MVP 2.0
Example Seed Projects

PILOT 2023 - 2025

MVP 2.0

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 Identifying existing policy/regulation that should be revised or repealed to address vulnerabilities and promote resilience in the face of current and projected climate impacts, especially for Environmental Justice (EJ) and other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.

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SEED PROJECT IDEA

Advance Community Food Justice

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.

Project Description:

Through community engagement and partnership with regional organizations and agencies, the project would result in a list of goals and implementation steps to advance community food justice. Advancing food justice means working towards the goals of communities owning and managing their food provisioning; supporting regional farmers and food businesses to create regional economic vitality; and expanding access to fresh, affordable, culturally appropriate, nutritious food for everyone. Communities should use this project to build upon and start to implement priorities documented in the Food + Water section of their Social Resilience Roadmap.

Depending on your local priorities, you may partner with regional organizations and agencies (like Extension and Extension Agents, food banks, farmers, collectives, non-profits, etc.) to understand community expertise in the food sector. Tribes and members of specific cultural and ethnic groups may also be important sources of local knowledge. As an additional resource, Sustainable CT offers actions that can be adapted for promoting a community-based, sustainable, and equitable food system (see 10.1 – Encourage an Equitable and Just Food System & 10.5 – Support Equitable Food Access and Local Farmers & 10.4 – Develop and Promote Community Growing Spaces).

High-level List of Potential Project Tasks:

1. **Reaffirm key partnerships and priorities:** Refer back to your Social Resilience Roadmap, specifically Food + Water in Part 2. What were the key takeaways from this exploration? What are the main community strengths/gaps? Who are the key stakeholders? Use this information to identify partners with knowledge in the local food system and community needs. This may include: foodbanks, WIC offices, farmers' cooperatives, grocery stores, school food programs, community kitchens, community garden managers, Tribes, people with lived expertise with food insecurity, and/or specific cultural groups.
2. **Form a project team:** The project team's work will be to evaluate the existing food production, networks, and access within the community, guide community engagement, and develop local food justice goals and implementation steps. In addition to some of the key partnerships identified in task 1, ensure your group is reflective of diverse perspectives and backgrounds of your community—such as age, race, gender identity, religion, immigration status,

and language. Compensation should be provided for project team members who are not participating as part of their job.

3. **Assess strengths and gaps in food production, networks, and access:** Again, refer back to the Food + Water section of the Social Resilience Roadmap. Prepare a preliminary list of key themes, capabilities/strengths, and vulnerabilities/gaps as they relate to food justice. Identify any areas that need further exploration. Key indicators of food justice from the GEAR tool, the U.S. Census Bureau, and other national and local data sources may include the following: food retail options, emergency food providers, community garden plots, participation in the National School Lunch Program, and number of persons participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps).
4. **Seek community input:** Develop and implement an engagement campaign to confirm or adjust your understanding of the important food justice issues in the community and priorities for action. Utilize the MVP 2.0 Engagement Plan to implement multiple engagement activities which might include participation in community events, leading workshops with community-based organizations, surveys, storytelling events, and more. Document the experiences and recommendations that community members provide. Engagement should include community members, including Environmental Justice and other priority populations, organizations that serve the community, farmers, businesses, and other social networks and community leaders.
5. **Develop community food justice action steps:** Informed by the community input, the project team can reconvene to develop a shared list of local food justice goals and identify priorities for action. This list can serve as a shared vision for stakeholders to work toward implementing priorities. To the extent possible, identify a lead partner, funding source, and target timeline for each priority. Examples of such actions may include supporting farmers' markets' acquisition of technologies for processing SNAP benefits; promoting locally-owned restaurants in municipal and community publications; establishing pop-up markets at locations underserved by food access points (e.g., areas without grocery stores, convenience stores, farm stands, food banks); providing opportunities and resources for farmers to supply excess produce to food banks; hosting an event to connect local farms to food retail companies to encourage local supply chains; creating a plan to help all people access food during supply-chain emergencies and climate emergencies; and identifying and supporting local growing spaces such as greenhouses and community gardens.
6. **Share and promote the goals and action steps:** Share the goals and action steps across municipal departments, the city council / selectboard, the school department, and with relevant entities in the community to build support, secure funding, and implement actions. This work may take place throughout the year depending on budget and regulatory cycles, grant program timelines, or other factors.
7. **Sustain the work with community partners:** Make a plan to periodically check in with key partners, assess progress, and support continued advancement of the identified goals and priorities for action. This could look like hosting a semi-annual meeting where participants discuss progress, obstacles, and brainstorm funding and other resources to continue to advance goals. The project team may be sustained by evolving into a sub-division of a local organization, such as the agricultural commission, the health board, food pantry, or a farmers network such as the local Young Farmers Association.

