

Statement from NAACP Boston Branch Regarding

White Stadium Franklin Park is both one of the nation's foremost historic landscapes and a vital gathering space for Boston's Black and Brown communities. From Roxbury Homecoming and countless summer cultural festivals to weekend cookouts, kite flying, and family bike rides, Franklin Park offers clean air, beautiful trees, and a respite from the city's noise and commotion. It is where generations have found connection, joy, and peace.

At the heart of Franklin Park's Playstead lies the George Robert White Schoolboy Stadium. This facility should be a source of pride and opportunity for our community—especially for our children and families. Instead, it has suffered years of neglect and mismanagement by the city and its agencies.

As Boston residents and members of the NAACP Boston Branch, we support the renovation of White Stadium into a high-quality public facility that serves all Boston Public School (BPS) student-athletes and the communities surrounding Franklin Park.

However, we have **serious concerns** about the current \$200 million proposal to redevelop White Stadium into an 11,000-seat venue to be leased to Boston Unity Soccer Partners (BUSP), a private, for-profit entity.

Key Issues with the Proposal:

- **Displacement of Students and Community**

Use The plan to designate White Stadium as the home of Boston's new National Women's Soccer League team would displace BPS students and community members from the stadium and adjacent parklands during at least 20 game days, 20 practice days, and additional event days each year—impacting more than half of the weekends during peak summer months. The proposal also calls for evicting BPS football teams from the stadium during their regular season due to concerns about cleats damaging the field. This prioritization of professional sports over public school students is unacceptable.

- **Negative Community Impacts**

The proposal lacks adequate plans for public transit access and parking, placing the burden of traffic, air pollution, noise, and congestion on surrounding neighborhoods. In addition, proposed parking restrictions would require nearby residents to apply for event permits just to host family gatherings—potentially stifling essential community life, including cookouts and birthday celebrations.

- **Failure to Meet Equity Standards**

Demolition of the historic stadium has already begun, yet it is evident that current and planned construction efforts do not meet the requirements of the Boston Residents Jobs Policy—standards intended to guarantee employment opportunities for Boston’s Black and Brown residents and women.

- **Lack of Transparency and Community Process**

We are deeply concerned about the absence of a meaningful public process. The project’s approval featured limited opportunities for community input, and recent revelations show city officials were in private negotiations with BUSP months before releasing the formal Request for Proposals. Crucially, the City has never seriously considered a fully public renovation plan that would preserve the stadium for student and community use without corporate involvement.

Our Demands:

In light of these issues, we call for an immediate halt to the ongoing demolition and construction at White Stadium until the City of Boston:

1. **Releases a fully public renovation plan** for community review and input;
2. **Finalizes comprehensive transportation, parking, and climate resilience plans developed** in collaboration with neighborhood associations representing residents near Franklin Park;
3. **Commits to meeting or exceeding the Boston Residents Jobs Policy** for all work—whether public or led by BUSP—at the site; and
4. **Improves community engagement and transparency**, ensuring that future investments in White Stadium benefit all Boston residents equitably.