

Restore America's Estuaries Southern New England Estuary Program
Watershed Improvement Grant
2022

DEVELOPING THE NORTH END **NEW BEDFORD** RESILIENCE DISTRICT

Executive Summary

Maura Valdez

mvaldez@groundworksouthcoast.org

508.974.3535



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SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND ESTUARY PROGRAM

Phase one of Developing the North End (of New Bedford) Resilience District's Riverside Resilience Zone Transformation was supported by Southeast New England Program (SNEP) Watershed Grants. SNEP Watershed Grants are funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through a collaboration with Restore America's Estuaries (RAE). For more on SNEP Watershed Grants, see www.snepgrants.org



GROUNDWORK SOUTHCOAST

As a non-profit working to cultivate environmental justice locally since 2017, we strive to transform open spaces and urban waters in the communities we serve. We invest in the leadership and stewardship of the youth while maintaining a cross sector network of like-minded changemakers.

NORTH END RESILIENCE DISTRICT

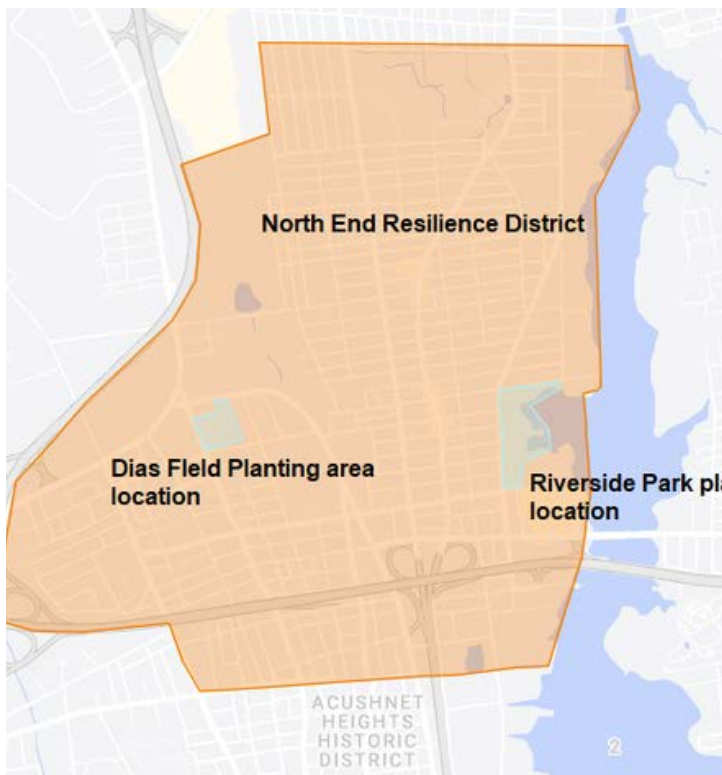
New Bedford is home to several an environmental justice (EJ) neighborhoods. One of these is in the North End and where Groundwork Southcoast's (GWSC) work is most stabilized. To focus our work we define the area of greatest environmental and social need as the North End Resilience District (NERD). NERD is bordering a signifiant portion of the Acushnet River. This neighborhood has long held one of the most vibrant business districts and is the home to our new waves of immigrant residents.

Additionally, the neighborhood is characterized by two parks and peppered with smaller open spaces. This sits in stark contrast to the area's history of environmental degradation including a prevalence of brownfields and polluted waterways.

Focusing on the NERD fosters strategic integration of positive transformation for people and environment. This is an innovative and scalable model first launched in 2020.

The Goals of NERD:

- Develop Environmental Resiliency by focusing on addressing stormwater flooding and heat island impacts through Green Infrastructure Installation.
- Develop Community Resiliency by engaging community through employment, leadership, and engagement in public environmental spaces.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

RIVERBANK RESTORATION

Urban beautification promotes community engagement by sparking conversations around nature based solutions to raised issues such as

The Acushnet Riverbank Restored

- In Partnership with the City of New Bedford, phases of restoration were completed after the EPA completed a superfund restoration of the location
- This restoration included removing invasives, planting native plants
- Maintaining the site by continuing to remove invasives and re-seed with native plants
- Groundwork Southcoast's Green Team is committed to continue to maintain this site long term

