Boston Climate Action Leadership Committee Meeting

33 Beacon Street, Boston
May 26, 2009

Co-Chairs: Mindy Lubber, CERES and Jim Hunt, City of Boston
Facilitators: Jonathan Raab, Raab Associates and Cynthia Silva Parker, IISC

Meeting #1: Draft Summary

31 people attended the meeting, which began at 3:00 pm and concluded just before 6:00 pm

Documents Distributed or Presented:

Before the Meeting:
1. Leadership Committee Charge and Membership, City of Boston
2. Meeting Agenda, Raab Associates and IISC
3. Preliminary Questions for the Leadership Committee, City of Boston

At the Meeting:
4. Boston Climate Action Plan: Charge, Structure, Schedule and Workplan, Raab Associates and IISC
5. Norms for Collaboration (aka ground rules), Raab Associates and IISC
6. Confronting Climate in Boston and New England, Peter Frumhoff, UCS
7. Nomination Forms for Community Advisory Committee, IISC and Raab Associates

Welcome by Mayor Menino and Co-Chair Lubber and Hunt

Co-chair Mindy Lubber opened the meeting by reminding the Committee of the importance of acting now at all levels of government to address climate change. She then reviewed some of the current activities at the federal (climate bill in Congress) and international (Copenhagen meeting of business leaders) level before introducing Mayor Menino.

The Mayor thanked everyone for agreeing to serve on the Committee, and charged the Committee to have real conversations about how to plan for and manage the future of Boston with respect to climate change. He then told the Committee that in addition to laying out a long-range plan, it should also identify actions we can take immediately.

Jim Hunt, the Committee's other co-chair, then thanked the Mayor and provided additional background information on the City's efforts to date, before introducing and thanking the funders (Barr and Boston Foundations), and introducing the facilitators. Jim further challenged the Committee member to be ambitious, even audacious, in bringing their expertise and resources to the task of creating a climate action plan for Boston He also stressed the importance of connecting climate change to social change as we attempt to get all citizens involved.

Committee Member Introductions

Committee members then introduced themselves and answered two questions posed ahead of the meeting, “Why you agreed to participate in the Leadership Committee, and what you hope we will accomplish?”

The “Hopes” for what we will accomplish included:

- Whatever we come out with has clarity for the average person to understand and embrace it
- Identify ways that the average citizen can reduce their carbon foot print
- Show how recommendations can impact people at the neighborhood level
- Finding solutions to both pollution and economic impacts on our communities
- Getting buildings to be more efficient, and coming up with demand management strategies to curb greenhouse gases in the transportation sector
- Engage and inspire our youth to take action
- For everyone to know and care what a food system is and how it relates to climate change, and to know what a food shed is and how we can influence a food shed strategy
- Solid data and tracking-- it’s hard to know how you’re doing without these
- Engage citizens, don’t just educate them
- Improve student education around climate change
- Look for solutions that have double, triple, quadruple, even quintuple positive bottom lines—good for the environment, the workforce, infrastructure, public health, etc.
- Engage higher education in climate solutions—explore green alleys, roofs, etc.
- Get really serious about the adaptation side of the issue
- Be a pioneer on climate strategies
- Solutions with high leverage, and multiple payoffs
- Include a massive energy retrofit campaign for existing buildings
- Making sure that those impacted by the pollution economy will benefit from the green economy

Potential Climate Related Impacts on Boston and Massachusetts--Peter Frumhoff, Union of Concerned Scientists

Peter Frumhoff described to the Committee what both measurement and modeling results on atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases and temperature. He also described current and potential future impacts caused from rising temperatures and changing climate including glacial melting, sea level rise, heat events, forest infestation and habitat change. He then focused in on 2007 study Confronting Climate Change in the U.S. Northeast: Science, Impact, and Solutions that shows potential impacts on Boston from various scenarios. The modeling shows substantial potential increased flooded area and increased flooding frequency. It also showed that by 2010 we could have from 30-70 days a year over 90 degrees and 6-24 days over 100 degrees. In the best case forecast Boston, would have the climate profile of Maryland, and in the worst case forecast, the profile of South Carolina.

