

Recommendations to Center Climate and Environmental Justice in Mayor-Elect Wu's First 100 Days

Dear Mayor-Elect Wu,

Congratulations on your victory. The decisions Boston leaders make in the coming months in response to the climate, transportation, economic, and public health crises will reverberate for the next 100 years. Will we meet this challenge head on? Or will we bury our heads in the sand?

Your campaign platform rightfully centered climate and economic justice. Alternatives for Community and Environment, Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation, Conservation Law Foundation, GreenRoots, and our undersigned partner groups of community, economic development, environmental, and climate justice advocates urge you to hit the ground running and take bold action on these issues in your first 100 days. This letter provides a list of critical steps you can take during your first months in office that will ensure Boston is a national leader in meeting this moment.

Commit to racial and environmental justice:

- Commit to spending at least 40% of city spending on environment, climate, housing, transportation, and resilience on projects and measures that invest in environmental justice populations;
- Commit to increasing City hiring of MBE/WBE contractors to 15% in Year 1, and to at least 25% by Year 2;
- Commit to improving government-to-government relations with all Indigenous nations to which Boston has historical obligations to provide meaningful channels of support and representation;
- Commit to land acknowledgement, recognition of Indigenous Peoples Day, expanded capacity within the City to engage the Indigenous community and to support Indigenous youth and families, increased public representation of Indigenous peoples in the City, and an increased focus on housing, economic and workforce development for tribal members;
- Commit to consultation with Indigenous organizations, such as North American Indian Center of Boston, in order to properly achieve these proposals and demonstrate Boston's commitment to supporting Indigenous residents.

Plan for an equitable and safe clean energy future:

- Publicly state the City's opposition to the Eversource East Eagle substation, withdraw from all agreements with Eversource that are currently in place on this project, and direct the Law Department to take all possible action in opposition to the proposed facility's permitting;
- Begin to implement BERDO 2.0 equitably by establishing a two-thirds majority neighborhood review board with members nominated by community-based organizations, and by funding data collection and enforcement work by City employees;
- Ensure that the Diesel Emissions Reduction Ordinance is effective by creating a two-thirds majority neighborhood review board with members nominated by community-based organizations;

- Prioritize energy democracy and climate justice by stating a commitment to obtaining the authority to manage the Mass Save energy efficiency programs for the City of Boston;
- Launch an inclusive green workforce training program that utilizes the skills of students at Madison Park High School and other Boston Public Schools to serve the needs of their communities, potentially including energy efficiency retrofits in Boston Public Schools facilities.

Reconnect neighborhoods and move people safely:

- Convene one or more community meetings on Melnea Cass Boulevard design to gather input on how to preserve all healthy trees while improving safety, transit, and bike access;
- Create a more inclusive, proactive, and engaged stewardship platform that incentivizes residents to request and care for public shade trees;
- Ask the new MBTA Board of Directors to electrify the Fairmount Line by 2024 and establish Zone 1A fares for all Boston stations, including Readville and submit testimony to the state legislature in support of H.3545 & S.2280 at the upcoming hearing for those bills;
- Dedicate City resources to fund fare-free bus routes (16, 19, 22, 23, 26, 28 continuance, 111, 116, 117) and discount fare media for low-income riders;
- Meet with the MBTA to call for increased bus frequency in 2022 and bus electrification starting with routes serving environmental justice populations in Boston and indicate a willingness to withhold the City's annual assessment to MBTA for failure to deliver.

Prepare for climate change impacts:

- Ensure that Boston's Wetlands Ordinance final Phase II and III regulations incorporate forward-looking climate risk, including replacement of FEMA maps with Climate Ready Boston maps;
- Increase the City's capital budget allocation for climate resilience from 10% to 15% with a priority for spending funds in areas housing environmental justice populations and a focus on protecting people rather than property;
- Commit to dedicate city funds to new tree planting that prioritizes neighborhoods with disparate canopy coverage and extreme heat vulnerability, and create a city ordinance to prohibit clearcutting of woodland for development.

Create a resilient, inclusive, and accessible public waterfront:

- Initiate a robust and inclusive city-wide waterfront planning process that harmonizes efforts across City agencies, including the Environment Department, and the City's planning and development authority, currently housed at the BPDA, to develop a vision for Boston's waterfront that promotes public access, equity, and resilience including explicit consideration of onsite affordable housing;
- Commit to waterfront plans for all neighborhoods, starting with the Downtown Waterfront District, that prioritize diverse waterfront uses including at least 20% affordable units in all developments, affordable water recreation, BIPOC businesses, and civic and cultural uses.

Overhaul city planning and development:

- Establish a Planning Department within City government to take over planning and development responsibilities from the Boston Planning & Development Agency;
- Hire or designate a staff person to quantify an analysis of short- and long-term displacement for each new or major rehabilitation project as an independent enhancement of the analysis required of developers by the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing Zoning Code, and commit to integrating an anti-gentrification and displacement process into project approvals;
- Increase Inclusionary Development Policy requirements to set aside 20% of new housing units for affordable housing;
- Ensure that the Fair Housing Commission resolves all outstanding housing discrimination complaints and commit to implementing Commission recommendations and community recommendations from the Assessment for Fair Housing.

Congratulations on your historic election. Your time on the City Council was marked with progress on economic, environmental, and racial justice issues. We look forward to working with your administration to continue these efforts and ensure a resilient, equitable, and just future for the people of Boston starting on day one. There's unfortunately no time to wait.

Sincerely,

**Alternatives for Community and Environment
Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation
Conservation Law Foundation
GreenRoots
Charles River Watershed Association
Crane Ledge Woods Coalition
Fairmount Greenway Task Force
The Harborkeepers
Mystic River Watershed Association
North American Indian Center of Boston
Piers Park Sailing Center
Speak for the Trees
Unitarian Universalist Mass Action Network**

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