

# NSORS as a Regional Model

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CHELSEA • REVERE • WINTHROP

Kristen Homeyer  
Resilience Manager



NORTH  
SUFFOLK  
OFFICE *of*  
RESILIENCE &  
SUSTAINABILITY

# MEET THE TEAM

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*Ben Cares*

**Director of Housing &  
Community Development  
Chelsea**



*Emily Granoff*

**Deputy Dr. of Housing &  
Community Development  
Chelsea**



*Tom Skierawski*

**Director of Planning &  
Community Development  
Revere**



*Tony Marino*

**Town Manager  
Winthrop**



*Abderezak Azib*

**Sustainability Manager**



*Kristen Homeyer*

**Resilience Manager**



*Lydia Malkemus*

**Energy Advocate**



# ABOUT NSORS

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- Advance projects and enact policies that combat climate change and that protect people, critical infrastructure, and the environment from climate impacts.
- Safeguard vulnerable areas, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution that are generated by and affect these communities
- Build the capacity of municipal officials, community organizations and residents to better prepare for and respond to catastrophic events.
- NSORS is oriented toward practical, actionable solutions that bring multiple benefits to residents of Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop, with an emphasis on equity and justice.



# HISTORY OF NSORS

## 2015-2020

Chelsea, Revere, & Winthrop complete MVP Community Resilience Building Workshop, become Green Communities, & are a part of the Metro Mayors Climate Taskforce

## 2021

NSORS Office Established

## 2022-2023

- Zero Carbon Action Plan
- NSORS Resilience & Community Preparedness Report

## 2024

- Revamping NSORS
- Broader Regional Partnerships

- Since all of the NSORS communities were already engaged in comprehensive planning efforts aimed at addressing energy and climate issues
- Shared need for additional personnel to oversee projects and help drive these initiatives across the three communities
- Application to the BARR Foundation
- Intermunicipal Agreement between communities



# NSORS CLIMATE VULNERABILITIES

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Protect against future flooding



Reduce urban heat island impacts  
with more tree canopy



Manage stormwater with green  
infrastructure



Calm traffic and improve safety



Add public amenities, bike  
paths, protected sidewalks, and  
waterfront access



Imagine a new industrial  
waterfront





# SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS

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## Chelsea Microgrid

Using clean sources of energy, we are creating a microgrid, which will provide reliable electricity to participating buildings even when the grid has an outage!

## Energy Efficiency Conservation

Awarded funding through Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to facilitate investments in clean energy

## Curbside Composting

Launched a weekly curbside composting program in Revere in partnership with Garbage to Garden

## Building Energy Reduction Disclosure

The [Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance \(BERDO\)](#) requires large buildings to:

- report their annual energy and water use to the City, and
- reduce their greenhouse gas emissions over time.





# RESILIENCE PROJECTS

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## MVP 2.0

Convening and providing training for a community team to implement a seed project focused on building social resilience, equity, and climate justice.

## Mary C. Burke Heat Mitigation

Designed and implemented cooling infrastructure around the Mary C. Burke elementary school complex

## Eastern Ave Flood Mitigation

Made the highly industrial Eastern Ave safer, cooler, more welcoming, and less prone to coastal flooding through flood protection infrastructure

## ACR White Roofs Project

Installed a white solar-reflective “[cool roof](#)” on CHA’s Margolis Complex to reduce indoor temperatures for some of the city’s most vulnerable residents.





# BELLE ISLE MARSH



Protect Communities  
&  
Preserve the Marsh





# BELLE ISLE MARSH

## CLIMATE VULNERABILITY OVERVIEW



### Project Sites

- 1 - Resilient Bennington Street and Fredericks Park
- 2 - Beachmont Resilience Project
- 3 - Short Beach / Winthrop Pkwy
- 7 - Morton Street Resilience Project
- 9 - Orient Heights Rail Yard

### Other Shorelines

- 4 - Revere St, Winthrop
- 5 - Bayou St / Argyle St
- 6 - Winthrop Cemetery
- 8 - Saratoga Street
- 10 - Austin Ave / Rosie's Pond
- 11 - Lawn Ave

