

WHAT IS A BIG LIFT?

A big lift is a multidecade mega-project that seeks to improve the city to align with its climate and equity goals.

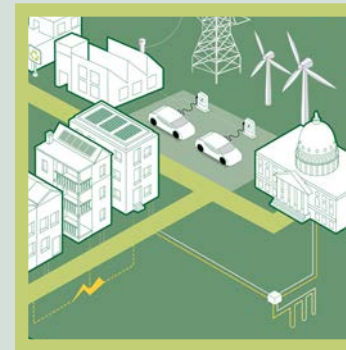
The assessment of outcomes needed to achieve Boston's climate goals identified several common and interlinked challenges. These are depicted at the start of this report (Figure 2, on page 24) and form the basis of what we identify as Boston's "big lifts" for this inaugural progress report.



Big Lift #1

Retrofitting the Small Building Stock

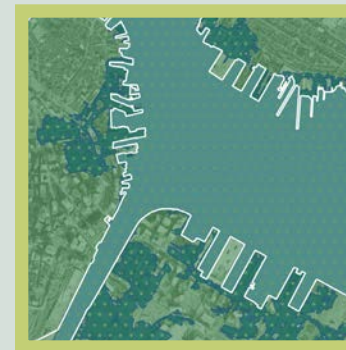
Not only do many small residential buildings need to be electrified, but they also offer opportunities to deploy rooftop solar and improve living conditions.



Big Lift #2

Local Energy Planning for an Electrified City

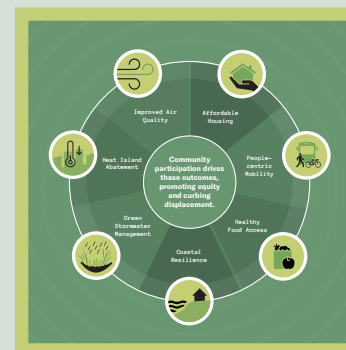
Developing low-carbon, resilient, reliable, and dynamic energy distribution systems requires new planning approaches for modernizing energy infrastructure.



Big Lift #3

Building a Resilient Coastline Through Improved Governance

Challenges in the governance of coastal protection and preparation for extreme weather events call for new frameworks for accelerating resilience investments.



Big Lift #4

Prioritize Reparative Planning for Boston's Frontline Neighborhoods

A century of marginalization based on race, income, and immigration status has given us neighborhoods where housing is inadequate, energy infrastructure is insufficient, residents are unduly exposed to unchecked fossil fuel and waste infrastructure, trees are few, cars are prioritized over people, and infrastructure unable to handle rising seas and intensifying storms.

A big lift requires funding, legislation at state and city levels, increased staff capacity at City Hall, coordination among community organizations, metrics and accountability frameworks, leadership by the private sector, and guiding support of residents. Those combined demands are a tall order, made more challenging by multiple barriers baked into the system (see table next page).

With federal funds starting to flow in and state climate policy starting to shape up, these big lifts are the local actions that are the most pressing and relevant for achieving the outcomes assessed in Part II.

While these actions have not been neglected, they have not received the attention and effort needed to ensure adequate progress on achieving the goals reviewed in Part I.

Here, we give them that attention by summarizing and assessing the challenges that have hindered progress in these areas so far. Each section ends with proposed next steps for making the big lift. More comprehensive evaluations of each big lift are provided in supplemental chapters.



President Joe Biden signs H.R. 5376, the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, into law on August 16, 2022, which brings significant new resources to climate issues.

Bill signing in State Dining Room of the White House. (Source: Cameron Smith/The White House)

Table 3. **Identified barriers to systematic action needed to address climate change**

| Barrier | Affected Outcomes |
|---|--|
| Conflicting interests | Transitioning to low-carbon electricity; electrifying transportation; integrating energy systems; strategic use of fossil and alternative fuels; reducing waste; carbon dioxide removal; protecting shores; neighborhood-based climate justice planning. |
| Contradictions | Transitioning to low-carbon electricity; neighborhood-based climate justice planning. |
| Jurisdictional limits | integrating energy systems; reducing waste; carbon dioxide removal; protecting shores. |
| Funding gap | Electrifying transportation; reducing vehicle miles traveled; integrating energy systems; protecting shores; extreme weather protection; neighborhood-based climate justice planning. |
| Misalignment of goals among policy or political actors | Transitioning to low-carbon electricity; electrifying transportation; extreme weather protection; neighborhood-based climate justice planning. |
| Unintended consequences | Strategic use of fossil and alternative fuels; neighborhood-based climate justice planning. |
| Technical feasibility | Transitioning to low-carbon electricity; strategic use of fossil and alternative fuels; reducing waste; carbon dioxide removal. |
| Knowledge gaps | Reducing vehicle miles traveled; neighborhood-based climate justice planning. |
| Inertia | Transitioning to low-carbon electricity; electrifying transportation; reducing vehicle miles traveled; protecting shores; extreme weather protection. |