

# BERDO REVIEW BOARD MEETING

*October 27, 2025*



# BERDO REVIEW BOARD



**Jessica Boatright**  
*Board Chair*



**Gabriela Coletta Zapata**  
*City Councilor*



**Stephen Ellis**  
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*Board Member*



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*Board Member*



**Gail Latimore**  
*Board Member*



**Reginald Stovell Jr.**  
*Board Member*

# City of Boston Staff



**Hannah  
Payne**

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*Director,  
Carbon Neutrality*



**Diana  
Vasquez**

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*BERDO Review Board  
Manager*



**Dima  
Moujahed**

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*Building Decarb  
Advisor*



**Claudia  
Diezmartinez, Ph.D.**

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*Policy and Equity  
Advisor*



**Zengel  
"Ziggy" Chin**

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*BERDO Review Board  
Assistant*

# Agenda

*Today's Meeting*



## Public Meeting

- 1. Update on the BERDO Building Decarbonization Advisor Program*
- 2. Discussion and Update on BERDO Regulations*
- 3. Approval of Meeting Minutes*
- 4. Administrative Updates*
- 5. Adjournment*

The background of the slide is a dark blue wireframe illustration of a city skyline, viewed from an elevated perspective. The buildings are represented by white and light blue lines, creating a complex geometric pattern of rectangles and polygons. A semi-transparent dark blue horizontal band runs across the middle of the image, serving as a backdrop for the text.

# Building Decarbonization Advisor Program

*Update*



# BUILDING DECARBONIZATION IS COMPLICATED!

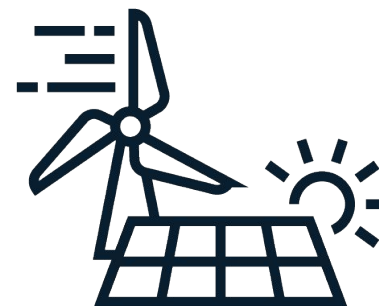
## Electrification barriers

- Many of Boston's old building stock runs on fossil fuels
- Cost of electrification and electricity is higher
- Electric grid does not have the capacity
- Not all buildings can: Hospitals, Manufacturing, Food



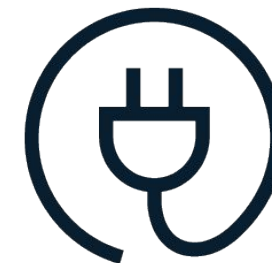
## Renewable energy scarcity

- Not much space for solar panels on rooftops
- Renewable energy development is expensive in MA



## Building owner hesitation

- Deferred maintenance in buildings
- Lack of funding
- Lack of technical knowledge and access to resources (especially language)



# PROGRAM GOALS



**Advance climate goals**



**Reduce energy burdens and greenhouse gas emissions**



**Support under-resourced building owners**

# BUILDING DECARBONIZATION ADVISOR PROGRAM



## Program Services



### Decarbonization Planning (Zero-Over-Time plans)\*

- Phases electrification, energy efficiency upgrades, renewable energy in line with capital planning and Mass Save incentives



### Financial Assistance

- Gap funding to advance specific building decarbonization projects for additional assessments, engineering and design studies, and/or energy efficient equipment purchases

\* Learn more about Decarbonization Planning [here](#)



# \$1,659,990 IN TOTAL FUNDING

From 3 sources

\$ Amount	Services Provided	Funding Source
\$ 659,990	Decarbonization Planning (Zero-Over-Time plans)	U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Conservation Block Grant (EECBG)
\$ 500,000		Equitable Emissions Investment Fund (EEIF)
\$ 500,000	Engineering and design studies, and/or energy efficient equipment purchases	American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

