City of New Bedford awarded grant to advance green infrastructure projects

The City of New Bedford has won a grant through the state's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program to advance green infrastructure projects across the city.

New Bedford uses green infrastructure to reduce urban flooding, mitigate extreme heat, improve neighborhood livability, and deliver environmental justice. The grant money will go towards developing a master plan for increasing the use of nature-based solutions to reduce flooding and water pollution.

What is Green Infrastructure?
More intense storms and increased precipitation caused by climate change means that some aging stormwater systems are no longer capable of handling the necessary volume of stormwater. This leads to urban flooding and harmful runoff flowing into waterways. Green infrastructure is one solution to this problem.

City of New Bedford photo.

Green infrastructure refers to a range of methods that use nature-based solutions to store or absorb stormwater to reduce flows to sewer systems or surface waters. Solutions include natural drainage systems (bioswales), rain gardens, permeable pavement, green roofs, and tree planting.

Green infrastructure is an essential strategy to protect our city from flooding, preserve our water quality by limiting runoff and combined sewer overflows, and enhance our tree canopy and biodiversity.

Environmental Justice

Of New Bedford's 30 census tracts, 93% are designated Environmental Justice (EJ) communities based on the percent of minority, low income, and/or English Isolation residents. Many of the city's EJ communities are the hardest hit by urban flooding as most are densely developed with some of the oldest infrastructure in the city.

EJ communities are also especially vulnerable to extreme heat. To combat these environmental injustices, the Green Infrastructure Master Strategy and Implementation Roadmap will

include a special focus on green infrastructure strategies that will benefit EJ communities. Green infrastructure approaches that increase urban tree canopy, for example, will mitigate extreme heat, store carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, and improve air quality.

The City is partnering with several community-based organizations, such as Groundwork SouthCoast and Old Bedford Village Development Corporation, that represent EJ populations to ensure their voices are centered in the planning process.

Learn more about the project and green infrastructure via #NBResilient at: https://nbresilient.com/category/green-infrastructure