

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS JULIA MEJIA, BREADON, COLETTA, DURKAN,
FERNANDES ANDERSON, FITZGERALD, FLYNN, MURPHY, PEPÉN, SANTANA,
WEBER, WORRELL, AND LOUIJEUNE



**CITY OF BOSTON
IN CITY COUNCIL**

IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FOUR

**ORDER FOR A HEARING TO AUDIT THE CITY OF BOSTON'S
ACCOUNTABILITY, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESSIBILITY REGARDING
CONSTRUCTION SITES IMPACTING SMALL BUSINESSES**

- WHEREAS,** The City of Boston believes in the importance of small businesses, stating, "Small businesses and entrepreneurs play an important role in the vibrancy of our city: they provide quality jobs, help power our economy, and revitalize neighborhoods" ; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Construction projects can disrupt the normal flow of commerce, resulting in financial hardships and operational challenges for small businesses that rely on consistent customer traffic; *and*
- WHEREAS,** A Minnesota Department of Transportation study found that “small single-location establishments in denser urban settings are more at risk than those in suburban areas” regarding impact of highway and transit improvement projects; *and*
- WHEREAS,** According to the same study “longer construction periods — thus a longer period of disruption to nearby businesses — are associated with sharper reductions in sales and employment for single-location establishments”; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Business owners affected by construction sites express a lack of communication regarding upcoming construction projects, timelines, and delays; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Boston business owners have faced various expenses, including the cost of cleaning storefronts affected by construction debris, revenue reduction resulting from sidewalk closures, and difficulties in providing services to clients with accessibility needs; *and*
- WHEREAS,** The City of Seattle has provided impacted businesses with a \$650,000 fund and offered options to defer payment on utility bills, business permits, signage permits, and the city portion of the business and occupation tax. Additionally, cities such as Cedar Rapids and Kansas City have offered direct compensation to

businesses during construction. Most recently, San Antonio has initiated a pilot program investing \$400,000 to mitigate the impacts of city construction; *and*

WHEREAS,

The City Of Boston prides itself in receiving community input, hosting public meetings, workshops, conversations, and media campaigns; *and*

WHEREAS,

Business owners on Blue Hill Ave. have publicly requested assistance due to the impacts of the construction such as limited parking, street closures, inadequate communication and concerns regarding safety of large construction vehicles; *and*

WHEREAS,

It is the responsibility of the Boston City Council to hold city departments accountable to the residents of Boston, ensuring transparency in how funds and permits are utilized in construction projects, and enhancing accessibility between city government and residents. ***NOW THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to audit the City of Boston's accountability, transparency and accessibility regarding construction sites impacting small businesses. Representatives from the City of Boston, including Boston Works, Boston 311, Boston Transportation Department, Boston Community Engagement, and Economic Opportunity and Inclusion Department, in addition to business owners and members of the public are encouraged to attend.

Filed in Council: May 1, 2024