



# ESSEX BOARD OF SELECTMEN

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## **Town of Essex Community Compact Report**

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The Town of Essex presently enjoys a Community Compact with the Commonwealth featuring two best practice focus areas: a) Climate Change Mitigation, and b) Housing and Economic Development.

The Climate Change Mitigation best practice has the following scope:

*Energy/Environment – Climate change mitigation and adaptation: There is plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change; Regulations and incentives discourage new development in at-risk locations, enhance the resilience of existing development, and encourage mixed-use growth and travel by multiple modes to reduce emissions; Critical coastal and inland infrastructure, buildings, and energy facilities are prepared for more frequent and intense storms.*

With respect to this best practice, the Town has endeavored to seek and utilize grant funding to study key elements of coastal resilience planning and to raise public awareness of the need for this work. The Town has administered two CZM Community Coastal Resilience grants dealing with getting the public more familiar with what to expect and what type of mitigation could be necessary, along with how coastal resilience planning goes hand-in-hand with emergency planning. The Town was subsequently awarded a MVP Planning Grant which developed a community resilience building framework and plan. Thereafter, the Town successfully competed for two MVP Action grants, both dealing with future stabilization of the Essex salt marsh as sea level rise may outpace the natural ability of the marsh platform to stay appropriately elevated with respect to sea level. The Commonwealth has recognized our Compact throughout this process, as evidenced by awarding grants in response to considerable effort on the Town's part to write competitive applications. The Town will continue to apply what has been learned through this iterative process to work toward actual field piloting and perhaps larger-scale implementation of mitigation measures in the future.

The Housing and Economic Development best practice has the following scope:

*Preparing for Success - Create an Economic Development Plan that engages diverse stakeholders, leverages local and regional economic strengths and assets, encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, and/or promotes workforce development planning and implementation.*

With respect to this best practice, the Town has commissioned a new Economic Development Committee (EDC). Presently, working with the Town Planner and the Town Administrator, the EDC has applied for funding through the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) for technical assistance to write an

Economic Development Plan. This type of model was used in the past by the Town's Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) to write the Town's Strategic Plan. If funded, the EDC will embark upon the planning process, which may take a year or more to work through. The Town Planner was also recently successful in writing a grant to the Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA) that looks at helping communities which have not focused too much on affordable housing in the past to being a more thoughtful process. It is very possible that the EDC will become the lead entity with respect to State grants in the future, using information and lessons learned from these two new initiatives.