

New Bedford launches NB Resilient, city's climate action and resilience plan

With the start of 2021, Mayor Jon Mitchell and the City of New Bedford have formally launched NB Resilient, the City's strategic climate action plan aimed at climate adaptation and mitigation.

The plan sets ambitious but achievable goals to help New Bedford achieve its vision – “a thriving, self-sustaining city that is culturally and historically secure, and ready to implement innovative approaches to prepare for tomorrow's possibilities.”

The full NB Resilient plan and a dashboard marking its progress have officially launched at nbresilient.com.

Under the leadership of Mayor Mitchell and led by the Department of Resilience and Environmental Stewardship, New Bedford created a climate action steering committee to support and develop a plan around six focus areas – climate and energy; economy and jobs; infrastructure, utilities and waste; natural resources; public health and safety; and transportation and land use – designed to cover all aspects of the city.

These goals address climate adaptation and resilience, and are geared toward enabling all residents of New Bedford to thrive, including:

- 100% of waste diverted from landfills by 2050
- Protecting the Port of New Bedford from sea level rise through infrastructure and resilience investments
- Offsetting the city's carbon footprint through the planting

of thousands of trees in New Bedford

- Committing to green building practices in new facility investments
- Improving food security and healthy living for New Bedford residents

“In the midst of the pandemic, we in New Bedford know that the world goes on. There are other challenges we face, there are other opportunities we must seize – and top among all of them are the threats and opportunities presented by climate change,” Mayor Mitchell said in the official launch video for the plan. “We know that our climate adaptation and mitigation efforts have to keep up with the times. That’s why we went about the work of developing a strategic plan: to reset our efforts, employ the data we track, and stay ahead of the challenges that climate change poses.”

“New Bedford will continue to be a leader when it comes to renewable energy, we will continue to be a leader in energy conservation, and when it comes to climate adaptations and protections, we’ll continue to lead there, too,” Mayor Mitchell said. “Years from now, people will say that this was a moment when we had to step up. Let them say that we made the right choices so that they could lead healthier, more fulfilling lives.”

While the plan itself is complete, the work to move toward a more resilient New Bedford is just beginning. New Bedford’s greatest asset is its people, and the climate action and resilience plan will have the greatest impact with more residents involved.

“NB Resilient is already leading to progress,” said Michele Paul, Director of Resilience and Environmental Stewardship for the City of New Bedford. “The nbresilient.com dashboard is tracking the important steps we’ve already taken, and will continue to be updated so that everyone – businesses,

neighborhoods, individuals – can be a part of building a healthier, safer, and more resilient city.”

NB Resilient is a roadmap for everyone in the city to take action, and it includes short- and long-term goals for a safe, thriving city – from reducing greenhouse gas emissions, to ensuring the waterfront and port are protected from the climate change the world is experiencing.

NB Resilient’s inclusive plan is possible thanks to the partnership of the New Bedford City Council, the city’s neighborhood associations, Coastline Elderly Services, the Community Economic Development Center, Love The Ave, Groundwork Southcoast, Preservation of Affordable Housing, and organizations and residents who participated in the climate action plan steering committee and community meetings.

More about New Bedford’s leadership in Solar & Wind Energy and Green Innovation

Solar Leadership:

- Under Mayor Jon Mitchell the City of New Bedford installed more solar capacity on a per capita basis than any other city in the continental United States besides San Diego. The City’s leadership was profiled in the Wall Street Journal in 2014.
- Ten major solar installations totaling more than \$60 million in privately financed construction will save city taxpayers nearly \$1 million this year by cutting the utility bills of city departments. Over 20 years the solar projects are projected to save city government \$22 million.

Offshore Wind Energy Development:

- New Bedford is the closest industrial port to the largest wind energy reserves in the United States, areas of open ocean south of Martha’s Vineyard off the Massachusetts coast.
- With the state and federal government now moving to develop

these waters for large offshore wind turbine farms, major industry players, including Vineyard Wind and Mayflower Wind, have committed to using the city's port to stage their projects.

- A key advantage of New Bedford's port is a \$100 million marine terminal built specifically to handle the heavy loads of turbine components. Unique in North America, the New Bedford Marine Commerce Terminal, was financed and constructed by the Commonwealth's Clean Energy Center with support from the City.

Green Municipal Innovation:

- The City of New Bedford boasts one of the largest municipal electric car fleets in Massachusetts. The vehicles, in use by Health Department inspectors in city neighborhoods, and other departments, are leased for just \$70 per month per vehicle as the result of attractive financing and incentives.

- The City of New Bedford's municipal landfill hosts two separate waste-to-energy projects which convert landfill gases and biogas into 3.4 megawatts of electricity annually.

- The City recently completed one of the largest performance-contracting initiatives anywhere in the Northeast. The long-term partnership with Siemens Corporation has retrofitted the City's stock of nearly 100 municipal buildings with energy efficiency measures, including heating and cooling systems and climate controls.