

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

JANUARY 2022 – JUNE 2022

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Equitable Workforce Development: A Better City's April 2021 report on [Workforce Development Opportunities in Building Automation Systems](#) that looked at providing internship opportunities for a diverse workforce in high efficiency building operations within Boston's commercial and institutional buildings, drew the attention of the City of Boston and a new funder. The City of Boston asked us to work with their newly established Youth Green Jobs Training program and Roxbury Community College to develop a curriculum in Building Operations that could be launched in 2023. A Better City members have provided key input about the skills and training best suited to this program, and have expressed their eagerness to host interns within their buildings as a first step to full time, well-paying positions. A new funder to A Better City, the Linde Family Foundation, has recently agreed to fund our work on this project. They are particularly interested in scaling up this type of project that can create a new generation of diverse workers in underserved communities while meeting the growing needs for highly efficient buildings to meet greenhouse gas reduction requirements.

Extreme Heat: As part of our commitment to Equity in the Built Environment A Better City has begun to explore opportunities for the business community to address extreme heat across Greater Boston. In addition to participating in a series of stakeholder engagement sessions to provide a business perspective for Boston's recently released [Heat Plan](#), the City of Boston asked A Better City to serve on the Community Advisory Board for their [20-Year Urban Forest Plan](#) as a Collaborating Partner. Through this work, we helped the City's UFP consultant team host a Developer Focus Group, during which A Better City members provided feedback on the unintended consequences of tree protection ordinances potentially hindering affordable housing work. We also hosted an A Better City Conversation two of the City's UFP leads to understand opportunities for collaboration with the business community on UFP implementation. A Better City plans to host a joint event on extreme heat in mid-July with the Green Ribbon Commission.

City Level Building Performance Standards: For over two years, A Better City staff and members worked with the City of Boston during the amendment of the Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance, known as BERDO 2.0, which was signed into law by Mayor Janey in October 2021. We have continued to engage in the BERDO 2.0 regulatory process by submitting comments in February 2022 on BERDO's Phase I Regulations that relate to data reporting and verification, and preservation of documents. Based on our extensive engagement during the BERDO 2.0 process, members with properties in Cambridge asked us to engage in Cambridge's Building Energy Use and Disclosure Ordinance (BEUDO) amendment process. We are currently working with members to develop a set of written comments and provide testimony in the coming weeks. Our experience with BERDO is proving invaluable to the Cambridge stakeholders we are engaging with.

State Level Climate Policy: A Better City has been engaged in the finalization of the Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2025 and 2030 (2025/2030 CECP) and the development of a possible 2022 climate bill. The final 2025/2030 CECP was released on June 30th and commits Massachusetts to a 33% economy-wide emissions reduction from a 1990 baseline by 2025 and a 50% reduction by 2030 and establishes additional emissions sublimits for each sector. As consistent with our comments, the final 2025/2030 CECP's transportation recommendations include an emphasis on strategies for encouraging mode shift to support alternatives to driving, like investing in public transit, supporting e-bikes and other micro mobility options, and making more walkable and bikeable streets. In the building sector, the 2025/2030 CECP also includes our recommendation for a state-level building performance standard that would be consistent with BERDO 2.0 in Boston, as well as an initial framework for a Clean Heat Standard targeting heat energy providers (more details on building sector priorities to come in the anticipated Clean Heat Commission report). Thanks to our collaboration with Senate leadership, we were able to provide input based on our BERDO experience, to an amendment in the Senate's climate bill that would enable the Commonwealth to capture large existing building energy and emissions data for the first time at the state-level, if passed. We will continue to engage the legislature on promoting consistency and alignment of state-level building policies with city-level policies like BERDO in Boston and BEUDO in Cambridge, as they approach the end of legislative session on July 31st.

Three-Year Energy Efficiency Plans: The Three-Year Energy Efficiency Plan for 2022-2024, approved by the Department of Public Utilities in the spring of 2022, included key A Better City recommendations based on member interests: the establishment of a Commercial and Industrial Working Group to increase access and engagement between utilities and stakeholders; increased support for electrification of existing buildings;

and the design and implementation of a deep energy retrofit offering. A Better City has been meeting with DOER to set up this working group and its charter, resulting in three A Better City members being accepted into the working group, which are expected to begin meeting in summer 2022.

