

April 2014

Talking With Mayor Marty Walsh: A City-Wide Town Hall

On December 14, 2014, Mayor-Elect Walsh's Transition Committee, with the assistance of the Rappaport Institute, convened a city-wide Town Hall at Roxbury Community College. With assistance from 11 facilitators drawn from the local academic community, the event featured 22 breakout sessions covering the 11 issues examined during the transition. It began with an address from the Mayor-Elect and Rappaport Director Ed Glaeser. Below is an edited transcript of the Facilitators' Reports and a Question-and-Answer session that followed.

Arts and Culture

STEVE JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr. Mayor-Elect, for convening this group. It was an exciting morning and afternoon. We were working with artists so, as you might imagine, it was lively, it was engaged, it was enthusiastic, it was hopeful. So enthusiastic that all the participants in the morning session volunteered to serve on Mayor Walsh's arts kitchen cabinet.

Before I go any further I would be remiss if I did not thank my colleagues and co-conspirators in the two sessions: Gary Dunning, Cuong Huang, and Charlie McInerny. They were terrific.

This Policy Brief is based on the reports of sub-committee facilitators to Mayor-Elect Martin Walsh at the City-Wide Town Hall Meeting on December 14, 2013.

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There were two big, very audacious goals that emerged from the morning and afternoon sessions. The first was the hope that the city will hold up the arts as a fundamental part of a city's persona, recognize that there is a vibrant community of artists and arts organizations in Boston and facilitate, support and promote that community in the city and nationally - even internationally. The city should promote the idea that the arts are a hugely important part of what makes Boston great.

The second big idea is the hope that the city will take pride in its artists and arts organizations, take pride in their diversity, and elevate the city's artists' profiles.

Other major themes also emerged. The first is that we need to sustain what we have. In terms of what we want to keep, participants were unanimous that we need to keep and support the Public Arts Commission and the Boston Cultural Council.

Second, we need to grow what we already do. We need a dedicated, sustainable arts line item in the city's budget. There was talk, on the

finance side, of an arts linkage for developers to produce revenue for arts and artists.

Third, there was strong support for removing unnecessary impediments to art, suggestions that there be dedicated street art areas in every neighborhood in Boston. The city should open up venues, open up parks, simplify permitting, and decriminalize street art.

Fourth, collaboration was a big theme - the notion of convening artists and arts organizations for dialogue, and directing all city departments to consider art as they do their work.

And then finally, the no-brainer, of course, was education. The idea that the city should expose young people early, both inside and outside schools, to the arts and artists.

In conclusion, while the two groups did not expect the city to solve all the problems related to the promotion of the arts, there was a distinct hope - an expectation even - that the city will convene and collaborate, and take pride in artists, organizations, and the arts scene generally.

Basic City Services

MY LAM: My name is My Lam and I am the co-chair of the Basic Services Committee. The priorities for our group were making the city more business-friendly, recognizing the difference between a small business and a larger businesses, and trying to streamline the process so that small businesses are not waiting two years to get certain permits.

I think all of us will talk about permitting and ISD. And that's one of the major sort of overarching concerns that every committee has raised so far. We talked a lot about how ISD should increase its technology capacity to allow it to do its work better, and to give the workers the resources to actually handle permits in a more efficient way.

One of the biggest ideas that came out of the group was having an online system where anybody who was applying for a permit or registration can actually go online and view where it is in the process, so that they know that their permit is getting attention.

Cleanliness of the city was a big issue. And a lot of folks talked about how they want to see Boston as one of the cleanest cities in America, and thinking about ways to do that. Obviously, that requires improved oversight at ISD and public works.

Another area of interest was Citizens Connect and not only maintaining but improving the Citizens Connect interface online, where people who speak different languages can also access the site. Another big discussion was the idea of, and the concept of decentralizing the basic services of city hall, and bringing it into the local neighborhoods. A lot of residents have expressed frustration with the maze of going to city hall for simple tasks. We talked about trying to bring it to a more local level when working with city services.

One person spoke passionately about animal control and the need to have a coherent animal

control policy. This policy doesn't really exist in the city. As far as technology is concerned, one of the biggest things people talked about was the use of technology to help provide better public services. One person mentioned the need for a chief innovation officer for the city to really recruit qualified IT staff and push technology solutions as one of the biggest factors in improving city services.

The other thing I want to plug to is the Boston Urban Mechanics Office. Many people raised that as an example of an office of innovation and as a new way of doing business where a lot of the policies and recommendations are driven by data, not just by anecdotes.

Education

BRIDGET LONG: Good afternoon. My name is Bridget Long. I am a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. And I was the facilitator for the Education Group. I want to thank the mayor-elect for this opportunity. We had many, many voices represented. It was an amazing session. And, as I've already apologized to those who attended, I'm sorry that I can't cover all the wonderful proposals and ideas and great discussion you had.

But three major themes. First, we discussed many proposals related to multiple dimensions of the achievement gap. From defining it as an opportunity gap, to gaps in performance, gaps in resources, and gaps in terms of our facilities. We discussed the achievement gap both in terms of assessing those gaps where they exist, as well as implementing plans. There are existing plans that we could implement, as well as new plans that people proposed.

We can think about these achievement gaps in terms of equity, racial equity, but also think about the differences in resources between all of our schools. Several voices spoke about differences between our K-8 schools versus our standalone middle schools with the middle schools receiving fewer resources, as well as

differences between our three magnet schools, with one of our magnet schools not receiving as much in resources as some of the others.

