



News from A Better City

Winter 2012

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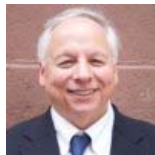
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Greetings!



It has been a whirlwind few weeks here at ABC. The highlight of the fall was the release of our [white paper](#), *On the Right Track? The Future of the Massachusetts Commuter Rail*, and the accompanying [panel event](#), which drew unprecedented press coverage and positioned ABC as a thought leader in policy issues affecting the economic livelihood of our membership. You can view our [2011 accomplishments](#), both highlights and in detail, online.

We also welcomed a new sustainability programs coordinator, [Mihir Parikh](#). Mihir is working to expand our [Challenge for Sustainability](#) into Boston's Main Streets districts and has already made remarkable achievements on behalf of the organization. We are excited for the opportunity to expand this hugely popular program into neighborhoods of Boston where its impact will be widely felt.

We continue into 2012 with a full calendar of [committee](#) meetings and policy activities on behalf of our member organizations. For the first months of the year, we'll be focusing heavily on the impacts of the [MBTA fare increase](#) for our member businesses and institutions, including an event on the topic. We look forward to hosting industry focus groups and collecting your comments to influence the scenarios proposed by the MBTA.

Last but certainly not least, we're extremely excited to be kicking off our [ABC blog](#) this week. We'll be launching the blog with a series on the MBTA fare increase and our four-step approach to influence the policy surrounding it. The blog will be an outlet for discussion on our ongoing and extensive portfolio of policy work, and we encourage your comments and participation.

We hope your new year is off to a joyful and prosperous beginning and look forward to keeping you up to date on the latest in transportation, land development, and the environment.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Dimino
President & CEO

Transportation

Urban Ring

The fall brought reports of several activities underway in the [Urban Ring Corridor](#), including new development in Cambridge requiring planning for transportation improvements, that could generate demand to proceed with early actions. ABC representatives also attended a December meeting to advise on the placement of Melnea Cass bus lanes in accordance with the Urban Ring Locally Preferred Alternative.

Charles River Basin

Continuing our work on [Bridging the Basin](#), ABC joined a 40-member forum moderated by former Governor Dukakis discussing pedestrian and bicycle connections at the Anderson Memorial, Western Avenue, and River Street Bridges, all of which are being reconstructed as part of MassDOT's Accelerated Bridge Program. In January, ABC's [Transportation & Construction Committee](#) received a customized update from MassDOT officials on the scope, method, and time line of the B.U. Bridge Commonwealth Avenue deck replacement project.

Transportation Finance

On December 12, ABC testified at a public hearing about MassDOT's operating budget, which continues to be squeezed by restrictions on the use of revenues from tolls and by payments on the agency's debt. ABC and other advocates used the hearing as an opportunity to call for a [comprehensive finance plan](#) for all modes of the transportation in the Commonwealth.

Land Development

Rose Kennedy Greenway

ABC's [Greenway Abutters Committee](#) met in November to review the current proposal for a Greenway BID offered by the Conservancy. Committee members raised several questions about how the proposal would be implemented. A small group representing ABC are currently discussing the questions with members of the Conservancy.

South Boston Waterfront

Building off of our collaboration with our membership, partner organizations, and the City of Boston to contribute to the economically sound development of the [South Boston Waterfront](#), ABC hosted a delegation from Hamburg's [HafenCity](#) to discuss waterfront development. Representatives from the project discussed the politics leading to the conclusion to outsource the principally public task of neighborhood development.

Environment

2012 Challenge for Sustainability

ABC kicked off this year's Challenge for Sustainability with a [breakfast](#) featuring Kathy Loftus, Global Leader in Sustainable Engineering, Maintenance and Energy Management for Whole Foods. With 37 previous properties plus 28 new recruits, we're expecting that the 2012 class for the [Challenge](#) will touch 35 million square feet and 57,000 employees.

Transit Benefits Cap

The [ABC TMA](#) has kept our membership informed regarding developments in the Congressional debate over the transit benefits cap, calling upon member

organizations to take action to advocate for a permanent extension of the existing benefit.

Utility Energy Efficiency

Emphasizing our role in leading the commercial real estate sector's engagement with energy efficiency plans, ABC's [Sustainability & Climate Change committee](#) hosted Christina Halfpenny, chief of energy efficiency for the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER), who outlined the steps for composing the next three year plan for utility allocated energy efficiency programs. ABC followed up with a joint facilitated discussion to collect feedback for [public testimony](#).

