

The following is a collection of questions that were asked by the Committee regarding the Environment Department's budget at the Working Session on Friday, April 30, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.

Recording here: <https://youtu.be/27MbPunbAuA>

The Administration is requested to respond to all questions in one of three ways:

1. Verbally at the hearing on Monday, May 10th, at 10AM.
2. For factual questions, through written responses supplied prior to May 10th, including budget book page numbers or other references where appropriate.
3. By deferring to a specific scheduled departmental budget hearing.

Please annotate and return this information request before May 10th, indicating how each question will be answered.

Environment Department Budget Questions

Councilor Kenzie Bok, Chair, asked:

- Please discuss the details of the Green Jobs Retraining investment, as well as the plans for all funding for Green Jobs.
 - What models are being considered, and are you looking at a format similar to Philadelphia's Power Corps, whom we hosted for a working session back in March?
 - One thing we learned from Power Corps is that your first hire probably needs to be someone who will coordinate between departments and start to solve contract/procurement issues -- are we establishing such a point person?
 - How will existing local community partners that provide youth with green jobs training, including those who are part of our SuccessLink program (Codman Square NDC, Southwest Boston CDC, the Emerald Necklace Conservancy, Speak for the Trees, etc.), be included in the discussions, so that we can create a meaningful career pipeline for Green Jobs? Can we start this summer by providing some additional resources to create a supportive 'connective tissue' for all these green jobs related youth programs?
 - How about involving the national partners -- like the US Forestry Service, American Forests, etc -- whom we have also talked to about best practices for urban forestry specifically?
 - How will the Native and Indigenous communities be included? Often, they are left out of the discussion, but it would be good to involve leaders such as the folks at NAICOB in program design and to ensure that Native and Indigenous folks also benefit from this type of training and job opportunities.

- How are we planning to utilize our vocational school -- Madison Park -- to train students for green jobs we need now, for the next five years of the capital plan, and beyond?
- What is this green job pipeline for -- public or private jobs, or both? We have discussed the fact that it would be good to build up more city worker capacity in various green infrastructure work -- including at Parks, Public Works, and Water & Sewer -- even as we also train people for a private marketplace where we are poised to drive job growth through regulatory action (as with the Carbon Performance Standards). It would also be good to discuss with Public Facilities and OBM where the unrealized capital budget space exists to scale up certain green capital work.

This initiative is in its earliest planning stages, and we are considering all of these questions. We look forward to discussing this with the Council.

- Does the City intend to create a green stormwater infrastructure plan? Cities like New York and Philadelphia have created and are implementing city-wide GSI plans, which they expect to save them money as compared to traditional grey stormwater infrastructure, in terms of reduced flood & storm damage.
 - Can we prioritize green stormwater infrastructure near affordable and public housing communities, and are we working with BWSC and BHA on this? We know that there is a great deal of overlap between flood risk and low income and public housing communities, and such work could also provide the mental health benefits of increased greenspace and reduce the heat island effect and pollution.

Stormwater infrastructure is primarily the responsibility of BWSC. However, Environment works with them, Parks and Recreation, Transportation, and other departments to coordinate plans and projects for green infrastructure in order to address flooding and heat risks and increase access to green space.

- Under Renew Boston Trust, how deep are the retrofits?

It depends on the building. In Phase 1, which had a \$10 million budget, we did “deep dives” in 4 buildings, which included replacing HVAC systems, electrical transformers, lighting, sealing the buildings, variable speed drives, building control systems replacement/upgrades/retrocommissioning, water conservation measures, and so forth. In 10 buildings, we did “light touch” work, which was lighting retrofits, sealing and water conservation measures. We also installed 3 solar arrays.

Phase 2 has a \$20 million budget for work in 31 buildings. It goes deeper into the “light touch” buildings from Phase 1, and includes HVAC replacements/updates, lighting retrofits, sealing the buildings, variable speed drives, building control systems replacement/upgrades/retrocommissioning, and water conservation measures.

Phase 3 has a \$20 million budget, and is currently under development.

- What types of energy and water savings and emissions reductions can we expect to see at each Phase?

The guaranteed savings for Phase 1 are: 2.7 megawatt hours, 50,000 therms of natural gas, 2.5 million gallons of water, and 1.2 million pounds of steam. This translates to first-year savings of \$613,044. It reduces the City's carbon emissions by about 1 percent.

