



THURSDAY, JULY 18, 2024



FREE

# CHARLESTOWN

PATRIOT-BRIDGE



Representative Dan Ryan, City Councilor Gabriela Coletta Zapata, Mayor Michelle Wu, Superintendent Mary Skipper, Boston After School & Beyond Executive Director Chris Smith, and City Councilor-at-Large Erin Murphy pose with students from the Courageous Sailing program.

## Wu, other officials visit Courageous Sailing

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

On Monday, officials from around the city visited Courageous Sailing, an organization with locations in Charlestown and Jamaica Plain that offers sailing programs to youth and is receiving Fifth Quarter of Learning funding.

Mayor Michelle Wu, who attended the event, highlighted the importance of investing in the city's youth.

"Our administration's goal every day is to make sure that Boston's a city that works for everyone, and that means investing in all the things that our young people need: an environment that inspires curiosity and encourages constant learning and growing."

Superintendent Mary Skipper spoke about expanding access and providing kids in the city with opportunity, saying, "I asked the

two students that were with us if they were the first in their family to sail, and they said yes."

"I think that's really important, because we're constantly in BPS and our city about breaking those barriers and giving kids exposure and opportunity to things that they otherwise wouldn't."

Jen Bodde, Education Director of Courageous Sailing, discussed

(SAILING Pg. 6)

## Coletta Zapata holds hearing on proposal to provide relief for small businesses

Special to the Regional Review

Boston City Councilor Gabriela Coletta Zapata chaired a hearing on July 9, to discuss an ordinance to adopt the small commercial tax exemption as a local option in the City of Boston. The Councilor's proposal would allow the City of Boston to opt into the existing state law and provide financial

relief for small businesses valued under a million dollars or with ten employees or less. Those in attendance included Councilors At-Large Ruthzee Louijeune, Henry Santana, Julia Mejia, Councilors Ben Weber, John Fitzgerald, Brian Worrell, Ed Flynn, Sharon Durkan, Tania Fernandes Anderson, and Enrique Pepén.

"This ordinance comes after

numerous conversations my colleagues, the administration, and I had earlier this Spring regarding tax classification in the City of Boston and finding additional pathways to support small businesses. This is one way to get a little bit more money in the pocket of mom-and-pop stores by giving

(RELIEF Pg. 4)

## Mystic River Watershed Association Honors Community Leaders

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

At the Mystic River Annual Champions breakfast along the Malden River, the Mystic River Watershed Association honored and acknowledged three leaders in our communities. Fidel Maltez, City Manager for the City of Chelsea, was awarded the Mystic Municipal Award, Kelleigh Harrington and Mary Chiappa accepted the Mystic Champion award on behalf of CharlesNewtown, an apartment near the Little Mystic Channel in Charlestown, and Thalia Patino Molano, a recent graduate of Everett High School and Wicked Cool Mystic Amba-

sador, was the featured speaker.

Fidel Maltez is an engineer by training with a Master's in Public Policy and Policy Analysis from Tufts University. He accepted the Mystic Municipal Award for his long partnership in MyRWA's work, first as Commissioner of Public Works in Chelsea, then as Town Manager for the Town of Reading, and now as City Manager for the City of Chelsea. In these roles, he has centered the concerns of residents and implemented projects to improve environmental conditions and help communities in the Mystic River watershed

(LEADERS Pg. 4)



Mary Chiappa and Kelleigh Harrington accept their award from MyRWA Greenways Program Manager Karl Alexander.

### CNC MEETING DATES

CNC Development Committee Meeting, Wednesday, July 24, 7 p.m. - 46 High Street

The Charlestown Neighborhood Council's Development Committee will hold an in-person public meeting at the Mary Colbert Apartments, 20 Devens Street, on Wednesday, July 24, at 7 PM. The sole agenda item will be the proposed 46 High Street project. A presentation by the project proponents will be followed by an opportunity for the committee and community to ask questions about the project.

# EDITORIAL

## THE REVERE BEACH SAND SCULPTING FESTIVAL IS THIS WEEKEND

One of the biggest events of the summer season in the Greater Boston area will take place this weekend when the 20th annual Revere Beach International Sand Sculpting Festival, sponsored by the Revere Beach Partnership (RBP), will transform America's oldest public beach into a world-class exhibition of sand sculptures that will transform Revere Beach Boulevard into a boardwalk with something for everyone, young and old alike.

The festival, for which the RBP trucks in 420 tons of special sand that is suitable for sand-sculpting, once again will bring together world-renowned sand sculptors from across No. America, Europe, and Asia, who will showcase their incredible talents in a competition that will feature both a judges' trophy and people's choice award. The theme for this year's festival is Wonders of the World.

In addition to the sand sculptures, the festival will feature more than 75 food vendors, including Revere Beach's own superb local restaurants and beachside food stands, plus food trucks, along with exhibitors, live music, interactive activities, amusement rides, fireworks, and a vibrant atmosphere that are sure to create a memorable experience for people of all ages.

The festival is scheduled to take place over the three days of this weekend (July 19-21) from 10-10 on both Friday and Saturday and from 10-8 on Sunday, with the fireworks show taking place at 9:00 on Saturday evening. We would note that for those who might be out of town this weekend, you can check out the sand sculptures on Thursday before the official start of the festival,

Free parking with shuttle buses to the festival is available at Suffolk Downs and parking will be available in the 1800-vehicle Wonderland T garage. For visitors from Boston, it is highly-recommended that they take the Blue Line, which has stops at Revere Beach and Wonderland stations that are a stone's throw away from the beach. In addition, the T has a number of bus routes (the 110, 116, and 117) that travel through East Boston, Chelsea, Everett, and Revere that terminate at Wonderland station.

With a forecast for perfect weather, Revere Beach will be THE place-to-be this weekend for what may well be up to a million visitors. We urge festival-goers to plan ahead and make it a day of fun, great food, and viewing of the amazing sand sculptures that will create memories that are sure to last a lifetime for every member of the family.

## PUTIN: THE HITLER OF THE 21ST CENTURY

The horrific bombing recently of Ukraine's largest children's hospital by Russia only adds to the genocidal atrocities being perpetrated upon the people of Ukraine at the direction of Vladimir Putin. The Russian assault on the hospital marked one of the worst days of violence against civilians in months.

The bombing, which targeted a civilian hospital with no military value, not only blatantly violated the rules of war, but also reinforced once again the barbarity of Putin's invasion of that peaceful country.

Putin's deliberate targeting of a children's hospital brings him ever-closer to the pantheon of Europe's 20th century barbarian dictators -- Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini -- and makes clear that the civilized world must do whatever we can to help the Ukrainian people resist this sociopathic monster of the 21st century.

## How would you spend the city's money?

By Renato Castelo

How would you spend \$2 million of the city's money to benefit your community? That's the question we're asking Boston residents as the City heads into its first-ever city-wide Participatory Budgeting process this July.

But first, what is Participatory Budgeting?

When Mayor Michelle Wu announced the Office of Participatory Budgeting in late 2022, she called it an opportunity for "direct civic engagement to shape our budget." The office was created following a ballot initiative to provide a new way for residents' voices and ideas to be represented.

Originally developed in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1989, Participato-

ry Budgeting is a civic engagement process that empowers community members to decide how to spend part of a city's budget. The Brazilians' idea was to "Democratize democracy" by bringing more equitable participation in public spending, particularly for marginalized communities.

This comes at a critical time when record numbers of people nationwide report feeling distrust toward the government. According to the Harvard Kennedy School's 2024 Youth Poll, trust in major public institutions has fallen by up to 50 percent over the past decade.

Participatory Budgeting can provide an opportunity to combat this mistrust as residents come together and connect with local

government in a meaningful way. Since its development, Participatory Budgeting has been adopted by more than 1,500 cities worldwide, including by our neighbors in Somerville and Cambridge.

Now in its tenth year of Participatory Budgeting, Cambridge residents recently voted to fund projects ranging from free menstrual care dispensers, to smart recycling compactors, to public toilet upgrades.

While these are not the massive government programs we are used to, they are practical ideas that come from the community and benefit people at a grassroots level.

I was honored to be named the first director of the Office of Par-

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### THE BPDA NEEDS A REALITY CHECK WITH A DOSE OF COMMONSENSE

To the Editor,

As we near a deadline of July 19, for an RFP [soliciting proposals] for Pier 5, the Boston Planning and Development Agency, as well as the residents of Charlestown, need to be reminded of the history of this blighted Pier.

The reality: The Navy Yard was decommissioned in 1975 and given to the Boston Redevelopment Authority, now known as the BPDA. Over 50 years of neglect and numerous BPDA attempts to build on Pier 5 against the public wishes has resulted in an uninhabitable, deteriorated and useless two acres.

The reality: While over \$51.1 million dollars has been collected

from a transfer tax and fees on real estate sales in the Navy Yard, on Pier 5 nothing has been done for its upkeep, to be used as a waterfront destination for the existing 20,000 residents. The BPDA has approved developments with our population doubling by another 20,000 Charlestown residents, added to the over one million visitors to our community annually.

The reality: Climate change is here. We have hotter summers, the lowest tree canopy in Boston and the BPDA is "planning" for over 30 more buildings to add to this community and make it a premier "heat island", in a flood zone with no transportation infrastructure planning.

The reality: Where do we all go for some sense of recreation? Where do we go for some green and open space? Where do we go for some relief in our dense community?

The reality: For most of the residents, there is no place to go. Charlestown is a dense community with limited access and exits, surrounded by commercial and industrial sites, destined to be the new go to sites for more buildings.

Commonsense would dictate that the BPDA find the money, use the people's money and put it toward a waterfront park for the people, for all of us.

Any privatization of Pier 5 must be scrapped. Keep Pier 5 public. Use the money the Charlestown Navy Yard has contributed after more than 50 years of paying \$51.1 million dollars.

The reality is we need a public park and using commonsense would be what's needed by the BPDA, NOW.

Please contact: Natalie. Deduck@boston.gov, mayor@boston.gov

Ann Kelleher

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**CHARLESTOWN**  
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# DiDomenico secures \$15 million in bond money for district projects in economic development bill

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

Last week, Senator Sal DiDomenico and his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate unanimously passed a comprehensive economic development bill that makes bold investments in life sciences, climate tech, and small businesses, building on Massachusetts' national leadership and creating an environment where businesses and workers thrive. DiDomenico secured \$15 million in bond authorizations for local economic development projects in his district.

The legislation also included DiDomenico's language to remove a hazardous waste parcel of land at the power plant site in Everett from its status as a designated port area, enabling a process to move forward that could create a sports venue with public access to the waterfront. Senator DiDomenico is happy to see this language included that will allow the public process to move forward on a project that will be an economic catalyst and environmental win for our residents.

"I am excited to move this economic development legislation forward so we can invest in small businesses, life sciences, climate tech, and local projects in my district and throughout the Commonwealth," said Senator DiDomenico, Assistant Majority Leader of the Massachusetts Senate. "There is also language in this bill that will help my community clean up a power plant site that has been a health and environmental hazard for decades. This will open up the possibility for hundreds of millions of dollars in private investment, cleanup of a hazardous waste site, create good paying union jobs, and open our waterfront for the public to enjoy. I want to thank Senate President Spilka, Chair Rodrigues, and Senator Finegold for their support, and I look forward to advocating for this bill until it is signed into law."

The \$2.86 billion in bonds authorized in An Act Relative to strengthening Massachusetts' economic leadership will stimulate new and proven industries, support workforce development and talent retention, and modernize economic growth strategies. The support in S.2586 extends to small businesses, communities, and cultural development, ensuring that main street businesses across the Commonwealth benefit from the economic boost.

"Life sciences and climate

technology are synonymous with Massachusetts because of the past decade of strong investment," said Senate President Karen E. Spilka (D-Ashland). "The Senate's action today ensures that we build on that leadership in the coming decade, amplifying the diverse and thriving economic ecosystem that enables people to stay in our state to build careers and families. I am grateful for Chair Finegold's leadership on this bill, to Chair Rodrigues, and to each of my Senate colleagues for their input and action to strengthen our economy."

The combination of investments, tax credits, and policy changes will position Massachusetts industries as global leaders at a moment when breakthroughs in science and technology are more important than ever.

Provisions of the legislation include:

**Maintaining Massachusetts' Life Sciences Leadership**

While 18 of the top 20 biopharma companies now have ties to Massachusetts, the national ecosystem remains competitive.

The Senate's economic development bill authorizes \$225 million over five years for the Life Sciences Breakthrough Fund to reauthorize the Life Sciences Initiative, totaling \$45 million annually. Known as "Life Sciences 3.0", the reauthorization adds health equity, biosecurity, digital health, and artificial intelligence (AI) to the mission of the Life Sciences Center.

It redefines "life sciences" to include preventative medicine, biosecurity, life sciences AI, and medical technology. It also allows for awards and grants to public higher education institutions or public private partnerships.

**Keeping Climate Tech Companies in Massachusetts**

Massachusetts is first in the nation for per-capita climate tech startups—despite being outpaced in investment by New York and California—with 49 businesses per one million residents.

To incentivize these startups to stay in Massachusetts and continue to build their companies, the legislation provides \$200 million for the Clean Energy Investment Fund to facilitate research and development, commercialization, and deployment of climate technologies. It adds a further \$200 million for the Massachusetts Offshore Wind Industry Investment Trust Fund to support the growth of the offshore wind industry.

Additional incentives include a climate tech tax credit, a climate tech jobs credit, and a climate tech research credit.

**Regional Equity**

The legislation reflects the different needs of different communities and ensures none of the Commonwealth's 351 cities and towns are left behind.

This will partly be accomplished through statewide targeted infrastructure improvements, with the bill authorizing \$400 million for MassWorks public infrastructure projects that spur economic development and help support job creation, \$100 million for the Rural Development Fund to provide financial assistance for infrastructure and community planning efforts in rural communities, \$100 million for local economic development grants for economic development in cities and towns, \$90 million to support the redevelopment of underutilized, blighted, or abandoned buildings, and \$10 million for the Broadband Incentive Fund for the capital maintenance of the MassBroadband 123 middle mile network.

In addition to infrastructure, the legislation recognizes the importance of local cultural and economic sites, providing \$150 million for capital grants for public libraries, \$50 million for the Cultural Facilities Fund, \$40 million for Destination Development grants to support capital improvements of tourism assets, \$15 million for a capital grant program to support the Commonwealth's agriculture, commercial fishing, and cranberry growing industries, and \$8 million for historical preservation grants through the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

**Accelerating AI & Advanced Manufacturing Development**

To position Massachusetts as a leader of the future economy, the bill includes provisions to further develop the rapidly growing AI industry as well as high-tech advanced manufacturing jobs.

It contains \$115 million for the Massachusetts Tech Hub to establish key industry consortia across the Commonwealth, \$100 million for the Applied AI Hub program to facilitate the application of AI, \$99 million for flexible grants to support advanced manufacturing initiatives, and \$25 million for capital grants to advance research, commercialization, and training in robotics.

**Retaining Talented College Graduates**

Outmigration is notably prevalent among students who graduate from Massachusetts colleges. To keep them and their talent in the state, the legislation includes \$85 million for the Massachusetts Education Financing Authority (MEFA) to improve access to affordable higher education opportunities.

Additional talent-retention provisions promote internships for students and recent graduates through the employer internship tax credit and allow foreign-licensed physicians to apply for a limited license to practice medicine in the Commonwealth with a pathway to a full unrestricted license. The program would enable their talents to be used to fill the state's physician shortage.

**Supporting Small Businesses**

With nearly 50 per cent of Massachusetts workers employed by companies with less than 500 employees, small businesses are a key part of the Commonwealth's economy. The Senate's legislation recognizes this, providing \$25 million through MassVentures for small business technology grants to help early-stage companies commercialize new technologies, \$35 million for grants to Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) to help disadvantaged and underserved businesses, and \$10 million for Biz-M-Power matching grants to small businesses with capital needs.

To assist small businesses in rural areas and areas impacted by pollution, the bill authorizes \$3 million for grants to improve the readiness of sites for econom-

ic development projects and \$30 million for the Brownfields Redevelopment Fund to support the remediation of land impacted by environmental contamination.

