

## US Mayors Take on Climate Change

The [2022 Menino Survey of Mayors](#) examined how 118 mayors across the United States think about climate action. Mayors were asked about their opinions on climate change and the changes they are willing to make using regulatory powers or other local actions. Nearly all mayors surveyed worried about local impacts of climate change, including drought, extreme heat, flooding, and air pollution. Most mayors (73%) agreed that cities should use their resources and funds to address climate change locally, with mayors expressing greater interest in investing in new green technology than imposing restrictions on their citizens. The most popular motivation for local climate action was “desire to do our part” (79% chose it in their top two), followed by concern about the impacts on their city (38%) and long-term money-saving potential (29%).

**Regulatory Powers** – When asked to identify the two most powerful climate tools at their disposal, the mayors most often chose influence over building codes (55%) and zoning (38%). These powers allow mayors to promote climate-resilient building and decarbonization, but using them requires navigating political challenges. When mayors were asked to share the most politically difficult climate action they had taken or planned to take, the most common responses were changes to the energy supply (19%) and changes to building codes or emissions reductions (12%); 13% said the actions were not politically difficult.

**Local Actions** – The most popular local programs and policies focus on purchasing climate-friendly technologies or encouraging consumers to do so. Of the mayors surveyed, 74% strongly support replacing municipal vehicles with more fuel-efficient versions—the most-supported local action. The climate innovations or technologies that mayors were most enthusiastic about were electric vehicles (32%) and solar energy (22%).

**Public Engagement** – Mayors were divided on the value of public meetings on climate change, with 53% agreeing that they are a valuable source of insight on public opinion and 47% agreeing that public meetings can be a misleading source of public opinion because attendees are not usually a representative group.

### Snapshot of Boston - Boston has begun work on the following climate initiatives:

- **Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO):** a law that requires commercial and residential buildings to report their energy and water use to the City and provides building emissions standards with decreasing allowances each year toward the goal of zero emissions by 2050
- **Municipal Vehicle Electrification:** The City is replacing existing municipal vehicles with zero-emission vehicles and transitioning BPS’s fleet of school buses to electric buses
- **Boston Community Choice Electricity:** A community choice aggregation program aimed at reducing electricity costs for residents and increasing access to renewable energy
- **Coastal Resilience Plans:** Flood-resistant infrastructure plans have been developed for waterfront neighborhoods including redesigned waterfront parks, new floodwall systems, and elevated roadways
- **PowerCorps Boston:** A workforce development program that trains young adults for green jobs

The [Menino Survey of Mayors](#) is produced by Boston University’s Initiative on Cities.