There were also voices saying that we should keep the focus on equity in the school assignment plan, to make sure that it is incorporated as part of the school assignment plan, as well as being monitored. Several voices saying, actually, we should postpone implementing the school assignment plan until we can do a better job ensuring issues of equity that all students have access to a high quality school.

A second major theme involved continuing and expanding collaboration models between schools and community-based organizations. There were several examples of collaborations that work well, that should be continued and expanded. School-based management models, where teachers and administrators are working together, not in a blame situation, but in terms of improving the schools were discussed. Other management models that were talked about were those that were increasing collaboration with business, those coming into schools and helping with things like financial literacy, those that would give more opportunities to foster volunteers. One suggestion for encouraging these partnerships was perhaps even having an office within the superintendent's office to work with all kinds of third parties who want to engage with students and help support students in all different kinds of ways.

Our third major theme was a continued push for transparency - transparency to help parents better understand what their voices are and how to advocate for their children. And a much stronger voice for parents, teachers, and community members to engage in the process and for those voices to be heard by the administration and valued.

There were many suggestions for continuing these town hall kinds of setups in particular as we go on searching for a superintendent. While

there were many voices of support for the current interim superintendent, there were also voices wanting to make sure that the search process going forward is visible, transparent, and that many community voices are able to take part, in addition to those of the Boston School Committee.

Just briefly, several other ideas were mentioned. There was some discussion about the school assignment plan and keeping the focus on equity. Another area was support for keeping the charter school cap, more monitoring about what the charter schools are doing, and making sure that charter innovations that they are feeding back into the district schools.

Finally, there were proposals for support of English language learners, not just the students, but also the parents, so that they can better engage with their teachers and with the school systems. Thank you.

Energy, Environment, and Open Space

JEROLD KAYDEN: My name is Jerold Kayden. I'm a professor of urban planning and design at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. I facilitated the meeting on energy, environment and open space.

In our session there was a breathtaking level of detail and specificity. In fact, it's very, very hard to come up with general themes so, based on voting by the participants, I'll discuss the top issues.

For things city government should keep doing:

- allow urban agricultural zoning for vacant lots and adopt Article 89, which would permit this
- keep the farmers' market compost program
- and keep Renew Boston, particularly weatherizing and solarizing homes.

Next, there was the category of things to implement. First, encourage energy efficiency in parks, recognizing that the more lights are



turned off, public safety issues increase. So there has to be a balance between energy efficiency and safety. Second, include more and better recycling in parks.

Third, the issue of horizontal and vertical silos in city oversight of energy, environment, and open space was raised. Encourage more cross-department collaboration and communication. Horizontally, we need to bust the silos and have more interdisciplinary attention to energy efficiency and public space among the departments. And then vertically, we need to have more porosity, more give-and-take between the City of Boston and certain state agencies.

Finally, offer the opportunity for community tree programs using resident volunteers. Not city employees, necessarily, but resident volunteers who will help by planting and maintaining trees on their properties to improve the city's green canopy. Everybody wants to volunteer and work with you, which is absolutely terrific and a compliment to you and everyone else.

As for the category of dream programs, there

were three ideas. First, make Boston the most beautiful city in the United States, but I don't think it's limited to the United States. Second, have green roofs citywide. People didn't say mandate, necessarily, but encourage green roofs citywide. And finally, better public use in the city of state-owned open space.

Finally, one person said, and everybody automatically agreed, Mayor-elect Walsh, manage expectations of what you're able to accomplish so people don't think you'll be able to accomplish more than any human being.

Economic Development

ED GLAESER: Thank you. I'm Ed Glaeser, economist, and facilitator for the economic development groups. The sessions were great. They were just an incredible array of ideas. There is clearly one theme, one vast overriding theme, which is that while this city has been, in many ways, very successful economically, those benefits have not been shared. There are huge fractions of the population who are not part of it.

There was a great deal of passion around ideas

meant to fix it. These include better pathways to employment, apprenticeship and reentry programs. There also was concern about the difficulty of the permitting process. Many people spoke about that.

There were several big vote-getters in each session. Number one in the morning session was an innovation center in an urban neighborhood such as Dudley Square. This speaks to a larger concern of labeling an innovation district that is in one part of the city, and thinking that somehow or other innovation is limited to there because we know that every neighborhood of Boston has innovators. And we know that every neighborhood of Boston is capable of the magic that can lift this city.

During the afternoon session, the top vote-getter was community representation on the BRA. This was a universally popular passion. The other one, which I was somewhat surprised to see in economic development, was universal

childcare. And that actually makes a lot of sense, in terms of enabling a large portion of the population to participate in the workforce.

There is another topic, which I was hoping to exclude, because it does have certain implications for my employer. But in due honesty to my group, I have to mention it. There was also a lot of enthusiasm for raising payments in lieu of taxes on non-profits.

The last idea is to embrace Boston as a world-leading city and embrace it in a sales pitch to the world. This would mean embracing regional collaboration on economic development by having all cities in this region come together to do something really terrific together. And that, I hope, is something you will do. The group felt very passionate about that.

I just want to thank you for letting us all participate in this process, which has been just incredibly eye-opening and wonderful for me





personally. And also, just thank the wonderful people who came to this and participated and helped by writing down ideas, or all the many different ways that people helped out.

Housing

JOE KRIESBERG: Good afternoon, I'm Joe Kriesberg. I'm the executive director of the Mass. Association of CDCs. I don't think our committee was shy about raising expectations, because people are really struggling out there with housing. There is still a number of homeless individuals. People are being evicted. There's still a serious foreclosure crisis. And with high housing prices, both homes to buy and homes for rent, it's a real problem for thousands and thousands of the people who live in the city. And with the federal budget cuts getting worse, people are even more fearful for the future. That was the overarching theme.

