CHARLES RIVER conservancy

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Community Preservation Committee, City of Boston
251 Causeway Street, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Support for the Herter Park — Permanent Cooling Canopy for Riverstage (Climate Resilience Improvement) (FY2027 CPA application)

October 29, 2026

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Charles River Conservancy to support the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and Friends of Herter Park in their application for Community Preservation Act funding to build a shade canopy at Riverstage at Herter Park, 1175 Soldiers Field Road, Allston.

Founded in 2000, the Charles River Conservancy (CRC) works to make the Lower Charles River and its parks more vibrant, healthy, and welcoming now and in the future. In partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and other stakeholders, we connect communities to the river and its parks, create impactful solutions, and celebrate the intersection of people and nature. We steward 10 miles of riverfront in Boston, Cambridge, and Watertown, serving 300,000 nearby residents and 1 million+ visitors with diverse programming, community engagement, and coalition-driven advocacy.

The gloriously expansive Herter Park is one of the primary parks in our geography where we routinely host volunteer cleanup events, promote connectivity and safety along the much-utilized greenways, and engage with neighbors and visitors on evolving community needs.

The CRC's stewardship efforts regularly support Riverstage at Herter Park, from painting and upkeep of the stage and seating, to litter cleanup and invasive vegetation management. We collaborate as partners with the Friends of Herter Park to stay abreast of ongoing park updates, including construction schedules

or planned work. We also regularly cross-promote Riverstage events on our communications channels, as we believe the talent, production, and imagination behind the culturally diverse programming provides a free, welcoming, and inclusive space for all to enjoy the park and make exhilarating memories along the Charles River.

Providing a comfortable outdoors experience for the public is aligned with the CRC's mission to make the Lower Charles River and its parks more vibrant, healthy, and welcoming now and in the future. Riverstage is a free, 550-seat outdoor amphitheater open to the whole neighborhood. Today it has no shade, which makes the space hard to use on hot days, especially for socially vulnerable residents in an Environmental Justice community impacted by the Urban Heat Island Effect in Allston/Brighton. A permanent canopy would make Riverstage usable throughout our increasingly hot summers, for everyday community use during the day as well as for events. A shaded Riverstage would not only provide comfort and relief to park visitors during ever-rising temperatures, but would also be an incredible cooling oasis for our team and hundreds of corporate, institutional, and youth groups who donate their time to beautify Herter Park year after year.

We believe a shade canopy at Riverstage is an ideal target of CPA funds. This is a one-time capital improvement to a public park that is free and open to everyone. Riverstage is a DCR state park, and DCR has committed to maintaining the canopy long term. This investment would serve Allston, Brighton, and neighboring Boston communities for years to come.

We urge the Committee to support this application in the name of shade justice and equity.

Sincerely,



Laura Jasinski
Executive Director, Charles River Conservancy
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