Peter emphasized a few points during his presentation. First, no matter what choices we make and how successful we are at reducing greenhouse gases in the future, there are already impacts to the environment which we will not be able to correct and around which we will have to begin adapting. Second, even so, the choices we make today will have a dramatic impact on the climate our children inherit. There are many things we can and should do to avoid the worst possible outcomes. Peter pointed out that the challenge is to take action in equitable ways.

If we, and the rest of the world followed the 80% GHG reduction scenario that Massachusetts has already adopted, this would put us on a path below their "best case" modeling, and would reduce the impacts their studies forecast. He ended by saying that the Obama administration was getting ready to release in June a terrific climate report that draws on multiple studies, including the ones he discussed today.

Following his presentation, Peter responded to the following questions:

Q: Can we get a copy of slides

A: Yes (including my notes)

Q: You mentioned that in next 30 years, we're locked into various climate impacts. Do we see some of the impacts sooner?

A: Yes, there will be some between now and 2040. See (see full report for details.)

Q: I'm assuming that sea level rise impacts subways and underground roads. Has anyone looked into that?

A: …and sewers… I don't know to what extent the design features of our existing infrastructure been adapted to sea level rise. The Deer Island facility was developed with higher sea level in mind (in 1990s). We can do that with new infrastructure as it's

being developed. But retrofitting existing infrastructure to address this is a challenge we haven't begun to address here and across the world.

Q: Mobile source pollution impacts…. Have you looked at GHG emissions from automobiles?

A: They're embedded in GHG emissions from the transport sector and are included in the models. They generally account for about 1/3 of emissions of GHGs. Reduction in vehicle. Reducing emissions in this sector, through for example new fuel economy efficiency standards, will potentially have important effects.

Q: If Boston's climate begins to look like South Carolina, what happens as you go further south?

A: It gets hotter and wetter, but the changes are more rapid the further north you are. The rate of change is more pronounced in the Arctic and slower as you get to subtropical areas.

Q: Have you added up the area that would be affected by the new 100 year flood?

A: No, I haven't seen the actual areas calculated. But that area isn't going to be under water all the time. It will be flooded on average once every 100 years. Also, everything today in the 100 year flood becomes a 2-4 year flood zone in the worst scenario.

Q: The idea of the 100 year flood or the 30 year flood is a planning concept. We're already getting more 100 year floods than we used to.

A. (Jim): We've had 15 storm events since 1985. One of the most severe impacts will be on infrastructure. Think about our sewer system being down for days; or the Central Artery being down; or subways being down. These are the kinds of things we need to think about related to adaptation. The city has adapted over time. For example, we filled in the Back Bay and East Boston. If you look at the historic mapping of Boston, it's all of those high land areas that are not inundated.

Overview and Feedback on Proposed Leadership Committee Process

Jonathan Raab then reviewed the elements that will contribute to the 2010 Climate Action Plan, the Leadership Committee's main tasks, and the schedule and workplan. (See slides) He then paused for comments and questions.

Comment: Even if we do our part in the city (to implement aggressive mitigation strategies), we will likely still have significant adaptation issues to address, as can't count on the rest of the world.

Q: Can I send one of my staff members to a meeting if I can't make it?

A. (Jim): We know you're not going to make every meeting. You can bring staff or have staff attend the meetings. To the extent that we have different people participating around the table, that might be a bit of a challenge, but they are free to come and listen, as observers.

Q: Given that we've been charged to think boldly, what is our city's role in mitigation from a regional standpoint? As the biggest economic driver in the region, what's the bully pulpit to influence other municipalities, not just state government?

A. (Jim): Mayor is very engaged in the U.S. Conference of Mayors, as one of the initial climate signatories[1] --now over 1,000 cities signed on. We're also involved with ICLEI's efforts. We can play a role in helping other communities in region, as in the past. From a policy perspective, the state is going to set statewide goals. Boston represents 10% of the state population but doubles during day from commuters. Should we set our goal to reach a little higher than the state? Should we take on more than our fair share and help other communities out?