I want to highlight four areas where specific concerns were raised. First is around neighborhood stability. There's a tremendous amount of concern that, as neighborhoods improve, the people who live there won't be able to stay. And we heard that again and again, both in the morning and the afternoon. So that leads to the first suggestion, and I think the most important item to keep, which is *keep* the affordable housing that we already have, both public housing and privately owned affordable housing. We need to keep every unit we can. We also have to support existing homeowners in owner-occupied housing, in part because of the pressure coming from investors who are buying up properties in some neighborhoods with cash.

A second area of discussion was around land use and planning. There was a strong call for better planning, and to actually adhere to the plans that are made. Rather than ignoring them



once a proposed development comes along. And with more areas zoned for “by-right” multifamily development, they by simply following the plans and the zoning we could ensure that we build the housing we need in the right places.

Third, there was a strong call for using public land strategically. There’s still a lot of public land available. We think the city needs to think really hard about how to use it, and make sure it’s used to benefit the public, and to make sure that low and moderate people have a place to live. In that context, a theme that kept coming up again and again is striving toward a one-third/one-third/one-third development strategy, with one-third market rate, one-third moderate, and one-third low income, in contrast to the current Housing 20/20 plan, which is really two-thirds market. And another subpoint, because it echoes some of the others, allow online permitting to make the process easier.

Finally, the good news out of our group is people have a lot of ideas about how to raise

resources. One of the benefits we have in Boston is we do have a strong housing market. And that can spin off resources for affordable housing. So there was strong support for enacting the Community Preservation Act, for strengthening and increasing inclusionary development payouts, and for raising the linkage fees. So lots of ideas for how to raise revenue.

Human Service

TIZIANA DEARING: Hi, my name is Tiziana Dearing. I’m on the faculty of the Graduate School of Social Work at Boston College. I just had the pleasure of facilitating the human service breakout groups. In fact, how many people are still here that were in one of the human service breakout groups today? Okay, you were wonderful. It was wonderful to work with you. And I feel a tremendous burden and responsibility about trying to bring forward your ideas.

I’m going to stick with the three categories: keep, implement and dream. In the keep

category, there was not really anything in human services that people said we don't need anymore. That's an important thing we would want to stipulate. A few things that really did particularly come forward were the importance of community centers and libraries in the human service network, as well as community health programs and transportation.

And then, there was an overall theme of "Keep plus expand." In particular, homelessness services, senior programming, supports to veterans, and physical and mental health provision, especially as mental health provision connects to schools, were cited for expansion. Another area for expansion was the idea of expanding community health and community centers into more neighborhoods and providing support locally to more neighborhoods in the city.

In the implement category, the first big thing was that people believe there are huge economies of scale to be achieved, just by improving communication and coordination, both among human service departments inside the city, and also between the city and the state. There could just be tremendous gains from better communication and coordination.

The second thing was that there would be early wins from competency training, especially around cultural competency, mental health competency, and customer focus, especially customer satisfaction.

The third is the idea that a feedback loop would be not only healthy, but appropriate. How are people experiencing their human services? The kind of voice they had today, why just today? Why couldn't that be a part of how we do human service provision in general?

The fourth was, - and this was interesting - this overlaps with a couple of the other groups, we could change contracting now to increase both diversity and the presence of people with disabilities who receive contracts and can

compete, and that that would be beneficial, not only from an economic standpoint, but from a human services standpoint as well.

And last on this one, there was strong support for shaking up leadership in human services to allow innovation to drive increased transparency and to drive increased accountability.

In the dream category, there were several things that came out of the discussion. First, implement comprehensive strategies for immigrants and city-wide human service coordination. The second one is an idea of a volunteer hub that would better coordinate and connect the rich supply of potential volunteers to services and support the community and human services realm.

The third is more supports for veterans and for young people, especially ages 18 to 21, who have aged out of foster care and may be of age but are not ready, and need a level of support they're not receiving now. To integrate overall awareness and competency around disabilities, mental health, domestic violence, veterans' needs, into the DNA of how we provide human services as a city. To push for an innovation culture across the board in human services. And lastly, to understand and deal with the role of trauma, the underlying role of trauma, not just in youth services, but across the board. And not just for the citizens of Boston, but also for frontline workers who are engaging with people suffering from trauma. There's a wonderful community of people prepared to engage. We should find ways to use them.

Public Health

RENÉE LANDERS: Good afternoon. My name is Renée Landers. And I'm a professor of law at Suffolk University Law School, where I direct the health and biomedical law concentration. I was the facilitator for the public health discussions that we had this morning and this afternoon. First of all, I

congratulate all of you for being here and engaging in this process. It's a really wonderful opportunity for our city.

One overarching theme that came out of our conversation was that we should strive to adopt a policy of evaluating everything that happens in the city, from the point of view of health and incorporating the evaluations into all policies. Health and the impact on health of communities and individuals should be an overarching concern, regardless of the policy. This approach would have the effect of creating a more robust health planning process for the city. We could conduct health impact assessments where we would take the long view, not just project by project, of the effect on health of multiple decisions made over the course of time.

Finally, and this has come up multiple times, these processes should be interconnected across all city departments, and they should include all city agencies, community groups, neighborhoods, and the individual people who are affected by the policies.

