

## Mayor Grigoraitis' First 100-Day Plan

My fellow Melrosians,

On January 8th, 2024, I proudly took the oath of office as your mayor. It was humbling and inspiring to be surrounded by hundreds of Melrosians from all corners of our city, including so many children. I am grateful to serve as your mayor and excited to get to work.

I've said many times that I felt like I won the lottery when my family moved to Melrose; since then, my love for our community has only continued to grow. As a city, our fundamentals are solid, and I believe we are on a journey toward excellence. To get us there, I see my role as two-fold: to be the vigilant steward of our community's many assets and to make the strategic decisions that will enable us to build on our strengths, embrace growth and change, and make this city a better place for everyone.

That's what my 100-day plan is all about. It outlines my administration's key priorities for my first three months in office. The following action items lay the foundation for how we will deliver high-quality services to all our residents and how we'll make certain Melrose is prepared to face future challenges and take advantage of new opportunities.

This plan marks the beginning of our shared work together and has been influenced by the ideas, concerns, visions, and voices of many community members. Its makeup reflects the themes you shared from your doorsteps and storefronts while I was on the campaign trail. It's what I heard as mayor-elect in listening sessions, read in your emails, and discussed in conversations in December and January with more than 40 different constituency groups, including senior citizens, small business owners, arts and nonprofit organizations, high school students, and city personnel. I've been inspired by how much you care about our shared city. You care about how decisions get made, why they were made, what the impact will be, and how you can get involved. Accountability, communication, and making local government accessible are priorities for me, and there are several steps outlined in this plan that will help us move toward these goals.

During my transition, I had the privilege of hearing from dozens of students at Melrose High School. I can tell you this: our young people care about the local decisions we make—not just the decisions that directly impact their buildings, school hours, and curriculum. They understand that the city's valuable green spaces, community events, and business districts have the power to bring people together, make them feel at home, and help bolster economic opportunity. They care about our climate resiliency and the safety of our streets and sidewalks—and they care deeply about each other and their collective well-being. This plan takes our students, their values, and their ideas into consideration and reflects my commitment to providing opportunities for our students to engage in local government.

This document is a blueprint for our shared future. It is my commitment to you to deliver results. You can expect to see updates from me and my administration about our progress. I welcome your input and involvement because together we will make our city better for everyone.

Thank you for putting your trust in me. I am honored to do this work.

Sincerely,  
Mayor Jen Grigoraitis

February 1, 2024

## Top Three Priorities for the First 100 Days

The first three months of Mayor Grigoraitis' administration will focus on strengthening three strategic priorities to make city government run better and be more accessible to more people.

### 1. Proactive Executive Leadership and Fiscal Stewardship

- a. Implement systems and processes at City Hall to provide clarity around and accessibility to city services and decision-making.
- b. Set expectations for responses to resident inquiries and regularly review unmet needs.
- c. Prepare to deliver a comprehensive, clear, and accountable FY25 City budget that fully reflects and communicates not only our revenues and expenses but also identifies short- and long-term needs and priorities.

### 2. Greater Access to Local Government

- a. Hold listening sessions with community groups on several key priority areas.
- b. Identify opportunities to better connect residents directly with city services, including planning a Melrose Civics Day where residents can learn more about how our government works, the services we offer, and the ways to get involved.
- c. Work to ensure government is inclusive and accessible for all our constituents, including persons with disabilities, those with limited English capacity, immigrants, and any other underserved populations.

### 3. Enhanced Communication and Engagement

- a. Launch methods to coordinate and improve communication from the Mayor's Office and all City departments, increase accountability, and promote on-ramps for public engagement.
- b. Establish stronger relationships with local media including print, broadcast, and social media.
- c. Launch the recruitment process for a communications manager to lead internal and external communications.

## First Three Months

In addition, Mayor Grigoraitis' administration will focus on making short-term progress, building momentum for larger initiatives, and gaining traction for long-term success.

### A. Strategic Direction

- Assess existing data and develop a sustainable process for reviewing and improving our capital needs.
- Review FY25 department budget recommendations and establish FY25 budget priorities.
- Review and update positions and recruit talent for several key positions including leaders in finance, communications, sustainability, and community and economic development.
- Launch a bi-monthly "Melrose Minute" show in partnership with MMTV to provide community updates.
- Review the City's goal setting and evaluation process for city employees to ensure the City's workforce has formal feedback upon which opportunities for improvement, growth, and advancement can be based.
- Review City employment policies to ensure legal compliance, advance equity, and attract and retain high-quality staff.
- Review all open City of Melrose board and commission positions and prioritize recruiting new members by implementing a sustainable process for residents to indicate interest.

- Initiate improved language access efforts for priority information both in print and online.
- Explore the creation of a grant writer position to increase the City's capacity to access state, federal, and private/public funding sources.

#### **B. Fiscal Oversight**

- Hire interim CFO and launch hiring process for new CFO, incorporating feedback from department heads, partners, and stakeholders.
- Present a mid-year FY24 budget review to the City Council, including projections for the remainder of the fiscal year and identifying any requests to the Council before the end of FY24.
- Start planning for the FY25 budget, including creating clear, easy-to-understand budget documents and publishing them for public review on the City website.
- Engage an external consultant to assess the City's financial status, review internal controls and fiscal practices, and assist with developing a long-term strategic plan.
- Meet with senior staff and state partners, including the Commonwealth's Division of Local Services, to ensure best practices are being followed and the City is in compliance with state rules, laws, and mandates.

