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# East Boston

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Wednesday, January 7, 2026



MAYOR'S OFFICE PHOTO BY JOHN WILCOX

Mayor Michelle Wu stands with her family as she takes her Oath of Office from Judge Sarah G. Kim, Associate Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court during the Inauguration Ceremony at Symphony Hall. See pages 4-5 for more photos.

## City officials take oaths of office as Mayor Wu promises, 'Boston will be a beacon'

Staff Report

Boston Mayor Michelle Wu took the oath of office for the second time on Monday morning before a capacity crowd who witnessed the traditional

pomp and ceremony of a mayoral inauguration at Boston Symphony Hall.

Ron Cobb, the official City Messenger, attired appropriately in a top hat and tails, opened the official proceedings with an

introduction of the participants and elected officials.

City Clerk Alex Geourntas, who served as the Master of Ceremonies, then introduced

See OATHS Page 6

## Breadon elected City Council President

Coletta Zapata withdraws her candidacy

Staff Report

In a major political development that stunned East Boston residents, Liz Breadon was elected the new president of the Boston City Council at its first meeting of the year Monday following the inauguration ceremonies.

Local observers were expecting District 1 Council-

or Gabriela Coletta Zapata, who represents East Boston, Charlestown, and the North End, to be elected to the top leadership position on the 13-member board. In the weeks leading up to the vote, Coletta Zapata appeared to have garnered the support from her colleagues for the presidency. But

See COUNCIL Page 7

## HVNA supports Byron St. project

By Michael Coughlin Jr.

At Monday's Harbor View Neighborhood Association (HVNA) meeting, those in attendance voted to support a project that would bring new units to 60-62 Byron Street.

The proposal, as explained by Attorney Richard Lynds, is to demolish the existing multi-family building on the site and build a new three-story, six-unit building that includes

six parking spaces.

"That (the parking spaces) is something that is not required — we have an alternative proposal where we would construct essentially two three-family dwellings," Lynds said. "Our option is to do one single building as opposed to two separate buildings and then have the parking in the rear."

Lynds expanded on this, not-

See HVNA Page 6



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# East Boston

## Times-Free Press

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**EDITOR:** Cary Shuman **PUBLISHER EMERITUS:** John A. Torrione



# Forum

## PROUD OF OUR MAYOR

As we were watching this past Monday's inauguration ceremonies of city officials, and then listening to the inspiring Inaugural Address of Mayor Michelle Wu, it really hit home for us the extent to which Mayor Wu and our City Council embody the moment in which we are living.

Mayor Wu's speech, though relatively short (about 20 minutes), starkly laid out in no uncertain terms the extent to which our democracy is under attack. Her clarion call to oppose the forces that threaten to destroy everything that our nation and our city have accomplished since our founding 250 years ago was more direct than anything that we hear from our tired and aging politicians in Washington, most of whom are more concerned about their own self-preservation than they are about the future of our country.

As the daughter of immigrants from Taiwan, it is obvious that Mayor Wu has both a firm grasp of the ideals that have made America great and a clear vision of what it will take to make Boston a model city as we enter the middle part of the 21st century.

We wish Mayor Wu the best as she embarks on her second term as our mayor, knowing fully well that her success will be ours.

## THANK YOU, STRANGER THINGS

The long-awaited conclusion of the hit Netflix series, *Stranger Things*, finally arrived over the holiday week.

It's hard to believe that it has been more than nine years since the show became a cultural phenomenon when the first season debuted in the summer of 2016.

The series is set in the 1980s, rekindling fond memories of that era for anyone who was around at that time. There were no cell phones or personal computers and kids gathered in their basements to play *Dungeons and Dragons* with playing cards, game pieces, and handwritten notebooks.

For those who grew up in that era, the show was a trip down memory lane. Although we were a bit older in the '80s than the show's main characters -- who were in middle school when the series began -- what resonated for us was the photographer for the high school newspaper who developed his black & white film and printed his own photos in his red-light dark room.

It reminded us of an era of our life, which we largely had forgotten, when we too, were printing our photos for our newspapers in the dark room in the basement of our newspaper office. Today of course, all of our photos are digital and are transmitted via the internet with a few keystrokes on our cell phones and laptops -- long gone are the spools of 36-photo rolls of film, chemical solutions, and printing paper, not to mention the hours we spent in the dark room making sure that our photos were shaded just right for the next day's newspaper.

The show also introduced us to one of our favorite new actresses, Millie Bobby Brown, and resurrected an old favorite, Winona Ryder, who herself was a teen in the 1980s.

On the surface, *Stranger Things* can be viewed as a straight-up horror movie involving a parallel universe (known as the Upside Down) that is populated by alien demons and oozing black vines, along with the requisite government conspiracy.

Metaphorically, the Upside Down can be viewed in any number of ways, from the spread of cancer in the human body to having been prescient of what has transpired in the world since 2016 -- the upside down nature of our political life, the onset of the coronavirus, or perhaps the ubiquity of plastics in everything we eat, drink, and breathe.

But in the last scenes of the series finale, the show reminded us that it was at its best when it focused on the loss of innocence that we all undergo -- and endure -- when we transition from childhood to adulthood on the journey from middle school through high school.

That is a universal theme that is applicable to every generation -- and that was captured so well by *Stranger Things*.

## MassDOT announces 10th annual Safe Routes to School Program Yard Sign Design Contest

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), through its Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program, is pleased to announce the launch of the 2026 Yard Sign Design Contest. The annual contest raises awareness for transportation-related themes that help support school safety for walking and biking to school and is open to students in second through eighth grade who attend participating SRTS partner public schools. To become an SRTS partner, school administrators can connect with their Outreach Coordinator or fill out the online form.

"Massachusetts schools are ranked # 1 in the nation and under Governor Healey, safety for all will always be our top priority. As MassDOT launches this year's Safe Routes to School contest, we take great pride in partnering with schools, communities and today's youth to promote safety across all modes of travel to and from school," said Interim MassDOT Secretary and MBTA General Manager Phil Eng. "By making it fun for students and adults of all ages, it reminds us all that no matter what age we are, we can all participate, teach and learn. Watching the next generation help shape a safer, healthier transportation system for everyone who walks, bikes, rides and drives or takes transit across our state demonstrates the importance of education and that the future is bright."

This year's theme is centered around "no idling." Students are tasked with creating original designs that highlight the importance of turning off vehicle engines to promote a healthy environment for nearby pedestrians. For the fourth year in

a row, multilingual designs are highly encouraged.

All contest materials including a blank template will be available on the Safe Routes to School website under the Encouragement page. You can also view winning designs from past contest themes. All designs must be submitted by Monday, February 23, 2026.

The Massachusetts SRTS Program, sponsored by MassDOT and with funds from the Federal Highway Administration, promotes safer routes for students to actively get to and from school by fostering partnerships between community-led organizations, local law enforcement, education leaders, and public health departments. The Program currently serves more than

1,290 schools in over 285 communities across the Commonwealth. Through these partnerships, the Massachusetts SRTS Program highlights the importance of pedestrian and bicycle safety. SRTS also provides information, materials, and resources to support schools and communities with their local SRTS initiatives.

