

# Mayor's Office of Food Access

Mayor's Office of Health & Human Services | City of Boston

Engage | Advocate | Serve



Boston Food Access Council Meeting

1481 Tremont Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room

Boston, MA 02120

September 13th, 2018 | 6:00p - 8:00p

## MEETING GOALS

- Learn about opportunities to align the BFAC strategy with Imagine Boston 2030
- Receive BFAC input on Share Our Strength Food Summit proposal
- Provide updates on an advocacy issue relevant to BFAC work: Public Charge
- Provide updates on BFAC Working Group activities
- Receive constituent input

## AGENDA

### Welcome and Introductions

**Members in attendance:** Liz Miller (City of Boston Mayor's Office of Food Access), Tara Agrawal Pedulla (Children's Hospital), Doug Rauch (Daily Table), Barbara Knecht (UFI), Bing Broderick (Haley House), Emily Broad-Leib (Harvard Food Law and Policy), Laura Benavidez (BPS), Leah Triscari (ABCD), Sarah Cluggish (Project Bread), Sutton Kiplinger (The Food Project) Christian Perry (DorchesterCommunity Food Co-Op)

**Other special guests:** Catalina López-Ospina (City of Boston Mayor's Office of Food Access), André Lima (HHS Director of Policy and Research), Natalia Urtubey (Executive Director of Imagine Boston 2030), Liz Hatzenbuehler (BFAC intern)

### Imagine Boston 2030 with Natalia Urtubey & Discussion of Boston Food Summit

*Boston Food Summit Proposal - Catalina López-Ospina*

- Office of Food Access submitted a proposal to Share Our Strength to:
  - Engage a consultant to interview BFAC members, City Departments and other stakeholders
  - Findings from the interviews will be released at a convening (aka the Boston Food Summit) in December when additional stakeholder input will be gathered to further develop and refine a draft strategic plan for the OFA and BFAC
  - The plan will be aligned with IB 2030 and is part of the Mayor's plan
  - See slides for timeline

### Council Feedback Q/A

Q: Supportive, interested in talking more about what the convening will look like?

A: The consultant will give an overview of findings and there will be breakout sessions to go more deeply into specific components from the findings. The outcomes from the end of the day can be used as a draft strategic plan. Share our Strength will provide a Boston based consultant that has been going through a strategic planning process with Chief Martinez at HHS

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## *Imagine Boston (IB) 2030 with Natalia Urtubey*

- IB 2030 is the first city wide plan for Boston since 1965
- Mayor Walsh felt it was important to develop a strategic plan that reflected all the unique challenges and opportunities facing Boston residents today (housing, climate change, productive economy, wealth disparities, population growth, inequality, technology, etc)
- IB 2030 is the umbrella for every other plan in the city
- 5 action areas: enhance neighborhoods, encourage mixed-use core, expand neighborhoods, create a waterfront for future generations, generate networks of opportunity (Fairmount corridor)
  - What does every neighborhood need to be a liveable neighborhood and to encourage people to invest in their neighborhood?
- The work of the OFA and BFAC fits within the Health and Safety Initiative that is focused on the conditions in which Bostonians live, work, commute, and go to school
- IB 2030 is intentionally vague because it's meant to be a framework for which shapes the priorities of Boston
  - Goals and metrics are updated yearly which provides an opportunity for internal and external partners to showcase how their efforts are aligned with IB 2030 and moving the plan forward
  - every department within city hall has aligned their goals with this plan
  - 86% of the budget is aligned with IB 2030 goals (housing plan, go boston 2030, housing, etc)
  - Refer to slides for additional details or go to <https://imagine.boston.gov/> to track process being made

### Council Feedback Q/A:

IB 2030 and Strategic Planning process

Q: What were the guiding principles framing this process?

A: It was a community process that started broad and narrowed resident feedback into common themes. We relied on community engagement and data to inform policies.

Q: How does what BFAC talks about fit in?

A: If your council is thinking about it, it has been thought about it too. Conducting pilot projects and thinking about food differently in Boston now. BFAC helps to gather information and because IB 2030 is a 12 year plan, it's a liveable document that can be shaped. Annual reports give opportunity to do that.

Q: In your eyes, how can the work of the OFA and BFAC best fit into this plan so we are in sync? And how is anyone on the streets of Boston going to know about this? What would be most impactful to the citizens?

A: Alignment: take a moment to look at the IB 2030 plan. Look at metrics dashboard and think about the OFA/BFAC goals and what's getting measured. Then look to see where and how can your work align with the metrics dashboard.

Q: One year in, how have you seen the plan impact resource allocation?

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A: The budget team goes through every fund request and ranks them based on the IB 2030 plan to ensure that they are aligned. Cabinet chiefs must report monthly with how they are spending money in alignment with the plan.

Q: As council members, what role can we play in strategic plan development over consultant timeline. Interviews? Attending the convening? What other things could we do to provide more help within that time frame?

A: The draft strategic plan will be the beginning of a living breathing plan that allows OFA/BFAC to communicate what is needed to accomplish our work.

Q: Where do external partners come into play for this that is aligned with IB 2030?

A: City of Boston needs to leverage state and federal partners and individual residents, non-profits, businesses to shape this. What are ways in which partnerships make sense for BFAC? Does leveraging partner funding/grants help vs funding from the city? Any and all partnerships are greatly valued. Documentation of leveraging work can be helpful for city support.

A: It will be important that the OFA and BFAC members dig into this plan as we think about what the strategic plan for our office looks like. Strategic plan for OFA will include a plan for BFAC. The role of the council will be to serve as the additional eyes and ears bring forward all the opportunities to make movement in food access space. If OFA is thinking about those opportunities within the context of IB 2030. then the interviews with the Share Our Strength consultant are a great way to organize a strategy. The Food Summit will be the space to refine what the consult finds and explore where it makes the most sense for us to move forward together on and where do we pull partners in together.

