



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

# PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date: January 18, 2023

Subject: Climate Resilience Zoning Petition

Recommendation: The Planning Board recommends ADOPTION.

To the Honorable, the City Council,

On January 10, 2023, the Planning Board (the “Board”) held a public hearing on a Zoning Petition (the “Petition”) by the Planning Board to create two new Sections 22.80 “Flood Resilience Standards” and 22.90 “Green Factor Standard,” and to amend Articles 2.000, 5.000, 19.000, and 22.000 to adjust development standards and urban design objectives with the goal of promoting resilience to the projected impacts of climate change.

Board members heard a presentation from Community Development Department (CDD) staff, heard comments from the public, and asked questions of CDD and Department of Public Works staff. After deliberation, the Board voted in strong support of adoption.

Board members commented on the importance of climate resilience and expressed a sense of pride that Cambridge is leading the region and the nation in thinking about this topic. The process of developing this proposal was cited by Board members as exemplary. It brought together stakeholders to discuss what can be achieved through zoning today, and involved compromises among different points of view to arrive at a consensus. This Petition represents a starting point for resilience standards that can be evaluated and considered over time. Board members also discussed complementary efforts being taken by the City to address climate resilience, and noted that most existing buildings are not required to meet new zoning standards.

Board members also found the Petition text to be clear and well-crafted given the complexity of the topic. The Petition takes a thoughtful and systematic approach to codifying resilience concepts through specific measures such as recoverable building design and tree planting. Many comments and suggestions made during the Board’s discussion of this proposal in November were incorporated into the Petition. Therefore, the Board does not have suggested revisions.

The Board voted 7-0 to transmit the above recommendation. One member was absent.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,

*Catherine Preston Connolly*

Catherine Preston Connolly, Chair.