There were several themes in the keep category. One is that there was a great deal of appreciation for the health equity and racial justice focus framework that the Boston Public Health Commission has been using to address public health issues in the city. Others to keep were the focus on violence prevention, as characterized by the example of the organization Mayors Against Illegal Guns to expand programs to address trauma, the impact of violence throughout the city, and to promote resiliency in the face of the things that do happen.

Also, the sessions mentioned the need for increased reliance on partnerships to promote health. This city, as an employer and working with other employers in the city - particularly some of the leading healthcare employers of the city, should try to pilot programs to focus on how to promote healthy workforces and

healthy populations. In this area, the city could play a leadership role in partnership with other employers in the city.

The city should expand on efforts to provide access to healthy food, perhaps partnering with grocery stores to have nutrition advice available as people shop, so that the education actually has an impact at the point of purchase. Also, the city should partner with universities and other nonprofit groups in the city to address some of the issues of youth homelessness, particularly among LGBTQ youth in the city.

On the implementation front, there needs to be a rapid expansion of addiction treatment and recovery opportunities. Also important is connecting those services to job opportunities and community supports, so that it's a sustainable, coherent process across a number of different sectors.

Another idea is to build on the mayor-elect's concept in trying to use data to inform public policy, and to have data available in accessible forms for everyone in the city who needs to use it, not just city departments, but also community organizations and community service organizations in the city.

And then, finally, it will be important to think about the impact of what's happening in one area of the city operations and what effect it might have on health. As specific examples: how the licensure process for things like alcoholic beverage stores and serving establishments might have an effect on neighborhoods and the health of neighborhoods; and how parking enforcement policy might adversely affect opportunities to provide services by social workers? These small things could have big and detrimental impact on the way services are provided in the city if not considered from a broad perspective.

Public Safety

CHRISTINE COLE: Good afternoon. I'm Christine Cole. I'm the executive director of



the Program in Criminal Justice Policy and Management at Harvard Kennedy School. It was a great conversation we had in the public safety discussion. Joining us were elected members of the legislature, sheriff, NGO leaders, young people, professional police and firefighters, human service providers, residents from all corners of the city, and business professionals.

At the risk of echoing what has been said before me, I think there are some striking similarities among the groups expressing a desire for opportunity, that is, equal opportunity for everybody, for coordination of services across city government; and a real human cry heard in our group to support and encourage community voice that is present and value the opportunities for community input. And this town hall meeting is a great start to that exchange. So, on behalf of everybody that I was with this morning, thank you for your voices.

In the “keep” category, which migrates very closely to implement, because as somebody

else said, it’s “keep and add,” was a lot of conversation about community policing. People are really advocates and proponents of the community policing philosophy. They want it to be department-wide. That means gang officers, as well as street officers behaving as community police officers. It is about how we treat people from policing, not just a program, that it’s about genuine citizen engagement and input, and that it’s a bi-directional trust-building relationship. Making sure that police services are delivered fairly and consistently to every person, irrespective of their allegiance to a gang or not, or neighborhood in which they live.

Next came two things to implement. The first was to ask every city agency to have a goal that’s directed towards public safety. We talked about that a lot. I think it’s a common theme that we’ve heard. So many things that we talked about in our group, about employment opportunities, substance abuse, and others tie back to improving public safety. This approach fits across all of government.

The second thing our group would ask you to

implement is to be the high level coordinator of all agencies in government, both at the city and the state level, so that we can have conversations and provide services better. That means having public safety engage with the health department, the mental health department at the city and state levels, as well as probation and jails and prisons.

And then finally, we talked about the “dream category.” We would ask you to think about the psycho-social needs, substance abuse, mental health, educational, housing and work opportunities, and create more of all of them for more people, especially for teens and for those people who return to the community from jails and prisons, with increased collaboration and coordination across the city, and state government.

Transportation

DAVID LUBEROFF: I’m David Luberoff. I’m the Senior Project Advisor at the Boston Area Research Initiative, an interdisciplinary entity at the Harvard’s Radcliffe Institute for

Advanced Study.

In transportation, it’s the three Ps that matter -- policies, planning, and projects. I wanted to add “pennies” for funding, but it doesn’t work with the acronym. In policies, there was remarkable support for a whole set of approaches that we’ll call complete streets, really thinking about how to make a transportation system that works not only for cars, but also for bicyclists, and also for pedestrians, and also for people who have to use other ways of getting around. Complete Streets is the policy the city has adopted and should keep, it’s a policy that we hope that you continue to enhance and implement.

Two other policies emerged as very important. First, as I’m sure you know well, the whole system of taxis and taxi regulation is broken. There is some strong support for implementing the Taxi Consultant Report released last fall. And in general, given the changes in technology, your administration also needs to figure out how that whole system of taxis and liveries is going to work. There was also a sense that when people show up with new



transportation technologies, we haven't really thought about how to embrace or regulate those services.

In terms of planning, particularly the first session, people were just thrilled with the sense of open collaboration. And they really hoped that this was the first one of many Town Hall sessions.

In terms of projects, as you know, you will have to make decisions on "Day One" about several very specific projects. Most notably, some people want you to keep the Casey overpass. Some people want you to implement the recently approved plan to remove the Casey overpass. There were a couple of other projects that really jumped out where there were strong opinions on both sides.

Finally, in terms of the funding, we're all very hopeful and supportive of, as you had talked about during the campaign, you and other urban mayors, will lead the charge on providing additional and sustainable funding for the region's transit system.

