

OFFERED BY COUNCILOR BENJAMIN J. WEBER



CITY OF BOSTON

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY SIX

ORDER FOR A HEARING ON HOUSING DEVELOPMENT COSTS AND BARRIERS TO BUILDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS IN THE CITY OF BOSTON

WHEREAS, Boston is in the midst of a housing crisis that is displacing longtime residents, increasing costs for renters, and making it more difficult to build affordable housing units; *and*

WHEREAS, The City is committed to the construction of affordable units and has made investments in the preservation and construction of these units throughout all neighborhoods in Boston; *and*

WHEREAS, In 2023, Boston's Inclusionary Development Policy was amended to require projects with seven or more units to set aside 17 percent of their units for income-restricted housing with an additional 3 percent of units set aside for households with mobile housing vouchers in large rental projects; *and*

WHEREAS, In 2024, the Boston City Council approved the appropriation of \$110 million towards the Housing Accelerator Fund, a joint endeavor between the Council and the Mayor to provide novel solutions to the housing crisis; *and*

WHEREAS, The City of Boston's Acquisition Opportunity Program launched in 2016 with the goal of supporting the acquisition and preservation of affordable housing in Boston with zero-interest loans to responsible owner-investors. Mayor Michelle Wu's investment of over \$56 million of federal resources into this program accelerated its expansion and allowed it to meet its goal of preserving over 1,000 affordable units in Boston from being lost to the speculative market by early 2025; *and*

WHEREAS, In 2024, the Mayor launched the Boston Acquisition Fund, a public-private revolving fund that provides developers with low-interest loans to help them acquire and preserve affordable housing across Boston's neighborhoods; *and*

WHEREAS, In May 2025, the Mayor approved amendments from the Boston City Council that included more investment in the Tenant Stabilization Fund, more rental vouchers, and more homeownership vouchers. She also signed an ordinance passed by this body to prioritize surplus municipal property as affordable housing; *and*

WHEREAS, Developers increasingly claim that promises to build affordable housing cannot be met due to increased costs of materials, labor, and borrowing; *and*

WHEREAS, Data from the City of Boston indicates that since 2023 less than half of the inclusionary zoning units approved are actually being built; *and*

WHEREAS, Councilors have increasingly seen developers with projects that have already been approved go back to the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) seeking a project change to lower the amount of affordable units in their project. Current rules at the BPDA do not require further public process before having these proposed project changes heard by the BPDA, leading to confusion and questions from both future residents and neighbors and advocates who achieved hard-fought wins for affordability; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to examine the status of building affordable housing units in the City of Boston, to discuss the challenges that developers face to meet commitments made and to hear from housing advocates about ways to address the financial realities that are contributing to less affordable housing being built in Boston.

Filed on: February 4, 2026