



City of Boston, Massachusetts
Office of the Mayor
MICHELLE WU

EXECUTIVE ORDER OF MAYOR MICHELLE WU

An Executive Order Relative to Resiliency, Affordability and Equity in Planning and Development in the City of Boston

WHEREAS: The opportunities and challenges before the City of Boston are significant and urgent—from improving equity and mobility to ensuring affordability and resiliency; and,

WHEREAS: These challenges require comprehensive citywide planning, design, and zoning efforts to shape Boston’s growth; and,

WHEREAS: The City of Boston will create a centralized City Planning and Design Department, headed by the Chief of Planning to effect a robust, coordinated central city planning function with oversight and accountability similar to all other City departments; and,

WHEREAS: Through this transition, the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) continues to fulfill critical functions, such as development review, but its founding documents from decades ago centers the agency on an outdated set of needs that do not match Boston’s urgent challenges today; and,

WHEREAS: The BPDA must continue to make the development review process as predictable, efficient, and streamlined as possible; and,

WHEREAS: A home-rule petition has been filed to end urban renewal in Boston, with provisions to continue the protections for affordable housing, open space, and other community-oriented land use restrictions established under urban renewal, but this legislation will require passage by the Boston City Council and State Legislature, so temporary provisions are needed until passage is finalized; and,

THEREFORE, I, Michelle Wu, Mayor of Boston hereby direct the BPDA to act immediately to address these pressing needs as described in the Articles below:

Article 1: Advance a BPDA New Mission: Resilience, Affordability, and Equity

The BPDA shall immediately deploy all of its tools, resources and powers toward advancing resiliency, affordability, and equity across the City of Boston. The BPDA shall define and create – and set annual goals with respect to – resiliency, affordability, and equity measures for agency-led efforts and private

development projects seeking Article 80 and other approvals from the city. To evaluate and refine its efforts, the BPDA's resiliency, affordability and equity work will be reviewed by a third party every two years.

Article 2: Plan and Execute Strategies for Reforming the Zoning Code

Currently Boston's zoning code fails to provide community members and real estate professionals alike with a predictable, transparent, and accountable tool for responsibly shaping Boston's growth while supporting the city's communities. While comprehensive citywide planning is necessary to align the code with a shared vision for Boston's future, additional technical work needs to be done to eliminate redundant and burdensome requirements, make the zoning code more accessible to Bostonians, and align the code with today's values and principles. Therefore, the BPDA is instructed to produce a recommendation on strategies to comprehensively reform the zoning code and then begin implementation of these strategies.

In addition, the BPDA shall create a **dedicated zoning reform implementation team** of sufficient size and capacity to execute strategies to proactively evaluate and modernize Boston's zoning code. This team's efforts should include updating Boston's code to be more efficient and making large scale amendments to ensure all planning efforts are codified into zoning with a focus on resiliency, affordability, and equity.

The reorganization should identify the additional staff and resources necessary to carry out this work, on the same timeframe as the City's fiscal year 2024 budget planning cycle.

Article 3: Expand and Empower Planning

To achieve a more resilient, affordable, and equitable future for Boston's built environment, its people, and the businesses it serves, the BPDA is directed to launch citywide planning initiatives that touch every neighborhood in Boston. These initiatives will address housing supply and affordability, build stronger intergenerational neighborhoods across all of Boston's downtown and its squares and corners, and create a pathway for as-of-right additional dwelling units (ADUs). Additionally, the BPDA will launch new plans to focus on mobility within Boston's neighborhoods.

To that end, the BPDA will codify these plans into the zoning code, resulting in streamlined reviews of small and large development projects, and fewer cases requiring relief from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

The BPDA will establish a comprehensive design vision for guiding development and planning that is diverse in charter and content while amplifying community representation in the built environment. Additionally the BPDA will jointly launch a Citywide Open Space master plan with the Boston Parks and Recreation Department to develop an open space fabric to support the growth of our City. In addition, all citywide plans will boldly embrace the inclusive growth of Boston growing to 800,000 people over time.

Additionally, the BPDA will closely coordinate with other City departments that work on the built environment through the creation of the newly formed Boston Planning Advisory Council to advance this work.

Article 4: Complete Existing Planning Efforts and Incorporate them into Zoning

To take immediate steps toward a more predictable, transparent and accountable development process, the BPDA and City of Boston will prioritize both completing existing and starting new citywide and location-specific community planning and codifying the planning principles articulated in the final plans into the zoning code.. Such planning should advance the goals of resiliency, affordability, and equity.