For more information on Massachusetts Safe Routes to School visit:

[www.mass.gov/safe-routes-to-school](http://www.mass.gov/safe-routes-to-school)

[www.facebook.com/SafeRoutes.MA](https://www.facebook.com/SafeRoutes.MA)

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### President

Stephen Quigley

[stephen.quigley@reverejournal.com](mailto:stephen.quigley@reverejournal.com)

### Advertising and Marketing

Debra DiGregorio – [deb@reverejournal.com](mailto:deb@reverejournal.com)

### Assistant Marketing Director

Maureen DiBella – [mdibella@winthroptanscript.com](mailto:mdibella@winthroptanscript.com)

### Senior Sales Associates

Sioux Gerow – [charlestownads@hotmail.com](mailto:charlestownads@hotmail.com)

### Legal Advertising

[legals@eastietimes.com](mailto:legals@eastietimes.com)

### Editorial

### Reporters, Regular Contributors

Cary Shuman – [cary@lynnjournal.com](mailto:cary@lynnjournal.com)

### Copy Editing, Layout

Scott Yates – [scott@chelsearecord.com](mailto:scott@chelsearecord.com)

Kane DiMasso-Scott – [kdscott@thebostonsun.com](mailto:kdscott@thebostonsun.com)

### Business

### Accounts Executive

Judy Russi

[judy.russi@eastietimes.com](mailto:judy.russi@eastietimes.com)

**Printer** – Concord Monitor

# Wu announces community benefits agreement with Kraft Group for Everett Stadium

Special to the Times-Free Press

Mayor Michelle Wu announced that the City of Boston and the Kraft Group have agreed on financial and operational terms of a community benefits package totaling nearly \$48 million over the next 15 years and additional commitments around project design review, local hiring, and regional transportation coordination. In addition to annual payments, the Kraft Group will make substantial infrastructure improvements in Sullivan Square in Charlestown prior to the stadium's opening and fund all public safety and transportation management costs for stadium events. This agreement comes after months of negotiations throughout 2025, in which Mayor Wu pursued a project mitigation package that would appropriately address the stadium's impacts on Boston. This final agreement — \$13 million in direct payments and a new, permanent per-ticket revenue source for the City, which is expected to total \$34 million in the first 15 years — follows

the Kraft Group's initial offer of \$750,000 in a one time payment for mitigation funds for the City. The deal was reached pursuant to provisions of the Mass Leads Act, the state's 2024 economic development bill, which required the Kraft Group to secure a community benefits agreement with Boston and Everett in order for the stadium project to move forward.

"The City fought for a fair deal for Boston and our residents, and that is what we have achieved through this agreement," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "After months of negotiations, we have secured commitments addressing the needs of Charlestown residents and feedback from community partners. This stadium will enhance Boston's position as the sports and entertainment capital of New England while transforming a blighted site on our doorstep. I'm grateful to all our neighborhood leaders and community advocates who helped us reach this important step, and the legislative leaders who ensured Boston would be at the table. We will continue

to engage with the project as it advances to the next stage of review."

"The language we passed into law made clear that the communities most affected by this project should have a voice in how this development moves forward," said Senator Sal DiDomenico. "I want to thank the cities of Everett and Boston, and the Kraft Group for coming together on agreements that address the needs of the communities and will have a positive and lasting impact in both Everett and Charlestown. I am happy to see the Revolution soccer stadium reach this critical step in making this transformational project a reality. The millions of dollars of investments in our communities continue to show that this stadium will result in economic and environmental wins for our residents."

To support the Charlestown neighborhood, which will be most impacted by the stadium, the Kraft Group will make an initial payment of \$3 million over six years which will be directed to the Charlestown

Community Impact Fund. The Fund was created in 2016 to distribute annual community mitigation funds from the Encore casino and annually supports a range of Charlestown organizations. The City also announced that of future annual ticket revenues, anticipated to be \$2 million per year, at least half will be directed to Charlestown-specific municipal projects.

The City and the Kraft Group also agreed to a set of terms to ensure the stadium will be a good neighbor to Boston. These include a commitment to establish an annual Traffic and Parking Management Plan to be approved by the City of Boston; a construction management plan executed with the City of Boston to reduce impacts on Charlestown during stadium construction; annual monitoring of traffic impacts; the creation of a ferry service dock at the stadium for water transportation; the construction of the stadium at 2070 flood resilience standards; prioritization of stadium design features in compliance with zero net carbon operational goals; noise and light pollution mitigation

requirements; prioritized hiring for Boston residents for stadium jobs; a commitment to solicit 25% of both construction and ongoing contracts from local minority, woman owned, and/or veteran owned companies; and an agreement for the Kraft Group to participate in regional working groups to address regional transportation concerns.

"I want to thank Mayor Wu and her team for their tireless efforts in getting the best possible deal for Charlestown on this transformative project," said State Representative Dan Ryan. "There is still a long way to go in this process but the community agreement between the City of Boston and the New England Revolution is a good first step in ensuring that the infrastructure needs of this part of the region are addressed and that Charlestown benefits from this transformation."

"Charlestown has been clear that a project of this scale must come with real mitigation," said City Councilor Gabriela Colletta Zapata. "After months of negotiations, the City secured

See STADIUM Page 7

## EAST BOSTON CHAMBER NEWS

### EAST BOSTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND KAORI CAFE COFFEE CONNECT 4

Please join the Chamber and Kaori Cafe for coffee and networking featuring coffee from the newly opened Kaori Cafe.

Friday January 23

8:30 to 10:30 am

303 Meridian Street, East Boston

eastbostonchamberofcommerce@gmail.com.

### EASTIE FARM COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE PROGRAM (CSA)

Eastie Farm announced that subscriptions are now open for their CSA 2026, and it's time to purchase your share! They are offering early bird specials on market shares, so be sure to grab yours before they sell out. Want more information? Visit

their webpage to learn about their CSA program which takes place from May 27, 2026 to November 11, 2026. Also, please consider making a donation to Eastie Farm at this time to help with programming there. eastiefarm.com/csa.

### EAST BOSTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COMMEMORATES MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY

Please join the Chamber in commemorating Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on Monday, January 19. The Chamber will pay tribute with an American flag display at the site outside the Chamber office at 464 Bremen Street in East Boston.

### PLEASE NOTE

• Consider at this time of the year to keep our local restaurants in mind as business slows down dramatically during the first part of the new year di-

rectly following the holidays. If you need a gift idea, please consider purchasing a gift certificate from a choice restaurant here in East Boston. This can help a small business immensely.

• At this time the East Boston Community Soup Kitchen is asking for donations to help continue the important work and resources they provide in our community.

• The Boston Water and Sewer Commission continues to provide information regarding plans of the East Boston Sewer Separation Project going on now in our community until the Winter. There is an after work hours number 617-989-7000. Check out the impacts to our streets at bwsc.org/projects/east-boston

• The Chamber is committed to providing opportunities for networking to its membership. If you are interested in a collaborating event or idea with the Chamber, please do not hesitate to reach out at 617-569-5000.

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MAYOR MICHELLE WU TAKES THE OATH OF OFFICE

Inauguration of the Honorable Mayor Michelle Wu took place at Symphony Hall, as well as the Administration of the Oath of Office for the Boston City Council on January 5, 2026

PHOTOS BY MARIANNE SALZA



Judge Sarah G. Kim, Associate Justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Court, and Mayor Michelle Wu.



Boston Police and Fire Departments, and Boston EMS Honor Guards presenting the colors.



Mayor Michelle Wu, with her husband, Conor Pewarski, and children, Blaise, Cass, and Mira.



Boston City Councilors honoring the Pledge of Allegiance.



Representative Dan Ryan and his daughter, Audrey Ryan.

SEND US YOUR NEWS

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MAYOR MICHELLE WU TAKES THE OATH OF OFFICE

PHOTOS BY MARIANNE SALZA



Boston City Councilors applauding Mayor Michelle Wu.



