

Frontline communities have experienced a history of neglect and outright damage. To repair these harms, the City must initiate a planning process to mitigate emissions and make homes and neighborhoods more resilient.

Connecting Outcomes to Goals

Net-Zero Emissions

Neglected housing stock is upgraded to be more energy efficient, healthy, and comfortable. Connected neighborhoods with sufficient access to services and transit reduce vehicle reliance.

Resilience

All neighborhoods are protected from sea-level rise and storm surges. Green stormwater management and increased green space protect communities from flooding and urban heat island effect.

Increasing Social Equity

Residents are authentically engaged in establishing climate and related goals and metrics for assessing progress.

Progress Assessment

Mayor Wu has committed significant funding to increase the stock of affordable housing and improve public schools. Still, housing affordability,⁶⁶ disparities in the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic,¹³¹ and lingering environmental harms present barriers to bringing frontline communities to full health without displacement.

A lack of diversity in many sectors, particularly green technology, and a lagging career development pipeline means that full representation—and the trust that it brings—is years out. The private sector has been going through the motions of climate and diversity, equity, and inclusion work, but has failed to fully commit to fundamental political change at local, state, and federal levels necessary to repair past harms. Calls for more public engagement are increasingly common, but so is participant fatigue and inertia. Despite more transparent planning processes, monied nonlocal interests dominate in shaping the city. Communities are subsequently dissatisfied with outcomes. Boston's anchor institutions, particularly universities, also need to engage more in uplifting their surrounding communities.



Cooling an urban heat island in Chelsea, one block at a time. (Source: GreenRoots)

Equity Implications & Indicators

Reduced Burden of Past Injustices: This is the ultimate indicator, measured in climate terms by access to green affordable housing, increased mobility options, access to renewable energy, protection from sea-level rise, and overall neighborhood resilience.

Big Lifts

Prioritize Reparative Planning: A participatory reparative planning process is essential to creating a climate-just city aligned with Boston's climate goals.

Retrofitting the Small Building Stock: Electrify and reduce the energy burden of low-income small multifamily housing that has experienced decades of neglect.