

# 311 HELP CENTER

BOSTON  
250

**TEAM:** Lexi Shetty

**CONTACT:** 311, 311@boston.gov

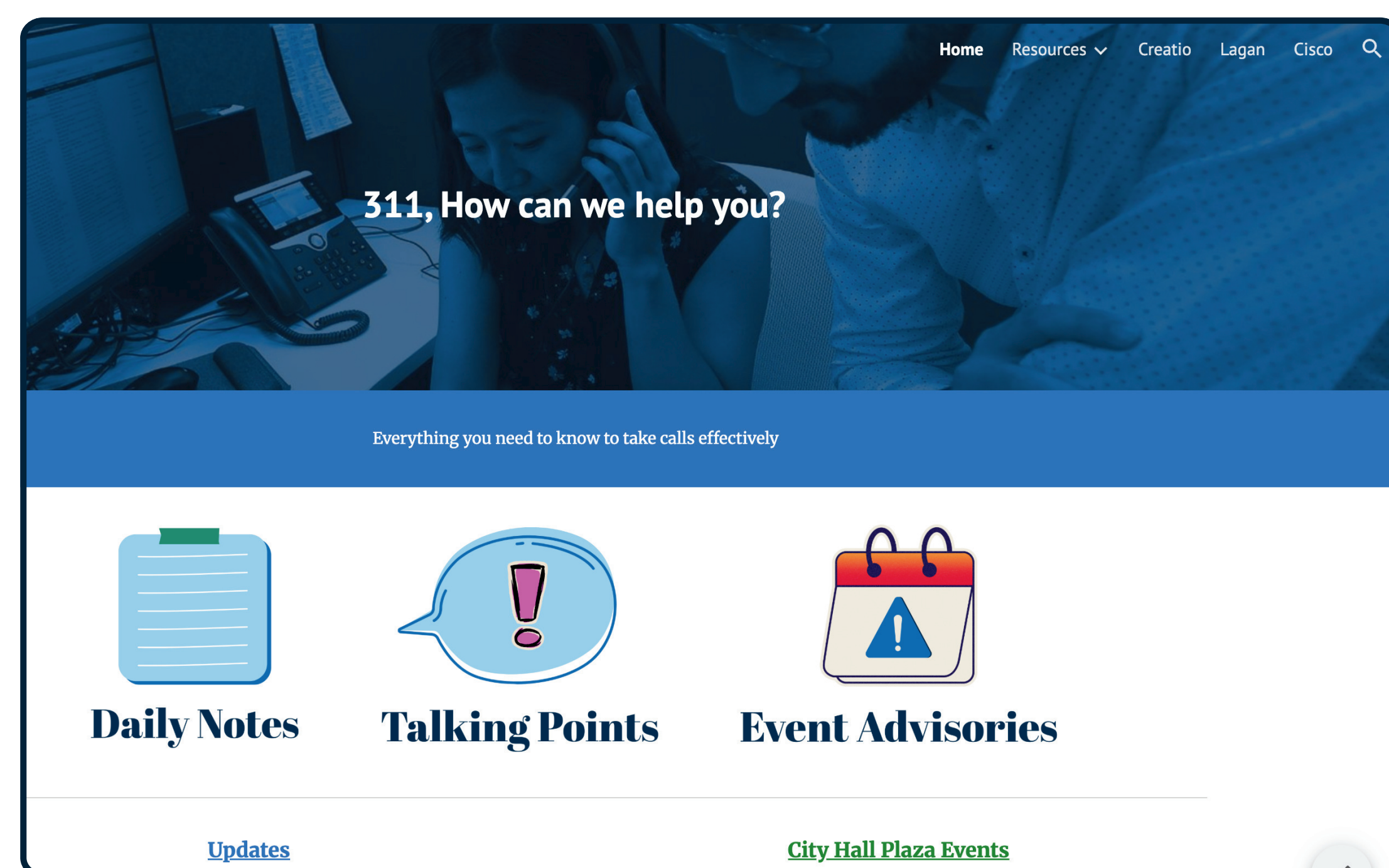


## CHALLENGE:

*Navigating fragmented information systems made it difficult for staff to provide residents with fast, consistent answers to complex city inquiries.*

## INNOVATION:

*We launched a centralized, searchable 311 Help Center that standardizes our procedures and "hot topics" into a single source of truth.*



### Key Quote

*A win for our staff is a win for the neighborhood—ensuring every resident gets the help they need, exactly when they need it.*

-ONS Neighborhood Liaison

*This ensures that every call-taker, whether a daily veteran or temporary support, has instant access to the exact same verified information.*



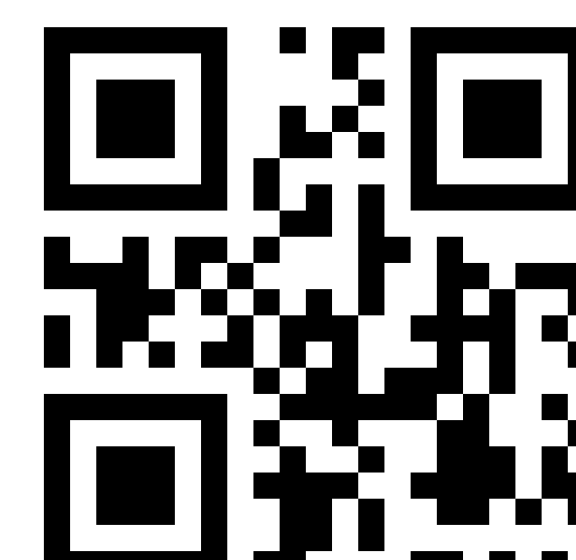
## IMPACT:

*By cutting information search time in half, we ensured residents receive faster, more accurate resolutions on the first call. This also guarantees service continuity, allowing for external support when 311 is in training.*



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# A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF BOSTON

BOSTON  
250

**TEAM:** Kergi Germain, Mike Kaminsky, David Burt, Brian Donoghue

**CONTACT:** Broadband & Cable Office (Cable@boston.gov)



## CHALLENGE:

While filming for our documentary, “Bill Russell: Bridging Communities,” we noticed the lack of drone footage available. At the same time, we started receiving requests from other City teams for aerial shots of the city.

## INNOVATION:

One of our videographers completed the FAA Part 107 certification, becoming a licensed drone pilot and unlocking the ability to safely capture professional aerial footage across Boston. We filmed iconic landmarks including the Boston Public Garden, China Trade Gate, and Faneuil Hall, then worked with the Mayor’s Digital Team to showcase the footage in Mayor Wu’s 2026 Inauguration video.



We also worked with the Public Facilities Department to recreate their renderings of the recently renovated Carter School. The aerial photos were featured in the official ribbon cutting event.



## IMPACT:

We now offer City teams access to drone footage for their media projects. Over 20 unique locations have been captured so far!



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Innovation and Technology

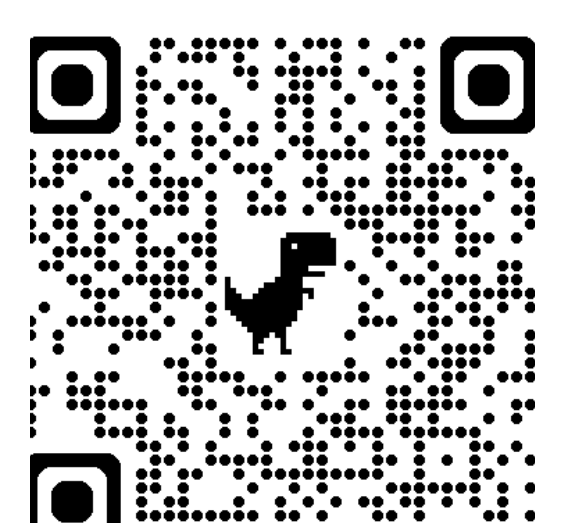


Broadband and Cable

**BOSTON**  
**CITY TV**

INNOVATION EXPO 2026

BOSTON CITY TV





# A LEAD FREE BOSTON

BOSTON  
**250**

## BWSC OPERATIONS

CONTACT: Joe Joyce



### CHALLENGE:

*Finding the most accurate and efficient method for detecting lead in water pipes.*

## VIKEN ORCA

Viken Detection has developed a device that can identify lead pipes without digging or relying on outdated records! This device uses advanced electromagnetic sensing (ORCA) combined with element-detection techniques to analyze pipe materials in real time, allowing crews to quickly and accurately determine whether a buried water service line contains lead. The result is a faster, less disruptive, and more cost-effective approach to locating hazardous pipes.



**The \*other guys\* don't compare. This device is more precise, easy to use and has more capabilities. This is the future, I'm not going back!**

-Joe Joyce, \*Position\*\*



What sets this technology apart is its accuracy compared to older methods like electrical resistivity, which can be inconsistent. Viken's system provides direct, reliable identification so utilities only replace pipes that actually contain lead.



### IMPACT:

*Makes programs like the BWSC free lead removal initiative more efficient by saving time and resources. In the future, similar tools could transform lead detection by enabling faster, city-wide removal efforts and improving public health.*



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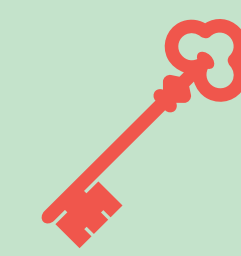
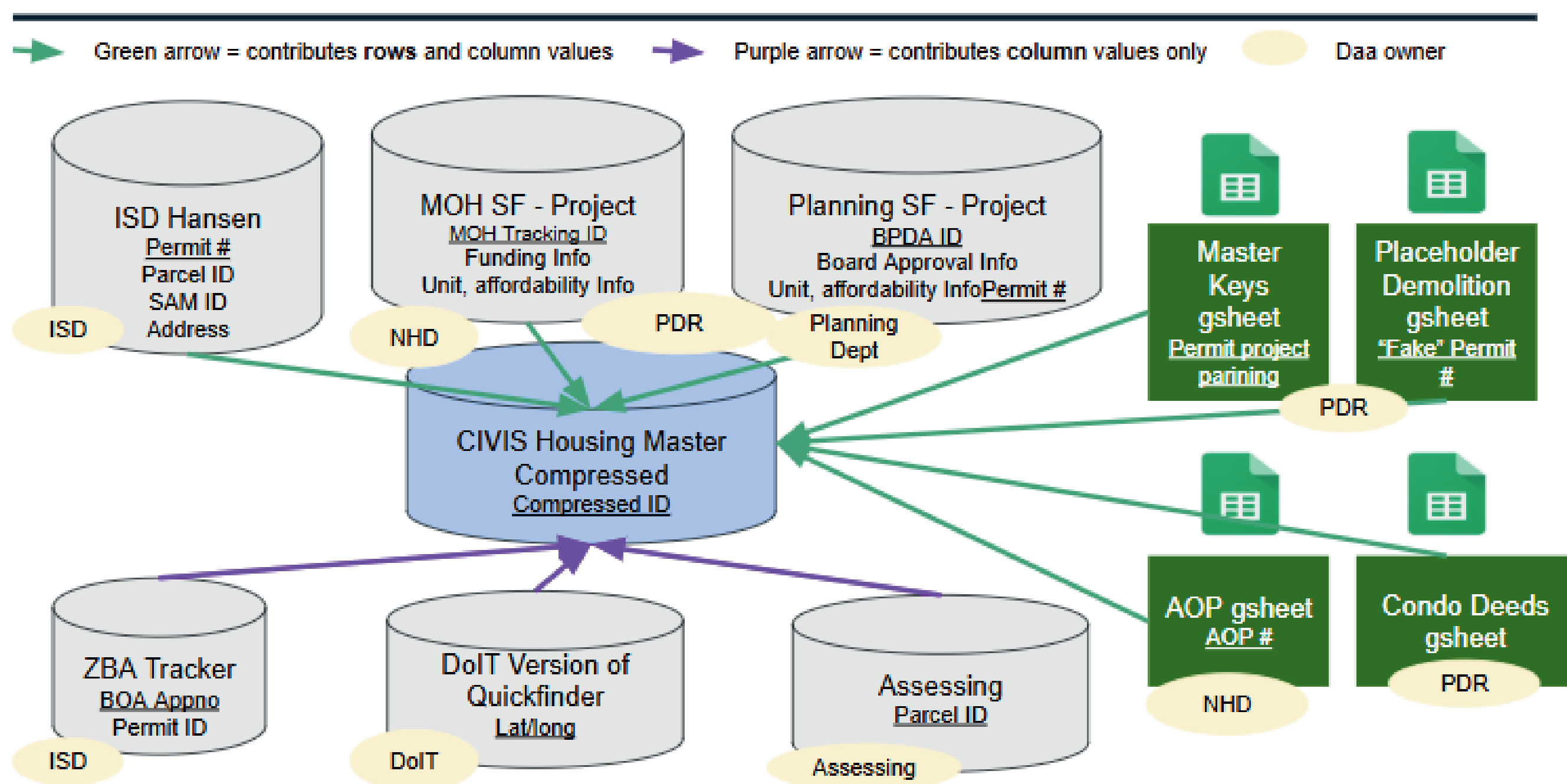
# Automating Boston's Housing Production Database

BOSTON  
250

**TEAM:** Mayor's Office of Housing & Department of IT

**CONTACT:** MOH | [amelia.najjar@boston.gov](mailto:amelia.najjar@boston.gov)

## Structure of the Dataset



## CHALLENGE:

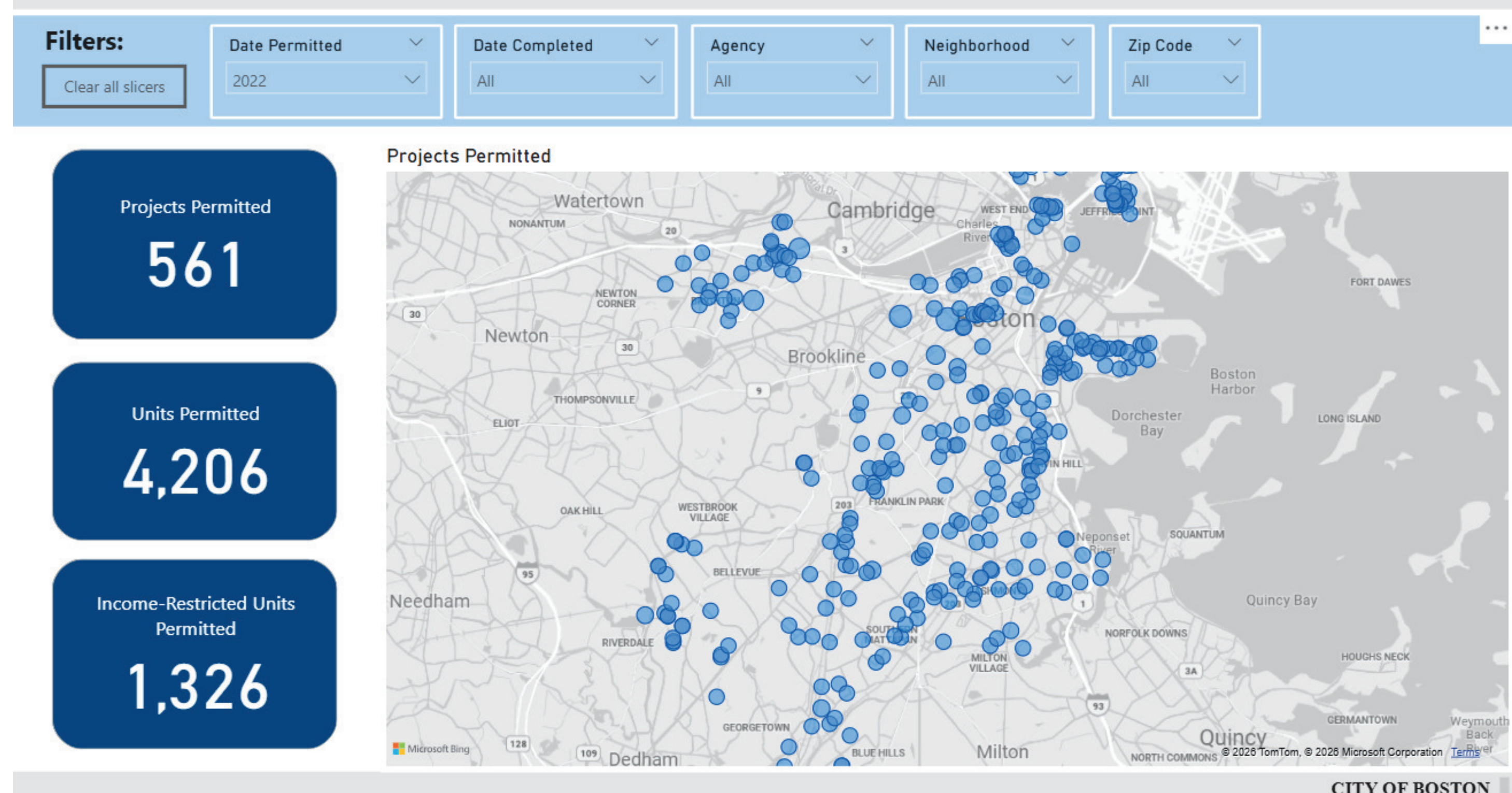
Housing production has been tracked manually, consuming 8-16 hours per week of staff time. It is challenging to keep such a large & complex dataset with tens of thousands of units timely and accurate.

## INNOVATION:

This project automates most of the process, and holds the data in a stable database.

- Uses computer programming to clean and combine dozens of datasets.
- Creates clear and consistent definitions and sources, so everyone understands what's being tracked.
- Displays all the data in a dashboard for easy use.

## Housing Production | Permitted Projects Mapped



## IMPACT:

Decreases staff time by 7-12 hours/week

Provides more timely & accurate information

Increases staff access to information



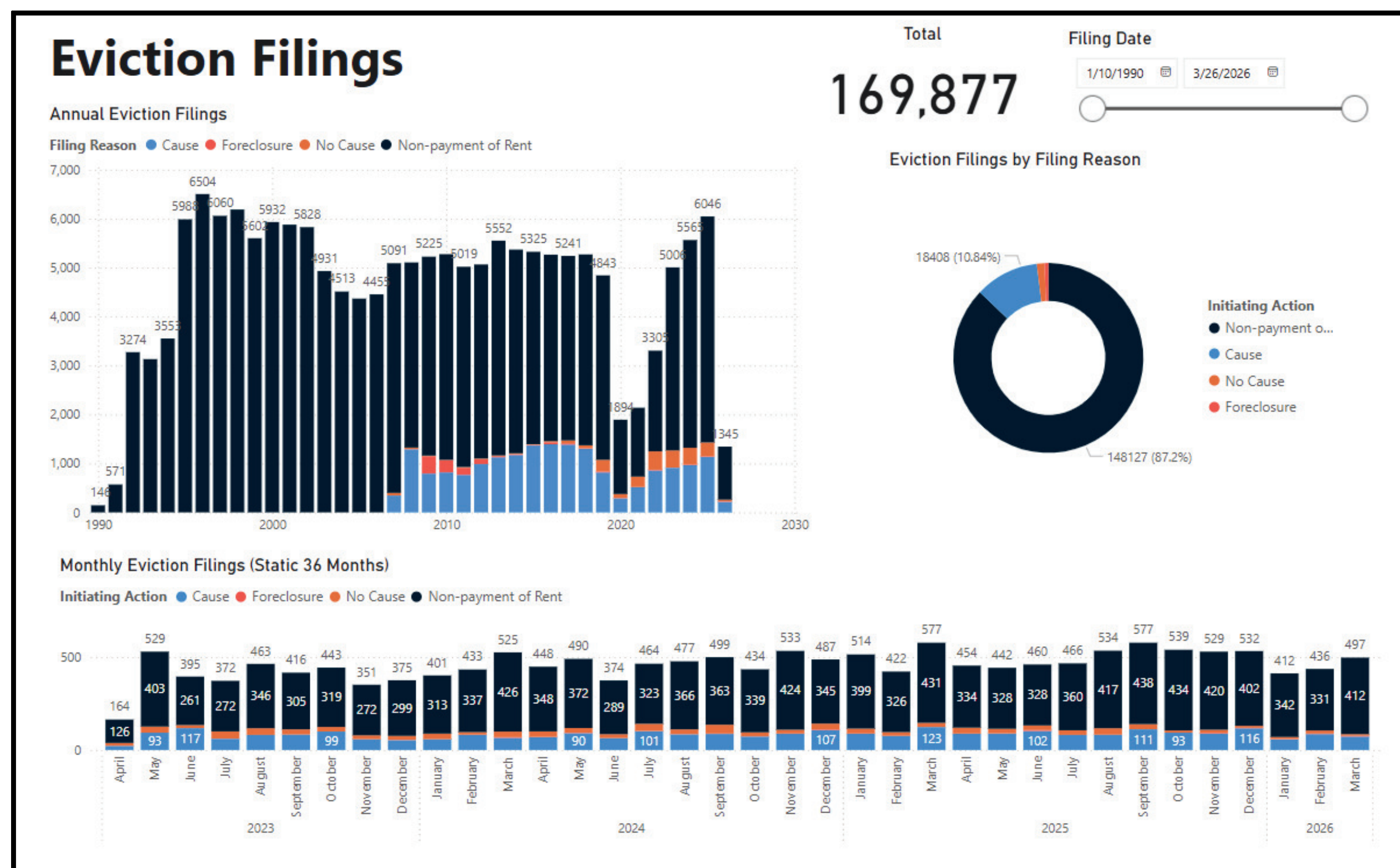
Housing

INNOVATION EXPO 2026

# AUTOMATING UPSTREAM EVICTION PREVENTION



**TEAM:** Nolin Greene, Katie Christy, The People Lab @ Harvard Kennedy School  
**CONTACT:** Mayor's Office of Housing (nolin.greene@boston.gov)



**CHALLENGE:**

It's often too late to help at-risk renters by the time they go to housing court. How can we look upstream and meet them where they are?