Mayor Michelle Wu administering the oath of office to the Boston City Council.



Councilor Gabriela Coletta Zapata embracing Councilor Henry Santa-na after being sworn in.



Mayor Michelle Wu presenting her inaugural address.



Judge Sarah G. Kim offering congratulatory wishes to Mayor Michelle Wu as she begins her second term in office.

A group of diverse people, including healthcare workers in blue scrubs, are smiling and making heart shapes with their hands. They are standing in a room with a white wall and a ceiling light fixture.

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# Oaths // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the Color Guards from the Boston Police, Boston Fire, and Boston EMS, as well as six student-athletes from the Boston public schools who led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance. The National Anthem was sung by Baird Lashley, an Emergency Medical Technician with Boston EMS.

Several religious members offered Interfaith Prayers. Among those offering the Interfaith Prayers were Father John Unni of St. Cecilia Parish; Bishop William E. Dickerson II, of Greater Love Tabernacle; Pastor Mima Concepcion de Rodriguez of Nueva Vida United Methodist Church; Imam Abdulqadir Farah, Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Cen-

ter; and Rabbi Elaine Zecher, Temple Israel.

Emmanuel Oppong-Yeboah, the city’s Poet Laureate, who is the school librarian at the Joseph Lee School in Dorchester, read his original poem, titled Boston Sonnet, that he said was inspired by the origin of the name of the City of Boston in Boston, Lincolnshire, England.

After the showing of a video that highlighted Mayor Wu’s first term, City Clerk Geourntas presented the official Certification of Election of Mayor Wu. Judge Sarah G. Kim, Associate Justice of the Massachusetts Superior Court, then administered the Oath of Office to the mayor, who was accompanied by her husband and three chil-

dren.

Geourntas next announced the Certification of Election for the members of the Boston City Council: Councilors-at-Large Ruthzee Louijeune, Julia Mejia. Erin Murphy, and Henry Santana and Ward Councilors Gabriela Coletta Zapata, Edward Flynn, John FitzGerald, Brian Worrell, Enrique Pepén, Benjamin Weber, Rev. Miniard Culpeper, Sharon Durkan, and Liz Brendon.

Mayor Wu then swore-in the councillors.

The program concluded with Wu presenting her inaugural address. She noted that Boston Symphony Hall, which was designed by renowned architects and a Harvard professor, is the most acoustically-perfect hall of its kind in America that reflects a “uniquely Boston blend of science and the arts.”

Wu thanked the elected state and federal officials on hand for their partnership and the city’s workers “for making everything we do possible,” a remark that drew extended applause from the audience.

She noted that 250 years ago, Henry Knox embarked on his epic winter journey that transported the heavy cannons from the captured Ft. Ticonderoga in upstate New York to Dorchester Heights, an against-all-odds feat that ultimately enabled George Washington to force the British fleet and occupying

army to withdraw from the city on March 17, 1776, for the remainder of the Revolutionary War.

Wu highlighted some of the major accomplishments of her first term, including the reduction of gun violence in the city to an all-time low, the construction of 4,200 affordable new homes with 2,000 more in the pipeline, and the expansion of pre-K education for 5,000 families.

“We’ve seen how much is possible because of how far we’ve pushed forward together. But we need to keep pushing,” Wu said, “because in some ways right now, the world feels helplessly stuck. We know what problems need fixing, but we’ve lost faith that we can fix them.

“Today the forces we face are not British troops on the Common or ships in our harbor, but they demand no less ingenuity. Isolation, polarization, and misinformation are fraying our connection to trust, truth, and each other. And against this backdrop, the federal government is taking aim at the ways in which we take care of each other,” Wu continued, citing the federal cutbacks in emergency management, research, and housing, as well as what she termed, “the abduction of our neighbors off our sidewalks and outside our schools...and the illegal deployment of our

troops against our own families and neighbors in peaceful American cities. This federal administration has plundered our economy, ravaged our reputation, torched our institutions, and destroyed the lives of our people.

“Boston will be a beacon,” Wu said to a standing ovation, “and we will not wait for permission to build the world our families deserve.”

Wu also promised that her second term will focus on making the city safer and improving the city’s parks, playgrounds, streets, services, and schools, as well as streamlining the city’s permitting processes.

“We will work to address the housing needs of our families and seniors, focusing on solutions they want and can afford,” Wu said. “Over the next four years, we will continue inventing new ways to use public planning, public finance, and public land to create the homes our residents need, because we know that housing is a public good. We will not be defeated by the affordability crisis of the present.

“If we can invent America, then we can be the city that forges the path forward in this moment. If we are willing to try, with a little help from each other, we can build the future that our families deserve,” Wu concluded.

## East Boston Times-Free Press Drop-Off Locations

Orient Height Food Market	1016 Bennington St.	Meridian Market	357 Meridian St.
Angelos	1012 Bennington St.	Mobil Gas Station	Meridian St.
Butcher	1008 Bennington St.	Shaw's	240 Border St.
Tobacco	1006 Bennington St.	Kappy's Liquors	216 Border St.
Sunny	1000 Bennington St.	CVS	210 Border St.
Renegades	1004 Bennington St.	McDonalds	Central Square
Metro PCS	982 Saratoga St.	East Boston Social Center	68 Central St.
Catering Deli	978 Saratoga St.	Wallgreens	1 Central Sq 100 St.
Kiosco Restaurant Bar	974 Saratoga St.	Americano Express Bar	Meridian St.
Rite Aid	971 Bennington St.	Shell Gas Station	52 Meridian St.
Luna's Italian	945 Saratoga St.	Police Station	49 Meridian St.
Neptune Laundromat	Saratoga St.	Post Office	50 Meridian St.
Subway	948 Saratoga St.	East Boston Saving Bank	10 Meridian St.
Burger King	948 Saratoga St.	East Boston APAC	17 Meridian St.
Saratoga Market	16 Trident St.	Bella's Market	67 Maverick St.
Royal Famous Roast Beef	752 Bennington St.	Bank of America	Maverick St.
Lanzilli Gas Station	931 Bennington St.	Smoke Shop	Maverick St.
Lisslot Hair Salon	730 Bennington St.	PLS Check	19 Maverick St.
Century 21 Realty	620 Bennington St.	Meridian Market	121 Meridian St.
7-Eleven	120 Byron St.	Clipper Wine and Spirit	Maverick St.
Salesian Boys and Girls Club	150 Byron and Bennington St.	Station Grocery	Maverick St.
Carlos Catering	567 Bennington and Moore St.	Dunkin' Donut	Maverick St.
The Corner Mini Market	517 Bennington and Harmony St.	Tedeschi	Maverick St.
The UPS	2 Neptune Rd.	Heritage Apts	209 Sumner St.
Neptune Liquors	1 Neptune Rd.	Cross Roads Shelter	56 Havre St.
Neptune Convenience	3 Neptune Rd.	Maverick Landing	31 Liverpool St.
Neptune Laundromat	489 Saratoga St.	San Miguel Argangel	317 Sumner St.
Mellos Coffee	476 Saratoga St.	Adela's Bakery	319 Sumner St.
DA. Copas Pizza	474 Saratoga St.	Mehak Halal	Sumner St.
Laundromat	470 Saratoga St.	Wine and Barley	326 Sumner St.
Mobil Gas Station	396 Chelsea St.	Al Bar	330 Sumner St.
Spinellis	282 Bennington St.	Italian Express Pizza	336 Sumner St.
Daycare Liquors	286 Bennington St.	Family Brothers Market	339 Sumner St.
Jeweli's Restaurant	Chelsea and Day Square	Alvaro Laundromat	341 Sumner St.
Tiny Bubbles	200 Bennington St.	Sumner Market	345 Sumner St.
Lolly's Bakery	158 Bennington St.	Maverick st Market	211 Maverick St.
Sava's Market	150 Bennington and Brooks St.	Wash and Dry	209 Maverick St.
Kelly's Pub	84 Bennington St.	Laundromat	72 Chelsea St.
East Boston Comer Market	233 Marion St.	Santarpios	111 Chelsea St.
Peach's and Cream	73 Bennington St.	Old Factory Condo	156 Porter St.
East Boston Saving Bank	1 Bennington St.	Spotless	24 Porter St.
Citizens Bank	Meridian St.	East Boston YMCA	215 Bremen St.
Dunkin' Donut	Meridian St.	Boston Library	365 Bremen St.
Castello Liquors	Meridian St.	Woody's Liquors	1035 Bennington St.
The Soap Box Laundromat	299 Meridian St.	Don Orion Nursing Home	111 Orient Ave.
Angela's Coffee	131 Lexington St.	Glastone Market	3 Glastone St.
Food Market	353 Meridian St.	Continental Dry Cleaners	15 Breed St.
		Martin Community Ctr	86 Boardman St.
		Starbucks	430 McEllian Highway