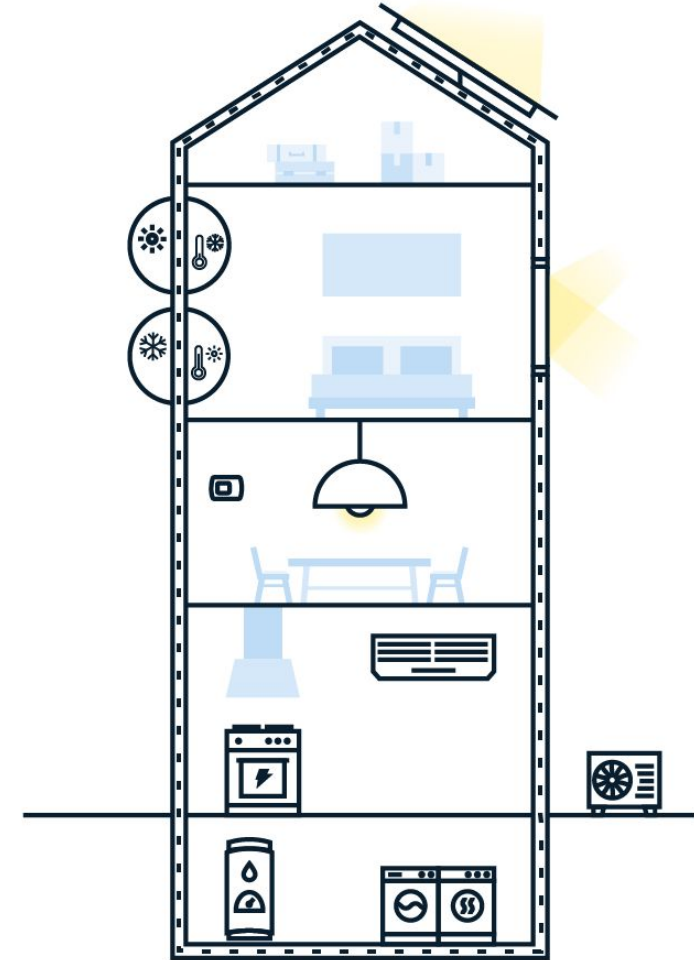
# WHO THE PROGRAM SUPPORTS

## Residential Buildings (15+ units)

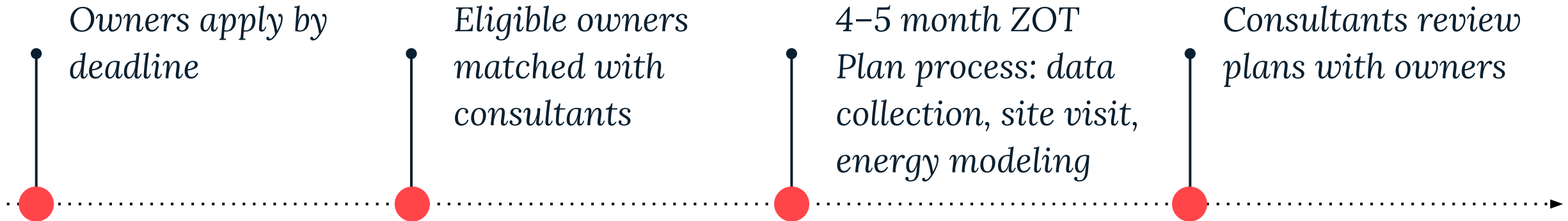
- In Environmental Justice neighborhoods
- Section 8 tenants or below-market rents
- Most residents earning  $\leq 80\%$  AMI
- Deed-restricted affordable housing
- Self managed condos with low HOA fees

## Non-Residential or Mixed-Use (20,000+ sq ft)

- In Environmental Justice neighborhoods
- Small business or nonprofit



# HOW IT WORKS



## 4 Building Science firms contracted through 2027:

- New Ecology
- GreenerU
- Thornton Tomasetti
- Jaros, Baum & Bolles

# STATUS & PARTICIPANTS

## Cohort 1 (February - June 2025)

- 18 building owners served
- \$210,370 federal grant spent
- \$104,150 in ARPA funding spent

## ➤ Currently in Cohort 2 (June - October 2025)

- 13 building owners
- \$177,100 anticipated federal grant spend
- Anticipate funding ~5-8 deep energy assessments with ARPA funds this time