STORMWATER MITIGATION

Installing Our First Stormwater Garden:

- In Partnership with Groundwork Rhode Island and the City of New Bedford, Green Team youth were trained on Green Infrastructure Installation.
- Sod in a culvert was replaced with native plants that have much deeper roots and can absorb water more quickly and need less maintenance than grass
- 14 fruit trees were also planted which help increase water absorption
- Green Team is committed to long-term care of the stormwater garden and the fruit trees

Top: Green Team member focused on invasive plants removal at a volunteer day; bottom: stormwater garden management at a volunteer day



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STEERING COMMITTEE

Groundwork Southcoast's partners for NERD participated in monthly cross sector meetings to refine the vision, goals and scope of what is now the NERD Steering Committee. Together, they came up with an Action Plan that would further enhance resident understanding. One product of this plan was the launch of Lideres Resiliencia Comunitaria (LRC).

The steering committee's action plan defines need for:

- Community outreach accessibility
- Centering equity in opportunities and provided services
- Delegating leadership responsibilities

Líderes de Resiliencia Comunitaria (LRC)

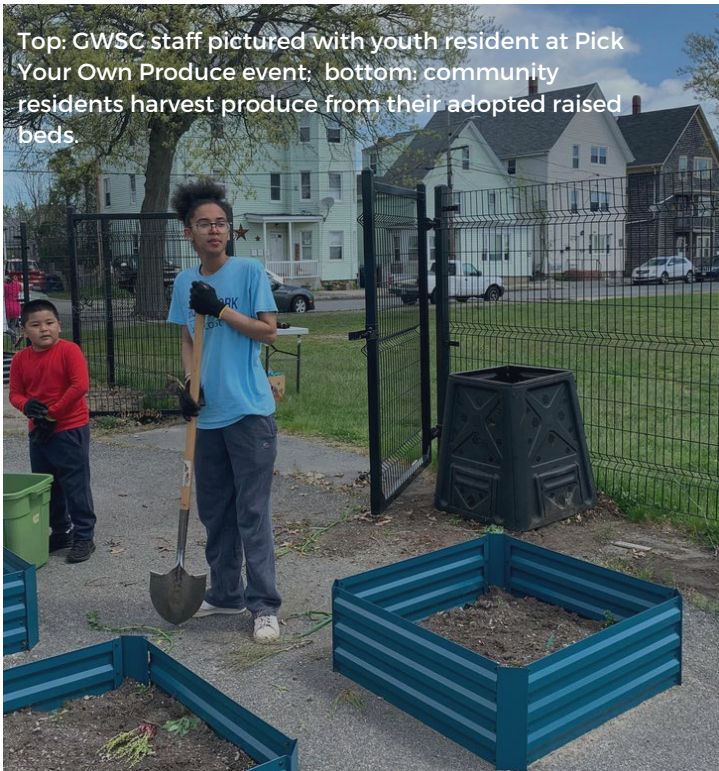
GWSC's next strategic step beyond the scope of SNEP funding

- Centers residents in the decision-making where they live
- Pairs lived experience with brainstorming and developing nature based solutions that are sustainable as well as effective for the community and the environment

left: A need for community leadership was identified through the Action Plan creation process. See Supplemental Materials to view the NERD Steering Committee's full story map.



Top: GWSC staff pictured with youth resident at Pick Your Own Produce event; bottom: community residents harvest produce from their adopted raised beds



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Groundwork Southcoast Centers Environmental Justice Communities:

- Our Green Infrastructure Projects are always paired with Food Access and Community Engagement Efforts due to youth and adult community input.
- The 14 fruit trees planted were due to community input as well as adding irrigation and the Urban Farm and Community Garden which are adjacent to the Riverbank and Stormwater garden with the orchard in-between
- This project included planning and outreach to launch leadership group of NERD residents
- GWSC also continued Pick Your Own Produce Days at the site which engaged community members to receive food grown at the site and learn more about the GI projects in process surrounding the food growing.



