

# CHELSEA 2017

## State of the City



Presented by City Manager Tom Ambrosino  
to the Chelsea City Council  
and the Residents of Chelsea

[www.chelseama.gov](http://www.chelseama.gov)

**Photo credit cover picture :** Matt Frank©

**Layout:** Axelle Bagot, Innovation Advisor to the City Manager

**Printing Company:** [Sterling Printing](#)

*A special thanks to Seth Daniel, journalist at Chelsea Record, and to Liliana Colón, Chelsea High School intern, for their help.*

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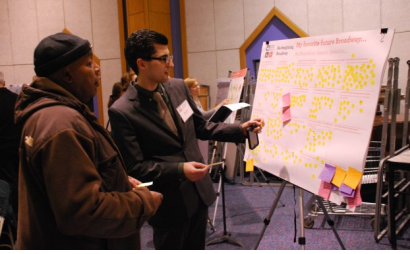
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Chelsea, April 20, 2017

Dear Reader:



I'm proud to provide you with this 2017 State of the City Report. It has been a busy year, and your local government has worked hard to deliver high quality public service and to improve the quality of life of all residents.



This report highlights some of the exciting changes that are underway in the City. Although many challenges remain, I'm confident that, during this coming year, the City will continue to maintain its positive momentum, and that the best days for Chelsea lie ahead.

I hope you'll enjoy reading it.

Respectfully,

Thomas G. Ambrosino  
City Manager



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## CHELSEA ON THE MOVE

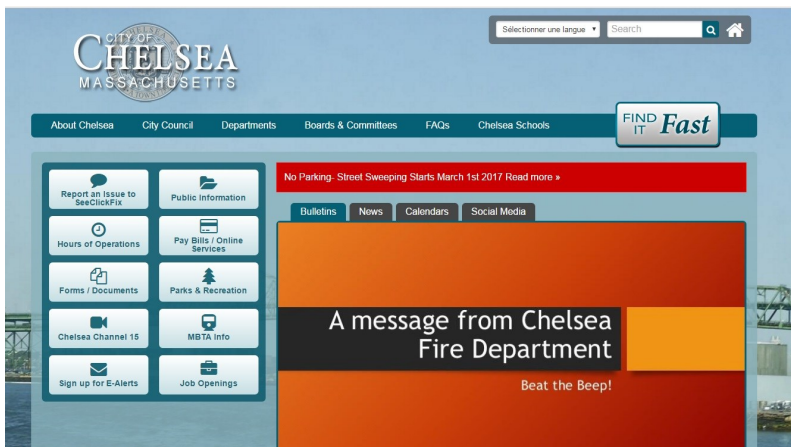
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The City had two overall strategic goals in 2016 — improved communication with its residents; and better collaboration.

### **IMPROVED COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY**

In 2016, the City hired a new Social Media Specialist with the goal of utilizing modern day technology and social media to better interact with its residents and provide them with more comprehensive and timely information. The City's main social media tools are:

- Twitter (@ChelseaGov\_MA @ChelseaFire\_MA @ChelseaPolice\_MA)
- Facebook ([City of Chelsea Massachusetts-Gov](#))
- the City Website <http://www.chelseama.gov>
- [SeeClickFix](#)
- Our new [YouTube Channel](#)



Included among the improvements implemented this year were:

- The City website was updated and will continue to be modified during the course of 2017, all with the goal of providing more convenient access to information.
- The [Chelsea Happenings Newsletter](#) gained new followers this year and can be found now on the City website.
- The new Emergency Notification System was implemented and has more than 7200 Chelsea Residents in its database, allowing them to be informed quickly about emergencies and important events.
- And, the City is making more robust use of See Click Fix, a digital service that allows anyone [to report and track non-emergency issues](#). The service can now be directly accessed [on the City Website](#). It can also be [downloaded to a smartphone](#).



