

Coalition for a **RESILIENT & INCLUSIVE** Waterfront

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Contact:

Alex Goldstein

agoldstein@ninetywest.com

40 ORGANIZATIONS FROM ACROSS BOSTON LAUNCH NEW COALITION TO ELEVATE WATERFRONT ISSUES IN ADVANCE OF 2021 CITY ELECTIONS

Coalition for a Resilient and Inclusive Waterfront launches with new poll showing Boston voters strongly support open space and access on the waterfront

BOSTON, MA – Today, 40 organizations from across the City of Boston launched the **Coalition for a Resilient and Inclusive Waterfront** to educate candidates and voters on issues impacting Boston’s waterfront in the 2021 municipal elections, with a specific focus on resilience, inclusivity, access, and economic vitality on Boston’s harbor, islands, and rivers.

In the coming months, the Coalition will work together to create programming and engagement opportunities with voters and candidates to explore the issues facing the waterfront and elevate them in the citywide discourse. To anchor this work, the Coalition announced today that it will host a mayoral forum focused on critical waterfront issues on **Thursday, July 29th at the New England Aquarium**. The event will be open to the public and media, and details on tickets will be available in the coming days.

In tandem with today’s launch, the Coalition also released the results of a new poll conducted by The MassINC Polling Group, which surveyed 635 likely voters on a host of topics related to the Boston waterfront, and underscored the importance of convening a coalition that can help make these issues a priority throughout the election and beyond.

The poll, conducted between June 10-16, 2021, had a number of key findings, including:

- 87% of voters say that they support the creation of new open spaces for public use on the waterfront.
- 83% of voters say they support additional city government funding for climate change protections for specific neighborhoods in Boston.

- 81% of voters support the city government creating a set of climate change and community benefit standards for all developers who want to build on the Boston waterfront.
- Only 38% of voters think the city's racial diversity is reflected in activities on the waterfront, and only 55% of respondents think activities and dining on the water are affordable.
- Voters, particularly in communities of color, want to see more investment in job creation and making the waterfront an affordable place to visit.
- 76% of voters think that the waterfront should be accessible to everyone, even if it means less land for development.
- 85% of voters say it should be a "major priority" for the next mayor to keep parks and open spaces available for everyone to use.

Additional details and results from the poll can be [found here](#).

"We are proud to join with organizations across the city for this important effort to elevate issues facing Boston's waterfront, and to advance a bold vision for its future," said **Kathy Abbott, President and CEO, Boston Harbor Now**. "It is essential that Boston's next Mayor and future leaders do everything they can to ensure that we confront and remove physical, financial and policy barriers standing in the way of creating a more accessible, equitable, economically vibrant waterfront."

"The future leaders of our city will face off with an escalating climate crisis that presents significant challenges to the health and safety of communities that live, work and play on our waterfront," said **Vikki Spruill, President and CEO, New England Aquarium**. "Science-based approaches to creating climate-resilient, open space on the waterfront will be critical to the future livability of the city, and we are hopeful that this coalition will help us spotlight these urgent issues at a key inflection point in Boston's history."

"The residents of Boston deserve a world-class, accessible, and inclusive waterfront. The coming months give us an opportunity to think big about what's possible, and encourage bold action to preserve and create new public open space around our City's harbor," said **Jocelyn Forbush, Acting President and CEO, the Trustees of Reservations**. "We hope to use this moment to educate our leaders and all of those in Boston who can benefit from what the waterfront has to offer about the potential of one of our most valuable public resources."

"The YMCA of Greater Boston is proud to join this effort to help broaden and expand the voices at the table on pressing issues facing Boston's waterfront, which is consistent with our focus on making sure our city's young people can benefit from everything the waterfront has to offer them," said **James Morton, President and CEO, YMCA of Greater Boston**. "For many youth

involved with the YMCA, their ventures to the waterfront are their first experiences with the city's coastline, islands, and rivers. The YMCA is committed to ensuring that all Bostonians, particularly in Black and brown communities that have historically felt disconnected from the waterfront, feel welcome on one of our city's greatest natural resources."

