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## Research Bureau Calls for Data-Driven Analysis to Inform Boston's Development Policy

March 26, 2019 -- On Tuesday, Research Bureau President Pam Kocher [testified](#) at a City Council hearing on Mayor Walsh's proposal to obtain authority from the state to formalize the City's Inclusionary Development Policy (IDP) into the City's zoning code and allow the zoning commission authority for more flexibility in the Linkage Program, in part to respond to market forces.

The Mayor's [Home Rule Petition](#), which requires City Council approval to be sent to the Legislature, does not include specific proposals on adjustments to exactions - the City retains decision-making on exaction requirements on developers.

### Thoughtful, data-driven analysis needed to inform program changes

If the Legislature and Governor approve this Home Rule Petition, the Research Bureau is concerned about how that flexibility will be used by the City; we will monitor closely the evaluation of potential changes to these programs.

The Research Bureau emphasized in testimony at the hearing that any potential changes merit through study and market analysis by the City: this work should be data-driven, analyzing the viability and impact of possible adjustments given the range of project sizes, income and development dynamics in different neighborhoods, need for predictability of exaction changes, and the current climate of increased cost of project funding, construction materials and labor, among other factors.

### Research Bureau speaks against ceding exaction-setting authority to the State

At the hearing, Councilor Edwards expressed an interest in specifying a minimum Linkage fee in the Home Rule Petition which would then require state approval for any changes to that minimum. Such action would reduce the City's flexibility to design the details of the Linkage program and make the City further beholden to the State on policy decisions. President Kocher responded that it is in the City's best interest to retain the authority it has on such matters and not voluntarily cede local control to the State.

### IDP and Linkage reports released this week by BPDA and Councilor Edwards

This week related reports were released by both the BPDA and by Councilor Edwards, Chair of the Committee on Housing and Community Development: BPDA's [2018 Inclusionary Development Policy \(IDP\) Annual Report](#), on housing creation, and Councilor Edwards' [Building for All Bostonians: Examining Inclusionary Development and Linkage Programs in the City of Boston](#)