

December 10, 2025

Michael Nichols, Chair  
Zoning Commission  
1 City Hall Square, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02201

Jill Hatton, Vice Chair  
Zoning Commission  
1 City Hall Square, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02201

Dear Chair Nichols and Vice Chair Hatton,

On behalf of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce and our 1,200 members, I write to offer our support for Special Order No. 16, recommending a zero percent increase to linkage fees in 2026. We would like to thank Mayor Wu and her administration for putting this proposal forward, acknowledging the current challenges to commercial development and the role public policy can play in fostering a competitive economy.

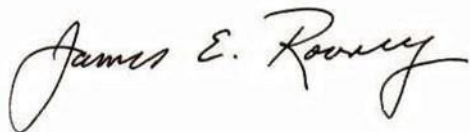
As you know, high construction costs, tariffs, and interest rates have contributed to slower new commercial sector growth in Boston for the last few years. Limited new growth and a decline in commercial property values not only restrict economic growth and job creation, but have direct impacts on City revenues, services, and residents. Unfortunately, lower growth and commercial property values are two trends that are likely to continue, especially as vacancy rates in office buildings downtown<sup>1</sup> and laboratory space across the region<sup>2</sup> remain elevated. The City recently reported that commercial property values decreased by 6% in 2025 alone.

Given these trends, the City's recommendation for 0% growth in linkage fees is a small but important indicator of public policy tools available to try to facilitate new development. Such policy changes, even if temporary, can relieve some of the cost pressures on development and make more projects in the city viable in the short term. Other tools, such as permanent or temporary changes to the City's inclusionary development policies, energy efficiency regulations, zoning requirements, or permitting processes could ease bottlenecks, delays, or costs to developers seeking to move to, grow, or remain in Boston.

As we look forward to 2026 and the years ahead, we believe that a wholesale and collaborative approach to support economic growth will be needed to create a strong foundation for long-term stability. We remain committed to working with all stakeholders to address the collective challenges we face.

Thank you for your attention and please reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



James E. Rooney  
President & CEO

---

<sup>1</sup>[CBRE Downtown Boston Office Figures Q3 2025](#)

<sup>2</sup>[Colliers Q3 Greater Boston Life Sciences Report 2025](#)