"For an environmental justice organization like GreenRoots it is critical that we are taking the appropriate measures to ensure that our waterfront is not only prepared for coming coastal impacts from climate change, but also remains accessible to and a benefit for the communities that live near them," said **John Walkey, Waterfront Initiative Coordinator for GreenRoots**. "Displacement of low income and BIPOC communities comes in many forms and our well intentioned efforts to ensure a resilient coastline can easily result in negative impacts for our communities, which is why this Coalition's work is crucial to ensure that these issues are aired and that these communities have a seat at the table for these conversations."

"We are proud to serve children and families in East Boston, Chelsea, Revere and Winthrop. Each of these communities is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and sea level rise; our headquarters in Central Square in East Boston already borders a flood zone, **said East Boston Social Centers**. "We are grateful for the leadership of this coalition in drawing attention to these important issues and ensuring access to a high-quality vibrant waterfront for the diverse members of our communities."

"The American City Coalition welcomes the amplification of the voices of BIPOC Roxbury residents in development, programming and rulemaking of the Boston waterfront," said **Christine Araujo, Executive Director, the American City Coalition (TACC)**. "The ability to actively participate in the economic opportunity, and recreational and cultural benefits must be expanded to include non waterfront proximate communities."

The current list of community partner organizations for the Coalition for a Resilient and Inclusive Waterfront includes:

Alliance for Business Leadership
A Better City
Becoming A Man (BAM)
Black Economic Council of Massachusetts
Boston Children's Museum
Boston Harbor Now
Boston Shipping Association
Boston Society for Architecture
Boston Society of Landscape Architects
Camp Harborview
Charles River Conservancy
Chinatown Main Streets
Conservation Law Foundation
East Boston Main Streets
East Boston Social Centers

Fields Corner Main Streets
Fort Point Neighborhood Association (FPNA)
Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands
Friends of the Charlestown Navy Yard
Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau
GreenRoots
Harborfront Neighborhood Alliance
Harborkeepers
Jeffries Point Neighborhood Association
Mystic River Watershed Association
NAACP Boston Branch
Neighborhood of Affordable Housing (NOAH)
Neponset River Watershed
New England Aquarium
North End Waterfront Residents Association (NEWRA)
Piers Park Sailing Center
Port Norfolk Civic Association
Rose Kennedy Greenway Conservancy
Save the Harbor/Save the Bay
South Boston Neighborhood House
The American City Coalition (TACC)
The Trustees of Reservations
West Fairmount Hill Community Group
Wharf District Council
YMCA of Greater Boston

"For decades, Conservation Law Foundation has protected the public's right to waterfront access against unrelenting efforts to create an exclusive enclave," said **Conservation Law Foundation President Brad Campbell**. "But that legal right only has meaning if the waterfront is open and welcoming to all of Boston's communities, especially historically marginalized Black and brown communities that have benefited little from the billions spent on new development. This coalition offers hope for making the waterfront both all-inclusive and resilient to the looming climate threat."

"The Mystic River flows into the north side of Boston Harbor, past richly diverse urban neighborhoods and life-critical regional infrastructure," said **Julie Wormser, Deputy Director of the Mystic River Watershed Association**. "Protecting these waterfront communities from both coastal flooding and economic displacement will require a third major civil engineering effort akin to the Big Dig or the Harbor cleanup. We've done it before, we can do it again."

"Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands support the Coalition's efforts for broad community outreach to inform the public how to access the parks and public spaces along the waterfront, rivers and the harbor islands," said **Suzanne Gall Marsh, Founder, Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands**. "As a Coalition we will have an opportunity to promote free access and

activities, as well as, an understanding of the environmental issues impacting the neighborhoods today and in the future."