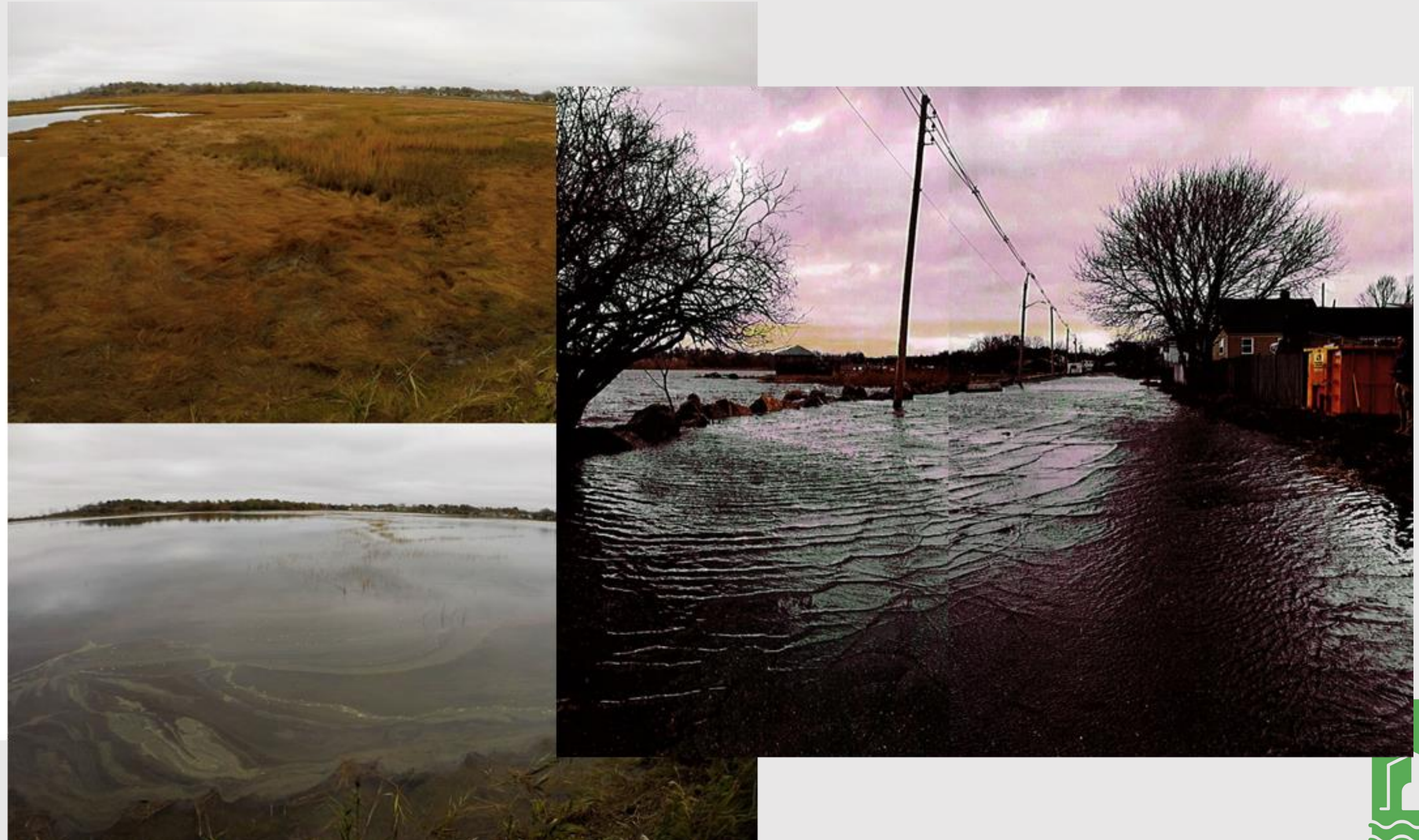
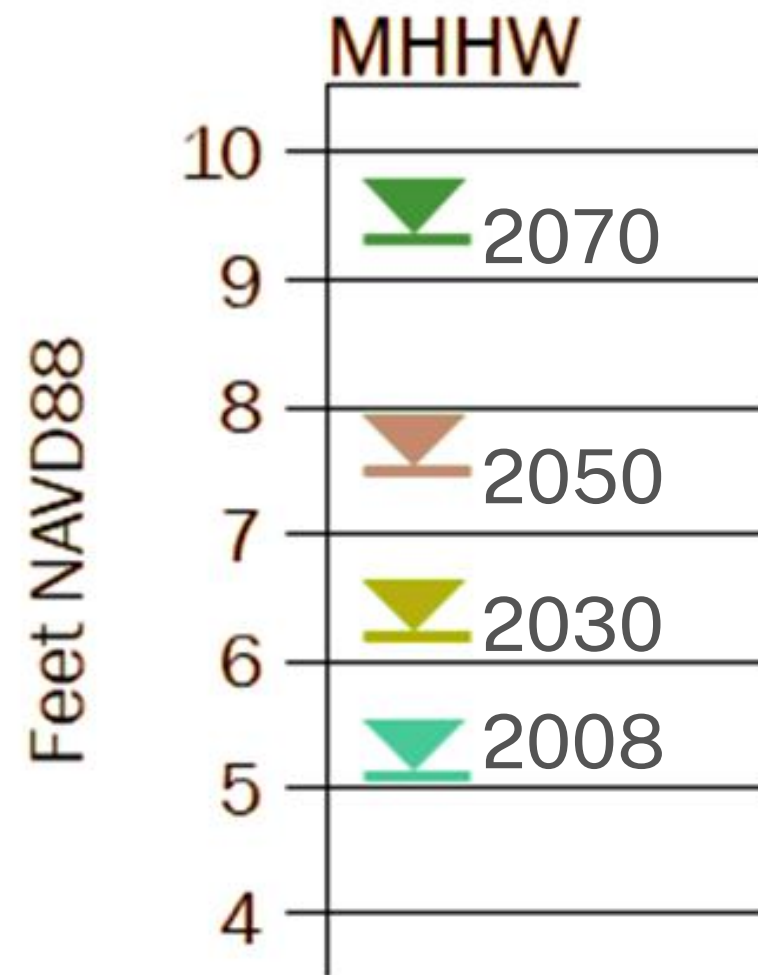




