

MAYOR MICHELLE WU ANNOUNCES WHITE STADIUM LEASE AGREEMENT WITH BOSTON UNITY SOCCER PARTNERS

Project to deliver state-of-the-art facilities for Boston Public Schools students, expanded public access, needed investments in Franklin Park, and a home for Boston's NWSL team

BOSTON - Monday, December 23, 2024 - Mayor Michelle Wu today announced the City of Boston has executed a Lease Agreement and BPS Stadium Usage Agreement with Boston Unity Soccer Partners, paving the way for the largest investment into BPS Athletics and White Stadium since it opened in 1949. This renovation and ongoing lease arrangement will transform the facilities and opportunities for Boston Public School students, Franklin Park lovers, and all community members. The new White Stadium complex will anchor youth sports in Boston with state-of-the-art facilities for multiple sports, as well as modern locker rooms, sports medicine, strength and conditioning for all students, and a much-desired community event space. The project will also host robust community programming; help implement needed park upgrades outlined in the [Franklin Park Action Plan](#); and create a home for Boston's National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) team. The City and Boston Public Schools will retain ownership of the stadium and will have priority in stadium scheduling.

First opened in 1949, White Stadium has been deteriorating for decades, particularly since a fire in the 1990s rendered a large section of the facility unusable, and multiple efforts to kickstart renovations over several decades have fallen through. The City's carefully negotiated plan, shaped and propelled forward by extensive community input, represents the first concrete steps to fix White Stadium in more than 60 years. When completed, White Stadium will be one of three carbon neutral stadiums in the country. Construction is expected to begin in January.

"Delivering excellent education for BPS students includes ensuring the fullest access to sports, arts, and enrichment of every kind across the city. White Stadium is a generational opportunity to anchor citywide youth sports, revitalize community programming, and bolster our beloved, historic Franklin Park—all while creating a home for the City of Champions' newest professional team," said **Mayor Michelle Wu**. "I'm so grateful for all the community members, coaches, students, and park lovers who helped shape this project to reflect the community's dreams for the next generation. Thank you to Boston Unity Soccer Partners for their commitment to our students and community, and their comprehensive investment to make this dream a reality."

"This is an exciting moment for BPS and our student athletes who are so deserving of a world class facility to call home," said **Mary Skipper, Superintendent of Boston Public Schools**. "This major investment by the City and Boston Unity Soccer Partners will have direct and lasting benefits for BPS students who will have access to state-of-the-art facilities where they can study, train and compete. The new White Stadium will also provide us with an opportunity to continue expanding on our storied athletics program. I'm incredibly proud to bring this project another step closer to reality for BPS students and I can't wait to see our teams compete on this exceptional stage."

“We are incredibly proud that our team’s home will be in the heart of the city through this generational public-private-community partnership to revitalize White Stadium,” said **Jennifer Epstein, Controlling Owner of Boston Unity Soccer Partners**. “This transformative milestone enables our club to deliver a lasting, year-round impact for Boston Public School student-athletes while uplifting the surrounding neighborhoods and businesses and providing a world-class facility for our home games. A renewed White Stadium will honor its historic roots while providing an extraordinary fan experience and we are excited to take the pitch at this iconic venue for our inaugural season in 2026.”

“Today marks a historic step forward not just for the future of professional women’s soccer in Boston, but for the entire sports community,” said **NWSL Commissioner Jessica Berman**. “This agreement between the City of Boston and Boston Unity Soccer Partners is a shining example of how sports can serve as a catalyst for innovation and meaningful impact. We are thrilled to see this vision come to life and grateful to Mayor Wu and the countless community voices who have made this possible. This partnership sets a precedent for how public and private collaboration can elevate women’s sports and leave a lasting legacy in our cities.”

The project incorporates comprehensive feedback from neighborhood residents, BPS athletes and coaches, and the Franklin Park community—shared throughout more than 60 public meetings and small group community discussions and more than 900 public comment letters. The project was also vetted by and received approvals from the Boston Civic Design Commission, Zoning Commission, Parks Commission, Landmarks Commission, BPDA Board, and the Boston School Committee.