## INNOVATION:

- Accumulated eviction filing records and pre-eviction filings for Boston tenants.
- Automated the insertion of tenant addresses into post card mailers.
- A/B tested two designs to learn what messages improve engagement

**ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT EVICTION?**  
 ¿Está preocupado por un desalojo?

**We can help!** The City of Boston has a team of experts to provide support accessing legal services, rental assistance, and mediation services.

**¡Podemos ayudar!** La Ciudad de Boston tiene un equipo de expertos que puede poner a su disposición servicios legales, asistencia para pagar la renta y servicios de mediación.

Evidence shows that accessing resources early may help prevent eviction.

La evidencia muestra que acceder temprano a los recursos puede ayudar a prevenir el desalojo.

Call 617-635-0320 or visit <https://bit.ly/40zoyVv> today to connect with a staff member with the experience to support you.

Llame al 617-635-0320 o visite <https://bit.ly/40zoyVv> hoy para comunicarse con un miembro del personal con experiencia para brindarle apoyo.

**CITY of BOSTON** City of Boston Housing **SCAN ME!**

## IMPACT:

Families getting help sooner, and insights into which messages resonate

**18,578**  
mailers sent

**2-5%**  
engagement rate

**124%**  
increase in service engagement



Mayor's Office of Housing



# BEACON IN A BOX

## CO-DESIGNING THE FUTURE

BOSTON  
250

### LET'S PLAY!

Beacon in a Box is a board game simulating the scenario planning process. Participants collaboratively build a community vision for the Allston Rail Yard, navigating real-world challenges!

*“Beacon in a Box was informative and educational – I’m so glad I took part.”*

### CHALLENGE:

- How do we imagine the development of 50 acres of land with 8+ million square feet, 20+ years in the future?
- How do we de-risk asking community members to create their own visions for the future?



### INNOVATION:

- Treating the “game” seriously with real constraints and complexity.
- Trusting residents to develop real scenarios so they can trust us to honor their vision.

### IMPACT:

120+ participants  
8 Public Co-Design Sessions

The three final scenarios guide redevelopment that will help:

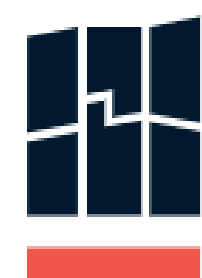
- fund major transit improvements,
- provide billions in revenue,
- create thousands of jobs and homes, and
- reconnect the Allston community.



**TEAM** Planning Department staff, including Ben Zunkeler, Yingu Pan, Andrew Plumb, Miranda Hall and our consultant WXY architecture + urban design.



City of Boston  
Innovation and Technology



City of Boston  
Planning Department

INNOVATION  
INNOVATION

LIPO  
EXPO

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2026



# BIKE TOWNS IN BOSTON



**TEAM:** Farah Elhadidy, Nate Lash, John Monacelli, Audrey Ng, Sam Veth

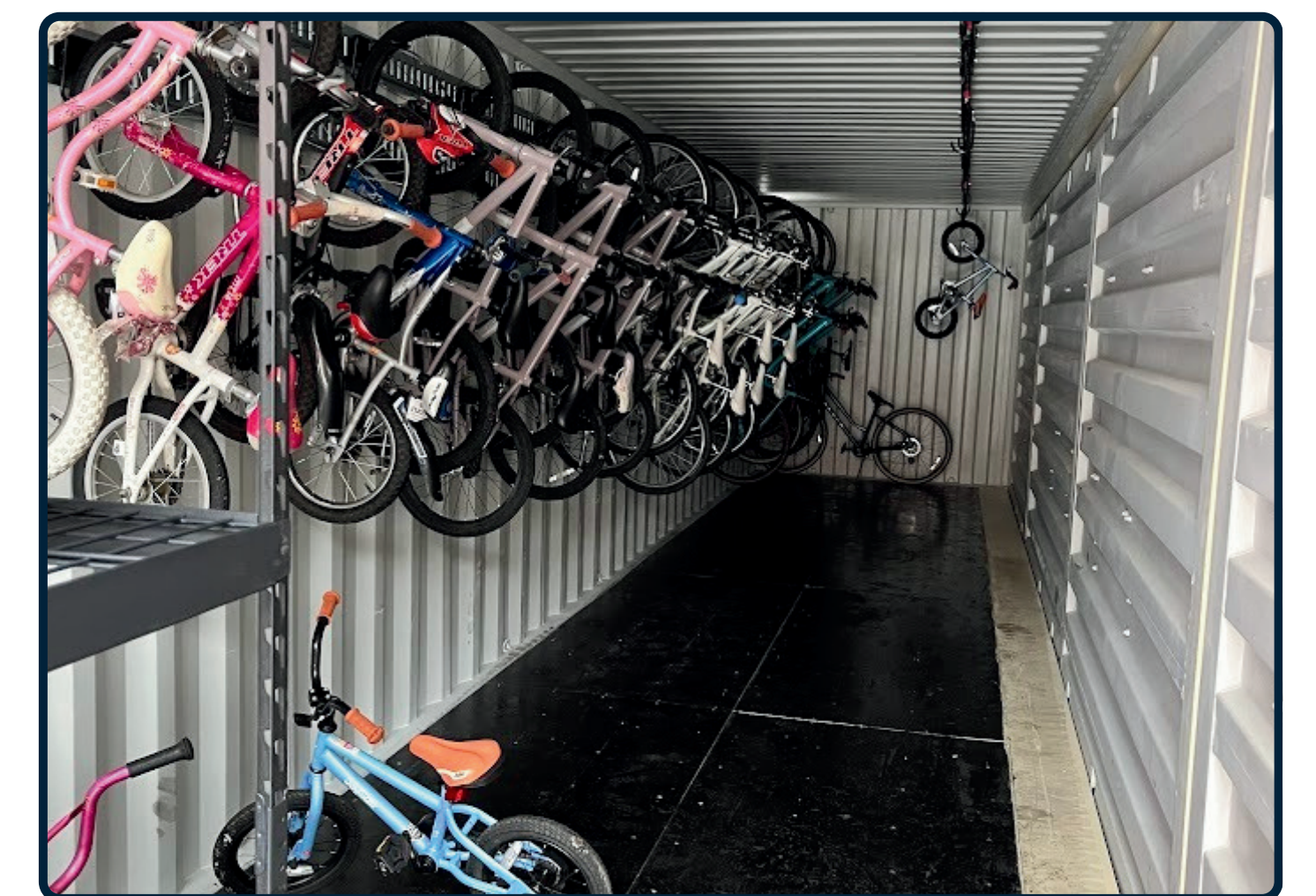
**CONTACT:** Streets Cabinet - Nate Lash (nate.lash@email.com)

## CHALLENGE:

- Families tell us that Boston does not enough safe places for kids to learn and practice riding bikes.
- Youth and adult learn-to-ride bike education programs are challenging to run without access to on-site bike storage.
- Boston has many underutilized hardscaped areas.

## INNOVATION:

We are building safe and fun places for kids and adults to learn and practice bike riding on underutilized hardscaped areas across Boston and providing on-site bike storage at select sites for City staff and community partners.



## IMPACT:

**5**

*different Boston neighborhoods will have a bike town by Fall 2026*

**120+ kids**

*learned and practiced bike riding at Bike Towns in 2025*

**189 bikes**

*are being stored year-round in 4 different neighborhoods*



City of Boston  
Transportation



City of Boston  
Early Childhood



# BOSTON ENERGY SAVER:

BOSTON  
250

*Rescuing Residents from High Utility Bills*

**TEAM:** Brooks Winner, Paulina Dieffenbach, Degen Larkin, Maria Holguin

**CONTACT:** Environment Department | 617-635-SAVE | [energysaver@boston.gov](mailto:energysaver@boston.gov)

## ENERGY SAVER

Power your home.  
Without draining your  
bank account.

**Boston Energy Saver**  
is here to help.



### CHALLENGE:

Boston is facing an **energy affordability crisis**. There are many programs available to help residents save money on utility bills but it's confusing to know where to start.

### INNOVATION:

The Environment Department has partnered with the utility companies to create a new City service, the **Boston Energy Saver** program, to help residents upgrade their buildings and lower their energy bills. This initiative provides residents with 1-on-1 support navigating energy saving programs through our new help desk.

### IMPACT:

**\$300 million**  
projected benefits  
to residents

**326**  
people  
helped and  
counting

“The Boston Energy Saver program is a fantastic resource that takes the guesswork out of home energy efficiency through clear, professional guidance.”

Boston Energy Saver participant, East Boston renter



City of Boston  
Environment

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EXPO  
2026

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EXPO  
2026



# BOSTON FIRE PROCUREMENT REFORM



**TEAM:** Alex McKenna & Cheyenne Candlin  
**CONTACT:** BFD Procurement (bfdbuys@boston.gov)

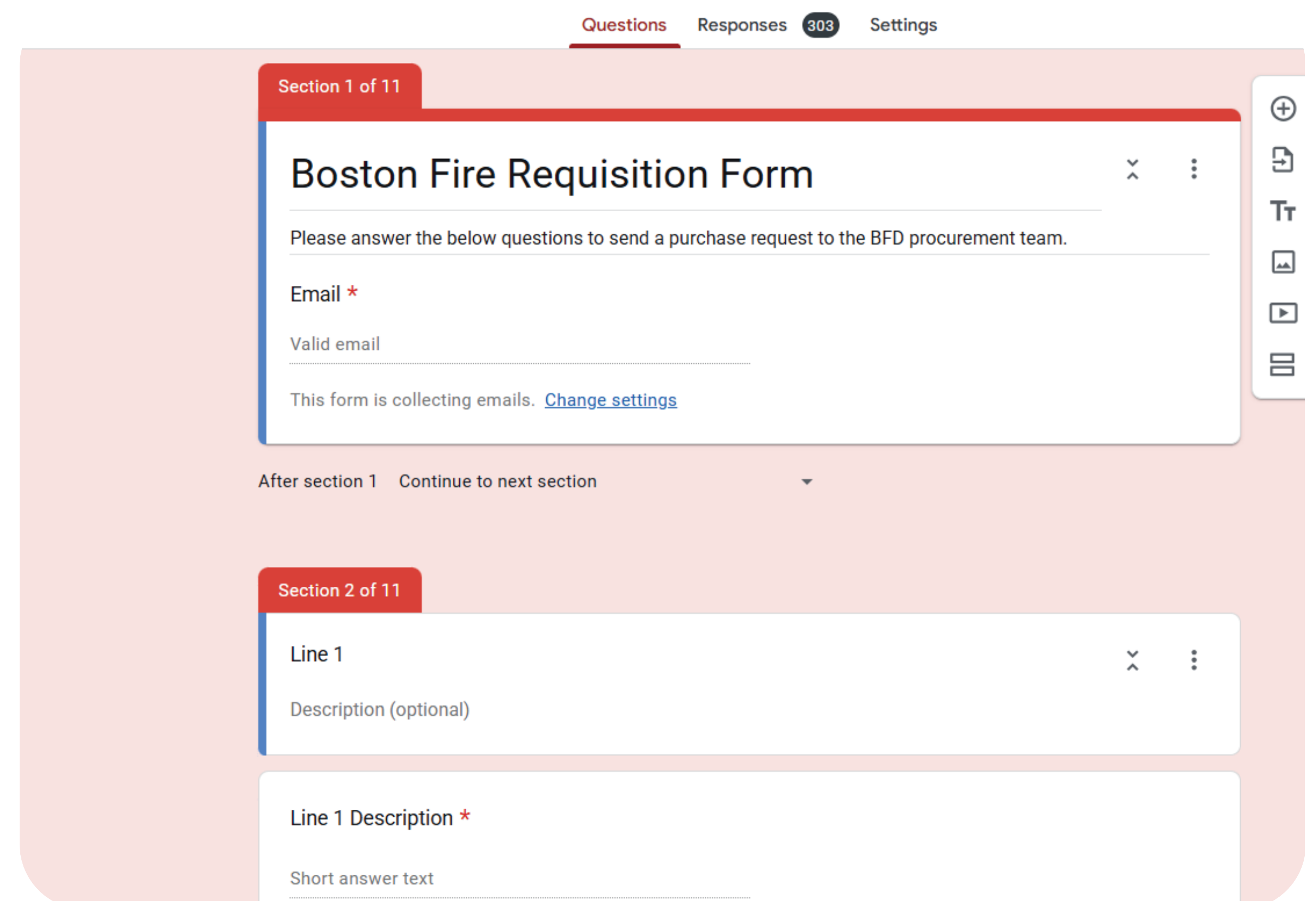


## CHALLENGE:

BFD has over a dozen internal departments, each with varying levels of administrative support. Previously, there was no standard procedure for initiating a purchase request.

## INNOVATION:

BFD Procurement office created a purchase request form, utilizing Google Forms. This standardized and centralized the first step in the purchase process, allowing us to establish single source of truth for all purchases.



| Ship To | Org Code                | Account Code       | Total Quote Price        | Specifications (please include) |                                |
|---------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| I Saf   | 5972 - BFD Special Oper | 221204 Marine Unit | 55914 Equipment Safety   | 7694.81                         | I am requesting new fenders to |
| il & B  | 0551 - BFD Spec Ops Cc  | 221206 Hazmat      | 55914 Equipment Safety   | 1,959.74                        | Specs per Quote, Proj: BFD26   |
|         | 5972 - BFD Special Oper | 221202 Tech Rescue | 55911 Equipment Other    | 310.02                          | Fuel needed to run Riverboat 1 |
| and     | 0551 - BFD Spec Ops Cc  | 221206 Hazmat      | 55914 Equipment Safety   | 598.85                          | Specs per Quote, Proj: BFD26   |
| il Pro  | 0551 - BFD Spec Ops Cc  | 221206 Hazmat      | 55914 Equipment Safety   | 12,281.61                       | Specs per quote, Proj: BFD26C  |
| All: C  | 0551 - BFD Spec Ops Cc  | 221206 Hazmat      | 53909 MiscSup Other      | 60.4                            | Specs per Quote- Requesting E  |
| I Saf   | 0551 - BFD Spec Ops Cc  | 221206 Hazmat      | 55914 Equipment Safety   | 2,702.91                        | Specs per quote, Proj: BFD26   |
| il & B  | 0551 - BFD Spec Ops Cc  | 221206 Hazmat      | 55914 Equipment Safety   | 1,487.40                        | Specs per quote, Proj: BFD26   |
| land    | 0551 - BFD Spec Ops Cc  | 221206 Hazmat      | 53903 MiscSup Sm Tools/I | 395.53                          | Specs per Grant, Proj: BFD26C  |

All purchase requests are now comprehensive, including all the budgetary and logistical information needed to get the process started.



## IMPACT:

This new tool has been used for over 300 purchase requests and counting. Significant time has been saved by eliminating the back and forth that frequently plagued our old way of doing things.



Fire Operations

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2026

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2026

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2026



**TEAM:** DoIT, Mayor's Office, ISD

**CONTACT:** Permitting Transformation (permitfeedback@boston.gov)



## CHALLENGE:

Homeowners and business owners find it difficult to understand the permit process and are frustrated with the lack of clear information on the City of Boston website.

## INNOVATION:

We created a single hub for all constituent-facing permit information for the City of Boston, at [Boston.gov/Permitting](https://boston.gov/Permitting), starting with building construction permits and projects. The website is oriented around what constituents are trying to do when they get a permit, like, "I am renovating a kitchen." The goal is to help constituents navigate permitting requirements and start their projects. With more information, constituents will also submit more complete permit applications, reducing the time to issue and administrative burden on City of Boston staff.

Over the next year, we'll expand the range of projects you can learn about to cover all of the most important constituent use cases, and include all City of Boston permits on the website.

### I'M TRYING TO...

Select the option that best describes your project.



## IMPACT

**31,748**

pageviews for home page, Q3

**15,083**

users on home page, Q3

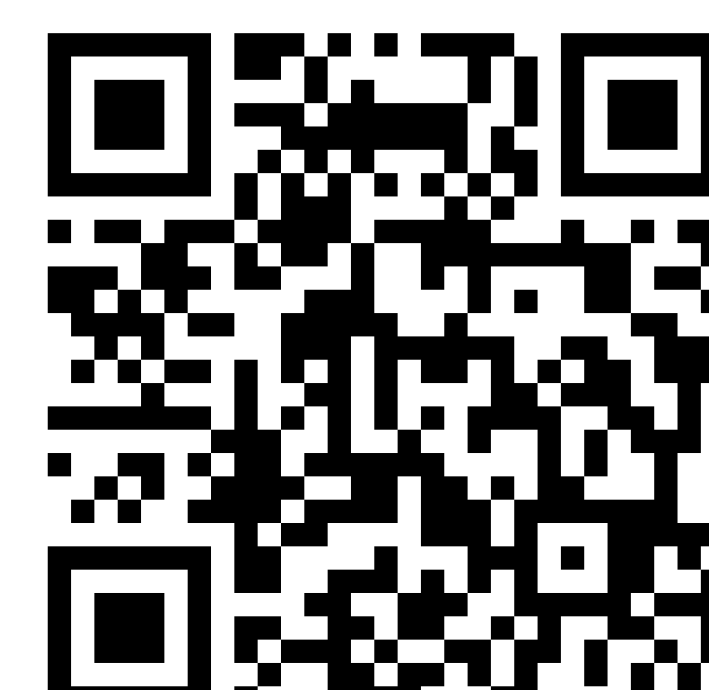


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2026



# BPHC DATA MODERNIZATION INITIATIVE



**TEAM:** Preeti Kumar, Akshay Damodar Prabhu, Mario George, Sreedevi Ravi, Christherson Jeanty, Roy Wada

**CONTACT:** Information and Technology Services/DMI, [pkumar@bphc.org](mailto:pkumar@bphc.org)



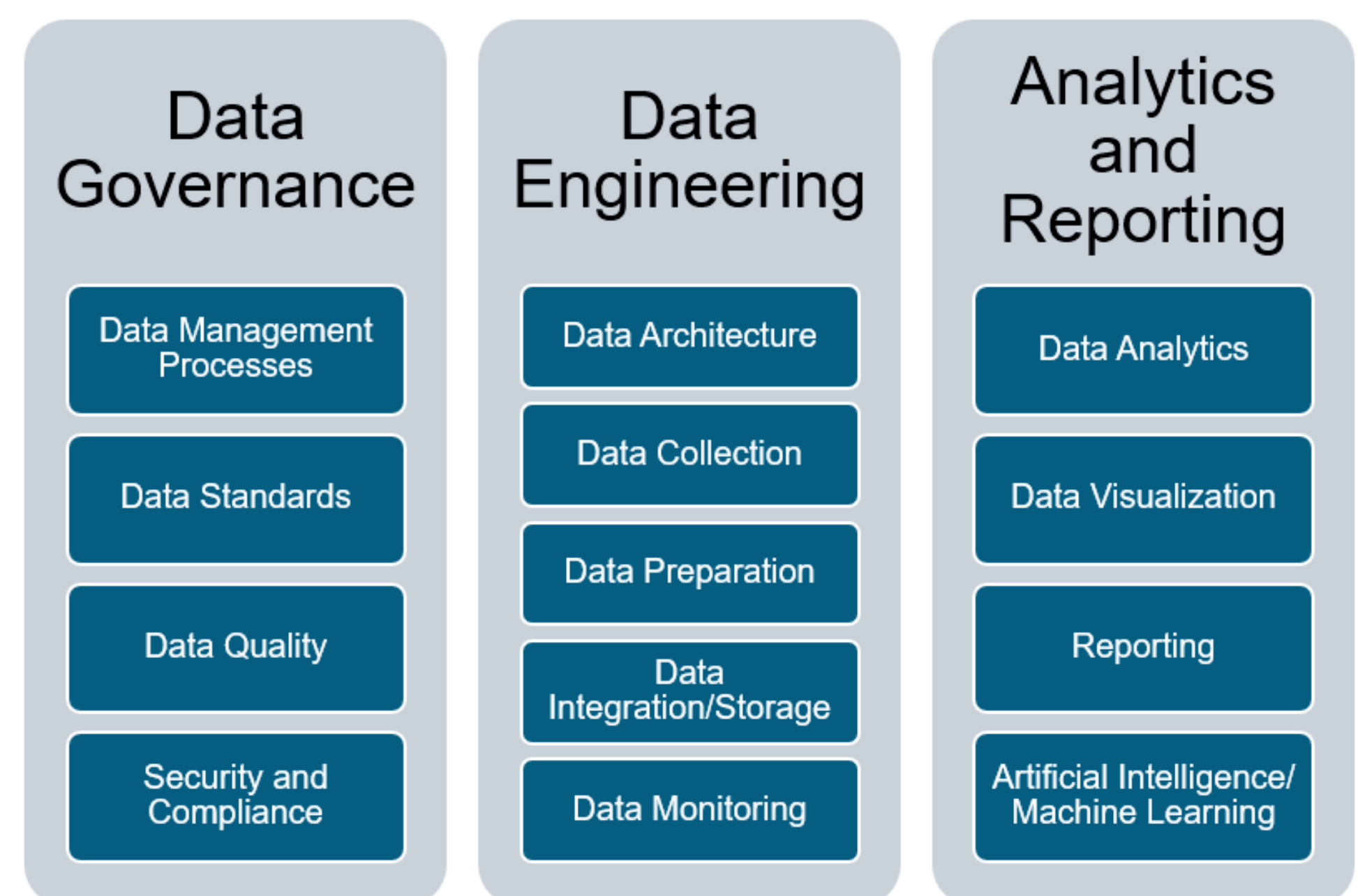
## CHALLENGE:

