

Offered by Councilor Breadon, Arroyo, Bok, Edwards, Essaibi-George, Flaherty, Flynn, Mejjia, O'Malley, Campbell, Wu and Janey



## CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

### ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING AN ALLSTON-BRIGHTON MASTER PLAN AND ZONING INITIATIVE

**WHEREAS,** The neighborhood of Allston-Brighton has long been home to a vibrant and intergenerational mix of families, immigrants, students, professionals, artists and creators, academic and medical institutions, and commercial businesses; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** In the past 10 years, Allston-Brighton has experienced an exponential increase in development, with over 13,000,000 square feet of new construction approved by the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA); *and,*

**WHEREAS,** In alignment with the City's goal to build 53,000 units of housing by the year 2030, over 7,000 new housing units have been approved for construction in Allston-Brighton by the BPDA since 2011; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** Current practices, including the use of variance-driven spot zoning, allow development and market priorities to dictate neighborhood planning; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** In the past two years, rents for housing units in Allston-Brighton have risen by an average of 32%, and rising costs threaten the continued displacement of neighborhood residents, artists and creators, and small businesses; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** Market rate new-build residential units are unaffordable to the majority of Allston-Brighton households, most of whom earn close to 50% to 60% of the Area Median Income (AMI), and even income-restricted units created through the City's Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) remain unaffordable and unattainable for many Allston-Brighton households; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** Of the residential projects approved by the BPDA in Allston-Brighton over the past 10 years, the average percentage of income-restricted units included in these developments across all projects is 14%, just above the minimum 13% required by the City's IDP, and is insufficient to meet both Allston-Brighton and citywide residents' need for affordable housing; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** New residential development has failed to provide residents with adequate access to homeownership opportunities within the neighborhood – Of the 7,000 new housing units approved for construction in Allston-Brighton in the past 10 years, only 20% of these units are homeownership units; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** Family-sized housing units are largely excluded from new residential development projects in Allston-Brighton – Of the units approved in the neighborhood since 2011, roughly 66% are either 1-bedroom, studio, or single-occupancy units, and roughly 3% of the units are 3-bedrooms; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** Allston-Brighton contains a significant amount of land owned by Harvard University, Boston College, and Boston University and is disproportionately impacted by institutional decision-making and expansion – particularly that of Harvard University in Lower Allston; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** Continued commercial development on Harvard University’s landholdings in Allston-Brighton will result in the creation of a new mixed-use neighborhood, the development of which must be carefully guided to ensure the creation of a neighborhood that includes housing affordable to all Bostonians; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** Increased development in Allston-Brighton has not been accompanied by sufficient investment in and improvement of transportation networks and public transit options; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** The growing climate crisis requires immediate action to ensure increased use of renewable energy and sustainable building practices; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** The ongoing, intertwined public health crises of COVID-19 and institutional racism have made existing disparities all the more evident, particularly those centered on housing and food insecurity; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** Boston continues to be one of the most racially segregated cities in the United States – Recognizing that Boston’s racial segregation was actively created and is continually perpetuated, planning strategies must be designed to actively dismantle inequities beginning at the neighborhood level; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** Prior initiatives, including the Brighton Guest Street Planning Study, offer planning guidelines for specific areas of the neighborhood, but do not achieve a comprehensive plan for the entirety of Allston-Brighton; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** Allston-Brighton’s last comprehensive zoning initiative occurred 30 years ago, when Article 51 of the Zoning Code established the Allston-Brighton Neighborhood District; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** The City of Boston has never conducted a comprehensive, community-led master planning process for Allston-Brighton; *and,*

**WHEREAS,** The master planning process presents an opportunity to create a community-driven vision for Allston-Brighton that utilizes progressive planning and zoning practices to build a community for all.

***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED,***

That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the creation of a comprehensive Allston-Brighton Master Plan and Zoning Initiative, and that city departments including the Boston Planning and Development Agency, Department of Neighborhood Development, Boston Transportation Department, Parks and Recreation, Boston Housing Authority, neighborhood and civic groups, the area Community Development Corporation, and any other interested members of the public be invited to attend.