**SeeClickFix**



## **IMPROVED COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION**

Public institutions are often seen by the general population as rigid and complex structures. To breakdown this barrier, the City of Chelsea has worked hard to make its rules and regulations more understandable and accessible in order to increase compliance. The City has published several easily understood brochures on its website, including the [Important Information to Property Owners and Tenants](#), and the Chelsea Collaborative's [Know Your Rights](#) pamphlet. Both are available in English and Spanish.



Chelsea Collaborative *Know Your Rights* operation, March 2017. Picture by Joseph Prezioso©



Board Leadership Boot Camp in March 2017. Picture by TND©

The partnership between the City and community based organizations has been strengthened over the past year. Whether it is the Chelsea Collaborative, GreenRoots, ROCA, CAPIC, North Suffolk Mental Health, MGH, the Chamber of Commerce, Chelsea Restoration Corporation or others, the City promotes their events on Facebook, the City website, Twitter, and in our Newsletter - [Chelsea Happenings](#) - supports them financially where feasible, and encourages their initiatives.

This year, for example, the City:

- Supported several initiatives from The Neighborhood Developers to promote leadership in the community, including the Parent Leadership Institute and the Board Leadership Boot Camp, all of which are aimed at fostering civic participation and increased resident leadership.
- Partnered with ROCA, TND, the Chelsea Collaborative and MGH, among others, to secure a \$1 million, 3 year U.S. Justice Department grant to reduce youth violence in the City.



Opening of *the Vision Project* at GreenRoot's in March 2017. Picture by Katy Rogers©



*Sidewalk Butt-ler* operation by TND. Picture by TND©





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## PUBLIC SAFETY

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### **REDUCING CRIME AND VIOLENCE**

The City Council and the Chelsea Police Department have worked together to implement concrete measures to reduce crime. The measures include:

- A fully funded Police contingent of 111 officers.
- Dedicated walking patrols 7 days a week for Bellingham Square (7:30 p.m.—11:30 p.m.) and the Broadway Business District (11:30 a.m.— 7:30 p.m.) during Spring, Summer and Fall.
- To address the persistent substance use disorder problem, a comprehensive program that includes street workers (called Navigators), housing support, clinical outreach and case management for ongoing treatment.
- Since 2017, a new Healthy Streets' anti-prostitution effort, an outreach program managed by the non-profit [Health Innovations, Inc.](#) to target individuals caught up in the sex trade, with the goal of reducing both supply and demand.



Navigators Team - Photo by Seth Daniel©

This work is supported by the HUB&COR, a collaborative effort that works on a predictive model to intervene with comprehensive services before an individual causes harm to himself or others.

### **What is HUB&COR?**

This initiative focuses on a data-driven, social service and law enforcement partnership network to deploy rapid interventions for at-risk individuals or families, whether due to drug addiction, suspicion of domestic violence, mental health issues, human trafficking, homelessness, or some other risk factors. Working in close collaboration with ROCA, the Chelsea Police Department adopted this approach after being inspired by the results of its implementation in Canada. It has been so successful in Chelsea that other communities are looking to replicate it in their cities.

### **Who attends this meeting?**

The Police Department, the Fire Department, CAPIC, the Neighborhood Developers, North Suffolk Mental Health, ROCA, the Community Substance Abuse Center, the Massachusetts General Hospital (Human Trafficking Initiative), the Mass. Dept. of Children and Families, Chelsea Housing Authority, the Chelsea School Dept. and others meet every Thursday morning to discuss cases. When the risk factors are high, a targeted intervention by relevant agencies is planned and executed.



[Hub and Core meeting](#) - Picture by Erin Whitten©

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## PROTECTING OUR VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

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Making residents feel safe and welcoming in a community goes beyond public safety — it has to include economic security as well.

- To minimize the tax burden on homeowners this year, the City increased the Residential Exemption from 20% to 25%. A further increase will follow in 2018.
- The City also adopted for the first time a rate break for seniors on water and sewer bills.