*Fragmented, manual, and siloed data with limited timely insights, preventing advanced analytics and AI-supported integration.*

## INNOVATION:

*Built a secure, cloud-based Data Lake and Data Modernization ecosystem, introducing automated pipelines, standardized data governance, real-time dashboards, and integrating AI/ML capabilities as a pilot into public health workflows.*

### Data Modernization Functions



Automated Referral System

Overview of Sites

| ID     | Recent Date | Client Name  | Case Manager | DOB        | Language       | Site              |
|--------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 76226  | 08/13/2024  | aaaaa rqqwr  |              | 09/20/1960 | English        | Homeless Services |
| 95070  | 07/31/2024  | aacwz wqddf  |              | 04/05/2002 | English        | Homeless Services |
| 101970 | 07/25/2023  | aaqir ebqxt  |              | 05/26/1991 |                | Homeless Services |
| 100239 | 02/10/2025  | aaqic zikph  |              | 03/07/1994 | Creole         | Homeless Services |
| 101632 | 03/01/2023  | aaqbi gthqc  |              | 05/28/1990 |                | Homeless Services |
| 5329   | 11/15/2023  | aaqsa jmqx   |              | 03/01/1982 | Not captured   | Erivision Hotel   |
| 104341 | 01/27/2024  | aaqvc vaaga  |              | 11/19/1999 | Spanish        | Homeless Services |
| 3148   | 05/06/2024  | aaqye qhyyn  |              | 01/10/1977 | Not captured   | BPHC Dorm 1       |
| 107454 | 12/19/2024  | aaqch inphk  |              | 05/29/1992 | Haitian Creole | Homeless Services |
| 38948  | 11/26/2024  | aaqiy wselu  |              | 03/23/1981 |                | Homeless Services |
| 102565 | 07/24/2023  | aaqkj qltbb  |              | 11/21/1993 | English        | Homeless Services |
| 99635  | 01/30/2024  | aaoww pimyy  |              | 01/07/1967 | English        | Homeless Services |
| 322    | 12/02/2023  | aaatf hsnbg  |              | 07/11/1979 | Not captured   | BPHC Dorm 1       |
| 108126 | 02/25/2025  | aaotoa gbvov |              | 11/18/1969 |                | MHL               |
| 106816 | 08/12/2024  | aauka bidja  |              | 12/05/1982 |                | Homeless Services |
| 102020 | 04/26/2023  | aaawv lendg  |              | 08/16/1994 | English        | Homeless Services |

Prepared by Boston Public Health Commission

### AI Pilot Use Cases

- Generative AI**
  - Training and education for command prompt engineering
  - Automate routine workflow and content generation
- Descriptive and Generative AI**
  - Support operations through an AI-powered virtual assistant
- Predictive AI**
  - AI for forecasting of Boston's seasonal influenza curve
- Prescriptive**
  - AI model to suggest number of shelter beds to prepare

Building a Healthy Boston | [boston.gov/bphc](https://boston.gov/bphc)



## IMPACT:

- Eliminated data silos and enabled cross-bureau data access
- Delivered near real-time dashboards, improving decision speed
- Improved data quality, governance, and transparency across programs
- Established BPHC's first AI-ready infrastructure supporting forecasting, automation, and insights

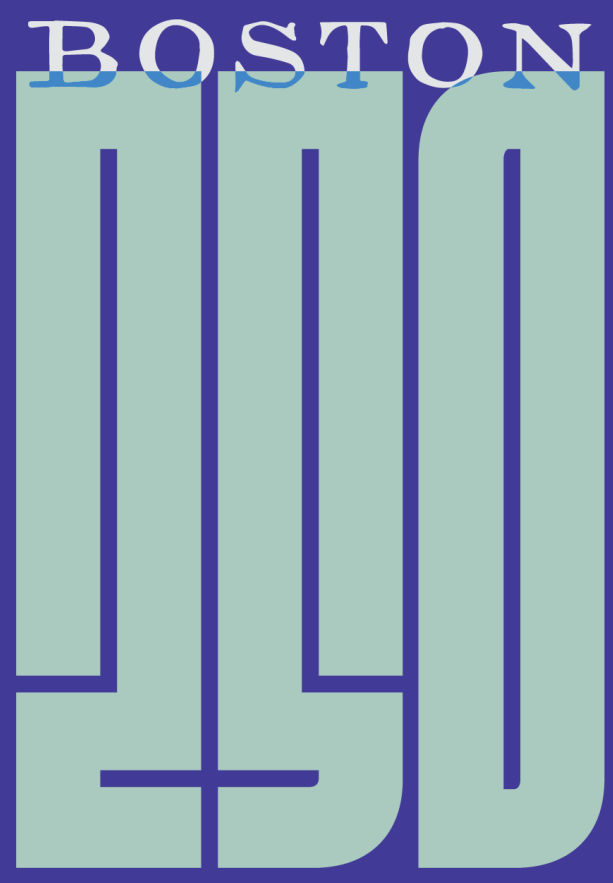


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INNOVATION EXPO 2026

INNOVATION EXPO 2026





# BUILDING A CITY FOR EVERYONE: E&I ACADEMY

**TEAM:** Equity & Inclusion Cabinet & City of Boston Partner Departments

**CONTACT:** Flo Glynn, florence.glynn@boston.gov



## CHALLENGE:

The **City of Boston** has played a role in causing and perpetuating the inequities in our society. **To break down these barriers, we are embedding equity and inclusion into everything we do.**

## INNOVATION:

The **E&I Academy** equips staff with tools to **better serve our diverse residents. Capstone Projects** invite staff to **apply learnings to build a City for Everyone.**



**220 staff touchpoints since 2023!**



### Key Quote

The **E&I Academy** didn't just **teach** me about **equity**; it **connected** me to a **powerful network of colleagues** who are all striving to build a "**City for Everyone**".



## IMPACT:

- Multilingual social media communications -DoIT & LCA
- Adaptive swim -BCYF
- ASL classes -BPL & SIGNING Basics
- Standard operating procedures -311, E&I & Age Strong



City of Boston  
Equity and Inclusion



# CAPITAL PROJECT STATUS DASHBOARD

Real-Time Transparency in City Construction



**Team:** Carleton Jones, Patricia Cafferky, Rohn MacNulty, Ellen McDonough, Bridgette Nee

**Contact:** Public Facilities Department, [publicfacilities@boston.gov](mailto:publicfacilities@boston.gov)

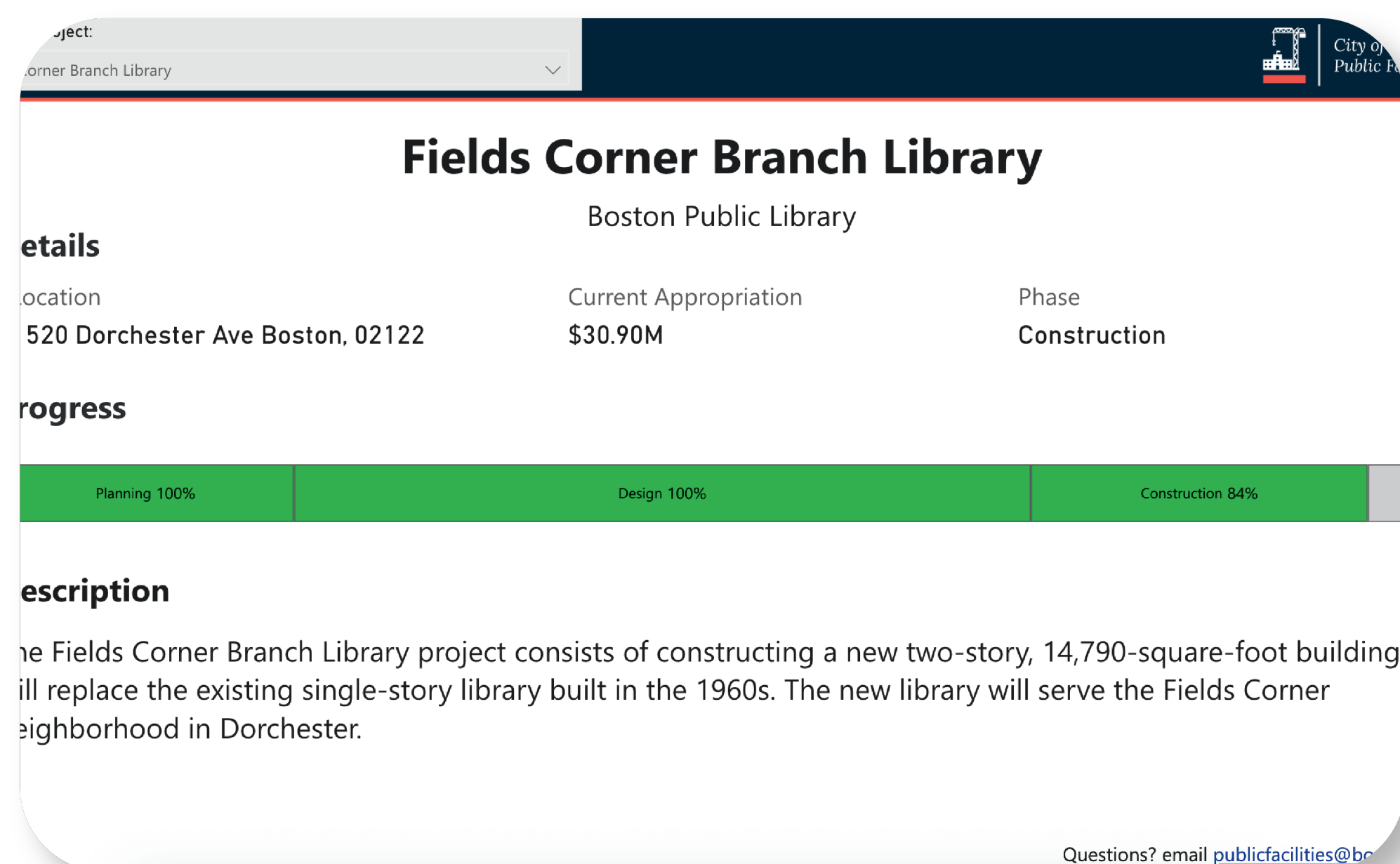


## CHALLENGE:

*It can be difficult for residents to find information about construction projects in their neighborhoods. Without an easy way to get updates, many people feel disconnected and left out of the process.*

## INNOVATION:

The Public Facilities Department solved this problem by creating a “Project Status Look Up” dashboard to link construction project signs and our website. We added QR codes to these signs so that anyone passing by can scan them with a smartphone to see live project updates on the digital dashboard.



This tool connects the physical work on the street to a page that shows general project information and project progress. Residents can also access this dashboard on the Public Facilities website.

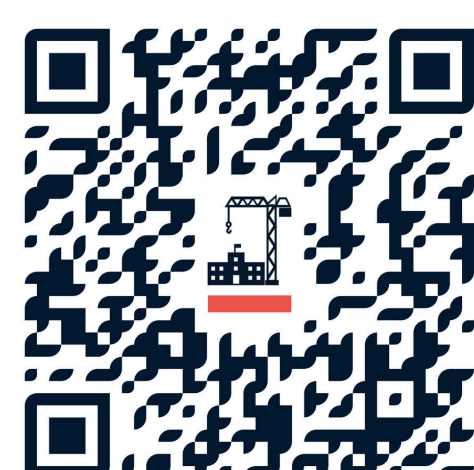


**Scan the QR code** here to learn more about the City’s capital projects!



## IMPACT:

*We’re improving the way we share information by making project data instantly available to everyone. This digital dashboard provides real-time updates so that residents don’t have to search for answers or wait for information, fostering a more open and accountable government that neighbors can trust.*



City of Boston  
Public Facilities

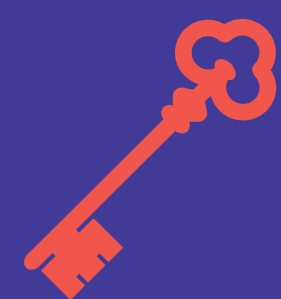


# CO-PURCHASING PILOT

BOSTON  
250

**TEAM:** Paige Roosa, Karen Rebaza, Christine McCrorey

**CONTACT:** Housing Innovation Lab (housingilab@boston.gov)



## CHALLENGE:

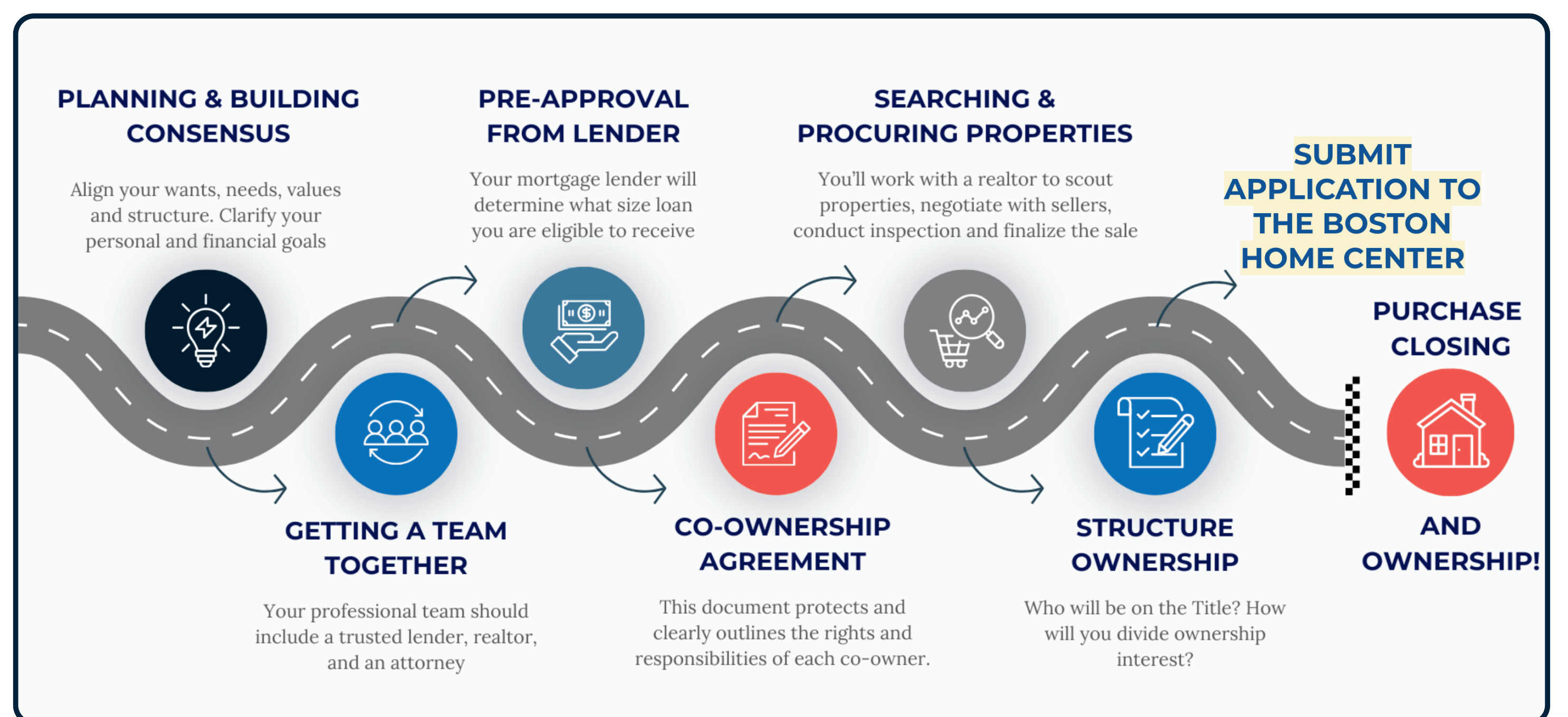
Income and asset limits for government-funded down payment assistance programs can discourage groups of households from pooling their resources to purchase multifamily properties.

## INNOVATION:

The Housing Innovation Lab partnered with the Boston Home Center to launch a “Co-Purchasing Pilot Program” with a revised set of down payment assistance program guidelines, where each household is assessed *individually* for eligibility, and assistance is based on *their* share of the total purchase price.



**Key Quote**  
“If we pursue co-ownership, then we cannot avail ourselves of first time homebuyer programs that we would qualify for if we were trying to buy as individuals.”  
-Co-Purchasing Survey Respondent



## IMPACT:

We've engaged hundreds of community members who are interested in co-purchasing. Dozens are now on the co-purchasing journey, and one group has successfully closed with city support!



Housing



INNOVATION EXPO 2026

# COMMON SENSES

BOSTON  
250

**TEAM:** Roua Atamaz Sibai, Michael Lawrence Evans

**CONTACT:** Office of Emerging Technology, oet@boston.gov

**Common SENSES**, Boston's largest and densest environmental sensor network, is a community-led project along Blue Hill Avenue. It combines data on heat, air quality, and noise with community stories to advance environmental justice solutions.

7

co-designed workshops

17

community events

+800

community stories

75

sensors installed



## WHAT WE DID:

Co-designed and deployed a neighborhood-scale sensor network measuring heat, air quality, and noise, while gathering community stories to ground the data in lived experience.

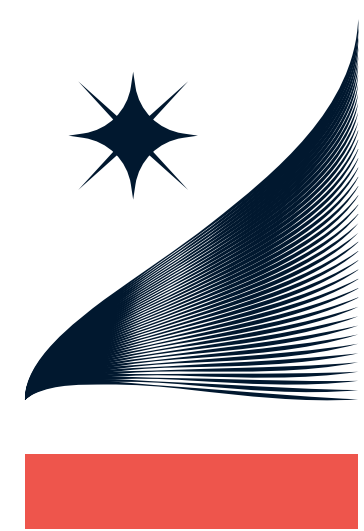
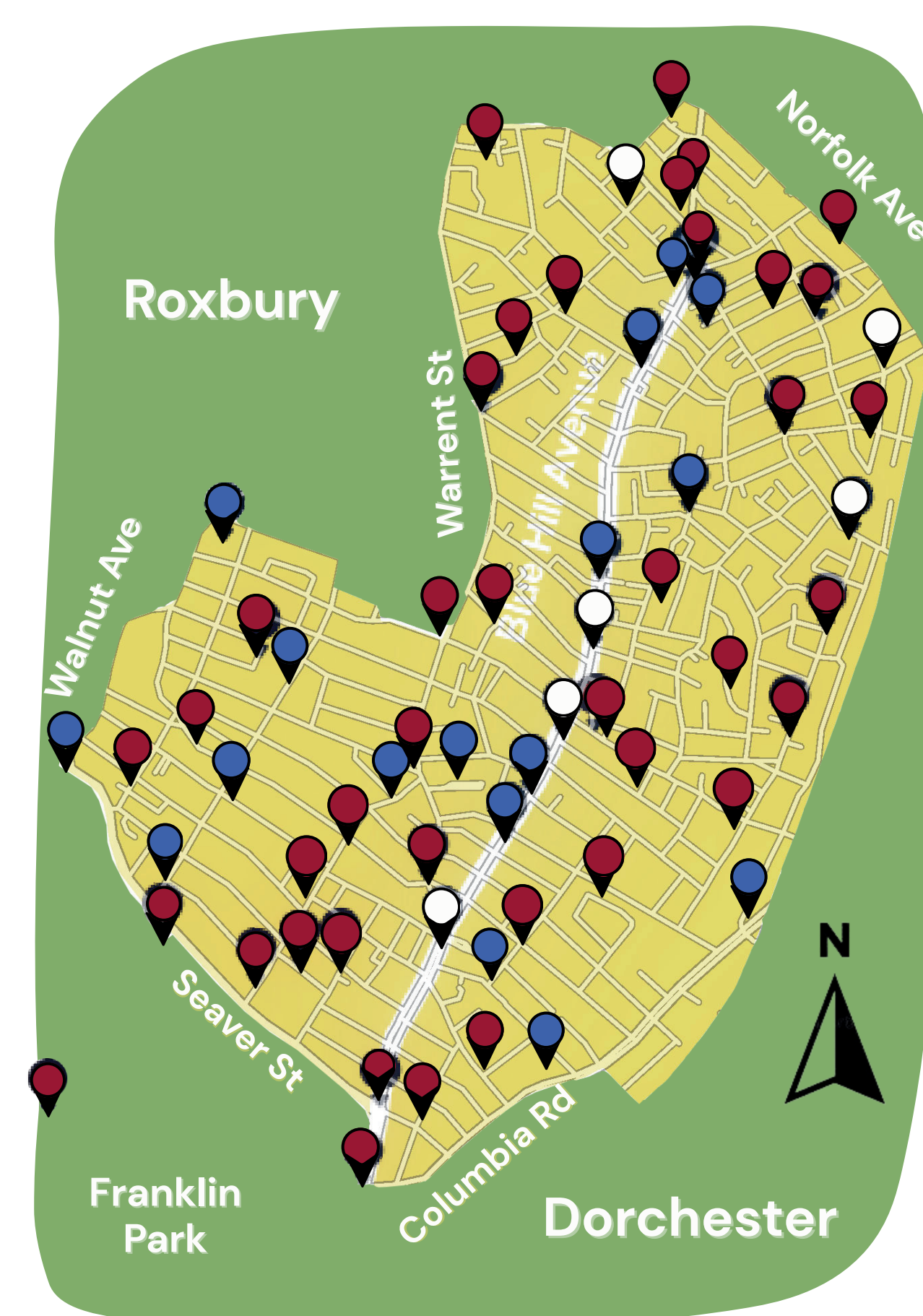
## INNOVATION:

Boston's largest and densest neighborhood-scale sensor network, co-designed with residents, combining hyperlocal data and community knowledge to make climate impacts visible and actionable.



