

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program Action Grant Case Study

Municipality: Shrewsbury

Project Title: Regulatory Update to Parking Requirements

Award Year (FY): 2022

Grant Award: \$82,501.60

Match: \$26,870.37

Match Source: In-Kind

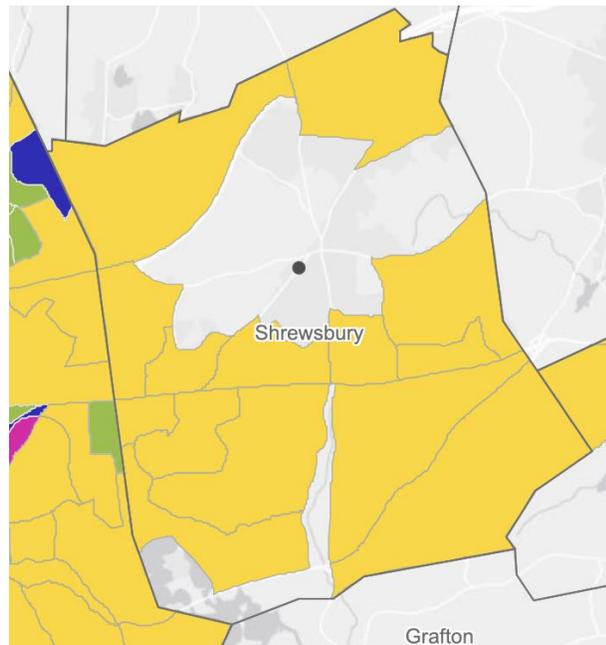
One or Two Year Project: One Year

Municipal Department Leading Project: Planning and Economic Development

Project Website URL: <https://sites.google.com/shrewsburyma.gov/town-of-shrewsbury/home>

Community Overview:

- What is the population size of your community and where is it located? **Shrewsbury is located in Worcester County and has an estimated population of 39,805 people according to 2022 US Census data.**
- Do you have any [Environmental Justice](#) or other Climate Vulnerable communities? (Think about both those who live and work in your town.) **Yes:**
 - **14 Minority EJ Population Blocks are present in Shrewsbury**



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

Shrewsbury is a suburb of Worcester. The Town has a total area of 21.6 square miles, of which 20.7 square miles is land and 0.9 sq mi is water. The top average employment by industry includes education and health services, transportation and warehousing, and retail

trade. The Town is governed in the traditional New England style with a Representative Town Meeting and a five-member Select Board.

Project Description and Goals:

- Where was the project located?
 - **Town-wide, with exception of Town Center**
- What climate change impacts did the project address?
 - **The proposed reduction in parking-related impervious areas and incorporation of nature-based and innovative solutions as design requirements in the regulatory update addresses:**
 - **Increasing precipitation and changing weather**
 - **Increasing temperatures**
 - **Reduction in greenhouse gas emissions**
- What were the specific goals and tasks of the project as stated in your application?

The goals of the regulatory update are to prevent further excessive development of impervious surface lots and to incentivize owners of existing overbuilt surface lots to reduce and replace their excess impervious surfaces with green infrastructure in order to decrease vulnerabilities related to increased extreme weather and heat events. As part of the regulatory update, the Town intends to explore innovative policies such as introducing parking maximums rather than minimums or flexible parking calculations, such as allowing further reduced parking requirements if public transit or alternate methods of travel are provided. Other considerations will include requiring low impact design, the installation of charging stations or the provisions of public greenspace.

Objectives will include conducting research to understand realistic parking needs for uses in different districts, ongoing communication with the business community, and outreach to consumers and members of the public regarding parking concerns. At the end of the process, the Town will have recommendations for a proposed rewrite of the parking section of the Shrewsbury Zoning Bylaw, and stronger connections with and between residents and business owners, which will provide the necessary support in order to successfully move the Zoning Bylaw revisions through the Town Meeting approval process.

The regulatory updates for parking in the Shrewsbury Zoning Bylaw were chosen because zoning requirements are one of the most powerful tools a community has to shape the built environment. Since the adoption of its Zoning Bylaw, Shrewsbury has required parking minimums that reflect the maximum number of spaces anticipated at peak consumer hours. The current parking requirements in the Zoning Bylaw have shaped Shrewsbury's auto-centric development to include large parking lots, which are often underutilized. In a 2016 Zoning Bylaw Audit produced by Horsley Witten, they advised the Town to consider a focused rewrite of the parking requirements to incorporate recent best practices for parking. The current proposed parking update

intends to address the aforementioned comments and to reshape the pattern of development by restricting large surface parking lots. If the regulatory update does not occur, development in Shrewsbury will continue to produce large surface parking lots which will make highly developed areas more vulnerable to extreme weather.

- Did your project meet the goals set forth in your application in terms of:
 - Employing nature-based solutions
 - **Yes, refer to Sections 4.3.1 and 4.3.2, and draft regulations in Appendix A, of the Summary Report dated June 29, 2023.**
 - Improving equitable outcomes for and fostering strong partnerships with EJ and other Climate Vulnerable Populations
 - Yes
 - Providing regional benefits
 - Implementing the public involvement and community engagement plan set forth in your application **Yes, refer to Section 3 and Appendix C of the Summary Report dated June 29, 2023.**
 - Finishing the project on time
 - **Yes, the project team feels that these goals have been met.**

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 consists of a regulatory update, and therefore there are no associated metrics available until the Zoning Amendment is passed at a future Town Meeting and implemented.**
- Provide a brief summary of project deliverables with web links, if available.
 - **The project deliverables are encapsulated in the Summary Report dated June 29, 2023. Broadly, the Summary Report includes information relating to the research and analyses completed, public outreach undertaken, the reasoning for why and why not certain strategies were incorporated into the draft regulations, and a copy of the draft regulations.**

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.

- **Participation by people (citizens, business owners, and Town staff) with town-specific knowledge was critical, to inform the practicability and enforceability of the regulations, and to establish appropriate design criteria and parking ratios that achieve a variety of sometimes opposing goals. However, coordinating numerous people, particularly for setting meetings with sufficient time, is challenging. Maintaining momentum is crucial, along with providing sufficient context to facilitate informed decision making. It is also notable that the various parking analyses benefited from Shrewsbury's project records, highlighting the importance of maintaining clear data.**
- What is the best way for other communities to learn from your project/process?
 - **Reviewing the Summary Report will allow other communities to understand the process Shrewsbury underwent, various considerations and strategies evaluated, and ultimate outcomes. Significant reference information is cited in the Summary Report, as well.**

Partners and Other Support:

- Include a list of all project partners and describe their role in supporting/assisting in the project.
 - EEA MVP Program Regional Coordinator Hillary King provided guidance and input **relating to public outreach, technical considerations, and available sources of information.**
 - **Beals and Thomas, Inc. (B+T) acted as the Town's consultant and shepherded the project with Town staff. B+T was responsible for undertaking the various project scope items with input and direction provided by Town staff.**
 - **Numerous Town staff applied their technical expertise and Shrewsbury-specific knowledge to inform the strategies ultimately incorporated into the draft regulations.**

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.
 - **Representative photographs are not applicable as this is a regulatory update and project photographs contain people at**

the public outreach meeting. There are numerous graphics contained in the Summary Report dated June 29, 2023.