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**CITY OF NEW BEDFORD**  
**Jonathan F. Mitchell, Mayor**

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For Immediate Release

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Major Improvements for Buttonwood Water Quality**

*City, State, Federal Officials Gather to Kick Off Environmental Enhancement Project to  
Reduce Pollution in Buttonwood Brook, Pond*

**New Bedford, MA** – Mayor Jon Mitchell announced that the City, along with local, state, and federal partners, is launching a major effort to improve water quality in Buttonwood Brook and Pond.

More than \$2 million in state and federal funds has been secured for the project, which aims to better manage stormwater to reduce pollution in the Buttonwood Brook ecosystem.

“This project will have a lasting positive impact on the ecological health of Buttonwood Park,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell. “I want to thank our federal delegation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Coalition of Buzzards Bay, and the Healey Administration for their support of this critical green infrastructure initiative.”

Environmental infrastructure improvements are planned for the northern end of Brownell Avenue, Kempton Street near the Route 140 intersection, and around the Buttonwood Warming House. They include rain gardens, retention ponds and bioswales, which will capture stormwater and allow it to filter and clean, keeping street pollutants from reaching the brook and pond.

Capturing and filtering stormwater will help Buttonwood Brook absorb heavy rains and reduce the chance of flooding. The Brook runs 8.5 miles, from Hathaway Road south through Buttonwood Pond and eventually emptying into Apponagansett Bay in south Dartmouth, passing through many residential areas along the way.

The parking lot for the Warming House will be repaved, and the walkways will be brought up to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.

The City worked with the Buzzards Bay Coalition and the Town of Dartmouth to plan and secure funding for the project. Funding sources include:

- A \$500,000 Watershed Implementation Grant from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Southeast New England Program to the Buzzards Bay Coalition, which accepted the award at Wednesday's ceremony.
- A \$350,000 grant from the state's Municipal Vulnerability Program to the City.
- A \$375,000 grant from the EPA's National Estuary Program to the City's Department of Parks, Recreation and Beaches.
- Almost \$710,000 in American Rescue Plan funds from the federal government.

"This project, which will protect our watershed and improve access for all who visit Buttonwood Park, is a reminder of what can happen when the local, state, and federal government partner with each other and with non-profit organizations like the Buzzards Bay Coalition," said Congressman Bill Keating. "I'm proud of the work that the Southeast New England Program has accomplished since Senator Jack Reed and I worked together to start the program a decade ago, and I am proud to see this increased federal investment in the City of New Bedford as a result of President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the American Rescue Plan."

"Massachusetts' senior elected officials continue to do a fantastic job crafting great solutions for the challenges facing our coastal waters – and this funding is a result of their hard work and creativity," said EPA New England Regional Administrator David W. Cash. "These projects announced today will advance EPA's and the Commonwealth's commitment to investing in underserved communities."

"This project will not only improve the water quality in Buttonwood Brook and Pond, but it will keep the Buttonwood ecosystem healthy and thriving for years to come," said Ward 5 City Councilor Scott Lima. "This is a good example of the good that comes when local, state, and federal bodies come together as a team."

"Climate change impacts like sea-level rise and increased rainfall require innovative approaches," said Commissioner Bonnie Heiple of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. "We applaud the collaboration that led to the use of nature-based solutions to improve water quality and reduce flooding risks to the New Bedford community."

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