

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS TANIA FERNANDES ANDERSON, BREADON, COLETTA,  
DURKAN, FITZGERALD, FLYNN, MEJIA, MURPHY, PEPÉN, SANTANA, WEBER,  
WORRELL, AND LOUIJEUNE



## CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

### ORDER FOR A HEARING TO DISCUSS WAYS TO EQUITABLY FIGHT CLIMATE DISPLACEMENT IN DISTRICT 7

**WHEREAS,** Black, brown, and working class communities have historically dealt with environmental racism and its interconnected class inequities; *and*

**WHEREAS,** This has resulted in children being exposed to lead tainted drinking water due to the widespread presence of lead water lines, leading to disparate asthma rates, dense patterns of development, a comparative lack of green space, race and class based zoning laws, pathetically low levels of tree canopies, and more; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Multiple local media reports have indicated the risk of lead exposure through lead water lines, and which is particularly dangerous for young children, pregnant women and breastfeeding moms; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Black children are twice as likely to have elevated blood lead levels compared to white children; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The state of Massachusetts only banned lead water pipes in 1989, and all water lines in Roxbury residences constructed prior to that date should be considered as having lead unless proven otherwise; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The state of Massachusetts received over \$100 million from the federal government in 2022 and 2023 for removal of lead service lines; *and* furthermore, access to lead free water should be a right, not a privilege; *and*

**WHEREAS,** The population of children aged 0-5 in Roxbury(10.4%) is double the city average (5.0%). Lead exposure at such a young age can have serious consequences for both individual development and neighborhood stability (via higher crime rates); *and*

**WHEREAS,** Additionally, parts of Roxbury and the South End are woefully lacking in tree canopy, leading to oppressive heat and an increase in air pollution, which

in turn, increases the asthma rates of residents;*and*

**WHEREAS,** Boston schools 33.3% of our Latino students have asthma, 32.2% of Asian students have asthma, and 28.2% of Black students have asthma, but a comparatively lower number of 13% of all Boston residents have asthma, meaning that the porous environmental conditions lived in by a significant number of the people of color in Boston is surely an integral component of said disparity

**WHEREAS,** It has been demonstrated that access to nature preserves trees, and other eco-friendly and environmentally sustainable initiatives are essential to both the mental and physical health of the residents who access them; *and*

**WHEREAS,** In 2014, approximately 10.4% of Boston's children aged 0-5 lived in Roxbury and parts of Roxbury are often as much 10 degrees warmer in the summer than in neighboring Jamaica Plain, which has superior tree cover, arboretums, ponds, and the like; *and*

**WHEREAS,** Living in areas awash with green spaces is associated with higher levels of happiness, cognitive development, and pedagogical outcomes; *and*

**WHEREAS,** We know that such green spaces tend to be concentrated in wealthier and whiter sectors of the city and state, while elevated lead levels tend to be found areas that are predominantly Black, brown, and working class again bringing to mind that environmental justice, is, at its essence, also race and class justice; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

**ORDERED:** That the pertinent committee of the Boston City Council convene a formal hearing involving key members of the administration, individuals affected by the persisting manifestations of environmental injustice, experts in the field—including representatives environmental health organizations/agencies such as the MA. chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MAACP), Clean Water Action and reputable non-profit organizations such as Speak For The Trees—and other stakeholders to collaboratively address and strategize against environmental racism prevalent in Roxbury and other parts of Boston.

**Filed on February 14, 2024**