

# **The Green Ribbon Commission accelerates Boston's progress toward a climate safe, carbon free, equitable future.**

## **OUR UNIQUE HISTORY with the CITY OF BOSTON**

Boston has 47 miles of coastline, 85,000 buildings, an aging electrical grid, and a population of 650,000. All of these are threatened by climate change.

The Green Ribbon Commission (GRC) has partnered with the City of Boston for nearly 15 years to accelerate climate resilience, carbon neutrality, and climate justice in our city. Launched at the request of then-mayor Thomas Menino, the GRC operates on the theory that by directly engaging key business and civic leaders in the design and implementation of the City's climate strategies, we can accelerate change and match the scale of transformation to the scope of the challenge.

Today, the GRC is co-chaired by Boston Mayor Michelle Wu and Barr Foundation Trustee Amos Hostetter -- and our robust and growing network of business and civic leaders is informed, engaged, and connected. We work together to share best practices, advance cohorts of "first movers" on climate actions, and weigh in on important policy directions. In sectors from real estate to health care to higher education, we provide urgent leadership and partnership to help the City achieve its climate goals.

## **The Opportunity Ahead**

In 2025, the City will engage in a major update of its climate action plan, bringing together many strands of related work into an integrated strategy for achieving short-term goals in hitting key milestones in 2030 -- and beyond. The challenge is now to implement our bold solutions at scale -- financing billions of dollars worth of coastal protection projects; decarbonizing our largest, highest carbon-usage buildings (plus 70,000 smaller ones); incisively beginning the transition off of natural gas; and modernizing our electrical grid to handle a dramatic increase in electricity use.

Through the GRC's [2025-2030 strategic plan](#), we are meeting this moment by leading efforts focused on three areas where Boston needs to make bold progress in the next five years and where partnership with the private sector is critical. We will accelerate:

- [Boston's Path to Coastal Resilience](#), tackling our toughest financing and governance challenges;
- [Grid Modernization and a Just Energy Transition](#), updating the capacity, resilience, and technology of our electricity grid ; and engaging stakeholders in the shift away from natural gas; and
- [Large Building Decarbonization](#), solving for the top source of carbon emissions in the city.

## **HOW WE WORK**

The GRC is a nonprofit entity with a fiscal sponsor, enabling us to be nimble, creative, and help where needed by the City of Boston. Our 40 person membership comprises some of the most significant institutional, sector, and individual leadership in the city and state. Working with many other organizations as a partner, convener, or supporter, the GRC contributes uniquely to the city's climate progress.

### **A Trusted Source of Research and Analysis**

The GRC has catalyzed many of the most impactful pieces of climate research in the region over the past decade, including:

- [Climate Ready Boston](#) (2016), which comprehensively detailed the likely impacts of climate change on Boston
- [Carbon Free Boston](#) (2019), which outlined the city's options for strategic electrification
- [Our Shared History](#) (2023), which encouraged policy makers and developers to avoid the mistakes of the past during a time of fundamental urban transformation

We are now undertaking a major investigation into options for financing the estimated \$4-10 billion of coastal resilience projects necessary for Boston to protect our coastline and neighborhoods from catastrophic flooding for generations to come.

### **Creating Structured Collaboration between the Public and Private Sectors**

Our sector-based and issue-based working groups – [Commercial Real Estate](#), [Cultural Institutions](#), [Health Care](#), [Higher Education](#), [Boston Grid Modernization](#), and [Coastal Resilience](#) – bring together organization leaders, staff members and subject matter experts to share their experience-based perspectives and propose policy directions for climate action. We also debate and promote emerging technical and managerial topics, and provide regular opportunities for our Members to share their strategies and experiences with the Mayor, Governor, their staff, and others, as we make Boston and its institutions more climate resilient.

### **Why we are Effective**

The GRC's mission is to accelerate the implementation of the City's climate action plan by convening, organizing and enabling leaders. Our power is soft, but our impact is hard. By bringing together institutional leaders who want to transform Boston, each with their own

unique base and style of operation, we multiply our effectiveness. We believe this is the best way to achieve consensus-driven breakthroughs, supported by the best available science, planning, engineering, cultural ideas, and innovation.

## **OUR MEMBERSHIP**

[GRC Membership](https://greenribboncommission.org/about/#people) is made up of dozens of the City's top leaders – from universities, utilities, hospitals, financial institutions, real estate organizations, and nonprofits – who are committed to organization-level climate action to meet the City's carbon neutral targets and other climate goals. The GRC membership also includes key agency heads from the City of Boston and Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (Please see our membership at <https://greenribboncommission.org/about/#people>.)

Members meet in person in Boston twice per year, in the spring and fall, for two-hour sessions. Personal attendance by the Member is expected, as a commitment of leadership. In the interim months, GRC staff, member staff, consultants, and other experts and stakeholders move the work forward with guidance from GRC Members as needed.

## **Funding**

The GRC is funded by its members, most of whom make annual tax-deductible contributions to the operating budget as well as occasional contributions to special projects as they arise. While annual contributions are neither required nor construed as dues, there is a strong culture of participation among members that are in a position to be supportive. Additional support comes from foundations and individuals.

## **JOIN US**

Many cities have plans to address climate threats, but few have enlisted the support and leadership of the local business community as effectively as Boston, and few are able to articulate the opportunities as well as the risks for the future. Please join us.

To learn more, visit [www.greenribboncommission.org](http://www.greenribboncommission.org) or to get involved, please contact Executive Director [Amy Longworth](#) or Associate Director for Resilience [Rebecca Herst](#).