# BELLE ISLE MARSH

## CLIMATE VULNERABILITY OVERVIEW

Storms and sea level rise are impacting both the marsh and communities

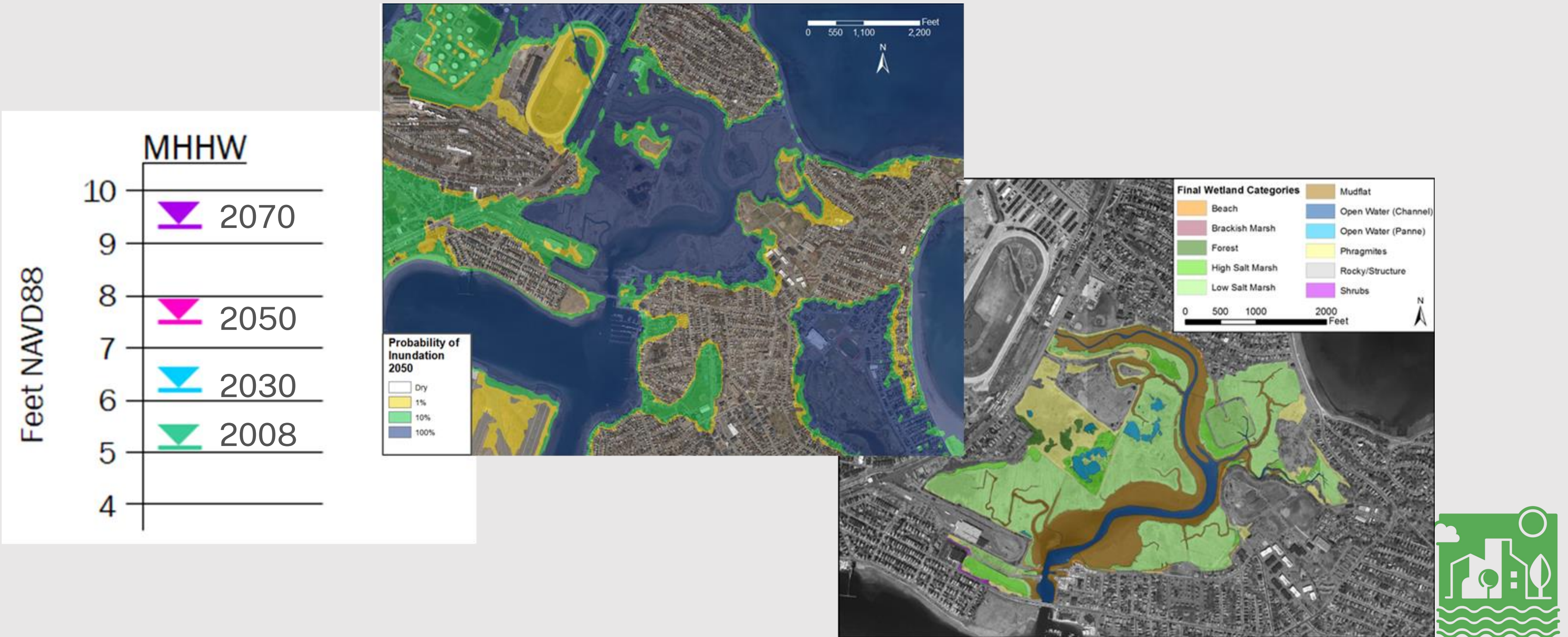




# BELLE ISLE MARSH

## CLIMATE VULNERABILITY OVERVIEW

Storms and sea level rise are impacting both the marsh and communities





