



City of Boston, Massachusetts
Office of the Mayor
MICHELLE WU

June 16, 2023

TO THE CITY COUNCIL

Dear Councilors,

Pursuant to Section 48 of the Boston City Charter, as amended, I respectfully disapprove the City Council's amended version of Docket 0760, "Message and Order for Annual Appropriation and Tax Order for FY2024" and return Docket 0760 with further amendments to your Honorable Body.

In April, we proposed a budget focused on investing in targeted new initiatives and improving existing services to make Boston the best place in the country to raise a family and create opportunity for every generation. Thank you for your many hours of analysis, community outreach, and thoughtful discussion with our administration over many public hearings.

Since introducing the budget in April, continued strength in interest earned on our investments has exceeded expectations in the current fiscal year, and allows us to assume an additional \$3.2 million in revenue for the FY24 budget. Our returned budget accepts amendments to increase funding for maternal and men's health initiatives, fire safety and worker protections, and support for newly arriving migrants. It also includes amendments to improve constituent service technologies, increase capacity to review the wages of City workers, and conduct a needs assessment for future senior programming across Boston. We also support additional funding for housing vouchers, increased capacity in our Fair Housing & Equity department, and additional support for the childcare entrepreneur fund. These amendments support the need to deliver on City services and make Boston the best city for residents of all generations.

Our returned budget also includes rejections, because the scale and scope of amendments passed by the Council would result in reductions to the core City services that our residents depend on and deserve. Our budget must be responsive to the needs of our constituents, fiscally responsible, and built on a foundation of effective delivery of City services that are central to our residents' quality of life.

In total, the amended budget proposed by the Council would reallocate over \$52 million, funded through significant reductions to personnel and contracted services across City departments. In the Police Department, the Council's proposed reductions to the budget are illusory, as the City is obligated to cover salary and overtime expenses incurred by the department. In Public Works and Transportation, reductions to personnel budget would mean holding positions vacant and delaying hiring for critically needed positions in both departments to fill potholes, upgrade crosswalks, plow snow, and ensure our street infrastructure is safe. Other proposed reductions

across the City to departments such as the Office of Veterans Services, the Boston Public Library, Boston Centers for Youth and Families, and the Equity and Inclusion cabinet would reduce critical programming and limit our ability to fund future obligations. As the City's elected officials, we have a collective responsibility to protect core City functions.

Although we reject the amendment to add \$10 million to the newly-created Office of Participatory Budgeting, I propose transferring to that office \$2 million of unspent funds from FY23. We share the Council's goal of a participatory budgeting process that engages more of our residents in the challenging and empowering work of crafting future City budgets. In our view, there must be only *one* City operating budget, reflecting all of the choices and priorities of our diverse and vibrant community, and we plan to work with the new Office and Board on a shared understanding of this important initiative.

Our team is eager to engage in the specifics of these returned amendments and look forward to the continued partnership of the City Council in this operating budget process and with the final approval of the FY24-FY28 Capital Plan.

Sincerely,



Michelle Wu
Mayor of Boston