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PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Continued Commitment to Green Infrastructure

As a long term investment GWSC's Green Team will continue to manage invasives to ensure the restoration of the Riverbank and installed stormwater garden are both maintained

Expanded Outreach with NERD Residents

Restoration efforts have brought new life to the NERD. Hosting community events leads to engagement from residents to understand what environmental justice means to and for them. Those who engage in a deeper investment with GWSC are the voices that will serve as leaders in the continued development of New Bedford's North End.

Deepened Strategic Planning

Projects were accomplished in collaboration with city, non-profit, federal, and regional partnerships that have evolved into the NERD steering committee. This Steering Committee will continue to deepen our work and provide enrichment for all partners moving forward.

See page 8 for Project Costs and Volunteer Activities.



Top: 150 raised beds adopted by low to moderate income (LMI) residents exceeded our initial goal of 100 raised beds adopted by 2024; bottom: Youth employed on the Green Team plant crops that will later be donated to community residents at no cost.



PROJECT COSTS

Budget Summary:

- \$100,000 was provided by the Southern New England Estuary Program for this project
- \$43,560 was provided in non-federal match

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

“2nd Saturdays”:

- GWSC began monthly volunteer engagement events
- The model for these volunteer days was developed by the Green Team to deepen engagement
- At these events community members have helped to assemble raised beds, prepare existing beds for spring planting and assist with planting, and have helped to remove trash and invasive plants from the riverbank.



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SNEP Watershed Grants Final Report

0. Executive Summary

Please See Attached.

1. Cover Information

Date: 2.28.2023

Project Name Developing the North End of New Bedford Resilience District

Subaward Number (#SNEPWG21-10-GWSC)

Subaward Period (4.29.22-12.21.2022)

Subawardee Organization Groundwork Lawrence DBA Groundwork Southcoast (GWSC)

Report Contact Person, with telephone & email Maura Valdez (formerly Ramsey);

508.974.3535; mvaldez@groundworksouthcoast.org

and Abdiel Perez; 978-974-0770 x 7008; aperez@groundworklawrence.org

Project Leader (if different)

Reporting Period

Report Type and Number (FINAL REPORT)

2. Project Narrative

The project activities focused on Green Infrastructure installation (GI) and restoration of a portion of the Acushnet Riverbank in Riverside Park, installing a stormwater garden in Riverside Park, and Community Engagement/ Food Access Implementation including tree planting, raised bed and low-tech irrigation system installation to deepen environmental justice (EJ) residents engagement in GI and environmental stewardship. Additional project activities focused on Strategic Planning for the Resilience District.

2.A. Project Results

Green Infrastructure (GI): Completing the Riverside Resilience Zone's 1st phase of development:

Acushnet Riverbank restoration; *Progress and Results Achieved:* Green Team and GWSC staff have worked with multiple city departments including the Conservation Agent to restore the riverbank with native plantings, install and maintain erosion controls, and trained Green Team to manage/ control returning invasives which was continued through the completion of this grant. GWSC will continue to maintain/ control invasives as our long-term commitment to the site.

Riverside Park stormwater garden planning; *Progress and Results Achieved:*

Stormwater garden planning and project implementation were set during Progress

#1. The final installation was completed in August 2022. Community Engagement/ Food Access Implementation; *Progress and Results Achieved:*

- a. Tree Planting: worked with various city departments to finalize planting locations, amend the soil at planting locations, order and install the trees. 14 heirloom fruit trees were planted in Fall 2022.
 - b. Finished building 150 34"x34" raised beds for community gardeners and while the goal was to have 100 adopted by 2024, this was exceeded and all 100 were adopted within two weeks of opening up bed adoption. All gardeners are low income residents and 90% identify as Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) predominantly Central American, Cape Verdean, North American Indigenous, and Caribbean. These gardeners were growing food right next to the GI projects and engaging with them.
 - c. Green Team also finished building 36 68.4"x36" beds for Green Team to grow food to donate to and cultivate on-going engagement from additional low income residents.
 - d. GWSC staff and Green Team also installed low-tech drip irrigation systems.
 - e. Strategic Planning; *Progress and Deliverables and Challenges:*
- Partners Meetings: The partners meeting's for NERD were formalized as a steering committee for NERD.
 - National Park Service Rivers and Trails Conservation Technical Assistance Staff provided facilitation during the development of NERD Mission and Values and content has been added to the website.
 - The scope was defined by the steering committee to create an action plan and delegate responsibilities amongst partners.
 - Connections to Climate Safe Neighborhoods:
 - GWSC's NERD Storymap is completed (see Supplemental Materials). Additionally, we were able to have it translated into Spanish. Planning phase was completed to recruit and launch a NERD Community Leadership Team composed of environmental justice (EJ) residents who live in the Resilience District. This team is called the Líderes de Resiliencia Comunitaria (LRC) and was launched with an info session in December 2022 and the team will begin regularly meeting outside of this funding scope beginning in January 2023.
 - In an effort to increase sustainability and synergy between funding opportunities, GWSC is also exploring launching its first Fall River Resilience District in the Cook Pond area, aligning with our most recent SNEP/SWIG funding in that city, as well as expanding the Climate Safe Neighborhood (CSN) program further to Fall River as part of a larger Climate Safe Massachusetts initiative.

