



NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION

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Wellesley Accepted to Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program

Town Receives Initial \$25,000 Grant to Carry Out Assessment Report

July 26, 2019 (Wellesley, MA) - The Town of Wellesley was recently accepted to the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program and will receive a \$25,000 grant from the Commonwealth to kick start projects to combat climate change. The MVP program is offered by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and provides support for local communities to begin planning for climate change resiliency and implement priority projects. As a qualified MVP community, Wellesley receives the initial \$25,000 and is eligible for part of a larger pool of \$10.3 million dollars in additional available funds.

The Wellesley Board of Selectmen, Board of Health, Planning Board, Natural Resources Commission (NRC), and Wetlands Protection Committee worked together on the program application. The initial grant money will be used to conduct a required Vulnerability Assessment Report coordinated by the NRC with input from boards, departments and the community that will include action-oriented plans.

In an effort to be proactive in addressing these issues, the Board of Selectmen recently adopted the first Unified Plan in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, incorporating the Town's Master Plan with strategic concepts for Town government operations. These operations include making resource-efficient choices to conserve energy, water and materials; improving water and air quality and reduce carbon emissions; and developing and implementing sustainable practices to adjust to changing environmental conditions.

Town leaders know the effects of climate change will be far reaching, impacting Town resources and the health and well-being of residents. "Temperature changes have the potential to exacerbate existing health conditions, such as asthma and cardiovascular disease, and lead to the emergence of new diseases," said Lenny Izzo, Health Department Director. "Our local public health infrastructure should have the resources to plan for and prepare for these potential impacts."

The effects of climate change are already visible in some of Wellesley's natural resources. "Drought in recent summers has significantly impacted Wellesley's tree canopy, and warmer water temperatures have increased the growth of invasive aquatic plants which requires expensive weed harvesting

to keep drinking water safe and protect ponds, streams and other bodies of water,” said Brandon Schmitt, NRC Director.

With approximately 10 percent of land in wetland areas, Wellesley will also need to prepare for changes in water levels due to rising temperatures. “Despite well-maintained infrastructure, we’ve also seen more localized flooding due to the increased intensity and duration of rainfall,” he added.

By completing the MVP program, Wellesley will become certified as an MVP community and will be eligible for MVP Action grant funding and other opportunities.

For more information about the MVP program visit: <https://www.mass.gov/municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-mvp-program>

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