## **BFAC Advocacy Update & Public Charge Discussion with André Lima**

### *BFAC Advocacy Update*

- At the last quarterly meeting we decided that advocacy should be visited at each meeting and that we needed to develop an advocacy agenda for the council.
- We identified that we need to better define what food access means so the council can be ready to weigh in on things happening at the local level that impact food access.
- We can develop a set of federal and state policy priorities for the council to follow.
- The most effective way for this council to advocate effectively is to build on what our partners are doing, and will forge our own path when needed
- It is important to understand council members capacity to do this and build accountability within the council to know where they can step in and what their role can be.
- A lot of advocacy is programmatic and practice and is very different than regulatory, which limits what the OFA can do, but not the council.

### Council Feedback Q/A:

Q: What does it mean to be limited by the city?

A: When we (OFA) feel strongly about something, our voice is strengthened when partners say it matters. Decision makers want to hear that partners/constituents say this issue is important. We need to have OFA work as a conduit for our partners.

Q: What makes us the folks who should be informing policy when we think about the realities that these are systemic issues? How are council members and their organizations being held accountable? How

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do we represent the residents, and not just be the voice of our organizations? How do we directly get residents in? I would love to see something about that in the policy. Also think about what are the voices and organizations whose voices challenge us in ways we don't want to be challenged and should they also be in the room? We should think about this as we think about a long term plan if the same voices that have been designing policy are the same voices that are making the policy.

A: We want everyone to come but there are limitations to that. This isn't always the space that people feel comfortable bringing their voice. Resident council needed to be that space?

Q: How do you have a a council that has members and does outreach? Like, how do we have youth involved and should we be having meetings in different places and different times? The convening in December should address these other voices. We should stress the importance of an outreach for the convening and commit to holding a series of neighborhood convenings post survey/ stakeholder interviews. Council members can be organizing one that is within their community, stakeholders, etc.

A: Should we have a 4<sup>th</sup> working group whose job is to collect the disparate voices and make sure we are reaching those who need the access, and track that as it changes so we are nimble and don't miss an important shift. We might miss these subtle shifts that are meaningful to a community.

A: Systemic change – we need to get the powerbrokers to value the voices of the residents almost more than the organization. 4<sup>th</sup> working group should be residents for shared/lived experience.

Q: Was there a decision made not to have residents on the council?

A: Yes, but it was the advice from a previous administration. Sounds like it might be worth revisiting so that our demographic makeup can change. It may be helpful to bring the meeting to people/different neighborhoods.

## *Public Charge Discussion with André Lima*

- Please reference the slides for this portion of the meeting as they contain important detail not reflected in these minutes

## Council Feedback Q/A:

Q: Public comment period piece but people are already disenrolling. What is the City's response to this in real time?

A: The City is following the lead of partners and advocates in terms of messages in immigrant communities. As the version stands now and city suggests NOT disenrolling from public programs. Several other cities have called 12-8-6-6 meetings to meet with the office of management and budget to discuss that the proposed change would have significant negative economic impacts. Panic and fear is a real problem in immigrant communities so we are trying to message to stay calm and not to disenroll at this moment. Ultimately this will affect each individually differently based on their individual status

Comment: Outside of communication what is the city thinking about -- this shift is in alignment with what is already going on in communities. What is the city thinking about in general considering deportation and mental health crisis of communities being targeted? Future presentations should focus on the humanity harms just as much if not more than the economics. How would this presentation be received if it were shared with other communities?

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Comment: Written comments in objection to this regulation change are an important exercise for the BFAC and also individual comments should be also sent. Please contact the OFA if you would like assistance in submitting a comment. Also, you can follow Protecting Immigrant Families Advancing Our Future <https://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org/> for updates.

## Brief Updates from BFAC Working Groups

- Working Group 1 goal: Improve food access in underserved communities through economic development and community wealth building initiatives.
  - Since last meeting, this group has been exploring “healthy corner store” concepts and will develop an outreach plan to connect with store owners to assess interest
- Working Group 2: Improve food access in under resourced communities by making more vacant land accessible and usable for cultivation by local residents interested to pursue community gardening and commercial urban agriculture.
  - In August, this group convened community garden and urban agriculture practitioners to discuss challenges and opportunities to pursuing urban growing. To build on the outcomes of that meeting, we will be outlining the steps in the process for commercial and non-profit farms to start-up and identify areas where we might be able to streamline.
- Working Group 3: Strengthen and expand nutrition assistance resources that support Bostonians to access the food they need and want.
  - This group will no longer be focused on advocacy alone. That will belong to the full council. This group's goal has shifted to supporting and expanding nutrition assistance programs specifically.

## Public Comments & Questions

Q: Are working groups open to the community, if so how does one join?

A: Not yet, but we are getting to a point where we need to identify some sort of opportunity for community/resident involvement.

Q: Do you have a streamlined process so that those people who want to be involved can be involved?

A: For the council specifically we don't have those opportunities. All minutes and everything to are posted to website. Liz Miller would be happy to connect interested folks with partner organizations

Q: Where will the convening be in December?

A: We will have more information by the end of next week

## Announcements & Closing

### Next Steps

- Dates for future meetings

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- Thursday, December 13th, 2018: 6p - 8p, Location: 1481 Tremont Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Boston, MA 02120
- Thursday, March 14th, 2019: 6p - 8p, Location: 1481 Tremont Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Boston, MA 02120



