

May 2016

As municipal, economic development and non-profit leaders and organizations, we ask for your assistance in advancing Senate 2065, *An Act Relative to Creating Community Benefit Districts*. Sponsored by Sen. Eileen Donoghue and Rep. Brendan Crighton, this legislation creates a new local-option tool for cities and towns to fund and manage supplemental services in downtowns, town centers, and other important areas.

Local government resources are already stretched thin to provide the basic municipal services that residents and businesses expect. However, with urban and town centers throughout the Commonwealth once again attracting new residents—including both Millennials and Boomers—there is a growing need for more robust governance models, management capacity, and financing tools to manage these lively, mixed-use places.

Residents of the Commonwealth are increasingly looking for a vibrant street life, convenient access to amenities, and well-managed public spaces. Similar to Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Community Benefit Districts (CBDs) are a way to accomplish this important goal. Creating a CBD formalizes a public-private-nonprofit partnership through a 501(c)3 entity in order to carry out a district management plan. Increasingly, major nonprofit and public institutions anchor our communities and we need tools that reflect that reality.

Under the proposed legislation, CBDs would be reasonably straightforward to put together and dismantle, and would establish a structure that would promote good governance and accountability. They are initiated by local petition process, and must be approved by City Council or Board of Selectmen. Cities and towns are provided great flexibility in the functions they could offer, and this legislation could be used by communities of all sizes, in all parts of the state. It will great create good-paying working-class jobs, with the opportunity to rise a career ladder to management.

Community Benefit Districts offer a way to empower our communities to solve their own challenges, and make positive changes that capitalize on our unique places.

We respectfully request your support for Senate 2065.

Sincerely,

Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance

Massachusetts Municipal Association

Mayors, Managers and Town Planners

Mayor Jon Mitchell, City of New Bedford

Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, City of Salem

Iram Farooq, Assistant City Manager for Community Development, City of Cambridge

Lee Hartmann, Planning and Development Director, Town of Plymouth

Richard Howard, Town Manager, and Brian Szekely, Town Planner, Town of Winchester
Paul Materazzo, Planning Director, Town of Andover
Melisa Tintocalis, Economic Development Director, Town of Lexington

Economic Development and Non-Profit Organizations

Amherst Business Improvement District
Cambridge Chamber of Commerce
Downtown New Bedford
Hyannis Main Street Business Improvement District
LOCUS (smart growth developers)
Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations
Massachusetts Public Health Association
MassCreative
Metropolitan Area Planning Council
Michael Gallagher (leader of downtown Lowell group)
Springfield Business Improvement District
Springfield Chamber of Commerce
Transportation for Massachusetts
Western Massachusetts Economic Development Council
Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce