

City of Cambridge  
 Climate Resilience Zoning Task Force  
**Principles and Factors to Guide Zoning Strategies**

Principle	Factors
<p>1. <b>Focus on people, communities, and equity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider human needs in relation to the physical environment;</li> <li>• For residential development, focus on health, safety, and livability of people’s homes;</li> <li>• For commercial development, focus on economic impacts that broadly affect people’s lives;</li> <li>• Acknowledge the differing capacities for risk of people across the income spectrum;</li> <li>• Foster greater social connectiveness and mutual support.</li> </ul>
<p>2. <b>Account for differentiation and choice</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Differentiation</i>: Apply different strategies to different land use scenarios (e.g., new buildings can be elevated while elevating existing buildings or systems is more difficult; open space and tree plantings will have different effects in areas with different prevailing patterns of development);</li> <li>• <i>Choice</i>: Provide options to allow for economic choices (e.g., cost of floodproofing to withstand damage vs. cost of replacement; installation of structural sun-shading devices vs. green infrastructure).</li> </ul>
<p>3. <b>Balance strategies to address new construction and existing development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target policies to new construction or existing development depending on how much of the population will be affected;</li> <li>• Evaluate what changes to existing buildings can reasonably be expected if they are incentivized and what changes are less likely to be feasible;</li> <li>• Assess implications of the recent trend toward more intensive use of basement space in existing buildings.</li> </ul>
<p>4. <b>Use performance-based standards as well as prescriptive standards</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt standards that allow for a range of possible solutions;</li> <li>• Set performance standards for larger development that undergoes a higher level of review;</li> <li>• Set prescriptive standards where they can be applied universally across a broad range of land use and development scenarios;</li> <li>• Use tested and established frameworks where possible (e.g., LEED resilience credits as a starting point);</li> <li>• Incorporate programmatic approaches (e.g., emergency preparedness plans) where practical.</li> </ul>

<p><b>5. Allow flexibility in changing circumstances</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Incrementalism</i>: Promote present actions that can lead to future improvements (e.g., designing roofs to anticipate the future installation of green infrastructure), mindful of the balance of risks and costs;</li> <li>• <i>Ratcheting</i>: Modify standards to become more or less strenuous as climate projections and associated risks change over time;</li> <li>• <i>Learning</i>: Periodically review what strategies have worked, if desired outcomes are being achieved, and if changes are needed to achieve outcomes or adjust to new data;</li> <li>• <i>Patience</i>: Recognize that the built environment changes slowly so evaluating the effectiveness of zoning interventions requires time to see impacts and benefits unfold.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Support actions with co-benefits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement strategies that mitigate both flooding and heat;</li> <li>• Prioritize strategies that have other benefits such as reduced energy demand (e.g., passive livability), improved water quality (e.g. increased pervious surface), air quality, open space, habitat, or recreation when possible;</li> <li>• Balance strategies that improve flooding and heat resilience with other city priorities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Seek effectiveness</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose strategies that are the best suited to address the issue or impact;</li> <li>• Use zoning to complement non-zoning tools and other actions the City is undertaking (e.g. CCPR);</li> <li>• Affect enough sustainable development to have a meaningful impact on residents and the built environment;</li> <li>• Aim for benefits at the individual property, abutter, neighborhood and city scale that will exceed costs over the life of a structure.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Make decisions based on best available data and science</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a base of knowledge for future decision-making by continuing to collect and evaluate information about climate change and its impacts;</li> <li>• Plan for climate science to evolve and our understanding of impacts to become clearer with time;</li> <li>• Use forward-looking data, acknowledging uncertainties while anticipating that future climate conditions will be warmer and wetter.</li> </ul>