

Town of Chelmsford

Application to the FY 22 Planning Assistance Grant Program

ENV 22PLN 01

Proposed Project: Over the last several years the Town of Chelmsford has successfully undertaken several planning initiatives related to Climate Preparedness and Resiliency. Specifically, the Town was designated an MVP community in September 2020, completed a Stormwater Management Plan in October 2020, received State approval for its updated Hazard Mitigation Plan in December 2020 and in 2020 / 2021 participated in NMCOG's stormwater collaborative in which a regional stormwater management framework and bylaw were developed.

In addition, in 2019 The town hired a full time Sustainability Manager, has a dedicated Energy Conservation Committee and most recently the Chelmsford Climate Action Team (CCAT) plans to submit a Citizen's Petition at the Spring 2021 Town Meeting proposing that Chelmsford charge a committee with studying and making recommendations for specific strategies and actions for the town to achieve a goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The above, to a large extent, have a focus on pursuing enhanced resiliency and sustainability measures as it relates to development / land use and the associated permitting process and regulations. Some of these measures may be required while others may be encouraged and / or incentivized.

Taken collectively within the context of mitigating climate change; the Town has strong framework of planning and is well positioned to begin the process of implementing recommended actions. As such this grant application proposes to utilize \$40,000 to hire a consultant(s) for purposes of conducting a **Climate Resiliency Regulatory Audit and developing an Action Plan** addressing priority through zoning and other regulations with a specific focus on the following:

- Green Infrastructure / Low Impact Development / reducing impervious coverage.
- Green (net zero) Buildings

Evaluation Criteria

- Advances Sustainable Development Principles – This project will strengthen the Town's existing "smart growth" zoning overlays and expedited permitting with the introduction of regulatory enhancements related to mitigation of climate change with a particular focus on "green infrastructure" and "Green Buildings".

This project will advance incorporation of "natural" stormwater best management practices (BMPs). such as shared driveways, permeable pavers, and bioretention are used to reduce the level of impervious cover and improve the quantity and quality of stormwater drainage. Other LID design techniques include:

- green roofs

- rain barrels
- rain gardens
- grassed swales
- stormwater infiltration systems
- alternative landscaping.
- Pervious paving
- Assess existing street and parking lot design standards and other local requirements that affect the creation of impervious cover.

This project will also advance considerations for Green buildings such as:

- Provide an incentive, such as quicker permitting or a density bonus, to utilize green building practices. (solar)
 - Require projects of certain size or type to meet LEED, Energy Star, or another green building standard.
 - Water / energy conservation measures
 - transportation demand management strategies (TDM) Limiting the availability of employee parking, participation of bus shuttles / ride share /
- Utilizes funding efficiently – While the Town is a recent grant recipient, the Town has a demonstrated track record of successful grant management and implementation. As mentioned, while the Town has completed significant planning / policy “Climate change” documents, funding for continued implementation of regulatory improvements is not in place. This grant would position the Town to be able to advance zoning and other regulatory measures to Town Meeting in the Fall 2022.
 - Implements a local Plan - As mentioned above, this project will initiate implementation of a number of climate change related policy / planning documents that have a particular focus on implementing zoning and other regulatory measures.
 - Involves more than one community – Not applicable.
 - Provide a match above 25% - This project provides the required 25%. This equals a \$10,000 match.
 - Implements a Smart Growth Toolkit technique – The “NET ZERO” component of this project will seek to implement the “Smart Energy / Energy Efficiency/Green Building.”
 - Pursues a zoning practice eligible for simple majority – Not applicable.
 - Advances a Community Compact Best Practice - Not applicable
 - Demonstrates consistency with Sustainable Development Principles - The project is consistent with “Protecting Land and ecosystems”, “Using Natural Resources Wisely” and “promoting Clean Energy”; thereby advancing enhance environmental protection, climate resiliency and reduced energy consumption.

Task by Task description of project

1. Major elements

Review of existing plans - Background documents will be reviewed to create an understanding and context for the identified priorities for implementation.

Task 2. Project Initiation Meeting & Tour - conduct a kickoff meeting. The meeting will involve the consultants and officials from the Town of Chelmsford.

Task 3. Regulatory Audit – consultant will review existing zoning bylaw and other town regulations related to land development for purposes of identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Task 4. Strategic Work Session - work session between the Consultant and stakeholders. In addition to the Town, the stakeholder’s group will include members of the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Energy Committee. The work session will involve a presentation of key findings from work completed to date and a facilitated discussion of opportunities and strategies as a precursor to drafting an Action Plan.

Task 5. Action Plan - based upon previous tasks, assess Opportunities, Strategies and Recommendations, identify specific zoning and other regulatory measures, determine which measures should be required vs. encouraged and / or incentivized.

Task 6. Final Report and presentation - Synthesize all findings into draft report with recommendations. summary presentation of all findings and recommendations

2. Means of accomplishing – An RFP will be distributed, and a multi-disciplinary consultant team will be interviewed and selected. The Consultant will work directly with staff and a committee.
3. Budget – the entire requested grant is for \$40,000 of which \$10,000 (25%) consists of the local match. All grant funds will be expended in FY2022.

4. Timeline - Based upon contract execution by late summer / early fall 2021, the following timeline is provided:

Sign Contract with state	- Sept / Oct 2021
Issue RFP	- Nov – Dec 2021
Conduct Interviews / award Contract	- Jan – Feb 2022
Initiate Project	- Feb – March 2022
50% project Completion	- April – May 2022
100% Project Completion	- May – June 2022

5. Deliverables - A regulatory audit and Action Plan will be will be submitted.
6. Measures of success – ability to achieve committee consensus on recommended action plan AND subsequent submission to and approval by Town Meeting in Fall 2022.
7. A letter committing to 25% local match – see attached
8. Copy of relevant pages from Planning / Policy documents related to implementing recommendations - see attached