The guaranteed savings for Phase 2 are 1.2 megawatt hours, 62,000 therms of natural gas, 2.1 million gallons of water, and 2400 gallons of fuel oil. This translates into first-year savings of \$436,746. It will lower the City's emissions by about ½ percent.

- As we make these types of retrofits, are we also taking steps to improve the indoor air quality and other components of the indoor environment for those who utilize the building?

We take into account the impact on the buildings' users, both employees and the public. We evaluate the current condition of the building. If we do a retrofit, we ensure that it meets the current design guidelines, which in many cases have changed since the building was built. We want to make the buildings better - more comfortable, safer, and better lit.

- Why exactly is Environment having difficulty attracting qualified candidates? What are the qualifications we are looking for that we can't find? What steps can be taken to diversify hiring?

The recent grade reassignments for the department have created a salary structure that is likely to attract more candidates and retain them longer. As demonstrated by the Department's achievements, we have a highly skilled and motivated team.

- Please discuss the revision of regulations for parking freezes under the Air Pollution Control Commission.

In September 2020, the Commission voted to update the Downtown, South Boston and East Boston parking freeze regulations in order to: strengthen consistency in procedures and criteria for permitting and enforcement; implement an annual renewal requirement and a consistent fee structure across all three freezes; reduce the hearing timeline from 60 to 30 days to allow additional flexibility for the Commission to meet more regularly; and improve language access with translated abutter notices.

- Please discuss the status of Carbon Performance Standard development and formalization for our building stock? I am excited about this and would like to know the updated timeline.

Over the past year, we have worked with experts, stakeholders, and community members to develop proposals for a Carbon Performance Standard, as described in the 2019 Climate Action Plan. We look forward to discussing these ideas with the City Council.

- How is the Clean Air Community Grant program being publicized? Do we expect to receive a lot of applications? How much interest do we have so far?

Grant program launch included a press release, Environment Department newsletter, a social media campaign, and inclusion in the ONS neighborhood newsletters. An email containing a multilingual social media toolkit was sent to 63 community contacts. We have already held two information sessions with Cantonese and Spanish interpretation and offered additional language accommodations. We will continue to promote via social media, speak to neighborhood groups, and hold weekly office hours (Wednesday 3-5pm) throughout the next year.

We are optimistic about applications, though, as of May 6 (1.5 weeks after the launch), we have not received any. We are planning on several funding rounds to ensure we can review and fund a variety of projects.

- Are there plans to monitor the success of these projects in reducing air pollution or carbon emissions and then scaling some of them up? Or hiring businesses to repeat their project in other communities throughout the city?

Yes, applicants are required to highlight key milestones or deliverables. All projects will have progress check-ins. We will also spotlight projects, where appropriate, both during and at the completion of their projects.

Businesses who have previously completed work relevant to the grant's purpose may apply for funding to repeat the project in other communities. Businesses interested in collaborating with others on a potential clean air project may complete our "Partnership Form" to appear on a publically available list of potential partners. This will encourage partnerships with and among local community groups and partners.

- Please discuss where we are in meeting our carbon goals, and how we plan to accelerate to meet our 2030 and 2050 goals.

Boston's emissions decreased by 19 percent between 2005 and 2018, the last year for which we have a complete inventory, which puts us on a track to get close to our original goal (from 2010) of a 25-percent reduction by 2020. In 2018, we were not on track to meet the carbon neutrality goal adopted in 2017. The 2019 Climate Action Plan Update had as its overall purpose the identification of strategies to accelerate emissions reductions in order to meet our new goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. The 18 strategies in the plan include moving to zero net carbon new construction, developing a building emissions performance standards for existing large buildings, launching Community Choice Electricity, implementing Go Boston 2030, expanding access to zero emission vehicles, and advocating for state-level policy changes.

- Please provide a list of the projects that have benefited from Green Bond offerings.

- Phases 1 and 2 of Renew Boston Trust
<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=cm#inbox?projector=1>
- Mitigation of sea-level rise at the Boston Center for Youth and Families Curley Community Center
- Climate resiliency aspects of the Langone Park/Puopolo Playground renovation
- Construction of the New Boston Arts Academy built to LEED Silver standards

Re Landmarks-

- Please provide a budget breakdown for Landmarks specifically -- including number, titles, and salaries of personnel, and non-personnel allocations for its operations.

The Historic Preservation division currently includes the following positions:

Director of Historic Preservation
 Director of Design Review
 Architect
 Senior Preservation Planner
 Preservation Planner
 Assistant Survey Director
 Preservation Assistant
 City Archaeologist
 Archaeology Lab Director

The Mayor's proposed budget would add another Preservation Planner.

