

# COALITION FOR A JUST ALLSTON ➔ BRIGHTON

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## **Coalition Criticizes Harvard's Expansion Plans**

### **Proposes an Alternative Vision for an Urban Community**

**Boston, Mass., March 15, 2022**—Residents, community and nonprofit leaders, and elected officials in Allston-Brighton say that Harvard University's expansion plans will cause significant harm to their community, replicating the problems and inequities of Boston's Seaport District: unaffordable, exclusionary housing; inadequate public transportation; traffic congestion; lack of resilience in the face of the climate crisis; and limited opportunity for local businesses.

Harvard University owns one-third of the land in Allston, and has considerable landholdings in Brighton, representing approximately 170 acres of potential development.

In a 19-page letter to Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, the **Coalition for a Just Allston + Brighton** (CJAB), comprised of 33 groups and organizations, calls for Harvard and its for-profit development partners to be open with their plans and to form a mutually beneficial partnership with the Allston-Brighton community and the City of Boston.

Seeking commitments from Harvard and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, CJAB's goals include:

- the development of a comprehensive approach to the planning of Harvard's vast landholdings in Allston-Brighton, replacing the university's current piecemeal approach.
- the creation of a significant amount of housing on Harvard land, with the university ensuring that 33% of all housing units built on its land in Allston-Brighton be income-restricted units available at the Area Median Income ranging from 30% to 80%. Harvard and its development partners also should fund the establishment and continuing operation of an Allston-Brighton Community Land Trust to create affordable rental and owner-occupied housing.
- the design of a climate resilient community that meets the challenges of the climate crisis, especially due to the proximity of the Charles River.
- the establishment of an expansive park system that creates a new Emerald Necklace.
- the creation of significantly improved public transportation, including frequent rail service between Brighton Landing, a newly created West Station, and South Station.
- the forging of well-funded and continuing partnerships with the Boston Public Schools.

Harvard's initial step in its massive development in Allston involves the Enterprise Research Campus (ERC), comprising 36 acres, with the first stage involving 14 acres.

CJAB highlights that the ERC will create a significant and continuing profit-generating district for Harvard and Tishman Speyer, with Harvard benefitting economically from land leases linked to for-profit corporations as well as a hotel and conference center. Harvard also realized considerable profits by selecting Tishman Speyer as its corporate partner in the ERC's development. The ERC represents a radical departure from a traditional academic campus.

The group also notes that many of Harvard's actions in Allston-Brighton over several decades have been characterized by secrecy or a lack of meaningful neighborhood input. For example, from 1989 to 1997, Harvard secretly purchased 53.7 acres of land in Allston for \$88 million, using The Beal Companies as a proxy. Harvard has chosen not to respond to letters from the Harvard Allston Task Force, the group representing the Allston-Brighton community in the City planning process related to Harvard's expansion, or it has delayed its responses for several months. Similarly, Harvard has ignored letters from City agencies related to its development plans. For example, the issues raised in a letter from the Boston Parks and Recreation Department concerning the ERC remain unanswered for nearly a year, despite the letter's focus on the opportunity for Harvard and the City to create a second Emerald Necklace on Harvard property in Allston.

"We want a productive partnership with Harvard. While the university repeatedly has stated its desire to forge this kind of partnership, it has not taken steps to realize this desire," said Tony D'Isidoro of the CJAB and the Allston Civic Association. "We have an unprecedented opportunity to create a well-designed urban community. We can't squander this opportunity with yet another urban planning fiasco like the Seaport."

CJAB has secured the support of City Councilor Liz Breadon, State Representative Michael Moran, and State Representative Kevin Honan.

"Working collaboratively with our local elected officials, Harvard, the City of Boston and the Commonwealth, we should seize this moment to create a more equitable, affordable and inclusive Boston," said Cindy Marchando of the CJAB and the Harvard Allston Task Force.

**At 5 p.m. today, CJAB will define its agenda and protest Harvard's flawed expansion plans at Barry's Corner, located at the intersection of North Harvard Street and Western Avenue in Allston.**

For more information on CJAB, go to the website: [cjallbri.com](http://cjallbri.com)

#### **About the Coalition for a Just Allston + Brighton (CJAB)**

Formed in August 2021, CJAB unites Allston-Brighton community groups and nonprofit organizations with their Boston-based counterparts as well as elected officials. Thirty-three groups and organizations have joined CJAB. CJAB was formed in response to Harvard's current and future plans to develop its significant landholdings in Lower Allston and North Brighton. Harvard University and its subsidiaries, including the Harvard Allston Land Company, own approximately 170 acres of land in Allston-Brighton that are available for commercial development.