Youth Issues

AVIVA ARGOTE: Hi. My name is Aviva Argote. And I serve as the executive director of the Hauser Institute for Civil Society at the Harvard Kennedy School.

We had three themes-- collaboration, opportunity and voice. Within collaboration, the dialogue was around reducing silos and increasing access. Very strongly, this collection of people want to keep the point person within the Boston Public Schools who serves in the superintendent's office as a central point of contact. And they wanted to make sure that that person's scope expands, so that more people understand how to use that as an entry point. The hope and the dream is that, within all Boston Public Schools, there would be a social justice curriculum requirement for all students graduating within the system.

Within opportunity, the key was around summer youth employment, strong-- almost everybody who sat in our breakout sessions was excited about that and hoping to improve by expanding it. Nearly 86 percent of the business community currently doesn't participate. And the idea was to implement some dialogue to ensure that the business community engages more. As one of our participants said, "Please help create some more safe spaces for us, including those after-school and in the summers." The dream area was that every student have a summer plan at the end of school every year, and a summer job as part of that plan.

The last item, "voice," was present throughout. And the big idea was to not just have representation, but to have decision-making power for the young people in this city. And the Mayor's Youth Council came up as a great one to keep, and then also to implement by expanding representation and including things like a participatory budget model so the youth have some decision-making over some dollars in their budget. There was support for the idea of the creation of the Boston Youth Charter, so that every young person in the city understands their rights and their responsibilities of participation.

The big dream leads us right back to where we started in arts and culture. There's this idea of having more youth-led organizations. And our group decided, why not start in the Strand Theatre?

Remarks by Mayor-Elect Marty Walsh

MARTY WALSH: First, I want to thank you all, all the citizens here.

It's funny, because I was here this morning, and the room was about as full as it is today, right now, at nine o'clock. But 80 percent of you look different than the people who were here this morning. I know a lot of people have come in, in and out throughout the day. and I'm

hearing a lot of great ideas.

One comment that I heard two minutes ago was that when everyone was in the room having lunch, the conversations were between people from different parts of the city and they haven't had those conversations before. Based on that one comment, this is a success. We have to continue this, we have to continue this beyond today.

As a candidate for mayor, you get to go all over the city, really getting deep into the neighborhoods, understanding the difference between Allston and Brighton, and the challenges that Allston and Brighton have, and also in other parts of the city, I think that's important. And that's important for all Bostonians to understand. So we will continue this, the dialogue, as we move into office.

I just want to recognize, again, a couple of elected officials that were here, not just now, but also this morning, just because I think it's important, because elected officials are the ones who are going to push me as well. And when I was running for office, running for mayor, a lot of them were pushing me and pushing all of us to really push about their neighborhoods.

So I just want to recognize them real briefly. Kevin Honan from Brighton is here, my colleague from the State House. Councillor Tito Jackson. We were also joined by Sheriff Tompkins, City Councillor Ayanna Pressley was here. Dan Cullinane was here. He used to work in my office and I still think he's like an extended staff member, but he's a State Representative. Which is scary. I'm either getting old, or something is going on.

But I want to thank Gloria Fox who couldn't be here today because she's at the National Conference of Black Legislators. And she texted me about 15 times today, to be sure that everyone in this room knows that's why she wasn't here. But I want to thank my colleagues

as well for this. And I'm going to stop talking, because now I think it's question and answer time.

Question and Answer Session

ED GLAESER: Thank you very much, Mayor-Elect. I want to thank the facilitators for their amazing work all day. And now for the Q & A. Any question is allowed, any question. But do make it a question, not a speech.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'd like to know when you're going to start the investigation of the Chapter 121A tax breaks that are going to developers? And I'd like to offer to help you with that investigation.

MARTY WALSH: Thank you. What we're going to be doing as we begin to restructure the BRA is to examine these issues. It is one of the pieces of BRA we're looking at, the 121As.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I want to ask you what you can do to help create a model for innovation in green initiatives. I want to see Boston become not the most green thinking city in this country, but the most real green city, things like solarizing, neighborhood gardens, really creating an even stronger local food supply. So what can you do personally, to help make that happen? And then, how can you pull in more people from the neighborhoods and the city and the region to make that happen?

MARTY WALSH: We started it today a little bit with the transition team and talking about what we're going to do. In the campaign, we spoke a lot about policy, a lot of candidates did as well. And I think just beginning this conversation. I want the green living commission to join the campaign, which had each candidate talk about the different ideas that they have. The one voice that I saw who was missing from that was the neighborhood. I think that, if we can actually incorporate neighborhood into that green living commission, and not just have the business side but also bring it to the community, I think we

can do a lot with that.

When it comes to the food supplies and things like that, there was a lot of discussion in the campaign as well. I think we start with farmers' markets. I had this conversation with some young people today down in Washington, D.C. they shut down streets on Saturdays and they have a farmers' market as a kind of a street festival. In Boston we have farmers' markets in certain neighborhoods and some locations. We should expand that. If that means shutting down a street in a neighborhood for a few hours, let's shut it down and get more people out there. We should be looking at all these ideas.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Boston is growing, because of immigrants. When we come here, we have no time. We came to make it. But we need capital and we need opportunity. Would you support more programs like this?

MARTY WALSH: The answer is yes. And if you look online at my policy around economic development, we specifically have a business

development section that names immigrants specifically as an engine here in the City of Boston. So the answer to the question is yes. I committed to it in the campaign and as we continue to move forward.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My question is around civic engagement. It's great to see so many people come here on a Saturday morning and afternoon. My concern is that there are not a lot of people here who utilize a lot of the services that we've been talking about today. So with that in mind, it's not so much what can you do, as what can we do as communities, to make sure that everyone that we serve is reflected and participating in activities such as this. What would be some of your recommendations? How could we civically engage people more in their own lives?

