

# Beacon Park Yard Regional Framework Plan

BEACON  
PARK  
YARD | regional  
framework  
plan



Coalition Partners - Workshop #1

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

5:30 - 7:30 PM

In-Person - Boston City Hall

## About the Project

The Beacon Park Yard Regional Framework Plan will support plans established by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's (MassDOT) Allston Multimodal Project for robust multimodal transit through a regional, community vision for dense urban development that provides the City capacity, landowner value, and community benefits to realize this transformational urban infrastructure project.

A complete description is available on the project website: [bit.ly/B-P-Y](https://bit.ly/B-P-Y).

## Contact

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Boston Planning & Development Agency

## Agenda

5:35 - 5:50 Context Presentation

5:50 - 6:00 Project Mission and Outcomes

6:00 - 6:10 Introductions

6:10 - 6:40 Breakout Group Discussion

6:45 - 7:30 Craft Theory of Action

## City of Boston and BPDA Staff Attendees

Ben Zunkeler, Senior Planner II

Christine Brandao, Community Engagement Manager

Emma Hunter, Assistant to the Director of Planning

Joe Blankenship, Senior Transportation Planner II

Lamei Zhang, Planner II  
Yarisamar Cortez, Planner I  
Yingu Pan, Urban Designer I  
Wenzheng Wang, Transportation Planner, Neighborhood Planning Team Department of Transportation

## **Coalition Partners Attendees**

Aimee Chambers, BPDA Director of Planning  
Alistair Sawers (on behalf of Laura Gilmore), Massachusetts Bay Transit Administration (MBTA)  
Amira Madison, City of Boston (CoB) Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics  
Breeze Outlaw, BPDA Boston Design Vision  
Chris Osgood, Mayor's Office  
Cindy Marchando, Harvard Allston Task Force  
Elizabeth Leary, Boston University  
Glen Berkowitz, A Better City  
Iram Farooq, City of Cambridge  
Jackson Moore-Otto (on behalf of Jarred Johnson), Community Advocate  
Jess Robertson, Community Advocate  
Jonathan Lee, Allston-Brighton Health Collaborative  
Karina Oliver-Milchman, Mayor's Office of Housing  
Kate England, City of Boston (CoB) Green Infrastructure Department  
Kelly Brown, Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
Marika Reuling, Harvard University  
Mark Handley, Harvard University  
Patricia Cahill, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)  
Ashley Stolba, Governor's Cabinet Executive Office of Economic Development  
Sonia Richards, Boston University  
Susan Harrington, Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)  
Traci Laichter, Community Advocate  
Vineet Gupta, Boston Transportation Department (BTD)

## **Meeting Goals**

The goals of this first Coalition Partners meeting was to:

1. Meet the coalition partners
2. Review key equity goals from our Theory of Change

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3. Document strategies and partnerships for equity
4. Craft our Theory of Action

## **Impact**

The conversations and written feedback collected throughout the workshop will be used for BPDA Staff to refine the Project's Mission, Vision, Theory of Change, Theory of Actions, Work Plan, and Engagement Schedule.

## **Project Team Workshop Follow-up**

- BPDA Staff to prepare our Theory of Action
  - The Theory of Action will include statements that describe specific actions that will achieve our equity goals, who should be responsible for those actions, a timeframe, and what results should be achieved.
- Distribute Theory of Action to Coalition Partners and Advocates.
- Post workshop materials and notes on the project website.
- Follow-up with Coalition Partners about workshop content and quality.

## **Project Team Next Steps**

- Update Theory of Change, Mission, Vision, Updated Theory of Change, Project Work Plan, and Engagement Schedule
  - These will be updated to reflect the specific project outcomes, project outreach, and programmatic opportunities proposed in the first workshop
- Schedule upcoming coalition partner workshops
- Update and prepare presentation materials for upcoming broad engagement in late November / early December.
- Prepare and distribute materials for subsequent coalition partners workshops and updates informed by the first workshop

## **What We Heard**

BPDA Staff asked Coalition Partners to brainstorm and discuss effective strategies and partnerships for producing equity around the themes from the Theory of Change (ToC) Statement at three levels: Systematic and Structural, Programmatic, and City and BPDA or Project. To update the project workplan and engagement strategy, the Project Team will first focus on specifically addressing the actions, partnerships, and programming to be

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implemented by City and BPDA or via project partners. Methods to foster systematic and structural change are reflected in the Updated Theory of Change and the Theory of Action and will inform the development of project engagement content and outcomes.

*Structural or Systemic Change (by City, BPDA, Partners, Allies)*

Multiple groups advocated for the need to lead and center Indigenous Knowledge in all facets of the project and allow people to show up as their whole selves. Additionally, the waterways should be prioritized and rethought of as a regional asset and infrastructure. The interplay of culture and science in decision making and outcomes should be explored and documented. Harvard's ownership of the site as well as the priorities for the City, BPDA, Harvard, and MassDOT should be consistently made clear and this knowledge should be used to hold these stakeholders accountable. Public health considerations should be incorporated as this is currently missing from the framework. Novel ownership models and workforce training and development beyond the anticipated uses and industries within the Plan Area should be considered. These strategies and partnerships established at the systematic and structural level will impact the approach at the City and BPDA or Project and Programmatic levels.

