



City of Boston, Massachusetts
Office of the Mayor
MICHELLE WU

EXECUTIVE ORDER OF MAYOR MICHELLE WU

An Order Establishing the Boston Planning Advisory Council

- WHEREAS:** The opportunities and challenges before the City of Boston are significant -- from improving equity and mobility to ensuring affordability and resilience; and,
- WHEREAS:** Our best strategy to tackle these opportunities and challenges is to start with sound urban planning that is ambitious and aims to nourish, heal, and empower our communities; and,
- WHEREAS:** Multiple City departments engage in various aspects of urban planning; and
- WHEREAS:** Urban planning by the City of Boston has often had uneven coordination across Departments and inconsistent objectives across plans; and,
- WHEREAS:** Planning has historically been peripheral to development proposals and led to underinvestment in Citywide planning; and,
- WHEREAS:** Robust centralized City planning coordination is critical to eliminating uneven planning communication, coordination, and objectives between City departments and to be more accountable to the people and better aligned with the needs of Boston's future; and,
- WHEREAS:** Planning is best done when it is anchored in the interest and ideas of the public; and,
- WHEREAS:** Planning is most impactful when it is coordinated across an Administration; and,
- WHEREAS:** Planning is most meaningful when it can drive implementation; and,
- WHEREAS:** Implementation investments are best leveraged and optimized when well-coordinated; and,
- WHEREAS:** A new structure is required to best deliver on this recommitment to engagement, departmental coordination, and implementation,

THEREFORE:

Pursuant to the authority invested in me as chief executive officer of the City of Boston by St. 1948, c. 452, s. 11, as amended, and every other power hereto enabling, I, Michelle Wu, Mayor of Boston, hereby order and direct as follows:

Article 1: Formation and Composition

The below-listed City officials shall form the Boston Planning Advisory Council. These officials shall meet for the purpose of increasing coordination among departments that engage in planning and advising the Mayor on planning across the City of Boston. The Planning Advisory Council will be chaired by the Chief of Planning for the City of Boston and be comprised of the following City officials (or their designee) whose cabinets conduct the majority of built environment planning initiatives across the City:

- Chief of Planning (Chair),
- Chief of Arts and Culture,
- Chief of Environment, Energy, and Open Space,
- Chief of Housing,
- Chief of Streets,
- Chief of Equity and Inclusion,
- Chief of Operations, and
- Chief Financial Officer

The Chief of Planning shall employ an Executive Director of the Planning Advisory Council and additional employees as necessary to support the work of convening the Council, subject to the availability of funds.

The officials comprising the Boston Planning Advisory Council are hereby instructed to coordinate in carrying out the responsibilities outlined in the Articles below. For the purposes of this executive order, Plans, Planning, and Initiatives are defined as efforts that may be or include:

- Citywide in nature;
- At neighborhood scales;
- Infrastructure concept planning/reconstruction;
- Efforts that advance the mission or program(s) of City departments; or
- Other types of efforts deemed appropriate to review under this new Council.

In order to execute the responsibilities outlined in the Articles below, the Chair shall regularly convene the Council. The Planning Advisory Council shall convene at a minimum every 90 days and may meet more frequently at the discretion of the Chair.

Article 2: Responsibility to Initiate Planning

In order to ensure that the planning work and priorities of Departments are aligned with each other in scope, purpose, and timing, each City official who is in charge of any planning process shall present any proposed planning process to the members of the Planning Advisory Council. The Council will, together,

review and advise on all Departments' planning processes before they commence. During such review, the Council shall ensure that new planning initiatives appropriately incorporate the findings of previous planning efforts to prevent redundancy, align community objectives, and drive toward a comprehensive citywide vision that ensures planning-led development in Boston. Review of proposed planning processes by the Council is advisory.

Article 3: Responsibility to Facilitate Public Engagement across the Planning Process

In order to center the public voice at the heart of our planning efforts, the Planning Advisory Council is instructed to consider and advise on whether planning efforts presented by departments reach historically marginalized populations, prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable populations, implement a lens of reparative justice, and incorporate the viewpoints of the many. To this end, the Council will work closely with the other cabinets and departments, share best practices and standards for public engagement with departments executing planning, and specifically consider any proposed planning process' methods of public engagement. Review of new planning efforts should also include coordination of efforts, inclusive of community engagement, for ongoing planning within the same planning geography while also ensuring that planning efforts align outcomes across districts, neighborhoods, the city and the region. Wherever possible, engagement should also incorporate the full range of Boston city government services including close coordination with Community Engagement, Economic Opportunity and Inclusion, Human Services, Boston Public Schools, the Boston Public Health Commission and more.

Article 4: Responsibility to Coordinate Ongoing Planning

To provide for coordinated decision making during the planning process, the Council shall regularly review ongoing planning efforts. The agenda for ongoing review shall be set by the Chair at the recommendation of its members. Ongoing review shall serve the general goals as plan initiation review while also ensuring that plans stay on track in terms of both timelines and delivery of outcomes.

In addition, ongoing review of open plans shall also present the opportunity for the Planning Advisory Council to advise the Mayor and department heads on key interim decisions of planning efforts and provide the staff of the department with the guidance of members of the Council on such decisions.

Article 5: Responsibility to Review and Evaluate Final Draft Plans

While the legal or other formal approval of planning documents may require the official vote of various governmental bodies (e.g., the Zoning Commission, the Public Facilities Commission, the Parks Commission, etc.), staff of departments involved in planning efforts are directed to consult with the Planning Advisory Council prior to seeking final approval from these various boards and Commissions. During this advisory review, the Planning Advisory Council shall evaluate the draft plan according to the following principles:

- The degree to which the plan advances the resiliency, affordability, and equity goals of the City of Boston;
- The coordination between the plan and various other ongoing and completed planning efforts;
- The degree to which the plan can be executed in a practical, responsible and timely manner; and
- The effectiveness of the plan in incorporating and advancing the interests of the full diversity of Bostonians, particularly those of historically marginalized communities whose voices have not been present in previous governmental decision making.

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All City staff serving Boards and Commissions across municipal functions are instructed to ensure plans have been evaluated by the Planning Advisory Council prior to taking up plans for approval. To prevent the Planning Advisory Council from becoming a bottleneck in executing important planning priorities, the Chair may advise staff that additional review of a plan by all members of the Committee is not needed, provided that, by the evaluation of the Chair, the planning effort was sufficiently evaluated by the Planning Advisory Council during the initiation and coordination phases of review.

Article 6: Responsibility to Drive Implementation of Plans

In order to ensure that the voice of the public in planning results in changes for the public in our city, the Planning Advisory Council shall regularly review the progress of approved plans including the degree to which plans are resulting in appropriate designs, implementation staffing and capital investments, regulations, mitigations, and other outcomes for citizens. If subsequent investments or regulations deviate from adopted plans or are not proceeding in a timely manner, then they shall be reviewed by the Planning Advisory Council which may choose to investigate and review any changes or delays.

In furtherance of the goal of implementation, the Chief of Planning through staff of the Planning Advisory Council will also support the Chief Financial Officer and Budget Office in the annual development of the City's five-year Capital Plan.

SIGNED THIS 26 DAY OF January, 2023



Michelle Wu
Mayor of Boston