During debate, the Senate adopted several amendments, notably:

An amendment to increase the age of juvenile jurisdiction to include 18-year-olds. The initiative, known as "Raise the Age", is proven to decrease crime and improve public safety by allowing emerging adults who are 18 years old—the typical age of a senior in high school—to be tried as juveniles instead of adults for certain crimes.

An amendment to allow local communities to opt-in and allow bars and restaurants in the community to responsibly offer happy-hour drink discounts.

An amendment to admit Massachusetts in the national nurse licensure compact, helping to address the critical workforce challenge facing the health care sector.

An amendment enhancing local public health infrastructure and service delivery.

An amendment allowing local breweries and distilleries to sell their products alongside local wineries at farmers markets.

An amendment increasing opportunities for a more diverse public sector teaching force.

An amendment to provide consumers more rights to seek repair of their cell phones without having to seek service from the original manufacturer.

A previous version of this bill having passed the House of Representatives, the two branches will now reconcile the differences between the bills before sending it to the Governor's desk.

## OBITUARIES

All obituaries and death notices will be at a cost of \$150.00 per paper.

Includes photo.No word Limit.

Please send to  
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OP-ED (from pg. 2)

participatory Budgeting for Boston by Mayor Wu, and look forward to administering our first \$2 million process in concert with our External Oversight Board. Our mission is to help create accessible spaces for civic engagement, collect ideas, and ultimately put these ideas in action.

As a native of Ecuador who made Boston my home several years ago, I understand the challenges many immigrants and newcomers face in accessing government due to mistrust in public institutions, civic apathy, and language and cultural barriers. That's why we are ensuring this engagement is done in partnership with local community groups and is multilingual and accessible to people from all walks of life.

Boston's 'Youth Lead the Change' initiative has run a youth Participatory Budgeting process since 2014. Building on that, we will also include the opportuni-

ties for youth to participate in the citywide process, which can plant the seeds for lifelong civic engagement.

July is Idea Collection Month. This July, the City will co-host a series of public forums in collaboration with non-profit partner organizations where people can propose and discuss their project ideas. Residents can also engage via an online portal, phone line, and via Participatory Budgeting corners at Boston Public Library locations.

Eligible ideas could include funding for programs to strengthen mental health among Boston youth, digital literacy classes for older adults, or workforce training for those reentering society after incarceration. Infrastructure projects are also eligible, such as expanding the City's free Wi-Fi networks or enhancing public art and green spaces.

Our office will work with res-

idents to develop the top ideas into a 15-proposal ballot, and in January of 2025, we will open up the process for voting and in the spring we'll begin implementation of the winning proposals.

As we embark upon our inaugural year of Participatory Budgeting in Boston, I invite you to join us this July. Visit [www.Boston.gov/participate](http://www.Boston.gov/participate) to share your project ideas online or find an Idea Collection Workshops nearby. Participants may also call the PB Phone Line at (617) 635-3059 or visit a PB corner at your local Boston Public Library branch.

We look forward to putting your ideas in action and helping inform our City's future budget investments.

- Renato Castelo is director of the Office of Participatory Budgeting in Boston. He holds a Masters in Education Policy from Harvard University and nearly 15 years of civic engagement experience.

RELIEF (from pg. 1)

them certain exemptions and protecting them from the cost burden shifting to them.," said Councilor Gabriela Coletta Zapata. "I'm grateful for the robust conversation we had and the various perspectives shared. I look forward to continuing the conversation to ensure we work collaboratively to assist small businesses and mom and pop stores like restaurants, corner stores, laundromats, and barber shops from potential impacts the new tax levy may have."

During the hearing, Councilors discussed the proposal specifically potential measures for quantifying success of the exemption, collaboration within various city departments to ensure adequate and effective communication and outreach for small businesses, and protections for small business tenants. Councilors requested additional information on the average increase on commercial and

industrial property if the exemption was baked into the annual tax rate, projected impacts, and a roll out plan if the exemption is enacted.

In addition to the ordinance, Councilors discussed the possibility of amending Massachusetts General Law Chapter 59 Section 5I for a specific Boston statute that would allow for businesses valued over a million dollars to opt in. Coletta Zapata noted that she is interested in understanding the implications of increasing the stipulations between two to three million dollars to cast a wider net for properties.

Additionally, Councilors heard testimony from small business owners and representatives including Jessica Muradian, Director of Government Affairs for the Massachusetts Restaurant Association, and Carlos Castillo of Castillo Wine & Spirits and Board Member, Massachusetts

Package Stores Association. Public testimony was offered by Brad Brown, owner of the Blue Frog Bakery in Jamaica Plain.

Coletta Zapata's proposal comes after the Boston City Council voted for a Home Rule Petition regarding property tax classification in the City of Boston sponsored by Mayor Michelle Wu. Mayor Wu sponsored the Home Rule Petition as a temporary tool to protect residents from property tax increases to mitigate potential revenue shortfalls from declining commercial valuations. The Home Rule Petition is now awaiting approval from the State Legislature before it can take effect.

For additional information, please contact the Office of Councilor Gabriela Coletta Zapata by phone at (617) 635-3200 or by email at [gabriela.ramirez@boston.gov](mailto:gabriela.ramirez@boston.gov).

LEADERS (from pg. 1)

become more resilient to climate change. Under his watch, the Town of Reading began work on the Maillet, Sommes, and Morgan Stormwater Wetland - the largest construction project catalyzed by MyRWA to date.

Kelleigh Harrington and Mary Chiappa are residents and board members of the CharlesNewtown apartments, Mary serving as board president. They accepted the Mystic Champion Award on behalf of the CharlesNewtown board. Kelleigh and Mary are dedicated neighbors and community members who advocate for tenants and work hard to ensure a vibrant and welcoming housing environment. Kelleigh also serves as a member of a resident steering committee, convened by MyRWA, that has helped to guide the revitalization of 14 acres of open space next to her home in the Little Mystic Channel area of Charlestown. Both Kelleigh and Mary go out of their way each and every day to ensure CharlesNewtown residents are informed of these improvement efforts, that space is made available for public meetings, and that issues in need of address are raised, such as ongoing structural issues with the harborwalk outside their front doors. The CharlesNewtown board and property management have also agreed to help maintain a revamped plaza next to the apartments that will break ground this summer.

Thalia Patino Molano is a recent graduate of Everett High School bound for BU in the fall. For the past two years Thalia and fellow Everett Resident Juan Soler-Ramos have served as ambassadors

for the Wicked Cool Mystic program, working in their community to learn about how their fellow residents experience and adapt to heat as our climate warms. As young organizers in Everett, Thalia and Juan have worked hard to build relationships within their community and have served as vital conduits for community voices. They have circulated surveys, attended many community events, and organized workshops about extreme heat, all of which serve to elevate stories and ideas directly from residents.

The work of the Mystic River Watershed Association would not be possible without the commitment and hard work of its partners - from state and federal agencies to elected officials and municipal staff to local residents and community leaders who all strive to create change and make the Mystic River watershed a safe, clean, and resilient place to live, work, and play.

The Mystic River Watershed Association works to improve the lives of the more than 600,000 residents of Mystic River communities through its efforts to protect and restore water quality, natural habitat and open space throughout the 76 square mile watershed. The Mystic River watershed is comprised of 21 communities: Arlington, Belmont, Boston (Charlestown & East Boston), Burlington, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Lexington, Malden, Medford, Melrose, Reading, Revere, Somerville, Stoneham, Wakefield, Watertown, Wilmington, Winchester, Winthrop, Woburn. For more information see [www.MysticRiver.org](http://www.MysticRiver.org).

NEWS BRIEFS

ART IN THE PARK JURIED ART EVENT

ART in the PARK is an annual juried art event sponsored by the Artists' Group of Charlestown. Since 1998, ART in the PARK has consistently attracted talented artists from the New England area, becoming an extremely popular fine art event. ART in the PARK 2024 will be held in the award-winning City Square Park, Charlestown, MA on Saturday, September 7, 2024 (rain date Sunday, September 8th). Artists are required to present their own original works and/or work derived from their original works (i.e. prints, calendars, postcards, etc.).

Various mediums including acrylic, oil, mixed media and watercolor painting, original prints and/or limited editions prints, pho-

tography, sculpture, glass and pottery, jewelry, fabric, textile and other fine art are acceptable. Final participants will be selected by Committee.

Artists sites within the park are limited.

