



## **CITY OF BOSTON**

**IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY FIVE**

### **RESOLUTION DESIGNATING THE DOWNTOWN RFI AREA AS A BOSTON CULTURAL DISTRICT LED BY INDIGENOUS AND BLACK COMMUNITIES AS A STEP TOWARD REPARATIONS**

**WHEREAS,** The City of Boston, through its Request for Information (RFI) for Space for Creative Enterprise in Downtown, recognizes the urgent need to revitalize and reimagine Downtown Boston, addressing issues of underutilized spaces and the imperative for economic growth; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The Commonwealth of Massachusetts faces significant economic challenges, including lagging GDP growth compared to the nation, underscoring the critical need for new and diversified economic engines to ensure the state's future resilience; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Boston is acutely affected by gentrification, which has led to the displacement of long-term residents and businesses, particularly within its Indigenous, Black, and immigrant communities, threatening the unique cultural fabric and historical continuity of these neighborhoods; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Boston possesses a rich, yet often marginalized, history of Indigenous and Black contributions to the ongoing struggle for truth and liberation, and has a moral imperative to acknowledge and address the systemic discrimination, economic disenfranchisement, and cultural marginalization experienced by these communities; *and*

**WHEREAS,** This designation of a Boston Cultural District, led by Indigenous and Black communities, is recognized as a foundational step towards redress and reparations for centuries of historical harms and systemic inequities faced by these communities in Boston; *and*

**WHEREAS,** There is an immense and growing global demand for Black art, culture, and authentic historical experiences, with the Black travel market alone representing a \$145 billion industry in the U.S., presenting a powerful opportunity for Massachusetts to strategically pivot its tourism and economic development efforts; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Black cultural zones, also known as Black Town Centers or Black Business Districts, have demonstrated a proven track record of successful economic revitalization in cities across the United States, including the Greenwood District in Tulsa, the 18th & Vine District in Kansas City, Bronzeville in Chicago, and the revitalization efforts in Rondo in St. Paul, by leveraging local resources, prioritizing community ownership, celebrating unique cultural heritage, and attracting significant investment; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The "Blacktown" Economic Inclusion Ecosystem proposed by Con Voi Cooperative for Downtown Boston offers a comprehensive framework that aligns with these principles, including the creation of affordable and accessible creative spaces, the implementation of cooperative ownership models, the adoption of equitable development practices, the cultivation of a BIPOC culinary coalition with urban farm-to-table and sea-to-table focus, the integration of urban ecological principles, and a nationwide call to artists and activists to reimagine revolutionary history; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Empowering Boston's Indigenous and Black communities to lead the design and implementation of this cultural district will ensure that the revitalization efforts are culturally relevant, community-driven, anti-displacement oriented, and generate sustainable wealth within these historically underserved populations, thereby contributing directly to the goals of reparations; now, therefore; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

**RESOLVED:** That the Boston City Council expresses its strong support for the reimagining of Downtown Boston as a vibrant cultural district and formally designates the area identified in the Downtown RFI for Space for Creative Enterprise as a Boston Cultural District, one to be designed, developed, and governed under the leadership of Boston's Indigenous and Black communities as a step toward reparations. The Council further urges the City of Boston to actively integrate the "Blacktown" Economic Inclusion Ecosystem into this district by facilitating affordable creative spaces, cooperative business models, equitable anti-displacement development, a BIPOC-led culinary coalition, the expansion of Black arts and entertainment, and a national call for artists to reinterpret Boston's revolutionary history through an Indigenous and Black lens. Lastly, the Council directs all relevant departments, including the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture, the Boston Planning & Development Agency, and the Office of Economic Development, to collaborate transparently with community partners to ensure the district's long-term equity, sustainability, and reparative impact.

Filed on: June 25, 2025