



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Date: July 21, 2015

Subject: Incentive Zoning Petition

Recommendation: The Planning Board recommends ADOPTION.

To the Honorable, the City Council,

Following a presentation of the proposed amendments to the Incentive Zoning provisions in Section 11.200 of the Zoning Ordinance and the study that provides the rational nexus supporting those amendments, and having heard testimony from the public, the Board recommends adopting the proposed amendments as one way to further support the housing needs of low, moderate and middle income households. Additionally, the Board has the following comments.

Regarding the applicability of Incentive Zoning requirements, the Board supports eliminating the provision that only projects seeking certain special permits would be subject to them, and supports the proposed expansion of uses that would be subject to the requirements.

Regarding the proposed initial contribution rate of \$12 per square foot, the Board believes that the rate should be no less than that amount but leaves it to the City Council to determine the appropriate rate based on a consideration of the needs identified in the study and the potential impacts on future economic development in the City. The Board also recommends continuing the annual one-dollar-per-square-foot increase in the contribution rate beyond 2018 and until such time as the Council makes an adjustment in the contribution rate based on a future economic study; but the Board cautions that the rate should not be increased beyond the maximum defensible rate identified in the most recently completed study.

Regarding the provision for adjustments based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the Board suggests investigating whether language can be included to ensure that the contribution rate would not be decreased below the then current amount in the event that the CPI decreased over the course of a given year, and further suggests clarifying what index will be used, while retaining the ability to use a different but equivalent standard in the future.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,

H Theodore Cohen, Chair.