The event runs from 10:00 AM - 5:30 PM with set up beginning at 8:00 AM. Artists are expected to be present for the entire event.

For more details/instructions and to submit your application go to <https://form.jotform.com/241224677301147> no later than July 24.

Location: City Square Park, Charlestown, MA 02129

Event Date: Saturday, September 7, 2024 10:00 AM to 5:30 PM

Rain Date: Sunday, September 8, 2024

(Setup from 8:00 - 10:00 AM)

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# Wu announces health equity agenda to improve life expectancy

Special to the Times

Mayor Michelle Wu and the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) announced a new long-term health equity agenda to improve life expectancy, reduce racial and ethnic disparities, and help all residents live longer and healthier lives. BPHC's Health of Boston 2023 report on Mortality and Life Expectancy found stark differences in average life expectancy among neighborhoods, the most striking being a 23-year difference between those who live in a part of Back Bay compared to those who live two miles away near Nubian Square in Roxbury. New BPHC data show that while life expectancy in Boston has overall rebounded since the COVID-19 pandemic, the racial gap has widened. In 2019, Black residents had an average life expectancy of 77 years, which was four years less than white residents, while in 2023, Black residents had an average life expectancy of 76 years, six years less than white residents. To improve life expectancy and reduce racial and ethnic gaps, BPHC is urgently encouraging organizations to partner with the Commission to advance health equity.

"I'm thrilled that Boston is launching this first ever public health agenda backed up by community collaboration and resources," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "Creating opportunities so that every resident has access to healthy food, livable communities, and access to healthcare are important to ensuring every resident feels at home in Boston. I'm so grateful to the Boston Public Health Commission, Atrius Health Equity Foundation, and all of our partners for their commitment to improving the lives of our residents."

The Commission's Live Long and Well health equity agenda focuses on three of the leading causes of premature mortality in Boston: cardiometabolic diseases, including diabetes, heart disease, and other related disorders; cancers of the breast, cervix, colon, prostate, and lung; and unintentional drug overdoses. The agenda



Mayor Michelle Wu.

also emphasizes the importance of infant and maternal health, older adult health, and mental and behavioral health.

This announcement identified the first priority area as cardiometabolic diseases, which are among the top five leading causes of death before the age of 65 in Boston and disproportionately impact communities of color. According to BPHC's Health of Boston 2023 reports, compared to white residents, Black residents died of heart disease at a 37% higher rate; Black residents died of diabetes at a 220% higher rate; and Latine residents died of diabetes at a 80% higher rate. Social and economic factors such as poverty, insufficient housing, and food insecurity make it significantly more likely for a person to develop poorer health outcomes, including cardiometabolic diseases.

"Boston is a city that is rich with high quality health care resources. Yet, we have long-standing gaps in life expectancy and other health outcomes by race, ethnicity and neighborhood," said Dr. Bisola Ojikutu, Commissioner of Public Health and Executive Director of the Boston Public Health Commission. "In order to close these gaps, we need to focus on drivers of poor health that exist outside the walls of health care institutions, like poverty and economic inequality. This will require a collaborative, whole-of-society, multi-sector

approach. I want to thank Atrius Health Equity Foundation for their investment that I hope will catalyze more new partnerships to improve health and well-being for all in our city."

The Boston Community Health Collaborative (BCHC) – which is facilitated by BPHC and convenes City departments, public health, healthcare, community based organizations, and Boston residents – developed a community health improvement plan that identified economic mobility and inclusion as a critical strategy to improve health. To support this, Atrius Health Equity Foundation has committed \$10 million for community-led coalitions to improve financial wellbeing in communities with poor cardiometabolic health outcomes. This investment makes the City of Boston, BPHC, BCHC, and Atrius Health Equity Foundation the first multi-sector partnership in the Live Long and Well agenda.

"We hear from communities across Eastern Massachusetts how economic opportunity is foundational for health and well-being. Our investment recognizes the deep connection between health and wealth and aims to support communities in creating the conditions that enable everyone to thrive," said Dr. Ann Hwang, President of the Atrius Health Equity Foundation. "We are thrilled to partner with the Mayor, the City of Boston, the Boston Public Health Commission, and the Boston Community Health Collaborative, all of whom have shown tremendous leadership in advancing community priorities for better health."

"Thanks to the leadership of Mayor Wu and the Boston Public Health Commission, our work as the Collaborative has flourished and is now resulting in a transformative \$10 million dollar investment by Atrius Health Equity Foundation," said Magnolia Contreras, Vice-President of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and Co-Chair of the Boston Community Health Collaborative. "This partnership is a testament to our shared commitment, and this investment will

go directly to issues raised by our community members who are most impacted by life expectancy disparities."

To execute on this work, a request for proposals will be developed collaboratively and organizations will be able to apply as early as this fall. This partnership will help residents, especially those who are most at-risk for cardiometabolic diseases, meet basic needs, have more access to financial supports and wealth-building opportunities, and navigate complex healthcare and social support systems. This will improve financial stability, mental health, stress, and cardiometabolic health for residents across Boston.

Additionally, the Boston Public Health Commission runs several existing programs and initiatives to prevent cardiometabolic diseases. The Commission's Chronic Disease Prevention and Control Division promotes screenings for early detection of disease and partners with other City departments to give residents more

access to healthy foods and physical activity. Programs include the Boston Parks Summer Fitness Series, Healthy Boston Nutrition Education, Boston Safe Routes to School, and the Boston Healthy Childcare Initiative.

The Commission is currently working on a report detailing the Live Long and Well agenda that will be published later this year. Learn more and track updates at [boston.gov/live-long](https://boston.gov/live-long).

Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) is the country's oldest health department. We envision a thriving Boston where all residents live healthy and fulfilling lives. To accomplish this, BPHC works in partnership with communities to protect and promote the health and well-being of all Boston residents, especially those impacted by racism and systemic inequities. Learn more about our work at [boston.gov/bphc](https://boston.gov/bphc).

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We also encourage readers to e-mail news releases and photos to [deb@reverejournal.com](mailto:deb@reverejournal.com).

SAILING (from pg. 1)

the impact of the fifth quarter of learning, saying, "What makes programs like ours and others in the Fifth Quarter so powerful is that it's a genuine partnership."

"It has developed in true partnership, and what makes it special is how relevant and connected the academics are with what kids are experiencing here at Courageous, in their daily lives, and in the community around them."

The release detailing the Fifth Quarter of Learning is in its entirety below.

A projected 18,000 Boston students will attend 239 summer programs, located in every neighborhood of the city, Mayor Michelle Wu and Boston Public Schools Superintendent Mary Skipper announced with Boston After School & Beyond. A total of \$4.2 million in city, state, and private funds will support nonprofits providing enrichment that complements academic learning throughout the city.

"The Fifth Quarter summer learning program allows Boston's young people to take advantage of the best our city has to offer and provides them with enriching educational experiences during the summer months," said Mayor

Michelle Wu. "By engaging in a variety of activities, our students can continue their learning journey, ensuring they are well-prepared for future success. Our thanks go to Boston After School & Beyond and our dedicated partners for their unwavering support in keeping our students motivated and involved throughout the year."

Research shows that effective use of the summer months can be a key strategy for accelerating learning, particularly for low-income youth. Boston's 5th Quarter of Learning, a partnership of the Boston Public Schools and nonprofit Boston After School & Beyond, has been at the forefront of national efforts to supplement school year learning, including a national study by RAND that showed high attending students outperform their peers in academics and key skills.

"The 5th Quarter of Learning is a testament to our commitment to ensuring that all of our students have access to high-quality educational opportunities year-round," said Boston Public Schools Superintendent Mary Skipper. "By engaging students in innovative

(SAILING Pg. 7)



Sailboats set sail during the event.



Mayor Michelle Wu delivers some remarks at Monday's event.

