

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

JANUARY 2021 – DECEMBER 2021

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Buildings Policy: A Better City continues to work at the vanguard of shaping buildings' climate policy at both the city- and state-levels in Massachusetts. A Better City has played an active role in representing and amplifying the perspectives of member businesses and institutions to improve both the development and implementation of the City of Boston's Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO 2.0), Zero Net Carbon Zoning Standard, Coastal Flood Resiliency Overlay District, as well as the Commonwealth's Draft 2030 Clean Energy and Climate Plan and Next-Generation Roadmap Bill (see below), which includes a municipal opt-in high performance stretch energy code, currently under development at the Department of Energy Resources. At a state-level, A Better City sits on the Governor's Global Warming Solutions Act's Implementation Advisory Committee and a variety of climate and clean energy policy coalitions. The development of a set of buildings policy principles by a group of progressive real estate representatives, convened by A Better City, has proved invaluable in responding to an array of climate and buildings policies. As climate policies are enacted and implemented, A Better City will continue to push for the solution-oriented engagement of the real estate and development community and for the alignment of building policies across jurisdictions.

State Climate Bill: In consultation with many members, A Better City successfully shaped the Commonwealth's landmark climate bill, An Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy (S.9), which was signed into law by Governor Baker in March 2021. The final statutory language includes many of A Better City's recommendations to strengthen and clarify the stretch energy building code, which will include—but importantly, not be limited to—a net-zero compliance pathway and definition of a net-zero building. In alignment with A Better City's feedback, the new law also ensures that the updated stretch energy code is structured in a phased manner to account for technical constraints and extends the stretch energy code development timeline to roughly 18 months, providing stakeholders with more opportunity for critical input.

Three-Year Energy Efficiency Plans: A Better City engaged with the Massachusetts Energy Efficiency Advisory Council (EEAC), Massachusetts Program Administrators (PAs), and the Department of Energy Resources as the 2022-2024 Three-Year Energy Efficiency Plan was under development. A Better City has been advocating for a set of key recommendations for the Three-Year Plan based on key member interests through written and public comments delivered across EEAC meetings in 2021, as well as through direct meetings with EEAC councilors and representatives of the PAs. As a result, the final three-year plan approved by the EEAC and submitted to the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) included the establishment of a formal C&I working group to increase access and engagement between PAs and stakeholders from key C&I market segments, increased support for electrification of existing buildings, the design and implementation of deep energy retrofit offerings, and the reorientation of commercial and industrial HVAC incentives to provide more flexible delivery channels. The 2022-2024 three-year plan is currently awaiting final approval by the DPU.

Energy & Environment Policy Agenda: In late June 2021, the Executive Committee approved the 2021-2022 E&E Policy Agenda, with added commitments to climate, energy, and environmental justice, community resilience through combatting extreme heat and promoting equitable workforce development opportunities, and commitments to equitable climate funding principles. Guided by this framework, A Better City has continued to advocate for comprehensive climate policy across both mitigation and adaptation at a regional scale. Additionally, A Better City continues to take a leadership role on a variety of climate and clean energy policy coalitions, including: The Alliance for Clean Energy Solutions, the Climate Adaptation Coalition, the Better Buildings Coalition, and the Equitable and Sustainable Climate Funding Coalition.

LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT

City Of Boston Policy Agenda: In November, A Better City delivered a transition report to Mayor-elect Michelle Wu immediately after her election to identify near-term opportunities for her first hundred days in office. These suggestions center on policies related to A Better City's core areas of our focus and relate to city actions that can help make Boston's economy stronger, more equitable, and resilient for future generations. The report also helped to solidify A Better City's close working relationship with Mayor Wu and her senior staff—the Mayor spoke at A Better City's annual Board Meeting on December 1st.

Greenway Business Improvement District: The Greenway Business Improvement District (BID) approved funding for two different initiatives that will improve the Greenway area in 2022. First, the BID approved \$116,000 to bring additional lighting to the area of the Greenway near Chinatown. This support raises the BID's commitment to this capital project to over \$300,000 and leverages third party and other public sector funds to produce \$1.1 million of work that will be completed next spring. The BID also approved \$150,000 to assist the Conservancy's operating budget to avoid deterioration of the parks physical space and programming, as the Conservancy is dealing with lower revenue projections as a result of the pandemic. The BID's financial support and partnership is essential to keeping this area safe, vibrant, and more welcoming for workers, residents, and tourists.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Allston I-90 Multimodal Project: In September, MassDOT announced the decision to advance the All At-Grade alternative to replace the existing Turnpike viaduct through the narrow "Throat" area of the Allston I-90 Multimodal Project. A Better City is responsible for developing the at-grade concept, advocating its adoption since 2015, and building support for this option. While A Better City was at the vanguard of advancing the technical development of the at-grade concept, it is the groundswell of support from community, business, political, and advocacy leaders assembled by A Better City and others that moved the decision to this point. A Better City has also kicked off an effort to study the regional economic benefits, transportation user benefits, and equity and environmental benefits attributable to transportation improvements in Allston and the I-90/Worcester mainline corridor. Additionally, A Better City secured funding from the Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA) to envision and develop a shared Neighborhood Connector Plan for transit service in Allston-Brighton.