## Cohort 3 (December - May 2026)

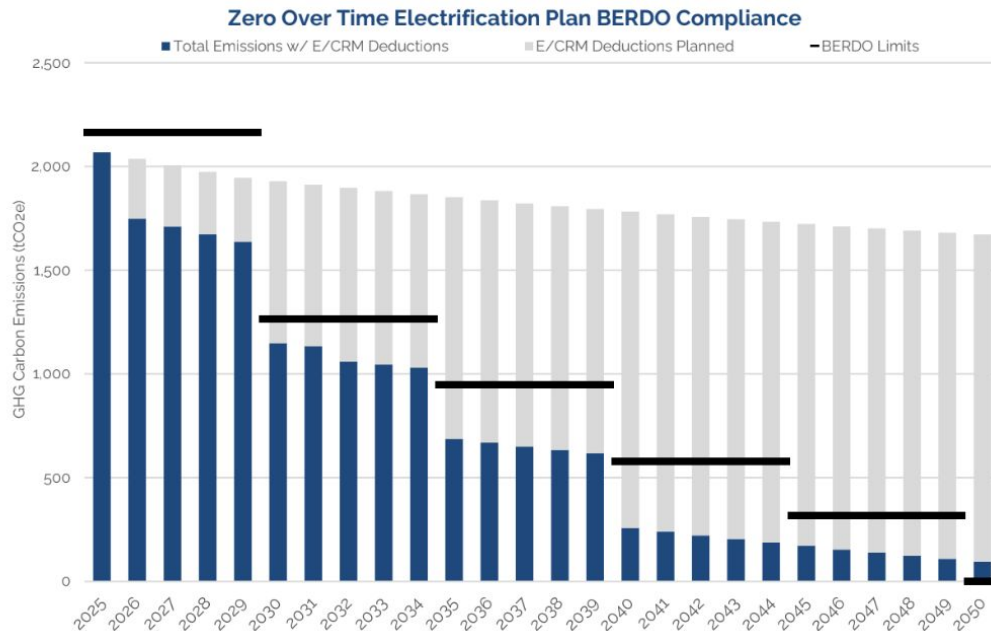
- [Application](#) is open until December 1st!
- \$272,520 EECBG funding remaining
- \$500,000 EEIF funding remaining

## Cohort 1 Building Owners:

- Archdiocese of Boston
- The Boston Home
- Catholic Memorial School
- Central Boston Elder Services
- Viviendas
- Methunion Manor Coop
- Historic Riviera
- Centre Creighton
- Pondview JP LP
- Madison Park
- Commonwealth Land Trust
- Mary Chiappa
- New Peterborough
- New Amiff
- Covenant House
- 2Life Leventhal
- Fenway CDC
- Beacon Communities
- Cruz Companies
- Kenmore Abbey Preservation
- Franklin Preservation Associates

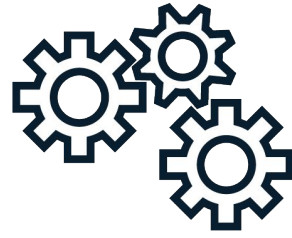
# ZOT PLAN SNIPPET

- Reports will detail the current state of building equipment and envelope.
- List recommendations for electrification and retrofits over the next 25 years, in line with BERDO compliance periods.



	Current State	Electrification
Summary	Gas furnaces for space heating, wall-sleeve & split-system A/C units for cooling, Gas water heaters with storage for DHW	Packaged HPs for heating and cooling, Electric Water Heater with Storage Tank for DHW
Space Heating	Gas Furnaces & Mini-Splits (Laundry)	Packaged Terminal Heat Pumps
Space Cooling	Wall-sleeve & Split-system A/C Units	
DHW	Gas Water Heaters	Electric Water Heater with Storage Tank
Cooking	Electric Stove	-
Laundry	Gas Dryers	Electric Dryers
Windows	Double-Paneled	Triple-Paneled
Walls	~3.5" (~R-10) Fiberglass Batt Insulation	Weatherize where feasible
Roof	Unknown	Add insulation as feasible
Renewable Energy	-	Rooftop Solar Arrays - Estimated 989 kW System

# CHALLENGES



- Many buildings have aging, inefficient envelopes with **costly upgrade needs**
- **Building electrification is challenging** due to building capacity and grid interconnection
- Envelope improvements have long payback periods but are **often value-engineered out**
- Some owners recently installed new gas boilers, **missing chance to electrify**
- Decentralized systems shift heating/cooling **costs to tenants**
- Most **owners lack capital funds** and rely on incentives, which may still fall short
- Wide variation in documentation makes **consistent analysis difficult**