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# 'Harborwalk 2.0' toolkit released to promote accessible, resilient waterfront design

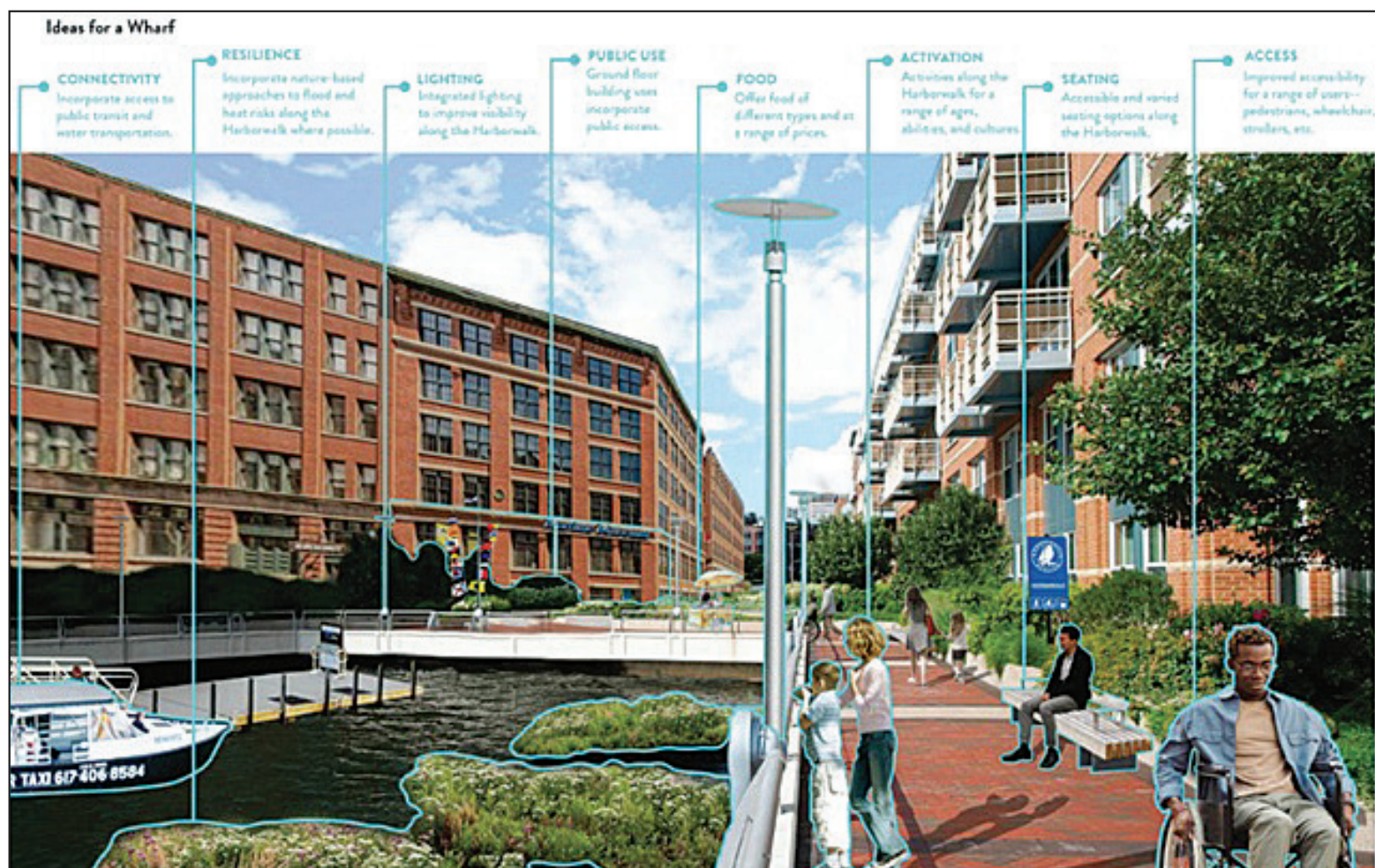
Special to the Times

Boston Harbor Now released Visualizing Harborwalk 2.0, a toolkit for designing a more resilient and equitable waterfront for Greater Boston. Intended for municipal planners, developers, and resident activists, the guide includes core principles and visual examples that will serve as a compass for Boston Harbor Now advocacy around future waterfront development along the Harborwalk.

"With this toolkit, we aim to provide both inspiration and interventions for waterfront development in an era of inequitable access, climate change, and flooding," said Kathy Abbott, president and CEO of Boston Harbor Now. "As we regularly weigh in on development projects, the toolkit will provide predictability around the issues we're likely to prioritize – and, as needed, call out – to ensure every new project improves the coastline."

The toolkit begins with a set of goals around waterfront resilience, equity, and access that Boston Harbor Now urges planners and developers to use as a baseline in designing projects, followed by detailed lists of principles that can serve as checklists for urban realm decision-making. These include:

- Implementing a variety of climate adaptation strategies to



Artist rendering of Boston Harbor's Visualizing Harborwalk 2.0.

protect and serve Boston at a district scale.

- Offering entertainment and food at a range of price points; and
- Ensuring the waterfront is visible from inland areas with a

design that communicates it is available and open to visitors.

"No single project can fulfill every principle to the fullest, but collectively, we need to ensure we're working together to bring Harborwalk 2.0 to life,"

said Kelly Sherman, Boston Harbor Now's manager of waterfront design. "Planners and developers face many competing challenges in design, and this toolkit offers potential solutions so that every project is

contributing to a more welcoming and resilient waterfront."

The toolkit lays out design scenarios for transforming the waterfront in three common

(HARBORWALK Pg. 9)

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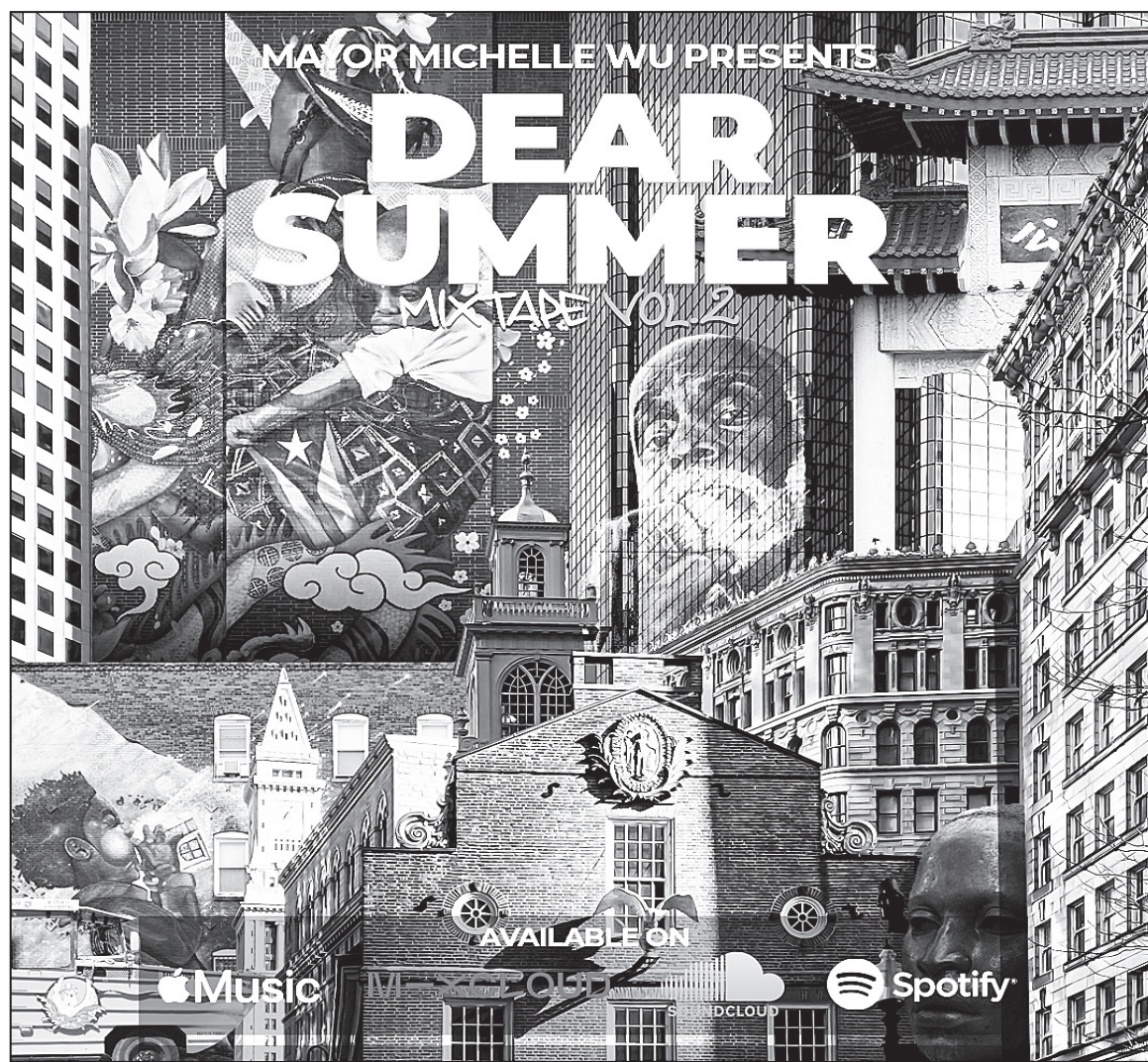
# Wu announces launch of 'Dear Summer Vol. 2' mixtape

Special to the Times

Mayor Michelle Wu and the City's Office of Tourism, Sports and Entertainment announced the release of "Dear Summer Vol. 2." This annual mixtape features songs and mixes from artists and DJs in Greater Boston, highlighting the vibrancy of Boston's communities. This collaboration aims to build awareness of local creative talent, connect residents and families across neighborhoods through music, and celebrate summer.

