

SEED PROJECT IDEA

Adopt Climate-Smart and Climate-Just Regulations and Policies

The following is a project idea for inspiration—ultimately, the Seed Project you choose should be based on your community's climate resilience priorities. Remember that you will have up to \$50,000 to spend on the Seed Project and about 9 to 10 months to accomplish it, so you may need to carve out a piece of the following action to fit those guidelines, and then work together on a plan for financing the next phase. This project sheet provides a suggestion for which tasks might be completed within the scope of a Seed Project; however, communities may have different starting points or capacity to advance projects and should decide which scope is achievable for them.

Project Description:

This project supports the adoption of climate-smart and climate-just policy and regulation through creating and/or updating municipal bylaws, rules, regulations, and/or policies. This process could involve two approaches:

1. Identifying existing policy/regulation that should be revised or repealed to address vulnerabilities and promote resilience in the face of current and projected climate impacts, especially for Environmental Justice (EJ) and other priority populations, and/or
2. Identifying new opportunities to provide proactive climate-smart and climate-just policy/regulation.

Policy/regulation could be related to development and design standards, zoning updates, local food systems, nature-based solutions (NBS), wetland and tree/forest protection, or other issues. Funds could be used to engage community members in the policy and regulation assessment and development, as well as communications and outreach support. It is important to note that some communities must have policy and regulation changes approved at town meetings with town member support. Funds for this project could also be used to pay for planning and legal support to assess, draft, and support adoption of necessary revisions and/or creation of new policies/regulations. Communities may benefit from use of existing regulatory change tools and sample language developed through previous MVP projects and other sources.

A note on timing:

The scope that can be accomplished within the Seed Project will vary depending on the complexity of the policy/regulation, the extent of existing community and municipal support, the documents that are being revised or created, the extent of legal or other professional services required, and the municipality's policymaking and approval process. We recommend identifying the most impactful opportunities for policy/regulatory change to improve climate resilience and determining locally what can be accomplished in the Seed Project and subsequent phases.

Objectives include:

- Engaging a diverse group of community members in the modification, repeal, or development of policies and regulations.
- Developing guidance for community groups and municipal staff on how to develop, update and/or implement municipal bylaws, rules, regulations, and policies to include and prioritize NBS and EJ and other priority populations.
- Identifying and facilitating the repeal/elimination of existing municipal bylaws (for towns) and ordinances (for cities), and/or other types of regulations and policies that exacerbate vulnerabilities to current and projected climate impacts, especially for EJ and other priority populations.
- Integrating climate resilience into existing bylaws/ordinances, regulations, and policies.
- Where none exist, developing new regulations, and policies that include and prioritize climate resilience, especially for EJ and other priority populations.
- Once climate-smart and climate-just policies/regulations exist, conduct public engagement activities to share information and develop or identify helpful educational materials and tools.

High-level List of Potential Project Tasks:

1. **Form a project team based on area of focus:** The assumption is that one or more key issues emerged through the MVP 2.0 Uncovering Social Resilience process that could be best addressed through the modification, repeal, or development of policies/regulations. (This could relate to zoning for flood resilience, housing development policy, or policies related to urban agriculture, for example.) This area of focus should be identified as part of your Seed Project Plan. In the initial phase of your Seed Project, you would form a core team in alignment with this area of focus, which would include relevant municipal staff and board/commission member(s), legal expertise, and subject matter experts who bring technical and lived expertise—including, for example, members of EJ and other priority populations and representatives from community-based organizations with experience on issues related to housing, food, transportation, and equity.
2. **Assess existing municipal policies/regulations:** Assess existing policy/regulation that should be revised to address the issue/s identified. Conduct research to identify existing and relevant examples and guidance. Examples include:
 - a. [Climate-Smart Wetland Bylaws & Regulations and Development Bylaws](#)
 - b. [Metropolitan Area Planning Council's Climate Resilient Land Use Strategies website](#)
 - c. [Mass Audubon Bylaw Review Tool](#)
 - d. [Cape Cod Commission Model Resilience Bylaw Article](#)
3. **Develop and implement a public engagement strategy:** Coordinate with the relevant municipal board/commission and community liaisons to develop a public engagement strategy that informs community members on the issue under consideration and potential policy solutions. Offer resources that they can share with other members of their networks. Additionally, provide opportunities in which community members can utilize their local knowledge and lived experiences to inform and contextualize the policy/regulatory assessment and development of solutions. Refer to your MVP 2.0 Engagement Plan for ideas on how to engage community members in the decision-making process.
4. **Draft and support the adoption of climate-smart and climate-just regulations:** Draft revised, or develop new, climate-smart and climate-just municipal bylaw, rules, regulations, and/or policies. Support the municipal approval process for approval and adoption. This may entail additional public engagement or may be as simple as bringing the revised or new materials to the appropriate body for a vote.