

Wishing you and your families a happy holiday
and a healthy, happy New Year

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2024



FREE

CHARLESTOWN

PATRIOT-BRIDGE



COURTESY PHOTO

Charlestown Community joined the Boston Parks and Recreation Department and local elected officials for a groundbreaking ceremony at Ryan Playground.

Groundbreaking ceremony at Ryan Playground

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

On Thursday, December 19, members of the Charlestown Community joined the Boston Parks and Recreation Department and local elected officials for a groundbreaking ceremony at Ryan Playground. The \$25 million project will rejuvenate the fields that have served as the longtime home of the Charlestown Little League.

Leading off the program, Interim Boston Parks Commissioner Liza Meyer described how the renovations to this area were shaped by community feedback with support from Charlestown Youth Sports Association, Charlestown Little League, and Charlestown Mothers Association as well as the Mystic River Watershed Association. They will feature new natural grass little league fields – supported by equipment storage areas and shaded dugouts – as well as multi-use field space, designed to support soccer, and other sports. The Bryan McGonagle street hockey rink will also be renovated

and will continue to support year-round play.

The plan includes recreation opportunities for community members of all ages. There will be a new colorful children's play area with equipment for 2–5-year-olds and 5–12-year-olds, including a splash pad. There will also be space for community gathering and active recreation, including a fishing spot and terraced seating.

Past and present leaders of the Charlestown Little League, including longtime coach and supporter Tom Ward, and former league president Cathy Reese were present for the ceremony. Speaking at the event, current league president Josh Bresler tapped into the sense of magic that comes from families gathering around these fields on Saturdays and described his excitement for how these improvements will enhance the experience for the more than 300 families in the league that rely on them. State Representative Dan Ryan recounted his childhood experiences on this field and tied those experienc-

es to his enthusiasm for what these fields will mean for future Charlestown families. "This project will allow generations to continue to hear the crack of a Little League bat...memories that last a lifetime," he said.

Brian Swett, Chief Climate Officer described how the plan is focused on the concept of climate resilience and flood prevention. He emphasized how this area is a key arrival point for flood waters that threaten the surrounding area. To confront this problem, a waterfront promenade and play area will be built atop a 6-foot flood barrier berm that will protect against rising sea levels and storm surges. Areas of the park will also be elevated by two feet to further safeguard against extreme weather.

Boston City Councilor Gabriela Coletta Zapata (District 1) described how "Ryan Playground is an example of the necessary climate-resilient projects to enhance

(PLAYGROUND Pg. 4)

Healey, Driscoll, GM Eng celebrate removal of slow zones on 'T' for the first time in 20 Years

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

Gov. Maura Healey, Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll and MBTA General Manager Phillip Eng joined MBTA workers and riders at North Station in celebrating the completion of the T's Track Improvement Program and the removal of slow zones for the first time in 20 years. Since 2023, the MBTA removed more than 220 speed restrictions and replaced 250,000 feet of rail across the system, saving riders 2.4 million minutes every weekday and generating nearly \$1 million in economic benefit every day.

"This is an awesome milestone.

We knew when we first took office that it was essential that we improve safety and reliability on the T. So, we got General Manager Eng and his team into place, and they developed and executed on their strategy with our strong support. And as a result, riders are getting more time back in their days and our entire economy is seeing the benefits," said Governor Maura Healey. "I want to extend my deep gratitude to the T workers who made all of this work possi-

(SLOW ZONES Pg. 3)

Wu announces White Stadium lease agreement with Boston Unity

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

Mayor Michelle Wu announced the City of Boston has executed a Lease Agreement and BPS Stadium Usage Agreement with Boston Unity Soccer Partners, paving the way for the largest investment into BPS Athletics and White Stadium since it opened in 1949. This renovation and ongoing lease arrangement will transform the facilities and opportunities for Boston Public School students, Franklin Park lovers, and all community members. The new White

Stadium complex will anchor youth sports in Boston with state-of-the-art facilities for multiple sports, as well as modern locker rooms, sports medicine, strength and conditioning for all students, and a much-desired community event space. The project will also host robust community programming; help implement needed park upgrades outlined in the Franklin Park Action Plan; and create a home for Boston's National Women's Soccer League (NWSL)

(AGREEMENT Pg. 9)

WE WILL BE CLOSED NEW YEARS DAY

HOLIDAY
DEADLINES

PUBDATE: 1/2/24 DEAD: FRI 12/27/24

Healey appoints Sheriff Peter Koutoujian as member of MBTA Board of Directors

Special to the Times

Governor Maura Healey appointed Sheriff Peter J. Koutoujian to serve as the newest member of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Association (MBTA) Board of Directors. Sheriff Koutoujian will be the public safety designee. Earlier this year, Governor Healey appointed Tom McGee to serve as Chair of the Board, following the resignation of Chair Tom Glynn.

"I'm proud to be appointing Sheriff Koutoujian to the MBTA Board of Directors, where he will work with this strong team of leaders to move us forward in our mission to deliver the high-quality MBTA service that riders deserve," said Governor Healey. "As a legislator and a Sheriff, he has always

prioritized the health and safety of the people of Massachusetts, which is an important perspective to have on the Board."

"Sheriff Koutoujian is a highly respected and trusted leader, and we are excited that he will join the team at the MBTA Board of Directors," said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. "We look forward to continuing to work with the Board, Secretary Tibbits-Nutt and General Manager Eng to make the T more safe and reliable for all of our communities."