## IMPACT:

Provides hyperlocal data to inform city planning, identify environmental hotspots, and support more equitable climate investments in Roxbury and Dorchester.



Emerging Technology

INNOVATION  
INNOVATION

LIPO  
EXPO

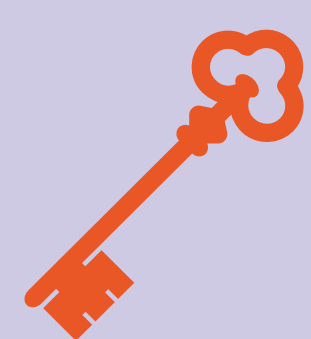
DUUU  
2026



# COORDINATED FURNITURE PICK-UP PILOT

BOSTON  
250

**TEAM:** Thaddeus Brown and Marcy Ostberg (MONUM), Avantika Mathur (Zero Waste), Alon Dubler (Environment), Nora Cahill and Naomi Carolan (Harvard Kennedy School)  
**CONTACT:** Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics ([newurbanmechanics@boston.gov](mailto:newurbanmechanics@boston.gov))



## CHALLENGE:

Allston Christmas produces tons of furniture waste. The City wanted to test if coordinating a free furniture pick-up program could reduce furniture going to the landfill and scale the program.

## INNOVATION:

On August 25, 2025, the Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics (MONUM) launched a one-day Coordinated Furniture Pick-Up Pilot in Brighton, in partnership with Household Goods, a furniture bank.

The pilot offered free furniture pick-up for residents and provided access to high-quality furniture for donation to those in need through Household Goods.



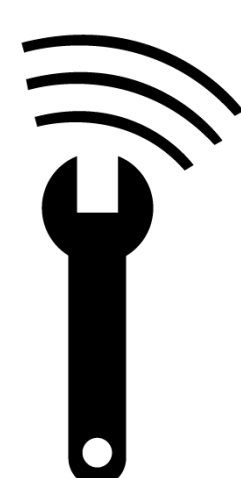
MONUM coordinated the design and delivery of operations and logistics on the City of Boston side, and Household Goods coordinated volunteers, movers, and moving trucks for the furniture pick-up effort.



## IMPACT:

This program resulted in 26 households participating, with a total of 54 high-quality furniture items collected, and a 92% satisfaction rate among participating residents.

THE MAYOR'S OFFICE OF  
**NEW URBAN  
MECHANICS**



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2026



# DESIGN STRATEGIES FOR MODERNIZING HIRING & ONBOARDING



**TEAM:** Abbie Milewski, Sarah Ballinger, Jess Beaudoin, Priya Millward, HRIT Team  
**CONTACT:** Office of Human Resources, ohr@boston.gov

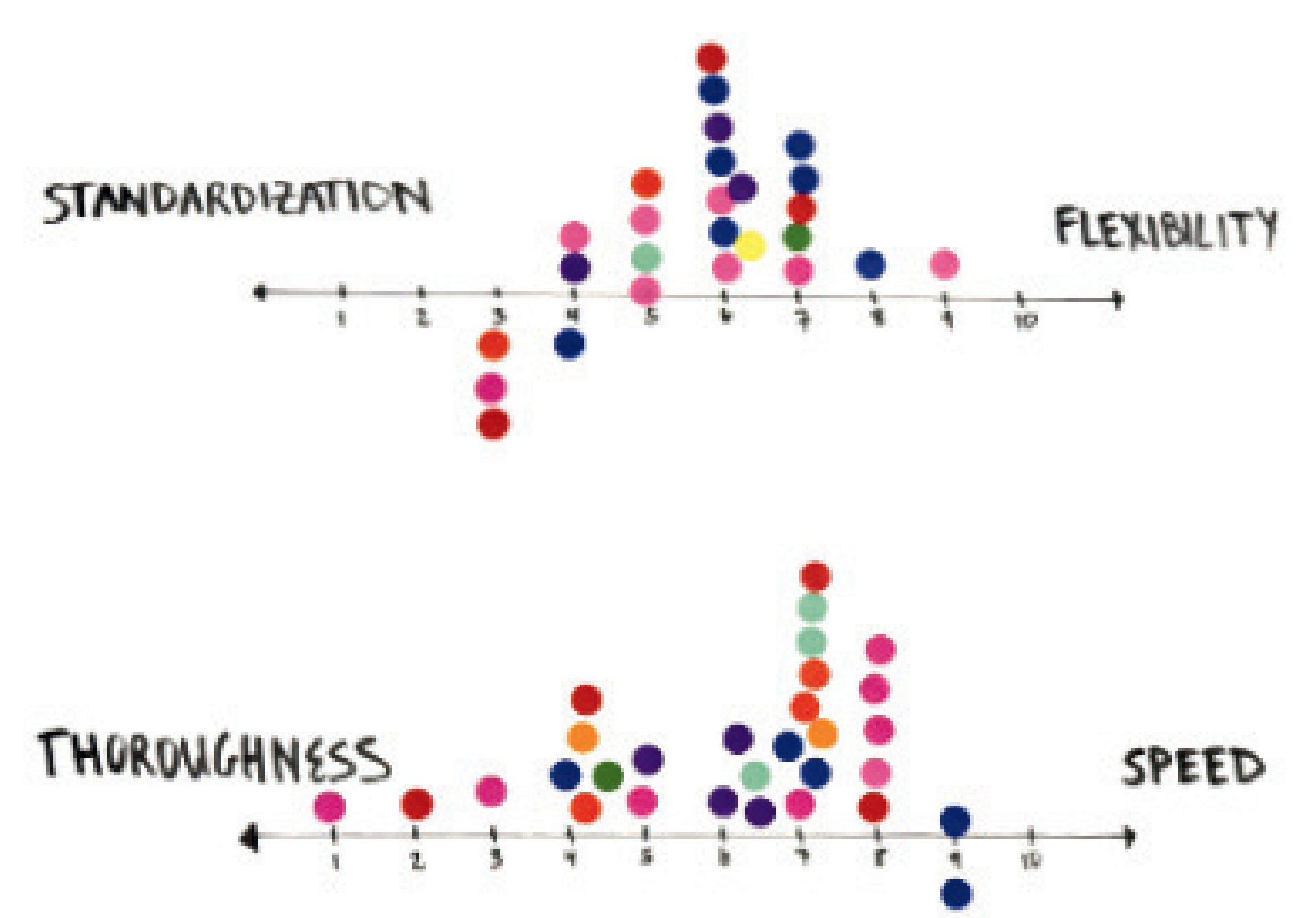
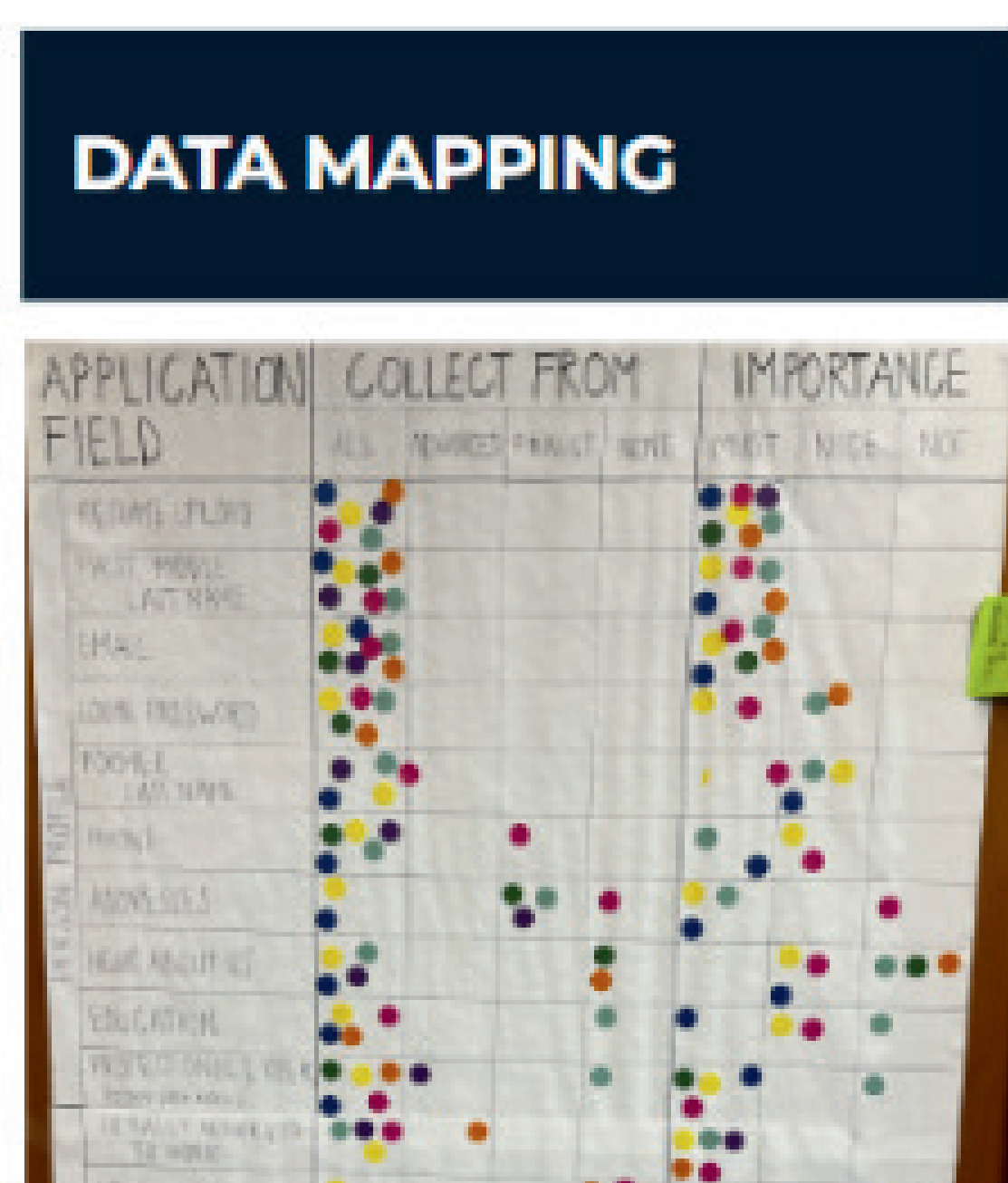


## CHALLENGE:

After 10 years, the City is replacing iCIMS - our applicant tracking system. This is more than a system replacement: it's an opportunity to rethink how we hire, understand and improve user experience, and build a foundation for the future of HR products.

## INNOVATION:

We grounded every design decision in real experience by conducting user research with both jobseekers and internal staff. By partnering with OHR Compliance and Law to rethink our requirements, we moved beyond past practice to build a modern process that actually works for people. As a result, we're splitting hiring and onboarding into two specialized tools to reduce the burden on our candidates. NEOGOV will power our recruitment, while Beacon (ServiceNow) will provide a streamlined onboarding experience for new hires.



## IMPACT:

By collecting the right information at the right time, we've reduced administrative burdens across the entire hiring journey and shifted most onboarding tasks to Day 1 or later. This new approach balances consistency and flexibility, reduces delays to hiring, and increases our internal capacity to continually improve our systems.



Human Resources



City of Boston  
Innovation and Technology

# FORECASTING AND ACCESSIBLY ADAPTING FOR DEMAND AT A BOSTON PUBLIC SHELTER

BOSTON  
250

**TEAM:** Gregory Grays-Thomas, Nikki Shen, Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC)

**CONTACT:** Homeless Services Bureau (nshen@bphc.org)

## CHALLENGE:

Shelter bed demand varies between seasons and across years, and periods of high demand are often unpredictable. Demand has been rising in recent years, and the population of people in our shelters have diverse and complex needs.

## INNOVATION:

In 2025, BPHC partnered with MIT students to use machine learning/A.I. to *create a model that will predict demand for shelter beds* based on factors such as time of year, weather, and housing market conditions (e.g. median rent).



In 2023, BPHC *began a process of shelter transformation*, involving changes to internal policies, as well as the physical space, to make shelter more appealing to people living with active addiction. *25 low-threshold beds were established for those living with addiction*, subsequently expanded to 75 beds due to demand.



## IMPACT:

- Created 75 beds for people with active addiction
- Machine learning-enhanced prediction models show early promise in improving BPHC's ability to predict and prepare for shelter demand



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2026

# HAYMARKET FOOD RECOVERY



**TEAM:** Anna VanRemoortel, Aliza Wasserman, Laura Alves, Avantika Mathur

**CONTACT:** Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics (newurbanmechanics@boston.gov)

## CHALLENGE:

While one-third of Boston's waste is food, many residents lack access to fresh produce. The project aims to bridge this gap by transforming Haymarket's end-of-market surplus into a source of fresh and nutritious food while reducing the market's waste.

## INNOVATION:

The Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics partnered with the Office of Food Justice, Environment Department, Department of Public Works, and Haymarket Pushcart Association to redesign the market's waste management and food recovery systems.



## Interventions:

- *Color-Coded Signage:* Clear instructions in the market's top four languages to improve waste sorting and diversion.
- *Purchasing Guides:* New multilingual guides to help vendors optimize inventory and reduce surplus.
- *Logistics Pipeline:* A direct connection between vendors and the Greater Boston Collaborative Food Access Hub to distribute recovered food to local communities.

**OTTO'S PURCHASING GUIDE**

**BUY LESS IF THERE IS...**

- BAD WEATHER**  
Will there be bad weather at the market? If so, buy less produce because there will be fewer customers.
- T DISRUPTIONS**  
Are there delays or disruptions on the T this weekend? If so, buy less produce because there will be fewer customers.
- POOR CONDITION**  
Is the produce in bad condition? If so, buy less and avoid the items that will need to be thrown out or sorted through.
- HIGH COST OF PRODUCE**  
Is the cost of produce high for the items that aren't popular among customers? If so, buy less of that item to minimize loss and waste.

**BUY MORE IF THERE IS...**

- HOLIDAYS**  
Are there holidays this week (Easter, Thanksgiving, etc)? If so, buy more produce because customers will be preparing for family dinners.
- SPECIAL EVENTS**  
Is there a special event going on (sporting event, TD Garden, Festival on City Hall plaza)? If so, buy more produce because there will be more foot traffic from the event.
- POPULAR PRODUCE OPTIONS**  
Is the produce available at the wholesaler popular among customers? If so, buy more to meet the higher demand.

*Rule of thumb: Buy only as much as you think you can sell. If you try something new, start small. Never overbuy!*

WWW.HAYMARKETBOSTON.ORG

**FOOD SCRAPS**

**ALL FOOD SCRAPS CAN INCLUDE PACKAGING**

Items will go through a depackaging process and be turned into energy by anaerobic digestion.

## IMPACT:

This initiative supports Boston's goal of becoming a Zero Waste city. By diverting surplus produce from landfills to the Greater Boston Food Access Hub, the project reduces greenhouse gas emissions while providing fresh, healthy food to food-insecure residents across the city.





# Implementing Innovative Naloxone Distribution Strategies

**TEAM:** Allison Li, Shereen Sodder, Christian Arthur

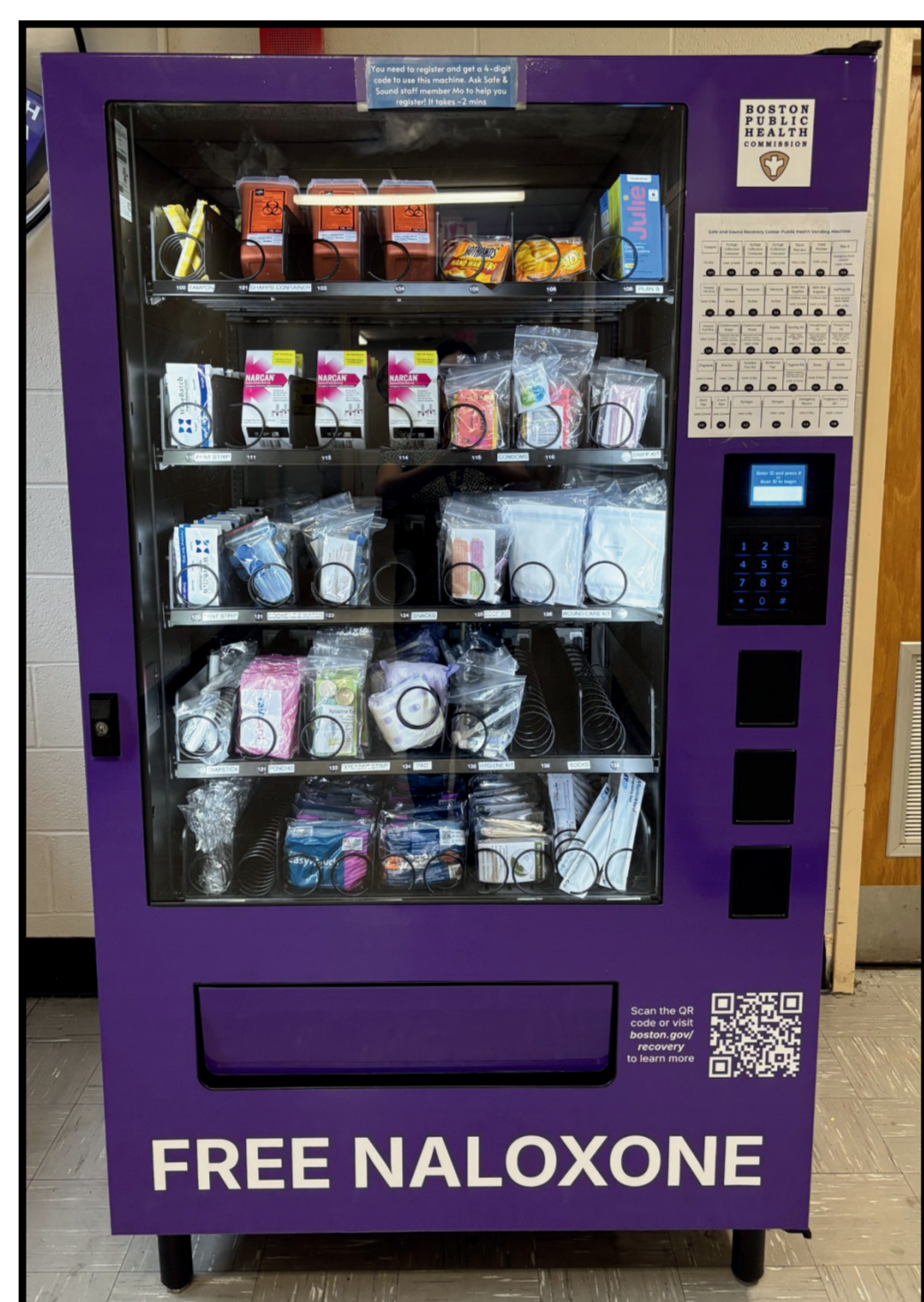
**CONTACT:** Boston Overdose Data to Action, BPHC Recovery Services Bureau (od2a@bphc.org)

## CHALLENGE:

In 2024, 169 Boston residents lost their lives to opioid overdoses. Timely administration of the overdose reversal medication naloxone can stop overdoses from turning deadly, but systemic barriers limit naloxone access for many.

## INNOVATION:

Since late 2024, BPHC has worked with community partners to establish naloxone kiosks and public health vending machines (PHVMs). BPHC places these with organizations that serve populations most affected by overdose, namely Black, Latine, re-entry, and unhoused individuals, to increase naloxone access for these groups.



Naloxone kiosks are recycled newspaper boxes that offer free naloxone and other health supplies. PHVMs provide naloxone and other overdose prevention supplies, educational resources, and other public health items (e.g., socks, water, pregnancy tests, hygiene kits, safer sex supplies). Both interventions are cost-effective and provide more privacy than face-to-face services, attracting clients who may avoid services due to fear of discrimination, with different capabilities for item storage and data collection.

## IMPACT:

BPHC has placed 6 PHVMs and 13 naloxone kiosks at partner organizations, increasing access to naloxone and other public health supplies for staff, clients, and community members at these sites. In 2025, the Boston PHVMs distributed a total of 24,572 items, including 262 naloxone kits.