# MORTON STREET

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## What is the project?

King tides, coastal storms, & heavy rains flood Morton St residential neighborhood, Winthrop MA.

## Why are we doing this?

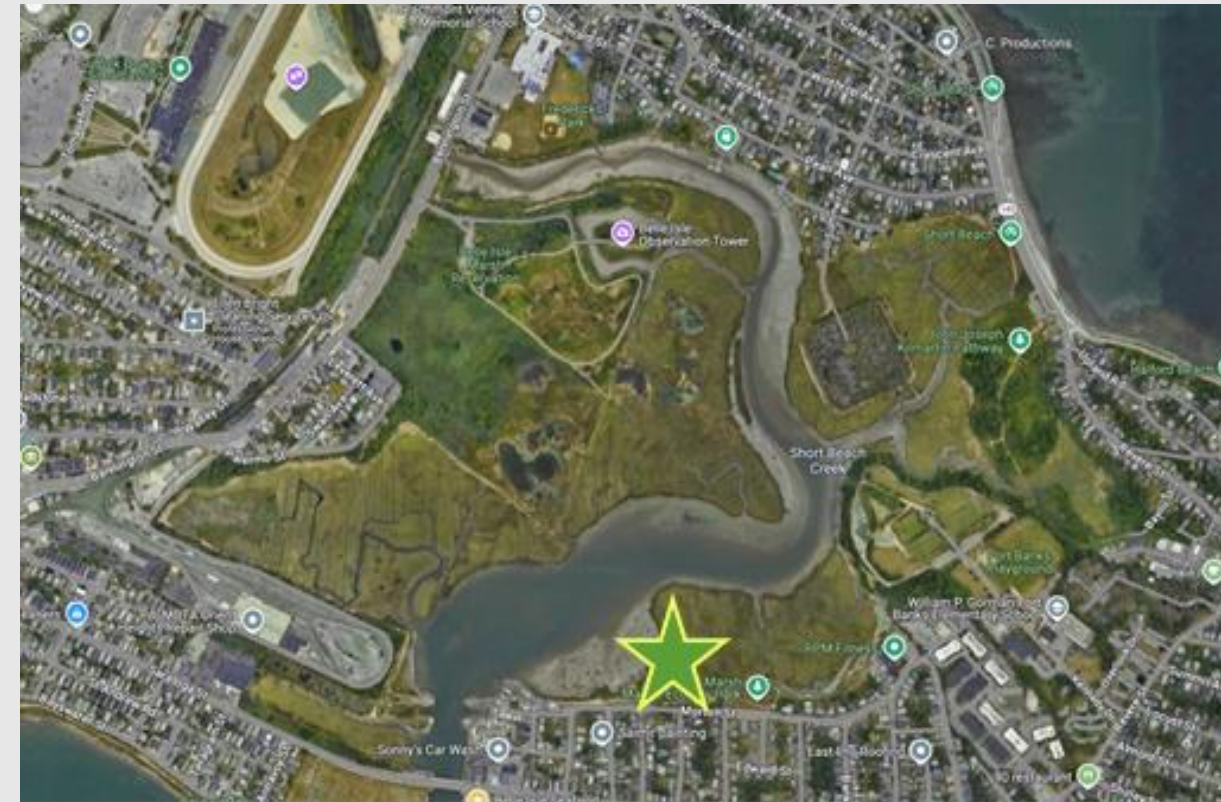
- Reduce flood risk
- Improve habitat quality
- Support community - residents & visitors