"The Healey-Driscoll Administration values leaders who have strong working relationships with community members, and Peter Koutoujian has demonstrated during his career that he is approachable and sensitive to the needs of the public," said Trans-

portation Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt. "We look forward to working with him as we transform the MBTA into a public transportation system that is safe, reliable, and equitable."

"I've worked with Sheriff Koutoujian for years, and I know him to be an exceptionally talented leader who is committed to the safety and wellbeing of the people of Massachusetts," said former MBTA Board of Directors Chair Tom Glynn. "The MBTA's top priority is delivering safe and reliable service, and his extensive experience in public safety and law enforcement will be a valuable addition to the Board."

About the Nominee:

Peter Koutoujian is currently the Middlesex County Sheriff. A former public defender, prosecu-

tor, legislator, professor, and law enforcement leader, Sheriff Koutoujian has worked on leading issues in public safety and public health throughout his career. His work has earned him local and national recognition, including being named the national Sheriff of the Year for 2023 by the Major County Sheriffs of America.

Sheriff Koutoujian previously served as a State Representative from 1997-2011. He served as Chair of the Committee on Health Care and created the Commission on Oxycontin and Other Drug Abuse and the Commission to End Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities. He holds a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, a law degree from the New England School of Law,

and a bachelor's degree in psychology from Bridgewater State University.

Sheriff Koutoujian has also earned honors as one of the nation's most prominent Armenian-American officials, including the U.S. Ellis Island Medal of Honor as well as the Mkhitaryan Gosh Medal and Medal of Gratitude from the Armenian government. While the Sheriff still lives in his hometown of Waltham, he enjoys traveling to his wife Elizabeth's hometown in Madrid, Spain with their three children: Peter, Cristian, and Isabel.

Sheriff Koutoujian will continue to serve as Sheriff, in addition to his new role on the MBTA Board of Directors.

This Hanukkah, Charlestown to shine brighter than ever with Jewish pride and confidence

This Hanukkah, The USA and the world over is seeing a surge in public displays of the holiday and Jewish identity, with many more families and individuals planning to light their menorahs in visible places, such as their doors or windows. ChabadCX (a division of Jewish Cambridge) will light a public menorah erected at the Bunker Hill

Monument, followed by a community celebration on January 1st, the 8th night of Hanukkah.

"At this fraught time for the Jewish community, with war in Israel and American Jews facing a major rise in antisemitism, this year we are doing more to celebrate Hanukkah with joy and Jewish pride," said Rabbi Berel Grunblatt. "The Menorah and Hanukkah represent freedom of the human spirit, freedom from tyranny and oppression, and of the victory of good over evil."

The ceremony will feature a menorah lighting and an array of entertainment for all ages including live music, as well as a selection of traditional Hanukkah foods. Throughout the state of Massachusetts, Chabad-Lubavitch will be presenting dozens of Hanukkah events and celebrations, including public menorah lightings, ice menorah displays, car-top menorah parades, community gatherings, giant dreidel houses, Chanukah Wonderlands and more.

This year's celebrations carry added significance as they mark 50 years since the first public menorah which was lit at the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia in 1974. The public menorah was lit after the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of blessed memory, launched the worldwide Hanukkah campaign in 1973 to build awareness and promote observance of Hanukkah. Today, public menorahs and Hanukkah displays have become a staple of Jewish cultural and American public life, forever altering the American practice and perception of the festival.

This year's Hanukkah campaign will be one of unprecedented light and joy, seeing Chabad reach more than 8 million Jews in more than 100 countries. Charlestown's menorah is one of over 15,000 large public menorahs throughout the world, including notable menorahs in front of the White House, the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, the Great Wall of China, and Berlin's Brandenburg Gate.

Celebrating Hanukkah is a potent point of light, Jewish pride and confidence for American Jews in the fight against darkness and antisemitism," added Rabbi Berel Grunblatt. "The celebration of Hanukkah underscores the G-d endowed liberty that is at the heart of what America represents."

CHARLESTOWN

CHANUKAH CELEBRATION

WEDNESDAY, JAN 1
4:30 PM
BUNKER HILL MONUMENT

MENORAH LIGHTING

LIVE MUSIC

JELLY DONUTS

for more information: info@chabadcx.org
A project of Jewish Cambridge

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Office of Housing celebrates GrowBoston accomplishments

Special to the Patriot-Bridge

The Mayor's Office of Housing announced the highlights and accomplishments of GrowBoston: Office of Urban Agriculture over the last year. Through innovative programs and targeted investments, GrowBoston continues to expand urban agriculture, improve food security, and enhance community green spaces across the city.

"I'm so proud of what our team has accomplished this year," said Shani Fletcher, Director of GrowBoston. "By expanding opportunities for local growers and beekeepers and supporting communities to establish new food production spaces, we're building on decades of work to make food production

more accessible and sustainable. These achievements are a testament to our team's dedication to creating a greener, healthier Boston for all."

Throughout 2024, the GrowBoston Grassroots Open Space Development Program awarded seven grants totaling \$950,000. These funds, ranging from \$50,000 to \$150,000 per project, will support neighborhood-based groups in Roxbury, Mattapan, Charlestown, and Jamaica Plain. The grants aim to develop and improve community gardens and open spaces in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods. Selected through a rigorous review process, the projects were evaluated based on design, community participation, and alignment with the

City's diversity, equity, and inclusion principles.