The financial and operational landlord/tenant arrangement between the City of Boston and Boston Unity Soccer Partners is defined by multiple legally binding documents outlining the public-private partnership to deliver, operate, and maintain the complex:

- **Cooperation Agreement:** Outlines project scope and codifies commitments regarding mitigation, community benefits, and operational details as part of the Article 80 development review approval issued in July 2024.
- **Lease Agreement:** Establishes financial terms and legal obligations for maintenance and operations of the facility.
- **Stadium Usage Agreement:** Codifies responsibilities and usage terms including types of permissible activities, hours of operation, and noise level and lighting mitigation.
- **Work Letter:** Defines the scope of construction and parameters for coordinating construction activities between the two structural halves of the project.
- **BUSP/NWSL/City of Boston Side Letters:** Reflects the team’s, league’s, and City’s commitment to the unique partnership for the Boston Public Schools.

Through these legal agreements, the City of Boston, Boston Unity Soccer, and the NWSL are setting new standards for public benefit.

New or Renovated Amenities

With newly modernized facilities, White Stadium will sustain at least 700 programmable hours annually for BPS, ensuring year-round opportunities for student-athletes:

- Regulation-size, eight-lane track and facilities for track and field for BPS to host state track meets, including new field events such as shot put and pole vault for the first time
- Natural grass field for BPS soccer, end of season football, and other BPS sports teams
- BPS student athlete locker rooms
- BPS strength and conditioning spaces
- BPS sports medicine facilities
- BPS Athletics administrative offices and space for coaching staff
- BPS student lounge spaces for studying
- Community event space to foster academic and social growth and celebrate student achievements or host community events.
- Freshly surfaced basketball courts outside the stadium
- Resurfaced and expanded tennis courts within Franklin Park so BPS can host competitive tennis matches
- Modernized and expanded BPS Athletic equipment storage

For park users and community members, new upgrades will also include investments laid out in the Franklin Park Action Plan:

- Public restrooms and water fountains accessible throughout the year
- Freshly paved and surfaced pathways outside the stadium
- New lighting for enhanced safety and wayfinding outside the stadium
- Stormwater infrastructure to address drainage issues and prevent flooding
- Reopening an acre of green space in the park by removing fencing south of the current stadium that has long closed off public access
- Expanded public offerings and programs in the Grove, connected to the nearby Playstead, Overlook, and future Elma Lewis Playhouse project
- Enhanced seasonal maintenance as Boston Unity Soccer Partners will assist the Parks Department in the Playstead and newly planted meadow areas around the stadium

Financial Terms

Boston Unity Soccer Partners will fund more than half of the construction costs for the new complex, as they will carry out construction of the West Grandstand, public restrooms, NWSL team spaces, scoreboard, stadium lighting, technology system, and the Grove area. The City will carry out construction of the East Grandstand, BPS student athletics spaces, the grass field, and the track. Boston Unity Soccer Partners will be responsible for ongoing operations and maintenance for the team's spaces and all the shared areas of the facility, including the field and track. See table below for a detailed breakdown of construction, maintenance, and usage responsibilities.

Boston Unity Soccer Partners will be responsible for ongoing financial payments to the City:

- **Rent:** \$200,000 annualized first season payment, prorated for the number of months the field will be operational; \$400,000 annualized rent, in monthly payments starting in the second season, and escalating by 3% each year afterwards. Should the lease be

extended beyond the first 10-year term, the base rent will increase by either 3% or the average annual increase in CPI over the last ten years, whichever is larger, with the 3% annual escalator continuing after the first year of the extension term.

- **Revenue-Sharing:** 10% of in-stadium advertising revenues (except field naming rights revenue), 10% of field naming rights revenue, 3% of concessions revenue. The City reserves the right to pursue potential additional sponsorships or revenues exclusive to the City's areas as well.
- **Operations and Maintenance Reserve Fund:** each quarter, 40% of in-stadium advertising revenues (except field naming rights revenue), 15% of field naming rights revenues, and 5% of concessions revenues will be deposited into an O&M Reserve Fund and used for such costs, but each year when the amount of reserves in the fund has been built up to 50% of the anticipated annual operations and maintenance costs, additional funds collected on this basis will be split 50%/50% between the City and BUSP as additional revenue sharing.