*Programming Directly or Via Partners (by City, BPDA, Partners)*

To foster a growing community, Partners suggested creating programming that allows for equitable access to the site. Programming should be designed to include small businesses, arts and cultural spaces, and the Charles River in creating comfortable spaces for all. In the development of the BPY Regional Framework Plan, to meet the ToC equity themes, Partners emphasized the importance of community engagement efforts to be more accessible, transparent, and accountable with opportunity for intersectional identities to be expressed and celebrated. Additionally, Partners advocated for providing clear context on past planning, the timeframe for development, and citywide planning efforts using these existing assets to help predict and plan for the future needs of the Plan Area.

*Actions & Partnerships (by City, BPDA)*

All groups emphasized the need to involve new and future demographics that could be part of this community like students, elders, artists, parents, advocates, and many more populations with the understanding that people have multiple identities. In addition to surveys, in-person and virtual workshops, Partners stressed the need for active listening and for the City to show up and be with the community.

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#### Specific project outcomes:

- Understand current user experience (residents adjacent to the site and commuters)
- Partner with Nature (include the Charles River and hidden natural infrastructure, Salt & Smelt Creek)
- Address wealth building (provide pathways reference: Atlanta Wealth Building Initiative)
- Provide resources for community coalition and power building (space, information - particularly on land use and Article 80, time, outreach, amplification, tools for accountability)
- Create an ecological innovation overlay district to protect nature
- Explore community land trusts as a new ownership model

#### Specific project outreach:

- Nature groups (Trustees, DCR, Charles River Watershed Association, City of Boston's Parks and Recreation Department, Friends of Herter Park)
- Health advocacy groups (St. Elizabeth's Medical Center, Zabota Center, Charles River Community Health, Brazilian Workers Center, Family Nurturing Center, Allston-Brighton PAUSES, Allston-Brighton Health Collaborative, ABCD, Addiction Treatment Center of New England, Brighton Marine, Little Brother Friends of the Elderly)
- Native Land Conservancy (NLC), Cultural Survival, The Massachusetts Tribe at Ponkapoag
- Immigrant groups (Chinese Progressive Association, MA Alliance of Portuguese Speakers, Josephine Fiorentino Community Center, Rian Immigrant Center, Asian American Civic Association, Brazilian Women's Group, Brazilian Workers Center)
- Boston Black Builders Coalition
- Allston-Brighton CDC
- Allston Village Main Streets and small businesses in Allston-Brighton
- Development Review Process Modernization (BPDA project team)

## Meeting Summary

On October 25th, 2023, the BPDA hosted the first Coalition Partners meeting. The meeting was hosted in-person at Boston City Hall from approximately 5:30 to 7:30 pm. The meeting began with a brief project overview from Chris Osgood, Senior Advisor to the Mayor's Office. Then, the BPDA's Director of Planning, Aimme Chambers, introduced the BPY

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Regional Framework Plan's primary goal which is to establish a regional, community vision for dense urban development to support and inform the transformational urban infrastructure project, in the context of a multiscale collaborative process. The BPY Project Manager, Ben Zunkeler, presented the project timeline and provided additional context to the Site and Plan Areas covering the topics of: Key Hubs, Green Network, Water System, Rail Transit Network, Bus Transit Network, Road Network, and Future Projects.

Afterwards, Ben Zunkeler, reviewed the Coalition Partners' Roles and Responsibilities, Coalition Partners Workshop Schedule and Topics, and the Workshop #1's Goals. Afterwards, Ben Zunkeler, called everyone to meet with their preassigned groups (1-5) for a round of introductions.

After introductions, Ben Zunkeler, introduced the Breakout Group Activity. The purpose of the activity was to review the key equity goals from the Theory of Change (ToC) and to brainstorm effective strategies and partnerships for producing equity outcomes in the ToC.

There were five groups in total with approximately 4-5 Coalition Partner members and 1 to 2 BPDA and/or CoB staff members facilitating the discussion. Each group was provided the key themes from the ToC Statement:

- Directly benefit the local community
- Diverse mix of people connected by development
- Documenting community and Indigenous knowledge
- Transparent process that prioritizes power sharing
- Guidelines which hold those with power accountable

The facilitator prompted the following questions and Partners were encouraged to write down their thoughts and engage in conversation with their group members.

- What strategies and types of partnerships are most effective for producing equity around these themes...
  - At a systematic or structural level?
  - At a programmatic level?
  - Of your organization or project?

After approximately 40 minutes of the breakout group activity, everyone reconvened in the main room to share the key themes from each of their small group conversations. After the

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report back out activity, Project Manager, Ben Zunkeler, presented the Partners with next steps and areas where their feedback will be impacted.

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