**Design phase:** Feasibility Study

**Next Steps:** Engineering & Permitting

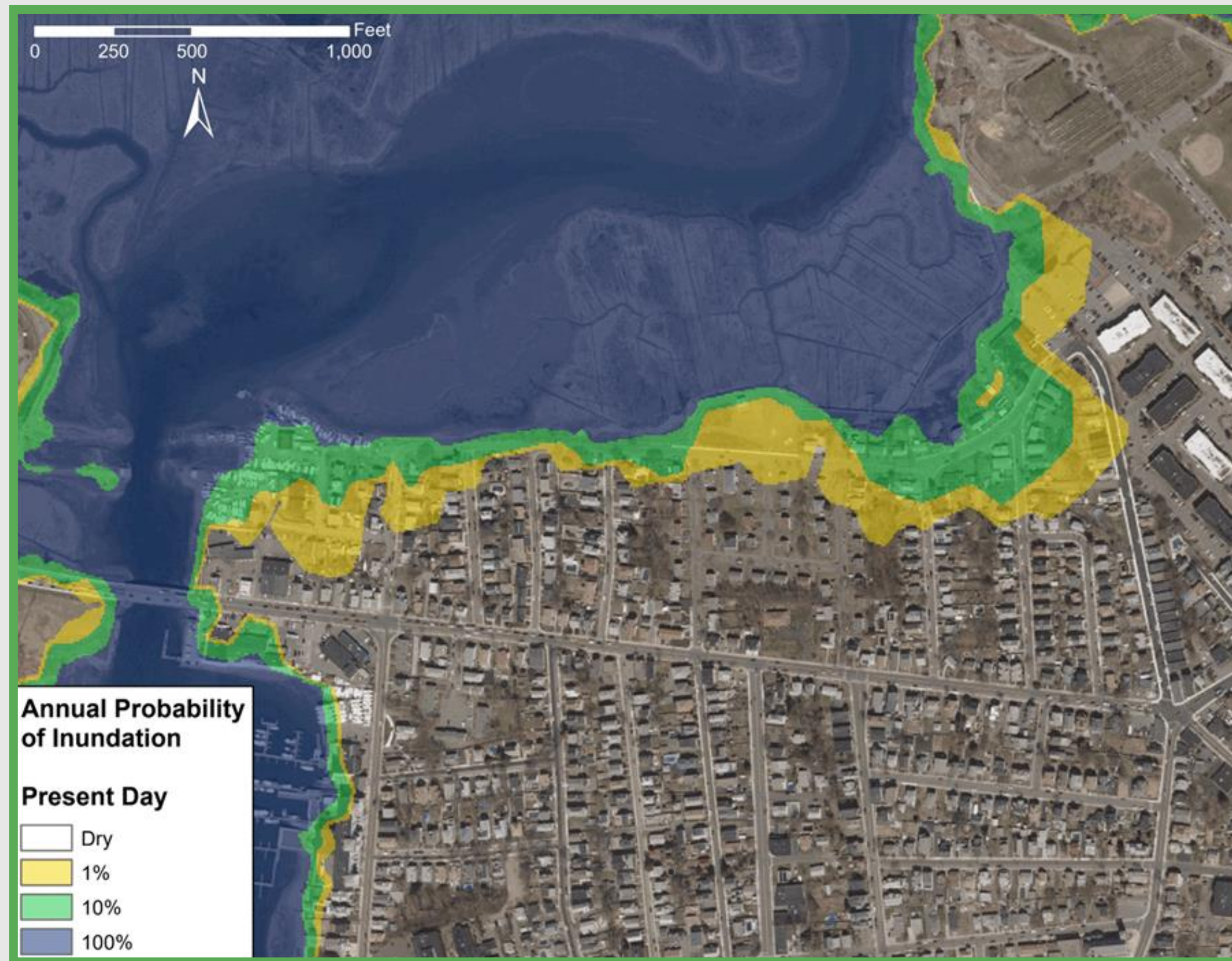
**Landowners/Project Partners:** Town of Winthrop, Friends of Belle Isle Marsh, Residents of Morton St/Bank St