# OPPORTUNITIES



- **Equitable support for all owners**, regardless of prior decarbonization efforts
- **Tailored guidance** across energy sources, owner types, and building typologies
- **Control system upgrades** are a low-cost, high-impact option with **quick payback**
- **Decentralized heat pumps** offer space-saving solutions for multifamily buildings
- **Domestic hot water electrification** feasible due to central location in buildings
- **Partial electrification** with fossil fuel back-up is **more financially and technically** attractive to building owners as they phase their decarbonization work
- **~100 buildings in the next 3 years**

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# Board Q&A

*BDAP Update*



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# **BERDO Regulations and Next Steps for 2025 Emissions Compliance Support**

*Discussion and Update*



# Key Changes Impacting Building Owners Next Year



## Third-Party Verification

- 2025 BERDO buildings will be required to provide third-party verification in 2026, but **only** for 2025 calendar year data.
- 2030 buildings will **not** be required to provide third-party verification in 2026, except for buildings whose first reporting year is 2026.

VERIFICATION YEAR	2025 BUILDINGS	2030 BUILDINGS
First reporting year	Yes, for the previous calendar year data	Yes, for the previous calendar year data
2026	Yes, for 2025 calendar year data	No, unless 2026 is your first year reporting
2031	Yes, for 2026 - 2030 calendar year data	Yes, for 2030 calendar year data
2036	Yes, for 2031 - 2035 calendar year data	
2041	Yes, for 2036 - 2040 calendar year data	
2046	Yes, for 2041 - 2045 calendar year data	
2051	Yes, for 2046 - 2050 calendar year data	

# Key Changes Impacting Building Owners Next Year



## Flexibility Measures

- Application deadlines for flexibility measures have been extended, benefitting owners 2026 onwards.
- Application deadlines for flexibility measures can now be extended by the Review Board. **This applies to 2025!**
- Building owners can request to extend the BERDO Review Board's voting timelines for all flexibility measures.
- It is no longer required to record decisions related to flexibility measures in the Registry of Deeds for any flexibility measures.

## Exemptions for Solar Requirements

- If a building receives net metering credits from a solar system located outside Boston and that started operations in or after 2024 **due to extenuating circumstances, building owners may request an exemption from the BERDO Review Board** so that you can utilize said solar net metering credits for emissions compliance.
  - *Hardship Compliance Plans are no longer required to request such exemptions.*
  - *Stay tuned for more details on this exemption request process.*

# Next Steps

- We recommend the Review Board considers voting to **extend 2025 flexibility measure application deadlines** and consider **solutions to manage volume of applications** for next year.
  - 2025 flexibility measures approved to date:
    - 35 Building Portfolios (24 under Pathway 1, 8 under Pathway 2, 3 under Pathway 3)
    - 3 Individual Compliance Schedules (2 for individual buildings, 1 for a Building Portfolio)
    - 1 Long-term Hardship Compliance Plan
    - 0 Short-term Hardship Compliance Plans

# Barriers to applying for flexibility measures

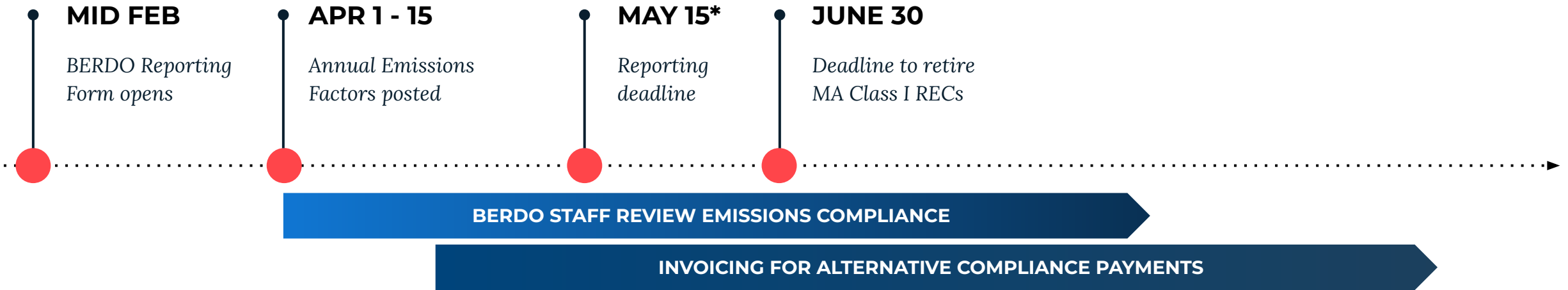
## All flexibility measures

- Overall awareness of BERDO and emissions compliance options
- Deadlines have passed for 2025
- Confusion about eligibility criteria for different flexibility measures
- Limited resources to hire consultant to prepare applications
- Barriers to contact certain building owners