As part of its Raised Bed Grant Program, GrowBoston allocated more than \$385,000 to six projects, enabling the construction of 532 raised garden beds across Boston. These gardens will enhance local food systems, providing low-income and food-insecure households with the resources to grow their own produce. The program underscores the City's dedication to addressing food insecurity while empowering residents to take an active role in their food production.

"At The Food Project, my favorite part of the job is supporting people taking the step to grow

(GROWBOSTON Pg. 11)



Some of the food grown with the help from GrowBoston.

SLOW ZONES (from pg. 1)

ble, as well as to the T riders who endured years of unreliable service and shutdowns. We thank you for your patience during this time and for your continued commitment to public transportation in Massachusetts. We know there is still work to be done. We're going to continue to invest in the T, and Phil and the team are going to continue working every day to deliver the world-class service that Massachusetts deserves."

"Each of these 2.4 million minutes saved is time back to the people of Massachusetts to spend more time with their families, pick the kids up from school, make a doctors' appointment that they've been putting off for too long, or make a stop in a local small business," said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. "We're so proud of the work that Phil and his team have accomplished with the support of T riders, and we're committed to ensuring they continue to have the resources they need to deliver even more of this progress."

"The completion of the Track Improvement Program is an outstanding accomplishment toward furthering the Healey-Driscoll Administration's commitment to providing safe, reliable, equitable, and accessible public transportation for all riders," said Transportation Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt. "General Manager Eng, our project delivery teams, and the crews on the front lines all deserve tremendous credit for their part in this momentous work. We have appreciated the strategic management by MBTA officials for these projects and have been grateful to riders for their patience while this critical work was underway."

"This has been a true team effort, and I want to thank everyone—from planning and construction to those maintaining our system and communicating with the public. All MBTA employees played a vital role in moving us one step closer to a state of good repair," said MBTA General Manager Phillip Eng. "Thank you to our workforce for their diligence, and to our riders for their patience throughout the process. I also want to acknowledge Governor Healey and Lieutenant Governor Driscoll for their leadership and support of our workforce. Our goal is to continue the positive momentum by focusing on accessibility and signal upgrades in 2025, as well as staying on top of preventative maintenance to ensure the T delivers safe, reliable and frequent service to best serve the public today as we build for future generations."

The Track Improvement Program has been a bold and ambitious initiative to eliminate speed restrictions across the subway system and bring the MBTA's tracks closer towards a State of Good Repair. With the completion of the Green Line work on December 20, the MBTA subway system has undergone key track upgrades,

including the replacement of over 15,400 feet of full depth track reconstruction, the replacement of approximately 38,000 ties, the installation of nearly 251,500 feet of new rail, and the performance of nearly 325,000 feet of tamping.

This major achievement was made possible by 23 full-access closures across various lines throughout the year, ranging from weekend closures to several days or even weeks of work. These closures allowed for safe and efficient construction, ultimately enhancing the safety of riders and workers alike while improving reliability and reducing delays. Uninterrupted work was a key factor in the expeditious completion of the project.

As a result of these improvements, roundtrip travel time has been significantly reduced for riders: over 20 minutes on the Orange Line, nearly an hour on the Red Line, 4 minutes on the Blue Line, and almost 9 minutes on the Green Line.

The MBTA's efforts show that, on average, heavy rail riders on the Red, Orange, and Blue Lines now collectively save 2.4 million minutes per weekday due to the removal of speed restrictions. This

translates to \$950,000 in daily economic benefits, representing an estimated \$300 million in annual savings for the region. This milestone highlights the positive impact of enhanced rail operations for commuters following the first multi-day Ashmont service outage in October 2023.

The completion of the Track Improvement Program marks the culmination of a year of progress for the Healey-Driscoll Administration's goal of improving reliability and safety across the system. Governor Healey delivered the highest level of state funding to the T for the first time in 20 years, including leveraging \$600 million from Fair Share funding to sup-

port rail and station upgrades. The T also launched a first-of-its-kind reduced fares program, as well as a new contactless payment system.

In the future, speed restrictions may be needed from time to time if warranted by a changing track condition – this is normal and common across all passenger rail service providers. As a result of the successful Track Improvement Program that has taken place over the last year, the MBTA is now well-positioned to quickly respond to any track issues that may arise. If and when new restriction are required, they will be addressed promptly to continue to provide riders with the safe and reliable service they deserve.

CHARLESTOWN GYM HOCKEY

FINAL STANDINGS OF THE SEASON

	W	L	T
Massport's Finest	10	0	4
Duce 2	8	2	4
Halligan Club	4	4	6
YMCA	2	7	5
A-1 Convenience	1	8	5
McCarthy Bros.	0	8	6

Players of the week 12/21/2024

A-1 Convenience - Wylie Whitman, Andrew Flaherty

Duce 2 - Oskar Hmura, Dominic Reardon

Halligan Club - Colton Morales, Clara McNiff

Massport's Finest - Charlotte Bagshaw, Carli Alexandre

McCarthy Bros. - Martin Forbes, Colin Murphy

YMCA - Callen Chambers, Conor DeRosa



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EDITORIAL

MERRY CHRISTMAS

This is the most wonderful time of the year, to paraphrase the popular song, with holiday music playing in the malls and on our car radios, resurrecting our earliest childhood memories of Christmases-past.

