

A

BETTER

CITY



**STATE OF THE**

**BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

**CONFERENCE**

**JUNE 7, 2016 | POST-CONFERENCE SUMMARY**

**#ABCSBE**

**@ABetterCity**

# A BETTER CITY INTRODUCTION

## STATE OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE

A Better City has examined the public realm in Greater Boston since 1989, implementing efforts for regional improvement alongside stakeholders in the transportation, land development, and environmental sectors. A Better City's State of the Built Environment initiative represents years of research and planning efforts to assess and advance these fields in our region; products of this initiative include:

### STATE OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT REPORT

The Report, written in collaboration with Northeastern University, comprehensively examined the impacts of population and economic growth on the region's transportation, energy, water, sewer, and waste management systems, as well as the consequences of forecasted climate change on the region's coastline over the next 15 years.

### STATE OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE

The Conference brought together over 250 stakeholders, policymakers, and experts, who gathered to debate the many infrastructural challenges facing our region over the coming years. As the first comprehensive review of infrastructure systems, the Conference was imperative in addressing the projected outcomes of the Report, which all point toward a necessary enhancement of infrastructure systems in the years ahead to accommodate expected population growth, economic development, and climate change.



# OPENING REMARKS

## STATE OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT CONFERENCE



Hosted at the Seaport Hotel on June 7, 2016, the Conference initiated a discussion about existing and future infrastructure deficiencies in the Greater Boston region.

Michael Cantalupa, Senior Vice President of Development at Boston Properties and Chairman of A Better City, opened the Conference with remarks that emphasized the need to plan for growth in the region.

Richard Dimino, President and CEO at A Better City, advocated for solutions in response to the Report's findings, which demonstrated the need for expansion of regional infrastructure and capacity-building of public agencies.

To inform discussions throughout the Conference, Barry Bluestone, Senior Research Associate at the Dukakis Center for Urban and Regional Policy and co-author of the Report, presented a comprehensive overview of the Report's methodology and findings. Bluestone described that, through the Report's study of nearly 150 communities in the Boston region, a new baseline for the state of infrastructure was established to build understanding of projected realities in the Boston region leading up to 2030. Further, the analysis found that today's infrastructure does not match the current demands of the Boston region; extensive development is necessary to accommodate both present and future populations.

**“THIS IS ONE OF MANY DISCUSSIONS OF HOW TO POSITION OURSELVES FOR THE FUTURE. WE ARE NOT SOLVING EVERYTHING TODAY, BUT BRINGING THESE LEADERS TOGETHER IS THE BEST WAY TO START.”**

**-MICHAEL CANTALUPA, BOSTON PROPERTIES**



### GREATER BOSTON'S INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS Perspectives from Government Leaders Panel

**Moderator:** Bruce Mohl, Editor, CommonWealth Magazine

**Panelists:**

Joseph Aiello  
Chair, MBTA Fiscal Management and Control Board

Thomas Glynn  
Chief Executive Officer, Massachusetts Port Authority

Judith Judson  
Commissioner, MA Department of Energy Resources

Fred Laskey  
Executive Director, MA Water Resource Authority

Sara Myerson  
Director of Planning, Boston Redevelopment Authority

Mohl moderated the Government Panel Session where leaders commented on the infrastructure challenges raised in the State of the Built Environment Report.

Judson highlighted the challenges of increasing energy prices and balancing diversified sources of energy, while emphasizing her department's focus on peak energy demand reduction.

Aiello spoke to the capacity of the MBTA in managing its workload and effectively spending the funds his department is provided annually. He described the loss of personnel over the past 20 years, particularly in the design and construction department, and the many staff who are now eligible for retirement. He said that the pay scale for senior staff is too low, making it challenging to build human capital.

Myerson discussed the City of Boston's efforts to modernize their approach to city planning and development processes.

Laskey noted that while Greater Boston maintains an adequate water supply that meets growing needs overall, some locations may require additional access to water in the future.

Glynn stated that continued access to the airport from transit lines is vital to regional connectivity and discussed the importance of maintaining mixed-income jobs in the seaport.

In an open discussion following the panel, problems facing these organizations were debated; consensus was reached that staff development issues commonly prevented well-funded projects from completion. Panelists agreed that an adequate employee base, a fair and effective salary structure, and experienced leadership were all of paramount importance in operating successful infrastructure agencies.