# HVNA // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ing that the alternative, which could be done by right, would not require any off-street parking under the city’s zoning regulations.

“By us opting to do one single six-unit dwelling, you still get the six units of housing, but you’re also getting the six parking spaces to go along with it,” he said.

Moreover, the proposal, which was initially presented to the HVNA this summer, requires a variance for the total lot width. Since the site is in the East Boston Residential (EBR)-3 zoning subdistrict, the lot width must be at least 55 feet for six units on the lot.

This proposal was presented at an abutters meeting last month. HVNA Board Member Skip Marcella, who attended the

meeting, said that it appeared the abutters in attendance were supportive of the project.

Following the brief presentation, the floor was opened to questions and comments from attendees.

One attendee asked whether each unit had a parking spot, and Lynds said, “Each unit is assigned one parking spot.”

The conversation about parking continued, and Lynds explained that, for example, if the units were condominiums, the unit price factors in the parking spot.

“They don’t have an option to say (they) don’t want a parking spot, so therefore (they) pay less,” Lynds said.

Though Lynds said that in this example, if someone purchased the condo and did not

have a car, they could rent out their spot to someone else in the building.

If these units were rentals, Lynds indicated that the situation would be similar, but tenants would be less likely to be able to rent out their spot to other members of the building.

As the conversation continued, parking, the building’s total square footage, the abutters meeting, and more were covered before the project went to a vote.

Ultimately, those in attendance voted to support the project by a 10-7 margin.

For more information about the HVNA and to view a recording of this meeting, visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/harborviewna/>. The next HVNA meeting is scheduled for Feb. 2.



# Council // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Coletta Zapata withdrew her name from the election Sunday, one day before the vote.

“Upon further reflection, I decided not to seek the nomination for city council president. I’m thankful for those who supported me and I look forward to serving my next term focused on my constituents, protecting Bostonians from divisive federal attacks, and in the health and well-being of my growing family,” said Coletta Zapata.

“I respect the outcome and I remain focused on the work ahead in partnership with Councilor Breadon as our new president,” added Coletta Zapata.

Breadon, the District 9 councilor who represents the Allston and Brighton neighborhoods, defeated District 4 Councilor Brian Worrell, 7-6, in the vote for the council presidency.

# Stadium // CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

nearly \$50 million in payments over 15 years, up from an initial \$750,000 proposal, along with funding for public safety, traffic management, and major infrastructure improvements in Sullivan Square and surrounding corridors. These investments will deliver necessary improvements for Charlestown residents before the stadium opens and make clear that major developments in Boston must deliver meaningful benefits to the neighborhoods they impact. Thank you to Mayor Wu, our state delegation, and residents who advocated for what our one-square-mile deserves.”

“The strength of our cities are the people we serve and how they continue to work and live while our communities expand with economic development,” said Revere Mayor Patrick Keefe. “We are grateful to Mayor Wu and her team for recognizing the regional mayor’s coalition and leading this effort to make sure all can benefit from increased access to public transportation and regional multi-modal transit improvements - it’s a good deal for business and much needed investment for our residents.”

The agreement incorporates financial guarantees, transportation and public safety requirements, design and climate resilience standards, and community benefits before and during construction as well as while the stadium is operational:

**Financial Details:**

- **Upfront Community Payments:** Upon completion of the MEPA permitting process, the Kraft Group will make an immediate \$1.5 million community impact payment, followed by \$300,000 annually for five years (totaling \$3 million in upfront impact funds).
- **Infrastructure Improvements:** The Kraft Group will perform at least \$5 million in safety and access improvements to roadways, sidewalks, bike paths, intersections and transit facilities in Sullivan Square, Main Street, and along Route 99 before opening day.
- **\$5 million Transportation Fund:** The Kraft Group will pay \$333,000 annually for 15 years to the City of Boston for ongoing transportation infrastructure improvements in Charlestown.
- **Ticket Surcharges:** To address ongoing community impacts, \$1.00 per soccer ticket (increasing with CPI) and 1.5% of every concert ticket sold will be paid to the City in perpetuity, which the parties estimate will generate \$2 million in the first year of operation, and approximately \$34 million over the first 15 years.

**Transportation and Public Safety**

- **Traffic Management:** An annual Traffic and Parking Management Plan (TPMP) must be approved by the City, with a primary goal of preventing stadium-related traffic from cutting through Sullivan Square.
- **Operational Costs:** The Kraft Group will reimburse the City for all event-day costs, including the deployment of approximately 38 Boston Police Officers per event.
- **Ongoing Transit:** The Kraft Group will install a water ferry dock, fund annual traffic data monitoring, and sponsor a Bluebikes valet service on event days.

**Design and Climate Resilience**

- **Neighborhood Mitigation:** Designs will include shielding to prevent field lights from shining into Charlestown and acoustic engineering to ensure noise levels remain below the 70-decibel limit set by the Boston Noise Ordinance. The Stadium will also monitor noise levels during events, operate a hotline for complaints, and perform ongoing mitigation to comply with the noise ordinance limit.
- **Coastal Flooding:** The stadium will be built to 2070 flood resilience standards, effectively closing the current flood path between Route 99 and the site.
- **Sustainability:** The project includes a comprehensive stormwater plan, waste reduction strategies, and a commitment to analyze feasibility for net-zero carbon operations.

**Operations and Community Benefits**

- **Event Levels:** The stadium anticipates holding 17–20 soccer matches and up to 20 concerts per year. Any increase would be discussed with the City.
- **Local Sourcing Goals:** 25% of construction and ongoing operational contracts targeted for local MWBE/Veteran-owned businesses.
- **Local Hiring Goals:** 25% of permanent stadium jobs targeted for Boston residents via preferential hiring.
- **Supplier and Workforce Advisory Group:** the Kraft Group and the City of Boston will convene an advisory group to assist with achieving the targets established above.
- **Community Access:** The City of Boston may use the stadium for community events four times per year. The Revolution will also host at least six free youth soccer clinics annually in Boston.