2.B. Next Steps and Recommendations

Green Infrastructure (GI): Completing the Riverside Resilience Zone's 1st phase of development:

- a. Acushnet Riverbank restoration; GWSC completed another seeding in Fall Riverside Park stormwater garden planning; installed in partnership with GWRI in late summer.

- b. Community Engagement/ Food Access Implementation; Green Team finished installing low-tech irrigation systems Strategic Planning; Website content was further updated and expanded to become its own page on the website. That page can be found at: <https://groundworksouthcoast.org/resiliencedistricts/>
- Scope was defined by the steering committee to create an action plan and identify which partners hold which responsibilities. Connections to Climate Safe Neighborhoods: GWSC's NERD Storymap is completed (see Supplemental Materials). Additionally, we were able to have it translated into Spanish. Planning phase was completed to recruit and launch a NERD Community Leadership Team composed of environmental justice (EJ) residents who live in the Resilience District. This team is called the Líderes de Resiliencia Comunitaria (LRC) and was launched with an info session in December 2022 and the team will begin regularly meeting outside of this funding scope beginning in January 2023. In an effort to increase sustainability and synergy between funding opportunities, GWSC is also exploring launching its first Fall River Resilience District in the Cook Pond area, aligning with our most recent SNEP/SWIG funding in that city, as well as expanding the Climate Safe Neighborhood (CSN) program further to Fall River as part of a larger Climate Safe Massachusetts initiative.

2.C. Compliance

N/A

2.D. Project Partners

Groundwork Rhode Island (GWRI)- provides training and education to GWSC's Staff and Green Team (youth employees)- for the installation of two stormwater gardens. This training will focus on project management planning and implementation

The City of New Bedford (CNB) Office of Parks, Recreation, and Beaches (PRB)- the Riverside Resilience Zone in a public park that is managed by PRB. They assist with ensuring that all projects are following any and all conservation requirements and served as a liaison with other CNB departments in the city for this project's management.

The CNB Office of Resilience and Environmental Stewardship (RES)- Provided data collection and Green Infrastructure installation and maintenance training. Connecting to city wide plans such as: the citywide Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan, the citywide Open Space Plan, the citywide Strategic Arts Plan, and the Riverwalk Project Plan; and liaising with the EPA on the final wrap-up of the Acushnet River dredging.

SRPEDD and the National Park Service- providing the leadership in developing the integrated Open space, parks, arts culture, and climate resilience planning for the development of the North End Resilience District Strategic Plan.

2.E. Volunteer and Community Involvement

GWSC has monthly volunteer engagement events called “2nd Saturdays”. At these events community members have helped to assemble raised beds, prepare existing beds for spring planting and assist with planting, and have helped to remove trash and invasive plants from the riverbank. GWSC also continued Pick Your Own Produce Days at the site which engaged community members to receive food grown at the site and learn more about the GI projects in process surrounding the food growing. GWSC is not using volunteer time as match.

2.F. Outreach & Communications

Please See attached.