We choose just the right tree, decorate it carefully with our family-heirloom ornaments, and when we first turn on the lights, it brings a smile to the faces of even the most-jaded among us.

Despite our hectic rushing to and fro, everybody, it seems, is in a good mood. We endure the traffic and the long lines in stores because we know that what we are doing will bring joy and happiness to others.

For those of us with young children, we get to see Christmas through their eyes, giving us a second chance to experience the wonder and joy that we felt when we were their age.

Although all of us celebrate the holiday season in our own way, the common thread is one of peace, joy, and happiness, regardless of religious or secular beliefs. Whether it be Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, or a Seinfeldian Festivus, the spirit of the season imbues us with a sense of togetherness that transcends whatever negativity may exist both in our own lives and in the world around us.

We wish all of our readers a Merry Christmas and a happy holiday season.

HAPPY HANUKKAH

The eight-day observance of Hanukkah, also known as the Festival of Lights, that started Wednesday evening, December 25, and will culminate on Thursday, January 2.

Hanukkah is observed for eight nights and days by lighting the candles of the Menorah, one on each day of the eight-day celebration. (The Menorah itself consists of nine candles, one of which typically stands above the rest and is used to light the other eight.)

Hanukkah commemorates the victory of the Maccabees in 166 BCE when the Maccabees liberated the Jewish people from the Greek-based rulers who essentially had outlawed the Jewish religion.

When the triumphant Maccabees captured the city of Jerusalem, they quickly entered the Holy Temple, tossing out the images of the Greek gods that had been installed there by the occupying rulers. When the Maccabees went to light the Menorah candles in the Temple, they thought they only had one day's worth of oil. However, the candles remained lit for eight days -- hence the miracle of the Festival of Lights.

Hanukkah usually is a joyous occasion for Jews world-wide, marked by gatherings of friends and families and the playing of traditional games such as the dreidel and eating traditional -- and delicious! -- foods such as latkes. Needless to say, in the aftermath of the events of October 7, 2024, as well as the subsequent increase in anti-semitic incidents, Hanukkah this year will have special meaning for Jews the world over.

We wish to take this opportunity to wish our friends and readers of the Jewish community a happy, healthy, and joyful Hanukkah season and we join them in solidarity against anti-semitism in all its forms.

ENJOY THE HOLIDAYS SAFELY

The upcoming holiday week means that most of us will be partaking in traditional gatherings with our families, friends, and co-workers to share the joy of the holiday season.

Unfortunately, this also means that many among us will be overindulging in holiday "spirits."

It is the responsibility of each of us to ensure that where alcohol is present, it is used responsibly, not only by ourselves, but by those around us at our holiday gatherings. None of us wants to wake up the next morning with the regret, "If only I had taken their car keys."

We wish all of our readers a happy, and safe, holiday season.

EVENTS HAPPENING IN THE CITY OF BOSTON WILL BRING SOME PARKING RESTRICTIONS AND STREET CLOSURES

People attending these events are encouraged to walk, bike, or take public transit. Information on Bluebikes, the regional bike share service, may be found on the website and information on the MBTA may be found online. The MBTA advises riders to purchase a round-trip rather than a one-way ticket for a faster return trip. Walking is also a great way to move around.

Hanukkah Vehicle Procession – Thursday, December 26, 2024

The annual Hanukkah Vehicle Procession will be taking place in Brighton. The procession starts near Dighton Street and Chestnut Hill Avenue. Parking restrictions will be in effect to support the event from 1PM to 8PM on the following streets:

- Dighton Street, Both sides, from Chestnut Hill Avenue to the Winthrop School.

- Chestnut Hill Avenue, West side (odd side), from #5 Chestnut Hill Avenue (Bank of America) to Academy Hill Road.

First Night Boston 2025 – Tuesday, December 31, 2024

Parking restrictions will be in place on the following streets:

- Arlington Street, Both sides, from Beacon Street to Boylston Street
- Atlantic Avenue, East side, from East India Row to Commercial Street
- Atlantic Avenue, West side, from Commercial Wharf to Cross Street
- Beacon Street, Both sides, from Charles Street to Arlington Street
- Boylston Street, North side (Public Garden side), from Arlington Street to Charles Street
- Both sides, from Charles

Street to Tremont Street

- Cambridge Street, Both sides, from Court Street to Sudbury Street

- Cambridge Street, South side (even side), from Bowdoin Street to Somerset Street

- Charles Street, West side (Public Garden side) from Boylston Street to Beacon Street

- Charles Street South, West side (odd side, opposite the Transportation Building) from Park Plaza to Boylston Street

- Court Street, East side (City Hall side) from Court Square inbound to Cambridge Street

- Tremont Street, Both sides from Court Street to Boylston Street

Events such as parades, road races, and street fairs may require road closures to accommodate the activities.

PLAYGROUND (from pg. 1)

our climate resiliency and protect our residents and vital infrastructure from the threats posed by climate change." She said that it will "serve as an outdoor space for recreation and connection, ensuring a greener and more resilient future for all Boston residents."

Initial construction on the project is slated to start with excavation and subgrade work this win-

ter, and the park construction is scheduled to begin in the spring 2025. The project is projected to last approximately 18 months.