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SEED PROJECT IDEA

Better Your Buffer (or Riverfront Area)

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 will improve the resilience of a wetland buffer zone or a riverfront area. Restoring these regulated areas will require compliance with the Wetlands Protection Act, which requires careful review of work that may alter wetlands as well as other resource areas, such as buffer zones (the areas within 100 feet of a wetland) and riverfront areas. Some municipalities may also have bylaws which promote further protection of these areas. Therefore, important aspects of this project will be identifying potential project sites and understanding which action(s) can be taken in each.

Wetland buffer zones and riverfront zones play important roles in ecosystems and provide many free services to nearby communities, such as slowing flood waters, trapping sediment and debris, recharging groundwater, purifying water, and temperature moderation, among others. When these ecosystems are healthy, they can more effectively adapt to climate change and continue to provide the benefits that help nearby community members contend with climate stressors as well (such as cooling benefits and recreational benefits). Increasing the resilience of these zones comes from enhancements which remove stressors or promote health—such as removing and/or reducing pavement, invasive species/pests/disease, herbivory pressure, trash, debris, and/or pollution, and increasing native and climate-adapted trees and other vegetation, restoring soil health, and increasing biodiversity.

Typical features of buffer enhancement may include the following: removal of manmade structures such as pavement, soil amendment and inoculation, replacing turf grasses with native plantings, old growth forest, habitat nest features, interpretive markers, or art. The project can also provide educational opportunities to increase awareness and understanding of climate resilience, biodiversity, stormwater management, heat islands, carbon sequestration and storage and healthy soils. See Rivergreen Park as an example of these features applied across a riverfront area and buffer zone.

High-level List of Potential Project Tasks:

1. **Form a project team:** Include municipal staff (consider conservation, parks, public works, and planning), key stakeholders (such as residents from Environmental Justice neighborhoods or other priority populations, large landowners, individuals and/or organizations who work in wetland buffer/riverfront areas, people who visit the area, people who have cultural ties to the land), and others working on environmental and climate issues in the community.
2. **Identify potential project sites:** Utilize local knowledge, prior studies and plans, and the GEAR maps to identify wetland buffer zones or riparian buffer zones that may be suitable for the project. Develop a set of screening criteria. This may include, for example, sites that are in or near Environmental Justice block groups or other priority populations; are in or near heat islands; have multiple stressors (e.g., invasive species, pollution); or have opportunities to provide additional co-benefits (e.g., walking trails, water access). Work with the project team and other community members to identify two or three potential sites.
3. **Work with the local community to narrow potential sites:** Vet the potential sites for development restrictions, safety concerns, and permit constraints. Conduct community engagement activities with nearby residents, businesses, community organizations, and Indigenous communities with ties to the site to build community consensus around the sites. Consider providing educational opportunities about riverfront areas, co-benefits of increasing access to green spaces, and climate resilience efforts—so as to build community understanding of the project and the background behind it. Provide opportunities for community members to directly provide their input on what site to select and why. Once the site is selected, begin outreach with those who live adjacent to the site and/or work in businesses adjacent to the site.
4. **Plan and permit the project:** Once the site is selected, hire a wetland scientist and/or landscape expert (potential resource here) to provide resource area delineation and permit preparation, soil design, plant list, species identification, management guides for stewards, and training to project team leaders. Layout and scale the project for the initial budget and future phases if necessary. Plan the cycles of the project site preparation, development, and establishment. File a Notice of Intent for work within/adjacent to a resource area or assess exempt activities. If the community has identified additional amenities (e.g., structures) beyond planting, the design and permitting process will be more extensive and will likely not be appropriate for a Seed Project because of the larger scope.

Seed Project ends – Subsequent tasks likely to be completed in future project phases

5. **Prepare the site and team:**

   a. A landscape and ecology consultant, with key stakeholders or stewards, can:

   - Assess site preparation needs such as clean up or invasive species control. Establish erosion control if needed, water source, invasive species removal, litter removal, excavation, bulk materials delivery, and site control.

- Assess soil health (see Healthy Soils Action Plan and Natural Resources Conservation Service resources) and select compatible species for planting to support diversification and replacement and apply ecological strategies for succession planning.
- Source materials (potential resource here) including soil/soil amendments, plants/seeds (potential resource here), and irrigation materials.

b. The project team can:

- Collaborate with Public Works and, potentially business or private donors, for bulk materials and heavy site prep.
- Identify staff to manage community stewards in a 3-year establishment maintenance program. Funding should be allocated in the Seed Project budget to compensate the community stewards to allow a wider variety of people and entities the opportunity to be involved, not just those who can volunteer their time. Community steward roles may be seasonal jobs or part of workforce development programs.
- Coordinate volunteer outreach, advertising, schedule, and donations.