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

Greenway Business Improvement District: The Greenway Business Improvement District (BID) approved \$850,000 of enhancement funding to improve parks throughout the entire corridor. This money will go to upgrading all the benches in the Wharf District, adding winter lighting that will improve safety and help attract visitors to the parks in the off-season, as well as advancing larger projects that would add electricity to some blighted parcels, improve pathways, and bring public art to and MBTA vent shaft. These enhancements will occur over the next 18 months. Also, the BID is near the completion of its fourth year and is now engaged with the Greenway Conservancy, MassDOT, and City of Boston to continue this partnership beyond next year. Under Massachusetts law, a BID must be renewed by a vote of the property owners every five years, or the BID expires, but initial conversations about a future partnership are encouraging.

City of Boston Revitalization & Planning & Development: A Better City leadership participated in several meetings with Mayor Wu and senior members of her cabinet to discuss short- and long-term Downtown revitalization strategies, as well as the future of planning and development in Boston. A Better City continues to emphasize the importance of proactive engagement with the business community, as well as investment in the transportation infrastructure that enables people to live, work, and play in Boston.

New Chapter 91 Regulations: In response to an effort by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection to amend Chapter 91 [regulations \(310 CMR 9.00\)](#) to better incorporate the effects of a changing climate on our waterfronts and waterways, A Better City convened a group of members who discussed concerns about current regulations and offered suggestions for modifications that would address the concerns and provide new opportunities for resiliency solutions. DEP is expected to release updated regulations in the coming months.

Land Use & Development Advisory Committee: The A Better City Land Use and Development Advisory Committee met this spring to review the work plan for the year and focus on potential changes to the approach for planning in Boston and the opportunities for supporting revitalization of Downtown Boston as part of an effort to restore the vibrancy of the city recovery from the effects of the pandemic.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

State Transportation Bond Bill: A Better City's advocacy on the federal infrastructure bill influenced the design and policy of the state's transportation bond bill. Governor Baker filed a transportation bond bill that would provide funding to match any future federal infrastructure grant that could be awarded to Massachusetts. Over the past year, A Better City has stressed to MassDOT and testified before the legislature that discretionary grants will be awarded as part of a national competition, but the Commonwealth can help improve our chances of success if we have matching funding and are updating state procurement laws to help deliver on infrastructure projects. The Governor's bill includes both policies. The Senate version of the bill includes language to create programs that are related to A Better City's workplan and policy goals: A low-income fare program at the MBTA and the creation of a new commission on the future of mobility where A Better City is specifically named to help study the potential benefits of a regionally-equitable roadway pricing system in the Commonwealth. This bill is currently moving through the legislature, and on track to become law before August.

Keeping the MBTA on Track Report: In April 2022, A Better City released a new report, [Keeping the MBTA on Track](#), that provides status updates on key commitments made by the MBTA under the Fiscal and Management Control Board (FMCB). It also offers recommendations for the current MBTA Board of Directors and MBTA leadership on how to sustain progress on initiatives related to safety, resiliency, decarbonization, equity, and infrastructure priorities. This report identified concerns that the MBTA was not addressing key goals related to the systemwide State of Good Repair backlog and the analysis on costs to keep MBTA infrastructure in a state of good repair. This work is helping the current board monitor recent promises but will be an essential document for the next Governor and future Board members overseeing the MBTA.

