

Waterways: Connecting Residents of Roxbury and Dorchester to Boston's Waterfront



In 2018 with support from the Barr Foundation, The American City Coalition (TACC) launched Waterways, an equity initiative to increase access and utilization of Boston's waterfront for recreation, culture, and employment.



Initially, Waterways aimed to identify barriers to access and catalyze sustained engagement so that more Roxbury and Dorchester residents are invested in and feel connected to the waterfront.

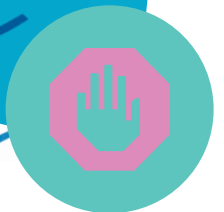
Ultimately, the goal is to give voice to a broader group of residents from Roxbury and Dorchester to impact programs, policies, and accessibility so that as the waterfront continues to evolve, it does so more equitably with the needs and interests of the Roxbury and Dorchester communities actively considered and implemented.

Between January 2018 and June 2019 and in partnership with Kelley Chunn & Associates and Denterlein, TACC collaborated with residents of public and subsidized housing in Roxbury and Dorchester and community groups to document resident-identified barriers and resident-identified solutions to accessing and utilizing Boston's waterfront. The project took a "doing is planning" approach; multi-generational family/friends groups engaged in activities (waterfront trips, neighborhood events) and participated in formal data collection (focus groups, pre- and post-surveys, data walks). See the reverse side of this document for a summary of these resident-identified barriers and resident-identified solutions.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN CITY COALITION (TACC)

TACC is a Roxbury-based 501(c)(3) organization that advances effective multi-sector and multi-stakeholder collaborations to focus investments and resources on community-identified needs and opportunities; these equity initiatives increase collective impact and result in systems-level change that actively thwarts the status quo. One such initiative is Waterways: Connecting Residents of Roxbury and Dorchester to Boston's Waterfront.

Questions/Additional Information: Contact TACC at waterways@tamcc.org or 857.308.3012.



Resident-Identified Barriers and Resident-Identified Solutions to Accessing Boston's Waterfront



Familiarity

Unaware of programs

- Bring waterfront resources/ programs into the neighborhoods
- Advertising/cross-promotion/ outreach in neighborhoods/ to new networks
- Giveaways that share additional information on free programs/listserves
- Block party toolkit (for residents to advocate for the waterfront)

Don't know the area

- Maps that show the relationship between the waterfront and neighborhoods
- Know before you go information sheets
- Pre-visit videos
- Clearly defined meeting place for travel and check-in
- Provide street address for program locations
- Group trips with staff

Language exclusion

- Multilingual materials including advertising
- Multilingual staff
- Translation/interpretation
- Multilingual signage at programs

Unaware of public amenities and rights to the waterfront

- Walking tours of area (self-guided and/or guided)
- Maps showing locations of public restrooms/other amenities
- Handouts/conversations/ booths to share information about rights to the waterfront (Chapter 91, Facilities of Public Accommodation)
- Promote Harborwalk and amenities search tool (bostonharborwalk.org)

Need for multi-generational programming/ activities

- Family programs
- Multiple activities that meet the needs/interests of different age groups at the same program
- Combine on-land and on-the-water activities
- Community events on the waterfront
- Cultural events on the waterfront



Affordability

Utilization of free and reduced cost programs

- Promote EBT Card to Culture/BPL Museum Passes
- Free tickets to museums/activities
- Add participants to waterfront listserves

Food

- Free food
- Reduced cost food
- Share location of grills/picnic areas

Transportation

- Free private shuttle to select programs
- MBTA passes
- Partner (nonprofit/corporate) for private bus service
- BlueBike passes/group ride to waterfront with leader

Retail

- Affordable retail options
- Bring neighborhood businesses to the waterfront



Transportation

Don't know how to get to the waterfront

- Detailed directions from neighborhoods to waterfront
- Contact person for questions/planning

Distance from home/travel time

- Private shuttle for select programs
- Location of programs (locate near transit lines)

Parking

- Reduced cost parking passes
- Programming on Sundays (parking free)



Unwelcoming

Prior experiences with discrimination/racism

- New experiences
- Conversations about race/ethnicity and the waterfront
- Transparency

Lack of diversity

- Group trips
- Intentional outreach to communities of color

Public spaces feel exclusive

- Share an inclusive history of the waterfront and people over time
- Information booths/touchpoints
- Resident waterfront ambassadors/ guides
- Acknowledge how space is demarcated for others

Lack of amenities for longer length of stay

- Add or highlight location of grills in public spaces
- Shade
- Water bottle fill-up
- Public restrooms with changing stations



Personal Reasons

Fear of the water

- Combine on-land and on-the-water activities

Unable to swim

- Publicize swimming lessons
- Share water safety resources

Programs not ADA compliant

- Inclusive programs for all abilities

Too busy

Information collected by TACC from 468 Roxbury and Dorchester residents in focus groups (71), through surveys (184), and at data walks (213) between January 2018 and June 2019. Published July 2019.