"To address the intensifying threats of Climate Change, such as extreme temperatures and sea-level rise, Boston will require a determined, all-hands-on-deck union of visionary thinking and intrepid actions," said **Philip Giffie, Executive Director, Neighborhood of Affordable Housing (NOAH)**. "The Coalition for a Resilient and Inclusive Waterfront sees the future as one in which ALL Bostonians can benefit from working together to both preserve and create our beautiful and vital waterside assets, which build not only our economy but enhance our spirits as well. Boston's next leaders will need to fully embrace the hard, collaborative work it will take to conceive of and build the inclusive vision Boston and the region require. The Coalition stands ready to champion and support such leaders."

"Friends of the Charlestown Navy Yard is excited to join with the voices for a resilient and accessible waterfront," said **Michael Parker, Chair, Friends of the Charlestown Navy Yard**. "The time is now to build a waterfront that not only mitigates and adapts to rising sea levels, increased precipitation events, and dangerous heat waves, but insures that all Bostonians and visitors have equal access to a vibrant waterfront that advances solutions to preserve the use and enjoyment of Boston's waterfront for our future generations."

"We look forward to working with the Coalition to ensure that Boston's historic North End and Waterfront continues to be an open and welcoming destination for everyone to enjoy," said **Cheryl Delgreco, President, North End Waterfront Residents Association**. "Now is the time for our community to imagine and plan together an accessible, inclusive and climate resilient waterfront filled with Boston's rich history and access to our most treasured resource - Boston Harbor."

"The Coalition for a Resilient and Inclusive Waterfront reinforces and reflects the Boston Society for Architecture's (BSA) commitments to surfacing and addressing the most pressing challenges facing the built environment," said **Greg Minott, President, Boston Society for Architecture**. "The coalition confirms our collective responsibility to celebrate our region's unique waterfront assets and to ensure that they are stewarded equitably and in the service of all communities. The BSA is pleased to be a partner in the Coalition and its ambitious agenda."

"South Boston Neighborhood House is excited to join the efforts of this coalition. We are proud to be part of the conversations and to be engaged in this important work to open Boston's waterfront to ALL of our City's residents. We are committed to ensuring that South Boston's residents have access to the opportunities and experiences that our wonderful waterfront presents," said **Kathy Lafferty, Executive Director, South Boston Neighborhood House**. "It's our neighborhood and many of our residents have felt disconnected for too long. There are amazing opportunities and resources that we want to be sure our residents- families, youth and seniors - are able to benefit from!"

"The Harborfront Neighborhood Alliance proudly joins the Coalition for a Resilient & Inclusive Waterfront to enhance the work of inner harborside neighborhood associations raising resident

voices to ensure the growth and development of a resilient and accessible Boston waterfront, through greater partnerships and awareness of waterfront issues and the right of everyone to access a waterfront that is welcoming to all," said **Sara McCammond, Executive Director, Harborfront Neighborhood Alliance.**

"The Boston Society of Landscape Architects (BSLA) is honored to join this coalition because this is landscape architecture," said **Kaki Martin, FASLA, President of BSLA, and Gretchen Rabinkin, Executive Director of BSLA.** "The network of paths, berms, parks, plazas, and open spaces -- and how we reach those spaces -- needs to be an interconnected web that builds climate resilience, enhances individual and community health, and offers the full diversity of our region access, opportunity, and joy at the water's edge, and BSLA is delighted to work with so many wonderful partners on this vision."

About the Coalition for a Resilient and Inclusive Waterfront. The Coalition for a Resilient and Inclusive Waterfront is an alliance of diverse non-profit organizations focused on bringing the pressing issues facing Boston's harbor and rivers to the forefront of the public conversation during the 2021 municipal election cycle. Through voter and candidate education and engagement, the coalition will focus on advancing a bold vision for the future of the city's waterfront that prioritizes resilience, inclusivity, access, and economic vitality.

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