**Funding Source:** TBD





# MORTON STREET SEA LEVEL RISE AND FLOOD RISK





# MORTON STREET SEA LEVEL RISE AND FLOOD RISK





# MORTON STREET: FY26 MVP APPLICATION

- Earthen Berm Elevated barrier buffering development from marsh-based flooding; Planted with native vegetation; Maintain open space and tie-in accessible pathways
- Raised Road Elevated roadway buffering development from marsh-based flooding
- Stormwater Management Store rainfall; Discharge rainfall to marsh; Prevent backflow during high tide



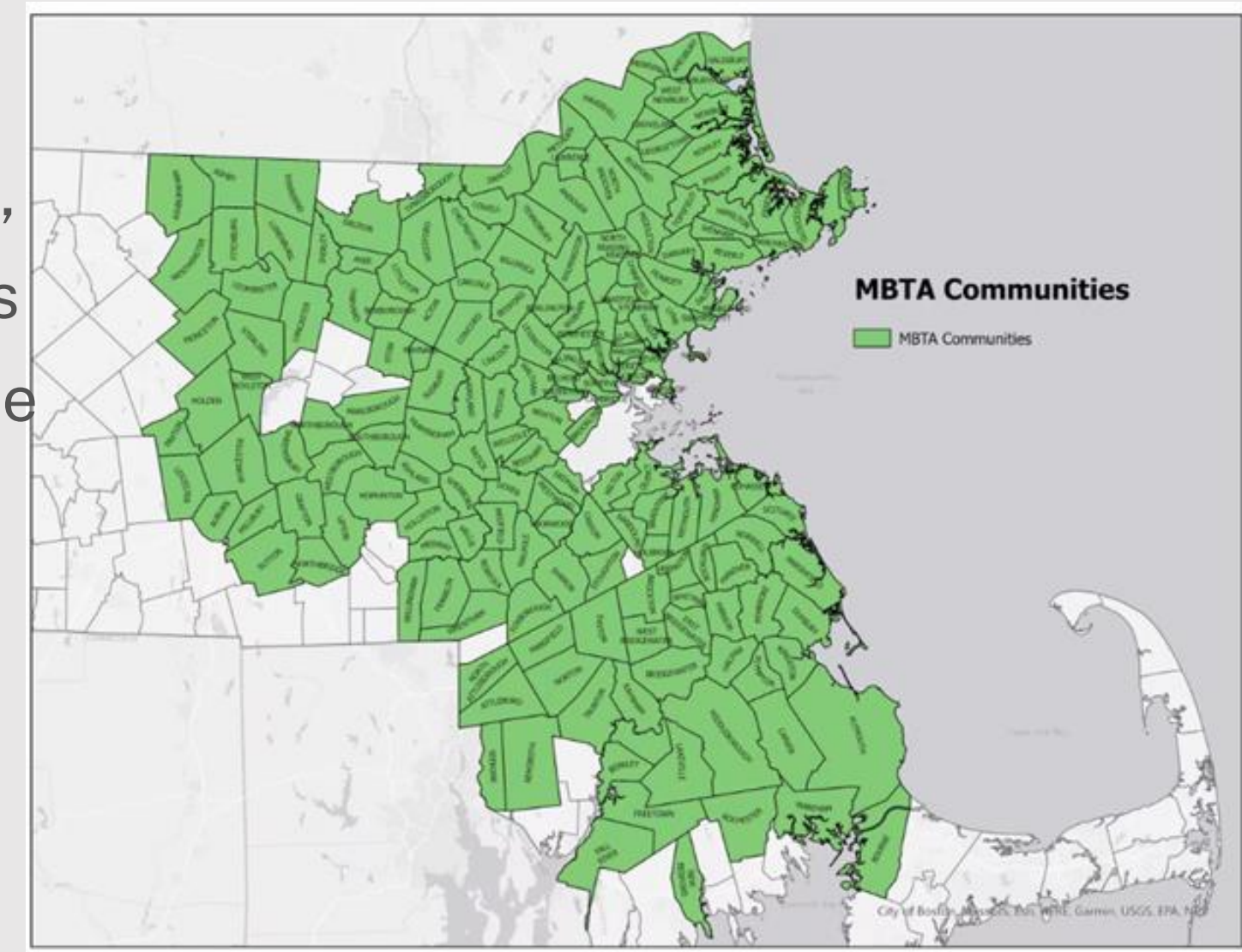


# MBTA COMMUNITIES ACT CONTINUED

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The MBTA Communities Act requires 177 Massachusetts cities and towns with access to public transportation to create at least one reasonably sized zoning district where multi-family housing is allowed by right. These districts must, when feasible, be located within a half mile of transit stations (like bus, train, subway, or ferry). The housing must be suitable for families with children and cannot have age restrictions.

While the law sets these requirements, it preserves local control, allowing each community to decide where and how large these housing districts will be, as long as they meet state guidelines. The law was passed in response to Massachusetts' housing crisis, with the goal of increasing housing supply near public transit to support economic growth and community stability.





# MBTA COMMUNITIES ACT CONTINUED

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## **What Happens if my City or Town does not comply with the MBTA Communities Act?**

Communities that fail to comply with the MBTA Communities Act automatically lose certain state funding, including funding: for local infrastructure generally, such as road, bridge, water and sewer improvements (known as MassWorks); for local infrastructure projects that support housing (known as HousingWorks); for EOHLC grants to communities with a “Housing Choice” designation; and state funding under the Local Capital Projects Fund.

In addition, the Healey-Driscoll Administration has notified communities that compliance with the MBTA Communities Act will be considered when dispensing certain discretionary local aid. This impacts climate-related state funding sources such as:

- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program (MVP)
- Coastal Zone Management (CZM)
- Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
- Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA)
- Division of Ecological Restoration (DER)