*Funding disclaimer: This project is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by CDC/HHS, or the U.S. Government.*

# KEEPING KIDS COOL



**TEAM:** Paula Gaviria Villarreal, Farah Elhadidy

**CONTACT:** Office of Early Childhood (earlychildhood@boston.gov)



## CHALLENGE:

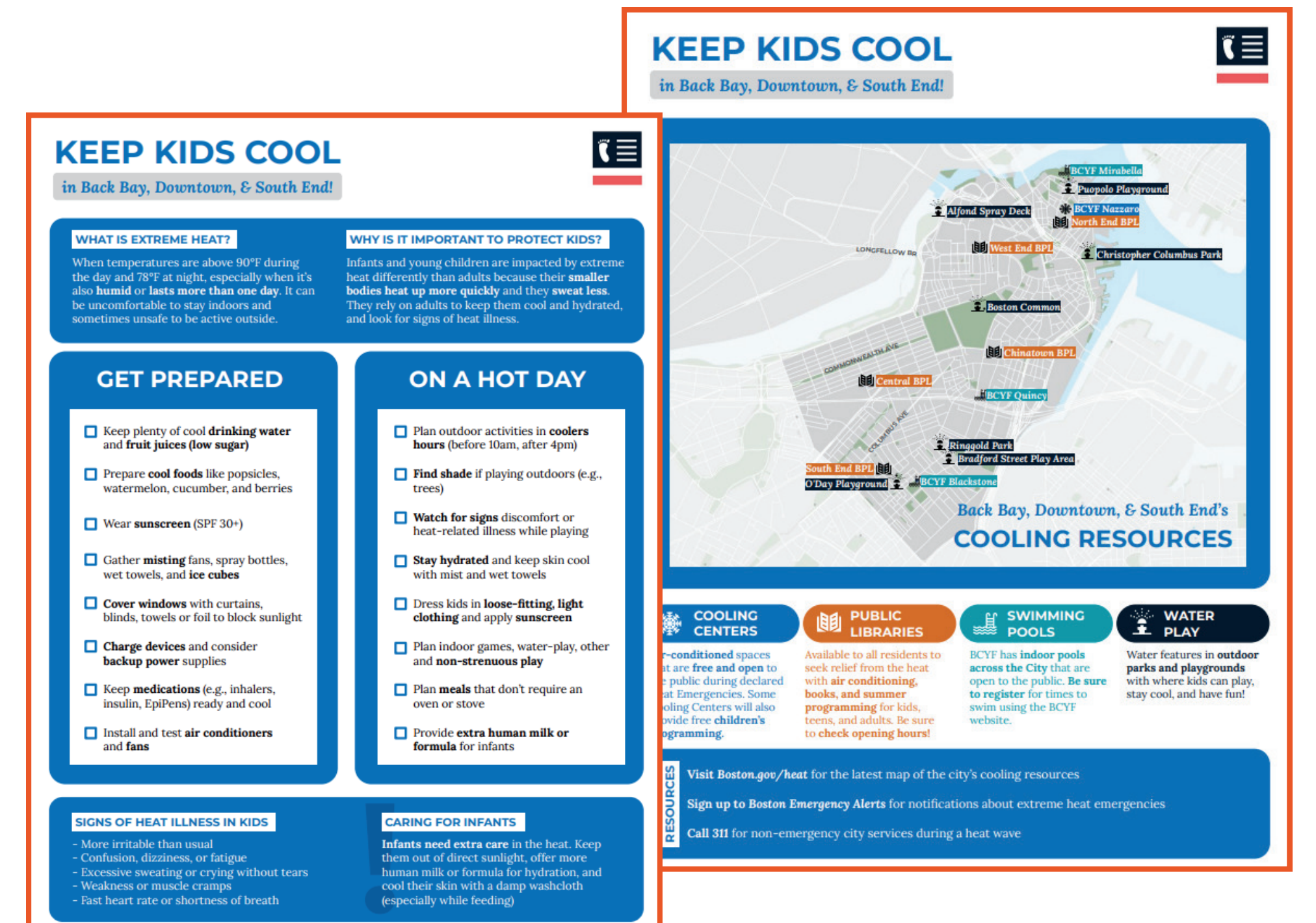
Extreme heat is an increasing public health risk, especially for young children (ages 0–5). However, they are often overlooked in heat preparedness efforts, leaving families and caregivers without clear, accessible guidance to stay safe.

## INNOVATION:

We are building practical solutions to protect young children from extreme heat across the places they spend their time.

**Public Spaces:** We provide programming in cooling centers across 5 organizations in urban heat islands, creating safe spaces during extreme heat.

**Home:** We created neighborhood heat action plans, trained “heat champions,” partnered with pediatricians to strengthen HHAN alerts, & distributed 18 splash pads to BHA communities.



### EN UN DÍA CALUROSO

- Manténga a los niños **hidratados**
- Ofrezca más **leche materna** o fórmula a los bebés
- Salga en **horario más fresco** (antes de las 10 a.m. o después de las 4 p.m.)
- Vista a los niños con **ropa ligera** y use protector solar
- Refresquese** con ventiladores, AC, sombra y duchas frescas
- Planifique comidas** que no requieran horno o estufa
- Manténga frescos los **medicamentos**
- Esté atento a señales de **enfermedad por calor**



**Childcare:** We supported family child care providers with temperature sensors, action plans, and information on extreme heat & Mass Save. We are now scaling this effort by sharing tools, activity guides, & resource connections.



## IMPACT:

This work equipped 25+ child care providers to manage heat & served 350+ children through cooling centers, while expanding access to trusted heat safety resources for families, with efforts continuing & growing through summer 2026.



City of Boston  
Early Childhood

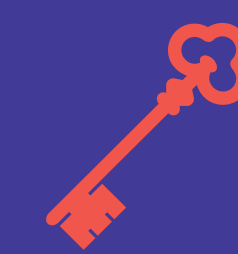
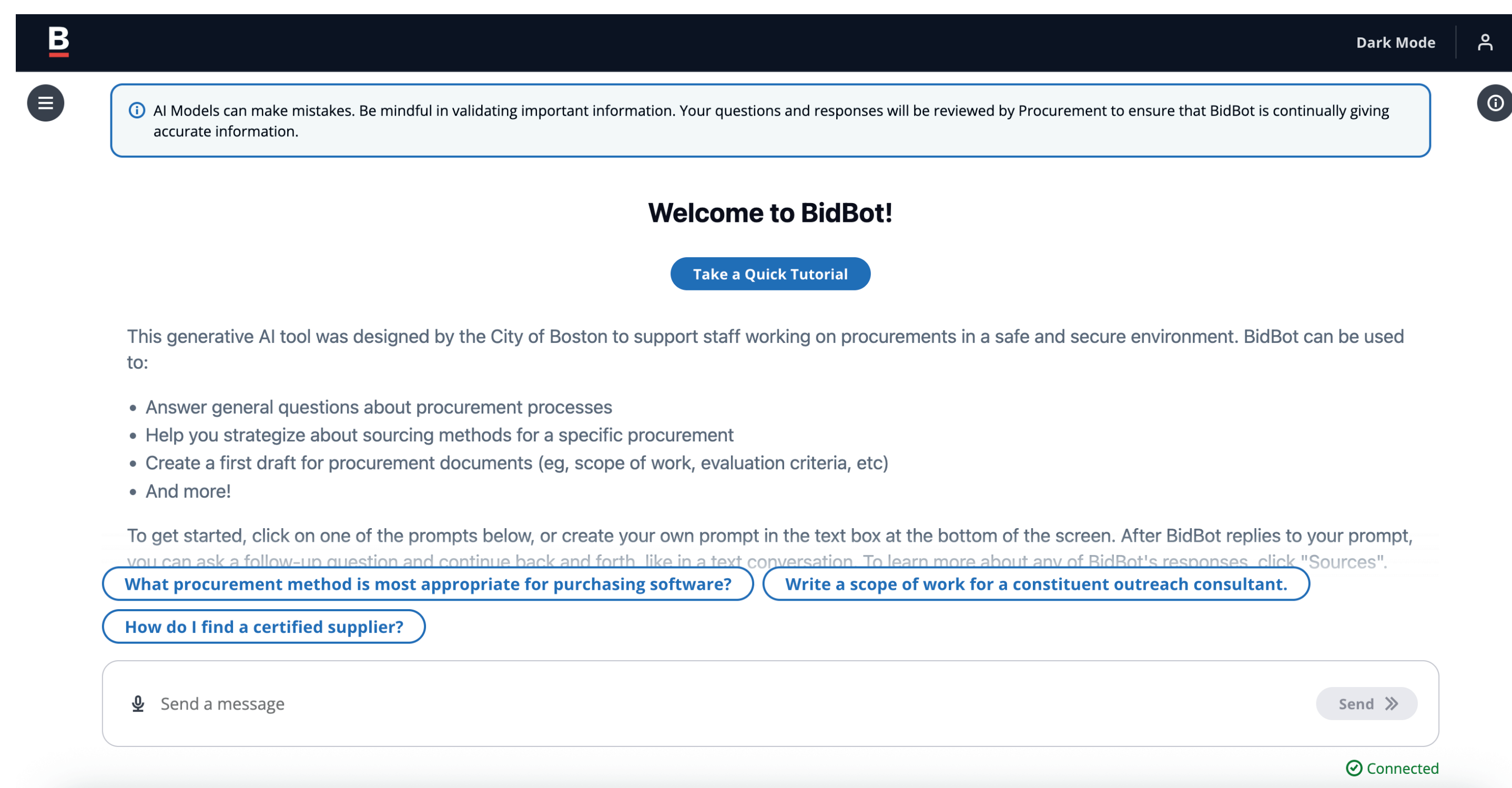


# LESSONS FROM BIDBOT: AN AI TOOL FOR CITY PROCUREMENT



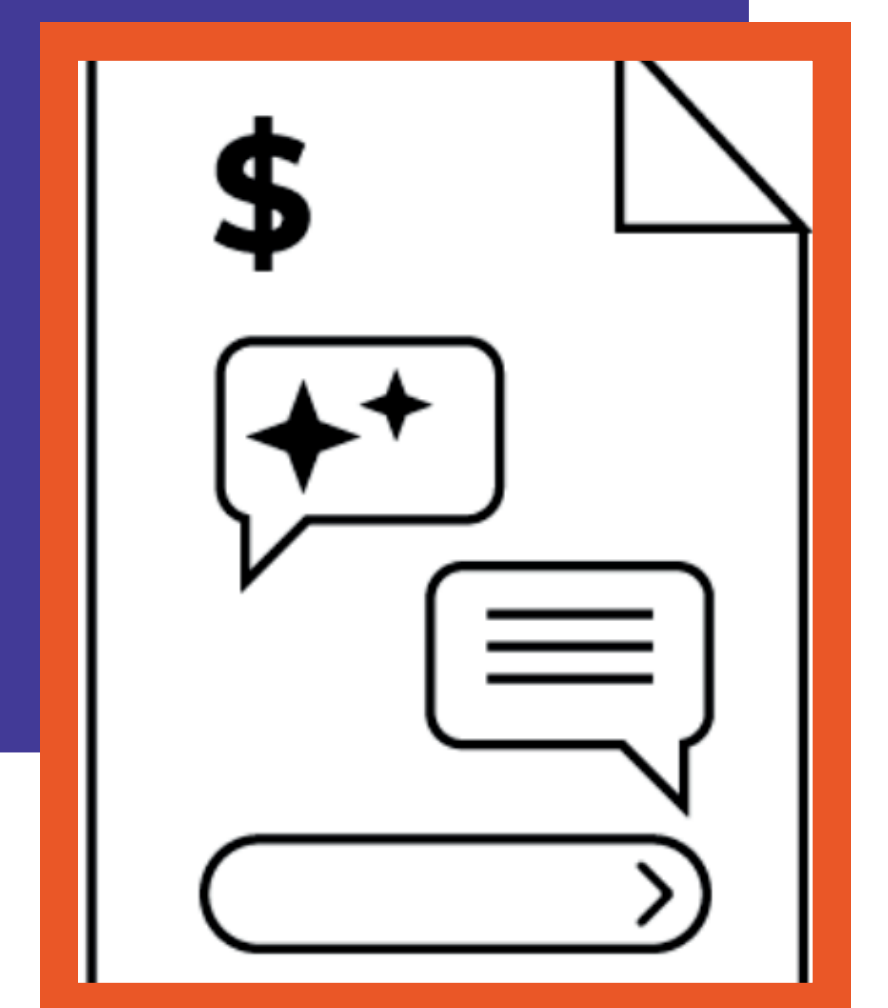
**TEAM:** Maia Materman & Sebastian Olascoaga (DoIT), Lydia Chew (Procurement)

**CONTACT:** DoIT & Procurement, [bidbot@boston.gov](mailto:bidbot@boston.gov)



## CHALLENGE:

City workers often need to buy supplies or hire contractors through a process called procurement. Rules for procurement are confusing and the process can be hard to get right. Most employees don't buy big things often, so procurement is tough to do without help.



## INNOVATION:

We worked together to build BidBot, an AI tool for City procurement, using the City of Boston's own rules and guides. Then we tested it with employees and gave them access to training.

## IMPACT:

Staff using BidBot finished their work more quickly and more accurately. City workers also liked AI more after using BidBot. Ten months later, employees who learned to use BidBot are still using it.

completed tasks

**18%**

more quickly

**2x**

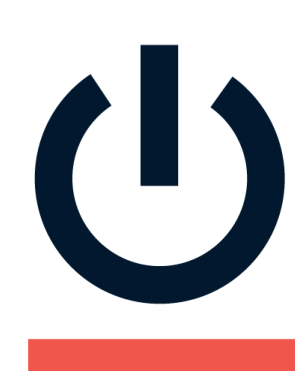
higher quality  
Scopes of Work  
drafted

**43%**

believe AI can  
help in their job  
vs 2% without BidBot



City of Boston  
Procurement



City of Boston  
Innovation and Technology



# MAKING EQUITABLE PROCUREMENT VISIBLE



**PRESENTERS:** Ryan Nicoll, Ana Girón Vives, Ross Cochran, Kelsi Frederick  
**CONTACT:** Procurement Department - [procurement@boston.gov](mailto:procurement@boston.gov)

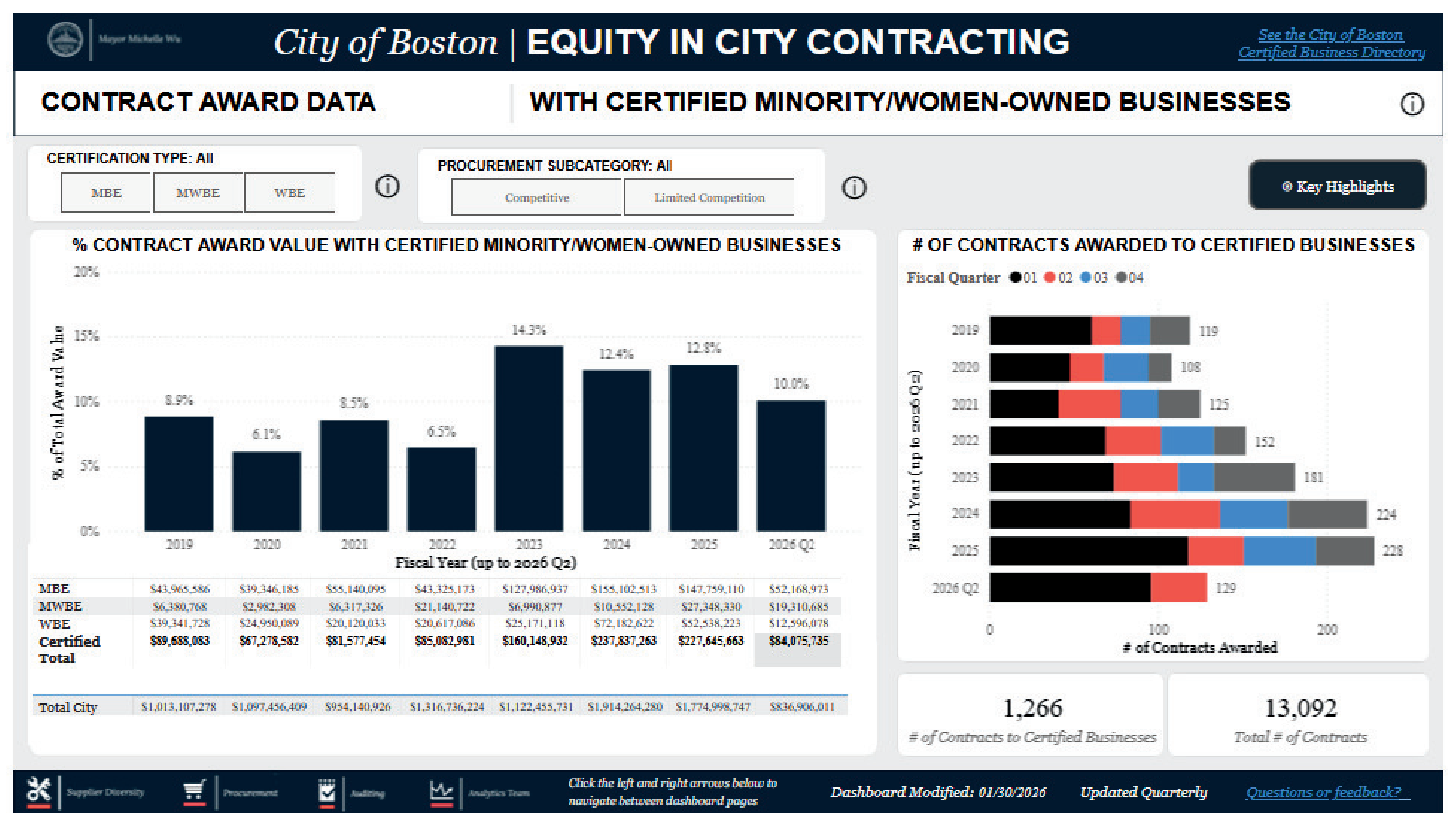
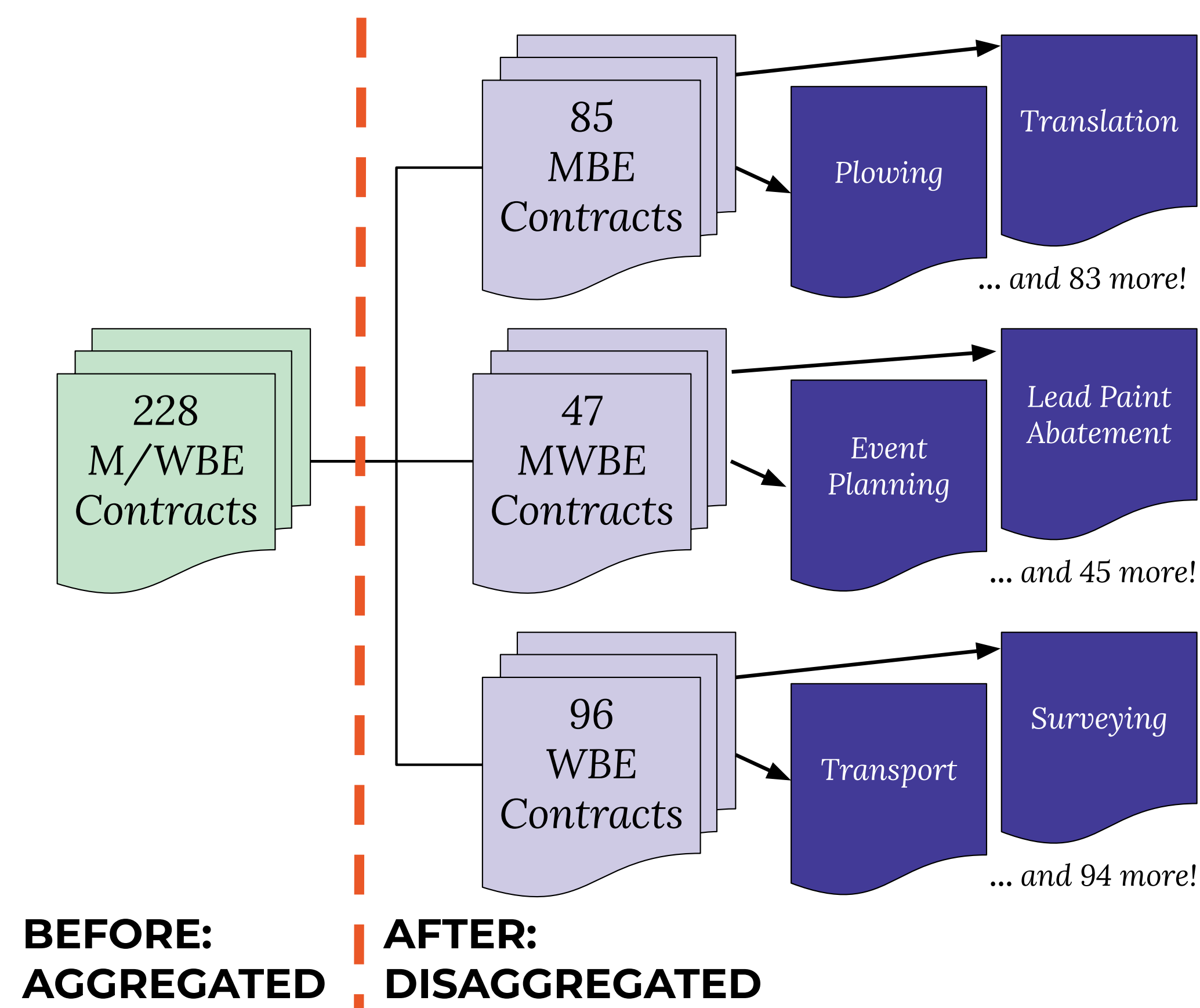


## CHALLENGE:

The City needed a way to increase visibility into contracts with diverse businesses for department staff, elected officials, and the public. This data was messy and non-standard and required significant manual effort and time to put together.