6. **Host the building and planting days:** Building and planting days are what bring the project to fruition. Best practice suggests these events should be at maximum half a day long and focus on a quarter acre. Partnerships with schools, workforce development programs, and community members are a great way to engage and educate the community and create a sense of ownership of the project. Public engagement best practices, such as providing stipends or other compensation, childcare, and interpretation may be needed to support the participation by diverse stakeholders.
    - Train event leaders in advance to direct and support community participants—ideally one trained leader per ten participants.
    - Start with a safety briefing and project purpose review.
    - Provide tools and equipment, first aid, and refreshments.
    - Announce follow up events and other ways to get involved with care of nature-based solutions projects.

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SEED PROJECT IDEA

Create Cool Housing or Community Space

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.

Project Description:

This project aims to enable natural cooling for housing or a community space that serves Environmental Justice (EJ) or other priority populations. This project aims to have a similar "quick build or tactical urbanism" approach as was commonly used for several public space modifications during the COVID-19 pandemic. "Quick build or tactical urbanism" projects use temporary, inexpensive materials to implement short-term projects that can then help inform longer-term improvements. These projects can often be completed much faster than typical capital projects (e.g., months instead of years) (City of Somerville, 2021; Tactical Urbanism Guide). Examples of such projects include the following:

- Tree planting,
- A green or white roof,
- Green walls,
- Cool pavement,
- A pop-up park (e.g. Park(ing) Day),
- A pollinator garden,
- A shade structure, or
- A splash pad (or other water feature).

High-level List of Potential Project Tasks:

1. **Form a project team:** The project team may include municipal representatives, community liaisons (with connection to those that live or work in heat islands), technical vendors (e.g., urban planners, landscape architects, builders), and volunteer organizations that can help implement like scouts or rotary clubs.
2. **Identify a location to create a cool space:** Identify and develop a short-list of potential locations/facilities for implementation of a cooling project. This identification process should involve community members and location/facility representatives and include:
    a. Vulnerability mapping – Use the GEAR heat guides to identify areas where heat islands (or hot spots) overlap with EJ and other priority populations, as well as critical facilities and spaces that serve these people.

b. Community input – Share vulnerability mapping with community members. Have community members identify locations that would benefit the most from a cooling project and what co-benefits they would like to see as part of the cooling project (e.g., recreation, lower utility bills, etc.). Using information from the GEAR heat guides, conduct outreach activities in EJ neighborhoods and ones at higher risk of experiencing extreme heat. In this step, community liaisons can use their lived experiences and/or strong connections to those who work in heat islands to support outreach efforts in these communities and gather input from these communities. These activities should be completed within the first 2-3 months of the project to allow maximum time for design and implementation.
c. Develop options – Options should include both a site (e.g., an affordable housing location, a senior center, a bus stop) and the solution (tree planting, a green or white roof, green walls, cool pavement, pop-up park, pollinator garden, shade structure, splash pad or other water feature). Continue to involve community members in the progress of the project and solicit input on the final options. Consider site accessibility so the selected option can be accessible to all community members (for example, sidewalks, ramps, parking, etc.).
d. Prioritize options – Work with the project team and community members to rank locations based on community priority, co-benefits, and feasibility (i.e., cost, timeline, regulatory considerations, site suitability, willingness of facility owner, maintenance requirements/ability, etc.). Technical vendors can provide input on which solutions are feasible within the Seed Project timeline. Solutions that extend beyond the timeline should be recorded for future projects and funding.

3. **Design and implement the solution:** Depending on the solution selected, work with the facility/site owner and appropriate contractor to design and install the solution. Incorporate the community in the development of the project by setting requirements that contractors hire locally, find opportunities to involve residents and students in project implementation, and host events and install interpretive signage that educate the community on the benefits of the project.

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SEED PROJECT IDEA

Convert Impervious Surface to Community Green Space

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 aims to support flood mitigation and reduce urban heat through the conversion of an impervious or degraded surface to a community green space—one where conversion has high potential to provide these services. In place of the former impervious surface, your community can decide to add a pollinator meadow, shade trees, and/or other community amenities such as a trail, community garden, or food forest. The implemented project may assist the community in increasing stormwater infiltration rates and groundwater recharge, reducing runoff, supporting community mental and physical health through access to green space, increasing biodiversity and carbon sequestration, and providing educational opportunities to increase awareness and understanding of climate resilience, among other benefits.