3. Project Budget Report

Summary Budget Tables

Summary Budget Table 1: Expenditures by Federal Cost Category

Budget Category	Total Budgeted Funds	Total Budgeted Match	Grant Funds Expended This Period	Grant Funds Expended Cumulative	Match Funds Expended This Period	Match Funds Expended Cumulative	Match Source (note cash or in-kind)
Personnel	63194		62,919.45	62,919.45			
Fringe							
Travel							
Equipment							
Supplies							
Contracts							
Other	27990	39600	27,990.00	27990.00	39600	39600	Cash- CPA In-kind- rent and utilities
Total Direct	91184	39600	90,909.45	90,909.45	39600	39600	
Indirect	8816	3960	9,090.95	9090.95	3960	3960	
Total	100,000.00	43560.00	100,000.40	100,000.40	43560	43560	

Summary Budget Table 2: Expenditures by Project Task (Grant Funds Only)

Budget Category	Budgeted Grant Funds	Expended Progress Period 1	Expended Progress Period 2	Expended Progress Period 3	Expended Progress Period 4	Expended Progress Period 5	Actual Expended to Date
Task 1 – Resilience Zone Planning	36005	36005					36005
Task 2 -- Resilience Zone Implementation	27990		27,990.00				27,990.00
Task 3 -- Resilience District Strategy	36005	22,206.84	13,798.16				36,005.00
Etc.							

Total	100000	58211.84					100,000.00
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Budget Narrative

Please see invoice submitted.

4. Supporting Materials

Please See the links below and the attached documents.

1. New Bedford Light- Heat Islands + our work in the Resilience District and Resilience Zone:<https://newbedfordlight.org/heat-islands-create-health-risks-in-some-new-bedford-neighborhoods/>
2. Standard Times- Heat Islands+ our work in the Resilience District and Resilience Zone:
<https://www.southcoasttoday.com/story/news/2022/08/10/what-heat-islands-and-how-do-effect-southcoast/10212721002/>
3. Groundwork USA Published Blog about Resilience Zone Food Access work which engages community into stormwater efforts:
https://groundworkusa.org/building-community-one-urban-garden-at-a-time/?fbclid=IwAR0RpZTIUYtt0HAMFIOb2L_sZq_C7zdO2QCGNvbcbg4MDIDwhrlZ8-jKN-9w
4. Groundwork USA annual report which also highlights Resilience District and Resilience Zone efforts:
<https://mailchi.mp/groundworkusa.org/gwusa-news-7271573?fbclid=IwAR0-bl5KD9fTlZzlypw9qDM9yM0k6YvB1DiA-CGwlmfc5u7LN8I4w8T9dU>
5. Map of overlapping plans for the resilience District and other research/ info of value developed by the NERD Steering Committee to support driving strategy for the district:
<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1Jr3qZLeqLmX8eaCwD6s0svpExX2zC9sH&ll=41.65554434661636%2C-70.933758&z=13>
6. Storymap: Climate Safe Neighborhoods Project on researching the history of environmental justice in NERD and informed NERD strategy setting:
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/2c547e999d4d48e2b329f191e3779d9d>
7. Standard Times Blue Economy Article:
<https://www.southcoasttoday.com/story/news/2023/02/20/legislation-aims-to-bolster-the-blue-economy-new-england-aquarium/69915221007/>

5. Certification

The undersigned verifies that the descriptions of activities and expenditures in this progress report are accurate to the best of my knowledge; and that the activities were conducted in agreement with the grant contract. I also understand that matching fund levels established in the grant contract must be met.

Grantee Signature:



Name: Maura Valdez (formerly Maura Ramsey)

Job Title: Executive Director; Groundwork Southcoast

Date: 2.28.2023

Organization: Groundwork Southcoast

[### End—Final Report ###]

[Attachments Continued Next Page]

SNEPWG21 Subrecipient Agreement



Phone.

508.974.3535



Email.

info@groundworksouthcoast.org



Address.