**Other Commitments**

- **Construction Management Plan:** The Kraft Group will execute a comprehensive construction management plan with the City of Boston to reduce local impacts during stadium construction.
- **Stadium Plan Review:** The Kraft Group will submit stadium plans for the review to the staff of the Boston Planning Department to ensure compliance with this agreement
- **Regional Coordination:** The Kraft Group and Boston commit to participating in regional working groups to address regional transportation impacts and promote investment in multi-modal public transit improvements

Underscoring the importance of Charlestown residents’ feedback, the City of Boston engaged with community members to understand their concerns. From December 2024 through February 2025 the City received input from Charlestown neighborhood leaders and stakeholders representing climate and transportation advocacy groups in preparation for negotiations. Additionally, on March 11, 2025, Mayor Wu, along with City officials from the Boston Transportation Department, the Planning Department, and Office of Neighborhood Services, attended a community meeting on the proposed stadium hosted by the Charlestown Neighborhood Council to hear directly what the group hoped to see the City negotiate for on behalf of the neighborhood.

Since August, the City and New England Revolution negotiating teams have had the support of former MassPort CEO Tom Glynn and Rebecca Kaiser, who served as the designated mediators.

A spokesperson for the Kraft Group said, “The Kraft Group has reached agreements with the cities of Everett and Boston, marking an important milestone in our effort to transform a long-neglected industrial site along the Mystic River into a vibrant, publicly accessible waterfront destination and the future home of the New England Revolution. These agreements reflect years of collaboration with city leaders and community stakeholders to ensure the project delivers meaningful, lasting benefits for residents while addressing transportation, environmental, and municipal impacts. We are especially grateful for Mayor Carlo DeMaria’s leadership and vision. At its core, this is an investment in Everett and its future. In addition, it provides improved access and an enhanced neighborhood experience by removing a physical and visual barrier for the residents of Charlestown and we appreciate Mayor Michelle Wu and her team’s partnership.

Under the agreements, we will undertake significant environmental remediation and demolition of the long-vacant powerplant, invest in extensive traffic and transportation improvements, and deliver substantial community benefits, including millions of dollars towards infrastructure improvements. The project will open the waterfront with the creation of a new public park, strengthen pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, and enhance access to public transit. We will also support Everett Public Schools, expand local employment opportunities, and make the stadium and waterfront park available for community and school events. Our shared commitment to Everett and Boston residents includes prioritizing local hiring, youth soccer clinics, and community programming. This project is intended to be a true neighborhood asset.”

“I want to thank the dedicated negotiating teams from the City, the New England Revolution, and our mediators, Tom Glynn and Rebecca Kaiser, who all worked through the holidays to achieve a fair deal for the people of Boston,” said Mayor Wu.



EAST BOSTON BOYS BASKETBALL FALL TO STONEHAM IN PATRIOT HOLIDAY TOURNAMENT



Jets Head Coach Tyrone Figueroa and staff with the 2025-2026 EBHS Varsity Basketball Team at the Annual RHS Patriot Holiday Tournament.

East Boston High School Jets Basketball Team falls to the Spartans of Stoneham High School 96-60 in the Annual Patriot Holiday Tournament hosted by Revere High School.



Vladmilson Pinto grabs a Spartan rebound for the Jets.



Kai LauQuan lines up a shot.



Angel Valdez played a tight defense for the Jets in the annual tournament.



Angel Rivera brings the ball into play for the Jets.



Stephen Lucas looks for an outlet pass.

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Bob Bolognese  
Owner

Stephen Lucas looks for an outlet pass.





Kai LauQuan works around a defender for a Jet basket.



Angel Valdez stares down a defender.



Stephen Lucas steps into the lane to block a Spartan play.

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# Atlantic Works Gallery presents ‘Art for the New Year’

Special to the Times-Free Press

Atlantic Works Gallery is excited to welcome 2026 with Art for the New Year: Small Works Off the Wall, a vibrant and accessible exhibition featuring small works by members, alumni, and invited friends of the gallery. This non-juried show brings together a colorful range of styles, mediums, and creative voices from across our community, January 10-31.

To celebrate the new year, all artworks are priced at \$300 or less, making this an ideal opportunity for both seasoned collectors and first-time buyers. Presented salon-style, the exhibition offers a lively, dynamic experience filled with painting, photography, drawing, and more.

This year’s Third Thursday Reception on January 15 (6–9 PM) includes an exciting new

twist: Guests who purchase artwork during the reception will take it home that night—right off the wall.

It’s a joyful way to collect original art and start the new year with something handmade, meaningful, and truly unique.

“Starting the year with small works brings joy, color, and accessibility into the gallery,” says Kristen Freitas of Atlantic Works Gallery. “This exhibition celebrates our creative community and welcomes members, alumni, and friends into a shared, welcoming space.”

All other purchased works will remain on view through January 31.

The public is warmly invited to visit throughout the month and join us for an evening of art, conversation, and commu-

nity on January 15. Light refreshments will be served.

Atlantic Works Gallery, 80 Border Street, Boston, MA 02128, is an artist-run collaborative space for art and ideas located in East Boston. The gallery is open to the public every Friday and Saturday, 2:00 – 6:00 p.m. For private viewing, contact [contact@atlanticworks.org](mailto:contact@atlanticworks.org). For more information, visit <https://atlanticworks.org/>. The Atlantic Works Gallery is a collaborative space for art and ideas.

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Arte para el Año Nuevo: Obras Pequeñas de la Pared 10–31 de enero de 2026  
Recepción del Tercer Jueves: 15 de enero | 6–9 PM  
East Boston, MA — Atlantic Works Gallery da la bienvenida al 2026 con Arte para el Año Nuevo: Obras Pequeñas Fuera de la Pared, una exhibición vi-

brante y accesible que presenta obras pequeñas de miembros, exalumnos y amigos invitados de la galería. Esta muestra no jurada reúne una amplia variedad de estilos, medios y voces creativas de toda nuestra comunidad.

Para celebrar el Año Nuevo, todas las obras cuestan \$300 o menos, lo que la convierte en una oportunidad perfecta tanto para coleccionistas experimentados como para quienes compran arte por primera vez. Presentada al estilo salón, la exhibición ofrece una experiencia dinámica y colorida con pintura, escultura, fotografía, dibujo y más.

La Recepción del Tercer Jueves, el 15 de enero (6–9 PM) trae una novedad emocionante:

Los visitantes que compren una obra durante la recepción podrán llevársela esa misma

noche—directamente de la pared.

Es una manera alegre e inolvidable de coleccionar arte original y comenzar el año con algo hecho a mano, significativo y verdaderamente único.

“Comenzar el año con obras pequeñas trae alegría, color y accesibilidad a la galería,” dice Kristen Freitas de Atlantic Works Gallery. “Esta exhibición celebra nuestra comunidad creativa y recibe a miembros, exalumnos y amigos en un espacio compartido y acogedor.”

Las demás obras compradas permanecerán en exhibición hasta el 31 de enero.

El público está cordialmente invitado a visitar durante todo el mes y unirse a nosotros el 15 de enero para una noche de arte, conversación y comunidad. Habrá refrescos ligeros.

## Kick off the New Year with the City of Boston’s free Winter Fitness Series

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department and Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC) are pleased to announce the 2026 Boston Parks Winter Fitness Series, sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. The series will offer free weekly classes in City of Boston parks now through April 4.

This season, Bostonians can

enjoy a variety of healthy activities both indoors and outdoors, including Walking Group, line dancing, Bota Foga, Kids Dance Fitness, Strength and Balance, Tai Chi, Yoga, and more. Classes are designed for all skill levels and ages, with options that are family-friendly, age-friendly, and welcoming to those who may be new to fitness.