MARTY WALSH: Thank you for that. Today is kind of a dry run for it, we're going to have civic engagement seminars in the City of Boston. Councilor Maureen Feeney had one many years ago. What we're going to do, and



we talked about in the campaign, is begin that in the coming new year, is to try and meet citywide two or three times a year, to keep people civically engaged. Because I think there's a lot of energy out there. And I wouldn't want to capture the energy today and for the next couple of weeks with the transition, and then all of a sudden, everyone goes away for eight years, whatever it is. I think we need to keep people active. So we have a plan for that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: What is your plan for the office for new Bostonians? It is so important in supporting new immigrants and incorporating them into the fabric of Boston, of our society.

MARTY WALSH: As we do the transition, we're going to go back and see where we can strengthen the department. So that's a lot of what we're doing today as well. And we're going to have a meeting, I believe, at some point on that specific department with other departments.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: What steps are you going to take to pursue your dream of making Boston a better and more beautiful place to live?

MARTY WALSH: I think we have to create more housing so more people can live here. We have to expand community policing so people feel safe in the streets. We have to keep more programming for our young people so that people feel safe and can be able to hang around. We need to close the achievement gap. We really need to focus on the environment.

We're trying to make Boston a place where people feel really engaged. So it's not just certain Bostonians, but all Bostonians have the opportunity to enjoy the city.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: In our transitional team meeting we had many talk about the centralized city hall and bringing neighborhoods back into the picture. What is your idea? What is your plan?

MARTY WALSH: I think there was a discussion about that today. And also, in the campaign, we were talking about possibly using our libraries. Creating little city halls by using a local library, so that people that-- we'll get people into the library number one.

But I'd like to have the neighborhood service coordinators that work in city hall, as your liaisons in different neighborhoods, have them in the neighborhood more so people can actually, instead of going into city hall, if they want to see somebody face to face, or just some services. We're exploring the idea of putting a lot more services in something like a library, owned by the city, operated by the city.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My question is, sir, is over the past few years, we've had problems with the St. Patrick's Day parade. And it's been all over the place. Most people know all of that. I would like to see you actually take the city-- have the City of Boston take over the St. Patrick's Day parade from the veterans council and make it a singular thing, where all can participate regardless of who they are, or what their LGBT status or whatever they're using, all people come together and celebrate the day. And I'm hoping that you will look into this and speak to them.

MARTY WALSH: The city is not going to take the parade over, because we don't do that. However, we are going to work with the organizers to make sure the parade is inclusive for everyone.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: How are you planning to incentivize young recent graduates to stay within the city, especially African Americans and other minorities? Because there are very few places for young minorities to go in this city, especially when it relates to nighttime activities. So I was wondering, what's your plan?

MARTY WALSH: Well, as far as trying to keep people in the City of Boston, one of

the issues we talked about today is housing, creating more housing. I think that's one of the big reasons people leave. A second piece of it is opportunities for employment, and making sure we create more opportunities for employment.

We have an end game, if you will, how we're going to get there. It's not going to happen today. Although I want people to stay, I'm going to keep working on this. I met with seven young people, and some of them are here tonight, this afternoon, to talk about that exact issue, how do we keep people here? How do we keep them engaged in the city? How do we allow opportunities for employment here? So we're working, part of this transition is coming up with a plan on doing that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: This is just a wonderful day and I hope we do it more often. I wanted to ask you again about the BRA. When are you thinking of restructuring the BRA, will you be looking at zoning laws and how will you improve them? Because developers get a carte blanche to develop. And residents and houses and condos are so unaffordable. Jamaica Plain is a good example of what's going wrong with the zoning laws or having to be approved.

MARTY WALSH: We're going to be looking at, when we start to begin the restructuring or restructuring is a good word to use, of the BRA, we're going to be looking at all that, the zoning, the 120A, and all the special deals that are out there. We're going to be looking at everything across the board. Yesterday, I spoke about transparency for the neighborhoods. We want to be sure that when we talk about the liaisons to the BRA, there are actually liaisons to the BRA to the community. Not just one way but a two-way communication.

So we're going to look at all of this. And the reason why I said that we're not going to implement the changes in January is because we have to make sure that any change we

make, and everything we do, is going to work. When it comes to the planning, when it comes to the development, when it comes to economic development and attracting new business to Boston, when we talk about having the businesses that we have here grow, so all of those different pieces are going to be part of the restructuring of what we have in the BRA, because it is important to keep our city moving forward. There are neighborhoods like Jamaica Plain, Brighton, Allston, Fenway, and Back Bay where people are concerned about over-development as well. So that's why we're going to make sure, as we're doing this, we keep in mind all the different neighborhoods as well.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I want to touch on the issue of food and really hunger. All of the schools throw out enormous amounts of food every single day that could be recycled and given to people who are hungry. And I want to know if you have any plan for using that food. The schools throw out all sorts of foods, like milk and applesauce, that could go to hungry families. So I want to know if you have any way of taking that food and giving it to the people who need it. Also, I'm concerned about gentrification.

MARTY WALSH: Thank you. Great question. We have to look and see what we can do when it comes to health. I'm not sure if we're allowed by law to be able to move food from one area to another area. So we'll have to look into that. It's a great point. It's something if we can do it, we should do it.

