

*Town of Weymouth
Massachusetts*

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Press Release

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Weymouth awarded \$184K Seaport Economic Council Grant for boardwalk design to connect beaches

The boardwalk project seeks to connect George Lane Beach and Wessagusset Beach through an accessible walkway with passive recreational amenities.

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Weymouth, MA – Mayor Robert Hedlund announced today a \$184,000 Seaport Economic Council Grant to the Town of Weymouth to design and permit an accessible pedestrian boardwalk between George Lane Beach and Wessagusset Beach in North Weymouth. The Seaport Economic Council, chaired by Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito, approved nearly \$5 million in awards to 13 coastal communities on February 2nd. Mayor Hedlund, Administrative Services Coordinator Nicholas Bulens, and Waterfront Committee Chair George Mutch joined all grantees in presenting their projects to the Council on that day in Fall River.

Upon entering office in 2016, Mayor Hedlund revived the Town's dormant Waterfront Committee to identify outstanding opportunities for waterfront enhancements.

"The idea for designing and building a boardwalk has been shelved for almost 30 years. Our newly energized Committee identified this project as its top priority," **said Mayor Hedlund**. "Weymouth's coastline is a hidden gem and an underutilized asset to drive improvements along Route 3A. I am glad that we can partner with the Seaport Economic Council to start this project and begin enhancing the potential of our waterfront."

Weymouth's Waterfront Plan, prepared in 1988, was the first planning document to propose a pedestrian boardwalk between the Wessagusset "old beach" and the George Lane "new beach". The two areas are separated by approximately 2,000 feet of coastline that is inaccessible at high tide and remains largely inaccessible at low tide due to large quantities of boulders, cobblestones, and concrete debris in the intertidal zone. The proposed project will design and permit a boardwalk to traverse this coastline, and incorporate new passive recreational opportunities for pedestrians such as viewing vistas, resting and seating areas, a fishing pier, and interpretive signage to highlight Weymouth's history as a coastal community. The design will also improve access from the overlook "shelf" at Wessagusset Road to the shoreline below.

The boardwalk project seeks to double the length of contiguous open space at Weymouth's beaches and enhance the recreational value of the town's historic waterfront. Studies show that neighborhoods that leverage natural features, particularly water resources, tend to have the greatest draw and staying power to support businesses, housing, and tourism. With an ocean-front boardwalk, the Town hopes to create a unique waterfront destination that will support future development of its Route 3A highway district.

Weymouth's Waterfront Committee will oversee the project with support from the Town's Department of Planning and Community Development. Initial design concepts will be presented in public meetings where Town staff will take public comment and look to build consensus on a vision for the boardwalk.

"This grant is a big step forward for Weymouth's vision to connect our two beaches with a waterfront resource for all to enjoy," **said Waterfront Committee Chair George Mutch.** "Most residents are not even aware of this coastal area due to its current condition. I want to thank Mayor Hedlund for recognizing the value of this project and his commitment to building open spaces for our town."

The Seaport Economic Council's capital grant program supports working waterfronts, local tourism, coastal resiliency, and maritime innovation from the North Shore to Cape Cod and the South Coast. The Council was revitalized in August of 2015 under Executive Order 564 to deepen the maritime economy, promote economic development, and support resilient infrastructure in all 78 of Massachusetts' coastal communities. The Council encourages these communities to bring forward the best ideas and projects for cultivating and stimulating the maritime economic sector and driving growth for businesses and residents. Weymouth's boardwalk project is the Town's first effort to utilize this capital grant program.

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