### TAKING ON THE CHALLENGE The Next 20 Years Of Infrastructure

**Moderator:** Chris Osgood, Chief of Streets, City of Boston

**Respondents:**

Abbie Goodman  
Executive Director, American Council of Engineering Companies of MA

Mary Skelton Roberts  
Senior Program Advisor, Climate, Barr Foundation

Marilyn Swartz-Lloyd  
President & CEO, MASCO

Osgood moderated this session in which local experts addressed the priorities and challenges in Greater Boston's surface transportation, public transit, and water systems.

Goodman suggested incentivization as a tool for implementing new water infrastructure policies within communities, and she stressed the importance of educating citizens and engaging youth.

Skelton Roberts advocated for improvements to the region's transportation system that make public transit more accessible, equitable, reliable, and affordable. She spoke of these factors as essential in encouraging commuters to choose public transit over driving.

Swartz-Lloyd challenged our leaders to consider transportation as a collaborative, comprehensive effort across public and private institutions in order to maintain Boston's competitive standing internationally.

Equity, technological innovation, and regional transportation needs were recurring themes of the post-presentation discussion. The audience posed media and public involvement, state funding, and legislation as challenges to be addressed in the future. Senator McGee, Chairman of the Transportation Committee, prioritized regional water transportation and pushed to connect the Commonwealth as a whole with surrounding states.

**“WITH TECHNOLOGY, SHARED MOBILITY AND AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES COMING OUR WAY, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR HOW WE PLAN, HOW WE FUND, AND WHAT POLICIES WE PUT IN PLACE?” -ANDREA D’AMATO, KLEINFELDER**



Bud Ris moderated the discussion as experts shared ideas to bridge the gap between the status quo of energy uses and the power systems of the future.

Roughan focused on existing energy efficiency programs, which currently have low participation rates, and agreed that managing the peak demand for electricity is one of the biggest challenges ahead.

McDiarmid commended the activity in developing clean energy resources like solar, wind, and large hydro, but stressed that these are not enough to meet the demands of the region going forward.

Puerto urged the audience to meet the climate imperative of decarbonizing the economy by 2050, and to start now in scaling clean and smart alternatives for energy demands.

Respondents and audience members envisioned solutions to mitigate climate change, including the growth of the clean energy sector, new technology, and expansion of building codes designed to reach net-zero carbon emission operations.

### Powering our Future

**Moderator:** Bud Ris, Senior Advisor on Climate Change, Barr Foundation

**Respondents:**

Tim Roughan  
Director of Energy and Environmental Policy,  
National Grid

Jeremy McDiarmid  
Senior Director of Innovation & Industry Support,  
Massachusetts Clean Energy Center

Mariella Puerto  
Senior Program Advisor, Climate, Barr Foundation

### Growing Demand, Shaping Land

**Moderator:** Marc Draisen, Executive Director, MAPC

**Respondents:**

Bryan Koop  
Executive Vice President, Boston Properties

Richard McGuinness  
Deputy Director for Waterfront Planning,  
Boston Redevelopment Authority

As the Greater Boston region's population and residency rate grows rapidly, the development of land has become more vital than ever to quality of life. This panel explored the importance of place-making and accessibility in future projects. Moderator Marc Draisen discussed opportunities for transit-oriented development and affordable housing as the region continues to grow, and suggested investment in alternative commuting options to manage a population influx.

Koop discussed enhancing existing properties across the region as citizens move closer to city living as a primary ideal. He considers both customers' wants and needs when developing new projects.

McGuinness shared extensive new development plans for the next ten years of South Boston Waterfront construction, including over 100 acres of new development working towards the Mayor's housing unit goal.





MASSACHUSETTS SENATE PRESIDENT

## STANLEY ROSENBERG



Massachusetts Senate President Stanley Rosenberg delivered the keynote address and praised the work and message of the State of the Built Environment Report. He referenced the Report's alignment with the State Senate's upcoming comprehensive energy bill discussion, focused on the opportunity to grow our green energy supply. During the question and answer session with the audience, Rosenberg identified innovation and new technology as keys to job creation and to lessening our environmental impact.

In his closing remarks, Richard Dimino reflected on the Conference. When it comes to infrastructure, Dimino emphasized the importance of considering and acting upon the present and future demands of the region. The Conference proved the imperative nature of enhancing infrastructure in response to the Boston region's current, near-term and future needs.

A BETTER CITY  
THANKS THE  
PANELISTS,  
MODERATORS,  
GUESTS, AND  
SPONSORS  
OF THE STATE  
OF THE BUILT  
ENVIRONMENT  
CONFERENCE.





33 Broad Street, Suite 300  
Boston, MA 02109  
617.502.6240  
[www.abettercity.org](http://www.abettercity.org)