

*Town of Weymouth
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Press Release

For Immediate Release – January 9, 2020

Weymouth Awarded \$183K Grant for Columbian Square Traffic Improvements

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Weymouth, MA – On January 9th, the Baker/Polito Administration announced the recipients of the competitive FY20 Housing Choice Initiative Grant Program at a presentation hosted by the Department of Housing and Community Development at the Brockton City Hall. Weymouth was awarded \$183,000 in grant funding to provide for traffic improvements at Columbian Square. Weymouth was designated a Housing Choice Community in 2016.

This grant funding will be matched by approximately \$50,000 in Town funds and will provide for the completion of preliminary design plans that will address much-needed infrastructure improvements in Columbian Square. These improvements will support current and future housing development, particularly that from Union Point.

"This program is all about opportunity and is in our portfolio of work that needs our attention," said **Lieutenant Governor Polito**. "Today is an opportunity to create more [housing] units for people to have alternatives...and this grant to 30 communities will address needs."

"Resolving the traffic and intersection issues of Columbian Square have been long overdue," said **Mayor Hedlund**. "The funding from this grant program will not just address the issues from a traffic standpoint but will provide for a more holistic overhaul of the intersection, taking into account the increased housing development at Union Point as well as bicycle and pedestrian foot traffic."

The Housing Choice Community Capital Grant is administered by the Commonwealth's Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The

Housing Choice program was created in 2018 under the Baker/Polito administration in order to provide incentives, technical assistance, and funding to encourage municipalities to continue planning and building a diversified housing stock in Massachusetts. Weymouth was designated a Housing Choice Community in 2018. The Town applied for a Housing Choice Initiative grant in FY19 but was not awarded. Under the FY20 competitive grant program, the Town applied for the funds for the preliminary engineering design services for the revitalization and reconstruction of Columbian Square. With the potential for additional development of over 2,00 residential units in Union Point, it is critical that the Town make Columbian Square a safer location particularly for pedestrians and improve aesthetics to provide for future development of the village center as well as make it more of a destination for patrons and businesses.

The grant will fund engineering services to complete 25% design that will review capacity analysis, confirm proposed lane configurations, and other proposed roadway/pedestrian improvements. A completed 25% design plan could then be funded by the Union Point project or, in the event a master developer is unable to be secured, it will be eligible for inclusion on the MassDOT Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

The Housing Choice Initiative Capital program is a competitive grant program that issues awards based on the project's nexus with housing, the municipality's housing production record, and sustainable growth policies that go beyond the housing choice requirements. The infrastructure improvements at Columbian Square are a much needed component to unlock development at Union Point and in the village center.

For more information on the Housing Choice Initiative capital project, please contact the Town's Planning and Community Development Department at 781-340-5015 or visit: <https://www.weymouth.ma.us/planning-community-development>.

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