



# BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Planning, Development, and Transportation  
Sharon Durkan, Chair

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## REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

February 11, 2025

Dear Councilors,

The Committee on Planning, Development, and Transportation was referred the following docket for consideration:

***Docket #0241, Message and order temporarily extending Urban Renewal Plans in the City of Boston until March 31, 2027 or passage of a proposed relevant Home Rule Petition.***

This matter was sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu and referred to the Committee on January 15, 2025.

### ***Summary of Legislation***

***Docket #0241*** is an order temporarily extending Urban Renewal Plans in the City of Boston until March 31, 2027 or passage of a proposed relevant Home Rule Petition. Twelve Urban Renewal Plans scheduled to expire utilize specific Urban Renewal tools and protections that maintain Land Disposition Agreements that protect existing affordable housing, open space institutional and community uses, and senior housing. The twelve active Urban Renewal include:

- Brunswick-King Urban Renewal Plan
- Campus High School Urban Renewal Plan
- Central Business District South Station Urban Renewal Plan
- Charlestown Urban Renewal Plan
- Downtown Waterfront-Faneuil Hall Urban Renewal Plan
- Fenway Urban Renewal Plan
- Government Center Urban Renewal Plan
- Kittredge Square Urban Renewal Plan
- Park Plaza Urban Renewal Plan
- South Cove Urban Renewal Plan
- South End Urban Renewal Plan
- Washington Park Urban Renewal Plan

### ***Information Received at Hearing***

The Committee held a hearing on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 to discuss Docket #0241. The Committee heard testimony from panelists which included Devin Quirk, Deputy Chief of the Planning Department, Lisa Herrington, General Counsel, Boston Planning Department; Reuben Kantor, Senior Policy Advisor, Planning Department; and Max Houghton, Policy Specialist, Boston Planning Department.

The panel presented a slide presentation that provided an overview and background of Urban Renewal in the City of Boston. They stated Urban Renewal Plan areas enable the City to restrict the sale of City-owned property to include important use protections. There are currently 12 active Urban Renewal areas. While awaiting passage of a Home Rule Petition that would reform the City's Urban Renewal



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policy, the Planning Department must request an extension to Urban Renewal to prevent the loss of important land protections in Boston.

The panel discussed Land Disposition Agreements (LDAs) and stated that they are a contract/covenant between the BRA and the conveying party that owns the land regarding use of land and additional covenants, often filed alongside deeds. LDAs are meant to represent public interest and community leverage over large-impact projects by including restrictions protecting open space, community institutions, elderly and income-restricted housing, and historical preservation. These LDAs are an extension of the Urban Renewal Plan, with a majority of LDA expirations tied directly to the Urban Renewal's sunset.

The panel provided LDA-related data including total number of LDAs, types of LDAs, expiration dates, location, and examples of current LDAs. They explained that this order would approve a two year extension for the 12 Urban Renewal Plans that would be in effect until March 31, 2027. If no action is taken, Urban Renewal will expire on March 31, 2025, and the City would lose key land-use protections for nearly 12,000 units of affordable housing, 2 million square feet of open space, and other protections.

The panelists and Councilors also discussed the harmful historical impacts that Urban Renewal has caused, ongoing planning and zoning initiatives, and heard from members of the community that spoke out in support of the extension

### ***Committee Chair Recommended Action***

As Chair of the Committee on Planning, Development, and Transportation 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**.

Sharon Durkan, Chair  
Committee on Planning, Development, and Transportation.