## INNOVATION:

A cross-cabinet team worked together to standardize the City's procurement data and formalize a data pipeline into the City's data warehouse. This allowed the Procurement team to share disaggregated data quarterly on a visual, searchable dashboard and in the City's open data portal.



## IMPACT:

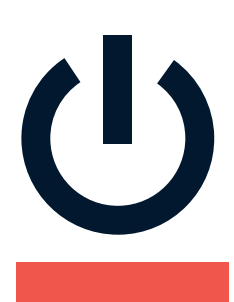
For the first time, city departments and the public can monitor contracts with diverse businesses. The City can track quarterly its progress on meeting supplier diversity and equitable procurement goals. Businesses and residents can learn what work the City contracts for.



Finance



Economic Opportunity and Inclusion



Innovation and Technology

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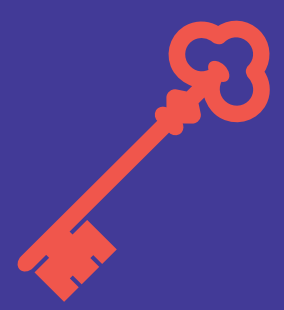


# Mapping Disability Access in Boston



**TEAM:** CPWD, DoIT, Parks

**CONTACT:** Disability Commission - [disability@boston.gov](mailto:disability@boston.gov)

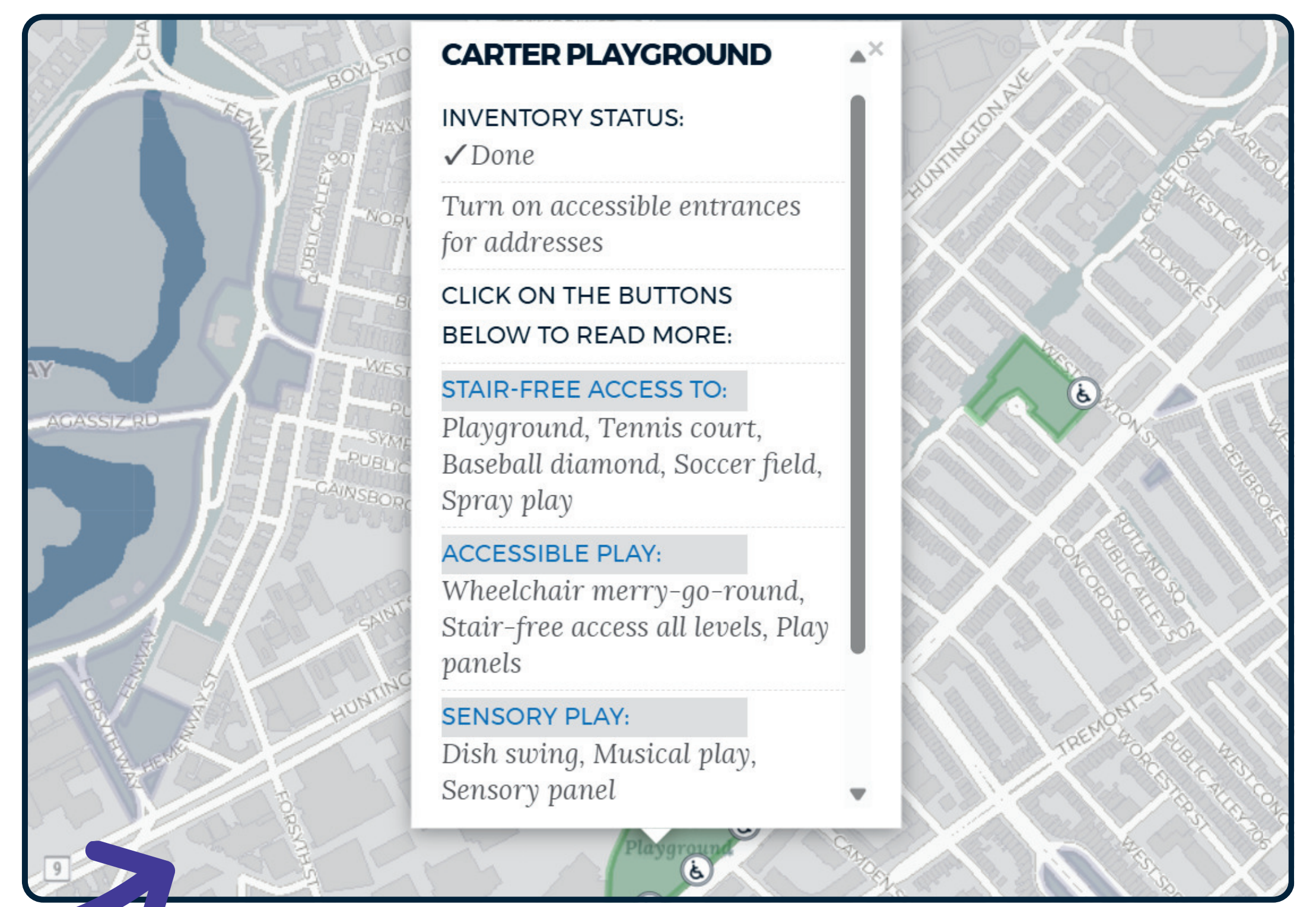
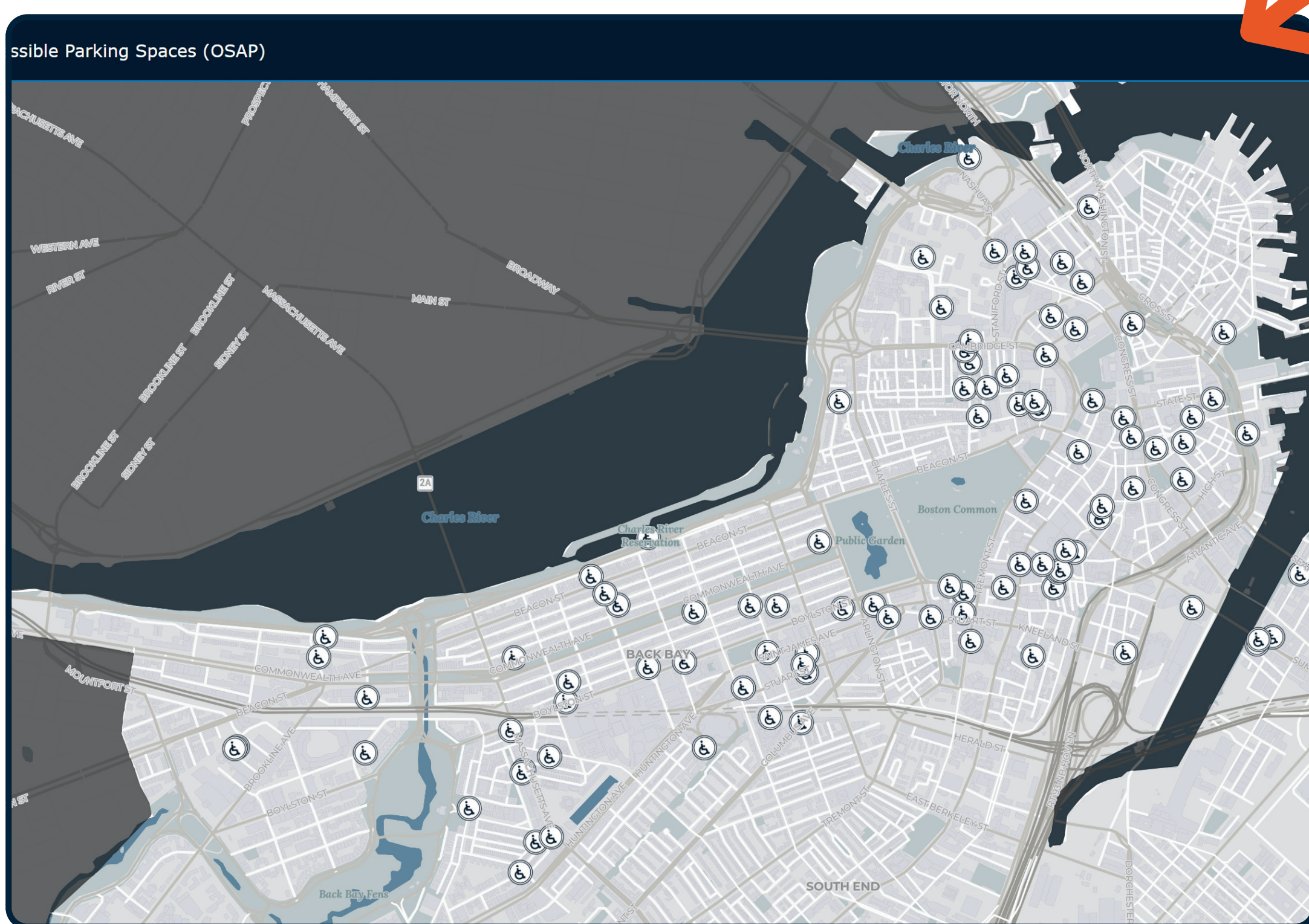


## CHALLENGE:

The City Of Boston has made significant ADA upgrades in public buildings, parks, sidewalks, and curb ramps. However, many people with disabilities still assume these spaces are inaccessible. We want to change that perception!

## INNOVATION:

The Boston Disabilities Commission has created a series of maps that show accessibility features in the built environment, including ADA compliant curb ramps, sensory play features in playgrounds, HP-DV parking spaces, and more.



## IMPACT:

Feedback from residents with disabilities has been very positive! These maps have helped them plan activities, meet daily needs, and enjoy the City of Boston. We're working on new maps with additional accessibility features.



City of Boston  
Innovation and Technology



City of Boston  
Disabilities Commission

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2026  
2026

# MODERNIZING PUBLIC RECORDS: DATA-DRIVEN AUTOMATION

BOSTON  
250

**TEAM:** Public Records Department

**CONTACT:** Jeffrey Maingot (jeffrey.maingot@boston.gov)

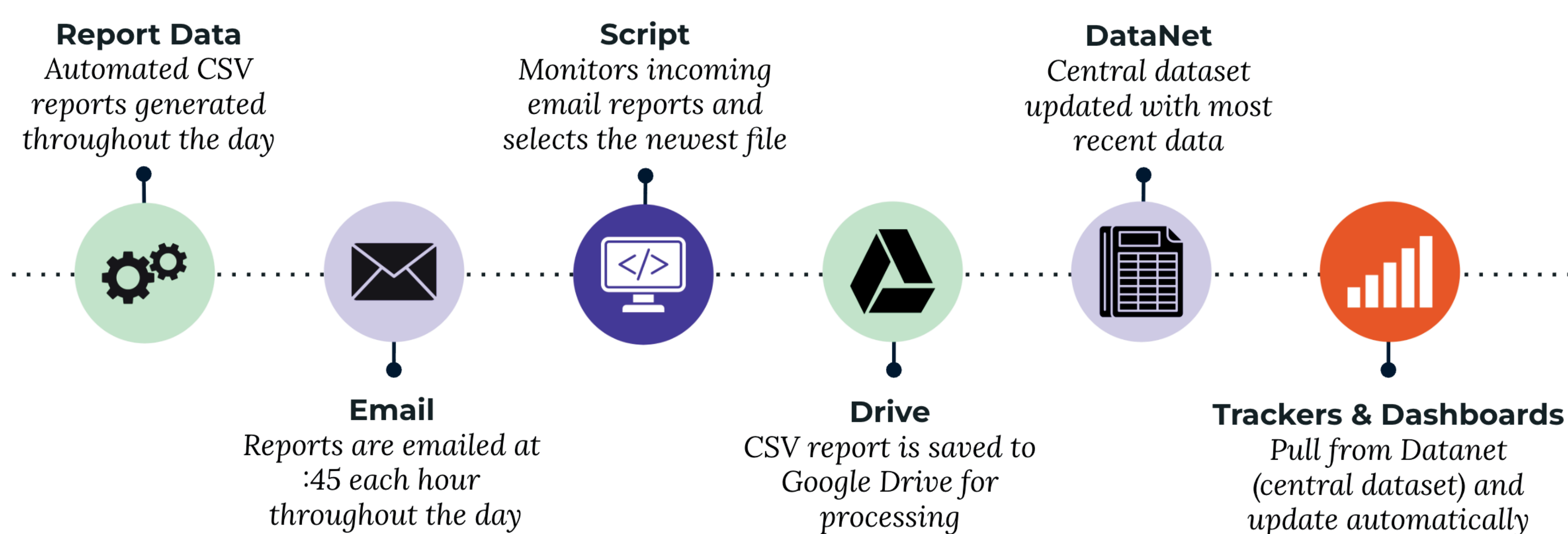


## CHALLENGE:

We needed a reliable way to identify and prioritize open requests using current data. Manual tracking and inconsistent follow-up made it difficult to monitor aging requests and coordinate across departments.

## INNOVATION:

We built a centralized, automated system that processes report data sent throughout the day from our public records platform (GovQA), updates a single dataset, and powers all Public Records trackers with frequent, consistent updates.



Google Sheet trackers like our Open Request Queue (ORQ) surface aging requests in real time, eliminating manual CSV work and ensuring every team works from the same data.



## IMPACT:

This system improved visibility, accountability, and coordination across departments, enabling faster action on aging requests. Leadership now has real-time access to accurate data, reducing manual reporting and improving decision-making.



Public Records

INNOVATION EXPO 2026

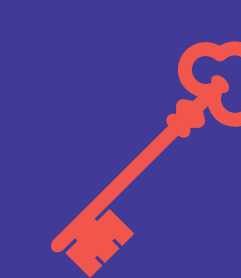
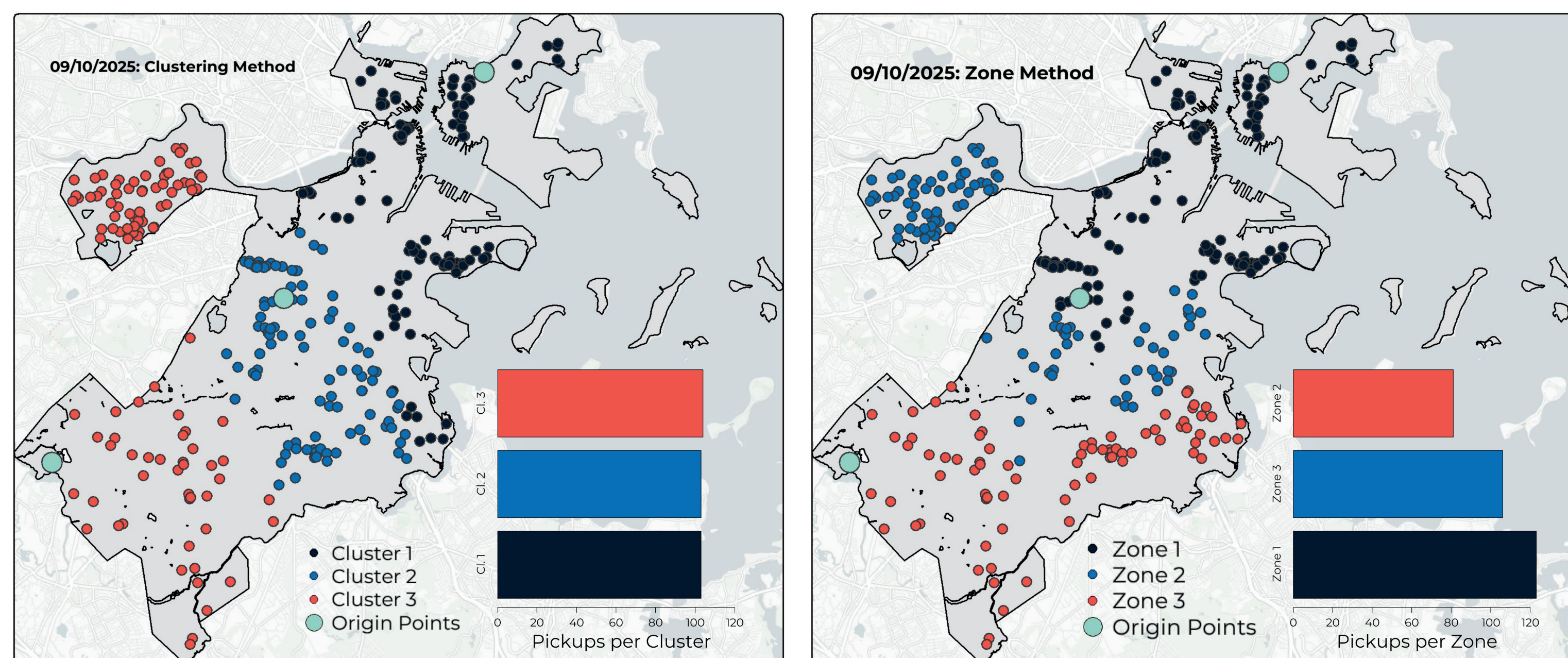


# NEW ALGORITHMS FOR OLD MATTRESSES

BOSTON  
250

**TEAM:** Ian Smith, Jeff Lambart, Jeff Kaplan, Jacob Cabral, Millan Andreoli

**CONTACT:** Innovation and Technology Cabinet (doit@boston.gov)



## CHALLENGE:

Daily mattress collection currently relies on fixed geographic zones assigned to contractor trucks, causing imbalances in workload, especially during high-volume periods like student move-in, leading to inefficiencies, delays, and uneven service levels.

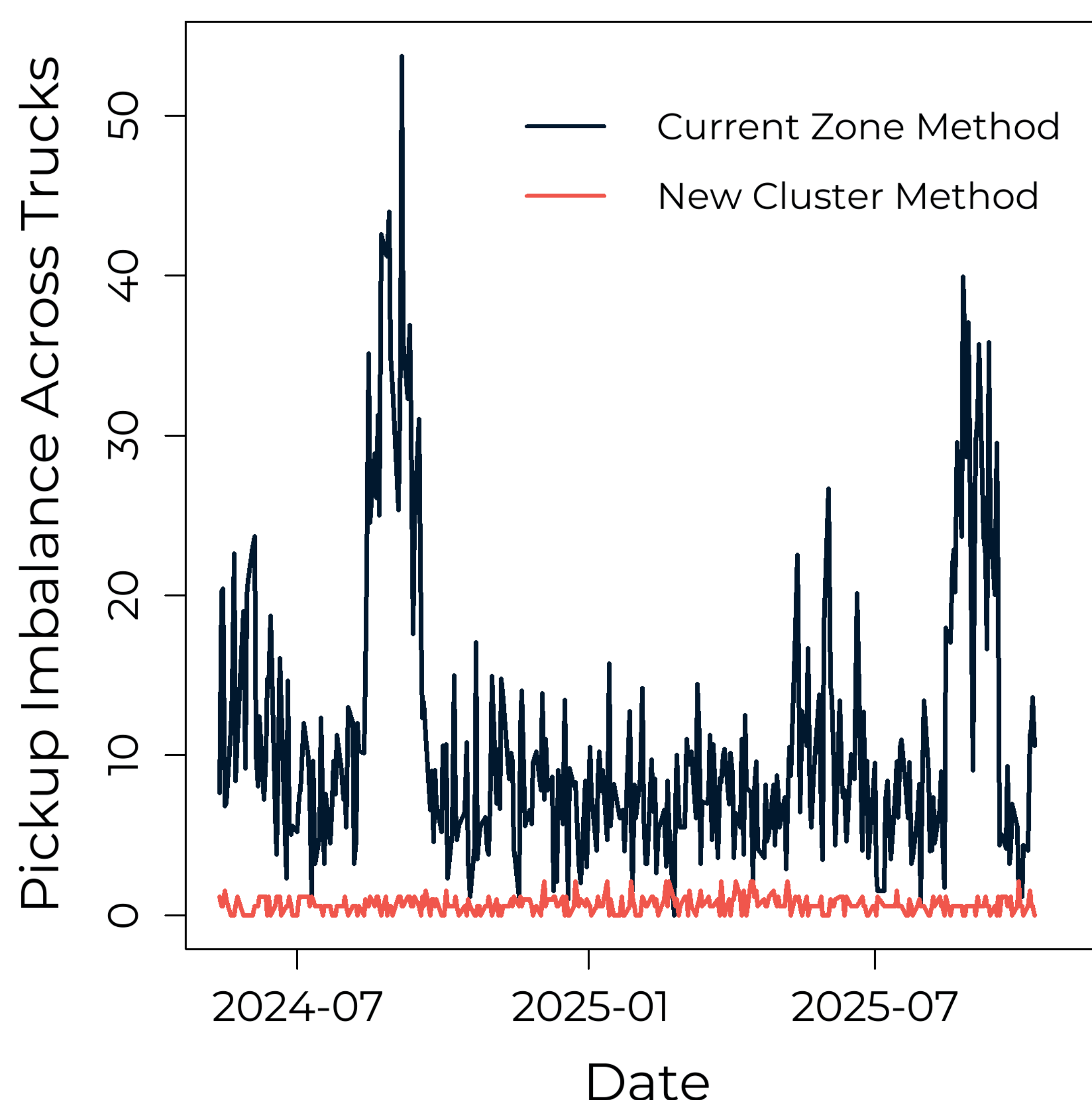
## INNOVATION:

We developed a dynamic clustering approach that reassigns pickup areas each day so each contractor truck handles a similar number of mattresses while minimizing total travel distance and improving operational efficiency.

