

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS GABRIELA COLETTA, JOHN FITZGERALD, BREADON, DURKAN, FERNANDES ANDERSON, MEJIA, MURPHY, PEPÉN, SANTANA, WEBER, WORRELL, AND LOUIJEUNE



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING IMPLEMENTING COASTAL RESILIENCE STRATEGIES FOR BOSTON'S WATERFRONT

- WHEREAS,** Boston's waterfront is a historic and treasured resource that is protected for all residents by the Public Waterfront Act (Chapter 91). As we prepare for sea-level rise due to climate change, we must prioritize waterfront planning and development that incorporates resilience, equity, accessibility; *and*
- WHEREAS,** According to a report from the First Street Foundation, Suffolk County faces the greatest risk of flooding with more than 45% of our critical infrastructure at risk, including hospitals, police, and fire stations. This is expected to increase by 20% by 2051; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Coastal flooding due to storm surge has increased on a more frequent basis and affects property owners and tenants alike. Severe flooding will result in the displacement of thousands, predominantly those who are low-income and people of color, renters in basement or first-floor level units within the flood zone; *and*
- WHEREAS,** The term "coastal resilience" is defined as building the ability of a community to "bounce-back" after hazardous events such as hurricanes, coastal storms, and flooding – rather than simply reacting to impacts; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Boston has a significant role in ensuring all 47-miles of our coastline are truly resilient.. Moving beyond a parcel-by-parcel approach will not adequately address the urgent threat of coastal flooding. We must be able to meet the sea, on a district-wide scale, use both passive and active permeable landscapes; *and*
- WHEREAS,** In 2022, the City completed an initial assessment of our coastline that identifies our most vulnerable areas and provides recommendations that include both nature-based and man-made infrastructure strategies; *and*
- WHEREAS,** Given the urgency to address the devastating impacts of the climate crisis, it is crucial to move beyond the assessment stage to implementation. Identifying the necessary resources as well as working collaboratively with private, public, and philanthropic partners should be a top priority for both the Environment, Energy,

and Open Space cabinet as well as the Boston Planning and Development Agency; *and*

WHEREAS, Any investments along our way should utilize contemporary resilience strategies seen around the world and meet goals set out by Climate Ready Boston. Collaboration with academic partners like the UMass Boston Stone Living Lab is key to analyzing the merits of large engineering solutions to sea-level rise, as applied in European cities such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Venice; *and*

WHEREAS, It is the City’s responsibility to identify all strategies and tools to ensure Boston’s 47-mile coastline is resilient, inclusive, and accessible to all residents to mitigate impacts of climate change. We must realize a more robust, equitable vision for Boston’s waterfront and more intentional city-level coordination of waterfront projects, led by a single individual or entity; *and*

WHEREAS, Dozens of waterfront organizations and affiliated groups have called on the City of Boston to create an “Office of the Waterfront” or a potential cabinet-level position with the title “Chief Resilience Officer” as seen in Hoboken, New Jersey;
NOW THEREFORE BE IT

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council holds a hearing to discuss a holistic, district-wide planning process for Boston’s district one waterfront, and that relevant members of the Cabinet of Environment, Energy, and Open Space, the Boston Planning and Development Agency, with other advocacy organizations and stakeholders invited to testify.

Filed on: January 24, 2024