

Community Engagement Strategy – Draft 4*

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Outline

This document provides an overview for the community engagement strategy and then outlines four elements for implementing the strategy.

Overview

- Framing the strategy
 - Connect climate to broader concerns about health, quality of life, community well-being and civic resilience
 - Offer recommendations for action
 - Emphasize the need for shifting community wide norms, not just discreet behaviors
- Unit of action – whom is the strategy attempting to engage?
 - Individuals
 - Community groups, nonprofit and public institutions, businesses
 - Neighborhoods
- Purpose of the engagement strategy
 - To catalyze action
 - To support citizen involvement in policy development and implementation

Elements of the engagement strategy

- 1) Equip leaders to adopt new behaviors and influence their peers
- 2) Create and maintain a high visibility, consistent citywide campaign with elements that can be customized
- 3) Create and sustain a high visibility action campaign at the neighborhood/ community level
- 4) Create mechanisms for community input into the City's ongoing climate action policy development, planning and assessing progress
- 5) Continue to “lead by example” with City-owned buildings, vehicles, etc.

* This draft is based on the 12/10/09 Community Advisory Committee meeting and the 1/19/10 Engagement Working Group meeting, with additional input from Jess Lerner of the Engagement Working Group and Rebecca Park, Leadership Committee liaison to the CAC.

Engagement Strategy

Overview

We recommend **framing** climate action in the context of broader concerns about health, quality of life, community well-being and civic resilience in the face of the additional stresses introduced by climate change. We recommend highlighting multiple entry points for action, while emphasizing the need for community wide shifts in the norms that guide how we live and what we do on a daily basis as residents, businesses, institutions and city government.

While we are focusing this engagement plan on Boston residents, the **unit of action** is not simply the individual or household. We recommend developing mutually reinforcing plans for individual and collective action at the neighborhood and citywide levels to create momentum and shared ownership of the climate action agenda. Individuals, neighborhood groups, nonprofit organizations, businesses and city government must all lead by example. And, focusing on greening visible community institutions (public, private and nonprofit) can provide a shared, community level context for climate action.

We recommend creating a menu of materials and activities designed not only to educate people but also to **catalyze action**. We recommend creating multiple entry points for action without overwhelming residents. Not only that, we recommend communicating clear goals that are broadly understood and against which progress is measured and communicated widely and consistently.

*Working Group/CAC will develop a targeted menu of **action items** to suggest, including the mitigation and adaptation recommendations that will come out of this process, the substance of the Mayor's Climate Action Pledge, and examples of other actions in Boston and beyond. We will do this in a way that does not appear to endorse specific nonprofits. The list below is illustrative and will be fleshed out further.*

- Energy retrofits of existing buildings (Renew Boston)
- Reduced car use (Car free diet?? Smart Trips? (Portland, OR))
- Eat lower on the carbon food chain (e.g., Low carbon diet)
- ...

We recommend that we combine a focus on individual and community actions that are within our direct control with **advocacy** to influence decisions that are beyond the direct control of city government, local institutions and individual households.

Working Group/CAC will create a 'short list' that calls out issues around which to advocate, building on the mitigation and adaptation strategies and also highlighting other kinds of efforts (again, without endorsing specific advocacy efforts). The list below is illustrative and will be further fleshed out:

- Ensuring the availability of efficient and affordable mass transit
- Reducing reliance on fossil fuels for transportation and electricity generation
- Lowering the energy requirements of new buildings
- ...

Elements of the Engagement Strategy

We recommend a **four-part engagement strategy** that relies on early adopters (individuals, businesses, institutions, and even neighborhoods), a high visibility citywide message/brand, high visibility change at the neighborhood level, and ongoing community input into City policy development, planning and assessing progress.

