



APPLICATION FOR MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

Wellesley, MA

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Schmitt, Brandon

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MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM FY 19
PLANNING GRANT
RFR ENV 19 MVP 01

Applicant (name of municipality): Wellesley

Address: 525 Washington St, Wellesley, MA 02482

Local Project Manager and Point of Contact:

Name: Brandon Schmitt

Department/Committee/Municipal Role: Director, Natural Resources Commission

Email: bschmitt@wellesleyma.gov

Phone: 781-431-1019 x2298

MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

RFR ENV 19 MVP 01

WELLESLEY, MA

1. **A signed letter of support from the chair of the board of selectmen, mayor, a town administrator, or similar city or town official showing commitment to the project and a willingness to lead on this issue. The letter should also state that municipal leadership will participate in the workshop process.**

Please see Attachment 1 for a letter of support from the Wellesley Board of Selectmen.

2. **A short statement of the municipality's commitment to taking on this grant and planning for the impacts of climate change, including their commitment to assigning a local project manager and developing a core team to support the project, outlined in the Community Resilience Building guide. Please also outline the municipality's commitment to providing sufficient staff time match to complete the project and how that will be accomplished within current resources.**

The Town of Wellesley is committed to evaluating and planning for the impacts of climate change on our community to ensure that the Town can withstand and recover from disruptions resulting from climate change, and adapt to new climate conditions to moderate harmful effects and take advantage of beneficial opportunities. Following the guidelines outlined in the Community Resilience Building guide, the Town will assign the Natural Resources Commission Director as the Project Manager and develop a core team from the Town's Planning Department, Board of Health, Department of Public Works, Natural Resources Commission and Board of Selectmen, along with at-large members of the public and representatives from local organizations. Each of these boards and departments has agreed to commit staff time adequate to complete the project and ensure ongoing reporting and implementation.

3. **The name and qualifications (please include resume and summary of experience) of an employee of the municipality, a committee member, or volunteer who can serve as the local project manager, assemble a core team to work on the project, and serve as the point of contact for the grant.**

Brandon Schmitt, Director of the Wellesley Natural Resources Commission will be the project manager. Please see Attachment 2 for his complete resume.

4. **A summary statement of municipal support, including at least 3 letters of support indicating interest in participating in the planning process from all relevant local boards, departments, commissions, businesses, organizations and other partners, including local, regional and statewide agencies or groups focused on climate change adaptation,**

emergency preparedness, planning, natural resources and land conservation. These partners are critical to the planning process and will ensure the city or town is able to develop a robust final report and build support for future work.

The Town of Wellesley, through its elected and appointed boards and departments broadly supports planning for climate change adaptation, emergency preparedness and natural resource protection through the Municipal Vulnerability Program. While all town departments will play a role in creating a resilient community, key stakeholders who have expressed support of this initiative include the Board of Selectmen, the Police and Fire Departments, Department of Public Works, Board of Health, Planning, Wetland Protection Committee and Natural Resources Commission. Please see letters of support outlined below in Attachment 3.

- 5. A description of how the municipality will use the results of this process to inform ongoing or new planning efforts including local hazard mitigation plans (HMP), open space and recreation plans, master plans, etc., and how results from this process would be used to inform that plan. Municipalities who clearly state their intention to incorporate results from the MVP program into a new or ongoing planning process may be eligible to receive additional funding through this opportunity. Please note the status of your local HMP, including if you have an active or expect to be soon completing a local HMP process (for plans expiring in 2019-2020). Municipalities with no current HMP or those with plans expiring in 2019 or 2020 are eligible for additional funding to complete or update a full draft of the HMP for MEMA review, in concert with the tasks described in Section 2A of this RFR. A merged scope of work for incorporating the tasks in Section 2A with those required to complete a full draft of an HMP will be provided during award contracting.**

The Town of Wellesley has recently adopted the first Unified Plan in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which incorporates the Town's Master Plan with strategic concepts for town government operations. Of the many values and goals identified in the plan, a cornerstone to the current Town operations is to make resource-efficient choices to conserve energy, water and materials; improve water and air quality and reduce carbon emissions; develop and implement sustainable practices to adjust to changing environmental conditions. Furthermore, the Unified Plan also states that Town decision-making, policies and activities should be evaluated through a sustainability "lens," with participation from all Town departments and attention to resource-efficiency, GHG emissions reduction, waste reduction, and use of non-toxic materials, with the additional goals to move towards 100% renewable energy, heightened public awareness about energy efficiency, waste management, and alternatives to single occupant vehicles, as well as protection of our aquifers.