## IMPACT:

**94%** decrease in daily pickup imbalances

During surge periods, the new method enables the City to **collect an average of 31 additional mattresses per day** without increasing vehicle miles traveled



City of Boston  
Analytics Team

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2026



# PARK PATROL

## KEEPING PARKS RUNNING WITH MAPS



**TEAM:** Chad Fisher & Maggie Owens (Parks Planning & Research), Scott Dupuis, + DoIT, OGI, Streets, and more!

**CONTACT:** Boston Parks & Recreation Department ([parks@boston.gov](mailto:parks@boston.gov))

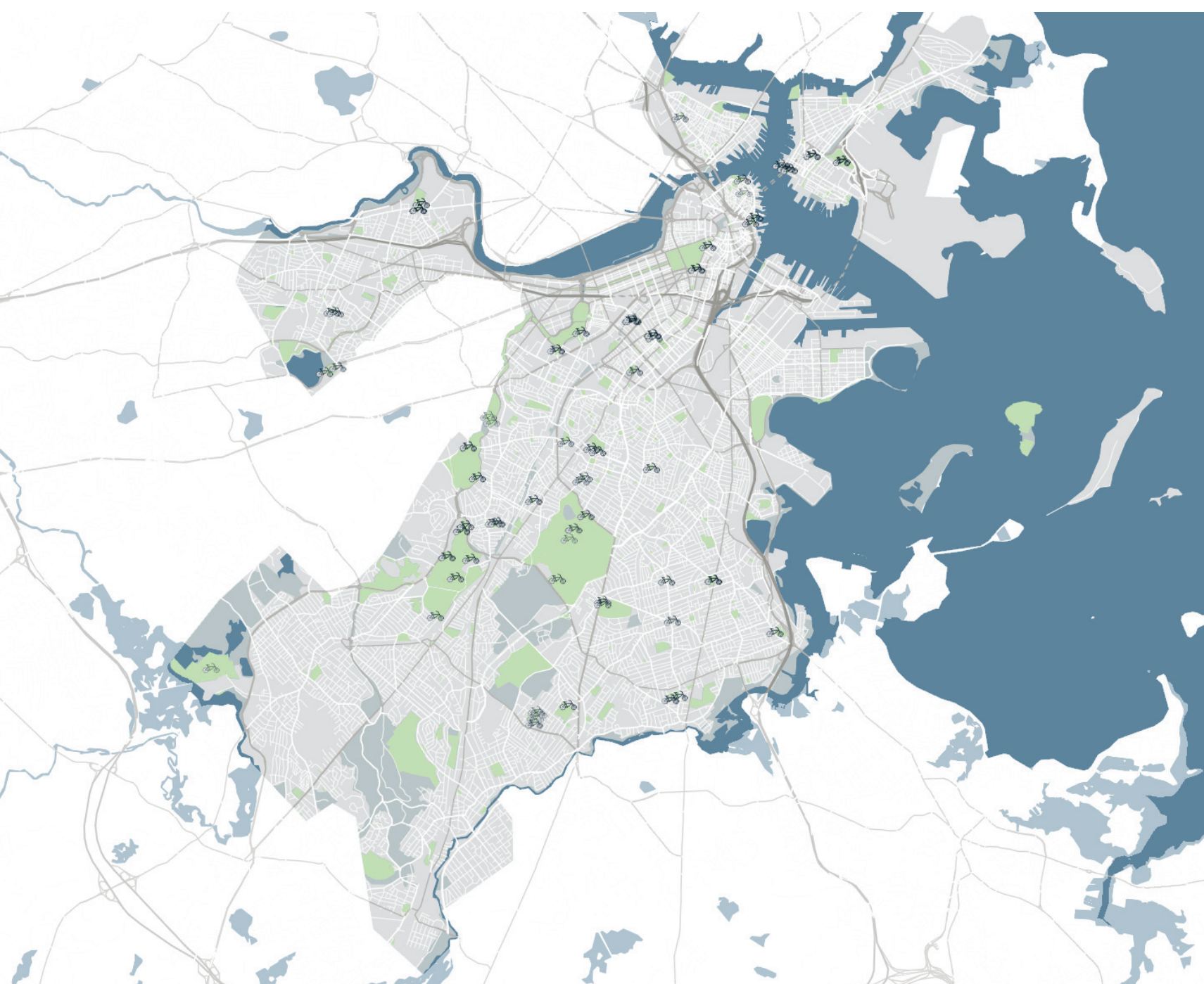


### CHALLENGE:

Great Parks maintenance requires tracking assets, understanding boundaries, and keeping track of metrics.

### INNOVATION:

We've deployed many field data collection workflows across the department. These empower our maintenance and Urban Wilds teams with maps in the field, helping them track work on specific assets and park areas.



### IMPACT:

- Inventoried 183 bike racks across BPRD parks
- Maintain an asset inventory of 10,000 + park features
- Tracking restoration for Climate Action Plan
- Collaborating on a jurisdiction map for Franklin Park



City of Boston  
Parks and Recreation



# POLL PADS FOR BOSTON'S ELECTIONS



**TEAM:** Election Department, Department of Innovation and Technology

**CONTACT:** election@boston.gov, doit@boston.gov

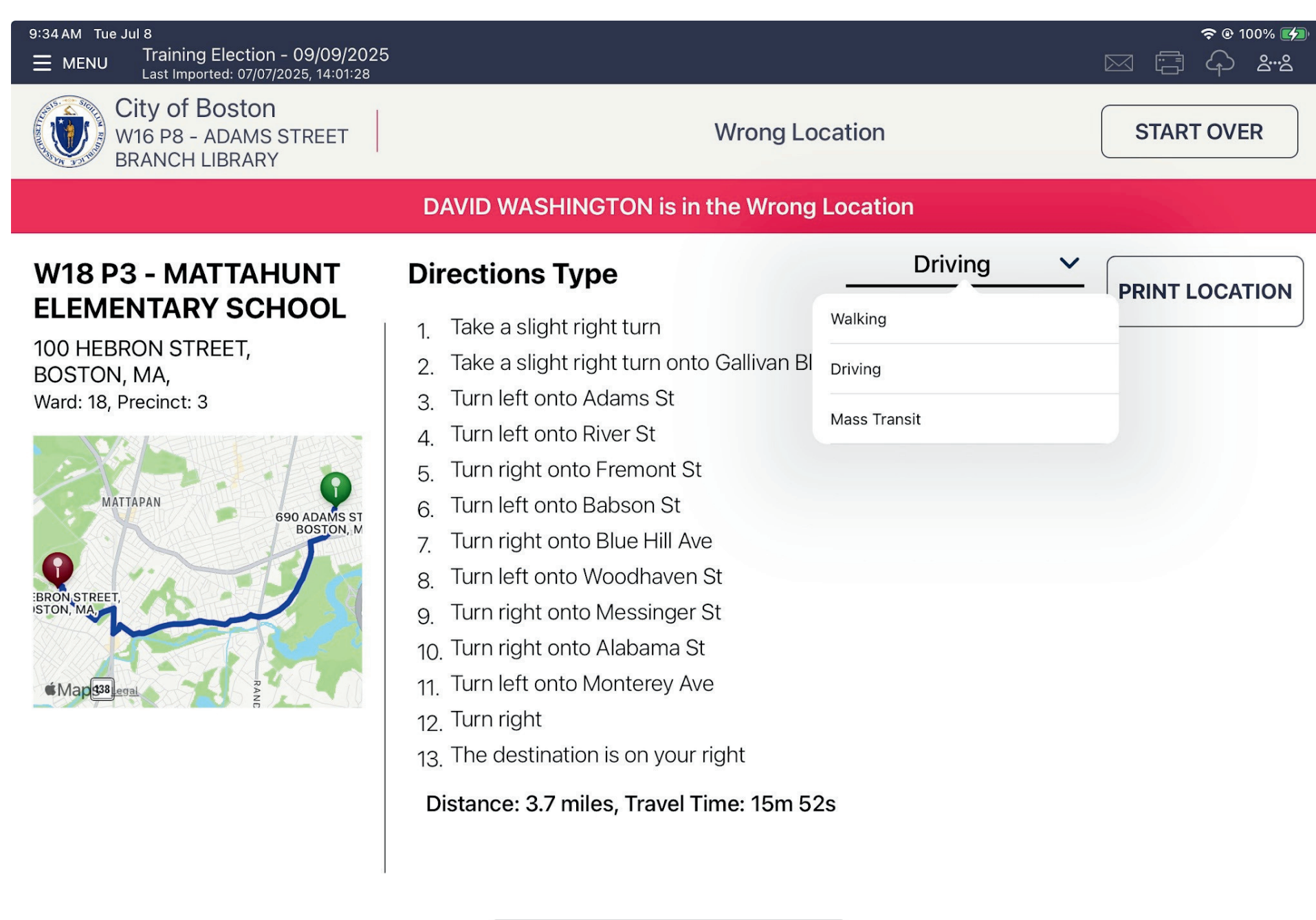


## CHALLENGE:

*Election staff have to call 275 separate precincts for voter counts. Additionally, check-in can take up to 5 minutes per voter using paper check-in books. Lost voters need to call the Election Department to find their polling location.*

## INNOVATION:

The Election Department purchased Poll Pads, electronic check-in books, and deployed them to each polling location. Election staff trained over 1,800 poll workers to use the poll pads.



Poll Pads enable real-time monitoring of voter turnout across the entire city and reduce check-in time. They can also direct lost voters to their polling location with printed or texted directions, reducing phone calls to the Election Department.



## IMPACT:

*Over 96,000 voter check-ins were reduced from up to 5 minutes to 30 seconds, phone calls to the department were reduced. Election staff were able to centrally tabulate 5x more ballots and monitor turnout in real time.*



City of Boston  
Innovation and Technology



Election

# PRIVACY-PRESERVING MOBILITY SENSORS

**PROJECT LEAD:** Sam Brenner, Office of Emerging Technology

**CONTACT:** samuel.brenner@boston.gov

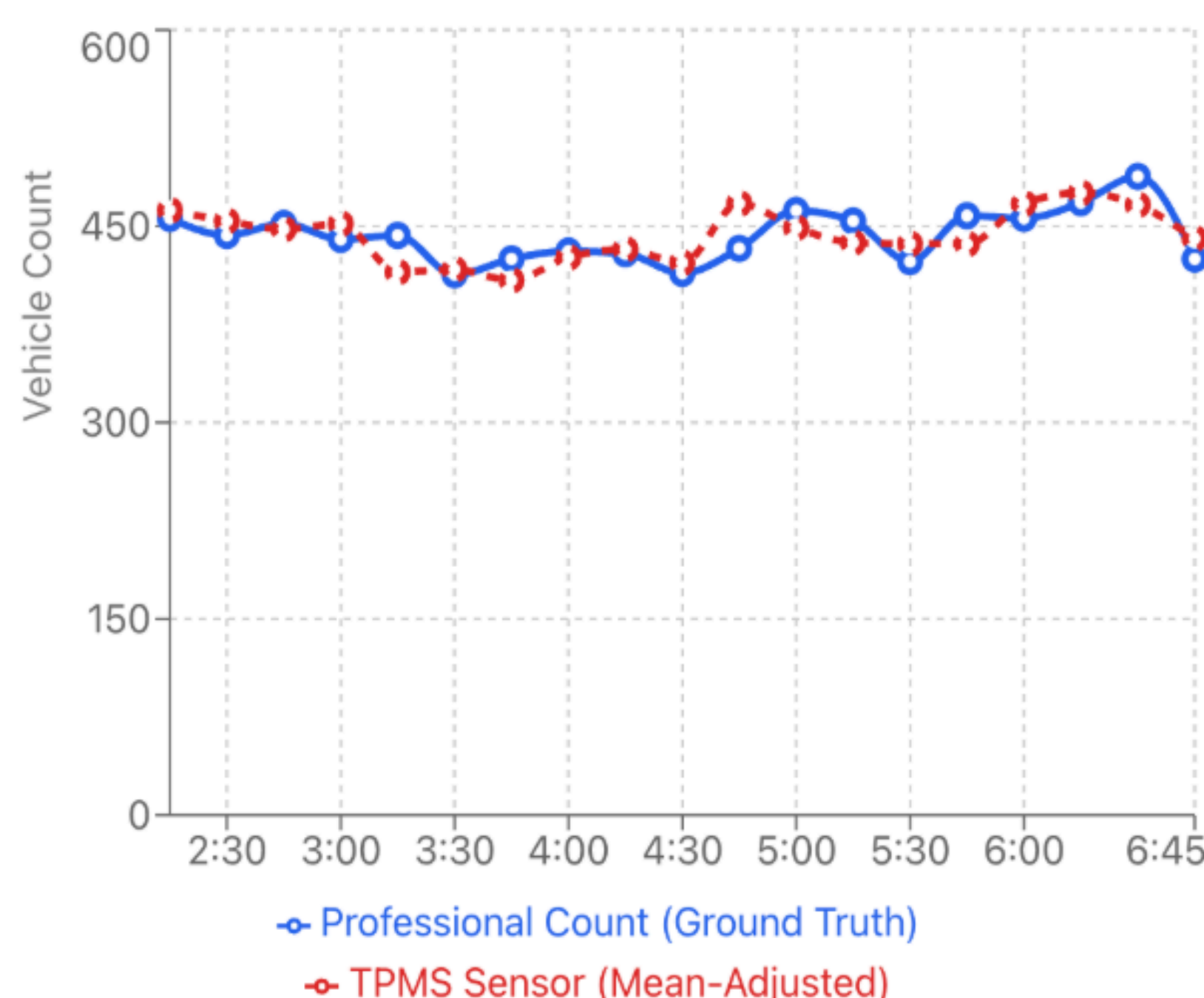


## CHALLENGE:

BTD spends \$40K–\$100K per month on traffic data, yet still lacks the information planners need. Car counts require expensive consultants. Pedestrian and cyclist data barely exists at all.

## INNOVATION:

The Curb Lab, working with private sector partner Code Metal, built a low-cost traffic sensor using basic off-the-shelf parts for just \$85. Four sensors were installed in under an hour on existing street poles at Blue Hill Ave & Quincy St – no new infrastructure needed.



The sensors pick up signals emitted by car tires, and match professional traffic counts with 97% accuracy. The same device can also pick up Bluetooth, WiFi, and other signals to track how people walk, bike, and drive through the city.



## IMPACT:

This technology could save the City hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in traffic data costs. It can be deployed anywhere in minutes, collects data continuously, and gives city planners a fuller picture of how people move through Boston's streets – without cameras or any personal data collection.



# REAL-TIME CURB REGULATIONS MAP



**PROJECT LEAD:** Sam Brenner, Office of Emerging Technology  
**CONTACT:** samuel.brenner@boston.gov

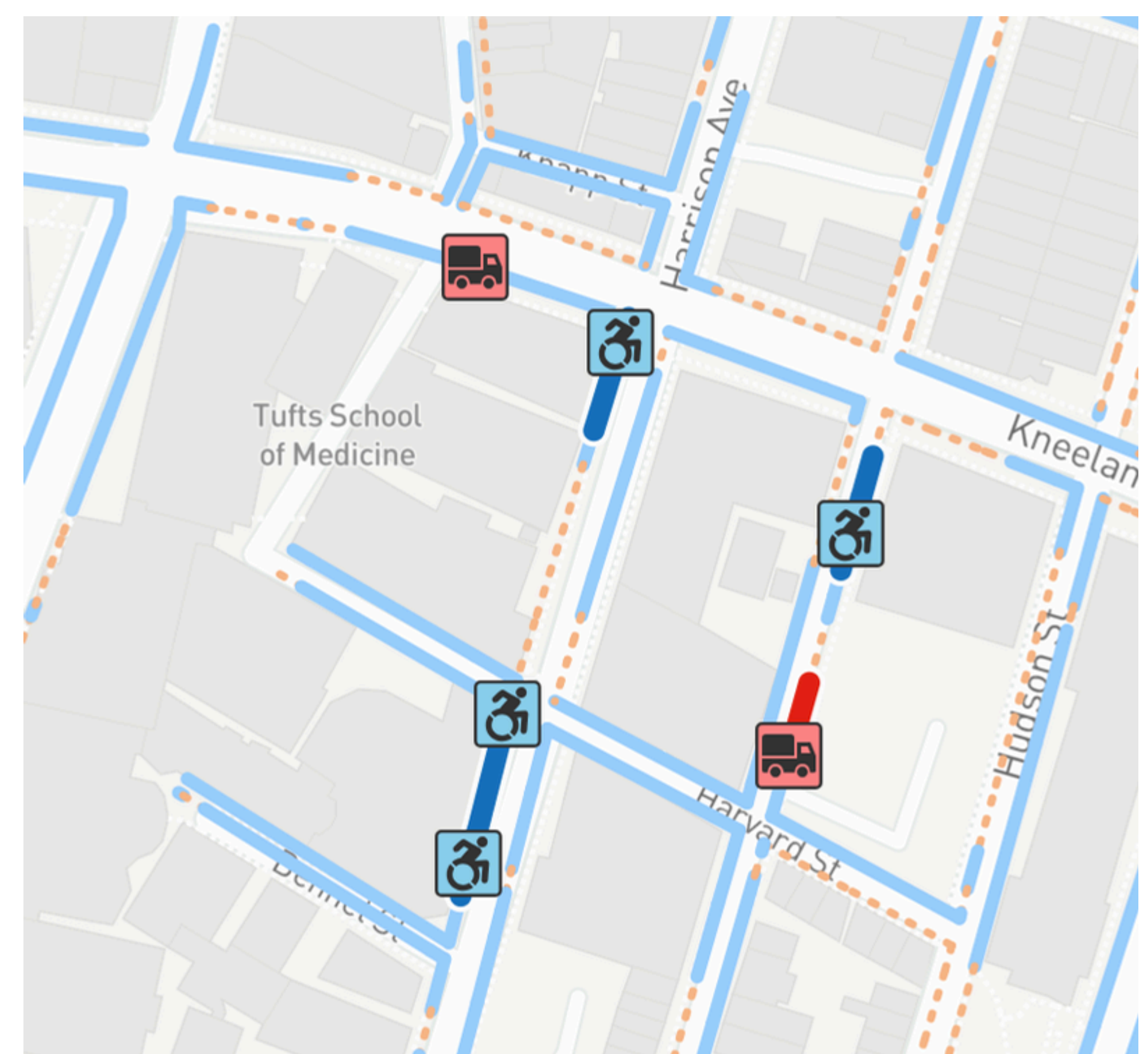


## CHALLENGE:

Boston has no comprehensive map of its curb rules. City staff can't effectively manage the curb without reliable data. Meanwhile, residents can't plan trips and struggle to understand curb rules, leading to wasted time in the car, costly tickets, and tows.

## INNOVATION:

The Curb Lab built a system that takes the City's existing street signs and asset data and automatically turns it into a real-time digital curb map. Using AI to read sign photos and match them to curb locations, the system converts complex parking rules into clear, up-to-date information anyone can use.



