



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Government Operations
Gabriela Coletta Zapata, Chair

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

April 7, 2025

Dear Councilors,

The Committee on Government Operations was referred the following docket for consideration:

Docket #0406, Message and order for your approval a home rule petition to the General Court entitled "Petition for a Special Law Re: An Act Relative to Certain Affordable Housing and Cultural Space in the Brighton Section of the City of Boston."

This matter was sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu and referred to the Committee on February 5, 2025.

Summary of Legislation

Docket #0406 is a Home Rule Petition requesting certain exemptions from Massachusetts General and Special Laws related to the procurement and award of contracts and acquisition/disposition of interests necessary to support the completion of two key redevelopment projects managed by the Boston Housing Authority (BHA). Specifically, the HRP requests the City not be subject to Chapter 149, Chapter 7C, Chapter 30, Section 39M, or Chapter 30B, Section 16 in completing the stated projects (described below) as such laws currently mandate separate and independent bidding processes for general contractors and subcontractors. Although the HRP requests such exemptions, it explicitly maintains compliance with other laws related to the employment of labor in the Commonwealth. Further, the exemptions requested will not compromise a fair and transparent process as the BHA must still adhere to the stringent regulations of its public funding sources.

The BHA seeks flexibility in procurement methodology to ensure timely and cost-effective delivery of the following projects. The first project involves the redevelopment of Faneuil Gardens, an existing state-assisted public housing community. The plan will replace 258 public housing units and introduce approximately 187 additional affordable units. These new units will serve various income levels, specifically targeting households earning 30%, 50%, 60%, 80%, and 120% of the Area Median Income (AMI). The second project at 290 North Beacon Street is an adjacent commercial site soon to be publicly owned, acquired as a mitigation measure resulting from displacement caused by nearby private development. This redevelopment aims to provide new affordable housing and dedicated cultural spaces, particularly musician rehearsal studios, compensating for losing previous cultural facilities. The project may also incorporate mixed-income units to address diverse housing needs.

Passage of **Docket #0406** would enable a more holistic approach to contractor selection, project management, and value engineering, in turn reducing delays and decreasing overall project costs. This petition is supported by past precedent as the BHA has requested similar legislative relief for numerous projects across Boston, including redevelopments like Mildred C. Hailey, Bunker Hill, Whittier Street, Orient Heights, Mission Main, Orchard Gardens, Maverick Gardens, West Broadway Homes, Old Colony, Washington Beech, Franklin Hill, and Mary Ellen McCormack.



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Committee Chair Recommended Action

As Chair of the Committee on Government Operations I recommend moving the listed docket from the Committee to the full Council for discussion and formal action. At this time, my recommendation to the full Council will be that this matter **OUGHT TO PASS**.

Gabriela Coletta Zapata, Chair
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