

Maintain ongoing implementation of coastal resilience strategies across Boston’s and the region’s coastline. These include nature-based and hard engineered flood and sea-level rise infrastructure to reduce the risk of coastal and riverine flooding, with the aim to protect all neighborhoods.

Connecting Outcomes to Goals

Resilience	Increasing Social Equity
Coastal infrastructure effectively protects Boston from sea-level rise and storm surges.	Safeguarding the shores protects residents of all neighborhoods especially those who are often most at risk during an emergency. Sufficient safeguards reduce the risk and cost (e.g., insurance) of housing.

Progress Assessment

A study of barrier systems for managing sea-level rise recommended that the region focus on shore-based protection rather than more ambitious harbor-wide strategies. Local climate resilience plans have been developed for Moakley Park,¹²⁷ Charlestown,⁵⁵ South Boston,⁵¹ and Dorchester,⁵² and Phase II plans for East Boston and Charlestown were completed in August 2022. Other City-led initiatives, including community outreach, zoning policy, and frameworks for project prioritization have been adopted.

The private sector, which owns much of the coastline, is doing reasonably well in complying with Climate Ready Boston guidelines and providing some public benefits, mostly in the form of access to the water and open space. In some cases, private developers are providing flood protection that will protect adjacent inland properties, but responsibilities for integration between and across properties to provide a continuous line of defense are not always clear. Likewise, questions about who benefits and who pays for measures that protect both shoreline property and inland areas vulnerable to flood pathways through those properties need to be resolved.

Funding gaps have slowed progress in developing infrastructure; however, recent federal climate and infrastructure legislation will provide new funding streams.^{37,38,39} Effective use of new federal and state resources will depend on having sufficient City staff support to overcome institutional inertia. To this end, the City has hired a director of green infrastructure to create a green infrastructure working group and focus on the resilience needs of Chinatown, East Boston, Mattapan and Roxbury.

Jurisdictional limitations challenge coastal resilience projects due to the need for approvals from various state agencies, while action on private property is largely out of reach. The City can only act on property it owns and much of the city’s coastline is privately owned. Conflicting goals between the City and various state agencies granting permits is slowing progress, particularly for nature-based solutions.

Equity Implications & Indicators

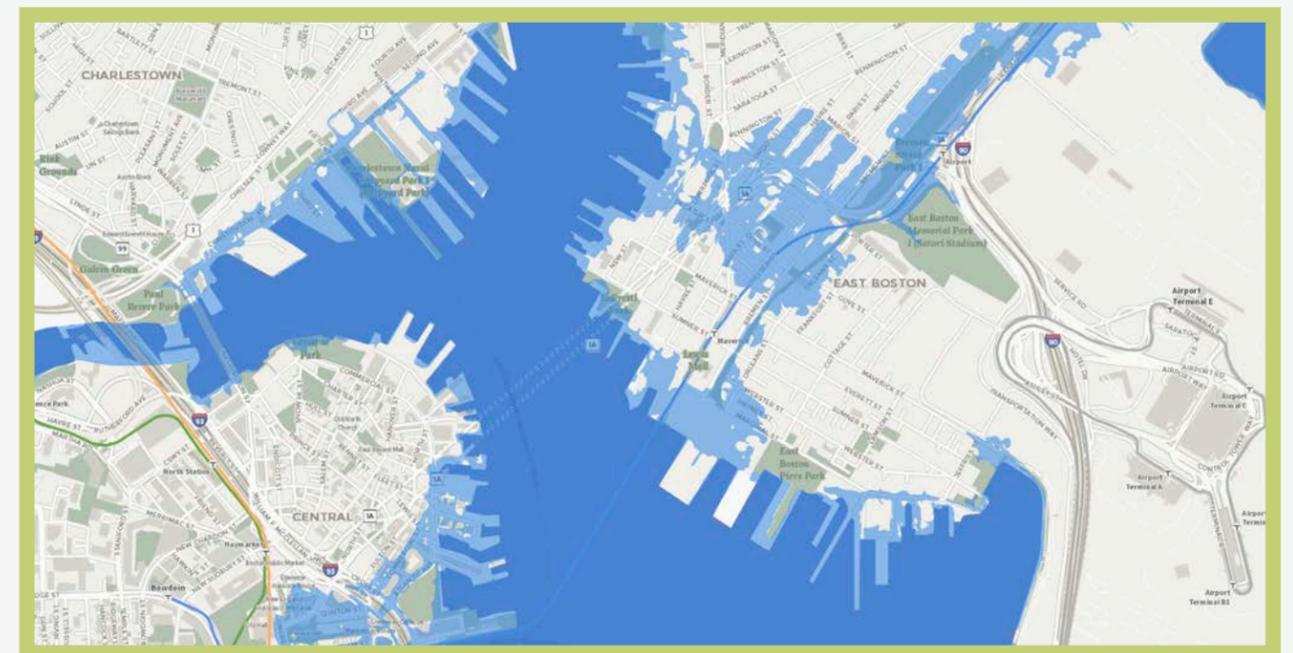
Investments and Community Input: Planning for resilience must ensure that frontline communities are protected, a priority of the Wu administration. Metrics detailing investments and progress toward meeting self-defined neighborhood needs should be used as indicators of equitable progress.

Big Lifts

Building a Resilient Coastline: Management of the coastline and a steady-but-insufficient stream of funding requires an agency that can fund and implement projects on the entire Massachusetts coast.

Prioritization of Reparative Planning: Represent and incorporate the various interests of frontline neighborhoods in developing and implementing neighborhood plans for emergencies.

Figure 14. Projection of the extent of high tide in 2070¹²⁶



Source: Climate Ready Boston Map Explorer