#### **C. Schools**

- Meet with MHS students to hear their priorities and ideas for a thriving MPS & Melrose community.
- Visit every MPS building to hear from students and staff and tour infrastructure.
- Send a free cash order to the City Council to cover the FY24 budget shortfall housed in the Melrose Public Schools budget.
- Partner with the interim superintendent and leverage existing City resources to regularly communicate MPS happenings with the broader Melrose community.
- Establish a school buildings committee to review, assess, and plan for infrastructure needs within MPS.
- Participate with the Superintendent and School Committee to provide the community with information regarding the most pressing priorities and fiscal needs within MPS to inform FY25 budget planning.
- Meet with the METCO Director and develop regular communication channels with METCO families.
- As a member of the School Committee, contribute to a comprehensive plan for onboarding the new superintendent.

#### **D. Community & Economic Development**

- Assess community and economic development needs, create an updated job description, and begin the process of recruiting for the community and economic development role.
- Establish one point of contact at City Hall to address businesses' needs.
- Begin to create a business toolkit to assist new businesses in understanding the required processes for signage, permitting, etc.
- Explore creating an advisory council of a diverse range of building owners/landlords and small businesses to be a touchpoint for the City for pressing and emerging concerns and priorities.
- Advocate for proposed changes to the Liquor Licensing Regulations.
- Review progress made on the application for Cultural District designation through the [Mass Cultural Council](#).

#### **E. Sustainability & Open Spaces**

- Review, seek community feedback on, and implement the City's new trash and recycling contract and develop a communication plan for engaging with residents about upcoming changes.
- Launch recruitment process to fill key vacancies in the City that support sustainability efforts, including conservation agent, recycling coordinator, and sustainability manager.
- Explore the formation of stakeholder groups to set up a Sustainability Summit for organizations to share goals and initiatives.
- Create a Net Zero Implementation Task Force to assess progress on our [Net Zero Action Plan](#) and focus on our goal to become a net zero community by 2050.
- Explore Mayoral involvement in the [Fells Caucus](#).
- Initiate review of management of open spaces, including permitting practices and schedule for use.
- Continue to engage with stakeholders regarding safe and quality sports field maintenance and improvement and the [City's November 2023 Open Space and Recreation Plan](#).

#### **F. Transportation & Public Safety**

- Engage an architectural firm for the design stage of public safety buildings, form an advisory committee, hire a full-time project manager, and develop and implement regular communication to the community with project updates and points of engagement.
- Reassess the City's practices around prioritizing potholes, crosswalks, flashing beacons, and other road conditions and needs.
- Review and assess DPW Services, including yard waste schedule (an additional week in the April 2024 has already been added) and [City Yard schedule](#).
- Begin to lay the foundation for setting Melrose on the path to become a [Vision Zero community](#) - making our streets safer for cyclists, walkers, and motorists alike, while also recognizing that transportation needs are different for every resident.
- Advocate to and with our State Representatives and [MBTA Advisory Board](#) to retain vital MBTA services in, and funding for, Melrose.
- Represent Melrose on the MBTA Advisory Board.

#### **G. Housing & Development**

- Submit appointments to fill vacancies on the Zoning Board of Appeals to the City Council for consideration.
- Convene the first meeting of the Melrose Affordable Housing Trust.
- Begin assessment of [Melrose Housing Production Plan](#).
- Assess Melrose's status to become compliant with the Massachusetts Multi-Family Zoning Requirements for MBTA Communities.

#### **H. Senior Residents**

- Hold a Listening Session at Milano Center during the first week of administration.
- Begin regular office hours at the Milano Center.
- Explore senior involvement at MPS through The Bridge.
- Review and revise water and sewer rate discounts for senior residents.
- Review senior tax work-off program for potential updates and expansion.

#### **April 17, 2024, Completion of 100th Day in Office**

During the week of April 22, 2024, the community will be provided with an update on the progress made under the first 100 days of Mayor Grigoraitis' administration. The update will be available on the city's website and there will be an accompanying video on MMTV.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Kris Rodolico

Amy Sestito

Raj Singh

Lori Timmermann

## THANK YOU

Thank you to the local businesses and community organizations invited to participate in listening sessions and for the insights and engagement of those who shared their time and ideas.

368 Collective  
Bobby C's Ristorante  
Buckalew's General Store  
Center Stage Studio  
EPiC  
Everybody Fitz  
Friends of Melrose METCO  
Friends of the Fells  
Hinge Fitness  
Incarnation Baseball  
Jitters Cafe  
Klippings Hair Salon  
Liberty Bell - Melrose  
Lorrie DiCesare Art Studio  
La Qchara

Lt. Norman Prince VFW Post  
MAAV  
Melrose Arts  
Melrose Babe Ruth League  
Melrose Chamber of Commerce  
Melrose Community Garden  
Melrose Creative Alliance  
Melrose Cultural Council  
Melrose Energy and Climate  
Melrose KIND  
Melrose Little League  
Melrose Pedestrian and Bike Committee  
Melrose Porchfest  
Melrose Youth Field Hockey  
Melrose Youth Football & Cheer

Melrose Youth Lacrosse  
Melrose Youth Soccer  
Melrose Youth Softball  
Molly's Bookstore  
MMTV  
Mt. Hood Park Association  
North Shore Elder Law & Estate Planning  
Paper & Clay  
Polymnia and Beethoven Society  
Racial Justice Community Coalition  
Stoneham Boys & Girls Club  
The Food Drive  
The Worklery  
Zero Waste Melrose