The Town of Wellesley's Open Space and Recreation plan update is scheduled for 2021. Results from the MVP planning process will be incorporated into that process. Results from the MVP process may also inform or lead to a potential stormwater bylaw or edits to the Town's local wetlands regulations or tree preservation bylaw.

Currently there is no active Hazard Mitigation plan for the Town, as past efforts to develop one were unsuccessful due to insufficient resources in personnel and difficulty in finding a suitable outside consultant. There is a 2010 draft Hazard Mitigation plan, and through the Fire Department the Town coordinates hazard mitigation trainings and other related activities in partnership with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, and by utilizing the Local Emergency Planning Group to coordinate town wide efforts on an “All Hazards approach”. The LEPC focuses primarily on hazardous material incidents, but the response, population impacts, environmental impact, sheltering, etc. all are transferable to other types of hazards. The Town of Wellesley is most interested in incorporating Hazard Mitigation into our resiliency planning efforts.

- 6. Please tell us about your need to address climate change. What are the expected climate change impacts in your community and what do you think are the biggest risks? Has your community done any work to address climate change impacts in the past? Have you experienced significant loss or damage from extreme weather events, flooding, heat waves, drought, sea level rise, storm surge, or other climate change impacts?**

While not expected to be directly affected by more dramatic impacts such as coastal sea level rise, Wellesley will experience impacts such as intense precipitation and more extreme storm events, which could result in flooding, increasing heat and the number of days above 90 and 100 degrees, more extreme storm events, and more frequent droughts. In the coming decades, expected changes include significant increases in temperature, both in summer and winter; increased annual average precipitation, though with important seasonal differences, such as more frequent and damaging ice storms and floods; earlier peak spring streamflow; more frequent droughts; and a longer growing season. The community needs well-sited, walkable neighborhoods, mixed commercial and residential districts, Low Impact Development, and green buildings that can meet our economic and housing needs while maintaining ecosystem function within a built landscape. The community has seen a significant dieback of some of its mature trees due to recent droughts, and continues to deal with isolated flooding issues due to more extreme storm events. Furthermore, the Town’s surface waters continue to see the effects of warmer winters and hotter summers with lower water quality related to accelerated algae growth. As a community with its own wells, and own Municipal Light plant, it is critical that the Town develop well-articulated plans to protect its infrastructure from vulnerabilities caused by climate change.

- 7. Please indicate if your municipality contains environmental justice communities or other populations that may be particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts and natural hazards. Please describe how you will work proactively to involve these groups in the planning process.**

Wellesley does have two distinct Environmental Justice Communities (detailed in Attachment 4) based on minority populations, although those parts of the Town are not expected to be more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change than the rest of the community based on their geography. One neighborhood surrounds two local colleges, and the project team will work

directly with the college administration to develop workshops for the students and faculty, as we believe those members of the community are under-represented in community decision making.

Attachment 1: Letter of Support from Board of Selectmen

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN HALL • 525 WASHINGTON STREET • WELLESLEY, MA 02482-5992

JACK MORGAN, CHAIR
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MEGHAN C. JOP
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF GENERAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

April 30, 2019

Katie Theoharides, Assistant Secretary of Climate Change
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Ms. Theoharides,

The Board of Selectmen fully supports the Town of Wellesley's application to participate in the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program and to engage with other town officials, boards, committees, and residents in the assessment and planning process prescribed by the grant.

The Town of Wellesley has recently adopted the first Unified Plan in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts which incorporates the Town's Master Plan with strategic concepts for town government operations. Of the many values and goals identified in the plan, a cornerstone to the current Town operations is to make resource-efficient choices to conserve energy, water and materials; improve water and air quality and reduce carbon emissions; develop and implement sustainable practices to adjust to changing environmental conditions. The town hired in 2016 a part-time Sustainable Energy Coordinator to work collaboratively with the Selectmen's Office, Facilities Management Department, Natural Resources Commission, Municipal Light Plant, Board of Health, Department of Public Works, and Planning Department to achieve town-wide goals of reducing GHG emissions and incorporating sustainable practices in Town projects, and we anticipate all departmental staff members participating in this grant program.

