

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS KENDRA LARA, LOUIJEUNE, ARROYO, MEJIA,
FERNANDES ANDERSON, BOK, BREADON, COLETTA



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS THE CREATION OF A CIVILIAN CONSTRUCTION DETAILS PROGRAM

WHEREAS, Structural racism in Boston creates conditions of economic precarity and poverty and erodes Black Bostonians' human and civil rights, such as experiencing high rates of police surveillance, stops, and searches - for example, Black people make up 25.2% of the Boston population but were the subjects of 62.3% of Boston Police Department Field Interrogation and Observation reports in 2020; *and*

WHEREAS, Black residents are disproportionately likely to be incarcerated due to structural racism and, according to a report by the Brennan Center for Justice, formerly incarcerated people earn 52% less than people who have not been incarcerated, and formerly incarcerated people earn an average of \$484,000 less over the course of their working life than people who have not been incarcerated; *and*

WHEREAS, The current rate of unemployment among Black people in Boston is 6.8%, and over the past four decades, Black people in the United States have experienced nearly double the rate of unemployment compared to white people - moreover, Black people have been disproportionately impacted by job loss during the COVID19 crisis, with unemployment rates that peaked at 16.9% versus 12.8% among white people; *and*

WHEREAS, Massachusetts became the last state in the country to legalize civilian construction details in 2008; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston Police officers are the only city employees who work construction details, and the Police Department does not have the capacity to fulfill all requests for construction details, as officers declined to work 42.71% of details in 2020, up from 32% of details unworked in 2017 representing 135,959 more hours that residents could have worked; *and*

WHEREAS, Private companies requested an average of 117,066 details for construction sites in Boston annually between 2017 and 2020, representing \$71,557,762 each year in potential wages for Boston residents or 740 full-time positions at \$70,000 plus benefits; *and*

WHEREAS, Boston Police officers are among the highest-paid city employees, and the average salary of a Boston Police officer in 2020 was \$132,487.61, and without working construction details, the average salary would have been \$115,558.94, of which \$30,975.28 was overtime pay; *and*

WHEREAS, The Boston Police Department reported that in FY20, 32 sworn officers and five civilians worked to administer the details system with a cumulative salary cost of \$3,787,763, representing the potential to hire 41 full-time employees at the median income rate to administer a new civilian construction detail office in addition to hundreds of full-time positions to work the details; *and*

WHEREAS, A civilian construction detail office could operate on an annual budget of tens of millions of dollars with a mission of gender and racial justice and equity to employ hundreds of residents most harmed by state violence, over-policing, and mass incarceration; *and*

WHEREAS, Creating a civilian construction detail office would create hundreds of union jobs at prevailing wages with benefits for Boston residents, particularly residents who have been excluded from the economy and struggled to provide for themselves and their families because of their CORI; *and*

WHEREAS, A civilian construction detail office could address profound racial disparities and discrimination against formerly incarcerated people in the labor market by increasing access to stable, salaried employment with benefits which is essential to thriving communities and growing the city's economy; *and*

WHEREAS, Residents who represent diverse cultures and speak multiple languages, and have pride in their communities could staff a civilian construction detail office with a mission of racial and gender justice to promote safety, well-being, and prosperity in neighborhoods across the city; *and*

WHEREAS, The Regional & Community Outreach department of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston acknowledges the “inextricable link between the economy and racial equity—which we define as just and fair inclusion in an economy in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential” and the opportunity to “seize the important opportunity arising from this simultaneous awakening alongside an urgent need for the U.S. to rethink our economy as we work toward rebuilding it in the wake of the pandemic and current recession”; *and*

WHEREAS, Residents of Boston have been engaged in a sustained, city-wide conversation about police spending since the murder of Mr. George Floyd and are seeking creative, reparative solutions to address the generational harm caused by systemic racism and economic insecurity and have raised the possibility of civilian construction detail office as one such solution; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the creation of a new department for civilian construction details dedicated to providing stable, union jobs to people in the city that have been most affected by incarceration and policing. Representatives from the Mayor's Offices of Returning Citizens, Workforce Development, Resilience and Racial Equity, Police Accountability and Transparency, Boston Police Department, and community advocates from Families for Justice as Healing, formerly incarcerated people, and other interested parties are invited to testify.