### **How can I apply for the exemption programs?**

The Residential Exemption : A taxpayer who owns and occupies a property as their principal residence may be eligible for this property tax break as well as the Trash fee exemption. For the complete list of the Residential Exemption requirements, please go online to <http://chelseama.gov/assessor/faq/when-and-how-do-i-qualify-residential-exemption>, or contact the Assessor's office at 617-466-4010. To benefit from the Trash fee exemption on your monthly water bill, please contact the Central Billing & Research office at 617-466-4240 or visit Room 217 in City Hall.

The Senior Water and Sewer Discount Program: Residents age 65 or older, who own and occupy their home are eligible to receive a 10% discount on their monthly water and sewer bills. If you think you might qualify, please contact the Customer Service & Collections line at 617-466-4240.

- The City Council approved for the first time a new Affordable Housing Ordinance that will mandate affordable units in any significant private development. The new Ordinance provides that, for any development in the City that has 10 units or more, the developer must provide affordable units as part of the construction. The default is that 15% of the units must be affordable for someone earning no more than 80% of the Area Median Income as defined by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development. Affordable in this context means that the person must be able to live in the unit without spending more than 30% of his/her monthly income on housing costs. The new Ordinance will ensure that residents of modest means benefit from the City's future growth.
- This past November, the voters of Chelsea approved by a 2-1 margin the Community Preservation Act. In Chelsea, the Act provides for a 1.5% surcharge on each tax bill to provide funding for open space and recreation, historic preservation and affordable housing. The surcharge should generate more than one half million dollars each year for these important goals.

## **PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR YOUTH**

Efforts at public safety are accompanied by counseling, services and opportunity for at-risk young adults. Two initiatives are worth mentioning:

- With the help of our partners, ROCA and the Chelsea Collaborative, the City in 2016 funded several new positions for youth counselors and advocates. These new hires help young immigrants get adapted to a new language and culture. Often unaccompanied by close family members, these young adults need emotional support as well as facilitated access to social services so that, in times of struggle, they turn not to guns and gangs, but instead toward education and professional opportunities.
- The City Council doubled its funding for the Summer Youth Employment Initiative and supported the creation of the new Recreation & Cultural Affairs Division to enhance youth programming.



## **PROTECTING OUR FOREIGN BORN POPULATION**

Almost 44% of Chelsea's population is foreign born, the highest percentage in the Commonwealth. Many have arrived from countries where political instability and corruption prevails. So, there is a natural skepticism about government.

In 2007, the Chelsea City Council adopted a Sanctuary City Resolution to ensure that all residents would be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their country of origin or immigration status. A key rationale for this policy is to promote and maintain public safety. Communities are safest when all residents feel comfortable interacting with and cooperating with police. If newly arrived immigrants are fearful of alerting the authorities when they see or suspect a crime, or when they are victims of a crime, we are all less protected.

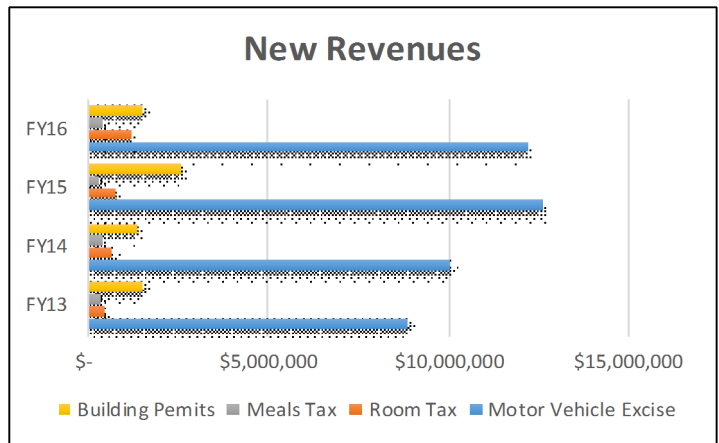
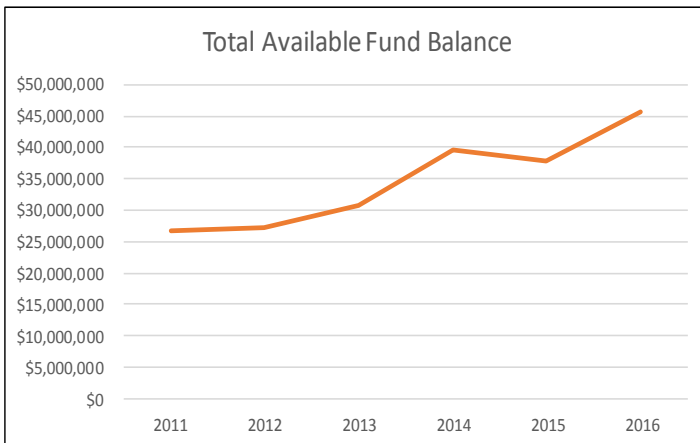