BUSP will also provide financial safeguards against potential project risks:

- Prior to demolition, BUSP will fund a **\$25 million Construction Escrow Account** that is restricted exclusively to fund direct construction costs on the site and requires City approval of expenditures. The escrow account cannot be reduced below \$10 million until total project financing is secured.
- BUSP is subject to a **\$45 million Pre-financing Guaranty**, including escrowed funds, such that if BUSP fails to secure total project financing or cannot advance the renovation, the City will have significant extra resources to renovate White Stadium.
- After BUSP secures project financing, subject to confirmation by the City, the team is contractually bound by a **Completion Guaranty** to complete all renovations outlined.

Community Benefits

BUSP will direct resources and investments into local community priorities:

- **Community Annual Fund:** an annual contribution of \$500,000 in the first year, escalating by 3% annually, to be distributed to local organizations and initiatives
- **Franklin Park Preservation Fund:** \$1 per NWSL ticket sold, to be directed toward implementing ongoing initiatives outlined in the Franklin Park Action Plan
- **Tree Bank:** BUSP and the City will contribute to the planting of more than 500 trees within Franklin Park
- **Local Purchasing & Supplier Diversity:** In coordination with the Black Men and Boys Commission, and under the leadership of the Office of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion, the City of Boston and Boston Unity will establish a Supplier Diversity Advisory Committee to help ensure MWBE businesses are aware of available contracting opportunities and reach 50% MWBE participation in design, construction, and operations
- **Jobs:** BUSP will create up to 500 construction jobs and 300 permanent jobs
- **BPS partnerships:** BUSP will provide scholarships, internships, and mentorship from the NWSL team to enhance opportunities available to BPS students
- **Sustainability:** improvements in green infrastructure, all-electric facilities, and usage of green building materials

Stadium Usage

The legal arrangement will guarantee enhanced public access and codifies scheduling priority and parameters for students and community to enjoy the facilities:

- Public access to the stadium and track for informal community use 6am-9pm, or 15 hours per day including weekends (when not reserved for an event), instead of the current access from 8am-4pm on weekdays only
- The City and BPS will have top scheduling priority for 12 major events per year, followed by BPS and NWSL games having co-priority in scheduling, then other City or City-permitted community events, then NWSL team practices, then other BUSP events as permitted by the City
- NWSL usage limited to no more than 20 games per year (including playoff games) and one team practice in the week ahead of each scheduled game
- To minimize late-night noise and activity, NWSL games must start by no later than 8:30pm; affiliated programming may only start two hours prior to the game and must conclude by one hour after the game ends or 11:30pm, whichever is earlier
- To protect time for BPS and community program during the day and on weekends, NWSL games cannot take place more than two weekends in a four-week period, and no more than four weekend games per season can start before 5pm
- BUSP must ensure cleanup is completed within 3 hours after each game
- Next year, the White Stadium Neighborhood Council will be created, to advise the City, BPS, the Parks Department, and BUSP on public programming and provide neighborhood feedback on stadium usage.

Transportation

The game day transportation plan has been significantly refined through a robust community engagement process to minimize impacts on neighborhoods surrounding the park and will be codified in the Transportation Access Plan Agreement (TAPA) to be signed after construction documents are finalized. This represents the first comprehensive transportation strategy for major events at Franklin Park. Key elements of the game day transportation plan include:

- **Electric Shuttle System:** Free electric shuttles for ticket holders from MBTA Orange and Red Line stations, as well as from satellite parking lots on game days
- **Multimodal Infrastructure:** BUSP will fund a new Bluebikes station, secure bike parking, and a bike valet service
- **Parking Protections:** Implementation of a resident permit parking system near White Stadium and an app-based parking system (via ParkBoston) for non-game visitors, including zoo visitors, golfers, and park permit holders
- **Enforcement and Oversight:** Additional parking enforcement funded by BUSP to ensure efficient traffic and parking management

The City and BUSP will continue to create open dialogue with the community throughout the project's implementation. Regular updates through the City and the White Stadium Neighborhood Council will empower even greater direct communication across all parts of our

community as the transformative vision for White Stadium becomes a reality. For more information, visit boston.gov/white-stadium.

