



City of Boston, Massachusetts
Office of the Mayor
MICHELLE WU

July 20, 2026

TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Dear Councilors:

This is the response to the 17F: Order requesting certain information under Section 17F regarding Article 80 large project review and small project review denials at the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) due to parking relief (**Docket #1003 filed on 5/11/2026**).

Information regarding development projects that are currently going through or have previously undergone Article 80 review is publicly available on [bostonplans.org](https://www.bostonplans.org). Information regarding Zoning Board of Appeals decisions is publicly available on <https://www.boston.gov/departments/inspectional-services/zoning-board-appeal-decisions>.

The Section 17F authority of the Boston City Council was introduced in Chapter 376 of the Acts of 1951 as an amendment to Chapter 452 of the Acts of 1948, and provides: “The city council at any time may request from the mayor specific information on any municipal matter within its jurisdiction, and may request his presence to answer written questions relating thereto at a meeting . . .” Section 17F was further amended by Section 16 of Chapter 190 of the Acts of 1982 to include the following (in relevant part), to clarify that “specific information” does not include records “exempt from disclosure under clause Twenty-six of section seventy-seven [sic] of chapter four of the General Laws,” which has long been interpreted to reference the Public Records Law.¹ As such, any record provided under Section 17F is subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, including its exemptions.

Thus, the Section 17F framework provides the Council access to records and testimony on topics within the Council’s jurisdiction and within the guardrails provided by the Public Records Law, including the reasonableness standard recently restated in *Friedman v. Div. of Admin. L. Appeals*, 103 Mass. App. Ct. 806 (2024).

Under the circumstances, and to the extent the records provided are publicly available, we have

¹ There is likely a clerical error in the statute. Massachusetts courts have consistently held that: “[w]here, as here, a statute contains an obvious clerical error, a court may depart from the statute’s literal meaning in order to effectuate legislative intent.” *Com. v. Maloney*, 447 Mass. 577 (2006), citing *Cohen v. Commissioner of Div. of Med. Assistance*, 423 Mass. 399, 409 (1996).

applied our best efforts to respond consistent with our obligations and the structure of 17F.
Thank you for your partnership.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Wu".

Michelle Wu
Mayor of Boston