- I was pleased to see the addition of one person to help get the new districts up and running; can you speak in detail about their anticipated responsibilities?

This person would staff any new historic districts, assist with study reports and the public designation process for pending landmarks, and support broader historic preservation planning.

- It seems to me that due to inadequate staffing, the BLC not only has a backlog of study reports to complete, but is often unable to be effectively responsive to requests of residents and certainly unable to be proactive and help get treasured buildings landmarked before there's a crisis. It feels as though the pace of development has outstripped the ability of the city's singular preservation agency to protect what it is tasked with protecting, due to a lack of resources.
 - What is the plan for catching up on the backlog of landmark applications?

The City has directed more resources in the past two years to make faster progress on evaluating pending landmarks for further action. Last year, we completed preliminary research for seven properties and are now working on four more. Later this year, we are planning to take full proposals to the Landmarks Commission for public hearings and review. As part of this, we have been streamlining the

process to bring pending landmarks to the next stage of review, which will also help to reduce the backlog.

- My impression is that an applicant can speed the process for their petition by paying for the study report; is this true, and have we thought about the equity implications of leaving landmark applications without financial means behind them at the back of the line?

It is true, and it has happened once. We are concerned about the equity implications of this, which is one reason that the proposed budget includes an investment in historic preservation staff.

- Just last week, we heard about a pending landmark demolished in East Boston. Can we implement a change where demolition of buildings under pending landmark status is forbidden?

We are discussing with Inspectional Services what authority the City might have that can address this kind of event.

- Historical sites are a key part of Boston's tourist draw, and as we pursue the renewal of our tourism sector:
 - Has Landmarks and our historic sites been involved in conversations about the city's plans to re-attract tourists and help drive an economic recovery?

The historic preservation staff have not been involved in these conversations.

- Might this be a good time for a citywide historic building survey and preservation plan, as a one-time expense that would help boost our history-based tourism on a long-term basis?
- Where do conversations stand with the Community Preservation Committee and Treasury about how Landmarks can best collaborate with them to help leverage CPA funds for strategic historic preservation initiatives?

We are having an ongoing conversation with CPA and City A&F to determine how we can accomplish this.

- Can you speak to the full combination of internal and external funds supporting our archaeology work, and to the extent that that work is grant-funded, how are we plan to extend (and expand) that capacity on a permanent basis?

In FY20, we added a full-time archaeologist to our permanent staff. This year, the renovation of the City's Rivermoor building includes the City's Archaeology Center. Our Director of Archaeology thinks that, when it is completed, this investment will likely create for Boston the best municipal archaeology facility in the country.

In addition to internal investments, we are fortunate to have received some major grants. In FY22, we will complete a two-year, \$350,000 accessibility and documentation project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. We will also start up a similar two-year, \$315,000 project on Faneuil Hall funded by Community Preservation funds; the start of this project was delayed by Covid. We have also just received a new \$100,000 grant from Community Preservation that will allow us to deepen our archaeological work involving Native sites on the Harbor Islands.

- As you know, I have a home rule petition pending regarding local landmarking, which we intend to move forward in the coming months. But leaving that aside, what plans do we have to be more equitable about the sites that we landmark, so that we are landmarking sites that represent the diverse history of Boston? What tools or staff are needed to do this more successfully?

We are determined to continue to expand our historic preservation work to neighborhoods that have often been overlooked in the past. In the past several years, we have used annual grants from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to expand our historical surveys in East Boston and Roxbury, including foundational work for a possible architectural conservation district in Highland Park. A city-wide survey such as discussed above would also increase our ability to apply historic preservation principles to all underrepresented areas of the city.

- I have several constituents who were nominated to the Mission Hill Triangle Architectural Conservation District review board, but have not been approved, I believe because we need a larger number of nominees to constitute a board. There are several other area stakeholders who are happy to nominate additional members; can Landmarks work with me to get a more complete set of nominees formally before the Council for approval?

We would be happy to work with you to fill vacant seats on the Mission Hill Commission and on all other commissions.

Councilor Liz Breadon asked:

- Please provide an update on tree planting and the urban forestry project.

Please see Parks and Recreation Department budget.

- In terms of green infrastructure, (rain gardens etc). Is this part of the environment department's work or is it more up to Boston Water and Sewer?

Stormwater infrastructure is primarily the responsibility of BWSC. However, Environment works with them, Parks and Recreation, Transportation, and other departments to coordinate plans and projects for green infrastructure in order to address flooding and heat risks and increase access to green space.