The scope of this Seed Project includes selecting a site and preparing a concept. The design phase and planting/installation are likely to occur in subsequent phases. After deciding on the selected site(s), either an impervious surface will be removed and replaced, or a degraded surface will be amended and enhanced, with the result being in either case, a community green space that offsets urban heat and/or supports flood mitigation. Restoring healthy ecosystems is also known as rewilding. Typical features of a rewilding project entail application of soil amendment, inoculation, installation of plantings, irrigation, herbivore barriers, furnishings, interpretive markers, art, and old growth forest or habitat nest features. The MVP Project Ayer Devens Main Street Regional Pocket Forests implemented these features in the development of community green spaces.

High-level List of Potential Project Tasks:

1. **Form a project team:** Establish a project team that includes municipal staff (consider conservation, parks, public works, and planning), a landscape/ecology consultant, a community stewardship partner (if possible), as well as residents who are likely to be most

impacted by climate change, including members of Environmental Justice (EJ) and other priority populations. These residents can advise on the ideal site for a community green space, as well as what kind of green space should be developed. Once a site is selected (task 3), neighbors or other key stakeholders should be added to the project team to foster a sense of ownership from early stages in the process.

- A community stewardship partner would be responsible for monitoring and maintaining the project, once completed. The community stewardship partner would ultimately manage multiple stewards in an establishment maintenance program. Funding should be allocated in the Seed Project budget to compensate the community stewardship partner to allow a wider variety of people and entities the opportunity to be involved, not just those who can volunteer their time. Planning for subsequent phases should take into account funding for stewards to maintain the project.

2. **Identify the site:** A possible site (or sites) should be identified with input from the project team, community members, and maps and analytical tools. The team should consult resources such as the GEAR tool, which allows users to locate impervious surfaces, as well as the Site Suitability Form from the Climate Resilience Design Standards Tool and Climate Resilience Design Guidance. The project team should draft evaluation criteria for selecting a site and vet these criteria with stakeholders including EJ and other priority populations. Criteria should include social resilience and equity considerations in addition to ecological resilience. The MVP Core Principles may serve as inspiration as potential categories for criteria. The project team should share the vetted site selection criteria and seek community input on potential sites. Participatory mapping tools and community engagement best practices should be used.
3. **Vet the site:** Once a possible site (or sites) is identified, the project can proceed after a vetting process has been completed. The site will need to accommodate the proposed project to comply with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations and development best practices. (Please note: if permitting considerations or the presence of conditions that would make the site unsafe for the purposes of this project arise, the project team should select a different site.)
4. **Develop site concept:** Based on the information collected in Task 3, the project team will identify the preferred community green space to develop and the specific amenities to include. This step should include community engagement so that the expertise and experiences raised by diverse groups of local community members can inform which kind of community green space to create and which kinds of amenities are wanted and needed. A concept-level plan should be developed.

Seed Project ends – Subsequent tasks likely to be completed in future project phases

5. **Finalize design and plans:** In this step, the landscape/ecology consultant will develop a soil design, a plant list and planting plan, and a management guide, informed by the preferences of the project team and community members as well as their professional expertise. An important consideration at this step is to plan for how to manage any bordering invasive species which can colonize cleared sites. The North American Invasive Species Management

Association - NAISMA provides information on how to manage local invasives, and there is also a Massachusetts Prohibited Plant List | Mass.gov. The landscape/ecology consultant will then develop a plant list and planting plan that can collectively withstand competitor species, environmental stresses, and disturbances.

6. **Develop budget and implementation plan:** Once the site is selected and the design phase is completed, the next step is to develop an initial budget and an implementation plan. The project team will lay out and scale the project, which allows for the development of an initial budget. Projects such as these can go through multiple cycles of project site preparation, development, and establishment. Discussions can be had about future phases and future costs, if necessary. The implementation plan should include the following:
    a. Site preparation: Acquire any required permits and approvals, site access and control, establish erosion control, identify a water source if needed, remove invasive species to the extent practicable, remove litter, and get bulk materials delivered.
        - Pavement or structures will be removed, and they will need to be replaced with an extensive amount of soil. The project team should work with the consultant on how much is needed for the site and design.
        - A member of the project team can work with public works to acquire bulk materials and establish connections with possible donors and/or donations from other projects for the bulk materials.
    b. Source materials: In addition to bulk materials like soil, gravel, and woodchips, specialty soils, amendments, plants, and seeds will also need to be sourced.
    c. A timeline for advertising, acquiring donations, and volunteer outreach; these will provide resources and volunteers for the building and planting days.
    d. A timeline for the necessary number of building and planting days to complete the new community green space.
    e. A timeline for follow-up/maintenance events. Typically, nature-based solutions require establishment care events.
7. **Host the building and planting days:** Building and planting days are what bring the project to fruition. Best practice suggests these events should be at maximum half a day long and focus on a quarter acre. Partnerships with schools and community members are a great way to engage and educate the community and create a sense of ownership of the project. Public engagement best practices, such as providing stipends or other compensation, childcare, and interpretation may be needed to support participation by diverse stakeholders.
    - Train event leaders in advance to direct and support the community participants—ideally one trained leader per ten participants.
    - Start with a safety briefing and project purpose review.
    - Provide tools and equipment, first aid, and refreshments.
    - Announce follow up events and other ways to get involved with nature-based solutions projects.