## Hardship Compliance Plans

- Complex and lengthy application process, even for short-term HCP.
- Difficulty identifying which eligible hardship is applicable
- Difficulty identifying relevant documentation to demonstrate the existence of circumstances and characteristics that may lead to an eligible hardship under BERDO
- Difficulty proposing custom relief
- Need for heavy hand holding from BERDO staff and multiple rounds of review (applicants may take up to a year to achieve a complete application)

# Emissions compliance timeline



- Several building owners may not learn about their emissions compliance status until the **spring of 2026**.
  - We expect that at that point, some building owners will realize they needed **flexibility measures** to come into compliance for 2025.
  - **Building Portfolios** and **short-term Hardship Compliance Plans** are a good fit to help several buildings back come into compliance and take time for long-term planning.

# Straw Proposals for Potential Solutions

## 1) Extend application deadlines

- We propose that the Review Board considers to extend the deadline for 2025 flexibility measures to **September 1, 2026**.

## 2) Fast-track simple Building Portfolio applications

- We propose that the Review Board considers delegating to the Environment Department the approval of Pathway 0 and Pathway 1.
  - *All Pathway 0 Buildings Portfolios must be approved if application is complete.*
  - *Most Building Portfolios fall under Pathway 1, but approval is only based on whether the applicant meets the eligibility criteria.*

## 3) Create a streamlined short-term HCP application “package” for **key equity priority cases**

- BERDO staff will propose to the Review Board a simplified version of the short-term HCP application package, featuring:
  - Predetermined type of relief in exchange for predetermined special conditions that ensure building owners start planning for long-term emissions compliance as soon as possible and demonstrate good faith efforts
  - Predetermined eligibility criteria\* for streamlined pathway
  - Checklist of supporting documentation.

\*Building owners who are not eligible for this streamlined short-term HCP could still apply for a regular short-term HCP, where the applicant must propose their own customized relief, evidence of hardship, and special conditions.

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# Board Q&A

*BERDO Regulations*





# Approval of Meeting Minutes

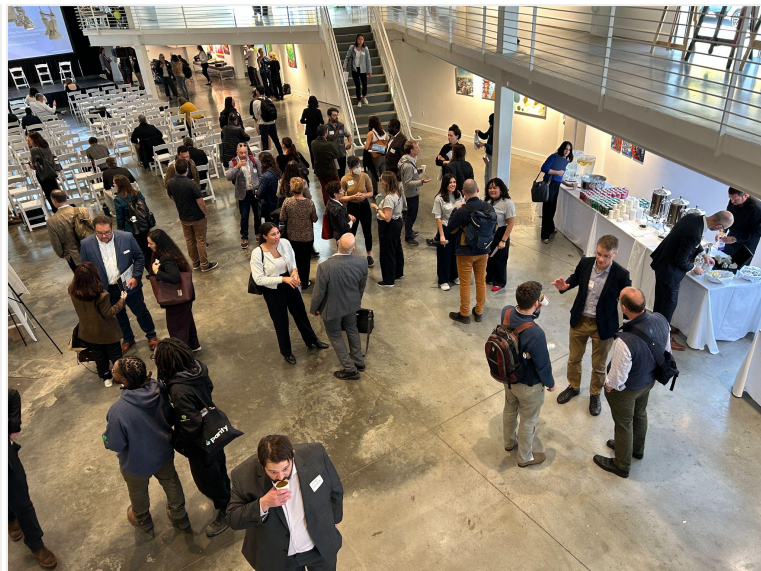
*Board votes on approving previous meeting's minutes*