- 1) Equip leaders in neighborhoods, businesses and organizations to adopt new behaviors and influence their peers
 - a) Website with:
 - Toolkits with a targeted set of tips/concrete action items in easily accessible language and formats
 - Interactive features: blog, chat, submit ideas
 - Track progress individually, by neighborhood
 - Link to incentives (e.g., Renew Boston utility programs)
 - b) Outreach and education resources for partner organizations and early adopters
 - c) Face-to-face, peer support networks
 - d) **What else?**

- 2) Create and maintain a high visibility, consistent citywide campaign with elements that can be customized
 - A. The campaign needs to communicate:
 - a) There is a serious problem. We must and can address it
 - b) We're creating a new vision of what Boston can become
 - c) This is about changing *how we live*, not just energy efficiency
 - d) We need everyone if we're going to succeed
 - e) We're making progress
 - f) There's something in this for you
 - g) Change is not as hard as you think
 - h) Climate action will create jobs

- i) Climate action will save money

B. Elements of the campaign should include:

Working Group/CAC will continue to build flesh out this list and build agreement on which items to keep and which to prioritize.

- a) Launch a bold, creative, highly visible public communications campaign uses traditional and new media
 - Ads on MBTA, posters, television, radio, billboards featuring “Today I _____ (walked to work; chose recycled products; etc). What will YOU do today?!?”
 - Youth poster/art contest
 - Professional sports team involvement
 - Apps for Iphone, Blackberry
- b) Use social media to create buzz and establish relationships
- c) Seek news coverage to supplement ad placements (print, radio, web)
- d) Create feedback loops so that activities in neighborhoods and communities that are successful or fail are fed back to help change the model
- e) Communicate goals and create feedback loops to track and communicate progress
- f) Create incentive programs (e.g., Green Points)
- g) Storytelling as a means for creating community cohesion
- h) Link to existing citywide efforts such as:

Working Group/CAC will continue to flesh out this list. Again, this is not an endorsement, but information for people to explore on their own.

- Boston Public Schools’ science curriculum and Boston Youth Climate Action Network (CAN)’s Education for Sustainability
- Renew Boston
- Solar Boston
- Boston Recycling
- Grow Boston Greener
- Community Climate Action and Clear Air grants
- Boston Green Awards

C. Possible tag lines for the campaign:

Working Group/CAC will review and drop/ add to this list, which will be tested in the community engagement workshops. Based on that community input, the Working Group/CAC will recommend a tag line for the campaign

- a) Green a little, change a lot... What will You do today? (From Jess Lerner’s campaign)
- b) Green a little, change a lot... Make a change, so the climate doesn’t have to (From Jess Lerner’s campaign)

- c) IM Cool: We're changing the climate for good (visit <http://www.imcoolcampaign.org/> for more info)
 - d) Renew Boston
 - e) From Beantown to Greentown
- Customize messages , tools and strategies for specific constituencies:
 - Children and youth – We need a specific strategy for engaging youth/young people
 - Business Owners – We need a strategy for engaging businesses, particularly community-based small businesses

Who else? e.g.,

- Faith-based communities
- Renter/Homeowner
- Income Levels
- Institutional
- Racial, ethnic and language groups
- Age/Generation
- Adoption of change curve (e.g., Early adopter/middle/late adopter/resister)

3) Create and sustain a high visibility action campaign at the neighborhood/ community level

Working Group/CAC will continue to build flesh out this list and build agreement on which items to keep and which to prioritize.

- A. Foster (where they don't exist) or strengthen (where they do exist) neighborhood networks or task forces that bring individuals and groups together to establish local priorities, take action, and share information
- B. Focus on greening high-visibility, local institutions (e.g., libraries, schools, community centers) and businesses
- C. Engage children by greening schools and also through the curriculum; use this as a way to reach their parents as well as engage students as budding citizens
- D. Roll out implementation of Renew Boston (*and other initiatives from the mitigation recommendations?*) in visible, coordinated way
- E. Block by block organizing with incentives for collective action; e.g.,
 - a. Renew Boston has the "Gold Star Neighborhood" when 50% of people get to some step
 - b. Connections to incentive program (e.g., Green Points)
- F. Neighborhood information centers where information can be accessed (e.g., libraries, schools, community health centers)

- 4) Create mechanisms for community input into the City's ongoing climate action policy development, planning and assessing progress

Working Group/CAC will flesh out a recommendation that could include:

- Ongoing group(s) similar to the LC, and/or CAC
- Other?

- 5) Continue to “lead by example” with City-owned buildings, vehicles, etc.

Include list of actions City has already begun or are proposed in plan as examples.