During this the construction phase of this project, the Charlestown Little League will use alternative field space in Charlestown and in neighboring towns. League President Josh Bresler expressed optimism that the league would

continue to thrive during this period away from Ryan playground. He emphasized that, while the physical aspects of the new project are amazing, "it's really the people and the soul of the place and everyone that comes out here and enjoys it that makes it what it is."

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CHARLESTOWN HOLDS HOLIDAY NIGHT OUT

The Charlestown Holiday Night Out is an evening where local merchants keep their stores open a little later and offer refreshments for shoppers as the holidays grow closer. Pop-up stores of local artisans are included as well. This year saw an unseasonably warm but rainy and windy night, yet shoppers still came out to support their local merchants.



Logan Vassos has some fun with the holiday spirit at Junebug.

DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN PHOTO



Junebug staff Lucia Martin wraps up a purchase to be transformed into a gift.



Junebug had many fun gift ideas to brighten up any home.



Olivia and Dani Gautreau, asked for a hamster from Santa who had to remind them that live animals aren't comfortable on his sleigh ride and steered them to more portable ideas. Branch manager and history reenactor Tom Coots was impressed with Santa's sales skills.



TCB "elves" Quinn, Asbok, and Carol helped Santa in bringing the holiday spirit to the bank.

CHARLESTOWN HOLDS HOLIDAY NIGHT OUT

DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN PHOTO



Mockingbird owner Lauren Thompson welcomes customers to search for gifts in her store.



Sharing some pop-up store space at Mockingbird are baker Jodi Petersen and family photographer Phoebe Addis holding some of Jodi's cookies.



Jack and Tucker Hampton wait patiently while their parents get some shopping done at Monroe.



Shoppers look over the fine home furnishings at Monroe.



Melinda and Malcolm Stewart braved the deluge to partake on the Holiday Night Out.



Visitors to Monroe enjoy a beverage break together in their shopping quest.



Some fun T-shirts for children were available at Mockingbird.

CHARLESTOWN HOLDS HOLIDAY NIGHT OUT

DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN PHOTO



Monument was the place to be to unwind from all the shopping fun.



At Monument, author Lindsay Cadigan introduces her new book "The Confetti Yeti Celebrates Christmas Kindness" and bartender Nathalie offers complimentary hot cocoa.



Place & Gather has many fun gift ideas to brighten anyone's day.



Maya and Blakely Vassos share secret intel on gifts at Junebug.

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Christmas tree ornaments call out for me homes for the holidays.

CHARLESTOWN HOLDS HOLIDAY NIGHT OUT

DEREK KOUYOUMJIAN PHOTO



Shoppers browse at Place & Gather.



At Place & Gather, Violet Plaisted helps her parents find special gifts to give.



Shoppers look over the fine home furnishings at Monroe.



Knit hats showing Charlestown pride were available at Place & Gather.



Charlestown flag earrings on sale at Place & Gather.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

The Patriot-Bridge encourages residents to submit engagement, wedding and birth announcements, news releases, business and education briefs, sports stories and photos for publication. Items should be forwarded to our offices at 385 Broadway, Revere, MA 021

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AGREEMENT (from pg. 1)

team. The City and Boston Public Schools will retain ownership of the stadium and will have priority in stadium scheduling.

First opened in 1949, White Stadium has been deteriorating for decades, particularly since a fire in the 1990s rendered a large section of the facility unusable, and multiple efforts to kickstart renovations over several decades have fallen through. The City's carefully negotiated plan, shaped and propelled forward by extensive community input, represents the first concrete steps to fix White Stadium in more than 60 years. When completed, White Stadium will be one of three carbon neutral stadiums in the country. Construction is expected to begin in January.

"Delivering excellent education for BPS students includes ensuring the fullest access to sports, arts, and enrichment of every kind across the city. White Stadium is a generational opportunity to anchor citywide youth sports, revitalize community programming, and bolster our beloved, historic Franklin Park—all while creating a home for the City of Champions' newest professional team," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "I'm so grateful for all the community members, coaches, students, and park lovers who helped shape this project to reflect the community's dreams for the next generation. Thank you to Boston Unity Soccer Partners for their commitment to our students and community, and their comprehensive investment to make this dream a reality."

"This is an exciting moment for BPS and our student athletes who are so deserving of a world class facility to call home," said Mary Skipper, Superintendent of Boston Public Schools. "This major investment by the City and Boston Unity Soccer Partners will have direct and lasting benefits for BPS students who will have access to state-of-the-art facilities where they can study, train and compete. The new White Stadium will also provide us with an opportunity to continue expanding on our storied athletics program. I'm incredibly proud to bring this project another step closer to reality for BPS students and I can't wait to see our teams compete on this exceptional stage."

"We are incredibly proud that our team's home will be in the heart of the city through this generational public-private-community partnership to revitalize White Stadium," said Jennifer Epstein, Controlling Owner of Boston Unity Soccer Partners. "This transformative milestone enables our club to deliver a lasting, year-round impact for Boston Public School

student-athletes while uplifting the surrounding neighborhoods and businesses and providing a world-class facility for our home games. A renewed White Stadium will honor its historic roots while providing an extraordinary fan experience and we are excited to take the pitch at this iconic venue for our inaugural season in 2026."

"This marks a historic step forward not just for the future of professional women's soccer in Boston, but for the entire sports community," said NWSL Commissioner Jessica Berman. "This agreement between the City of Boston and Boston Unity Soccer Partners is a shining example of how sports can serve as a catalyst for innovation and meaningful impact. We are thrilled to see this vision come to life and grateful to Mayor Wu and the countless community voices who have made this possible. This partnership sets a precedent for how public and private collaboration can elevate women's sports and leave a lasting legacy in our cities."