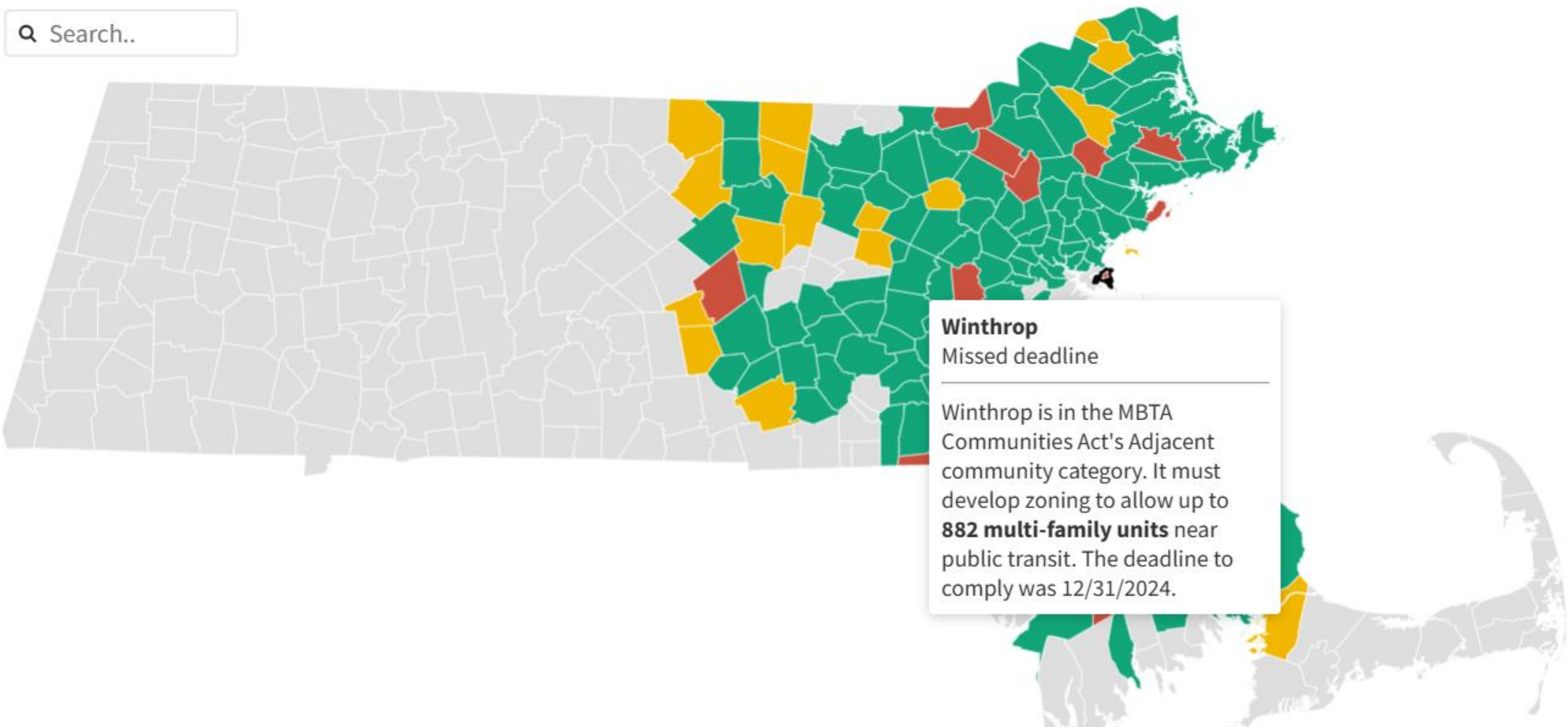
# MBTA COMMUNITIES ACT CONTINUED

## Which towns are on track for MBTA-based rezoning

177 cities and towns in eastern Massachusetts must comply with the MBTA Communities Act, which requires multi-unit zoning near rapid transit or commuter rail stops.

■ Passed zoning intended to comply ■ Hasn't reached deadline ■ Missed deadline

Q Search..



**Winthrop**  
Missed deadline

Winthrop is in the MBTA Communities Act's Adjacent community category. It must develop zoning to allow up to **882 multi-family units** near public transit. The deadline to comply was 12/31/2024.





# Thank you!



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SUSTAINABILITY

COMUNIDADES  
ENRAIZADAS

COMMUNITY  
LAND TRUST

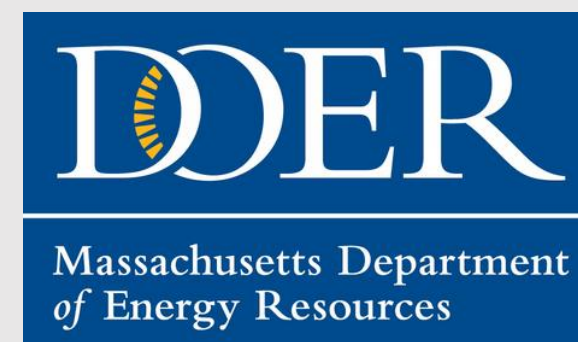


La  
Colaborativa

The Nature  
Conservancy



Mystic River  
WATERSHED ASSOCIATION



Metro Mayors Coalition

CLIMATE  
TASKFORCE



MVP  
Municipal Vulnerability  
Preparedness





# MBTA COMMUNITIES ACT

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The MBTA Communities Act requires 177 Cities and Towns to establish “at least 1 district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right.” Where possible, the district must be within a half mile from public transportation (commuter rail, bus station, ferry terminal or subway). MBTA Communities must permit the development of housing suitable for families with children, and may not impose age restrictions, within the district.

The state legislature had the authority to pass the MBTA Communities Law to require multi-family housing districts in 177 communities where public transportation is accessible. The state is particularly interested in such development because Massachusetts is facing a housing crisis that is crowding out people who wish to live and work here, hurting our communities and limiting our economic growth. The legislature also chose to preserve significant local discretion to determine where that housing may be allowed in order to meet the particular needs of each community.





# MBTA COMMUNITIES ACT CONTINUED

MBTA Communities Act allows for municipal discretion; The MBTA Communities Law and Compliance Guidelines established by the state require that multi-family housing districts must be of reasonable size and, where feasible, located near mass transit; they must allow housing suitable for families with children; and they cannot be age-limited. As long as they meet those requirements, communities have considerable discretion as to where to locate multi-family districts and how big those districts may be.