A. (Mindy): We wanted to bring in Adele Simmons to discuss a similar process in Chicago. It really is an audacious plan to do everything and then some more to impact communities, business, environ community, academic community. The Chicago plan goes above what state law requires, and beyond where Waxman/Markey will likely end up. Part of this is how do you set best practices for a city, so that others will follow.

Comment: We should avoid another 81 point plan. Let's find out what are the three most important points around mitigation and 3 around adaptation and go for those. Let's get really focused.

About the regional question (how much does Boston contribute to Massachusetts emissions?): This goes to the heart of what we mean by carbon footprint. Ten percent of the state population lives in Boston, but during the day time the population almost doubles, to 1 million. The infrastructure is built for that [day time] size. Do we have an obligation to look beyond the 600,000 people who have address here to at least include the people who commute into Boston as well?

Ideas about networking for CAC nominees

Cynthia Parker then reviewed the strategy for identifying candidates for the Community Advisory Committee, and solicited ideas for networking channels to get the word out. The Committee then quickly brainstormed the following list.

- Rose Kennedy Greenway
- CIM
- Community development corporations

[1] http://usmayors.org/climateprotection/agreement.htm

- NE Clean Energy Council
- Community Centers
- Churches
- Elevator Screens
- Tenant Organizations
- City Calendar
- Boston Climate Action Network
- Cable TV
- E2 (Environmental Entrepreneurs)
- Young Professionals, e.g., 2nd year associates in businesses (approach through Managing Partners, senior execs)
- Commencements
- School Site Councils

Review and Feedback on Preliminary Leadership Committee Questions

Carl Spector from the City of Boston then reviewed a list of questions organized by Mayor Menino's 6-point charge to the Leadership Committee, and asked the Committee whether other important questions were missing. Following is a bulleted list of suggestions organized under each charge.

Review the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP) and make any appropriate recommendations.

- Measurement and tracking
- How does reducing GHG relate to reducing use of other natural resources, such as solid waste?
- How are going to pay for the mitigation and adaptation measures identified in the Plan? There was some discussion on this question:
  - Strategies that are most cost effective can get us the deepest reductions, will pay for themselves, and will leverage economic development and job creation. These should be top priorities.
  - We should not be constrained by taking things off the table if they cost money.
  - Cost and economic feasibility will be different for mitigation and adaptation. Easier on the mitigation side; adaptation will probably take more retrofitting.
- Be bold but realistic and pragmatic; focus on 3-5 practical things where the city can make a difference should be part of the thinking

Update the community-wide greenhouse gas emissions inventory and set goals for community-wide reductions.

- No additional questions suggested for this one

Recommend to the Mayor and the community actions necessary to meet climate action goals and ways to maximize associated opportunities.

- When talking to community, have to talk about the things that contribute to GHG and reducing those things in a common sense, simple way. Put it in tangible terms.
- Identify other best practices at the municipal or state level. E.g., Chicago, California Title 24
- What do we do to make sure no parts of the community are being unduly burdened?
- Community Advisory Committee to also consider 'community-wide goals.' E.g., different layers within neighborhoods, different institutions…
- What should the building code say about tenant improvements? How to capture the improvements made by tenants each year?
- How are we going to tackle the existing building stock?
- In the spirit of finding short term actions, should we ask whether Boston should be one of the first to adopt the "stretch code" for new construction, which goes beyond Article 37?

Evaluate the risks to Boston from sea-level rise and other likely consequences of climate change, and recommend actions for the City and the community to take to reduce these risks?

- Look at what we might save from warmer winters (e.g., less heat, less snow removal). Can we use any of that to deal with more catastrophic affects in summer?
- Should adaptation of our transportation infrastructure be brought forward [by League of Cities?]?
- Has anyone taken stock of the vegetation in the city? [Response (Jim) Landscape zones have already changed. Boston Greenspace Alliance may have done one. City has done one with US Forest Service and UEI, inventoried entire tree canopy. We know our forest cover and species diversity of urban forest. Have set some goals for planting 100,000 trees of diverse species in urban neighborhoods with less tree canopy. Good example of combining mitigation and adaptation strategies. Primary goal is to reduce urban heat island effects. Look at what kinds of trees to be sure we're planting trees that will survive in 30 years. E.g., Philadelphia Green Plan--great example of easily understandable.]

