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BOSTON CITY COUNCIL PRESIDENT

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Chief Segun Idowu
Economic Opportunity and Inclusion, City of Boston
1 City Hall Square, Suite 500. Boston, MA 0220

RE: Equity in Contracting Hearing/Tourism Follow Up

Dear Chief Idowu,

Thank you again for joining us at the recent City Council hearing on equitable contracting and business opportunities around major events. Your engagement and the Administration's leadership set the tone for what should be a defining decade of inclusive growth.

Since the hearing, the City has released the FY25 Equity in City Contracts report and the Commonwealth has launched the MA250 "Road to 2026" initiative, including over \$6 million in statewide investments and a blockbuster Esplanade celebration. These announcements reinforce how Boston's mega-events, from FIFA to MA250, must serve as engines of shared prosperity.

Building on our discussion from the hearing, I wanted to summarize key takeaways and propose a set of policy ideas rooted in what we heard at the hearing, and best practices we can learn from, like cities preparing for FIFA 2026. *Key Takeaways from the Hearing:*

- The city should act as a connector, not just a regulator. This means leveraging our convening power to bridge FIFA organizers and local businesses early.
- Several business owners echoed the sentiment: "We don't need handouts, we need clear pathways."
- Councilors and advocates underscored that "this can't be a one-time shot; we should build structures that last through 2026 and beyond."

Follow-Up Policy Suggestions

1. Establish a Citywide Inclusive Events Procurement Framework
 - Require all host committees and City-supported events (FIFA, MA250, Boston 400) to submit supplier diversity plans with clear M/WBE goals, timelines, and reporting benchmarks.
 - Appoint an "Event Equity Officer" to coordinate across departments, track contracts, and ensure compliance.
 - Seattle has embedded supplier diversity requirements into its FIFA event contracting, with regular reporting to the City Council.
2. Launch a "FIFA-Ready" Business Support Program That Can Be Reused
 - Host multilingual certification clinics, RFP workshops, and vendor registration drives through trusted community partners.
 - Publish a FIFA 2026 vendor guide and promote a prequalified roster of local diverse suppliers to general contractors.



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- Kansas City launched the "KC Game Plan" with bilingual playbooks and self-assessment tools to prepare small businesses for World Cup procurement.
- 3. Unbundle Contracts and Create Tiered Bidding Opportunities
 - Break down large contracts into accessible scopes and create a fast-track pipeline using the Sheltered Market and Inclusive Quote tools.
 - Include mentor-protégé requirements in high-dollar contracts to pair large vendors with emerging local M/WBEs.
 - Atlanta's Olympic strategy used joint ventures and contract unbundling to steer over 30% of purchases to minority- and women-owned firms.
- 4. Support Visibility and Activation of BIPOC- and Immigrant-Owned Businesses
 - Help develop equity-forward cultural tourism campaigns and fund pop-ups or festivals in historically excluded commercial districts.
 - Partner with systemic organizations like Meet Boston and World Cup committees to promote minority-owned retailers and service providers.
 - Philadelphia's World Cup planning includes a vendor interest portal and community festivals showcasing Black and immigrant-owned businesses.
- 5. Institutionalize a Legacy Structure for 2026 and Beyond
 - Create a Boston Inclusive Events Council of city staff, community chambers, and event organizers to coordinate economic inclusion across FIFA, MA250, and Boston 400.
 - Expand the City's procurement dashboard to include event-specific equity data and create a long-term vendor engagement portal.
 - Paris 2024 created a permanent online platform for SME vendor registration that will be maintained after the Olympics to support legacy inclusion.

As Governor Healey said at the launch of MA250, "Every community is going to be a part of these commemorations and celebrate all the benefits that they'll bring." This is Boston's chance to lead on economic justice, not just equity as a value but equity as an outcome.

I look forward to continuing the partnership with your office to ensure our city's moment on the world stage uplifts all of Boston's communities.

With appreciation,

Ruthzee Louijeune
Boston City Council President