### CDS Policy Tool



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  "curb_policy_id": "fenway-kenmore-permit-parking",
  "published_date": 1730073600000,
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  "rules": [
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      "no_return": null,
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      ],
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  ],
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      "end_date": null,
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  ],
  "data_source_operator_id": []
}
```

The map updates automatically as rules change, and covers everything from loading zones to snow emergency bans to accessible parking spaces.



## IMPACT:

For the first time, Boston has a living map of its own curb. Wheelchair users can plan accessible routes with confidence. Residents spend less time circling for parking, which means fewer cars on the road. City staff can make faster, smarter decisions – saving hundreds of thousands of dollars each year on manual curb surveys and studies.



# TAPA MODERNIZATION



## TEAM CONTACT

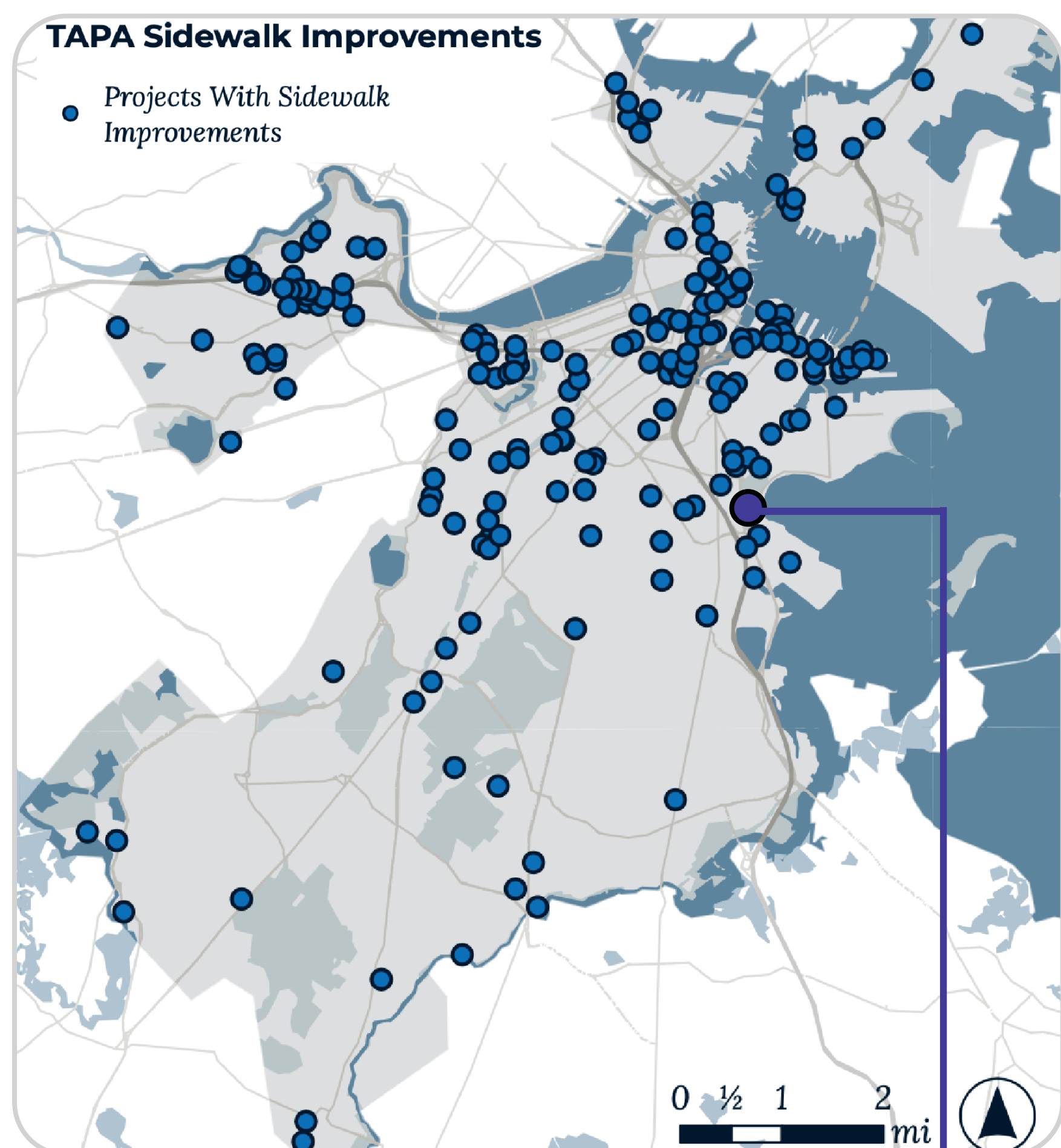
**Sam Roy, Jim Fitzgerald,  
Joshua Barber**  
Boston Planning Department  
([planningcomms@boston.gov](mailto:planningcomms@boston.gov))

## CHALLENGE

New large buildings must enter into an agreement with the city known as a Transportation Access Plan Agreement. It is a plan for how to reduce transportation impacts due to development. In the past, TAPAs had inconsistent reviews and siloed information on past commitments. This leads to uneven requirements.

## INNOVATION

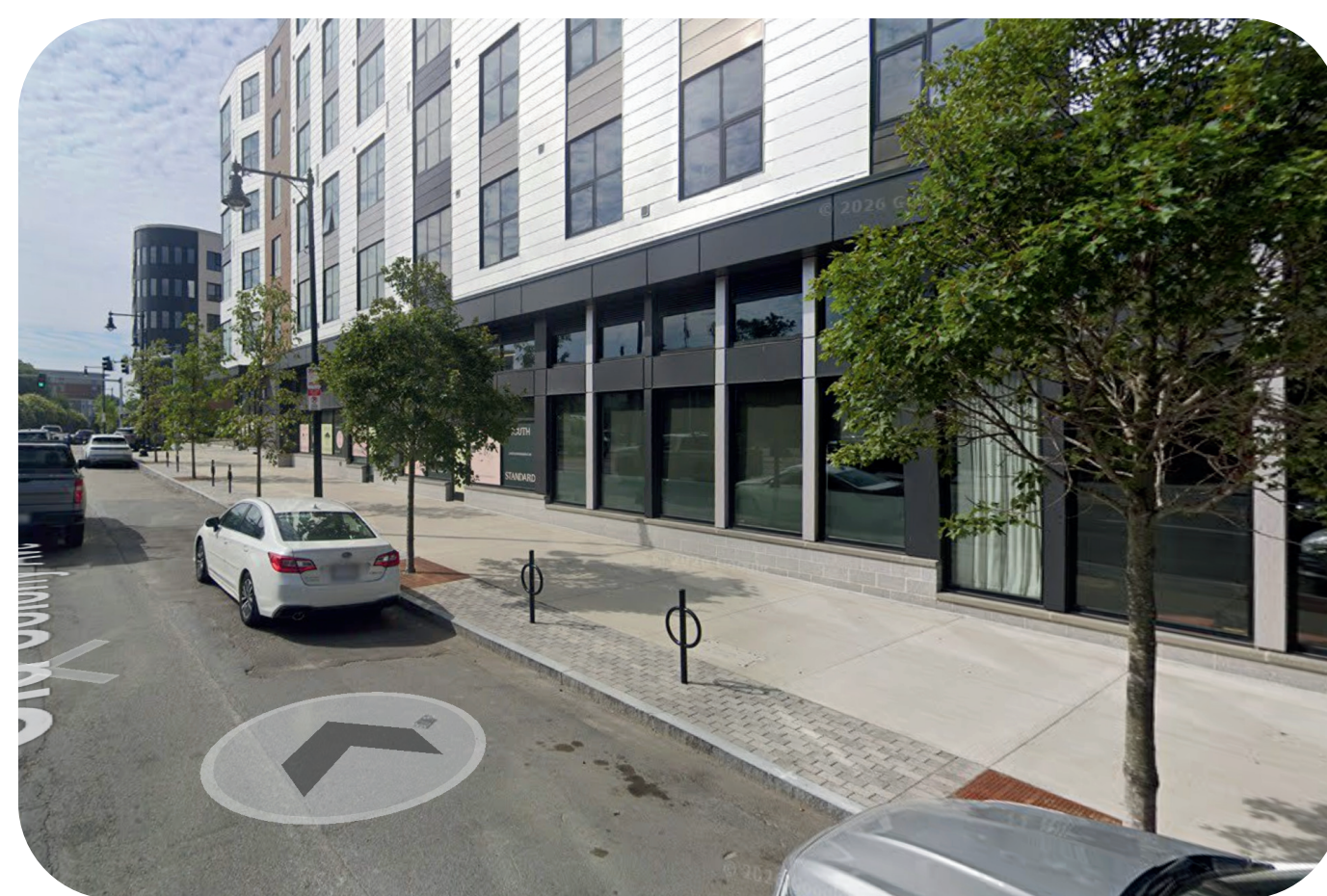
- **Continuous Oversight.** One team will lead the review and enforcement of TAPAs.
- **Streamlined Submissions.** A new form and guidelines for developers will allow the city to review TAPAs faster.
- **Better Coordination.** A clear order of operations makes the process smoother.
- **Centralized Data.** A public website brings together all relevant information and helps keep record of commitments.



## IMPACT



235 Old Colony, Before

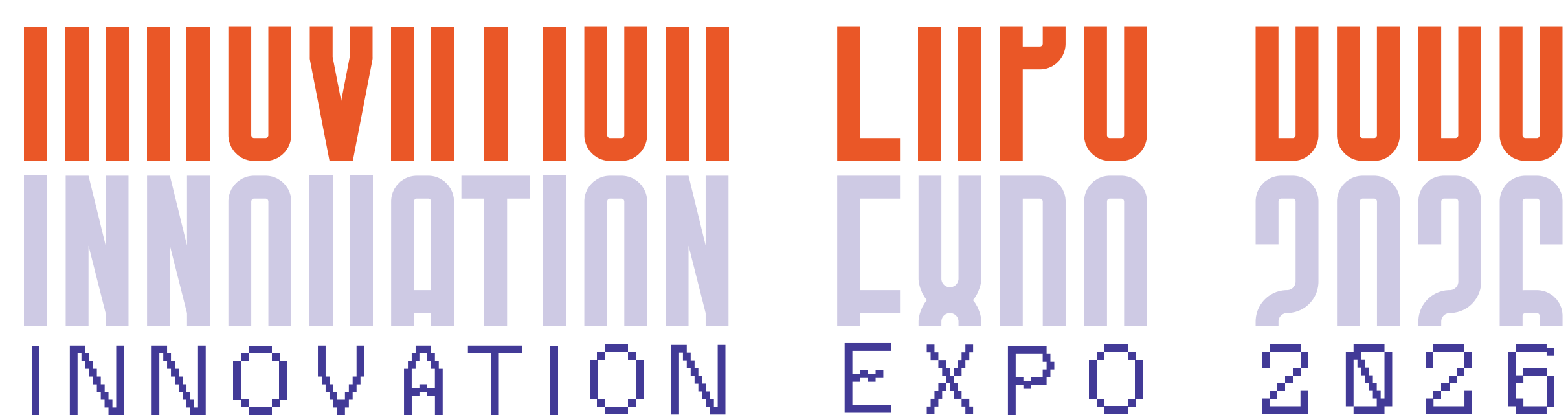


235 Old Colony, After

- **Faster review** (A recent office to residential TAPA was executed in weeks when previously it may have taken months)
- **Easier access to information**
- **Integration into the permit process**



City of Boston  
Planning Department

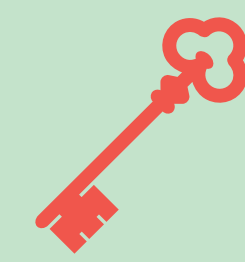


# UNSHELTERED HOMELESSNESS 'SNOFO' HOUSING PROJECT

BOSTON  
250

**TEAM:** Jim Greene, Matthew Landers

**CONTACTS:** bostoncoc@boston.gov



## CHALLENGE:

The City successfully mitigated the Mass & Cass encampments in October 2023. However, it did not yet possess **a robust system to target, house, and provide wraparound services** to meet the unique needs of unsheltered clients citywide.

## INNOVATION:

**199 vouchers and 75 public housing units** targeting clients with long-term unsheltered histories

The City worked with Pine Street Inn, Eliot, Victory, Hearth, and BHA to build innovative outreach and housing models to address system barriers and determinants of health.



## Client Testimonial

John had been sleeping in his car after losing his job and getting a divorce. He now lives in an SRO in a gorgeous building in JP. **He says that having his own room to sleep in every night has saved his life.** He is now accessing mental health resources, getting more involved in his mosque, and following through on what he needs to do to get back in his children's lives. He is an excellent cook and is thrilled to have a kitchen and be able to cook again.



## IMPACT:

232

clients housed

501

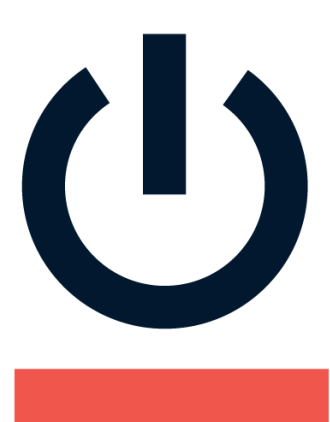
referrals made\*

75

Successful BHA  
PH screenings

-11%

Street Census  
decrease (25-26)



City of Boston  
Innovation and Technology

INNOVATION  
EXPO  
2026

LIPO  
EXPO  
2026

DUUU  
2026

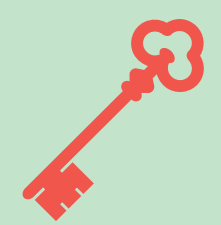


# UPGRADING THE ELECTION CALL CENTER



**TEAM:** Nolan Brown, Kadija Diallo, Chrismary Gonzalez Torres

**CONTACT:** Election Department (election@boston.gov)



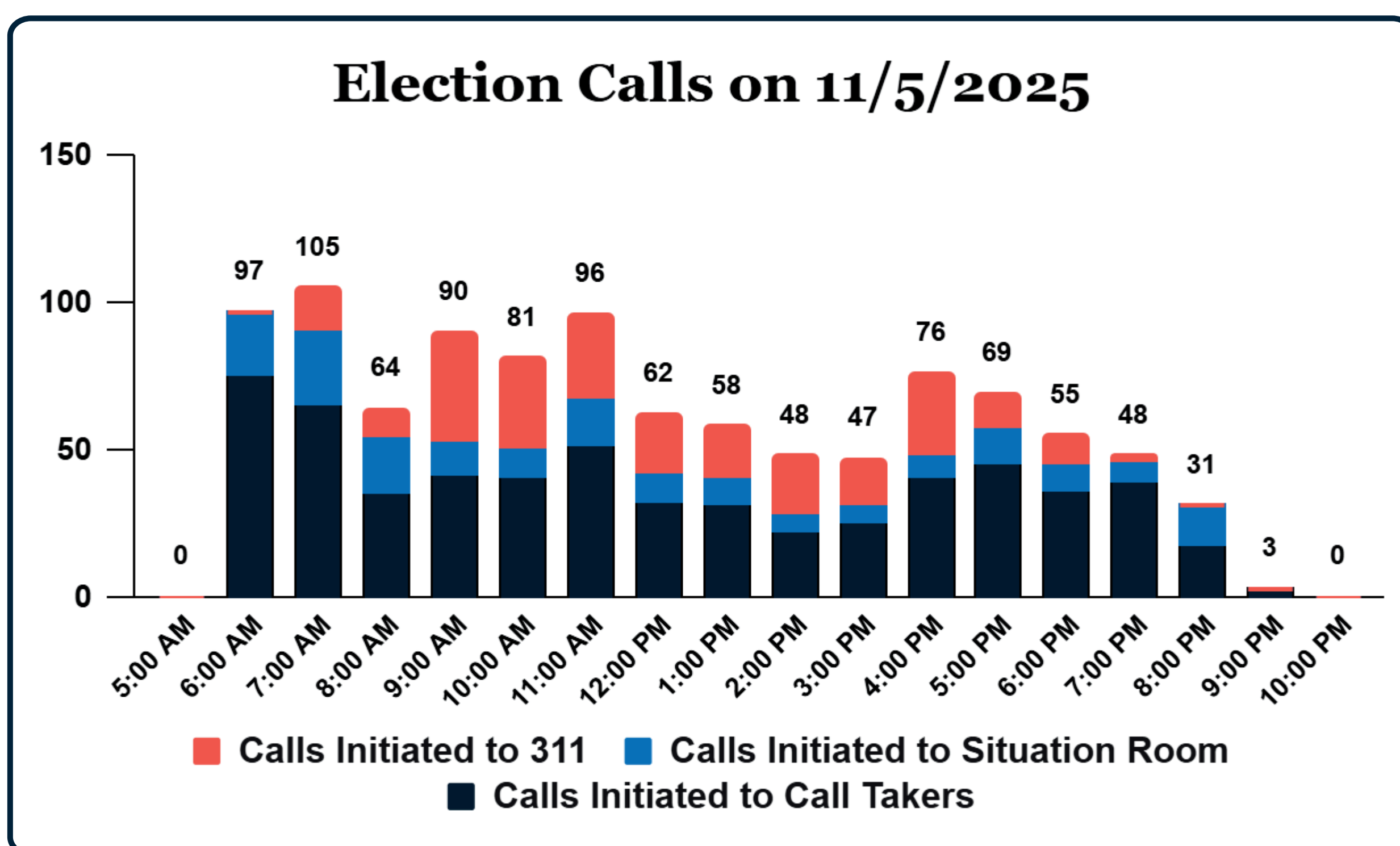
## CHALLENGE:

The Election Day Call Center needed to increase its capacity, reduce wait times, and more effectively track incidents during November's Election Day.

## INNOVATION:

The Election Department rebuilt its Call Center to ensure every call was answered promptly, resolved effectively, and tracked efficiently.

The department cut wait times significantly by recruiting and training volunteers, upgrading technology systems, and prioritizing experts' time.



## Key Quote

[I] placed 4 calls to the hotlines throughout the day.... No complaints.... calls were answered rapidly, call center folks were knowledgeable and friendly

-Warden

**IMPACT:** Election Day calls were answered, tracked, and resolved in less than 5 minutes, on average, and the Department received actionable data for future improvement work.

**794**  
Calls Answered

calls averaged  
**~4 minutes**  
until resolution

**100%**  
of issues resolved



City of Boston  
Election

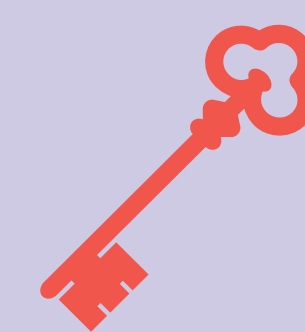


# YOUTHLINE RESOURCE HUB

BOSTON  
250

**TEAM:** Office of Youth Engagement and Advancement

**CONTACT:** oyea@boston.gov - youthline@boston.gov



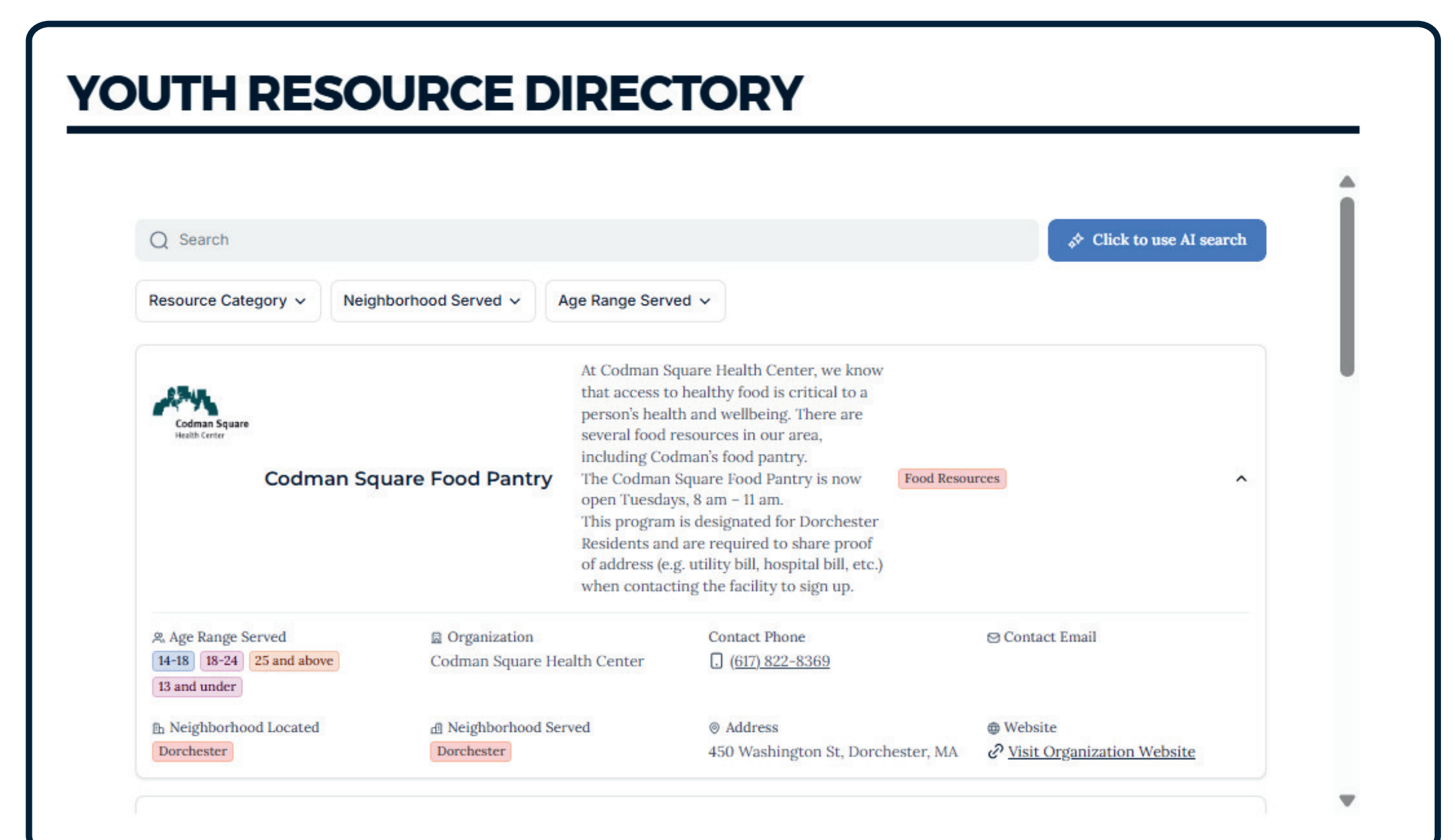
## CHALLENGE:

Boston has many programs for young people, but they are often difficult for residents to find. The lack of visibility and coordination creates a barrier for youth and families to get the support they need.

## INNOVATION:

YouthLine is a **centralized hub** that connects residents to youth-centered programs, opportunities, and services. The YouthLine Directory is a one-stop shop that allows youth to **search and filter through vetted resources**.

The directory features an **AI powered chat tool** that can instantly provide a tailored list of results based on the needs of the young person.



## IMPACT:

- Features **over 700 resources**, services, and opportunities for youth and young adults
- **Five ways to connect:** online directory, phone, email, in-person appointment, or intake form



Youth Engagement  
and Advancement

INNOVATION  
EXPO  
2026

INNOVATION  
EXPO  
2026

INNOVATION  
EXPO  
2026