Prepare educational materials for Boston households and businesses describing global climate change and climate actions that they can take.

- Like the wording in other places better…"engage residents" vs. "educational materials."
- How can we make the best use of Bostonians ideas, talents and other resources in addressing climate change?
- Letting residents know what steps they can do right now in their homes and at their jobs. Where to begin?
- Have to convey messages it in plain English.

- More concrete questions about how we do this? What are the efforts to get us there? It's a lot deeper than flyers or cable tv. Community-based organizations that have deep relationships will have deep impact to get the word out. Rely on those networks.
- What are the audiences we need to be addressing? Probably need different messages for different audiences. E.g., renters and owners.
- "City's 10 steps pledge" is probably something we can all do..

Identify economic and workforce development opportunities associated with climate action and the clean technology sector.

- Add something around job quality. Pay attention so that it's not only low wage jobs that are being creating?
- What are those green jobs? Where are they coming from? Who's working on developing them? What are the steps to create them?
- Does the curriculum in schools (e.g., math, science, trades) need to be revamped to deal with green jobs? [Comment (Stephanie): Northeastern and BRA are working on how to look what the jobs would be and what the curriculum,/training would be at the high school and community college level.]

Cross over questions/Other questions….

- Process model suggestion…this looks like a model that is about a large gathering, analyzing, and then winnowing. Could we collapse the process by pre-selecting the strategies that we already know are most cost effective? [Comment (Jonathan):To get to 80% reduction by 2050, you can't just do three things. It may be that we are identifying the 3-4 things to do first]

Wrap Up and Next Steps

Next Steps

What	Who	By When?
Send out meeting summary; UCS presentation; Chicago plan; schedule for remaining meetings	Facilitation team	Early June
Nominations, ideas for CAC and TAP	All, send ideas to facilitation team	June
Ways to engage before the next meeting; feedback loop	All	

Attendance

Boston Greenhouse Gas Plan Update Process			
First Leadership Meeting, May 26, 2009, Parkman House (33 Beacon Street) Boston			
Last Name	**First Name**	**Organization**	**5.26.09**
Barnett	Kalila	Alternatives for Community & Environment	X
Bok	Viki	Jamaica Plain resident	X
Buckley	Mark	Staples	
Connolly	Hon. John	At-Large Boston City Councilor	X
Coyle	James	Boston Building Trades	
Dimino	Richard	A Better City	X
Escarfullery	Galicia	Hyde Square Task Force	X
Hammond	Rev. Ray	Bethel AME Church/Ten Point Coalition	
Healey	Timothy	EnerNOC	X
Hunt	James, III	City of Boston	X
Koop	Bryan	Boston Properties	X
Landsmark	Ted	Boston Architectural College	X
Lubber	Mindy	CERES	X
McCarthy	James	Harvard University and UCS	
McDermott	Chuck	RockPort Partners	X
Nitsch	Judith	Nitsch Engineering	X
Park	Rebecca	Climate Action Network	X
Pollack	Stephanie	Northeastern University	X
Queely	David	Trust for Public Land	X
Ris	Bud	New England Aquarium	X
Saunders	Tedd	Lenox Hotel/Eco-Logical Solutions	X
Williams	Margaret	The Food Project	X
Facilitation/City Staff			
Raab	Jonathan	Raab Associates	X
Spector	Carl	City of Boston	X
Swing	Brad	City of Boston	X
Glascock	Bryan	City of Boston	X
Other			
Menino	Mayor	City of Boston	X
Frumhoff	Peter	UCS	X
Grogan	Paul	The Boston Foundation	X
Griffin	Jill	The Boston Foundation	X
Kleiman	Scott	CERES	X
Puerto	Mariella	Barr Foundation	X
Skelton Rogers	Mary	Barr Foundation	X
Straus	David	ABC	X