The project incorporates comprehensive feedback from neighborhood residents, BPS athletes and coaches, and the Franklin Park community—shared throughout more than 60 public meetings and small group community discussions and more than 900 public comment letters. The project was also vetted by and received approvals from the Boston Civic Design Commission, Zoning Commission, Parks Commission, Landmarks Commission, BPDA Board, and the Boston School Committee.

The financial and operational landlord/tenant arrangement between the City of Boston and Boston Unity Soccer Partners is defined by multiple legally binding documents outlining the public-private partnership to deliver, operate, and maintain the complex:

Cooperation Agreement: Outlines project scope and codifies commitments regarding mitigation, community benefits, and operational details as part of the Article 80 development review approval issued in July 2024.

Lease Agreement: Establishes financial terms and legal obligations for maintenance and operations of the facility.

Stadium Usage Agreement: Codifies responsibilities and usage terms including types of permissible activities, hours of operation, and noise level and lighting mitigation.

Work Letter: Defines the scope of construction and parameters for coordinating construction activities between the two structural

halves of the project.

BUSP/NWSL/City of Boston Side Letters: Reflects the team's, league's, and City's commitment to the unique partnership for the Boston Public Schools.

Through these legal agreements, the City of Boston, Boston Unity Soccer, and the NWSL are setting new standards for public benefit.

New or Renovated Amenities

With newly modernized facilities, White Stadium will sustain at least 700 programmable hours annually for BPS, ensuring year-round opportunities for student-athletes:

Regulation-size, eight-lane track and facilities for track and field for BPS to host state track meets, including new field events such as shot put and pole vault for the first time

Natural grass field for BPS soccer, end of season football, and other BPS sports teams

BPS student athlete locker rooms

BPS strength and conditioning spaces

BPS sports medicine facilities

BPS Athletics administrative offices and space for coaching staff
BPS student lounge spaces for studying

Community event space to foster academic and social growth and celebrate student achievements or host community events.

Freshly surfaced basketball courts outside the stadium

Resurfaced and expanded tennis courts within Franklin Park so BPS can host competitive tennis matches

Modernized and expanded BPS Athletic equipment storage

For park users and community members, new upgrades will also include investments laid out in the Franklin Park Action Plan:

Public restrooms and water fountains accessible throughout the year

Freshly paved and surfaced pathways outside the stadium

New lighting for enhanced safety and wayfinding outside the stadium

Stormwater infrastructure to address drainage issues and prevent flooding

Reopening an acre of green space in the park by removing fencing south of the current stadium that has long closed off public access

Expanded public offerings and programs in the Grove, connected to the nearby Playstead, Overlook, and future Elma Lewis Playhouse project

Enhanced seasonal maintenance as Boston Unity Soccer Part-

ners will assist the Parks Department in the Playstead and newly planted meadow areas around the stadium

Financial Terms

Boston Unity Soccer Partners will fund more than half of the construction costs for the new complex, as they will carry out construction of the West Grandstand, public restrooms, NWSL team spaces, scoreboard, stadium lighting, technology system, and the Grove area. The City will carry out construction of the East Grandstand, BPS student athletics spaces, the grass field, and the track. Boston Unity Soccer Partners will be responsible for ongoing operations and maintenance for the team's spaces and all the shared areas of the facility, including the field and track. See table below for a detailed breakdown of construction, maintenance, and usage responsibilities.

Boston Unity Soccer Partners will be responsible for ongoing financial payments to the City:

Rent: \$200,000 annualized first season payment, prorated for the number of months the field will be operational; \$400,000 annualized rent, in monthly payments starting in the second season, and escalating by 3% each year afterwards. Should the lease be extended beyond the first 10-year term, the base rent will increase by either 3% or the average annual increase in CPI over the last ten years, whichever is larger, with the 3% annual escalator continuing after the first year of the extension term.

Revenue-Sharing: 10% of in-stadium advertising revenues (except field naming rights revenue), 10% of field naming rights revenue, 3% of concessions revenue. The City reserves the right to pursue potential additional sponsorships or revenues exclusive to the City's areas as well.

Operations and Maintenance Reserve Fund: each quarter, 40% of in-stadium advertising revenues (except field naming rights revenue), 15% of field naming rights revenues, and 5% of concessions revenues will be deposited into an O&M Reserve Fund and used for such costs, but each year when the amount of reserves in the fund has been built up to 50% of the anticipated annual operations and maintenance costs, additional funds collected on this basis will be split 50%/50% between the City and BUSP as additional revenue sharing.

BUSP will also provide financial safeguards against potential project risks:

Prior to demolition, BUSP will fund a \$25 million Construction

Escrow Account that is restricted exclusively to fund direct construction costs on the site and requires City approval of expenditures. The escrow account cannot be reduced below \$10 million until total project financing is secured.

BUSP is subject to a \$45 million Pre-financing Guaranty, including escrowed funds, such that if BUSP fails to secure total project financing or cannot advance the renovation, the City will have significant extra resources to renovate White Stadium.

After BUSP secures project financing, subject to confirmation by the City, the team is contractually bound by a Completion Guaranty to complete all renovations outlined.

