



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL
WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

April 1, 2025

Mayor Michelle Wu
1 City Hall Sq.
Boston, MA 02201

To Mayor Wu:

In the spirit of collaboration, I'm writing to you to amplify the Council's advocacy in the upcoming FY26 budget. Building on the collaborative efforts initiated during the FY25 budget cycle with Boston Public Schools - and further expanded in FY26 - we are pushing for key investments to be included before the budget is released on April 9. To ensure community voices are reflected in the process, the Council held an initial hearing on the FY26 budget in February, along with four working sessions, multiple public testimony hearings, and in-community budget pop-ups.

Based upon the current federal environment, we advise the city to limit its overall budget growth in order to stay nimble enough financially to backfill critical city services for any federal funds that are lost in FY26. Last fiscal year, the city saved tens of millions of dollars in salaries, and in order to achieve the City Council's limited requests, we suggest leveraging payroll savings from the nearly 2,000 vacant jobs in the city. Listed below are some key priorities we have heard through those engagements that we hope to see addressed in the FY26 budget:

- **More Supports for Housing and Food Insecurity:** Funding increases are sought for the Office of Food Justice, Office of Housing Stability, and existing programs such as housing vouchers, downpayment assistance, and Access to Counsel. The Council is also in favor of the creation of an emergency assistance fund for utilities, rent, and food for income-eligible residents and income-eligible City workers, as well as piloting a clean water program for residents.
- **Protecting Boston's Diversity & Inclusion:** Extra investments are recommended for the following: dedicated employees to respond to community crises, increased marketing, and additional legal services at both the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Advancement and the LGBTQIA2S+ Department. The Council is seeking continued and sustained investments in ESOL classes across multiple departments, including Workforce Development, Boston Public Schools, and Immigrant Advancement. A commitment to



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funding for the departments housed under the Equity and Inclusion Cabinet is also a priority for the Council.

- **Increased Investments in Quality of Life Issues:** Expanded trash services, pilot pest control programs, pothole repair services, park maintenance, and improvements to the mattress disposal system are priorities for the Council. In regards to trash service, the Council seeks a fellow to help identify areas for improvement in the current trash contract, as well as deploying additional city personnel to clean, ticket and track leftover trash. The Council is seeking to create a Hometown Heroes Banner Program, a Citywide inventory of sidewalks not compliant with ADA standards, and to expand the PowerCorps BOS program beyond its current focus to support Public Works and Parks & Recreation. Up to six employees are requested at the Inspectional Services Department as part of the Boston Rodent Action Plan, and the Council also seeks the creation of a downtown parks administrator. Additional investments are also requested toward the following: senior programming (especially at the Ethos Senior Center), young adult workforce development, expansion of Age Strong's Healthy Rides initiative, base pay received by retirees, pollinator gardens (especially at Adams Playground), climate resilience hubs, the ARTery and public art in Roxbury.
- **Expanded Programs for our Youth:** Extra commitments are requested toward: Year-round youth jobs, support for unhoused students and English Language Learners at Boston Public Schools, digital equity programs, career and college readiness programs, after-school tutoring with a focus on literacy, youth clothing and supplies programs, youth development programs, and homework help. Additional resources are needed for indoor playgrounds for toddlers at BCYF, and to restart youth programming at the BHA's Mildred C. Haley Apartments in an effort to bolster violence prevention and at the BCYF Jackson Mann and BCYF Nazzaro to increase the anemic offerings in their neighborhoods.
- **Community Safety Commitments:** The Council seeks increased social workers (including rotating workshops with social workers at city-owned buildings such as libraries and community centers) and behavioral technicians, level funding for support for families of homicide victims at the Boston Public Health Commission, and making permanent a flex fund for BPHC's Violence Intervention and Prevention Bureau. Expanding the Community Interaction Teams (CIT) at Boston Police Department (including expanding the CIT to city parks as well), restarting the Community Syringe



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Program or other alternatives, planning for a “soft landing” for Safe Routes to Schools Planners starting in FY27, and adding support for the Office of Returning Citizens are priorities.

- **Expanding Small Business Assistance:** The Council is targeting extra support for liquor license applicants, increased tech assistance for small businesses, increased funding for Main Streets, and the creation of a grant program for startup and existing microbusinesses as well as a database to track vacant storefronts.
- **Government Productivity:** In order to speed up the permit process, the Council is seeking more ISD building inspectors and plans examiners as well as making any changes needed to increase efficiency and language access. The Council is also seeking new equipment and more personnel at the Elections Department. The Council also hopes to fill an additional budget analyst position at the City Council, and create an Ombudsperson at 311 with an eye toward quality control. Additionally, the Council seeks to increase efficiency at city departments that historically underspend their budgets, and a more efficient timeline for RFP creation and repayments from the city. In light of last year’s creation of the Planning Department, we’re also seeking a closer examination of transportation planning at the Boston Transportation Department and Planning Department.
- **Capital Projects:** The Council seeks an expedited plan and timeline to rebuild the Jackson Mann Community Center. Building off prior commitments, the Council is asking for the following projects to move to the next phase with an expedited timeline: Town Field, Ringer Playground, McKinney Playground, South Boston Library, and Tobin Community Center’s air conditioning project. Improvements to pools at Hennigan, Holland and Condon, and all BPS bathrooms are requested. The Council is also asking for a study for the following projects: the old East Boston police station, an ambulance bay in Charlestown, OEM Command Center, Dorchester Senior Center, Eastern Roslindale park, Roxbury skate and graffiti park, and a Cultural Center. Repairs are requested to the McLean Park in East Boston, Elmhurst Park, Brighton High Auditorium, City Archives, Healy Field, and the public stairway in Charlestown. Sidewalk improvements are also requested, especially in District 2 and 9 as well as Mattapan Square. An urgent investment is also sought in Boston Housing Authority to address broken elevators, repairs, and unit renovations. An update in writing for all of the aforementioned capital projects should be available by April 18, 2025.



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I hope you will consider the Council's advocacy and ensure that the priorities of our constituents are reflected in the FY26 budget. Further, I'd like to reiterate the importance of fiscal responsibility in our current national environment. I appreciate your leadership and dedication to our city, and I look forward to continued collaboration to advance these investments. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Worrell".

Brian Worrell
City Councilor, District 4
Chair of Committee on Ways & Means