Positive Signals Report: In February 2022, A Better City released a new report, [Positive Signals: Framework for Advanced Signals and Controls for the MBTA Red and Orange Lines](#). The Red and Orange Lines are among the oldest and most established parts of the MBTA system, having opened for initial service in 1912 and 1901, respectively. Like much of the MBTA's transit system, these lines suffer from decades of

underinvestment, as capital maintenance and worthwhile upgrades were deferred. In this report, A Better City reviews how signals operate the MBTA's Red and Orange lines. The report outlines key recommendations on how to improve and better serve riders while meeting the economic development needs and environmental challenges facing the state and region. A Better City continues to advocate on the following recommendations: 1) Semi-Automatic Capability: A Better City recommends that the MBTA amend existing contracts for new vehicles and signals upgrades to incorporate modest amounts of semi-automatic capability in routine train operations at a cost of approximately \$70 million; 2) Platform Screen Doors Pilot: A Better City recommends that the MBTA undertake a new Platform Screen Doors Pilot Project at several key Red and Orange Line stations in the downtown Boston core at a cost of approximately \$25 million; 3) National Advanced Technology Center for Next-Gen Subway Signals: A Better City recommends that the MBTA together with federal transportation officials and industry leaders collaborate to fast-track the development of a federally funded National Advanced Technology Center for Next-Gen Subway Signals based in Boston.

Bus Facility Modernization & Electrification: A Better City continues to advocate that the MBTA undertake the modernization of all nine of its aged bus maintenance facilities, pursue a joint-development strategy where transit-oriented development is collocated onsite and helps subsidize the expense of building new facilities specially designed to support all-new battery-electric-buses, and take steps to begin to decarbonize the MBTA bus network thru the proactive procurement of 100% battery-electric new bus fleets.

I-90 Allston Multimodal Project Federal Mega Grant Application: As a result of A Better City's advocacy and direct assistance with letters of support, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and the City of Boston officially applied as a joint sponsor to seek federal infrastructure funds to support the I-90 Allston Multimodal Project. This application to the Mega Grant Program could mean hundreds of millions of dollars—potentially even 1.2 billion dollars—in federal infrastructure funds to advance this critically important project. A Better City has worked to raise awareness about the opportunities in competitive grants that would become available as a result of the 2021 federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This application, is an example of A Better City's effectiveness in getting this message across to elected officials. The Commonwealth is now one step closer to improving the railways, highway, and replacing the structurally-deficient elevated viaduct to create a safe, vibrant, multimodal network that works for drivers, bicycles and pedestrians, the surrounding neighborhood, and commuters all throughout the corridor from Boston to Worcester. The Biden Administration is expected to make decisions on this grant application in fall 2022.

I-90 Allston Economic Benefits Study: In anticipation of the opportunity to support federal grant applications by MassDOT, A Better City initiated an economic benefits study to demonstrate the local and regional benefits of investment in the transformative multimodal project. A Better City staff managed the preparation of a 160-page study with consultant AECOM that produced findings to support: assumptions on the potential scale of development, the viability of the life sciences sector as a driver of development in Allston, the importance of West Station as a multimodal transportation hub providing access to and from Allston, the employment and fiscal contributions of development around West Station, and the regional benefits in the MetroWest and Worcester corridor attributable to transportation improvements in Allston. This study will be released publicly in summer 2022.

I-90 Allston Multimodal Project Notice of Project Change: A Better City continues to advocate that MassDOT adopt the following as key project elements: a) Commitment to the all at-grade design for the "throat" area; b) West Station as a regional multimodal transit hub; c) Support for decking over rail and highway adjoining West Station; d) New pedestrian and bicycle crossing from Boston to the Charles River at Agganis Way (aka Agganis Promenade); e) Multi-use paths along the southern edge of the project site (aka Peoples Pike) between the rebuilt Franklin Street footbridge and the Agganis Promenade over to the Charles River to provide space and separation for pedestrians and cyclists including connections to Braintree Street, Commonwealth Avenue via Malvern Street, and West Station, among other local access points and, where possible, a new linear green space and buffer park; f) An expanded Paul Dudley White Path and green space along the Charles River between River Street and the Boston University Bridge to provide space and separation for pedestrians and cyclists and, where possible, a new enhanced living shoreline. At the time of this writing, MassDOT is expected to issue the Notice of Project Change in July. A Better City will be able to better measure the success of these advocacy efforts once the NPC has been received and reviewed.