"Summer in Boston is a truly special time for our residents, families and communities across every neighborhood. We are proud and grateful that incredible talent calls Boston home, and that these amazing artists and creatives create space for community and culture building all year long," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "We are thrilled to launch Vol. 2 of the Dear Summer Mixtape that represents the very best of our creative community, featuring 17 of our best local musicians, mixed by six of our top DJs, and representing our city. As we continue to make our way through summer, we hope that this mixtape taps into the joy and community present throughout Boston's communities"

"This tape is a reflection of the times and an opportunity to showcase local artists who have international talent, yet are often overlooked," said John Borders IV, Co-Executive Producer and



Director of Tourism, Sports and Entertainment for the City of Boston. "By playing champion to artists from Boston, we are looking to amplify a homemade sound. No other municipality has done anything like this. We look forward to

seeing this initiative grow, as Boston artists deserve international notoriety."

Dear Summer Vol. 2 includes 17 curated tracks that represent various styles and genres, including Hip-Hop, R&B, Rock, Blues, Alternative, and Dance music.

Participating DJs include:

- Cammy V, DJ based in Medford
- Knszwrth, DJ based in Dorchester
- L'Duke, DJ based in Medford
- DJ Mez, DJ based in Roxbury
- DJ Prince, DJ based in Dorchester
- Guru Sanaal, DJ based in South End

"My goal as a DJ, Producer, and contributor to the music scene in Boston has always been to crack the door open for other artists and DJs and let light shine through. I hope that many of them can stay and thrive as creatives here in Boston and garner momentum for projects that they may have in the pipeline," said Chimel "ReaL P" Idiokitas, Co-Exec. Producer & Curator of "Dear Summer Vol. 2" mixtape. "I'm honored to be co-leading this project, and equally as honored to be able to add to the growing infrastructure for creatives throughout not only Boston, but also the neighboring cities and towns that help make our community so unique."

Participating artists include:

- Amandi, R&B artist based in Roxbury
  - CD Rose, R&B artist based in Jamaica Plain
  - Clark D, Hip-Hop artist based in Mattapan
  - Heyssis, R&B artist from Dorchester and Hyde Park
  - Blue Light Bandits, Soul/Indie Rock in Worcester
  - Julia Chisholm, Pop/R&B/Soul artist based in Brighton
  - Leo the Kind, Hip-Hop/R&B artist based in Dorchester
  - Najee Janey, Hip-Hop/Soul artist based in Roxbury
  - Pat Loomis, Jazz artist based in South End
  - Uche Malik, Afrobeats artist based in Hyde Park
  - Nay \$peaks, Hip-Hop artist based in Mattapan
  - Caliph, Hip-Hop/Afrobeats artist based in New Bedford
  - Fabiola Mendez, Latin Folk artist based in Quincy
  - Jill McCracken, R&B/Pop artist from Medford
  - Neemz, Hip-Hop/Alternative artist based in Medford
  - Sança, R&B artist based in Weymouth
  - Zola Simone, Indie Pop artist based in Cambridge/Medford
- "Boston is a booming art city and the New England region as a whole is so slept on," said DJ Knszwrth, based in Dorchester. "It's fulfilling to have leadership

that amplifies the reach of local talent and deepens their roots in a unique way. It's my new favorite tradition; it's an honor to be selected and to put on for your city."

"One thing about Boston is we know how to come together and build as a community," said Julia Chisholm, Pop/R&B/Soul artist based in Brighton. "This project exemplifies exactly that. It is more than just a mixtape, but a testament to the power of music and love. Music is and always will be, in my opinion, the most unifying energy. Every artist and every song that is featured on the project has their own unique story. And in those stories, is the essence of the city. You can literally feel it. I am proud and honored to be a part of such a beautiful piece of work. And I hope this music touches people's hearts and souls and fills the summer with LOVE."

In addition to Mayor Wu, "Dear Summer" also features appearances from the following 15 Bostonians who represent various neighborhoods, backgrounds and communities.

- Mayor Michelle Wu, City of Boston
- Kara Elliott-Ortega, Chief of Arts & Culture, City of Boston
- Lauren Melendez, NBC Boston
- Michael Bivins, New Edition/BBD
- Jimmy Hills, Java With Jimmy
- Pamela Leins, Boston Education Fund
- Paris Alston, WGBH
- Jared Weiss, The Athletic
- Coach Beefy, Dorchester Eagles
- Danielle "Ms. Hot Sauce" Johnson, SPARK FM
- Devin Morris, The Teacher's Lounge
- Jeneé Osterheldt, A Beautiful Resistance/The Boston Globe
- Brian Scalabrino, Boston Celtics
- Aliesha Porcena, Director of Small Business, City of Boston
- Robert "ROB" Eugene, HUE Boston
- Chimel "ReaL P" Idiokitas serves as music curator and executive producer and John Borders IV, Director of Tourism, Sports, and Entertainment for the City of Boston serves as an executive producer for the mixtape. Additional credits for the "Dear Summer" Vol. 2 mixtape include Marquis Neal as Lead Studio Engineer and Connis, a Hip-Hop producer based in Cambridge, as a producer. The mixtape is available to stream on [boston.gov/dearsummermixtape](http://boston.gov/dearsummermixtape) using Soundcloud, Spotify and Apple Music.

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# Wu announces new disability data standards for Boston

Special to the Times

Mayor Michelle Wu announced new disability-aware standards for City resources and the collection of disability data from residents throughout government processes. This Disability Data Standard will support City workers who design and operate services, programs, and policies in the City of Boston and are intended to provide more dignified experiences for all residents and expand opportunities for people with disabilities across Boston's neighborhoods. This initiative is led by the City of Boston Disabilities Commission in partnership with the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT).

"Our goal in city government is ensuring that our policies, programs and services reach everyone and affirm and support our residents each and every day," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "Boston is home to over 78,000 residents with disabilities and we know historically this community has not been fully included in city services and underserved in data standardization efforts. These new guidelines will create a common format for all city departments to collect

data on disability - improving our services and creating a more welcoming experience for residents. I'm excited to see how these critical changes better support our constituents and move us forward in our work to make Boston a home for everyone."

This announcement comes after several months of work to inform the design of the new data standardization across City departments. The work explored preferred language around disability identity and accommodations. Projects included focus groups with Boston residents, literature reviews, process mapping, and user research. Before the release of the new data standard, the City primarily collected data on disability with the Disability Survey of Boston residents; however data collection from that effort was too limited. The new disability data standard will collect more meaningful data to ensure City programs and services are accessible, welcoming, and inclusive to people with disabilities.

"Understanding how disability impacts residents' participation in City of Boston programs and services is much more valuable than

knowing residents' medical diagnosis, in most cases," said City of Boston Disability Commission and ADA Title II Coordinator Kristen McCosh. "We expect the new data standardization to be more effective when planning and implementing programs, events, and services, because now we are asking people what people really need."

"We needed to identify best practices for collecting information about disability so we can make Boston even more inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities," said Chief of Equity and Inclusion Mariangely Solis Cervera. "My staff worked closely with other city departments to map the process of specific city services to gain a better understanding of the experience for people with disabilities.