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SEED PROJECT IDEA

Conduct a Green & Resilient Business Initiative

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Project Description:

This project aims to build resilience and promote decarbonization within the business community through education, planning, technical and financial steps to make business operations more resilient and sustainable. For this action, consider a regional approach and involve regional business networks. Partnering across communities can support efficiencies of scale while also facilitating a more holistic view of business activities (e.g., employees and customers may come from the broader region even though a business itself is located within a specific community). Creating an online presence with identified resources, processes, and materials (e.g., training materials, plan templates, best practices) will help this project serve as a model for other communities in the future.

High-level List of Potential Project Tasks:

1. **Assess vulnerability:** Use the GEAR and community mapping process to identify districts, industries, or certain sectors of the workforce that will experience the greatest adverse impacts from climate change. Use this to guide the focus of your project and project team formation.
2. **Form a project team:** Informed by step 1, partner with local Chambers of Commerce, Downtown or Main Streets organizations, Economic Development Committees, organizations connected to Minority, Women, Veteran-owned, or Disadvantaged business enterprises (see, for example, Black Owned Brockton or La Colmena Community Farm), business leaders and workforce members. The project team should set objectives for the initiative, help with community engagement, and guide the implementation of specific activities.
3. **Engage resilient business champions and other vendors:** Identify and train one or more paid resilient business champions who can facilitate communication within the business community, especially those businesses or sectors likely to experience the greatest adverse impacts from climate change. Equipped with local knowledge and the cultural competency

to work with business owners and workers across cultures, the champions will also research and facilitate access to resources that close identified gaps and provide education on topics like adapting work practices in hazardous conditions. Champions should have an understanding of how climate impacts businesses, be personable, able to assist businesses with filling out paper or online forms and applications for funding, and able to organize events such as trainings or networking.

4. **Establish an online presence:** Establish an online presence (e.g. webpage, social media) for information and resource sharing.
5. **Hold discussions on climate projections and preparedness:** Educate the local business community on best available information on local climate projections and impacts utilizing the GEAR tool, ResilientMA map viewer, MA Climate Change Assessment, and materials from the MVP 2.0 program. Invite discussion on gaps in preparedness (both for disaster events and gradual impacts to day-to-day operations) and resource needs. Potential methods include: workshops, videos, digital surveys, breakfast/lunch & learn events. Consider repeating the program in multiple locations, times of day, or modalities to maximize participation from businesses and workforce members on different schedules.
6. **Disseminate resources:** Assemble and disseminate resources based on community needs. This may include, but should not be limited to, business emergency plan templates, industry-specific resilience planning guides, sources of technical assistance and funding opportunities for resilience (e.g., flood or heat mitigation) and energy efficiency, and guidance on adapting work practices to protect workers in a changing climate (e.g. preventing heat stress for outdoor workers). Resilient business champions(s) will identify partners and resources that address locally identified needs and help businesses navigate these resources.

Seed Project ends – Subsequent tasks likely to be completed in future project phases

7. **Optional or additional activities**, that may occur in future project phases, may include:
    a. Facilitating a workforce development program that builds skills within the local workforce to meet future needs, such as installing and maintaining green infrastructure or developing skills related to clean energy jobs.
    b. Providing training to workforce members and businesses on adapting operations and protecting workers against climate extremes such as extreme heat.
8. **Measure outcomes:** Depending on the specific activities implemented, establish and track certain metrics to measure progress. This step can assist with program evaluation and may provide useful data on program reach and effectiveness if additional funding is sought. Metrics may include: number of businesses engaged; number of workforce members trained; number of businesses who apply for and receive grant funding, technical assistance, or similar resources; amount of grant funding won by businesses; or the number of businesses that adapt work practices for resilience and/or sustainability.
9. **Sustain the program:** Identify opportunities to build long-term capacity to maintain resilient business liaisons. Local business organizations may be able to serve as administrative and fiscal hosts. The municipality and project team can collaborate on sustaining funding through municipal funds, grants, dues or registration fees, and other revenue generating activities (festivals, fundraisers, etc.).