- I'm concerned about hardscape paving over neighborhoods, with people creating parking spaces with asphalt and increasing runoff. What are we doing to increase the use of more permeable surfaces in order to address potential flooding?

For large projects subject to BPDA review, the Environment Department supports the work of the BPDA in developing and implementing its Smart Utility Policy. That policy includes higher requirements for capture of stormwater. For these and other projects, we also have the requirements of the Conservation Commission for wetlands protection and the provisions of the Groundwater Protection Overlay District to maximize permeability. From the other side of the equation, we are working with our partners in the Transportation and the BPDA to reduce the demand for parking spaces.

- Please provide an update on green building codes and where the City is at with them.

Over the past year, we have worked with experts, stakeholders, and community members to develop proposals for a Carbon Performance Standard, as described in the 2019 Climate Action Plan. We look forward to discussing these ideas with the City Council.

Also last year, the BPDA launched their Zero Net Carbon Building Zoning Initiative to strengthen green building zoning requirements to a zero net carbon standard for new construction. Technical analysis and community outreach is currently underway, with groups meeting regularly on standards for low-carbon buildings as well as onsite and offsite renewable energy.

In the summer of 2020 the Department of Neighborhood Development instituted a requirement that all new affordable housing construction funded by the City must meet Carbon Neutral performance standards.

- We've had conversations in the past about cemeteries and whether there are plans to do more sustainable/green burials? Especially given the increase in burial needs over the pandemic, how are we thinking about alternatives as we run out of space?

Please ask Parks and Recreation.

Re Landmarks-

- Re Landmarks, they're at capacity in dealing with backlog on studies of nominations for landmarks status. We should increase staff rather than trying to contract studies out. Can you speak to this?

Please see answers to Councilor Bok's questions.

Councilor Matt O'Malley asked:

- Can you provide an update on acquisition on city land for the purpose of green space, open space and affordable housing (esp. project in Roslindale)?

The Mayor has proposed a \$2 million increase to the capital account for the Climate Resilience Reserve. As you note, in the past year, we have used that fund to purchase two parcels that together will expand the size of and access to the Roslindale Urban Wild and create some affordable housing. That is probably an exceptional circumstance that allows us to address two important goals simultaneously. The Parks and Recreation Department is currently leading a Parcel Purchasing Prioritization initiative that will identify parcels of land that the City may want to acquire to expand green space.

- Please provide an update on the wetlands ordinance. I know we are still in the process of fine tuning the regulations, but can you provide more detail on where we are with that process and implementation.

After the Ordinance was enacted in December 2019, the Conservation Commission separated the development of regulations into three phases. In August 2020, the Commission completed Phase I with the adoption of administrative and procedural regulations. For Phase II, the Commission is developing regulations for Land Subject to Coastal Storm Flowage (LSCSF) (the 100 year floodplain), Isolated Vegetated Wetlands, Vernal Pools, and Vernal Pool Habitat; these draft regulations will be released for public comment and hearings on May 12, 2021. Phase III is just getting started. It will address climate resiliency, Coastal Flood Resilience Zone, Inland Flood Resilience Zone, Extended Riverfront Area, and environmental justice components of the Ordinance.

- Please provide an update on CCE/CCA, which went into effect in February.
 - How many residents opted up to 100% renewable? How many opted down? How many stayed in the default category.

The current customer counts are as follows:

Standard	204,206
Optional Basic	1,873
Optional Green 100	933
Total	207,012

- What do these choices mean in terms of revenue for renewable infrastructure?

We are meeting the renewable goals above the Renewable Portfolio Standard by purchasing Massachusetts Class I Renewable Energy Certificates from non-renewable sources. We are hoping that our purchase will help increase the demand and increase prices, providing an incentive for developers to build additional renewable resources. We are also still seeking a way to participate in the State's Low

Income SMART incentive program, which would provide more incentives to solar developers as well as lower electricity costs for low-income participants.

- Please provide an update on the plastic bag reduction ordinance, especially given the pause last year due to COVID-19.

Due to conditions of the Covid emergency, Mayor Walsh, by executive order, exempted all essential businesses from the requirements of the bag reduction ordinance as of March 24, 2020. Mayor Walsh reimposed all requirements of the bag reduction ordinance as of October 1, 2020.

- Please talk about adherence and plans for net zero carbon construction on municipal buildings. What plans are there to codify the next iteration (e.g. large scale buildings)?