TMA Operations & Innovation: The A Better City Transportation Management Association (TMA) team successfully implemented a revised TMA dues structure among legacy members, which increased annual collectible dues by nearly 10% to reflect the value of the online [GoMassCommute](#) platform, align membership structure with the City of Boston's new TDM Points Tool, and offer greater flexibility to property-based members. Direct commuter engagement through [GoMassCommute](#) continued at a brisk pace, with more than 400 new accounts created, 7,300 trips logged, and 290 submissions made to access rewards and perks for sustainable commuting. Our creative seasonal promotions like the [2022 Clean Air Pledge](#), the [Move Green, Plant a Tree](#) challenge, and our [Bike Month Promotion](#) have deepened our engagement with 100

commuter champions. Additionally, in a clear operational win, we transformed our popular Bike Clinic events into a hub-and-spoke model, which has dramatically increased access for commuters and flexibility for our team. Lastly, our shuttle effort in Allston Brighton has moved significantly on two fronts. First, after a successful RFP and continued stakeholder engagement, we signed final vendor and partner agreements for Coordinated Connector Service in June, with a July 1 start date. Our related BPDA-funded effort to complete a broader Neighborhood Connector Plan went from subconsultant selection in Q1 to technical analysis in Q2. We are currently soliciting public feedback on our draft route concepts and are on track to publish a final report this fall.

TDM Leadership & Analysis: The A Better City team ran a [third round of the commuter survey](#) conducted in 2020 and 2021 to provide a critical snapshot of commuter sentiment regarding post-pandemic work and travel patterns—we will publish the results in summer 2022. Additionally, the team convened companies interested in bikeshare as a commute option with the team at Bluebikes, which inspired us to create the Bluebikes Calculator to help institutions put firm numbers on the cost to subsidize bikeshare. As with the [MBTA Fare Calculator we launched last year](#), this tool is being distributed at no cost to universities, hospitals, partner TMAs and others. We continued to convene the Tag-Up coalition on a bi-weekly basis, which resulted most notably in the 10-Ride Pass for Commuter Rail riders. Finally, our team has continued to refine its ZIP code analysis tool, recently adding a Park & Pedal locations layer to the analysis. In total, we have analyzed more than 53,000 ZIP codes for TMA members.

MEMBERSHIP & COMMUNICATIONS

Gubernatorial Candidate Conversations: In early June, A Better City hosted its first Gubernatorial candidate conversations with then-candidate Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz. These programs are designed to allow A Better City members and staff to have a direct discussion with the candidates, ask questions, and learn about each person's vision for addressing the future challenges in the Commonwealth. This fall, A Better City in partnership with key partners, aims to host a primary gubernatorial forum for a broader public audience.

Publications & Programming: During the first half of 2022, A Better City has held three Executive Committee meetings, two Board of Director meetings, 14 A Better City Membership Engagement Programs, and published three reports, 32 email blasts, and 26 blog posts. Highlights included Arthur Jemison, Chief of Planning for the City of Boston, Jascha Franklin-Hodge, Chief of Streets for the City of Boston, and Steve Poftak, General Manager of the MBTA.

Norman B. Leventhal Awards: A Better City is thrilled to bring the 2022 Norman B. Leventhal Excellence in City Building Awards back in person at the Boston Harbor Hotel on December 5, 2022. We have plans to provide a livestream to the Wharf room the night of the program should the event need to move to a hybrid format. Fundraising for this year's program is underway and we are excited to work with Host Committee members and event partners for another celebratory and successful program. We are honored to recognize our distinguished group of awardees:

- **Transportation:** Alan A. Altshuler, Distinguished Service Professor, Emeritus
Harvard University
- **City Builder:** Hubie Jones, Dean Emeritus, Boston University School of Social Work
- **Environment:** Mindy S. Lubber, CEO & President, Ceres
- **Land Use:** David P. Manfredi, CEO & Founding Principal, Elkus Manfredi Architects

Member Recruitment & Retention: A Better City continues to field membership inquiries and approach new membership opportunities with the assistance of the Executive Committee. In the first six months of 2022, A Better City has welcomed Cushman Wakefield, Camber Development, DLJ Capital Partners, Equity Residential, and Faros Properties as new members. We also continue to retain our existing membership and have collected almost 65% of our annual dues.