Statements from Community Stakeholders

John Kett and Gary Hilderbrand – Principals, Reed Hilderbrand Landscape Architecture (Co-Authors of Franklin Park Action Plan)

“The City's investment in the rehabilitation of Franklin Park's White Stadium promises a legacy of benefits for students and park users that will extend for generations. We thank Mayor Wu for adopting significant design changes in the expanded project that more fully reconcile the stadium with the historic character of the Playstead and the Overlook—including pathways, lighting, plantings, and the establishment of a 10-year tree bank to significantly expand the park's tree canopy. These measures will leverage continued investments in the park in the coming years. We are proud to collaborate with Mayor Wu and the Parks Department and advocate on behalf of the park and its community.”

Rickie Thompson – President, Franklin Park Coalition

“The Franklin Park Coalition (FPC) believes a renovated and well-maintained White Stadium will be an asset to Franklin Park, community members, and Boston's student athletes - a net benefit to all. FPC has worked tirelessly for the past two years raising concerns, proposing ideas, and submitting feedback at all stages of the renovation process. The City of Boston and Boston Unity Soccer Partners (BUSP) have engaged with the community through dozens of meetings and been responsive to feedback, resulting in significant improvements. Many of the changes FPC advocated for have been incorporated directly as binding commitments in the lease documents. FPC is pleased with the project's progress, but our advocacy on behalf of park users will continue. We will push for comprehensive traffic management for all large events (including BPS activities) to prevent increased motor traffic in and around the park. We will press BUSP to meet their 50% commitment to hire minority businesses, contractors and employees, and for BPS to exceed their targets. Thank you Mayor Wu for your vision, commitment, and courage on making this project a reality.”

Coach Cleo Woodcock – BLS Girls Soccer

“BPS soccer is more popular and competitive than it ever has been before. I share the excitement of many BPS soccer players that I coach. The access to world class soccer right in White Stadium is going to be such a gift to our players and coaching staff. As a neighbor, I am excited to walk to games. As a lifelong Bostonian, I am excited to have another women's team! The renovation of the stadium and access to top-notch facilities are going to be great!”

Coach Hatim Jean-Louis – Head Coach, BPS Cross Country

“As a former BPS student and now a coach, I've always believed in the untapped potential of our kids. They face so many obstacles—transportation challenges, lack of resources—but they show up every day with heart and determination. I've seen how much it means to them to be part of something bigger, like our city-wide cross-country program, despite all the hurdles. White Stadium's renovation is going to change the game. No more worrying about injuries on a

worn-out track. Now they'll have a facility they can be proud of, one where we can finally host state meets and showcase their talent. I've always known how incredible these kids are—now the rest of the city will, too.”

Coach Tony DaRocha – BPS Middle School Track and Cross Country; Co-Founder and President, Boston United Track Club

“With over 30 years in BPS as a PE teacher and coach, and as co-founder of the Boston United Track Club, I've seen how the right facilities transform opportunities for young athletes. The renovated White Stadium, with its new throwing cage and multi-sport spaces, will give kids the tools they need to compete and grow safely. Having coached state championship teams and national champions, I know this investment will inspire the next generation to reach new heights.”

Coach Terry “Beefy” Cousins – President and Head Coach, Dorchester Eagles Pop Warner Football

“This White Stadium renovation is exactly what our students deserve. The city is investing in fields across Boston and creating an athletic complex so every team has a great place to play. White Stadium is now all about the big games—Thanksgiving rivalries, playoff showdowns—the moments our kids will remember forever. And the new indoor spaces? That's a huge win for every sport. I'm excited my kids can now use the facilities in the offseason to get stronger. This is how you do it right—student-centered and top-notch. IT'S BIGGER THAN FOOTBALL.”