As far as the issue of gentrification, every neighborhood in the City of Boston has either gone through or is beginning to go through it. My concern about gentrification is that people are moving out because of lack of opportunity. People are feeling that they're being pushed out. There's very little opportunity for employment. And there's also an issue with job training, job readiness, and education.

Actually, it came up yesterday in the meeting with the President. There are many cities and towns, neighborhoods around this country, who are in the same boat, that there are people concerned about it. And there was a lot of discussion about it. And I feel Boston is poised right now to do a lot more about it than some other cities around this country. So we're looking forward to tackling the issues.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My question to you is your thoughts about 24 hour transportation. From the standpoint of trying to get to work, everything is structured between seven and 3:30, eight to 4:30, five. So what are your thoughts around expanding transportation so that for me, for instance, my job starts at five in the morning. And that's when the MBTA starts. So would you consider putting forth some type of effort through legislation so that we have 24 hour access to the MBTA?

MARTY WALSH: Thank you for the

question. I will work with the MBTA on that. I know they have some financial challenges. I will tell you one thing. In May, they're doing a pilot program to provide service later on Friday and Saturday nights. And my recommendation to a lot of people, particularly young people, take the train. Just show that it works. Because I think what happens is, if you don't take the train and show it doesn't work, it won't continue. But I will continue to work with the team to expand it. They did announce a pilot, and it is important for us to make sure that we push that forward.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: In '83 the outgoing mayor rubberstamped a number of luxury developments at the last minute. The incoming Mayor Flynn called a moratorium, and appointed a creative, effective BRA director, Stephen Coyle, who redid them in a very positive way for the city. Would you consider doing the same for the questionable mega



development projects that have just been rubberstamped in the last couple of months?

MARTY WALSH: I would have to look at each development separately. We haven't gotten to do that yet. I'm not willing to stop development in the City of Boston just for the sake of stopping development. So I can't say yes to that question. But we will look at some of the deals that have gone through to see how they benefit the City of Boston. Some of those deals have implications as far as employment and jobs, long-term jobs. And I'm not willing to stop the growth of the City of Boston for a year because of that.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Mr. Mayor, I would like to thank you very much for doing this. One of the problems with current housing policy is that there's not enough recognition of the amount of risk of displacement for Boston residents in the neighborhoods. There's 23,000 people, very low income people, who are

paying more than 50 percent of their income in rent today.

So when we look at how the city allocates scarce resources, we have to think about how are we going to keep people in their homes. I feel like we can't look at it as if there's a static situation. We need to recognize that people are being pushed out of the city every day.

I was in a housing discussion last week. And somebody put forward a goal that I really liked, and I wanted to ask you if you shared, which is that we should have a goal of Boston being the leading city in the country for doing development without displacement.

MARTY WALSH: That's an issue that came up in the campaign. And that's something that comes up every day in my life, as far as housing, and how do we keep people in Boston, keep Boston the great city it is, allowing people for housing who are low income and medium



income housing. And I think we have to continue to grow that.

I know there's a lot of development going on now with high end housing. And I'm not against that. I mean I think it's great people want to move into the city. That's wonderful. But I know in certain parts of this city, families are getting pushed out. And I know Chinatown is one of those neighborhoods that I made a commitment to during the campaign with Chinatown on moving forward, to make sure we can create more affordable housing so people in neighborhoods don't get pushed out.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I was just wondering if you had any complementary ideas to go along with the MBTA late night service pilot program, such as keeping businesses potentially open later, bars open later, or any sort of other complementary ideas. Was that something that's going to have to wait for the pilot program to be over? Or how do you see it?

MARTY WALSH: No, I haven't gotten into any concrete discussion about it yet. But we're going to work on that right after I take over in January, to see what areas are going to keep places later. Do we do it in certain zones, allow restaurants to stay open later and serve food? I mean that's something that's definitely on the table. It will happen in some shape or form in my administration.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I want to make sure that you see the Charles River as part of your city, because this is a world-class river that has been, in a way, forgotten, because it's a state-owned river and park. And we have so many wonderful places, the Esplanade, Allston, Brighton, all along. So, as the mayor of this world-class city, how can you make the Charles River a priority for the state and the City?

MARTY WALSH: I think somebody brought up earlier today, I don't view the city and the

state as separate. I know the state runs the state parks and the city runs the city parks. But as a state representative who represents a part of Boston, Dorchester, right now, and soon to be the mayor, I view it all under one umbrella. Now the state will pay for upkeep for some of their land. But I'm not going to view things as separate city and state when it comes to the City of Boston monuments. It's all the City of Boston residents' parks. They're public parks. And I want to work collaboratively with both the state, city and the federal government.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: The most powerful human-made institution in the world is the global marketplace. Yet nobody talks about it. And we have to start talking about it. So I'm asking a question, how can we-- Can we have some sort of a conference for a meeting or commission, where we talk about it, especially as far as education is concerned? Like how can we prepare our children to humanely succeed in a powerful institution like the global marketplace?

MARTY WALSH: I met with the governor two and a half weeks ago. And he was talking to me about his trip to China and the importance of going to China. The role of attracting business to Massachusetts is extremely important.

Number one, I think it's important for us to reach out and go to other places to attract business here.

I met with the mayor of Los Angeles, California yesterday. And he was talking to me about a foreign company that produces denim jeans. And the mayor went to the company to sell them on the benefits of relocating to LA. Now they're making 238,000 pairs of jeans in LA every year.

