



City of New Bedford
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CITY OF NEW BEDFORD
Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor

PRESS RELEASE

City awarded \$1.7M RAISE Grant from U.S.DOT For Blue Lane Working Waterfront Connector Project

New Bedford, MA – The U.S. Department of Transportation has awarded the City of New Bedford a \$1.7 Million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The RAISE Program focuses on planning and capital investments that support roads, bridges, transit, rail, ports, and intermodal transportation.

This planning grant will be allocated to advance the design, permitting, and continuation of public outreach for the City's Blue Lane Working Waterfront Connector Project (BLWWC). THE BLWWC project will reconstruct three continuous major roadways in the Port of New Bedford and is a project based on a feasibility study prepared by the City in 2020. Planned improvements along MacArthur Drive, Herman Melville Boulevard, and North Front Street will enhance access to waterfront industries, the intercity rail, recreational opportunities, and tourist destinations fostering safe, non-motorized travel for all, especially for waterfront employees.

The project ultimately would include underground infrastructure, including the replacement of water, sewer, and stormwater pipelines to improve climate change resiliency along with the incorporation of green infrastructure elements to meet the state's Clean Water Act municipal stormwater discharge requirements. It would also include the installation of fiber optic cable to serve areas in need of high-speed internet access. Streetscape improvements would include the construction of a shared-use pathway accompanied by pedestrian-scale street lighting and Americans with Disability Act-compliant crosswalks and access ramps to foster walking and biking along the corridor. Traffic signal upgrades would enhance the safety of many of our fishing industry workers who live in the surrounding neighborhoods and walk or bike to work.

“This planning grant will enable us to tie together various neighborhood improvement and economic development efforts,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell. “I want to thank the Biden Administration and the Congressional delegation for making these resources available.”

“New Bedford’s working waterfront is home to the top fishing port in the nation, the hub of the offshore wind industry, and is a top tourist destination in the region, and this RAISE grant will improve access to the waterfront for workers, residents, and tourists alike while taking cars off the road and improving water quality,” said Congressman Bill Keating. “In passing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, President Biden promised to create jobs, modernize our infrastructure, and turn the climate crisis into an economic opportunity – and this RAISE grant for the BLWWC Project does just that. I commend the City of New Bedford for submitting this successful grant application that I was proud to support.”

“The BLWWC Projects aligns with the Planning Department’s ongoing waterfront planning, recognizing the significance of the City’s strategic port location to advance economic development,” said Director of City Planning, Jennifer Carloni. “The proposed infrastructure planning supports a future vision of a waterfront that continues to represent New Bedford’s rich history, supports industries of today and tomorrow, and broadens public access.”

The BLWWC Project would fill a critical network gap in the City’s Blue Lane network, an 11-mile waterfront pathway network spanning the City’s shoreline. The BLWWC will connect the Blue Lane’s existing CoveWalk and HarborWalk (pathways atop the New Bedford Hurricane barrier) as well as the RiverWalk (a planned pathway along the shoreline of the Acushnet River). This connection will provide safe and convenient access to the working waterfront, State Pier, downtown, nearby neighborhoods, and the intercity rail station.

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