

BPDA/City of Boston Application for Downtown Conversion Tax Abatement Program

Introduction

The Boston Planning and Development Agency, the Mayor's Office and Housing, and the City of Boston Finance Cabinet have [launched a Pilot program](#) for downtown buildings prepared to convert office space to residential. This program is currently expected to be open only for a limited time period. Prior to submitting an application, property owners or developers are encouraged (but not required) to contact John Weil (john.weil@boston.gov) at the BPDA to discuss the details of their proposal.

Benefits

- An average 75% reduced property tax rates for up to 29 years. This could mean 100% abatement at the start of the agreement with a much lower abatement later on, averaging up to 75% over the total contract period.
- Streamlined Article 80 process
- Ombudsperson support to assist in getting project to permitting
- Zoning for conversion to residential where applicable, with potential access to bonus density.

As-Of-Right Requirements and Qualifications

- Applications accepted through June of 2024.
- Priority will be given to properties within the [121B Demonstration Area](#).
- Applications will be considered on a rolling basis.
- Must comply with the new proposed Inclusionary Zoning standards of 17% of units available at 60% AMI and 3% of units available at [Fair Market Rents](#) accessible for voucher holders.
- Must comply with the new Stretch Code's energy efficiency standards.
- Maintain ground floor retail and other public uses.
- A 2% payment to the city on any gross sales of the property for the duration of the PILOT agreement.
- Converting commercial space to residential uses, pulling a full Building Permit by October, 2025.

The Fine Print

- The BPDA has adopted a Demonstration Project Plan pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 121B, section 46(f) that enables the BPDA to take an interest in the subject property and enter into a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreement with the proponent and the City of Boston.
- Projects that fail to meet the requirements set out in the 121B PILOT agreement will face a clawback on any tax benefits received.

Other Properties

If you have a project that you would like to convert that does not meet the requirements and qualifications listed above, the BPDA will consider all applications for their eligibility in meeting the City's goals in this program.

Process

- Complete and submit this application. Visit <https://www.bostonplans.org/projects/office-to-residential-conversion-program> for the submissions portal
- BPDA will review the application and request the applicant sit with a BPDA staff committee to go over the details and answer questions.
- Assuming the committee is ready to move forward with the proposed project, the applicant will immediately be required to submit more comprehensive plans and financial details than is requested in this application.
- Applicant and BPDA Legal Staff, in conjunction with the City Assessor, will work out the details of a 121B agreement for the BPDA to take a share of ownership of the property in order to create the PILOT agreement for the tax abatement.
- BPDA Board approval of the agreement will be required to move forward.
- Upon approval, the City Assessor will find the next opportunity within the Assessing calendar to switch the relevant part of the project from commercial to residential taxes.
- If the proposal is more than 100,000 sq.ft., it will then require a submittal into the Article 80 process, as well as initiating the permitting process. For projects under 100,000 sq.ft., if they do not require Article 80 approval, the project will be requested to immediately begin the permitting process.





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Contact Information

Name of Applicant

Title

Firm of Applicant

Phone

Email Address

Address of Applicant

City

State

Zip Code

Is Applicant the Property Owner or the Developer?

Property Owner

The Developer

Property Information

Address of Property

City

State

Zip Code

[Parcel ID](#) (One or More)

Zoning Analysis of Property. Please include whether the property falls within the Coastal Flood Resiliency Overlay, Groundwater Conservancy Overlay, Shadow Impact, or Greenway Overlay districts. Use [this map](#) for analysis purposes.

Gross Square Footage

Gross Floor Area

Does the applicant currently own the building? Yes No Other

If Yes: Would you be refinancing in the next 24 months? Yes No

If Yes: Share a Title Report disclosing any interest in the property.

If No: Is your potential purchase of the building contingent on the result of this application for downtown conversion? Yes No

If No: Please provide a letter from the existing owner showing an intent to sell.

If Other: Explain

Program Use

Narrative Description of intended conversion program

Total number of current commercial tenants in proposed converted space

Of current office tenant leases, approximately how many leases accounting for how many square feet would be expiring after the October 2025 construction start deadline?

Please share any plans you have to relocate the existing office tenants?

Estimated number of units to be created.

What is the proposed unit mix?

What is the proposed estimated affordability mix for the project?

What is the proposed rent range on the market units?

How many parking spaces are existing and how many are being proposed?

Briefly describe the existing and proposed ground floor retail component

Program Info

	Existing		Proposed		
	GFA	RSF	GFA	RSF	Efficiency
Office					
Retail					
Residential					
Parking					
Other					
Other					
Other					
Total					

Financial Narrative

Use of funds: What is the estimated Total Development Cost of the project?

Source of funds: What is the anticipated Capital Stack and other source of funds - including rental income and possible public funds or subsidies?

Other relevant financial metrics or projections you can share about the project proposal.

Confirm whether this project is expected to be eligible to receive a [TIFIA](#) (Federal) low-interest loan and/or enhanced [MassWorks](#) (Commonwealth of MA) grant funding. Please describe.

Other Information

Briefly share what other residential projects of this scale that you have previously worked on.

Please briefly share any other information that you think would be relevant for the BPDA to consider in your application.

This application and any communication incorporated herein, including attachments, may be subject to public disclosure as a "public record," as defined by M. G. L. c. 4, § 7, and subject to public inspection, examination and copying pursuant to M. G. L. c. 66, § 10.

END OF APPLICATION