



GRC Climate Innovations Study Tour January 11, 2016

Overview of Climate Innovations Study Tour

The Boston Green Ribbon Commission is planning a Climate Innovations Study Tour for approximately 20-25 Boston and Commonwealth leaders interested in in-depth learning about climate adaptation and mitigation best practices in several advanced cities in Northern Europe. Participants will include a mix of City of Boston and Commonwealth leadership; Barr Foundation leadership; Green Ribbon Commission members and potentially others.

The tour will focus on city climate adaptation and mitigation best practices. Current itinerary plans are to visit Rotterdam and Amsterdam in the Netherlands, and Copenhagen in Denmark.¹ The Netherlands portion of the tour will represent Boston's reciprocal visit under an MOU signed with the Dutch Embassy in 2015.

The current targeted visit dates are June 13-17, with travel days on June 11-12 and June 18-19.

Study Tour Objectives

The purpose of the tour is use knowledge of cutting edge European practices for achieving city carbon neutrality and long-term climate preparedness to advance the City and Commonwealth's climate strategies. European cities and countries have been global leaders in pursuing carbon neutrality and long-term climate resilience. A supportive policy environment, deep concerns about long-term energy security, and political parties with strong environmental agendas, drive this leadership. This study tour will create opportunities for the Boston participants to interact with their European counterparts who will share the "inside story" of what it takes to achieve this level of change.

- **Climate Preparedness.** The tour will include a significant focus on using the experience of the Netherlands and Copenhagen to inform the City's Climate Ready Boston initiative. The timing of the City's Climate Ready Boston Phase 1 recommendations (June, 2016) will provide an opportunity to benchmark the emerging City strategy with European partners who have been working on climate preparedness implementation for a much longer period of time. Taking advantage of this experience and expertise will provide enormous tangible value to the City's efforts.

In April of 2015, the City of Boston and the Dutch Consulate signed a joint Memorandum of Agreement to engaged in technical exchanges on best practices related to climate preparedness, sea level rise and water management. The Netherlands portion of the Climate Innovations Study Tour will constitute the reciprocal visit by City of Boston officials under the terms of the MOU.

¹ It may also be possible to make a visit to Malmo, Sweden while in Copenhagen, since it is a relatively short distance away.

- **Climate Neutrality.** Both Rotterdam and Copenhagen have committed to achieving carbon neutrality at much earlier dates than Boston's and the Commonwealth targets of 80% emissions reductions by 2050. Their experience can help inspire and accelerate planning by the City, the Commonwealth, and the private sector to achieve a carbon-free energy future.

Study tour participants will engage in a variety of content that demonstrates how climate management has become a core function of government in the European cities. Themes will include:

- Building political will for climate action
 - Political strategies and rationale for constituents
- Public/private engagement
 - Creating economic opportunities for the private sector
 - The role of public/private partnerships
- Best practices for climate adaptation
 - Water management strategies for climate resilience and preparedness (sea-level rise, storm surge, and fresh-water flooding)
 - Climate preparedness actions focused on policy, planning, design, and development
 - Planning, design, and operational strategies for critical infrastructure
 - Emergency planning and disaster recovery
- Best practices for climate mitigation
 - Building energy efficiency
 - Energy system de-carbonization (electrical and thermal)
 - Sustainable mobility
 - Land use planning and open space, including green infrastructure

Thorough advance work and briefing materials will prepare the participants for a deep understanding of their experience. The GRC and Barr staff, aided by Meister Consultants Group, will develop the material that includes such aspects as:

- World class benchmarks to compare our work in Boston and Massachusetts to counterparts in Europe
- Specific context comparisons in each location
- Best practice taxonomy
- Policies and regulations supporting climate goals
- Stakeholder engagement