The Town through our Unified Plan has identified that Wellesley, like all Massachusetts communities, is already experiencing some climate change impacts related to increasing temperatures and extreme weather. The Town anticipates increases in temperature may have lasting impacts on open space management from drought and/or longer growing seasons and has established a goal to prepare for the impacts of extreme weather events and climate change. The development of a vulnerability assessment and resilience plan assists the Town in achieving this goal and preparing priority actions for climate change.

The Board of Selectmen looks forward to engaging with all stakeholders in Wellesley to build a more resilient community and the Town very much appreciates the opportunity to participate in this program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jack Morgan".

Jack Morgan, Chair

Attachment 2: Qualifications of Project Manager

Brandon Schmitt is an experienced Public Administrator, with 10 years of experience working directly with local government on environmental planning issues. Mr. Schmitt has experience working with Communities of various sizes and demographics including small communities like Grand Island, Nebraska to large metropolitan areas like New York city. Most recently, Mr. Schmitt has managed the Town's Natural Resources Commission, who bears the statutory authority and responsibility of Park Commissions, Conservation Commissions, Tree Wardens, Town Forest Committees, and Forestry and Pest Control Officers. In this capacity, Mr. Schmitt is responsible for policy development and analysis, and land use evaluation, and well suited to direct collaboration amongst diverse constituents to address climate change issues that affect the community. Please see the official resume on the subsequent page.

Attachment 3: Letters of Support

See subsequent pages for letters of support from the Wellesley Wetlands Protection Committee, Planning Director, Natural Resources Commission, and Board of Health.

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



MASSACHUSETTS

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

Town Hall, 525 Washington Street, Wellesley, Massachusetts 02482-5992

Regina LaRocque, Chair
Raina McManus, Vice Chair
Laura Robert
Katie Griffith

Brandon Schmitt, Director
Telephone: 781.431.1019, Ext. 2298
Website: www.wellesleyma.gov/NRC

4/25/2019

To Whom It May Concern:

The Wellesley Natural Resources Commission (NRC) was created in 1977 and bears the statutory authority and responsibility of Park Commissions, Conservation Commissions, Tree Wardens, Town Forest Committees, and Forestry and Pest Control Officers. It is the mission of the Natural Resources Commission to provide stewardship of, education about, and advocacy for the Town of Wellesley's parks, conservation, recreation and open space areas so the full value of the Town's natural assets can be passed onto future generations.

The Commission has approximately 545 acres of conservation, parkland, and water bodies under its jurisdiction. These lands protect the town's drinking water wells, provide stormwater and flood control, support active and passive recreation, and provide important wildlife habitat. Daily maintenance of these lands is carried out by our town's Department of Public Works (DPW) according to NRC policy in a close working relationship.

Due to this close connection to our land, the NRC witnesses examples of climate change on our lands on a regular and increasing basis. Below are just a few examples.

●**Trees:** Wellesley is the longest running Tree City USA in New England, funding a robust tree planting program and tree maintenance regimen. The NRC also recently purchased a combustible gas indicator (CGI) to test for the presence of gas (methane) prior to the planting of trees. Despite these efforts, we continue to see the harmful effects of gas leaks, warmer summers, and the prolonged drought of a few years ago on our trees, especially mature sugar maples, many of which are stressed and failing. A few years ago our town also suffered the loss of many trees due to a sudden microburst which was extremely unusual for the area.

●**Water bodies:** Warmer winters are contributing to an increase in invasive aquatic plants, necessitating the creation and enactment of pond management plans. Actions include intensive and expensive weed harvesting in order to avoid eutrophication, protect drinking water quality, and maintain the water bodies for recreational uses like swimming, canoeing, and fishing.

●**Flooding:** Despite well-maintained infrastructure, Wellesley often sees street and property flooding due to increasingly frequent and more intense rainfall. The Town recently completed a \$5-million dollar restoration of the Fuller Brook Park, a 2.5 mile linear park which captures one third of the town's stormwater. This work involved brook and stream restoration, storm drain improvement, path reconstruction, pond and brook dredging, invasive plant management, landscape improvement, and educational signage.