# Administrative Updates

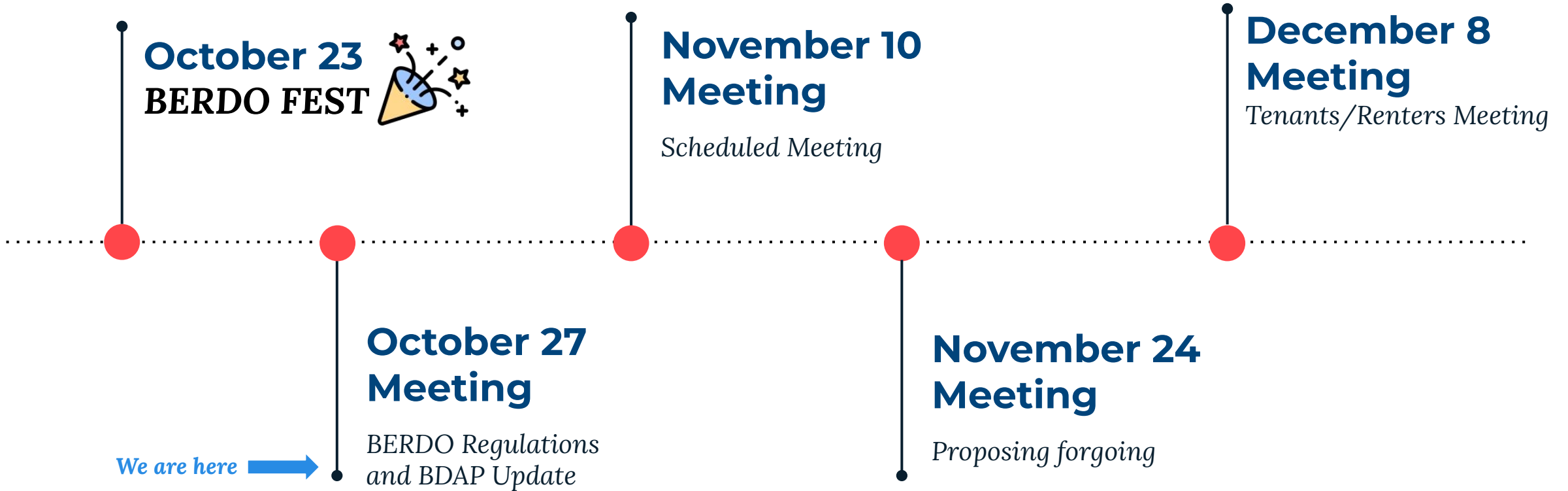
*Staff presents administrative updates*

# BERDO FEST

*at a glance*



# Review Board Upcoming Timeline





# Updated Language on Portfolio Applications

*Narrative Question (for applications that trigger the need to make an emissions standard compliance plan)*

## Based on Feedback from the Board, the following language has been added

- *If applicable, any preliminary plans to inform and engage tenants in the development of the Emissions standard compliance plan. **Information on how you currently engage your tenants regarding decarbonization projects and any plans you have to engage residents on larger projects.***
- ***Please provide any information regarding preliminary thoughts on sequencing of projects. Include what you take into account when assessing which projects are completed first.***

## Retitled the narrative in application as the following:

- *Preliminary Compliance Plan Narrative*
  - *Aim to make the intention of the narrative more clear.*

Preliminary Compliance Plan Narrative

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Please provide a narrative of any existing plans to achieve compliance across the proposed Building Portfolio. Your narrative should include the following:

- Any anticipated Building energy audits, weatherization projects, building retrofits, on-site renewable energy projects, capital improvements, or other emission reductions efforts that may be implemented in the Building Portfolio in the near term. Where feasible, please provide information at the Building level.
- Any recent energy efficiency or decarbonization projects within the Building Portfolio that you would like to describe.
- Any energy efficiency or building decarbonization assessments or best practices integrated into ongoing processes such as routine maintenance work, appliance and heating system replacements and upgrades, or major building modifications. Where applicable, please specify the Building(s) where any such best practices are in place.
- Any preliminary strategies for developing your Emissions standard compliance Plan.
- If applicable, any preliminary plans to inform and engage tenants in the development of the Emissions standard compliance plan. Information on how you currently engage your tenants regarding decarbonization projects and any plans you have to engage residents on larger projects.
- Please provide any information regarding preliminary thoughts on sequencing of projects. Include what you take into account when assessing which projects are completed first.

# Board Questions

*Admin Updates*



# Adjourn

Thank you! A recording and slide deck for this meeting will be available at [boston.gov/berdo-review-board](https://boston.gov/berdo-review-board).