“Throughout the winter months, our parks remain active and welcoming places for Bostonians to move, connect, and care for their well-being,” said Cathy Baker-Eclipse, Interim Commissioner of the Boston Parks and Recreation Department. “We’re grateful for our partnership with the Boston Public Health Commission and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, which help bring free, accessible fitness programming and community connection directly into our neighborhoods this winter.”

“The Winter Fitness Series is a wonderful opportunity for everyone in Boston to get moving and participate in free and accessible activities that can improve health and well-being,” said Bisola Ojikutu MD, MPH, FIDSA, Commissioner of Public Health for the City of Boston. “Resources like these free classes help reduce the risk of chronic disease, which is one of the goals of Live Long and

Well, our citywide population health equity agenda. By encouraging everyone to engage in physical activity, we are ensuring that Boston is a city where all residents can thrive.”

Through this citywide initiative, the Parks Department and BPHC aim to reduce barriers to active living and provide more opportunities for Boston residents to stay healthy and active throughout the winter months. Continuing on the success of the 2025 Parks Fitness Series, the winter series offers the opportunity for residents to stay active during shorter daylight hours while enjoying safe, accessible outdoor options. All classes are free and open to the public.

“We are delighted to continue our long-standing partnership with the City of Boston to offer Winter Fitness, bringing free and accessible fitness opportunities to Boston neighborhoods,” said Jeff Bellows, vice president of corporate citizenship and public affairs at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. “The Boston Park Fitness series offers year-round in-person classes that support the physical and mental well-being of residents.”

For up to date information, including weather-related cancellations for outdoor fitness classes, visit [boston.gov/fitness](https://boston.gov/fitness).

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department (BPRD) stewards over 2,200 acres of public open space across 288 properties, including the Boston Common, the Public Garden, and the Olmsted-designed Emerald Necklace park system. Our parks feature walking trails, playgrounds, courts, natural areas, and historic sites, as well as 29 urban wilds, four high school athletic fields, two public golf courses, and more than 40,000 street trees. BPRD offers free cultural and recreational programming for people of all ages, helping to create welcoming, active, and connected communities. Learn more at [boston.gov/parks](https://boston.gov/parks) and sign up for updates at [bit.ly/Get-Parks-Emails](https://bit.ly/Get-Parks-Emails). Follow our social channels @bostonparksdept on X, Facebook, Instagram, and @parks.boston.gov on Bluesky.

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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## EAST BOSTON YMCA News

Winter is right around the corner, and we're ready to turn up the fun at the pool!

Our Winter Swim Session officially started January 6, and we have exciting options for everyone in the family.

What's happening this winter?

- Swim Lessons

From parent/child and beginner swimmers to more advanced levels, our classes are designed to build confidence, safety, and strong swim skills—one splash at a time!

• For Winter A and Winter B, we are offering twice-a-week swim lessons for faster progress and skill development.

- Private Swim Lessons

Looking for one-on-one instruction? Private lessons are

perfect for personalized goals, flexible scheduling, and faster progress.

- Lap Swim

Whether you're training, exercising, or just enjoying a steady swim, lap lanes are available for members looking to stay active this winter.

- Open Swim

Family-friendly open swim times are available for everyone to enjoy the pool together in a safe and supervised setting.

- Pool Parties

Celebrate birthdays or special occasions with a splash! Our pool parties are a fun and unique way to make memories all year long.

• Ladies Night — Fridays at 6:45 PM

Grab your friends and enjoy

a fun, relaxing evening at the pool made just for you. A great way to unwind, move, and connect!

Spots fill quickly, so we encourage you to register early. If you have any questions, need help choosing the right option, or would like more details, feel free to reach out—I'm happy to help!

- How to Register

You can register online, in person at 215 Bremen street, by calling 617-569-9622, or by emailing me directly. If you need help choosing the right class or have any questions, I'm happy to assist you through the registration process.

<https://community.ymcaboston.org/s/registration>

## Massachusetts fire deaths drop by 12% in 2025

Massachusetts fire deaths in 2025 declined from a seven-year high in 2024, with more than 90% taking place in the victims' homes, State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine said.

Excluding fatal motor vehicle collisions with an ensuing fire, Massachusetts recorded 44 fire deaths in 30 fires during 2025. That number is a decline from the 50 civilian fire deaths recorded in 2024 and on par with the five-year average of 44 per year from 2020-2024. One child — a 4-year-old North Adams girl — was lost to fire, down from three in 2024. Two dozen people aged 65 or older lost their lives in fires during 2025, making them nearly 55% of fatal fire victims but only about 17% of the population.

Single-family homes accounted for 14 deaths, followed by the devastating fire at Gabriel House Assisted Living in Fall River, which claimed 10 lives and represented the greatest loss of life to a single Massachusetts fire incident in decades. Nine people died in apartment or multifamily home fires, four people

died in mobile home fires, and three people died in two-family homes.

The unsafe use or disposal of smoking materials was the known cause or a possible factor in 21 fire deaths in 2025, making it by far the most common factor and continuing a decades-long trend. Smoking is especially dangerous in the presence of medical oxygen — a fact pattern that investigators believe contributed to the Gabriel House fire. The Department of Fire Services last year updated its Home Oxygen Fire Safety brochure, which is offered on the DFS website and through the Massachusetts Health Promotion Clearinghouse in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Smoke alarm operation could be provisionally determined for 30 of the 40 residential fire deaths. Only 16 of these homes or units of origin had working smoke alarms. The alarms in the remainder were either not working or missing entirely.

"Sadly, the places we should feel safest — our homes — are the places where most people lose

their lives to fire," said State Fire Marshal Davine. "Changes to building construction allow fires to grow and spread faster. Synthetic furnishings create deadly smoke and toxic gases as they burn. The US Fire Administration estimates that we have less time to escape a fire at home than ever before, so it's vital to have working smoke alarms to alert us to the danger before it's too late."

Four people perished in non-residential fire incidents. Three lost their lives in outdoor fires, including one who suffered fatal injuries while using illegal fireworks, and one was overcome by smoke and flames in his vehicle when the engine caught fire.

While fatal fires tend to be most likely in the winter months, the Gabriel House fire caused 10 of the 11 fire deaths in July. November was the second leading month with nine fatalities, followed by March and October, which accounted for four each. Fatal fires were distributed relatively evenly throughout the day, with spikes between 9:00 pm and 4:00 am.

## OBITUARIES

### Pasquale "Pat" Gaglione

A True Family Man

AKA "the Mayor of Brandywyne"

Pasquale "Pat" Gaglione passed away peacefully on January 2, 2026, surrounded by his loving family. He was 92 years old.

Born on June 29, 1933, Pat was the beloved son of the late Raymond and Francis Gaglione. He was the devoted husband of the late Barbara (Pope) Gaglione, with whom he now reunites in eternal rest. Pat was a proud and loving father to Richard Gaglione and his wife, Toni and to Robert Gaglione and his late wife, Mary. He was a cherished brother of Michael Gaglione and the late Angie King, Ronald Gaglione and Susan Pioppi. A devoted grandfather, Pat adored his grandchildren: Jason, Christopher, Robert and Brianna and was a loving great-grandfather to Kallee.

A true family man, Pat was known throughout his neighborhood for his daily walks to Saratoga Market—often two or three times a day—for his scratch tickets, earning him the affectionate nickname "the Mayor of Brandywyne." He had a deep love for horses and spent many happy days at the racetrack at Suffolk Downs. Pat also worked for many years at Haymarket Produce, standing at his produce stand on weekends, and became a proud



laborer with Local 22.

