



BOSTON CITY COUNCIL

Committee on Environmental Justice, Resiliency and Parks
Kendra Lara, Chair

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR

March 1, 2023

Dear Councilors,

The Committee on Environmental Justice, Resiliency and Parks was referred the following dockets:

Docket #0116, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of One Million Six Hundred Thirty-Three Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,633,500.00) in the form of a grant, for the Resilient Moakley Connectors, awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, passed through the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, to be administered by the Environment Department. The grant will fund pre-construction planning and design activities in the northern and southern areas adjacent to Moakley Park, located along the waterfront of Dorchester and South Boston neighborhoods. The project is separate but complementary to the flood mitigation project within Moakley Park, and

Docket #0117, Message and order authorizing the City of Boston to accept and expend the amount of Eight Hundred Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$870,000.00) in the form of a grant, for Climate Resilience, awarded by the Barr Foundation to be administered by the Environment Department. The grant will fund the continued implementation of Climate Ready Boston initiatives. This includes advancing coastal resilience and heat resilience strategies, prioritizing equitable electrification and creating a community tree care program.

These matters were sponsored by the Administration and referred to the Committee on January 11, 2023.

Summary of Legislation:

Docket #0116 is a grant for \$1,633,500.00, awarded by FEMA, flowing through the Massachusetts Energy Management Agency to the City of Boston Environment Department to fund the pre-construction planning and design process for the Resilient Moakley Connectors project. This project which should take 2-3 years to complete, is separate but complementary to the existing flood mitigation project within Moakley Park. The pre-construction planning and design process will entail looking into how to expand upon the extensive work of the existing Moakley Park Project (MPP) by extending the line of flood protection slightly north and south of the park.

Docket #0117 is a grant for \$870,000.00, awarded by the Barr Foundation to the City of Boston Environment Department, to fund the implementation of Climate Ready Boston initiatives over the next three years.

Information Gathered at the Hearing:

The Committee held a hearing on Thursday, February 23, 2023. The Chair was joined by Councilor Michael Flaherty, At-Large, and received an absence letter from Councilor Erin Murphy, At-Large. Dr. Alison Brizius, Commissioner of the Environment Department, testified on behalf of the Administration.

The Administration testified that **Docket #0116** will build on a number of years of community engagement and work to help Boston prepare for the effects of climate change. It was confirmed that the planning and design process will be done not only in collaboration with community partners and neighborhood organizations but also with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and Massachusetts Water Resource Authority, as they are holders of critical infrastructure adjacent to Moakley Park.

The Administration testified that **Docket #0117** will support ongoing efforts to increase climate resilience across the city through funding increased staff capacity (hiring project managers) to advance and implement a number of resilience priorities across the city, identified through the Climate Ready Report, including coastal resilience, heat resilience, energy resilience, increasing tree canopy.

Questions were raised regarding tactical effectiveness and whether the grant could go towards doing more offensive flood mitigation projects rather than defensive ones. The Administration explained that as a part of the Climate Ready Boston study in 2016, they conducted a comprehensive study around a harbor wide barrier and concluded that while it may help during a storm, it will not solve the problems caused by sea level rise on the coast, but assured they would continue to revisit the idea while carrying out other projects, like those funded under the current grants.

At the request of the Committee, the Administration agreed to update the Council on community engagement initiatives and to keep District Councilors involved throughout the process.

Recommended Action:

The Chair of the Committee on Environmental Justice, Resiliency and Parks, to which the following dockets were referred:

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submits a report recommending that these dockets **ought to pass**.



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