Implementation of net zero carbon new construction for municipal buildings is led by the Public Facilities Department.

Over the past year, we have worked with experts, stakeholders, and community members to develop proposals for a Carbon Performance Standard, as described in the 2019 Climate Action Plan. We look forward to discussing these ideas with the City Council.

- Please provide some updates and details regarding BERDO. Where we are in terms of measuring and managing information and sharing that information? How can it be better publicized? How can we improve adherence to it? This is the most impactful way to reach our climate goals.

The past two years posed some significant obstacles to collecting BERDO data (2019--data-management problems at utilities; 2020--Covid) but we still obtained reports for over 80 percent of the covered building space. This year, we are ahead of last year's pace and hope to be up around the 90 percent mark again. BERDO, in its current form, requires reporting, but it does not require any particular level of performance. For this reason, the Climate Action Plan calls for development of a building performance standard.

- Relating to trash and recycling pickup (and in coordination with Public Works), every year the cost increases. When I started we were getting paid \$5/ton for recycling, and we are now paying \$86/ton. This shows a need to move away from single stream recycling. We should be pushing for compost, textile recycling, and other alternatives.
 - How and when will we have curbside composting?
 - We should consider discussing building our own recycling facility with federal stimulus money.

The Public Works Department, which has responsibility for this program, is considering these issues.

Councilor Julia Mejia asked:

- I'm concerned about the impact of climate change on small businesses. What kinds of work is the City doing to support small businesses to address the impacts of climate change? Are you working on green business initiatives?
 - On Columbia Road and other places, some businesses are being impacted by flooding. How can these businesses impacted by climate change be looped into this work?

We are looking to expand resources that enable small businesses to take climate action. To help them reduce energy costs and carbon emissions, the Mayor's proposed budget includes a new position to expand our capacity in this area. To help them prepare for the effects of climate change, we are filling a grant-funded position that will develop resources for residents and small businesses to assess their vulnerability and prepare. In furtherance of our zero-waste goals, resources for businesses, including toolkits by business type, toolkits by waste type, and case studies. We would welcome hearing from small-business owners on Columbia Road, in Main Streets programs, and elsewhere what kind of help would be most useful.

- A report in 2019 revealed that Chinatown had the worst air quality in MA. Since that report went public, please summarize what efforts the City has made to mitigate this problem.
 - What steps are being taken to improve air quality in Chinatown and throughout the City, and when can residents expect to see improvement?

The major source of the air pollution is vehicles. We are supporting the work of the Transportation Department in its implementation of GoBoston 2030 and the transportation-related strategies of the Climate Action Plan to both reduce traffic and increase the proportion of non-emitting vehicles.

- Has the department done any research about the correlation between violence and heating patterns in the City? Are there opportunities to address this through cooling spaces or other environmental solutions?

We have not done any research of this kind, but are aware of some studies on this topic. The current Heat Planning initiative is looking to develop both short-term and long-term heat stress across the city.

- Please provide an update on Melnea Cass 2.0 and street trees.

Please refer this question to the Transportation Department.

- Is the dept looking at ways to support green building at Madison Park?
 - What plans are there to educate and engage youth, and support youth internships in green building?

This will be considered as part of the green jobs training initiative, now under development.

- What else can we do to better educate the community around environmental issues (e.g. composting)? In other countries composting is a way of life, but it seems to be difficult to

incorporate for people here. What opportunities exist to educate the public about steps they can take to improve their footprint, and how can we be intentional with PSA campaigns?

We use all of our communications channels and work with many community groups to share with residents of Boston our environmental goals and programs. We welcome the Council's support in these efforts.

- What does an environmental green building look like? Similar to with BuildBPS, are there any talks about rebuilding BHA with a green lens? If so, what does the dollar amount look like for this?

Although we have a particular focus on carbon-neutral buildings right now, there are many aspects to a "green" building: water conservation, safety in emergencies, indoor air quality--not to mention other benefits a good building brings to a community. We have been talking with BHA about ways to support their efforts to reduce carbon emissions from their buildings, increase recycling, and other good practices.

Councilor Andrea Campbell:

- What is the City's approach to conserving privately owned lands/urban wilds? How are sites researched, valued, approached, and reviewed with an equity lens?

The Parks and Recreation Department can address how privately owned open space is incorporated into the City's Open Space Plan.

- What do we currently have in place to oversee waterfront and river sustainability and access projects?

The BPDA and the Environment Department have worked together to coordinate and mutually strengthen our overlapping responsibilities for waterfront planning, climate planning, project review, and wetlands protection.