Article 5: Utilize Public Land for Public Good

The BPDA should continue to leverage its portfolio of publicly-owned land and its expertise in acquiring and redeveloping property to advance the new mission of addressing Boston's most critical challenges including affordability, equity, and resiliency. The BPDA's Real Estate team must continue to work closely with communities to ensure that developments on BPDA-owned land meet community needs, including affordable housing, economic growth, and job opportunities in growing commercial sectors. The BPDA shall work with the departments charged with controlling and managing the City's property and the City's financial teams to identify BPDA-owned property that would be better held and/or redeveloped by other City departments and execute such transfers. In addition, the BPDA shall identify revenue-producing properties, rents, and other assets that might be transferred to the City to promote a shared vision of greater investment in planning the city's future and increase the City's financial oversight of the BPDA. In addition, the City will over time also look to increase investments and financial support of planning functions in order to secure a more affordable, resilient and equitable future for Bostonians.

Additionally, the BPDA should closely coordinate with other City cabinets (e.g., Housing, Environment and Open Space, Equity and Inclusion, Human Services, Public Health, Streets, Economic Opportunity and Inclusion, and Arts and Culture, etc.) to create opportunities for these partners to advance their work. Wherever necessary, the BPDA is instructed to use its real estate expertise and tools to assist all departments in the City of Boston with executing their community development objectives.

Article 6: Create a Coastal Resilience Delivery Team

To help achieve the mission of a more resilient city, the BDPA will create a new Coastal Resilience Delivery team in coordination with the BPDA's Real Estate Department. Building off of Climate Ready Boston planning, this team will act immediately to protect Boston's coastline from climate change. It will prioritize projects, secure rights-of-way, seek out funding through grants or creative financing mechanisms while working with the City's Chief Financial Officer, identify and design solutions to implement resiliency plans, and lead public-private partnerships in cooperation with landowners and other parties. The Coastal Resilience Delivery team will work with the Environment Department and other city, state, and federal agencies to align efforts on protecting Boston from coastal flooding and sea level rise. In addition, as this team grows and establishes strength in addressing coastal resilience, the team should use its tools and expertise to also advance real estate actions to address other resilience challenges such as mitigating heat island effects or increasing equitable access to open space.

Article 7: Seek Interim Protection of Land Uses for Civic Benefit Previously Established Under Urban Renewal Plans

To prevent land use protections for affordable housing, open space, and other civic benefit from lapsing during the legislative processes to end urban renewal while securing these protections, the BPDA shall work with the City Council and the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community

Development to temporarily extend the twelve (12) active urban renewal plans listed below. The proposed extension date will allow a reasonable period of time for passage of the currently proposed home rule petition, which functionally replaces urban renewal, to pass and be signed into law. Upon passage and implementation of the proposed legislation, the need for the urban renewal extension shall be voided.

These plan areas shall be subject to an interim extension consistent with the “minor plan change” requirements of 760 CMR 12.03:

1. Central Business District South Station Urban Renewal Plan,
2. Fenway Urban Renewal Plan,
3. Campus High School Urban Renewal Plan,
4. South Cove Urban Renewal Plan,
5. Charlestown Urban Renewal Plan,
6. Downtown Waterfront-Faneuil Hall Urban Renewal Plan,
7. Government Center Urban Renewal Plan,
8. South End Urban Renewal Plan,
9. Washington Park Urban Renewal Plan,
10. Park Plaza Urban Renewal Plan,
11. Brunswick-King Urban Renewal Plan, and
12. Kittredge Square Urban Renewal Plan.

In seeking this temporary extension, the BPDA shall focus its urban renewal-related efforts solely on (a) enforcing existing land use restrictions that protect community values (e.g., income restrictions, elderly preferences, open space, and other community uses) and (b) advancing the resiliency, affordability, and equity goals of the City of Boston.

The BPDA shall not adopt new urban renewal plans but may use its existing urban renewal and demonstration project tools solely to advance resiliency, affordability and equity goals to the extent permissible under existing laws until such time as the home rule petition passes and these tools are no longer needed.

Article 8: Implement Article 80 Process Improvements

The BPDA will continue to improve the development review process to make it more predictable, transparent and accountable to residents, businesses, and development entities alike. To advance this work, the BPDA shall create an advisory committee of stakeholders to inclusively inform changes to the Article 80 process and the BPDA’s related practices.

This will include guiding a review of specific aspects of Article 80 within 90 days of this Order to study technical aspects of the Art. 80 zoning code, analyze current practices, and recommend improvements to streamline both; as well as a process to reform community engagement to make it more inclusive, equitable, predictable, and impactful.

Through this process, the BPDA will create new tools to measure what and how development is delivering for Bostonians and accelerate the growth most needed to achieve a more affordable, resilient,

and equitable city. In addition, the BPDA will also look to set clear expectations for the community benefits that every development project should provide.

I hereby request the BPDA to adopt the above Order as its policy.

SIGNED THIS 30 DAY OF January, 2023



Michelle Wu
Mayor of Boston