

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program Action Grant Case Study

Municipality: Chelsea

Project Title: Equitable Resilient Coasts (MVP FY23-FY26)/RMC Waterfront Development

Award Year (FY): FY23

Grant Award: \$ 556,000

Match: \$ 197,795

Match Source: In-Kind

One or Two Year Project: Three Year

Municipal Department Leading Project: Housing and Community Development

Project Website URL: N/A

Community Overview:

- What is the population size of your community and where is it located?
 - The City of Chelsea is located in Suffolk County in Massachusetts, just north of the City of Boston. According to the 2020 United States Census Bureau 2020 Decennial Census, the City of Chelsea is home to 40,787 residents.
- Do you have any [Environmental Justice](#) or other Climate Vulnerable communities? (Think about both those who live and work in your town.)
 - The entire City of Chelsea is an Environmental Justice Community.
- Other unique traits of your municipality like who the top employers are, geography, history, etc.
 - The City of Chelsea's unique traits include:
 - High Density: Chelsea is the second most densely populated city in Massachusetts
 - Immigrant Population: Chelsea has the largest foreign-born population in Massachusetts
 - Historic Relevance: Chelsea houses historical signification with it being home to the Battle of Chelsea Creek, the second Battle of the Revolution.

Project Description and Goals:

- Where was the project located?
 - The project was located in the lower Mystic communities of Somerville, Medford, Malden, Everett, Chelsea, Boston, and Revere. These communities are located along the Lower Mystic River and Chelsea Creek waterfronts.
- What climate change impacts did the project address?
 - Climate change threatens the safety of the entire waterfront, and the ability of Lower Mystic communities to thrive. Recommendations include:
 - Implement flood resilience overlay districts in each Lower Mystic municipality
 - Continue the work to protect critical infrastructure

- Create cool waterfront areas that increase community resilience to higher temperatures
- What were the specific goals and tasks of the project as stated in your application?
 - The goal is to develop a meaningful partnership with community stakeholders--that includes a high-level conceptual land use plan for climate resilience and other public benefits.
 - Tasks
 - Task 1 – Project Kick-off, Management, and Reporting in FY23
 - Task 2 – Public Involvement and Community Engagement in FY23
 - Task 3 – Secure Consultants
 - Task 4 – Build collective baseline knowledge and relationships in FY23
 - Task 5 - Draft principles for regional waterfront development
 - Task 6 – Project Management and Reporting in FY24
 - Task 7 – Public Involvement and Community Engagement in FY24
 - Task 8 - Refine the principles for regional waterfront development and draft a Memorandum of Agreement
 - Task 9 – Project Kick-off, Management, and Reporting in FY25
 - Task 10 – Public Involvement and Community Engagement in FY25
 - Task 11 - Seek to finalize the principles for regional waterfront development
- Did your project meet the goals set forth in your application in terms of:
 - Yes, the project met the following goals:
 - Through this project, the Lower Mystic Waterfront can become a dynamic and inclusive space built around four key themes:
 - 1. Resilient and Climate-Ready Communities
 - 2. Connected and Continuous Water Access
 - 3. Inclusive and Active Open Space
 - 4. A Thriving Working Waterfront
 - Now is the moment to co-create an actionable, forward-looking vision — one that delivers a vibrant, inclusive, and resilient waterfront for generations to come.
 - Employing nature-based solutions
 - While not technically achieved in this project, it lays the foundation for future work.
 - Improving equitable outcomes for and fostering strong partnerships with EJ and other Climate Vulnerable Populations
 - Community Liaisons fostered strong partnerships within the Lower Mystic municipalities, and laid the foundation for future work.

- This FY24-25 MVP project aimed to build the Lower Mystic Waterfront Vision from input by the members of the Resilient Mystic Collaborative, our Community Advisory Committee, waterfront private partners, and local community members input. Project activities included charrettes with municipal partners and other stakeholders, individual meetings with municipalities, conversations with grassroots leaders, collaboration with a dedicated community advisory group, and extensive public engagement.
 - From this engagement, the project lays the foundation for:
 - Resilient and climate-ready communities
 - Connected and continuous water access
 - Inclusive and active open space
 - A thriving working waterfront
- Providing regional benefits
 - This is a regional project; The Lower Mystic, which refers to the portion of the watershed below the Amelia Earhart Dam, spans seven municipalities—Boston, Chelsea, Everett, Malden, Medford, Somerville, and Revere—together accounting for approximately 70% of the total watershed population. Notably, about 75% of residents in the Mystic Watershed live in environmental justice communities (as designated by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs). To meet these needs, communities across the region are advancing bold plans for resilience, housing, and transportation. The Resilient Mystic Collaborative unites these efforts, helping shape a shared, Cross-municipal vision grounded in collective hopes, needs, and values.
- Implementing the public involvement and community engagement plan set forth in your application
 - The community liaisons who formed the Advisory Committee (AC) began their work in early 2024 and met approximately 10 times through 2025. Together with the project team, the AC played a significant role in community engagement, both at existing partner events, as well as with the making of the report.
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- Finishing the project on time
 - This project did not end on time, and was extended a year due to staff turnover.

Results and Deliverables:

- Describe, and quantify (where possible) project results (e.g. square footage of habitat restored or created, increase in tree canopy coverage, etc.). Report out on the metrics outlined in your application.
 - Six different themes established that residents and municipalities support in the Lower Mystic.