Community Benefits

BUSP will direct resources and investments into local community priorities:

Community Annual Fund: an annual contribution of \$500,000 in the first year, escalating by 3% annually, to be distributed to local organizations and initiatives

Franklin Park Preservation Fund: \$1 per NWSL ticket sold, to be directed toward implementing ongoing initiatives outlined in the Franklin Park Action Plan

Tree Bank: BUSP and the City will contribute to the planting of more than 500 trees within Franklin Park

Local Purchasing & Supplier Diversity: In coordination with the Black Men and Boys Commission, and under the leadership of the Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion, the City of Boston and Boston Unity will establish a Supplier Diversity Advisory Committee to help ensure MWBE businesses are aware of available contracting opportunities and reach 50% MWBE participation in design, construction, and operations

Jobs: BUSP will create up to 500 construction jobs and 300 permanent jobs

BPS partnerships: BUSP will provide scholarships, internships, and mentorship from the NWSL team to enhance opportunities available to BPS students

Sustainability: improvements in green infrastructure, all-electric facilities, and usage of green building materials

Stadium Usage

The legal arrangement will guarantee enhanced public access and codifies scheduling priority and parameters for students and community to enjoy the facilities:

Public access to the stadium and track for informal communi-

STADIUM (from pg. 9)

ty use 6am-9pm, or 15 hours per day including weekends (when not reserved for an event), instead of the current access from 8am-4pm on weekdays only

The City and BPS will have top scheduling priority for 12 major events per year, followed by BPS and NWSL games having co-priority in scheduling, then other City or City-permitted community events, then NWSL team practices, then other BUSP events as permitted by the City

NWSL usage limited to no more than 20 games per year (including playoff games) and one team practice in the week ahead of each scheduled game

To minimize late-night noise and activity, NWSL games must start by no later than 8:30pm; affiliated programming may only start two hours prior to the game

and must conclude by one hour after the game ends or 11:30pm, whichever is earlier

To protect time for BPS and community program during the day and on weekends, NWSL games cannot take place more than two weekends in a four-week period, and no more than four weekend games per season can start before 5pm

BUSP must ensure cleanup is completed within 3 hours after each game

Next year, the White Stadium Neighborhood Council will be created, to advise the City, BPS, the Parks Department, and BUSP on public programming and provide neighborhood feedback on stadium usage.

Transportation

The game day transportation

plan has been significantly refined through a robust community engagement process to minimize impacts on neighborhoods surrounding the park and will be codified in the Transportation Access Plan Agreement (TAPA) to be signed after construction documents are finalized. This represents the first comprehensive transportation strategy for major events at Franklin Park. Key elements of the game day transportation plan include:

Electric Shuttle System: Free electric shuttles for ticket holders from MBTA Orange and Red Line stations, as well as from satellite parking lots on game days

Multimodal Infrastructure: BUSP will fund a new Bluebikes station, secure bike parking, and a bike valet service

Parking Protections: Implemen-

tation of a resident permit parking system near White Stadium and an app-based parking system (via ParkBoston) for non-game visitors, including zoo visitors, golfers, and park permit holders

Enforcement and Oversight: Additional parking enforcement funded by BUSP to ensure efficient traffic and parking management

The City and BUSP will continue to create open dialogue with

the community throughout the project's implementation. Regular updates through the City and the White Stadium Neighborhood Council will empower even greater direct communication across all parts of our community as the transformative vision for White Stadium becomes a reality. For more information, visit boston.gov/white-stadium.

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GROWBOSTON (from pg. 3)

their own food,” said Danielle Andrews, Boston Farm Manager for The Food Project. “Last week, we installed a raised bed for an elderly woman who had recently lost her husband and moved in with her daughter in Dorchester. Gardening had been a childhood joy for her, and she was eager to reconnect with it while sharing the experience with her grandchildren. People apply for raised beds for many reasons—mental, physical, spiritual health, teaching their children, or saving on groceries. Every story is meaningful, and I’m grateful to the City of Boston for supporting a program that helps build healthier individuals and communities.”

Further bolstering this effort, the Urban Agriculture Ambassador Program awarded a total of \$352,000 to four grantees in East Boston, Mattapan, Dorchester, and Roxbury. Each grantee will provide one-on-one garden education and technical assistance to residents benefiting from the Raised Bed Program. These ambassadors will also facilitate community workshops, ensuring that public facilities and local gardeners receive the support they need to thrive.

A groundbreaking bee ordinance, crafted in collaboration with City Councilor Ruthzee Louijeune’s office and the Inspectional Services Department (ISD), was passed this year. This ordinance removes beekeeping from the zoning code and places it in the municipal code, making it allowable citywide under specific guidelines. Previously, beekeeping was permitted in only a small portion of Boston, forcing many to seek variances or operate without legal approval in order to engage in this aspect of urban agriculture. This change reflects Boston’s commitment to fostering sustainable urban agriculture practices while ensuring compliance with local regulations.

This year, GrowBoston published the 85-page Urban Agriculture Recommendations Report, a comprehensive guide to strengthening Boston’s urban agriculture landscape. The report includes

22 recommendations and 225 sub-recommendations designed to expand food production, improve access, and promote sustainability across the city. Currently in its second phase, the GrowBoston team is prioritizing actionable strategies from the report and actively working toward implementation, paving the way for future growth in Boston’s food systems and green initiatives.

