

# Boston Food Access Council

6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday, March 8th  
BPDA Boardroom | Boston City Hall

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF

**FOOD  
ACCESS**

MAYOR MARTIN J. WALSH

CITY of BOSTON

**Welcome,  
Introducing Chief Marty Martinez**

*Boston Food Access Council Meeting  
Thursday, March 8th, 2018*



## **Overview of Agenda**

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# Overview of Agenda

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## Updates from BFAC Working Groups

6:40p -7:25p

- Brief update on activities of working groups between last meeting and this one
- Progress reports, discussion of considerations and next steps:
  - **Working Group 1:** Improve food access in underserved communities through economic development and community wealth building initiatives. **(15 minutes)**
  - **Working Group 2:** Improve food access in underserved communities by making more vacant land accessible and usable for cultivation by community members interested to pursue community gardening and commercial urban agriculture. **(15 minutes)**
  - **Working Group 3:** Strengthen and expand resources that support Bostonians to access the food they need and want. **(15 minutes)**

## Discussion of Working Groups Moving Forward

7:25p - 7:40p

## Public comments, questions

7:40p - 7:55p

## Closing

7:55p - 8:00p

## GOALS

- Share and discuss progress of Boston Food Access Council (BFAC) Working groups
- Identify opportunities to strengthen working groups
- Receive constituent input

## **Working Group 1**

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## Working Group 1

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*Goal 1: Improve food access in underserved communities through economic development and community wealth building initiatives.*

**Priority issue: Cost, physical access** identified as primary barriers to food. More food access outlets needed with range of food at affordable prices, including healthy food.

**Suggestion to address this issue:** Create “toolbox” of TA and other financial resources to **support development and/or expansion of food access retail** outlets in underserved communities, including:

- City of Boston Economic Development Resources
- External resources
- Potential newly created Food Access Economic Development Fund
- Procedures to promote toolbox, streamline access to resources in it, offer guidelines and support to sustain impact of resources.

## Working Group 1

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**Next steps:** Identify and explore the following, to further inform this concept:

- ***Available resources in City of Boston*** Economic Development, potential to expand or tailor to support businesses that increase food access
- ***External resources*** that could be leveraged to support businesses that increase food access
- ***Models*** for a Food Access Economic Development Fund

## Working Group 1

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**Additional priority:** Support development of OFAs brick-and-mortar SNAP match program, through advice and input on implementation and design.

**Next steps:** Waiting on notice about FINI grant, to arrive mid-March.



**Working Group 2**

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## Working Group 2

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*Goal 2: Improve food access in underserved communities by making more vacant land accessible and usable for cultivation by community members interested to pursue community gardening and commercial urban agriculture.*

**Priority issue:** ***Demand for land*** to use for community gardening and urban agriculture, and ***vacant land available***, but ***barriers*** for groups and individuals that seek to use this land include:

- ***Permitting/regulatory process*** to develop land for these purposes is complicated and arduous to navigate.
- ***Costs to install water connections*** and other development activities are prohibitive.
- As with most new types of development, ***experienced design professionals and contractors re scarce***.

**Suggestion to address this issue:** Support City and external partners in ***bringing a determined number of plots into a usable state*** for use as community gardens or urban agriculture plots.

## Working Group 2

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### Next steps:

- ***Convene City departments, external partners*** to identify roadblocks in zoning and permitting process and streamline navigation of these processes
- ***Identify parcels suitable for these uses***, areas where more gardens or urban agricultural plots are in demand, and groups interested in gaining access to them
- ***Develop strategies for reducing costs***, particularly for water connections, on a set of suitable plots, using economies of scale, and identify funding to support this work.
- Develop a process to ***connect interested parties with this land***
- Increase capacity and resources for groups to hold and manage parcels.

**Working Group 3**

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## Working Group 3

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*Goal 3: Strengthen and expand resources that support Bostonians to access the food they need and want.*

More review of large list of strategies and tactics needed, but initially identified areas in consideration:

- Create a ***strong, unified advocacy*** voice that:
  - Advocates for ***protection, expansion of state, federal programs*** relevant to our work (ex. SNAP, WIC, Summer Food Service Program)
  - Is inclusive of, participates in ***advocacy efforts from peers*** focused on other areas relevant to our constituency, including affordable housing, living wages, and so on.
- Exploring opportunities to increase physical food access through ***innovative transportation programs***, for example:
  - Uber-sponsored rides home from grocery stores
  - Free grocery delivery services sponsored by the retailer
  - Shuttle services to food access outlets provided by social service providers

**Working Groups Moving Forward**

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### ***What do working groups need to be successful moving forward?***

- Incorporating other voices
  - City departments
  - Other agencies with strong subject-matter expertise
  - Boston residents
- Setting goals for immediate initiatives, thinking about long-term trajectory for overall goal
- Additional research and network mapping support
- Formalizing structure/roles
  - Chairs/co-chairs
  - Other support roles?
- Other?

**Questions? Comments?**

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**Closing**

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## Next Steps

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- Working groups continue on
  - Set regular meeting schedules
  - Discuss input shared today, ways to incorporate it
  - More research on initiatives to pursue

## Next Meeting: Thursday, June 14th 6p - 8p

(Second Thursdays of the month, on quarterly schedule)

## Future Meeting Dates

- Thursday, September 13th, 2018: 6p - 8p, Location TBD
- Thursday, December 13th, 2018: 6p - 8p, Location TBD
- Thursday, March 14th, 2019: 6p - 8p, Location TBD

# THANK YOU

[bostonfoodaccesscouncil@boston.gov](mailto:bostonfoodaccesscouncil@boston.gov)  
617-635-3717



City of Boston  
Mayor Martin J. Walsh



*Innovation & Technology*