

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program Action Grant Case Study

Municipality: Malden

Project Title: Malden River Works

Award Year (FY): FY22

Grant Award: \$554,650

Match: \$311,161.20

Match Source: Accelerating Climate Resilience grant from MAPC, Malden Community Preservation Committee grant, staff time

One or Two Year Project: two

Municipal Department Leading Project: Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development

Project Website URL: <https://www.maldenriverworks.org/>

Community Overview:

- What is the population size of your community and where is it located?

Malden is located just north of Boston in the Mystic River Watershed and has a population of 66,263 residents

- Do you have any [Environmental Justice](#) or other Climate Vulnerable communities? (Think about both those who live and work in your town.)

Almost all Malden residents live in census tracts defined by the State of Massachusetts as environmental justice communities for reasons of large minority populations, limited English proficiency, or low-income residents.

- Other unique traits of your municipality like who the top employers are, geography, history, etc.

42% of Malden residents are born outside the US and 49% speak a language other than English at home. Malden High School is the most diverse high school in the state, with over sixty languages spoken by its students.

Project Description and Goals:

- Where was the project located?

356 Commercial Street in Malden

- What climate change impacts did the project address?

The project advanced plans to make the Department of Public Works building more resilient through the creation of the Malden River Works Park, which will involve the renovation and improvement of the DPW yard to improve stormwater drainage, plant over 100 new trees to decrease urban heat island effects, and create a raised berm to guard against future riverine flooding caused by sea level rise. The project also serves as a model for climate resilient open space development on industrial waterways, a model other properties in Malden are increasingly interested in adopting.

- What were the specific goals and tasks of the project as stated in your application?

To advance the River Works project to 90% design and continue engaging Malden residents in this project.

- Did your project meet the goals set forth in your application in terms of:
 - Employing nature-based solutions
 - Improving equitable outcomes for and fostering strong partnerships with EJ and other Climate Vulnerable Populations
 - Providing regional benefits
 - Implementing the public involvement and community engagement plan set forth in your application
 - Finishing the project on time

We have met these goals as set forth in our application, and we are proud of the engagement we've been able to complete this year.

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.

This project is still in a design phase, so the quantifiable benefits are still theoretical. The chief result is the creation of 90% design plans.

- Provide a brief summary of project deliverables with web links, if available.

As noted this project advanced design on the Malden River Works park to a 90% level, and those plans are the main deliverable. Additional deliverables include notes from project team and steering committee meetings and evidence of strong continued community engagement, which can be found at <https://www.maldenriverworks.org/> under the "Latest" tab.

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.

Malden River Works was the first project the City of Malden has done that is led by resident steering committee, and we have learned so much from the experience. Community engagement conducted during this project has been above and beyond anything we've been able to achieve in other work and a big part of that is that engagement is both directed by the Steering Committee and supported by them. One city staffer can't reach thousands of residents with inclusive and culturally sensitive engagement because there will just never be enough time to do it well. But once we ask engaged community members for advice and participation, our capacity increases substantially.

I asked the project team and Steering Committee for their thoughts on this as well, and they agreed that the Steering Committee has been a pivotal component of advancing equity through this project. They also noted that the payment of stipends to Steering Committee members was essential to appropriately valuing the time and work that they are putting into the project.

From a technical perspective, over the last year we've spent some time trying to put into words what the expectations of the Steering Committee are and what role they should expect/want to play. That took the form ultimately of an MOU with the Steering Committee, a document that has grown and changed over time as new questions come up. The team is happy to provide the MOU to other folks looking to define the role of a resident Steering Committee.

- What is the best way for other communities to learn from your project/process?

Malden River Works Steering Committee members have spoken with similar steering committees on other projects and with communities considering using this model; we try to be as open and welcoming to folks who are interested in how this works as possible. People interested in learning more should review the project website, maldenriverworks.org, and reach out to us in the City to connect with Steering Committee members.

The MRW Steering Committee has invited other newly formed resident steering committees to join them for a meeting, an invitation taken up by the Steering Committee of the Little Mystic project in Charlestown. These connections have helped other groups gain confidence and feel empowered to own the project, and the MRW team is happy to extend an invitation to anyone who might be interested.

Partners and Other Support:

- Include a list of all project partners and describe their role in supporting/assisting in the project.
 - Malden River Works Steering Committee – directs community engagement on the project and has decision making power on the design

- Friends of the Malden River – Karen Buck, president of FOMR, is a member of the Project Team and Steering Committee, and the group often partners with MRW for river cleanup events
- Mystic River Watershed Association – Multiple MyRWA staff, both their Trails Manager and Outreach Coordinator, participate in the Malden River Works project team and steering committee. MyRWA helps us network throughout the watershed and increases our capacity to manage community engagement events.
- MIT Leventhal Center for Advanced Urbanism and Centers for Environmental Health Science – MIT, through the LCAU and the CEHS, was an early funder on the project and continues to be a strong partner and supporter.

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.

Please see attached images