



Are you on board?

15 State Street Suite 1100
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bostonharbornow.org

September 22, 2022

1 City Hall Square
Iannella Chamber
Boston, MA 02201

Re: Comprehensive, District-Wide Planning for Boston's Waterfront

Dear Members of the Boston City Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment at tonight's meeting.

The Boston City Council understands the changing nature of the Boston waterfront, the improvements that have been made, and the challenges that coastal communities currently face.

Across Councilor Coletta's District, there has not been a dearth of planning, but rather layers of planning that follow the guidelines for specific formal processes but lack the comprehensive implementation to serve all residents holistically.

- Municipal Harbor Plans address waterfront parcels outside of designated port areas that are vacant or targeted for redevelopment without fully considering adjacent waterfront parcels that don't meet that criteria.
- Climate Ready Plans (also known as "Coastal Resilience Solutions" plans) address future flood hazards from sea level rise and extreme storms. Although the preliminary design concepts strive to utilize good urban design, they focus primarily on flood control without weighing trade offs involving waterfront access and visibility or fully assessing the timeline for dramatically altering buildings and roadways
- Neighborhood Plans tend to look at transportation, housing, and open space issues within the neighborhoods but do not fully address climate adaptation strategies and other coastal issues.

We've seen numerous parks and private development projects reshape the Boston waterfront over the past several decades. In the meantime the planning strategies across multiple levels of government have not changed to meet new challenges. Chapter 91 has created waterfront access and some public



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amenities, but the “build it and they will come” mentality is no longer sufficient to address pressing crises -- new criteria for inclusivity and climate change preparedness are needed.

This is why Boston Harbor Now uses a “Harborwalk 2.0” framework to define our aspirations for the waterfront: a vision for the work ahead and a framework for ensuring that all waterfront parcels provide

1. Connected coastal resilience through a variety of effective climate adaptation strategies
2. Improved access with physical connectivity and diverse activation strategies that make the Harborwalk an inviting and enjoyable place for all Bostonians to spend time; and
3. An equitable design and operation that dismantles barriers preventing people from taking advantage of the waterfront along lines of race, gender identity, ability, language, and more, and ensuring permanent features and programming that serves the diverse residents of Boston

Boston Harbor Now is committed to supporting municipal, state, and grassroots planning efforts to provide a comprehensive and connected vision for a waterfront that meets the economic, social, and hazard protection needs of every resident, especially the most vulnerable, in East Boston, Charlestown, the North End, and beyond. We are currently working on organizing a community design process along Fort Point and would like to expand this model to other areas as appropriate.

In addition to planning, we are eager to ensure that these visions are fully implemented and have funding mechanisms for maintenance and programming beyond initial implementation. We look forward to remaining engaged and appreciate your commitment to the waterfront.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katherine F. Abbott".

Katherine F. Abbott
President and CEO
Boston Harbor Now