

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE, BRIAN WORRELL, LIZ BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, DURKAN, FITZGERALD, FLYNN, MEJIA, MURPHY, SANTANA AND WEBER



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FIVE

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF STRENGTHENING AND PROTECTING AFFIRMATIVELY FURTHERING FAIR HOUSING

- WHEREAS,** The federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, signed on April 11, 1968, prohibits housing discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), familial status, national origin, and disability; and
- WHEREAS,** That Act further requires the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to administer programs “in a manner affirmatively to further the purposes of the Fair Housing Act” and the courts have held that this requirement applies to all recipients of HUD funding, including state, local government and public housing authorities; and
- WHEREAS,** Federal courts have consistently held that this obligation extends beyond prohibiting discrimination to taking proactive steps, known as Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH), to dismantle policies and practices that perpetuate segregation and limit access to opportunity; and
- WHEREAS,** HUD regulations have defined AFFH as taking meaningful actions to eliminate disparities in access to community assets, overcome patterns of segregation, transform racially and ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity, and ensure compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws; and
- WHEREAS,** Fair housing work is inherently intersectional, demanding strategies that address overlapping inequalities of race, class, gender, disability, familial status and other protected characteristics; and
- WHEREAS,** Boston’s history includes entrenched patterns of residential segregation and racial inequity that continue to affect housing access and wealth accumulation; and
- WHEREAS,** Beginning in 2016, the City undertook an extensive community-driven Assessment of Fair Housing (AFH), which was formally adopted by the City Council and reinforced by Mayor Michelle Wu’s Executive Order on AFFH dated January 20, 2022; and
- WHEREAS,** Boston is among the first U.S. cities to embed AFFH requirements directly into its zoning code and has established both a Community Advisory Committee and a Monitoring Committee to guide and oversee implementation; and

WHEREAS, The City has adopted an anti-displacement strategy focused on ensuring new development does not displace existing residents, particularly in historically marginalized neighborhoods, and including creating more homeownership opportunities to help residents remain in the city they call home; and

WHEREAS, Recent federal policy shifts underscore the need for local governments to recommit to AFFH principles and safeguard the progress already made; and

WHEREAS, Effective enforcement requires a strong, adequately resourced Office of Fair Housing & Equity and an empowered Fair Housing Commission led by experts in fair housing law and policy; and

WHEREAS, Periodic, data-driven evaluations are essential to identify and remedy disparate impacts of municipal housing policies on protected classes, as well as to provide transparency and accountability to the public; and

WHEREAS, Ongoing collaboration with the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, particularly the Statewide Office of Fair Housing, will enhance alignment and innovation in fair housing policy across jurisdictions;
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED That the Boston City Council reaffirms Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing as a foundational principle in guiding all housing-related policies, practices, and plans of the City of Boston, and calls for sustained investment, stable leadership, rigorous monitoring, and transparent public reporting from the Office of Fair Housing & Equity and to fully implement the goals outlined in Mayor Wu's Executive Order on AFFH of January 20, 2022; **AND BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED That the Boston City Council urges continued and strengthened collaboration with local, state and regional fair housing entities and urges regular, publicly accessible evaluations and reports from the Office of Fair Housing & Equity, including specific recommendations for ongoing action and improvements to ensure measurable progress toward fair housing and equity objectives.