- Community advisory committee established and robust community engagement.
- Maps of lower mystic communities created.
- Provide a brief summary of project deliverables with web links, if available.
 - Task 1 – Project Kick-off, Management, and Reporting in FY23
 - Task 2 – Public Involvement and Community Engagement in FY23
 - Task 3 – Secure Consultants
 - Task 4 – Build collective baseline knowledge and relationships in FY23
 - Task 5 - Draft principles for regional waterfront development
 - Task 6 – Project Management and Reporting in FY24
 - Task 7 – Public Involvement and Community Engagement in FY24
 - Task 8 - Refine the principles for regional waterfront development and draft a Memorandum of Agreement
 - Task 9 – Project Kick-off, Management, and Reporting in FY25
 - Task 10 – Public Involvement and Community Engagement in FY25
 - Task 11 - Seek to finalize the principles for regional waterfront development and produce a signed Memorandum of Agreement

Lessons Learned:

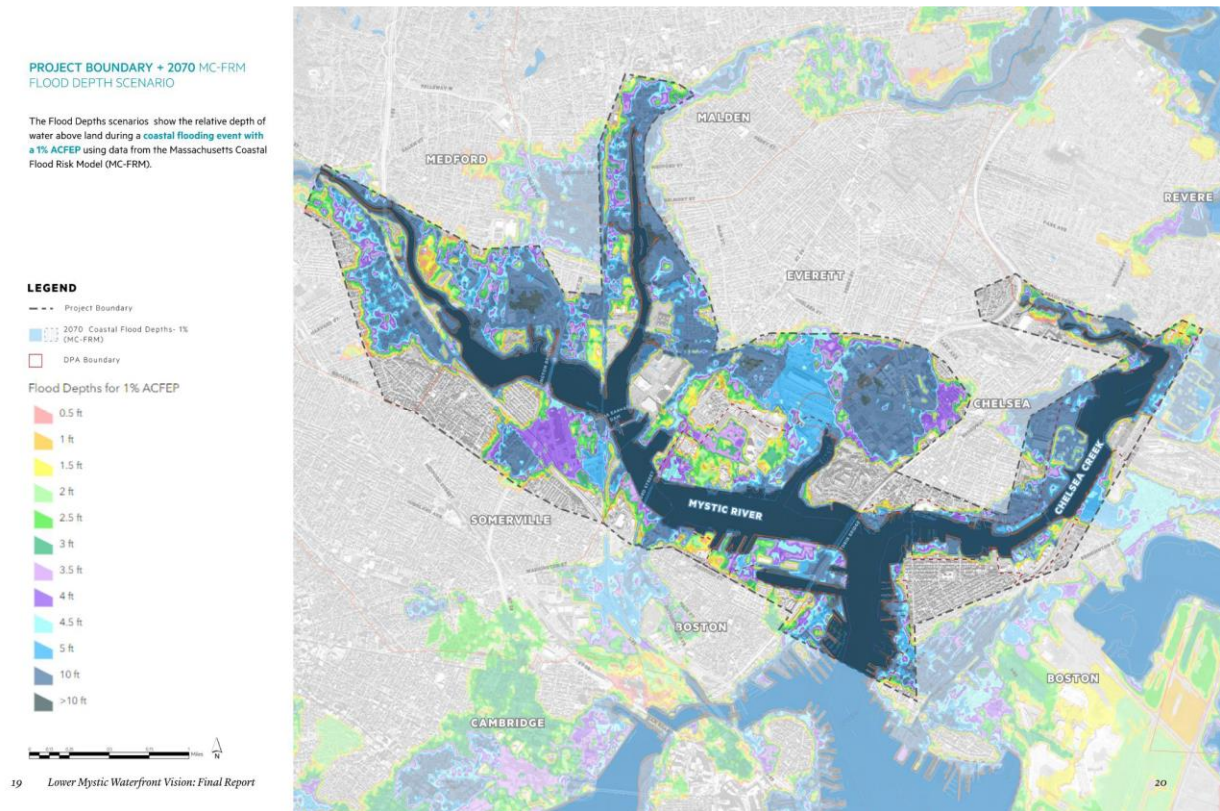
- What lessons were learned as a result of the project? Focus on both the technical matter of the project and process-oriented lessons learned.
 - Staff turnover can really impact the longevity and timeline of a project.
- What is the best way for other communities to learn from your project/process?
 - Other watersheds can learn from this project that staff turnover can affect the process of the project.
 - Working relationships and conversations with all stakeholders are needed.

Partners and Other Support:

- Include a list of all project partners and describe their role in supporting/assisting in the project.
 - Resilient Mystic Collaborative
 - Stoss
 - CBI
 - Mystic River Watershed Association
 - City of Chelsea
 - City of Somerville
 - City of Medford
 - City of Malden
 - City of Everett
 - City of Revere
 - North Suffolk office of Resilience & Sustainability

Project Photos:

- In your electronic submission of this report, please attach (as .jpg or .png) a few high-resolution (at least 300 pixels per inch) representative photos of the project. Photos should not show persons who can be easily identified, and avoid inclusion of any copyrighted, trademarked, or branded logos in the images. MVP may use these images on its website or other promotional purposes, so please also let us know if there is someone who should receive credit for taking the photo.



OVERALL CONNECTED OPEN SPACE VISION

