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# Press Release

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## Weymouth awarded \$500K grant to replace bridge over Herring Brook

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Weymouth, MA – Mayor Robert Hedlund announced today that Weymouth has been awarded a \$500,000 grant through the MassDOT's Municipal Small Bridge Program to replace the Commercial Street Bridge, which extends over the Herring Brook in Jackson Square. Weymouth's Chief of Staff Ted Langill, Town Engineer Chip Fontaine, and Administrative Services Coordinator Nicholas Bulens, representing Mayor Hedlund, joined Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito, Transportation Secretary and CEO Stephanie Pollack, and Highway Administrator Thomas Tinlin for an announcement ceremony at the Massachusetts State House on March 29th. A total of \$16 million was awarded to 36 communities.

"The Commercial Street Bridge is more than just transportation infrastructure; it's something that connects people to opportunities in our village center while protecting one of Weymouth's most important natural and cultural resources," **said Mayor Hedlund**. "I thank the Baker-Polito Administration and the MassDOT for helping our community replace this critical bridge."

The Municipal Small Bridge Program is a new \$50 million program, signed into law by Governor Baker and supported by Weymouth's legislative delegation, to aid cities and towns in the replacement and preservation of locally-owned small bridges with spans between 10 and 20 feet. These bridges are not eligible for federal aid under existing bridge replacement or rehabilitation programs and an increasing number are at high risk for full or partial closure due to their present conditions.

Weymouth's Commercial Street Bridge has played an important role in the town's history as a special location to view the herring migration each spring. It has also supported traffic flow and access to businesses in Jackson Square throughout evolution of the village center. Multiple state inspection reports have concluded that the bridge is structurally deficient due to severe deterioration of the bridge deck as well as deficient abutments. Since 1999, the bridge has been posted for five tons with the recommendation that the structure receive major rehabilitation or be completely replaced. The bridge has required continual maintenance to address recurring sinkholes. A steel plate was installed to span over severe localized deck deterioration to keep the bridge in service.

Weymouth's grant application was supported by Commissioner George Peterson Jr. of the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game (DFG), as well as Director David Pierce of the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF).

"We applaud the Town of Weymouth for their past efforts to maintain the infrastructure that allows river herring to make their annual migration," **said Director Pierce** in a letter of support for Weymouth's application. "This project is another good example of Weymouth seeking to improve their transportation infrastructure while preserving important natural and cultural features at the same time."

"This funding through the state's Municipal Small Bridge Program will help strengthen a crucial piece of Weymouth's infrastructure while also ensuring that the Commercial Street Bridge remains intact for the enjoyment of future Herring Run spectators in Jackson Square," **said State Representative Ronald Mariano**.

"Over the years, I have advocated for state funding to be allocated to the preservation of Weymouth's Herring Run," **said State Representative James Murphy**. "This grant is twofold: not only does it support one of our town's treasured assets; it provides for the replacement and improvement of a central transportation route – the Commercial Street Bridge."

"The Commercial Street Bridge is vital to the Town of Weymouth for resident and businesses access while protecting the Herring Run in Jackson Square," **said Senator Patrick O'Connor**. "Rebuilding our infrastructure is a great investment for the future of the South Shore, and I thank the Administration and MassDOT for their support in that effort."

The Town plans to replace the bridge with a precast concrete arch that will improve transportation infrastructure in Jackson Square without impacting the width or flow of the Herring Brook. The total project cost is estimated at one million dollars.

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