

Executive Summary

Harvard University and its subsidiaries, including the Harvard Allston Land Company (HALC), own one-third of all land located in Boston's Allston neighborhood. It is the single largest landholder in Allston-Brighton. Given its landholdings, Harvard has expressed its intent to develop Allston and Brighton on a scale equivalent to that of the Seaport or Suffolk Downs districts.

Given the scale of this development, the Coalition for a Just Allston + Brighton (CJAB) fears the replication of the Seaport in Allston and Brighton, with all its attendant issues — unaffordable, exclusionary housing; lack of opportunity for local businesses; traffic congestion; and lack of resilience in the face of our climate crisis. More specifically, we fear that Harvard will reproduce Boston's existing economic and racial segregation in the construction of this new neighborhood.

To actively prevent the reproduction of such exclusionary conditions, the Coalition seeks a range of expansive, binding commitments from Harvard, HALC and its associated development partners in order to ensure the creation of an equitable and inclusive community. With Harvard's commitment to appropriate measures, we support the development of a vibrant community that combines dense housing, lab and office space, green space, significantly enhanced public transportation, and locally owned small businesses. Significantly, this community must be designed to meet the challenges of the climate crisis we face.

Ultimately, the Coalition seeks a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship between Harvard, Allston, Brighton and the City of Boston in the creation of this new community.

With a FY2021 endowment of \$53.2 billion, Harvard is the wealthiest university in the world.¹ As the largest landholder in our neighborhood, the Coalition recognizes that we cannot address Allston-Brighton's housing, mobility and sustainability related issues without significant commitments from Harvard, HALC and its development partners.

We ask Harvard and HALC to make commitments to Allston, Brighton and all Boston residents in the following areas:

- **Community outreach:** Harvard has no existing system through which to conduct robust community outreach and engagement in Allston and Brighton. In collaboration with the Harvard Allston Task Force (HATF) and an outside consulting firm, Harvard and HALC must establish a robust system for community outreach in Allston and Brighton that utilizes active strategies to engage with the neighborhood's diverse population. This outreach system must seek to minimize barriers to participation and must partner with and support neighborhood organizations in order to expand engagement.
- **Comprehensive planning:** Current development of Harvard-owned land in Allston and Brighton is approached utilizing a piecemeal strategy that is fragmented, opaque, and exhausting for community members. Most significantly, Harvard has continually sought to separate itself from its ground lease projects, placing total responsibility — including community outreach, mitigation and community benefits — on its development partners. The Coalition expects Harvard to take accountability for all projects built on Harvard land in Allston and Brighton, including the three active projects located on Harvard-owned land currently under review by the City (the Harvard Enterprise Research Campus; 176 Lincoln Street; 180 Western Avenue). Harvard must also create a comprehensive framework plan that encompasses all Harvard-owned land intended for development in Allston and Brighton.

¹John S. Rosenberg, "Harvard Endowment Increases \$11.3 Billion to \$53.2 Billion, and University Operations Yield \$283-Million Surplus Despite Pandemic," Harvard Magazine, October 14, 2021, <https://www.harvardmagazine.com/2021/10/harvard-endowment-surges-11-3-billion-university-surplus>.

- **Housing:** Allston, Brighton and Boston at large are confronted by a housing crisis that has become the status quo. Harvard and HALC must ensure that one-third (33%) of all housing units within residential developments built on Harvard-owned land in Allston and Brighton are income-restricted units available at Area Median Incomes ranging from 30% to 80%. To create affordable rental and owner-occupied housing in Allston and Brighton, Harvard, HALC and its development partners should fund the establishment and continuing operation of an Allston-Brighton Community Land Trust.
- **Sustainability:** Given the severity of our climate emergency, the Coalition expects Harvard and HALC to act as a local, national, and world leader in climate action. To start, Harvard, HALC and its development partners must clearly outline how they plan to comply with the City's recently enacted BERDO 2.0 Ordinance. In all climate resiliency efforts, Harvard must use an equity lens.
- **Transit and mobility:** Without proper transportation planning, the scale of Harvard's development in Allston and Brighton will produce a traffic and environmental disaster. While the Coalition realizes that public transportation is the primary responsibility of the Commonwealth and the MBTA, Harvard must develop ambitious plans to significantly reduce reliance on cars as a means of transportation to and from Harvard-owned developments in Allston and Brighton. This letter also contains a detailed discussion of commitments expected from the Commonwealth, MBTA, and the City in regard to transportation improvements.
- **Open/green space:** Harvard and HALC are uniquely positioned to create an extensive network of green space in our community, producing an Emerald Necklace for the 21st century. Harvard must create a comprehensive open space plan for all Harvard-owned land in Allston and Brighton that envisions a robust network of green space connecting the neighborhood to the Charles River. This network must include green stormwater infrastructure and extensive tree canopy.
- **Retail and commercial space:** The Coalition seeks to ensure the inclusion of small-scale, local businesses in all development constructed on Harvard-owned land in Allston and Brighton. We ask Harvard and HALC to designate at least 33% of retail/commercial space included in each development constructed on Harvard-owned land in Allston and Brighton as affordable retail space reserved for small-scale, Boston-based businesses. A specific percentage of this space must be allocated to MBEs and WBEs.
- **Education:** As Harvard continues its expansion in Allston and Brighton, the Coalition expects Harvard to increase its commitment to the Boston Public Schools through the expansion of its existing partnerships with Gardner Pilot Academy (GPA) and the Gardner Adult Education Program and the establishment of a partnership with Brighton High School. In the development of such initiatives, Harvard must work cooperatively with the Wu Administration, the Boston Public Schools, the Boston Teachers Union and school communities.
- **Arts and culture:** Allston and Brighton are home to a vibrant creative community that faces continued displacement due to development pressures, including those created by Harvard and HALC. Harvard should mitigate impacts on this community by implementing such measures as the inclusion of a significant number of income-restricted artist live/work units across its residential developments.
- **Labor and workforce:** Working with the City, the Boston Public Schools and community stakeholders, Harvard, HALC and their development partners need to establish educational and training programs that will enable better access to well-paying jobs within the life sciences industry for Boston residents.

We view this as a decisive moment in the history of both Boston and Allston-Brighton. Much is at stake. Let us work together to construct a community and future that realizes Boston's most noble aspirations. Collectively, we should seize this moment to create a more equitable, affordable, and inclusive Boston.