Number two, it's important for us to educate our kids on a global scale in school, so that they have opportunities to not only learn about other parts of the world, but also we have



to work with our colleges and universities about encouraging them that they go abroad somewhere for education.

I went to Israel in 1999. And most young people that go to college in Israel go to either Europe or America for a semester to learn about the global market. My cousins in Ireland went to Australia. And people in Ireland go to other places for a semester to learn about the world. We as Americans, we don't do that. We stay here in our neighborhood. We might go to college somewhere else. But we come right back to our neighborhood in some cases. And, if we do leave, the global markets for some of our kids is going to New York City or going to another city. I think we have to really look at expanding and encouraging international education.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm a Boston Public School parent from Roxbury. I have two kids in the system. As the BPS administration is currently set up, parents don't truly have a voice. We should have a way to get to you. How will you welcome and include BPS parents in the Boston Public School administration?

MARTY WALSH: Good question. There's no process now. But we're aware of the issue, we are working on a process for parents to communicate with me. And we'll also look at the role of the school committee.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you, mayor-elect. I appreciate the opportunity to speak and your thoughtful listening to what we have to say. I am very grateful to be a teacher in Boston Public Schools in Dorchester. I'm very grateful to be teaching to English language learners that come through our doors. I'm very grateful that the majority of them are making great progress because we work very closely with Boston College.

My concern is the policy that someone who has just come to our country, after one year, is given standardized tests and expected to become proficient in one year. Now the research tells us it takes five to six years to become fluent in a language. But we are putting these tests in front of children. They're sitting for hours, many weeks during the year, taking these tests over and over. And then we tell them they have failed. And then we give them their report cards and say to them that you've failed.



And this contributes to the reports of how so many in our schools are failing. But I think we need to find a way to assess the work of the children who are just learning English and allow them to grow. And also have an assessment for people who are fluent, whether they are native speakers, or they're English language learners, to measure their academic performance.

There's no other field in the world that assesses people on subjects they know they're not proficient in, or they haven't even become a learner of. And I feel like we are not serving our children or our families if we're assessing them on things that we know they do not understand.

MARTY WALSH: We have some real opportunities here with the schools but there's a lot of work to be done. There's been some great work that's been done in the last several years in the school department. We have some schools that have turned around. We have some exciting progress. We have to continue to grow on that. We are going to be conducting,

at some point here in the near future, a superintendent search. And we're going to be-- when I say shake things up might be the wrong use of words. But we're going to make some changes. And you know, the first step is going to be to bring in a new superintendent to begin those changes. I know [current Acting Superintendent] John McDonough was here earlier. John has implemented an awful lot of changes in the school and has done some great things.

Despite that, we aren't satisfied. I know one of the suggestions was to stop the implementation of the new school assignment process for this upcoming year. I don't think we can do that. But I agree, on education issues, we need to listen to parent voices more often.

People are going to start to see some positive changes. We can't do everything for everybody, because if we do, the school system is not going to move forward. But we are going to make some changes. My goal, as Mayor of the City of Boston, is to close the achievement gap. My goal, as mayor of the City of Boston, is

to keep kids in high school. My goal is to get them off to college. That's my goal. We should have as many kids as we can graduate. But my goal is to build upon what's happening now and put some good strong policies in place so that we can educate more and more kids every day.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm wondering if you have been out to the Boston Harbor Islands. The reason I'm asking is, as a public space we found it to be an ideal place to teach our kids about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and environmental victories.

MARTY WALSH: Thank you. I've been out to some but not all of the islands. I know that some people have concerns about opening up the islands to the public. But I certainly think we should open up some of the islands to the public, to allow people the opportunity to visit. Because it's their island. I certainly think there's a lot of history to be taught on the islands as well, of the history of our country, and also the immigrants that came to this country, that didn't make it off the island. So absolutely, I would love to visit all of them at some point. We're going to look at that.

ED GLAESER: Now we have reached the end of our time for today. The conversation will continue, but we're done for tonight. Thank you all for attending and participating. And thank you to the Mayor-elect for his willingness to participate and listen. We look forward to continuing this dialogue between the City and the Mayor.

MARTY WALSH: I want to thank the Rappaport Institute for helping us here. I want to thank all of the volunteers that were here today. I didn't thank you earlier, I should have. I appreciate it. I want to thank the staff. I want to thank the police that were here earlier as well. And to let you know that this is not the last of our meetings. We're going to continue to meet. And everyone is going to be included. Everyone is invited to the inauguration. If

you're around, please come.

END

[Portions of this transcript have been edited for clarity and length. Rappaport Executive Director Steve Poftak served as an unpaid volunteer to the Walsh Transition team and the Mayor's Director of Policy during the initial months of the Walsh Administration.]

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“Greater Boston’s Economy and the Entrepreneurial Age,” by Edward L. Glaeser (Harvard University), Kristina Tobio (Taubman Center for State and Local Government) and Steve Poftak (Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston) February 2014.

“Using Technology to Improve Transportation: All Electronic-Tolling and Beyond Conference Proceedings,” (Rappaport Institute for Greater Boston and The Center for Strategic Studies at the D’Amore McKim School of Business at Northeastern University) October 2013.

“Greater Boston’s Economy: The Impact of College Quality on College Completion Rates,” by Joshua Goodman (Harvard Kennedy School) September 2012.

“Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise: Improving the Productivity of Massachusetts’ Health Care Spending,” by Amitabh Chandra (Harvard Kennedy School) May 2012

“Which Places are Growing? Seven Notable Trends from Newly Released Census Data,” by Edward Glaeser (Harvard University) March 2011.



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