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SEED PROJECT IDEA

Pursuing Resilient & Equitable Power

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.

Project Description:

Frequent power outages are a current problem in many Massachusetts communities. Heat and extreme weather events are increasing damage and stress on electric transmission and utility distribution infrastructure, resulting in one of the most urgent climate impacts statewide (MA Climate Change Assessment, 2022). At the same time, converting energy generation and distribution systems to clean, renewable power is a core element of the Commonwealth's decarbonization efforts, which requires an increased reliance on continuous access to electricity. Energy resilience involves implementing efficient, renewable power solutions that can withstand and recover quickly from disruptions, and that provide needed power independent of the grid. For energy resilience to support community resilience, all residents, regardless of race, gender, ability, and socio-economic status must be able to access the social, environmental, and economic benefits of resilient energy systems. Solar power coupled with battery storage is a commonly used resilient power solution.

A resilient and equitable power plan should focus on distributed energy generation systems that use renewable energy (diesel generators are not funded by MVP) and directly benefit Environmental Justice (EJ) and/or other priority populations. Equitable power planning requires centering the needs of population groups that have historically been marginalized in this sector, and designing policies that both offer equal footing and address existing inequities in accessing the benefits of a resilient power system.

This example Seed Project is an assessment-based project that evaluates energy infrastructure vulnerabilities; identifies critical facilities, sites, or neighborhoods that support EJ and/or other priority populations and that could benefit most from resilient power systems; and identifies at a high-level what improvements and partners are needed to build energy resilience. What Cities Should Do: A Guide to Resilient Power Planning offers planning steps and case studies of clean, resilient power planning in communities across the country.

High-level List of Potential Project Tasks:

1. **Form a project team:** For an assessment-based project, the project team should include many of the following representatives, or should consult with these individuals as part of completing the assessment.
    - Municipal staff (particularly those in charge of energy programming)
    - Representatives from local utility companies
    - Representatives from local light plants
    - Community organizations that work on energy resilience
    - Both municipal staff and community-based organizations that focus on affordable housing and public housing
    - Vendor team with expertise in electrical engineering, community processes, and equity
    - Those that have experience with high power demands and those that have experience with cooling shelters also provide invaluable expertise –
    - Hospital facility directors
    - Emergency shelter staff
    - Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) staff
    - Visiting Nurse Association (VNA) staff
    - Licensed group home and group care facility staff
    - Local Red Cross Staff
    - Educational institution representatives (colleges, high schools, etc.)
    - Large employers (industrial, institutional, military, etc.)
    - Regional transit hubs (airports, train terminals, etc.)
    - Library staff (as libraries are often used as cooling shelters)
    - Local unions that represent affected individuals (teachers, nurses, municipal staff, etc.)

    Individuals not being compensated for participation through their job (or municipal volunteer role) should be compensated through the project. For an implementation project, the project team can be focused on representatives from the identified location and people the location serves.
2. **Identify opportunities for resilient power:** Utilize the GEAR tool and community mapping process to identify energy infrastructure at highest risk of damage or failure as well as high priority locations and systems (for example, environmental justice block groups, healthcare facilities, schools/emergency shelters, affordable housing, or public transportation systems).
3. **Engage the community:** Engage the community to weigh in on their biggest areas of concern, priority locations and systems, and potential solutions. Meet people where they are by conducting engagement at facilities the community uses. Discuss the potential for energy investments (with financing support) with staff and facility managers at those facilities. Work with community members to develop a prioritization system that should consider, at a minimum, need, feasibility, equity, and co-benefits such as contributions toward net-zero targets, increasing resilience of essential community services—such as schools—and maximizing eligibility for funding mechanisms. Broad community input, including from EJ and other priority populations, should be incorporated into the prioritization effort.
4. **Conduct an engineering assessment:** Assess power loads of priority locations and systems and how well different resilient power options could meet the critical loads for each. Incorporate

nature-based solutions into project design to manage stormwater, moderate temperature, and provide other benefits to the resilient power solution and the broader community.

5. **Identify potential sources of financing:** Consider grants (including the MA Community Clean Energy Resiliency Initiative and Community Development Block Grants), bond financing (including Green Bonds), and other mechanisms.
6. **Develop the plan:** The resilient power plan should include community priorities, alternatives assessed, and concepts for the highest priority projects.

