

# Boston

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## Follow Friday: Greenovate Boston

The community-driven movement is the city's effort to becoming a cleaner, greener place to live.

By Yiqing Shao | Arts & Entertainment | January 23, 2015 10:30 a.m.

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MAYOR MARTY WALSH AND CITY OF BOSTON CHIEF OF ENVIRONMENT AUSTIN BLACKMON WITH GUSTER. / PHOTO BY DON HARNEY VIA GREENOVATE BOSTON

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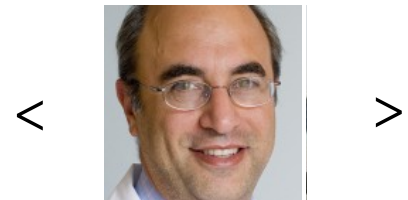
When they're not launching a new Climate Action Plan with Guster, Greenovate Boston is regularly sharing tips and resources on how Boston residents can reduce their carbon footprint, thereby helping the city reach its goal of substantially reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the next few decades.

This week, Leah Bamberger, who runs Greenovate's social media, tells us about Greenovate's goals, free resources you might not have known about, and how small, simple changes in lifestyle can make a big difference in making Boston a more environmentally friendly city.

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## Some of our readers might not know about Greenovate Boston. Can you give a brief overview of what your team does?

Greenovate Boston is Mayor Walsh's initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 25 percent by 2020 and 80 percent by 2050, and prepare for the impacts of climate change. It is a community-wide movement that seeks to engage all Bostonians in achieving these goals, while continuing to make Boston a thriving, healthy, and innovative city.

## Who runs social media for Greenovate? How do you manage them?

I oversee the accounts, with support from two fantastic interns. All of the City's social media accounts are ultimately managed by the City's Chief Digital Officer, Lauren Lockwood.

## Tell me about the newly released Climate Action Plan.

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Created from a yearlong community process, the Mayor's Greenovate Boston 2014 Climate Action Plan lays out concrete steps and a vision for Boston's role in reducing greenhouse gases and preparing for the impacts of climate change. In addition to the robust community engagement process, what's exciting about this plan is that for the first time, Boston has sector-specific GHG (greenhouse gas) targets, as well as program participation targets. By drilling down Boston's GHG goal to more tangible targets, such as the number of no-cost home energy assessments we need to complete by 2020—which, by the way, is 72,000—it makes the plan more tangible and empowers individuals, businesses, and community organizations to take action. The new plan also takes a first look toward the city's 2050 goal of reducing GHG emissions by 80 percent (80 x 50). This includes both envisioning what a low-carbon Boston might look like in 2050 and identifying medium-term actions that start exploring paths to achieve this longer-term vision.

## What can Boston residents do to reduce their carbon footprint? From an environmental viewpoint, in what areas are we doing the best and the worst?

I always tell people to start with what's easiest and works best for their lifestyle. This could be something as simple as turning down your thermostat a few degrees—68 when you're home and 62 at night or when you're away—or something more ambitious like biking or carpooling instead of driving to work. You don't have to be an environmental superhero to make a difference. A few small tweaks to your daily routine can make a big difference. Most importantly, don't give up! Studies show it takes about a month to change a habit, so if 68 feels too chilly at first, or you keep forgetting your reusable grocery bags, keep at it and find solutions that work for you. You can find comprehensive tips and resources at [greenovateboston.org/resources](http://greenovateboston.org/resources).

From a numbers perspective, home weatherization is one of the biggest impacts you can have on reducing your carbon footprint, so start with your no-cost home energy assessment. This will also help you save money on your energy bills, which, with rising electricity costs, could make a big difference. If you don't own your home, check out new discounts for Boston residents on energy-saving home improvement kits. You can get four LED light bulbs, a smart power-strip, and a low-flow shower head for just \$15. This pilot program ends at the end of February, so don't wait!

## Mayor Marty Walsh declared January 15 Guster Day, and they performed at the Climate Action Plan launch party at the EpiCenter. How was the turnout and reception at the event?

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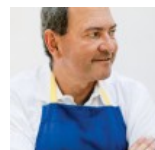
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The event sold out in about 20 minutes, which is certainly a record for Greenovate Boston. Needless to say, people were very excited. And it was amazing to have Guster involved. They are doing great things to raise awareness of climate change and they were a pleasure to work with. Having them there really helped elevate the event. So many people contributed to the plan over the past year; it was nice to be able to get together and celebrate its completion. But it was also a kickoff of the work that lies ahead. It provided great momentum for us to really roll up our sleeves and start implementation.

**Was the launch successful in being a zero-waste event?**

It was! Even the wristbands given to attendees were compostable. We had great volunteers who helped direct waste to either recycling or compost bins, which was key.

**In three words, describe the voice and tone of Greenovate Boston’s social media.**

Pizza with friends.

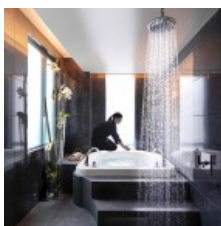
**How can Boston residents get involved with Greenovate?**

The best way is to sign up for our e-newsletter at [greenovateboston.org/news](http://greenovateboston.org/news). We send them weekly, and they include everything from green tips, to new programs, to upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. Of course, following us on Facebook and Twitter is great too!

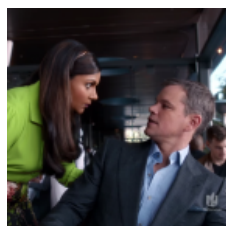
**Any other environmentally friendly organizations you recommend people join?**

Boston is chock-full of them! We have a list on our website, but one we are working with at the moment is ABC’s Challenge for Sustainability, which provides free services to help commercial properties go green. We also encourage folks to get involved in their neighborhood or civic associations and help make sustainability a part of their community. After all, this is not just about greenhouse gas emissions, it’s about creating a more thriving, healthy, and innovative Boston. Greenovate Boston will help get us there.

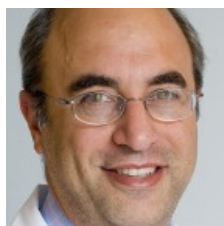
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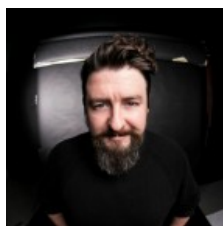
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