

*Town of Weymouth
Massachusetts*

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Press Release

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Weymouth receives \$51K grant to address flood mitigation at Puritan Road

The award is one of 19 state grants given to coastal communities to improve climate change resilience in Massachusetts.

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Weymouth, MA – The Baker-Polito Administration has awarded over \$1.8 million in grants to support local efforts to prepare for and reduce the impacts from coastal storms and climate change, including storm surge, flooding, erosion, and sea level rise. The Town of Weymouth was one of 19 communities to receive funding as part of the state's Coastal Resilience Grant Program, now in its fourth year. Weymouth's award (\$51,504) will support final design plans and permit documents for replacing a persistently collapsing culvert with a combination pre-cast tunnel and open-air channel at Puritan Road in East Weymouth.

"Massachusetts is taking a leading role in understanding and preparing for climate change impacts like sea level rise and coastal flooding," **said Governor Charlie Baker in a statement released by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA).** "These coastal resilience grants are an excellent example of these efforts, providing direct funding and technical assistance to help our coastal communities address these issues in a pragmatic and proactive way."

"Storm surge and flooding are the most prevalent, serious natural hazards facing Weymouth, and climate change is only exacerbating their impacts," **explained Mayor Robert Hedlund.** "The Puritan Road project is a great example of how coastal communities like Weymouth are redesigning vulnerable infrastructure to better protect

residents from changing weather patterns, rising sea levels, and greater risk to quality of life. This grant is a step forward in helping us achieve results.”

“Our coastal communities are regularly affected by storm surges, flooding, and beach erosion,” **said State Senator Patrick O’Connor in a statement released by the EEA.** “The Coastal Resilience Grant funding will help address the ongoing impacts from flooding and sea level rise in the South Shore communities, and I’m happy to see these investments in the Marshfield, Scituate, and Weymouth coastal projects.”

CZM’s Coastal Resilience Grant Program provides financial and technical support for innovative local efforts to increase awareness and understanding of climate impacts, plan for changing conditions, redesign vulnerable infrastructure, and implement measures that use natural or non-structural approaches as an alternative to hard structures like seawalls and groins. Grants can be used for planning, public outreach, feasibility assessments, and analysis of shoreline, as well as for design, permitting, construction, and monitoring of projects that provide storm damage protection and enhance natural resources. Over \$7 million has previously been awarded to communities and nonprofits through these grants, supporting 52 projects along the coast, including two projects in Weymouth.

Weymouth’s Puritan Road Flood Mitigation and Ecological Resilience project, funded in the FY17 grant round, seeks to address a persistently collapsing culvert located on Puritan Road at the entrance to Great Esker Park on the Weymouth Back River. The culvert currently runs beneath the roadway carrying tidal waters and storm runoff to and from the Back River and an inland salt marsh. Because the culvert is collapsing, sink holes continually appear in the roadway above, endangering visitors to the local park. In addition, engineering studies have confirmed that the culvert is choking the natural tidal flow between the Back River and salt marsh, increasing the duration of flooding in event of a severe storm and compromising the water quality and functions of the Back River estuary as a breeding ground, food source, and nursery for marine life.

The Town of Weymouth previously received Coastal Resilience Grant funds in FY15 to develop a restoration plan for the Puritan Rd culvert given anticipated climate change impacts. Consultants of the Town have proposed replacing the culvert (a corrugated metal pipe) with a new pre-cast box culvert and a 150-ft long open-air channel. The plan would not only reduce flooding in the area but also restore the tidal creek to a more natural condition – one better equipped to cope with rising sea levels and changing weather patterns and hence protect nearby residential homes against flooding. The Town’s award of \$51,504 will allow final design and permit documents to be completed, and leave the project “shovel ready” for future funding opportunities.

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