Family and friends will honor Pat's life by gathering at the Ruggiero Family Memorial Home, 971 Saratoga Street, East Boston, on Thursday, January 8th from 4 to 8 p.m. and again on Friday morning at 9 a.m. prior to a prayer service at 10 a.m. Services will conclude with Pat being laid to rest beside his beloved wife at St. Michael Cemetery in Boston.

Pat will be remembered for his warm presence, strong work ethic, love of family, and the familiar sight of him walking his neighborhood each day. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him. For more information or to leave an online condolence please visit [www.ruggieromh.com](http://www.ruggieromh.com).



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SCENES FROM BOSTON’S FIRST NIGHT PARADE AND FIREWORKS

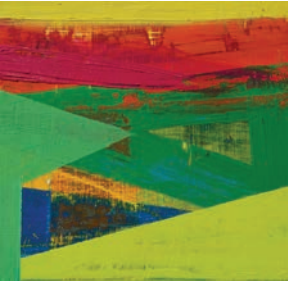
MAYOR’S OFFICE PHOTO BY JOHN WILCOX

Mayor Michelle Wu attends First Night Parade and Fireworks. Boston rang in the New Year with parades, ice skating, fireworks, and performances at City Hall as the City celebrated 50 years of First Night.

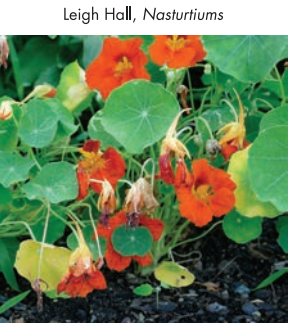


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SCENES FROM BOSTON’S FIRST NIGHT PARADE AND FIREWORKS

MAYOR’S OFFICE PHOTO BY JOHN WILCOX



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# MBTA closes out 2025 with major progress on service delivery, accessibility, and infrastructure

Special to the Times-Free Press

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) reflected on 2025 improvements across the system, from more frequent service to accessibility upgrades, to safety progress, and new innovative technology, as the agency heads into 2026 with continued momentum in its charge to deliver a quality public transit experience for the general riding public.

Under the leadership of the Healey-Driscoll Administration and Interim MassDOT Secretary and MBTA General Manager Phillip Eng, the MBTA accelerated critical investments to rebuild aging infrastructure, modernize system operations, expand service, strengthen the workforce and attract talented professionals, and serve the communities that rely on the MBTA across the Commonwealth daily.

“Congratulations to Phil Eng and the entire team at the MBTA on another successful year,” said Governor Maura Healey. “This continues the progress and significant turnaround at the T since we took office - improving service and reliability across the system, eliminating slow zones, and opening South Coast Rail. I want to thank the Legislature for their support in providing funding to support this work. Most importantly, I want to

thank riders for continuing to choose the T and playing an essential role in our efforts to improve transportation across Massachusetts.”

“I’m proud of the MBTA workforce for their efforts that have enabled the MBTA to continue to deliver improved and more reliable service across all modes, giving our riders more frequent service and time back in their day with shorter travel times. I want the public to know that we will continue to carry that same focus, discipline, and urgency into the new year,” said Interim MassDOT Secretary and MBTA General Manager Phillip Eng. “Under the leadership of Governor Healey, Lieutenant General Driscoll, and their Administration, we are following through on our commitment to provide a safe mass transportation system that the public and businesses can rely on. With the support of the Legislature, partners across all levels of government, public transit advocates, community leaders, and most of all, the riding public, we are committed to continuous improvement, delivering meaningful projects and service in the most cost effective and efficient manner. I’m honored to work side by side with our dedicated workforce of over 8,000 employees and our industry partners as we head into 2026 and beyond.”

## Key 2025 Highlights

- **Major Commuter Rail Service Expansions to Southeastern Massachusetts:** Passenger service on SCR began March 24, 2025. The over \$1 billion project brought passenger service to the communities of Taunton, Freetown, New Bedford, Middleboro, and Fall River for the first time in 65 years on the Fall River/New Bedford Commuter Rail Line.

- **Resetting High Speeds on the Red and Orange lines:** Red Line Braintree Branch speeds were restored to 50 MPH for the first time in 20 years in March 2025 following the unprecedented work of the MBTA’s Maintenance of Way Department. Orange Line trains began traveling at its maximum speed of 55 MPH (up from 40 MPH) between Oak Grove and Assembly Station for the first time ever in August 2025 following the restoration of track in this area.

- **Permanent Later Subway and Bus Service:** All subway lines and eight frequent bus routes now offer extended service on Fridays and Saturdays with five of the MBTA’s most frequent bus routes with the highest number of later riders offering extended service every day of the week. Trip end times for these lines and routes are about one hour later compared to past service end times.

- **Enhancing Fare Collection**

with Fare Checks: In September, Fare Engagement Representatives began issuing formal warnings and citations to riders who have not tapped at a fare gate or farebox at downtown stations and onboard vehicles. Fare Engagement Representatives expanded to more stations this winter, focusing on those with high ridership and transfer points.

- **Improving Safety with Green Line Train Protection System (GLTPS) Installation:** Last June 2025, the MBTA awarded the GLTPS contract to Piper Networks following their successful completion of “demonstration phase testing.” Since that time and throughout the rest of 2025, crews have been hard at work installing GLTPS equipment along Green Line tracks and onboard vehicles with Phase 1 of the project on track to be operational in summer 2026.

- **Rebuilding the Workforce:** Since the beginning of the Healey-Driscoll Administration, the MBTA has scaled its workforce and hired over 1,900 employees – the workforce is now over 8,200 strong. Thanks to the Administration and the Legislature, the MBTA will continue to upgrade its workforce in order to deliver even more safe, robust service.

- **Critical Accessibility Milestones:** After 19 years of steady improvements to the accessibility of its system, the MBTA has fulfilled a substantial amount of its obligations under the 2006 Joanne Daniels-Finegold, et al. v. Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority Settlement Agreement. As a result, in December 2025, court-appointed independent monitor Judge Patrick King concluded his oversight role.


- **Expanding Access to Income-Eligible Reduced Fares:** Since its launch in September 2024, the income-eligible reduced fare program has made MBTA travel more affordable for over 38,000 riders. About 70% of riders have enrolled via an automated verification process that takes under five minutes to complete thanks to partnerships with the Registry of Motor Vehicles and Executive Office of Health and Human Services. This streamlined approach has enabled quick

program growth and lays the groundwork for similar improvements coming to other reduced fare programs in the near future.

- **Industry Recognition:** The MBTA welcomed the American Public Transportation Association’s (APTA) annual TRANSform Conference to Boston in September 2025. APTA TRANSform is the flagship event for public transportation professionals to engage in workshops, attend technical tours, and exchange best practices.

For more information, please visit [mbta.com](http://mbta.com) or connect with the T on X @MBTA, Facebook /TheMBTA, Instagram @theMBTA, Threads @thembta, or TikTok @thembta.