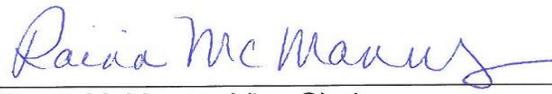
The NRC's mission of education, advocacy, and stewardship places our board in an excellent position to work with our DPW, Health Department, and especially the public to contribute to the success of a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program. In addition, during the next two years the NRC will embark on updating the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP); we envision results from the MVP program will help to inform the OSRP.

For all of the reasons above, NRC Commissioners and staff would be willing team members in partnering with town boards and departments throughout town to create and execute a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program.

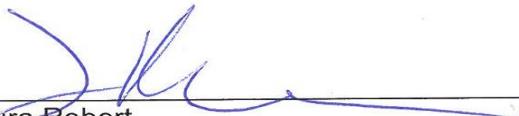
Sincerely,



Regina LaRocque, Chair



Raina McManus, Vice Chair



Laura Robert



Katie Griffith

PLANNING BOARD

Catherine Johnson, Chair
James Roberti, Vice Chair
Kathleen Woodward, Secretary
Patricia Mallett
Frank Pinto
Sheila Olson, Associate Member

TOWN OF WELLESLEY



MASSACHUSETTS

Town Hall, 525 Washington Street
Wellesley, MA 02482
Tel. (781) 431-1019 ext. 2232
Fax (781) 237-6495

Victor Panak
Interim Planning Director

April 26, 2019

Re: Submission of an Application to the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of the Planning Board to express their support for the Town of Wellesley's submission of an application for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program.

After a long community planning process involving numerous community partners and stakeholders, the Planning Board recently adopted the completed Unified Plan as the Town of Wellesley's Comprehensive Plan. The Unified Plan combines an update of Wellesley's comprehensive plan for the physical development of the town with a strategic framework for Town government operations to support implementation of the plan and provide excellent and fiscally-prudent town services. One of the goals expressly listed in the Unified Plan is to become a state-certified Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Community. The Planning Board therefore fully supports completion of this stated goal to train a group of staff and residents in identifying climate change vulnerability and priority actions, and to complete vulnerability assessments and resiliency implementation plans.

At their meeting on April 24, 2019, the Planning Board voted unanimously (5-0) to support this initiative.

Sincerely,

Victor Panak
Interim Planning Director



TOWN OF WELLESLEY MASSACHUSETTS
WETLANDS PROTECTION COMMITTEE
525 WASHINGTON STREET, WELLESLEY, MASSACHUSETTS 02482-5992

Richard Howell, Chair
Peter Jones, Vice Chair
John Adams, Secretary
Tobias Stover
Jim McLaren
Ellie McLane, Associate

Julie Meyer, Wetlands Administrator
jmeyer@wellesleyma.gov
(781) 431-1019 x2292

April 19, 2019

Re: Municipal Vulnerability Program

The Town of Wellesley Wetlands Protection Committee (WPC) administers and enforces the State Wetland Protection Act and local bylaw. Roughly 10 percent of the land area of the community falls within our 100' wetland or 200' riverfront buffers. The committee is acutely aware how important these resources are to protecting our Town's water supply and managing stormwater. We also know that as a community, we will need to plan and adapt to changes in temperature and precipitation as well as the timing and intensity of flooding and drought, and consideration of these resources will be critical. Therefore, we are thrilled to support Wellesley efforts to develop a Municipal Vulnerability Plan, and hope to incorporate the findings of that process into our own procedures and regulatory framework.

For the Committee,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Meyer".

Julie Meyer, Wetlands Administrator

Attachment 4: Environmental Justice Map

As noted in the map below Wellesley currently has 3 Environmental Justice Communities (one in central Wellesley south of Route 9 and 2 adjacent segments in eastern Wellesley along the Charles River dissected by route 9) identified under the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' (EEA) Environmental Justice (EJ) Policy. These 3 block groups meet the Environmental Justice neighborhoods criteria under the $\geq 25\%$ minority designation. These Environmental Justice block groups constitute 13.0% of the total number of block groups in the Town and 19.8% of the Town's population. The Town of Wellesley agrees with the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution, and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. Following EEA recommendations, wherever possible, Wellesley is working to increase environmental assets in EJ communities to improve public health and achieve environmental equity through expansion of tree canopies in urban areas and advancement of urban land conservation, which is a key component in the creation of new parks, trails, urban wilds, and gardens, particularly in EJ neighborhoods.