It is for this reason that many experts assert that local police, particularly those in communities with large immigrant populations, should not be involved in any way, shape or manner with federal immigration enforcement. So, when President Trump signed an Executive Order which threatened to punish communities like Chelsea for adopting this common sense approach to public safety, Chelsea joined with other municipalities across the nation in seeking a declaration from Federal Court that the Executive Order was unconstitutional.



## FINANCIAL POSITION

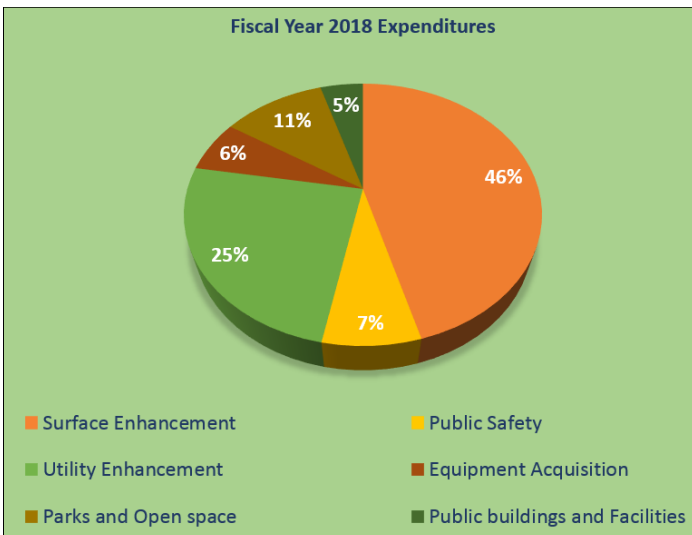
Due to the astute financial stewardship of the Chelsea City Council, Chelsea is currently in an enviable financial position.



### THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

One critical way a municipality can maintain good economic momentum is through bold public investment. [The Capital Improvement Plan](#) approved in March 2017 by the City Council dedicates \$19 million dollars in public projects for next fiscal year alone (FY 2018).

It includes park development, building improvements, water and sewer upgrades and neighborhood street and sidewalks improvements. Other specific investments in new graffiti removal and snow removal equipment will enhance the quality of life for residents.



Source: [Capital Improvement Projects 2018-2022](#).

Pocket Park on Library Street. Picture Planning and Development©

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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The City is constantly seeking development opportunities to enhance its commercial tax base and maintain the City's strong economic position.

### **CURRENT EFFORTS**

The City's efforts are changing the skyline, with new projects open for business and others about to break ground:

- The new FBI Regional Headquarters opened for business in November of 2016. More than 500 employees were relocated to this eight story 275,000 square foot facility.
- The new Hilton Homewood Suites opened for business in March of 2017. 65% of its staff are Chelsea residents.
- The City's newest hotel is breaking ground in 2017 on Mill Creek at the Revere line.



FBI Director James B. Comey speaking at the opening ceremony on March 8th 2017.  
Picture by Boston Globe©



FBI Regional Headquarters - Picture by FBI©



Rendering of the new [Hilton Homewood Suites](#) in Chelsea.