Steve Vaitones – Managing Director, USA Track & Field (USATF)

“Designing an 8-lane track for White Stadium has been a careful process, and I've worked with the team to ensure the facility supports the needs of athletes and meets key competition standards. The upgrades prioritize both functionality and the experience of hosting meets, creating a space that will serve as a valuable resource for BPS and the broader track and field community.”

Dion Irish – Chief of Operations, City of Boston

“This is not a renovation—it's a realization of the potential that White Stadium holds in the eyes of our community. These historic investments will benefit Boston residents and our talented students year-round while maintaining our commitment to sustainability and community-first values. This generational commitment will be sustained through our partnership that provides ongoing investments in the stadium, community, and Franklin Park, while creating long-term economic opportunities for MWBE businesses.”

Liza Meyer – Interim Commissioner, Boston Parks and Recreation Department

“The White Stadium improvement project is transformative for Franklin Park, building on the vision outlined in the Franklin Park Action Plan. This project strengthens the connection between White Stadium and the larger Playstead, breathing new life into an area that has long been a vital hub for recreation, athletics, and community events. With this project, we're supporting Boston's young athletes and the local community while laying the groundwork for sustainable, long-term funding streams for Franklin Park. Paired with improvements at the

Overlook and Bear Dens, this work signals a bold commitment to the future of Franklin Park as a place for connection, play, and celebration.”

Avery Esdaile – Senior Director of Athletics, Boston Public Schools.

"The new stadium will be a cornerstone of BPS athletics as we continue to elevate our sports programming and opportunities for students. Our focus is on the student athlete experience. The benefits that come with the upgraded track, field and facilities at White Stadium will be transformative for thousands of BPS student athletes across the City of Boston."

Segun Idowu – Chief of Economic Opportunity and Inclusion, City of Boston

“As a proud product of Boston Latin Academy and someone who grew up in the Grove Hall and Humboldt Ave. areas, I’m excited for what this project will mean for the economic health of the neighborhood. In addition to what this project means for the long term health of the small businesses in the immediate vicinity, I have the privilege of leading the Supplier Diversity Advisory Group to create meaningful pathways of opportunity at every stage of this stadium’s development. From connecting high school students to their first jobs, to ensuring established local and diverse companies secure opportunities to build, manage, and operate the stadium, we will deliver on the promise of keeping this as a space that is for our community.“

SUMMARY OF ASSETS & RESPONSIBILITIES*

Asset	Who pays for construction?	Who gets to use it?	Who maintains it?
OUTDOOR ASSETS			
Grass Field (90,430 SF)	City	BPS games, City, and community events, except for up to 20 NWSL soccer games per year and one NWSL team practice before each game (Estimated 600+ hrs/yr of usage)	BUSP
Running track (8 lanes)	City	BPS practices and meets; public access 6AM-9PM daily except scheduled events	BUSP
Scoreboard	BUSP	BPS and BUSP events, operated via press box	BUSP
Basketball courts outside the stadium	City	BPS and community	City
BPS field sports & throwing areas	City	BPS and community youth sports groups; includes BPS' first ever throwing cage area	City
Pathway lighting outside stadium	BUSP	All parkgoers, improving Franklin Park safety and wayfinding	City
The Grove (59,995 SF total, incl. 8,230 SF South Crescent Building)	BUSP	Park users and fans at NWSL or BPS games; event programming to be reviewed by White Stadium Neighborhood Council and approved by Boston Parks Department	BUSP
West Grandstand concourse & seating (~5000 seats; floorplate 41,270 SF)	BUSP	Primarily designated for NWSL attendees and leased by BUSP on game days; also for BPS and City events when needed, with prior notice required to ensure coordination	BUSP
East Grandstand concourse & seating (~5000 seats; floorplate 45,080SF)	City	Attendees at BPS, City, and community events; also licensed to BUSP for attendees during NWSL games, with exclusive use by BUSP during designated game hours	BUSP
MEP (Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing) Systems	City (East Grandstand); BUSP (West Grandstand)	All stadium users	BUSP
Canopy (both grandstands)	BUSP	All stadium users	BUSP