Future of Work: In a year of continued uncertainty, A Better City's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) team continued to focus on research surrounding when and how "the great return" to the workplace might happen. In June, A Better City released [Anticipating Post-Pandemic Return To Work Trends In Metro-Boston](#), forecasting the "future of work" in Greater Boston. The report reflects eleven in-depth interviews with member companies across six sectors conducted in winter and spring 2021 and also build upon the results of the [summer 2020 survey](#) of more than 4,200 commuters. In August, A Better City released an [update](#) to this report, that analyzes responses from over 2,650 commuters and identifies key takeaways and actionable recommendations for employers, the City of Boston, and the MBTA. These survey efforts were made possible thanks to generous support from the Energy Foundation via the Bloomberg Philanthropies American Cities Climate Challenge.

Federal Infrastructure Bill Planning: This year, there is a rare opportunity to deliver major transportation infrastructure projects with federal funding, but it will only happen if Massachusetts develops a list of shovel-worthy projects and a related federal advocacy strategy. In August, A Better City released a report, [Ready to Move in Massachusetts: A Blueprint for Delivering Major Infrastructure Projects through the Biden Infrastructure Plan](#), which shows the key lessons from the 2009 federal infrastructure bill and makes recommendations on how MassDOT and the MBTA can properly prepare for upcoming federal infrastructure funds. As part of A Better City's legislative strategy related to this issue, the State Senate passed an amendment to the state budget that requires the MBTA to advance planning and design work on specific capital projects that could take advantage of federal infrastructure funding opportunities. A Better City also submitted testimony to MassDOT and the MBTA demonstrating that important capital projects related to decarbonization plans, resiliency, regional rail electrification, and the Red-Blue connector remain unfunded but could be funded with federal funds if the state is preparing these projects in 2021.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Innovation: Consolidation and growth were hallmarks of our Transportation Management Associations (TMAs), which provide direct employer support to promote and enable more sustainable commuting. The team completed the two-year integration process of the TransComm TMA—which includes anchor members Boston Medical Center and Boston University's Medical Campus—into the A Better City TMA. In addition, the team onboarded new organizations to both the Allston Brighton TMA and A Better City TMA and restructured the TMA dues tiers. This growth was enabled by robust member engagement through quarterly TMA meetings, enhanced programming and online events, innovative promotions, and the formation of a digital resource library accessible via smartphone app or web browser. The team launched these updates and achieved nearly 100% renewal commitments by year-end. For more TMA accomplishments, see [2021 Year in Review](#).

ADMINISTRATION

Equity In The Built Environment: In March, A Better City released an [Equity in the Built Environment Action Plan](#). A Better City leadership presented a draft Action Plan to the Officers on November 30, 2020, to the

Executive Committee on January 20, 2021, and to the Board of Directors on February 24, 2021—the March 2021 document reflects their feedback and support. The Action Plan is a living document that will be updated periodically to reflect evolving organizational opportunities and objectives. In alignment with the commitments in the Action Plan, A Better City has released a revised [mission statement](#) and implemented [new event guidelines](#). The Equity in the Built Environment Working Group, first convened in June 2020, continues to meet to advance the objectives of the Action Plan.

MEMBERSHIP, MARKETING, & COMMUNICATIONS

City Of Boston Mayoral Forum & Candidate Engagement: In partnership with the Black Economic Council of Massachusetts, Roxbury Community College, and Denterlein, A Better City developed and co-hosted the “Building Boston’s Economic Future for Everyone” forum for the City of Boston Mayoral Candidates a week before the September primary election. This live event at Roxbury Community College allowed all the major candidates to discuss issues presented by A Better City and the Black Economic Council of Massachusetts related to the economy, equity, and quality-of-life challenges facing the City of Boston. The program was virtually streamed to more than 1,000 viewers in addition to the intimate personal audience, generating significant media coverage and attention during the final days of the historic campaign. Additionally, A Better City convened one-on-one virtual conversations with each major mayoral candidate in the months leading up to the primary.

Publications & Programming: In 2021, A Better City released eight reports covering a range of timely topics, including public realm activation, pandemic-related commuter trends, energy offsets, and the federal infrastructure bill. A Better City hosted 4 board meetings, 4 executive committee meetings, 7 advisory committee meetings, and 24 membership engagement events. The membership engagement events included the Boston Forward Together speaker series, featuring intimate one-on-one conversations with an array of thought leaders to explore the future of cities. Additionally, A Better City circulated 22 bi-weekly updates to their audience of nearly 4,500 subscribers. The bulletins included nearly 80 blog posts, as well as calls to action related to the ongoing pandemic, public transportation, and the 2021 mayoral election.

Norman B. Leventhal Awards: A Better City was thrilled to present the 2021 Norman B. Leventhal Excellence in City Building Awards in a hybrid format on December 9th, 2021. There were both in-person and virtual elements to the program where 100 people attended at the Wharf Room and 250 attended via livestream. Governor Baker was able to join awardees for an intimate reception before the event. Congratulations and thank you to the 2021 NBL awardees:

- **City Builder:** Vivien Li, Past President, The Boston Harbor Association
- **Land Use:** David Lee, President, Stull and Lee, Inc.
- **Transportation:** Mary Skelton Roberts, Senior Vice President, Programs, Energy Foundation
- **Environment:** The Honorable Charles D. Baker, Governor, Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Honorable Karen E. Spilka, Massachusetts Senate President, The Honorable Ronald J. Mariano, Massachusetts Speaker of the House