Rendering of the future 1012-1018 Broadway Hotel in Chelsea.



- At the former Chelsea Clock Site, Fairfield Residential will soon begin construction of a two phase residential development. The developer is currently completing its environmental cleanup and should be pulling building permits before the end of Fiscal Year 2018.



Rendering of 284 Everett Avenue by [Fairfield Residential](#)



- The French Club Development project, supported by The Neighborhood Developers, is expected to break ground in 2017. It will create thirty four affordable apartments in Chelsea's Mill Hill Neighborhood, with three units targeted to low income renters with disabilities, and eight units designated for formerly homeless families. With the City's new Affordable Housing Ordinance and Community Preservation Act Funds, the City expects to deliver additional affordable units in the future.



Renderings of the French Club Development from project's architect, [Utile, Inc.](#)





## FUTURE GROWTH

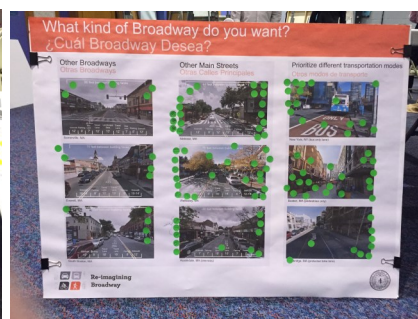
The City is focusing on two areas which present the greatest opportunity for growth and improvement.

## CHELSEA'S DOWNTOWN

The City Council has approved \$5.2 million in bond funds for infrastructure improvements for Chelsea's Downtown made up of Bellingham Square, Chelsea Square and the Broadway Business District. Planning has already begun for these roadway and public space changes. The project is supported by a new Downtown Coordinator position, created by the City Council to engage residents and local businesses in a collective effort to advance the district. Technical assistance, beautification efforts and cultural events will enliven and support economic development.



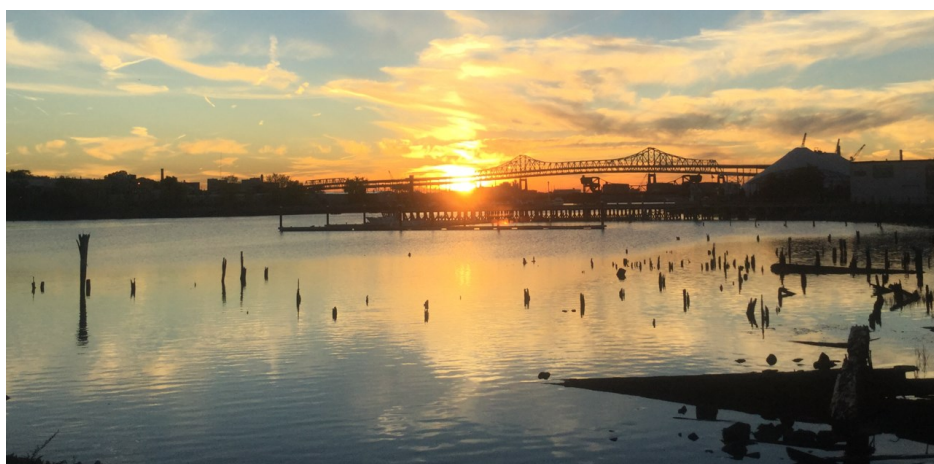
Source: [Re-imagining Broadway project](#)



First public meeting for Broadway Corridor Improvements on January 12th, 2017 - Picture by Planning and Development©

## THE WATERFRONT

The other key area for development is the City's waterfront. This underutilized area will undergo a transformation in the next few years. The City recently completed a visioning study of the Chelsea Creek waterfront. Assisted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and following several well attended public meetings, our Planning and Development Department identified potential redevelopment options that will ensure enhanced public access for residents.



Picture by Frank Henry©



Picture by Planning and Development©

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## SCHOOLS

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The City is working hard to create a strong and vibrant school system.

