ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

20 Accomplishments in 2020

GreenRoots works to achieve environmental justice and greater quality of life through collectiv e action, unity, education and youth leadership across neighborhoods and communities.

This past year was more difficult than any in recent history. We're proud of and grateful for the following accomplishments which helped to make 2020 a little more just, a little more tolerable and on the path to affecting lasting change.

1. EJ Legislation GreenRoots board & staff have been integral in drafting and advocating for environmental justice legislation that was will be voted on favorably by the MA Legislature. EJ Legislation, decades in the making, is awaiting approval by Governor Baker!

2. Expanding Partnerships GreenRoots partnered with dozens of members, volunteers, activists, organizations, elected and appointed officials, businesses, funders and other supporters to advance a community-owned microgrid, EJ legislation, food security, housing stability, public health, climate resilience, and much more. We're grateful to each of you. THANK YOU!

3. #NoEastieSubstation Throughout the year, GreenRoots expanded the movement of residents and allied supporters opposed the non-sensical and unneeded electrical substation in East Boston, increasing burdens on an already overwhelmed EJ population. We will stop the substation!

4. Congressional Support for #NoEastieSubstation GreenRoots led an effort to get congressional, state and local elected officials to stand in opposition to the proposed electrical substation for East Boston. 16 Elected Officials signed a powerful letter; and Sen. Markey hosted a press conference and Congresswoman Pressley attended the EFSB hearing both to articulate strong opposition to the substation.

5. Increased Public Transit We successfully advocated for public transit during the first COVID peak and thereafter, increasing service upwards of 39% among the bus routes serving Chelsea. Before the close of the year, GreenRoots opposed any future service cuts.

6. Dedicated Bus Lane Together with CLF, we successfully won a dedicated bus lane on the Tobin Bridge to reduce transit times into the city for the 111. This lane complements the dedicated bus lane on Broadway in Chelsea's downtown.

7. Strategic Planning In 2020, we completed GreenRoots' 5 Year Strategic Plan calling for greater land sovereignty, energy democracy and racial justice. We've already begun to implement the plan and we're excited to take on even more!

8. Evening on Chelsea Creek Though we couldn't hold our regular, annual celebration on Chelsea Creek with hundreds of people dancing and celebrating, we got creative... and painted a community mural while adhering to COVID safety protocols. The murals are featured at the opening of this email and can be seen at the Chelsea Public Library!

9. Monthly Members Meetings Despite COVID19, GreenRoots never missed a monthly members' meeting, we just went virtual, including our Holiday Gathering and Celebration. In fact, our organizers held regular weekly meetings with a group of Lideres to ensure we continue to build community in the face of COVID.

10. Re-Affirmed Commitment to Language Justice and Racial Justice GreenRoots ensured our meetings - be it a staff, board or member meeting -- provided simultaneous interpretation to ensure language justice and access. Our staff and members marched for Black Lives and provided public comment in support of a DEI Office for the City of Chelsea. And our team launched the beginning of an extensive racial justice learning journey led by Chelsea's own Khalil Saadiq.

11. Community Land Trust This year, we advanced our goals of establishing the first Community Land Trust in Chelsea. We held a day long planning retreat, facilitated by Harry Smith, to gain a clear picture of how we envision bringing the CLT to fruition in 2021. Environmental justice cannot be achieved without land sovereignty!

12. Storm Drain Murals The ECO Youth Crew designed and painted, together with muralist and Chelsea's own Silvia Lopez Chavez, murals along storm drains throughout the city, adding beauty while increasing community education on stopping water pollution.

13. Judie Dyer Park On a balmy January morning, the community came together to celebrate a lifetime of commitment to Chelsea, by naming a neighborhood playground, built with 250 volunteers in 2011, after lifelong resident Judith Dyer.

14. COVID Response In early March, GreenRoots initiated what would become the Chelsea Pandemic Response Team with over 65 days of daily calls and 10 working groups. In East Boston, we helped create and continue to support East Boston Mutual Aid. The work continues today, in partnership with many organizations include Centro Presente, Eastie Farms and Empower East Boston.

15. One Chelsea Fund Together with La Colaborativa, TND, the City and the United Way, GreenRoots co-founded the One Chelsea Fund which raised and disbursed over $1.3m to Chelsea families impacted by COVID19.

16. Farm to Table Together through Gaining Ground in Concord and GreenRoots' Urban Farm in Chelsea, we were able to provide 17,000lbs of locally grown produce to Chelsea and East Boston pop-up food pantries helping to address our communities' food insecurity challenges.

17. City's Food Distribution GreenRoots helped to establish, expand and move indoors Chelsea's Emergency Food Distribution hub. This allowed the city to prepare food boxes for its pantries and many other food pantries in our community. We also provided the financial infrastructure, advancing over $300K, for staffing, box purchases and more.

18. Suffolk Downs GreenRoots played a significant role in establishing the PUEBLO coalition, working to raise the voices and concerns of East Boston residents with regard to the proposed Suffolk Downs development -- a massive project with 10,000 units of new housing + major commercial development. PUEBLO argued for and achieved wins for more affordable housing, language justice and climate resilience.

19. Fighting Displacement GreenRoots convenes a multi-stakeholder roundtable working to advance policies addressing displacement in our community, made more urgent by COVID. During the pandemic, we've continued to strategize; secured a meeting with the Governor and his staff; and continue to advocate for increased resources and support to help the most impacted residents in the state.

20. Hydration, Heat & Health Together with partners at BU School of Public Health, we implemented a study of heat impacts on Chelsea and East Boston residents. And to combat extreme summer heat waves, we installed 6 hydration stations throughout Chelsea with support from local foundations. Now, our recently launched 4-member Health Equity Corps is working to address health disparities in Chelsea.