



nerej

Boston area mayors sign historic compact committing to DEI standards in real estate development projects

June 02, 2023 - Owners Developers & Managers



Shown (from left) are: Somerville mayor Katjana Ballantyne; Boston chief of planning Arthur Jemison; Cambridge mayor Sumbul Siddiqui; Lynn mayor Jared Nicholson; and Salem acting mayor Bob McCarthy.

Boston, MA Mayors from Cambridge, Lynn, Salem and Somerville joined with leaders from the city of Boston and lieutenant governor Kim Driscoll to sign the Commonwealth Development Compact, committing to historic 25% Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) evaluation criteria in public real estate development projects within their municipalities, as well as groundbreaking DEI

considerations in private real estate projects.

Minority- and women-owned businesses have been severely underrepresented in real estate development, comprising less than 1% of developers nationally and managing less than 1% of real estate assets across the Northeast. According to industry reports, expanding public-private diversity initiatives could create opportunities for close to 1,000 developers of color, resulting in nearly \$700 million in new revenue, and 17,000 new jobs in Massachusetts.

The mayors were joined by leaders from the Civic Action Project, Builders of Color Coalition, the Boston Society for Architecture, and Eastern Bank Foundation for the historic event. By signing the compact, the mayors committed to promote DEI considerations in both public and private real estate development projects in their communities, as part of a pilot project.

Shown is Somerville mayor Katjana Ballantyne signs Commonwealth Development Compact.

The DEI standards can be met through any number of creative ways, including: Contracting with minority- and women-owned businesses, partnering with diverse equity investors, creating space for community use and retail, or creating diverse internships and talent pipelines. Results of this pilot project will be collected, evaluated, and discussed with other municipalities and compact partners.

“Governor Healey and I are proud to support the Commonwealth Development Compact and applaud our partners in local government for committing to this initiative,” said lieutenant governor Driscoll. “As a former mayor, I’ve seen firsthand the positive impact that intentional DEI strategies in real estate can have on our communities. Our administration is committed to partnering with municipalities to increase the representation of minority and women-owned businesses in real estate development across the state.”

“Cambridge is known as an innovation hub, and it is our job to ensure that innovation will extend to the often cloistered field of real estate development,” said Cambridge mayor Siddiqui. “Our development projects must look like our people: diverse, creative and bold. I look forward to all the cities in the compact leading the way toward a more equitable industry.”

“Lynn’s communities of color are a cornerstone of our story and key leaders in our local development,” said mayor Nicholson. “My administration is committed to inclusive growth and equity-focused progress that is beneficial to all our residents. I am proud to sign onto the Commonwealth Development Compact, which will pave the way for the next generation of diverse leaders in development.”

“With our wealth of real estate development opportunities and diverse population, Salem is proud to sign onto the Commonwealth Development Compact,” said Salem acting mayor McCarthy. “I’m

confident the results of this endeavor will lead our neighboring cities and towns to follow suit.”

“Creating and expanding opportunities for minority- and women-owned businesses in Somerville is one of the most important priorities of my administration,” said Somerville mayor Ballantyne. “I am thrilled to join my fellow mayors to sign the Commonwealth Development Compact, which will help create systemic change in our region for historically underserved small business owners.”

“I am excited that the ongoing work of the BPDA will become the standard for this initial cohort of municipalities, and hope that it inspires other cities and towns to join this effort,” said city of Boston chief of planning Arthur Jemison. “We look forward to working with our partner cities moving forward on how we can drive a greater impact toward economic advancement of historically underrepresented populations.”

“As part of our strategic mission to advance the economic inclusion and mobility of small businesses led by people of color and women, we are proud to be the investor and strategy partner in bringing this compact to fruition,” said Nancy Huntington Stager, president & CEO of Eastern Bank Foundation. “We are delighted to have Natalia Urtubey, Eastern Bank Foundation Fellow, leading the efforts with this coalition and look forward to the results and learnings coming from this unprecedented pilot that can serve as an innovative equity model that others can follow.”

New England Real Estate Journal - 17 Accord Park Drive #207, Norwell MA 02061 - (781) 878-4540