- How will the new investments in climate ready boston be directed?

As we have moved from a focus on climate planning to a focus on climate-plan implementation, the resolution of this question is continuing to evolve. Mayor Janey, as indicated by the investments in the proposed budget, is advancing implementation with an emphasis on equity and climate justice.

- The new heat resilience study, will that be citywide?

Yes. It has an initial focus on some EJ communities, but will expand to develop actions that can be implemented across the city.

Re Landmarks-

- Regarding the Landmarks Commission, how are we expanding capacity to address the backlog and have the commission play a role earlier on in development?

Please see answers to Councilor Bok's questions on historic preservation.

Councilor Michael Flaherty asked:

- It's long overdue, whether through Parks, Environment, or Public Works, for the City to fund its own, in-house tree pruning division, with up to date technology and equipment. It is important to plant trees, but we also need to take care of our existing trees. We have some arborists, but not enough.
 - How much have we spent contracting out tree pruning, trimming and planting services?

Please refer to Parks and Recreation budget.

- Environment is received a \$1.2M increase, \$1M of which is to work with organizations to develop job training programs, especially in green industries. Please provide more detail about what these programs will look like.

This initiative is in its earliest planning stages. We look forward to discussing this with the Council.

- Reiterating, in support of a point made by the Chair at the Law Department hearing, the Groundwater Trust needs more support from the City, especially legal.

Re Landmarks-

- Re Landmarks, the time has come to give them the resources they need to be on the front end of development. Many residents reach out early in the process, but the Commission's hands are often tied until it's almost too late to save a space. I would like to see more resources to get BLC involved earlier in these processes.

We welcome the Council's support for a robust role of the historic preservation staff in these processes.

Councilor Michelle Wu asked:

- The operating budget is set to increase by \$1.2 million, including a \$1 million initiative to work with organizations in the City to develop job training programs in the renewable energy and green infrastructure industries. What staff will be dedicated to managing this program? What funding, if any, will be provided through collaboration with City departments like OWD?

This initiative is in its earliest planning stages, and we are considering all of these questions. We look forward to discussing this with the Council.

- The budget includes an annual authorization of \$50,000 for the Conservation Commission to secure outside consultants to aid in the review of proposed projects. What outside consultants were contracted to review the proposed Eversource substation in East Boston, and what were their findings?

We did not engage outside consultants in review of this project.

Councilor Ricardo Arroyo asked:

- There seem to be quite a few external funding sources that have been discontinued in FY22: Can the department explain why many of these grants have been discontinued in FY22?

The Environment Department is active in pursuing grant opportunities from the State and the Federal government as well as from foundations and other sources. It is normal for old grants to expire and new ones to appear. If there are questions about specific grants or other external sources, we would be happy to answer them.

- For FY22, there is an external funds allocation for the MVP Heat Resilience Study: can you talk a bit more about that? How long will the study last, how is it conducted, and when can we expect to see the results?

The Heat Resilience Study is funded by a grant from the State's Municipal Vulnerability Program. It is now underway and is likely to finish around the end of the year.

- Why are there no planned expenditures for the Climate Resilience Reserve for FY22?

The Resilience Reserve can be used as need and opportunity arise. We have not yet determined any specific uses for it in FY22.

- How is the department working to make sure their employees are reflective of the City of Boston? How is the department working to diversify its workforce?

The Environment Department uses all internal City resources, reaches out to professional associations with diverse membership and to local organizations, and uses its own extensive network to bring our employment opportunities to the attention of as wide an audience as possible.

- Can the department talk a little about the impact that the pandemic has had on the environment in Boston?

Although the pandemic -- by lowering economic activity, including traffic -- has probably lowered the City's carbon emissions and reduced air pollution, these are not improvements we can take for granted. We still need to push forward our environmental initiatives and work with residents and businesses across the city to expand them.

A major lesson of the pandemic has been the unequal effect of Covid on different groups within the City. The City's Climate Ready Boston report in 2016 mapped how different parts of Boston would be affected by climate change. From that, we know that the groups most severely affected by Covid are the same groups that are most likely to be severely affected by climate change, due to exposure or to lack of resources to take action.

- Out of 17 contracts, none are SLBE, MBE, or WBEs: How does the department plan to diversify its contracts?

The Environment Department is working closely with the Equity and Inclusion Office to ensure that our contracting opportunities are made available to all. This includes ensuring that our RFPs and other procurements are structured in a way that maximizes such opportunities.