The new standard will include the question, 'Which of the following do you typically need to access services and events? (Select all that apply)' and provides respondents 11 access and functional needs options as well as a write in option to select. An important guideline of the standard will be to offer multiple ways for people to participate.

"We were thrilled to partner

with the City of Boston to provide research and technical assistance to the data standardization program," said Ellysheva Bunge-Zeira, the Director of Training and Consulting at Disability Policy Consortium. "Our staff worked with the City to support meaningful engagement with Boston's disability community including focus groups facilitated by our staff."

The City of Boston will celebrate the new Data Standards at the 2024 ADA Day event on Wednesday, July 17th from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. This annual public event held on City Hall Plaza celebrates the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a landmark civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Each year, the Disabilities Commission honors a partner, usually a City department, that has done exceptional work related to accessibility that year. This year, the City will be honoring DOIT for both the Data Standards and for their on-going work updating internal policies and training documents for departments to improve digital accessibility across City products.

"It was a privilege to be able to partner with the Commission

for Persons with Disabilities and apply the lessons DoIT learned from developing the Gender-Aware Guidelines and Standards to the collection of data about disability," said Chief Digital Officer Julia Gutiérrez. "The Disability Data Standard will help ensure more consistent data collection across departments and programs focused on what constituents need, which makes it easier for the City to understand where we can and should invest in accessibility from both a technology and program design perspective."

This announcement builds on the Mayor's commitment to ensure that Boston is an inclusive and equitable city for all residents. Last August, the Mayor, along with the Department of Innovation and Technology (DoIT), the Mayor's Office of LGBTQ+ Advancement, and the City's Registry Department, announced that the City updated its marriage licenses by no longer requiring sex or gender identification on the licenses - the first change made based on new gender-aware guidelines for City resources and the collection of gender-identity data.

## SAILING (from pg. 6)

and enriching programs over the summer, we are helping them to develop critical skills, stay academically on track, and foster a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom and, of course, have fun."

"Our young people are the future of our Commonwealth and we must offer them the educational and social-emotional support they need to learn, play, and thrive during the school year and summer months," said Education Secretary Patrick Tutwiler. "The 5th Quarter of Learning provides a critical bridge between grade levels and encourages students to pursue their passions while building on the skills learned during the school year. I am excited to see all of the academic and enrichment programs available for children and families this summer."

In response to youth surveys expressing mental health needs, program leaders will focus on supporting resilience, wellness, and mental health. These programs foster important life skills, such as perseverance, teamwork, and communication, which are predictive of success in college and career.

"The 5th Quarter of Learning encourages students to build on the skills learned during the school

year and become more engaged, curious, and confident," said Chris Smith, Executive Director of Boston After School & Beyond. "We're grateful to the City of Boston for their continued partnership as we work to make the city a classroom for all youth."

"As a parent, I have seen firsthand the tremendous benefits of the ACEDONE 5th Quarter summer program. Three of my children participated, and the impact on their education, social engagement, and problem-solving skills has been remarkable. The program also significantly contributed to their mental growth and well-being. I am grateful for the opportunities ACEDONE has provided to my children, helping them make meaningful progress over the summer," said Abdullahi M. Hussein.

Under the 5th Quarter of Learning effort, Boston After School & Beyond will disseminate a total of \$4.2 million to 94 non-profit organizations running academic or enrichment programs, or both. Included in this approach is \$3 million in funding from the Boston Public Schools to 67 community-based programs operating five days a week over five weeks. Teachers begin the day with instruction in math and English

language arts, with the remainder of the day featuring engaging enrichment, ranging from sailing to mixed martial arts to Mariachi. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provided \$940,000 for Boston After School & Beyond to 57 enrichment programs.

All programs participating in the 5th Quarter of Learning will adopt a common set of performance measures, tracked by Boston After School & Beyond.

As young people continue to grapple with the effects of COVID-19 and a mental health crisis, these programs provide critical intervention for youth facing adversity, and help them to improve across all metrics, all while having fun. Boston After School & Beyond and PEAR, has certified its first cohort of 25 program leaders in developmental resilience, equipping them with the skills to help youth adversity into resilience through participation in programs.

The 5th Quarter of Learning is a resource open to Boston students, kindergarten to grade 12, at no cost. For more information and to find a program, visit [bostonbeyond.org/summer-programs](http://bostonbeyond.org/summer-programs).

## HARBORWALK (from pg. 7)

conditions: wharf, seawall, and park. Using the latest data around both flood and heat vulnerability, the toolkit offers visual examples of how, in each scenario, planners and developers can create an equitable and accessible Harborwalk that is

responsive to changing climate conditions.

The toolkit was designed by Boston Harbor Now fellow Rocio Alonso, in collaboration with the Boston Harbor Now planning and policy team.



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# Officials announce launch of Boston Rodent Action Plan

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

Mayor Michelle Wu announced the launch of the Boston Rodent Action Plan (BRAP), a new coordinated, multi-agency initiative to mitigate the rodent population in Boston and maintain an excellent quality of life established for Boston residents, families, and visitors. The City of Boston also released the BRAP report, commissioned by the Inspectional Services Department (ISD) and authored by Dr. Bobby Corrigan, a leading Urban Rodentologist renowned across the country. The report details the factors contributing to the urgent rodent population in the city. It will serve as a foundation for the BRAP's aim to improve ongoing City efforts to address this critical quality of life issue better impacting residents and neighborhoods across Boston.

"Boston takes pride in distinguishing our city through delivering exceptional basic city services for safe and clean streets, beautiful public spaces, and responsive and accessible city government," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "We're working to make Boston a home for everyone. Except for rats. Our rodent action plan, which is informed by this data-driven report, will guide our approach across our neighborhoods."

In an effort to better address areas of concern and coordinate actions taken by city departments, the City also has established a Boston Rodent Action Plan working group to target better prevention and intervention measures to address Boston's rat mitigation efforts. This group comprises relevant City departments including the Operations Cabinet, Inspectional Services Department, Public Works Department, Boston Public Health Commission, Parks and Recreation, Community Engagement Cabinet, Boston 311, Boston Housing Authority, Department of Innovation and Technology and the Boston Water and Sewer Commission. The working group

will ensure that we are using our City resources to address the root causes of rodent populations and drive engagement with residents and property owners to help keep neighborhoods and public spaces safe and clean.

"Boston doesn't like rats, and rat mitigation is one of the priority quality of life issues for this administration," said Chief of Operations Dion Irish. "We are excited and optimistic about the enhanced collaboration amongst city agencies whose work impacts rodent mitigation. Dr. Corrigan's report will be a valuable resource that will aid us in building on the great work already being done towards developing and implementing an action plan that prioritizes addressing root causes, utilizes data & technology, and reduces environmental hazards."

The report highlights various causes and effects of rodent infestation, including poor trash mitigation, storage, and removal. Given its position as one of the oldest cities in the Northeast, it also outlines Boston's infrastructure as an inherent factor that significantly influences the rodent population. This, coupled with densely populated neighborhoods, intertwining alleyways, old sewer systems, and century-old cobble or brick streets and sidewalks, provide an environment for rodents to thrive.

"The Rodent Action Plan is a strong tool to coordinate multiple City departments that play a crucial role in approaching this complex issue," said Inspectional Services Department Commissioner Tania Del Rio. "By integrating best practices in waste management, public education, infrastructure improvements, and environmentally friendly pest control, we are confident the BRAP will yield positive results for Boston's residents. The Inspectional Services Department is excited to be a part of this initiative."

"We strive to make our parks and green spaces feel like home to

Boston residents, and addressing the rodent issue is a crucial part of that mission," said Parks Commissioner Ryan Woods. "By integrating our efforts with the cross-departmental Boston Rodent Action Plan, we can ensure our parks and public spaces remain safe, clean, and enjoyable for everyone in our community."

"Every Boston resident deserves a home that is rodent free," said Boston Housing Authority Administrator Kenzie Bok. "At BHA, we know that it takes coordination between all city agencies and departments to effectively combat rats in a neighborhood. I applaud Mayor Wu for leading on this issue and I'm confident that this initiative will make a significant difference for the quality of life for our BHA residents and for families across Boston."

