

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR SHARON DURKAN



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING ON MODERNIZING PERMITTING SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION, CURBSIDE MANAGEMENT, CONSTRUCTION, AND DEVELOPMENT

WHEREAS, Mayor Wu has issued the Technology Modernization Executive Order, which directs the City of Boston to undertake citywide permitting reform and develop an internal technology plan to improve resident and business interaction with the permitting process; *and*

WHEREAS, The City is seeking to improve accessibility and efficiency through enhanced coordination amongst departments and real-time status updates, and is beginning by moving permit applications online; *and*

WHEREAS, Numerous permits regulate activity in our neighborhoods, including but not limited to construction, renovations, utility work, and parking, all of which impact on residents' daily lives; *and*

WHEREAS, Transportation, curbside management, construction, and development-related work is particularly disruptive in communities due to recurring and frequent impacts on public space, traffic, noise, and sidewalk accessibility, especially in dense downtown neighborhoods with historic infrastructure; *and*

WHEREAS, Although the City maintains some permitting records online, these systems are inconsistent, and residents are severely limited in their ability to obtain real-time information about permitted work occurring in their neighborhoods. This results in frustration and inequities, as only residents with contacts in City Hall are able to obtain updates or clarity about projects in their community; *and*

WHEREAS, Last year's hearing on contractor parking before the Planning, Development, and Transportation Committee highlighted problems with outdated systems, including confusion and a lack of accountability due to reliance on paper flyers and gaps in interdepartmental coordination; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston is committed to developing a modern permitting system, and its efforts should expand beyond digitizing applications to include creating a consolidated, outward-facing digital platform so residents can access real-time information about permitted work in their neighborhoods in one place; *and*

WHEREAS, Addressing the current lack of efficiency and accessibility in permitting is necessary to improve public trust in our neighborhoods, better manage permitted work occurring on our streets, and create a more predictable and effective permitting system for all; **THEREFORE BE IT**

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the City Council hold a hearing to examine how the City of Boston can further digitize and modernize its permitting systems, specifically in regards to transportation, curbside-management, and development-related work. This hearing shall evaluate opportunities to improve coordination amongst departments and explore creating an outward facing digital platform with up-to-date permitting information. Officials from relevant City departments shall be invited to testify.

Filed on: March 6, 2026