MVP 2.0

SEED PROJECT IDEA

Resilient Land Acquisition

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 intends to identify opportunities for land acquisition to promote community climate resilience. In this project, land acquisition means a parcel of land is purchased by a municipal agency, state agency, Tribe, land trust, or other organization, such that ownership (and rights) transfers from the former titleholder to the organization making the acquisition. Land acquisition can be part of a broader resilience strategy.

Resilient land acquisition can enhance the protection of environmental ecosystems and resources such as drinking water supplies; it can also provide equitable access to recreation and outdoor spaces and align with a community's Open Space and Recreation Plan. Some strategies focus on cooling, stormwater and floodwater mitigation, and nature-based solutions or low impact development, while others focus on connecting the network of forests to provide safe passage for wildlife migratory routes. Resilient lands benefit flora and fauna, ensure clean air and water, protect communities from flooding, and preserve open green spaces. Working at a regional scale may support more efficient use of funding and stakeholder time, and meaningful coordination for communities that share certain natural resources or have strong cultural or economic ties.

As the MVP 2.0 Equity and Climate Justice Learning Series modules demonstrate, social resilience is foundational to overall community resilience, which makes it important to consider land acquisition projects with a climate justice lens. Many land acquisition projects have deprioritized Environmental Justice (EJ) and other priority populations. Equitable land acquisition requires that the following kinds of questions that consider the past, present, and future impacts of the acquisition are asked at each step of the process:

- Beyond ecological benefits, how will the conservation of this parcel benefit everyone, including those in adjacent communities?
- How will conserving a specific land parcel impact housing affordability? Will it remove a

parcel that is actually better suited for housing?
- If open to the public, will it be accessible by public transport?
- How will new visitors be welcomed to the land?
- Does the land have cultural significance to a Tribe who may actually be better suited at stewarding the land and can you work with them to make that happen?

High-level List of Potential Project Tasks:

1. **Form a project team and define objectives:** Engage a project team to develop guiding principles and objectives for a resilient land acquisition strategy that have a strong focus on social equity. These objectives will set the tone for how your team is considering land acquisition. If you and your team are unfamiliar with how land acquisition, environmental justice, and social resiliency intersect, building out this knowledge could be a central task in your project. The project team should include members from EJ and other priority populations; EJ advocates and community liaisons; Tribes, and those who work and live adjacent to potential sites; among others. Paid community liaisons can assist with outreach and ensuring that the objectives reflect the needs and priorities of EJ and other priority populations. Technical vendors, including community planners, land trusts, and ecologists, can assist with the project analysis and strategy development.
2. **Assess opportunity:** Through climate data mapping (e.g., Resilient MA Map Viewer, the Nature Conservancy Resilient Land Mapping Tool), takeaways from GEAR explorations, and property analysis, identify critical parcels of land to consider for resilient land acquisition. Parcels may be within a current or projected future floodplain, forested area, agricultural land, or within a heat island. Analyze property ownership, parcel value, available funding, potential partners (land trust), zoning, proximity to other municipal resources, proximity to EJ and other priority populations, etc. Analysis should also assess whether certain parcels are better suited to Indigenous stewardship, in which case the project could be a conduit to returning the land to the Tribe, and whether there are opportunities to benefit EJ neighborhoods in the municipality and the region in which it is situated. It should also be considered if acquiring certain land parcels will have impacts on affordable housing or food production.
3. **Develop land acquisition strategy:** Create a preliminary list of parcels, reasons for acquisition, and an implementation timeline based on priority. When developing this acquisition strategy, consider ownership, property value, funding, land use, history, proximity to other municipal resources, environmental concerns, and social resilience benefits of acquisition.
4. **Rank parcels:** With involvement of the project team including municipal staff, community members, and other key stakeholders, identify any red flags (e.g., title issues, easements, liens, contamination). Complete site visits as necessary. Remember to consider future land management and improvement costs when developing a strategy and prioritizing parcels. Discuss whether the land will be put under a conservation restriction and whether a Cultural Respect Easement is appropriate. Other options and legal factors may be important to consider for a given community. A checklist can be helpful when considering the various parcels and prioritization of acquisition.
5. **Engage the community:** Engage the community on what a resilient land acquisition strategy is, and why it is important (e.g., protection of natural resources, water resources, open space, affordable housing, public health, extreme weather, and expanding access to open spaces). In

the process of engagement, essential knowledge is gained from the community about how they would like to see land used, and how they would like to interact with public spaces. Potential engagement methods include the following:

- Presentations
- School field trips
- Nature walks
- Open house workshops
- Digital surveys and online tools (e.g., website, StoryMap)
- Recorded videos
- Flyers
- Booths at festivals/outdoor programming

Consider offering programming in multiple locations, various times of day, and by different methods to maximize participation from the community. Offer translation/interpretive services as needed. Engage community members to further identify strategic land parcels not previously identified for resilient land acquisition and affirm the parcel list as prioritized.

