

Accelerating Climate Resilience Case Study: Malden River Works for Waterfront Equity and Resilience

Project Snapshot

Project Lead	City of Malden
Project Partners	MIT Friends of the Malden River Mystic River Watershed Association Bread of Life Malden
Grant Round	FY21
Grant Funding	\$52,500 (one-year project)



Preliminary concept visualization showing new riverfront park at the DPW during a community boating event. Photo provided by Project Team.

ACR Program Priorities



Local environmental and community resilience measures (nature-based solutions, green infrastructure, restoration, and social resiliency)



Improvements to social resiliency or cohesion



Public outreach, marketing, or arts and culture

The Malden River Works project aims to transform the City of Malden's DPW Yard on the Malden River for better climate change preparedness and to create a vibrant, climate resilient public riverfront park.

The Malden River Works project has strengthened local interest in reclaiming the river after decades of contamination and neglect. It is designed to provide green space and access to the Malden River while also building community resilience against climate change impacts.

This project advanced climate resiliency efforts by:

- Incorporating community leadership in climate resilience planning - The Malden River Works Steering Committee, led by residents of color, continued to drive community engagement
- Reducing urban heat island effect by planting over 200 new trees
- Introducing green infrastructure and shoreline stabilization

Project Outcomes

1438

Approximate acres of Malden River shoreline stabilized and restored with native plantings

200

Trees planted to reduce urban heat island effect

1,000+

Residents engaged through this project's planning process

700+

Survey responses as part of community-wide outreach efforts

Lessons Learned



Develop different strategies (in person, digital, etc.) to engage with the community besides Zoom outreach. Reaching out to existing community groups further raised awareness of the project and opportunities for others to be involved.



When organizing multiple meetings, it takes a lot more time and effort (than hosting one traditional community meeting) but is critical to building relationships and meaningful dialogues in the community.

Tips & Tricks



A dedicated Steering Committee and Project Team members contributed to successful community engagement. Providing compensation has been a crucial part of ensuring their commitment to the project as well as recognizing the value of their expertise.



Creative strategies that are less feedback-focused and more education-oriented about nature-based solutions and stormwater infrastructure are useful for urban communities with formerly industrial waterways.

Looking Forward

The City of Malden continues exploring opportunities for capital funding to prepare for construction of the project. **Malden River Works is the City's first self-directed climate resiliency project; the City's Federal Delegation successfully secured \$1,334,610 in funding for Malden Rivers Works project to:**

- Reduce the City's climate vulnerability by building green stormwater infrastructure
- Increase the tree canopy to mitigate urban heat island effects and restore the natural riverfront landscape
- Build an elevated greenway path to serve as a flood barrier in the event of sea-level rise
- Address the legacy of environmental racism as a part of response to climate change