

An Act Establishing the Commission for a Climate-Ready Commonwealth

A statewide commission to determine which entity should lead major coastal and inland resiliency projects, how such projects might be funded and how those projects should be prioritized.

Boston is not alone in facing the threat of climate change, and all communities are experiencing the reality of extreme heat, snow, rain, and flooding. As the impacts increase and intensify, it's more important now than ever before to coordinate investments to adapt infrastructure and our natural and built environment to future climate conditions.

Example projects:

Moakley Park is a low-lying, 60-acre waterfront park in South Boston. Recently the City of Boston created a vision plan for the future of the park to protect it and several Boston neighborhoods from future flood events. The project required coordination across nearly half a dozen local and state agencies including Boston Parks and Recreation, Boston Housing Authority, the Department for Conservation and Recreation, the University of Massachusetts Boston, and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority to identify resiliency measures in a cohesive design.



As implementation of the design begins, these stakeholders will need to continue to work together to align plans and investments.

The City will soon complete a resilience plan for each coastal neighborhood in Boston, offering solutions to protect residents, businesses, critical infrastructure, and community landmarks. Throughout these projects, it was clear that **coordination across jurisdictions** is needed to combat the growing threats of climate change.

- **East Boston:** One of the near-term actions to address the Marginal Street and Border Street flood pathways is the elevation of the East Boston Greenway, owned by Boston's Parks and Recreation, and Piers Park II, owned by Massport.
- **Charlestown:** Critical flood entry points around the Schrafft's City Center create flooding vulnerability for both Cambridge and Somerville. Both municipalities were active in the planning project and coordination across stakeholders, including Massport and MBTA.
- **Dorchester:** The City of Boston will begin its next coastal neighborhood project in Dorchester in June 2019. It will need to convene similar stakeholders as the Moakley Park vision plan and neighboring municipalities to encourage participation in shared outcomes.

WHAT WE'RE FACING

Record snowstorms, more frequent flooding, hotter summers – climate impacts are here with more to come in the future, placing people, our economy, and critical services at risk.



Sea Level Rise: Sea level rise is underway and will accelerate over time. With a sharp reduction in emissions, the impact could be less than two feet, however business as usual could result in more than seven feet of sea level rise by the end of the century.



Coastal Storms: With sea level rise, flooding from future storms will cause more damage even with less precipitation and storm surge.



Major Rain and Snowfall: The Northeast is already experiencing the greatest increase in extreme rain and snow events in the country and the trend is expected to continue disrupting transit, damaging buildings and infrastructure, and limiting access to jobs and services.



More Heat: Summers are getting hotter. More frequent, extreme and long-lasting heat waves are expected creating health risks, power outages and other challenges. Winters will be warmer yet with cold snaps that can cause frost and freeze damage.

Boston is a leader on climate resilience, putting forth plans and actions before the next big storm. **Resilient Boston Harbor** is a vision plan to protect and enhance Boston's 47-mile shoreline from coastal flooding through new and revitalized open space.

We're not just planning for the next storm we will face - we're planning for storms the next generation will face. This is a moment they'll look back and judge us by.

- Mayor Martin J. Walsh,
Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce speech,
2018

The City will soon complete a resilience plan for each coastal neighborhood in Boston, offering solutions to protect residents, businesses, critical infrastructure, and community landmarks.

Boston cannot create a resilient future in isolation, nor can any single community. As the impacts of climate change worsen, it will become more necessary for governance beyond the local level. The State already demonstrates strong leadership in supporting communities climate-ready communities and the proposed commission will build on that.