

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS ENRIQUE J. PEPÉN and SHARON DURKAN



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS WAYS TO REPAIR AND MAINTAIN PRIVATE WAYS

WHEREAS, Thousands of roadways across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and dozens across our community are privately owned, owing to our nearly 400-year history and neglect by some developers to apply for public adoption of streets; *and*

WHEREAS, Many of these private ways in Boston—such as Maple Leaf Drive, Stella Road, and Back Street—have fallen into disrepair as their owners cannot collectively afford nor come to agreements on how to finance repairs that can range in cost from tens of thousands to millions of dollars; *and*

WHEREAS, Many of these private ways are still publicly accessible to our community’s vehicles, compounding damages over time and multiplying the costs for our municipality every year that action is not taken to convert and repair them; *and*

WHEREAS, These private ways expose our vehicles to potholes that can cause substantial damage and uneven surfaces that can contribute to collisions; *and*

WHEREAS, These private ways are a barrier for emergency response vehicles, particularly in winter months when snow removal is delegated to multiple private owners; *and*

WHEREAS, These private ways expose pedestrians and cyclists to unnecessary risks by preventing the city from installing traffic-calming technology; *and*

WHEREAS, These private ways are accessed by companies that maintain and repair public utilities, underlining how public responsibility already extends to this infrastructure in complex and overlapping ways; *and*

WHEREAS, Communities across the United States have workshopped a variety of policy alternatives to alleviate this issue; **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT**

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing on the possibility of repairing and maintaining private ways. Representatives from appropriate departments of the administration will be invited, and members of the public are encouraged to attend and testify.

Filed on: May 1, 2024