The New Clark Avenue Middle School opened its academic wing to students in January of 2017. The building remains under construction and will fully open in 2018. It represents a \$60 million investment in the School System by the City Council and the City's residents.



Source: [Rendering of the new Clark Avenue Middle School](#)

In addition to modern buildings, the Chelsea Public School System is home to cutting edge academics and partnerships:

- [For Kids Only](#) provides comprehensive afterschool programming in the elementary complex.
- [Citizen Schools](#) supports out-of-school time opportunities in Wright and Browne Middle Schools, and will be expanded to the New Clark Avenue School once that project is fully complete.
- The City also collaborates with Bunker Hill Community College - whereby Chelsea High School students take classes for dual high school and college credits - to ensure that CHS graduates have a significant head start on college requirements.

The Chelsea Public School System also is host to the Chelsea Community Schools program. These programs are based at the Williams School Complex and provide recreation and continuing education opportunities to all Chelsea residents. The offer of affordable [classes](#) and the use of state-of-the-art [facilities](#) has evolved in response to the diverse and changing needs of our community.

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## CONTACTS

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If you have any questions about a specific City department, you should contact it directly. We recommend first looking online at the department's webpage, where a lot of information is available at [www.chelseama.gov](http://www.chelseama.gov).

Assessor (617) 466-4010  
Chelsea Community Schools (617) 466-4070  
Chelsea Retirement System (617) 466-4230  
City Auditor (617) 466-4030  
City Clerk (617) 466-4050  
City Manager (617) 466-4100  
Elder Services (617) 466-4370  
Finance (617) 466-4035  
Fire Department (617) 466-4600  
Health & Human Services (617) 466-4080  
Inspectional Services (*ISD*) (617) 466-4130  
Law Department (617) 466-4150  
Licensing (617) 466-4160  
Parks & Playgrounds (617) 466-4200  
Planning & Development (617) 466-4180  
Police Department (617) 466-4855  
Public Library (617) 466-4350  
Public Safety (617) 466-4662  
Public Schools (617) 466-4477  
Department of Public Works (*DPW*) (617) 466-4200  
Chelsea Fire Alarm: (617) 466-4662  
Graffiti Hotline: (617) 466-4212  
Recreation & Cultural Affairs Division (617) 466-4070  
Rubbish, Recycling, & Yard Waste (617) 466-4200  
Treasurer / Collector (617) 466-4240  
Veteran's Services (617) 466-4250  
Water & Sewer Services (617) 466-4240



Please report any non emergency problems on private properties, streets or sidewalks on [SeeClickFix](#).



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## BOARDS & COMMISSIONS

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Some of the business of the City is conducted by volunteer Boards and Commissions. Here is an exhaustive list:

Affordable Housing Trust Fund Board- 617 466-4180  
Board of Assessors - 617 466-4010  
Board of Health - 617 466-4090 or 617 466-5953  
Board of Library Trustees - 617 466-4350  
Board of Registrars - 617 466-4050  
Community School Advisory Board - 617 466-4070  
Community Preservation Committee - 617 466-4100  
Conservation Commission - 617 466-4180  
Council on Elder Affairs - 617 466-4370  
Cultural Council - 617 466-4090  
Economic Development Board - 617 466-4180  
Historical Commission 617-466-4180  
Housing Authority Board of Commissioners - 617 409-5312  
Human Rights Commission - 617 466-4100  
Licensing Commission - 617 466-4050  
Planning Board - 617 466-4180  
Traffic and Parking Commission - 617 466-4054  
Tree Board - 617 466-4100  
Youth Commission - 617 466-4073  
Zoning Board of Appeal - 617 466-4180



Openings occur occasionally. If you are interested in volunteering for one of these entities, please fill out an online application form at <http://www.chelseama.gov/home/webforms/chelsea-volunteer-application>, or mail or drop off a letter of interest and resume to the City Manager's office at City Hall (second floor, room 302)