The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) opened America’s first subway tunnel in 1897, pioneering public transportation in the United States. Today, the MBTA is one of the largest public transit systems in the country, operating an extensive network of subway, bus, Commuter Rail, ferry, and paratransit services across 176 cities and towns. The MBTA is undergoing a transformative period, focusing on cultivating a culture of safety and excellence, modernizing infrastructure, and improving reliability and accessibility. Current priorities include accelerating critical infrastructure repairs, expanding accessibility, and reducing emissions. The MBTA is committed to providing dependable, frequent, and accessible service that riders can rely on while supporting the region’s economic vitality. Through initiatives like the unprecedented Track Improvement Program, Bus Network Redesign, and Rail Vision, the MBTA aims to connect communities and improve riders’ daily experiences and trips. For questions or assistance, riders are encouraged to contact the MBTA Customer Center at 617-222-3200. Members of the press are encouraged to contact [mediarelations@mbta.com](mailto:mediarelations@mbta.com). For the latest updates on MBTA services, projects, and initiatives, visit [MBTA.com](http://MBTA.com) or follow @MBTA on social media.



## Celebrate Catholic Schools Week 2026

January 25 - January 31  
#CSW26

**Catholic Schools**  
United in Faith and Community

National Catholic Schools Week (CSW) is the annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. CSW runs from the last Sunday in January through the following Saturday. The Catholic Schools Week (CSW) 2023 – 2026 theme is “Catholic Schools: United in Faith and Community.” Catholic schools have an irreplaceable role in the Church’s evangelizing mission. Building on the central goal of Catholic schools to form saints, Catholic schools teach and embrace the whole person, body, mind and spirit. The fact that all members of a Catholic school community share the Christian vision of faith that Christ is the foundation of Catholic education is what unites the school as a faith-filled community.

While faith is the binding element in Catholic schools, the Church reiterates that parents are the first teachers of their children. Holding this tenet, Catholic school communities expand beyond the walls of school buildings to envelop the family as an integral part of the school community. Together teachers, administrators, staff, students and parents fuel the light of faith by integrating culture with faith and faith with living.

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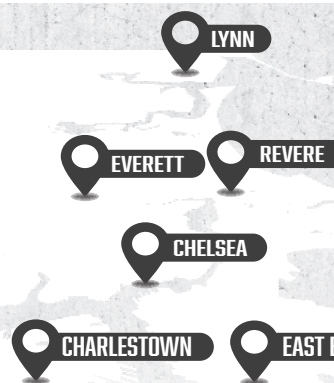
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# Wu appoints Lydia Torres and Franklin Peralta, and reappoints Stephen Alkins to Boston School Committee

Special to the Times-Free Press

Mayor Michelle Wu announced three new appointments to the Boston School Committee, Lydia Torres, Franklin Peralta, and Dr. Stephen Alkins. Torres and Peralta will begin their first terms, and Dr. Alkins will begin his second term, after first being appointed by Mayor Wu in January 2022. The Boston School Committee is the governing body of Boston Public Schools (BPS).

"I'm excited to reappoint Dr. Stephen Alkins and appoint Ms. Lydia Torres and Mr. Franklin Peralta to the Boston School Committee. These three leaders embody the dedication, expertise, and passion for serving our young people that will help guide our work to make Boston Public Schools the first choice for all our families," said Mayor Michelle Wu. "Each brings a personal connection to our schools and the professional experience to complement Superintendent Skipper's leadership. I'm grateful for their service and look forward to partnering with these members and the entire School Committee in this work."

"There's much generational work to be done. To truly make BPS a high-quality experience for every student, we must focus on addressing critical opportunity and achievement gaps and reimagine the ways we do this in partnership with our families and community organizations," said Dr. Stephen D. Alkins, Jr. "BPS is building upon this through districtwide investment in foundational literacy and inclusive education reform, but we must continue to engage in deep, critical discourse, transparency with families, data analysis, and accountability."

"I have spent my entire life in BPS—as a student, teacher, parent, and school and district leader," said Lydia Torres. "I'm honored to be appointed to the Boston School Committee as the capstone of my career serving the district I love and I look forward to helping the district advance opportunities and outcomes for students."

"It is a true honor for me that Mayor Wu has chosen me to join the Boston School Committee," said Franklin Peralta. "As



Lydia Torres

I said several times through the application process, education has opened doors for me to enter places where I never dreamed I would be. I'm ready to join the talented and committed group of leaders in the School Committee to continue offering these same opportunities to all our students in the Boston Public Schools."

"We are excited to welcome three school committee members who each brings a valuable perspective to our collective work to advance educational equity and excellence across Boston Public Schools," said Boston School Committee Chair Jeri Robinson. "We remain committed to advancing our important work through partnerships with families, educators, and the broader community to ensure every student has access to the high-quality education they expect and deserve. I look forward to working alongside our new and returning members as we continue the critical work of moving our district forward."

"I look forward to working closely with each new and returning school committee member as we continue to strengthen and advance Boston Public Schools for every student we serve," said Superintendent Mary Skipper. "Ensuring the success of our students is a shared effort that takes strong governance, collaborative leadership, and strong partnership with educators, families, and communities. Alongside our school communities and City partners, we will remain focused on improving student outcomes, supporting our educators, and ensuring every school has the resources and supports needed for all students to reach and suc-



Franklin Peralta

ceed beyond the classroom."

First appointed by Mayor Wu in January 2022, Stephen D. Alkins, Jr., Ph.D. is the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (and Belonging) Officer (DEIO) and Co-chair of the DEI Council at TERC. With his leadership, Stephen helps craft and implement the vision for DEIB at TERC through his collaboration on NSF STEM education grant development in multiple learning environments (informal and formal K-16 spaces). His role and responsibilities include recruitment and retention of a diverse research and infrastructure staff, internal policy review, development and analysis of inclusive educational opportunities and social programming, and establishment of collaborative partnerships to promote equity for all STEM learners. A resident of Mattapan and BPS parent, Dr. Alkins received his B.S. in Biology from Morehouse College and his Master's and Ph.D. in Cellular Neuroscience from Brandeis University.

Lydia Torres, a Roslindale resident, has nearly four decades of experience as a Boston Public Schools educator. She began her career as an English as a Second Language teacher at the Hennigan School, and has served as a literacy specialist, literacy coach at the school and district level, Director of English Language Arts for grades 6-12 district-wide, and Assistant Principal and Middle School Director at the Eliot K-8 Innovation School. After retiring in 2018, Lydia has spent her time volunteering with the Boston Teacher Residency program run by Boston Plan for Excellence, supporting new teachers in



Stephen Alkins

adopting data-informed instruction for multilingual learners. She has a Master's in Education from Lesley University and a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in Educational Leadership from Cambridge College.

Franklin Peralta, a BPS parent and Jamaica Plain resident, has dedicated his entire professional career to public education, particularly focusing on adult basic education, in Boston and in his native Dominican Republic. He currently serves as Director of Business Engagement and Public Policy at English for New Bostonians (ENB), where he oversees workplace and workforce English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) projects, including needs assessments for companies applying for funds to teach English to employees, and implementation of

workplace English training. Prior to joining ENB, Franklin was Student Counselor at the Adult Learning Program of Jamaica Plain Community Centers, and a researcher and social educator at a cultural center in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Franklin is actively engaged in his daughters' schools, the Sarah Greenwood K-8 School and Boston Latin Academy, and is the elected representative for the Sarah Greenwood on the City-wide Parent Council. Franklin holds a Master's degree in Qualitative Research in Education for Social Change from the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo.

The School Committee is responsible for:

- Defining the vision, mission, and goals of the Boston Public Schools;
- Establishing and monitoring the annual operating budget;
- Hiring, managing, and evaluating the Superintendent; and
- Setting and reviewing district policies and practices to support student achievement.

The School Committee meets approximately twice per month during the school year to adopt, review and modify policies and practices that support teaching, learning and improved student achievement. With the exception of executive sessions, Committee meetings are open to the public, feature public comment periods and are broadcast on Boston City TV.

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