EAST GRANDSTAND & WINGS			
Lobby Vestibule (300 SF)	City	BPS and community event attendees	BUSP
3 Lobbies (North 860 SF, Central 2,600 SF, South 850 SF)	City	BPS and BUSP through the two main entrances that connect the wings to the central grandstand	BUSP
Multi-Purpose room (2,200 SF)	City	BPS & community events, such as sports banquets or community gatherings permitted by the City; flexible space that can also serve as a student lounge or to meet other needs	BUSP to maintain all systems; City custodial staff for basic services
BPS Athletics administrative offices (2,320SF)	City	BPS Athletics staff (private offices, open layout offices, conference room, print room, break room, right next to the bathrooms)	BUSP to maintain all systems; City custodial staff for basic services
BPS strength & conditioning space (3,370 SF)	City	BPS students	BUSP to maintain all systems; City custodial staff for basic services
BPS sports medicine unit (900 SF)	City	BPS students, staff, and trainers	BUSP to maintain all systems; City custodial staff for basic services
BPS home and visitor locker rooms (4,450 SF)	City	BPS student athletes and visiting teams	BUSP to maintain all systems; City custodial staff for basic services
Referee & coach locker rooms (1,130 SF)	City	BUSP during NWSL games and BPS during BPS games when a referee is present	BUSP
BPS track and field equipment storage (910 SF)	City	BPS Athletics to store equipment such as hurdles, goals, and more	BUSP to maintain all systems; City custodial staff for basic services
BPS custodial and grounds office (200 SF)	City	BPS custodial staff	BUSP to maintain all systems; City custodial staff for basic services
2 concession rooms, (1,820 SF total)	City	BUSP and BPS during game days to use warming kitchens and storage	BUSP
Interior Bike Room (250 SF)	City	BPS staff and students for regular daily access; BUSP staff during NWSL game days	BUSP
Spectator restrooms (6,200 SF total)	City	BPS spectators on BPS game days; BUSP spectators on NWSL game days	BUSP

Public restrooms (Northeast wing) (130 SF)	City	All visitors to Park or stadium, accessible during daily access hours, not just games	BUSP
Field maintenance equipment storage room (2,000 SF)	City	BUSP to maintain the field and the facility	BUSP
Mobile seating storage enclosure (3,420 SF)	City	BUSP to store and deploy extra mobile seating on NWSL game days; BPS and City can request to use if needed	BUSP
WEST GRANDSTAND & WINGS			
Loading dock (Northwest wing)	BUSP	BPS for storage and equipment pick up and drop off without having to drive through the park; BUSP for receiving deliveries	BUSP
Public Restrooms (Southwest wing)	BUSP	All stadium and park users	BUSP
Media center	BUSP	BUSP on NWSL game days	BUSP
Press Box	BUSP	BUSP for media during NWSL games; City during BPS or community events (BUSP will provide staff to help operate equipment)	BUSP
BPS equipment storage and uniform racks (3,400 SF)	BUSP	BPS Athletics staff	BUSP to maintain all systems; City custodial staff for basic services
Tunnel club	BUSP	BUSP on NWSL game days as main corridor for access from locker rooms to the field	BUSP
BUSP Locker rooms	BUSP	NWSL athletes during games, practices	BUSP
BUSP Sports medicine rooms	BUSP	NWSL athletes and trainers on game days	BUSP
Bar & lounge spaces	BUSP	NWSL athletes and BUSP on game days	BUSP
Stadium Operations Offices	BUSP	BUSP-contracted stadium operators	BUSP
Restrooms	BUSP	BUSP during NWSL game days; BPS and community during City or community events	BUSP
Family Room	BUSP	BUSP for NWSL team during game days	BUSP

*Developed in close collaboration with BPS Athletics and with intensive community feedback, the plans also incorporate recommendations from the Franklin Park Action Plan and requirements of the National Women's Soccer League. Programming will be shaped with input from BPS Athletics, BPRD, and the White Stadium Neighborhood Advisory Council. Square footage allocations may shift in final construction docs.

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