Broadly, the report outlines that the City take the following actions:

Build on the City's ongoing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach. Integrated pest management stresses addressing the environmental root causes first and from there utilizing various extermination approaches.

Ensure the goal of rat management program, whenever possible is preventative instead of reactionary.

Utilize data related to complaints, physical inspections, geo-mapping, population cluster models, and additional emerging technology to target efforts.

Establish a Priority Action Neighborhood (PAN) plan for the top 3-5 most afflicted neighborhoods to reduce currently established rodent hot spots.

Incorporate specialized infrastructure-specific rat control for Parks, Sewers and Alleys, and major construction zones.

Move towards alternative baits and other effective tools for controlling rats that do not present environmental threats to wildlife.

Dr. Corrigan's report emphasizes how human behavior signifi-

cantly contributes to the rodent population which he calls 'a modern-day city conundrum.' Storing trash in unprotected plastic bags is a norm in some areas of the city, which is a key factor in the rodent population. Dr. Corrigan also establishes that the No. 1 driver of rat populations in all cities, including Boston, is the food refuse dynamic, often disposed of in plastic bags. The report outlines that the City in partnership with residents, business owners and property owners changing this behavior will be critical in ultimately reducing the rodent population, and it needs to be done consistently throughout the city for a sustained period of time.

As Boston continues to grow as a city, tackling the rodent control challenge will require investment in data and technology aimed at mitigation. Dr. Corrigan, in the report, also suggests incorporating technology such as rodent sensors, remote rat monitor technology above ground, and shared routine camera scoping below

ground/sewers to trace infestations and vulnerabilities. Furthermore, the report highlights the need to manage trash in large housing complexes, parks, green spaces, sewers, and utility systems. Additionally, BPHC has determined that the current rodent population at this time does not pose a high public health threat to Bostonians.

The formation of this report and changes to the City's approach were informed by an extensive community engagement process during the annual Spring Pest Management Campaign led by ISD that runs from March through July. City workers conducted various neighborhood walkthroughs and administered rodent control treatment services to impacted areas, which also greatly informed residents, business owners, and elected officials of the challenges posed by Boston's rodent population. For more information regarding the Boston Rodent Action and an update on City efforts, please visit [boston.gov/rats](http://boston.gov/rats).

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Shown are some of the walkers from last year's event.

Lace up your walking shoes for our annual walk of Boston's largest park system, on Saturday, July 20 (rain date: July 21), 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

This 6-mile urban hike takes walkers from Franklin Park in Dorchester to the mouth of the Muddy River in Charlesgate Park, led by Conservancy President Karen Mauney-Brodek. Take

in the sights, sounds and the sheer scale of the Emerald Necklace on this special walk. We will make brief stops along the way to take in the scenery and learn about this historic parkland and the Conservancy's current work to restore, maintain and improve these green-spaces while championing better parks access for all.

The walk starts in Franklin

Park at the Shattuck Picnic Grove, extending 6 miles through the entire Emerald Necklace until it reaches Charlesgate Park. Stops include Jamaica Pond, the Kelleher Rose Garden, Allerton Overlook in Olmsted Park and more.

Event is free and open to all but registration is required: <https://www.emeraldnecklace.org/event/emerald-necklace-tour-2024/>.

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# Charlestown teens active in program

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

We are Charlestown teens. We write this column with concern for youth, teens, and our community's future. This past year we have participated in the Photovoice Project at NEW Health, a project that is funded by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Office of Problem Gambling Services. This project seeks to empower youth voice through the art of photography and educate youth and their communities on the impacts of problem gambling. This past year we have engaged in the critical work of building community by engaging in discussions about the things that impact our lives, both the good and the bad.

Positive influences in our lives include family, friends, our schools, sports, and our cultures. Challenges that Charlestown, Greater Boston, and all of the U.S. face that impacts our lives include systemic racism, gentrification, food insecurity, homelessness, and gun violence. For the Photovoice

Project we were tasked with identifying an issue that our community faces that we wanted to speak on. We have collectively chosen to address gun violence. Together we have come up with the tagline "Drop a Gun, Save a Life" to reflect how gun violence has affected us in our personal lives and our communities.

Gun violence impacts everyone. We are teens ranging in age from 12-17. As students, we have witnessed multiple U.S. school shootings in our lifetime through the news and social media. As of 2017, the number one cause of death among children, adolescents, and young adults results from fire-arm related injuries. Since the 1999 Columbine school shooting, over 370,000 U.S. students have experienced gun violence in school. Furthermore, it is estimated that 4.6 million kids in the U.S. live in a home with at least one gun that is loaded and unlocked. In Charlestown, gun violence threatened and disrupted Charlestown High School graduation just 2 years



Shown are some of the teens involved with the NEW Health project.

ago. The majority of us in this cohort have already witnessed at least one incidence of gun violence in our life, if not multiple incidences. Given these shocking statistics and events in our own community and communities around us, we feel unsafe for ourselves and for the safety of others.

We hope to raise awareness of

the dangers that come with gun violence and how they are harmful to youth and our communities. In an effort to increase awareness on gun violence safety, prevention, and resources we've created a QR code that includes gun violence resources in English and Spanish. Flyers with these barcodes will be posted around Charlestown at the

following locations: Charlestown Public Library, Charlestown High School, Charlestown YMCA, Bunker Hill Housing Office, Turn It Around, the Charlestown Boys and Girls.

We hope you utilize these resources provided and have an increased awareness on the dangers of gun violence.

## FRESH AND LOCAL

### Take it down a notch!

By Penny & Ed Cherubino

When chefs cook at home, they don't "take it up a notch." Think about the meaning of that expression. The website "The Idioms" offers this definition. "If you take it up a notch, you increase the effort or intensity exerted in a situation."

In the last few years, chefs have gone public and admitted they "take it down a notch" when they cook at home. After all, at home, they don't have prep cooks who peel, chop, and measure portions. They don't have a team of dishwashers and pot scrubbers to clean up after them. And, while they could have the hundreds of ingredients available in professional kitchens, most of them don't duplicate that pantry at home.

#### David Chang and the Microwave

Chef David Chang seldom cooked at home. During the lockdown, when he had to cook to feed his family, he found an easier way to do it. He developed new guiding principles "...to create something as delicious as possible, in the least amount of time possible, while making as little mess as possible."

From this experience came

the award-winning cookbook he authored with food journalist Priya Krishna: "Cooking at Home: Or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying About Recipes (And Love My Microwave.)" It's widely available on local library systems and is a relatively inexpensive ebook.

It may seem strange for us to recommend a cookbook for you to learn to cook without one, but this would be a great place to start for anyone who would like to relax in the kitchen and take their cooking down a notch.

He's not the only one fitting the microwave into their cooking principles. You now see the cooks on America's Test Kitchen, Jamie Oliver, the "normal" home cooks, and chefs on the popular "Sorted Food" YouTube videos using the microwave in new and surprising ways.

Another appliance that can serve David Chang's principles is the Air Fryer. We've not tried one yet, but a friend just offered us one she replaced with a larger version.

#### Entertaining

Some home cooks have always been a bit afraid of entertaining, and posts on social media have

increased that fear. Years ago, we learned that something simple, offered in friendship with a side of great conversation, can be the perfect answer.

Penny gave a last-minute dinner invitation to a rather sophisticated gentleman who traveled widely for his work and had been very helpful to her. She cautioned that it would only be a stew she had made the day before. He quickly told her that would be perfect. When he was on the road, dining out with clients, he constantly craved a simple home-cooked meal. The evening was a great success. We found many things we had in common that made for an even better working relationship in the following years.

One-pot meals are great for entertaining, especially those you can make ahead and keep warm until it's time to serve. Offering comfort food that is familiar and easy to eat can make a guest very happy.

Our advice: relax! Your food does not have to be Instagramable. You are not in a cooking competition. You can get better results by using fewer but better ingredients and cooking simply instead



For this simple farmers' market meal, our stuffed pepper and sweet corn were cooked in the microwave.

of fancy. Always remember one of David Chang's guiding principles. He explained that when cooking in a restaurant, you always have to hit the bull's-eye. Then he wrote, "Cooking at home, you don't need to hit the bull's-eye, you just need

to hit the target."

Do you have a question or topic for Fresh & Local? Email Penny@BostonZest.com with your suggestion.