

## Climate Resilience

The first priority of the East Beach Corridor Vulnerability Study, which concluded its work in May of this year, was to “Establish and Sustain a Coastal or Climate Resilience Committee.” This was a unanimous recommendation of the committee, which felt that the issues raised during our deliberations about the impacts of climate change affected the entire Town. The report of the Study is available on the following website: [https://www.westport-ma.com/sites/g/files/vyh1if1441/f/uploads/mvp\\_final\\_report\\_east\\_beach\\_corridor\\_vulnerability\\_study.pdf](https://www.westport-ma.com/sites/g/files/vyh1if1441/f/uploads/mvp_final_report_east_beach_corridor_vulnerability_study.pdf).

At a work session of the Planning Board on August 17, 2021, the Board voted unanimously to recommend to the Select Board to establish a town-wide Climate Resilience Committee under the joint jurisdiction of the Select Board and the Planning Board.

The makeup of the Committee would comprise two members of the Select Board, two members of the Planning Board, one member each from the Conservation Commission, Highway Department, Building Department, Beach Committee, Board of Health, Agricultural Commission, Fire Department, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, and designees from the Westport Land Conservation Trust, Westport River Watershed Association, Buzzards Bay Coalition and three neighborhood associations to be selected from interested applicants. The Planning Board or their designee would staff the Committee.

The Committee would be Co-Chaired by a member of the Select Board and a member of the Planning Board, and the Committee would elect an Executive Committee of not more than 5 members who would be expected to meet on a more frequent basis to organize the work.

The charge to the Committee would be:

1. Identify the many ways that climate change is going to impact the Town of Westport, with a particular focus between now and 2050. We would expect impacts to include but not be limited to sea level rise, beach erosion, coastal flooding, loss of saltmarsh, potential breach of The Let, increased number of 90 degree days with resulting heat-related deaths, impact on the hydrological cycle of drought, and flood and resulting harm to agriculture, an influx of pests, stress on the electric grid, saltwater intrusion into wells, increased severity of storms, difficulty or impossibility of obtaining property insurance, ocean acidification affecting marine life, invasive species on land or sea, increase in disease because of weaker frost, estuary flooding, interior flooding of rivers, brooks and streams, possible dam breaches, etc.
2. For every impact, identify what entity in Town is most appropriate to understand the issue and prepare a response plan that would include what can be done and what resources are needed.
3. Submit this to the Select Board and Town Administrator so they can direct town entities to prepare each component of the response with the support of the Committee.
4. Identify state and federal grants, private foundations, and other funding opportunities that can support the work of the committee’s planning and the implementation of the committee’s recommendations.

5. Compile the responses with their costs into a prioritized list that considers factors of cost, urgency, impact, and numbers of residents affected.
6. Conduct at least three public meetings to inform the Town's residents of the committee's work.
7. Submit a final report to the Select Board.
8. Seek out funds for professional consulting to perform this mission.
9. Recommend and support projects and grants that would address issues raised by the committee. Follow up on climate-related action items identified in existing studies and reports such as the Master Plan Update and the East Beach MVP Corridor Study.

Prepared by John Bullard