

To: City of Boston City Council

Subject: Testimony for Hearing Regarding A Comprehensive, District-Wide Planning Process For Boston's Waterfront

From: Gerald H. Angoff, President, Constellation Wharf Condominium Association, Pier 7, Charlestown

Date: September 22, 2022

Attention: Councilor Gabriela Coletta and Councilors Arroyo, Baker, Bok, Breadon, Fernandes, Flaherty, Louijeune, Mejia, Murphy, Worrell and Flynn:

I wish to submit testimony for the Hearing September, 22, 2022 which I am unable to attend.

Boston's waterfront is currently and will be increasingly at risk from sea level rise. Although referenced in many discussions and articles and the time line for flood risk increase documented by magnitude and map location, no viable, actionable plan has been proposed or is available. Climate Ready Boston has been a process underway for at least 5 years resulting in documents under the umbrella of Climate Ready Charlestown. These documents define the problem well. However, the recently released report Coastal Resilience Solutions for East Boston and Charlestown - Phase II proposes solutions that will not protect the waterfront or the adjacent properties.

Charlestown is unique in that its waterfront is the historic Navy Yard, part of the Boston National Historic Park. It is owned in part privately, in part by the City of Boston and in part by the National Park Service. In the most recent plan for Charlestown, the primary proposal is for a 5-7 foot elevation of the Harborwalk which is neither feasible or desirable. Much of the Charlestown Harborwalk is narrow, supported by pilings and rests on an aging seawall. Some of the Harborwalk is privately owned land. The seawall area from Flagship Wharf to Pier 3 is vulnerable and currently undergoing engineering evaluation. Raising the Harborwalk 5-7 feet will block views of the harbor and block access to the Navy Yard piers which are excluded from any related flood protection. The buildings of the former Navy Yard are all linked by utility tunnels which would bypass the Harborwalk barrier. The secondary solution would be to raise First Avenue as a barrier to flooding. This solution would relegate the seaward portion of the Navy Yard to perpetual flooding. No engineering plans for either solution are contained within this document. Also of note is the absence of any plan or integration with plans of the National Park Service for their area which includes the USS Constitution. In the Climate Resilience proposal this area has no protection.

<https://www.boston.gov/sites/default/files/file/2022/08/Coastal-Resilience-Solutions-for-East-Boston-and-Charlestown-Phase-II-August-2022.pdf>).

In brief, the Coastal Resilience plans for Charlestown and its Navy Yard waterfront are conceptual and wishful rather than detailed and actionable. They lack any engineering specifics despite a time line of 2030 for some or their recommendations. The plans would seal off some properties from flood protection or relegate much of the Navy Yard, a National Historic Park, to flooding.

I would request that the City Council review in detail this document and grapple in substance with the proposals it contains rather than assuming that true solutions are present within its pages. A new and revised approach and proposal is needed.