The accomplishments of GrowBoston in 2024 reflect the City of Boston’s commitment to fostering resilience, sustainability, and equity through urban agriculture. By empowering local growers, collaborating with City Council as well as City agencies, and creating vibrant community spaces, GrowBoston is laying the groundwork for a healthier, greener future. The Mayor’s Office of Housing will continue to champion these efforts, ensuring that all Boston residents have access to the resources and opportunities needed to grow, thrive, and connect with their communities.

GrowBoston’s goal is to increase food production and support local food producers in Boston, including gardeners, farmers, beekeepers, and more. Our work builds on the long-term work of the Mayor’s Office of Housing (MOH). MOH, through the Grassroots Program, has been supporting the development of community gardens, urban farms, food forests, and other open spaces through land disposition and capital funding for more than 25 years. We work to increase food-growing spaces throughout Boston. We support the implementation of innovative food production strategies, such as rooftop growing, vertical growing, and hydroponics. GrowBoston provides technical help to prospective and existing gardens and farms. Our team develops educational and other food production resources for gardeners, farmers, and residents. We partner with sister agencies to leverage public facilities to increase food production. We also coordinate with other City departments to make food production more accessible in Boston.

**NORTH WASHINGTON STREET BRIDGE
CONSTRUCTION UPDATE**

The Construction Look-Ahead through January 4 for the North Washington Street Bridge is as follows:

Scheduled Work

- West sidewalk formwork and utility install
 - West pedestrian handrail installation
 - Southwest approach barrier and sidewalk work
 - Marine fender wood installation
 - Lovejoy walkway pile cap formwork
- Work Hours**
- Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.
 - Saturday from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Travel Tips

For everyone using the east sidewalk of the new bridge, please help share the space: walk to the

right, walk bikes, and be mindful of people coming from both directions, if walking in a large group.

Drivers should take care to pay attention to all signage and move carefully through the work zone. Police details, lane markings, temporary barriers, traffic cones, signage, and other tools will be used to control traffic and create safe work zones.

The Tudor Wharf Walkway (under the bridge next to the water in Paul Revere Park) will be intermittently closed for safety during construction operations, with access provided via the Water Street underpass. The Boston Harborwalk under the bridge and eastern/harborside bridge sidewalk remain closed until rebuilt.

The contractor is coordinating with the TD Garden and local police to provide awareness and

manage traffic impacts during events. For your awareness, the following TD Garden events are scheduled during this look-ahead period:

- Other events: Dec. 26, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

How can I find more information?

Stay up-to-date and informed by following @MassDOT on X, formerly known as Twitter, and Mass 511 for real-time updates, visiting the project website, or emailing us with any questions.

You can also sign up to receive project updates via email by clicking this link.

Project website: [Mass.gov/north-washington-street-bridge-replacement](https://www.mass.gov/north-washington-street-bridge-replacement)

Project email: NorthWashingtonStreet@dot.state.ma.us

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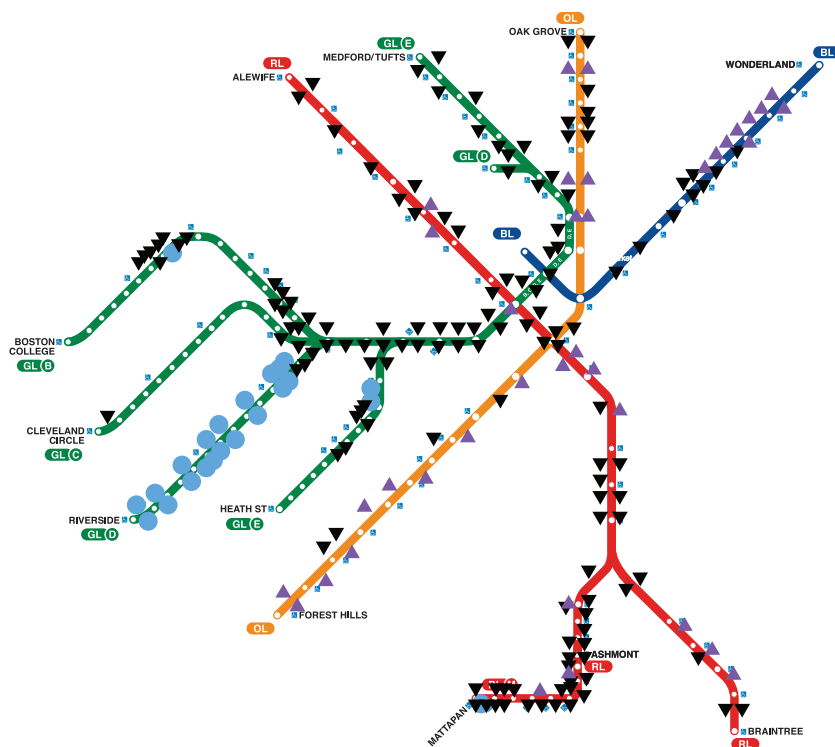
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Last fall, our MBTA map showed more than 200 slow zones across all our subway lines. Today? It's the way our system map should look – free of slow zones and ready to deliver smoother, faster, and safer rides for you. And now even when new slow zones do pop up occasionally, we are committed to removing them within 30 days. This milestone is thanks to months of tireless effort by our teams and the patience and support of our riders. While there's still more to come in 2025, this marks a significant leap toward a better MBTA experience for everyone.

So many reasons to **Get on Board.**