Seed Project ends – Subsequent tasks likely to be completed in future project phases

6. **Identify funding and partnerships:** Explore funding opportunities to acquire properties identified in the resilient land acquisition strategy. Consider public/private partnerships with community-based non-profit organizations such as land trusts. Identify sources such as conservation and agricultural land tax credits, state grants (includes conservation, preservation, and restoration funding), local support, and affordable housing incentives, among others).
7. **Parcel selection and appraisal:** Based on prioritization in the strategy and the funding investigation above, identify a parcel to acquire and conduct an appraisal. Note that MVP Action Grant applications must be accompanied by an appraisal that meets EEA standards to justify the grant request.
8. **Acquisition:** Receive necessary approvals to proceed to the acquisition phase. Negotiate and prepare a letter of intent and purchase agreement. Perform due diligence (title investigation, environmental inspection, survey). Finalize forms and legal work and complete transaction.

MVP 2.0

SEED PROJECT IDEA

Sustaining a Focus on Resilient Relationships

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.

Project Description:

Undertaking the MVP 2.0 process has brought an incredible amount of learning and capacity to your municipality. Being a more resilient community involves transitioning this information from the individual process participants and formalizing it into how your municipality functions. Climate change touches every area of our lives, both directly and indirectly. Determining the ways each municipality can incorporate social resiliency into how it conducts everyday business, which includes having robust community engagement become the norm, will not only build a more adaptable community, but will broaden the pool of who is participating in municipal government.

While the MVP 2.0 process has focused on climate resilience, potentially new community members have taken an interest in how the municipality works and may now be interested in serving on a board or committee. Developing transparency and accountability is the foundation of trust building. Many community members may not fully trust how decisions are made in government or feel welcome to be a part of the process. Sustaining an inclusive resiliency mindset requires dismantling systems in your municipal government that concentrate power and exclude those most vulnerable. These seed ideas are a jumping off point to start addressing this.

High-level List of Potential Project Tasks:

For all tasks below, stipends, compensation, and or other equitable engagement modifiers (e.g., childcare) should be provided for project team members who are not participating as part of their job to remove barriers to participation for people who bring important and diverse perspectives. A professional facilitator, with expertise in equitable community processes, social and or racial justice, may be engaged to facilitate completion of one or more of the tasks below.

1. **Develop an equity-centered checklist:** Develop an equity-centering checklist to be used by different town boards and committees in their decision-making processes.
    a. Form a project team that includes a cross section of the community and includes representatives of EJ communities or other priority populations to assess how different town boards and committees make decisions and the types of topics they are deciding about.

b. Develop a checklist, or a set of questions, for each of these boards that will help them center equity in their decision-making processes. Some examples of similar resources developed to promote equity in municipal processes include Seattle, WA's Racial Equity Toolkit and Springfield, MA's Public Employment Equity Plan.
c. Make the checklist available for the public to comment on, evaluate, add to, and prioritize the kinds of questions that should be on different checklists.
d. Design ways to integrate the checklists into the decision-making structures for the municipality's different boards or committees.

2. **Institutionalize the Core Team:** Institutionalize the Core Team as a new town committee.
    a. Identify what initiatives coming out of the MVP 2.0 process would be helpful to have a team move forward.
    b. Identify what supports would need to be in place to sustain the Core Team.
    c. Specify how this committee would continue to center community engagement and equity.
    d. Explore how this team would work across municipal departments.

3. **Institutionalize engagement best practices:** Institutionalize new municipal-wide community engagement best practices.
    a. Form a community engagement and outreach team to continue to advise and test a variety of different ways to engage and communicate with the community.
    b. Identify the lessons learned from the MVP 2.0 process to serve as a baseline.
    c. Explore different forms of communication of municipal business beyond public meeting notices at the town hall and meeting minutes. In 2021, the City of Springfield, MA completed a Resilient Springfield Communication Strategy to improve communication with climate vulnerable residents; see their strategy, key findings and recommendations, and tips to replicate this work.
    d. Identify what supports and structures would need to be in place to support the engagement and outreach team and to make sure the work does not fall on one person's shoulders.
    e. Design systems of accountability and transparency that could be applied across the municipality.