90 Hatch St

New Bedford MA 02745

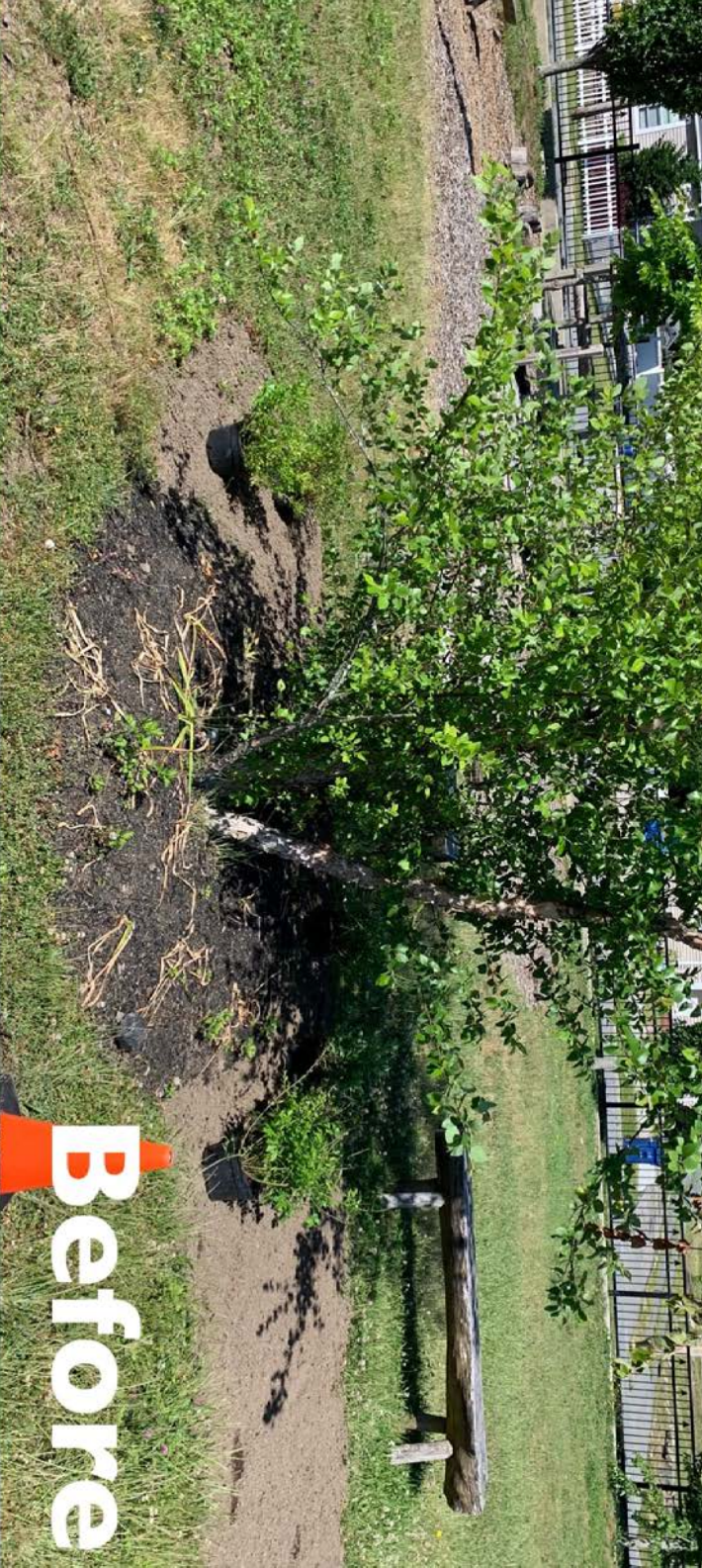


Before

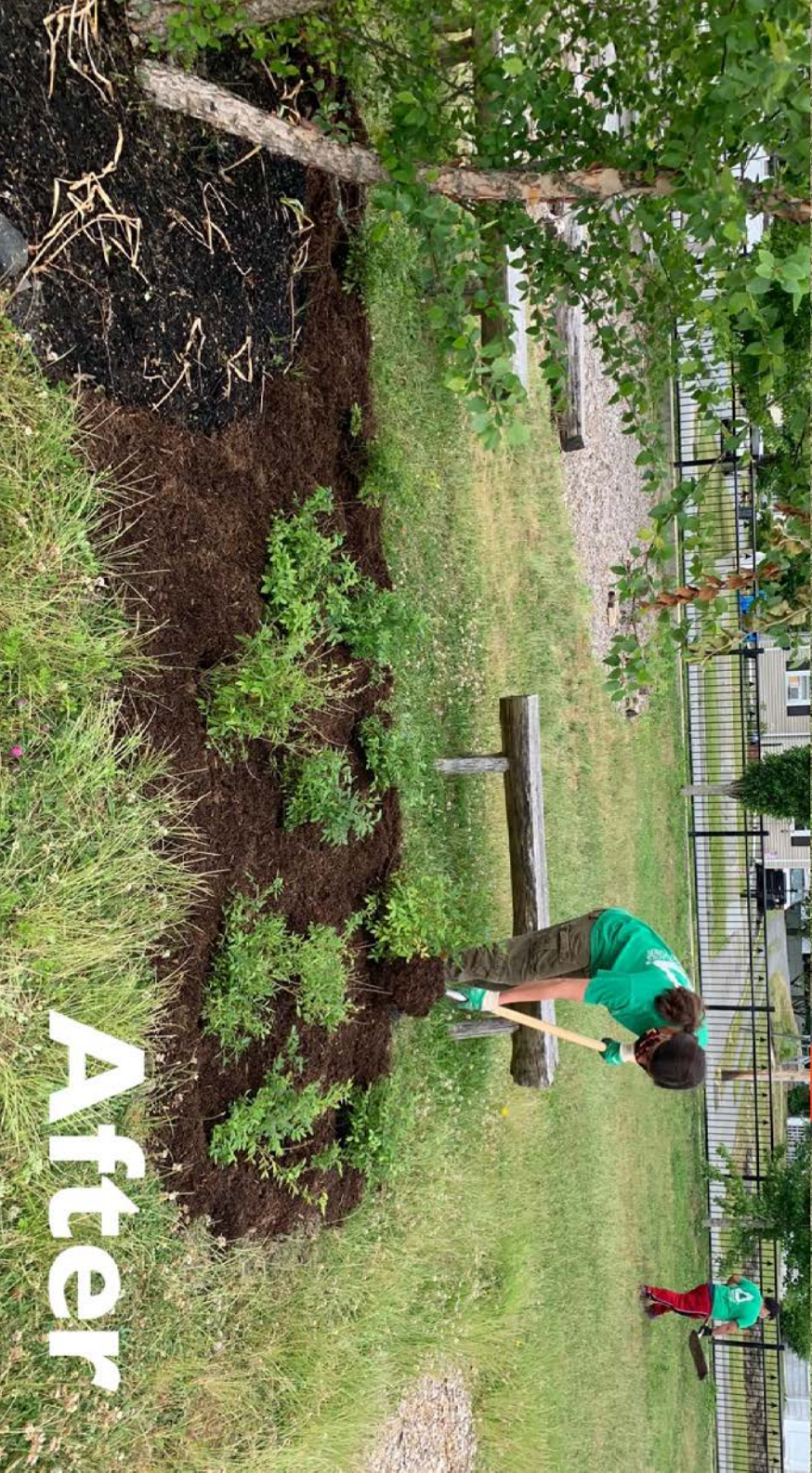


After





Before



After







NO MOWING SALTMARSH RESTORATION AREA

RESTAURAÇÃO DE
PÂNTANO SALGADO

AREA DE
RESTAURACION
DE CIENAGAS

PER ORDER CITY OF NEW BEDFORD

ADVENTURE WALK



Scan this code with your phone/
Digitalize este código com o seu telefone/
Escanear este código con su teléfono



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Community Resilience Leaders/Líderes de Resiliencia Comunitaria (LRC)

December 8th, 2022



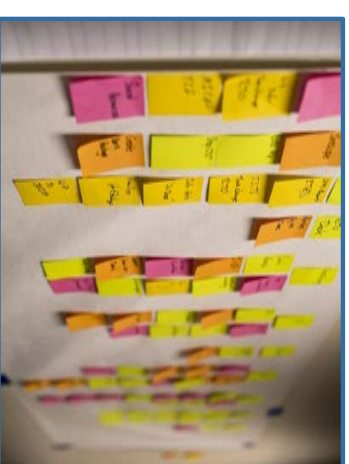
Goals of the LRC Framework:

- Build the capacity of residents to intervene in systems for a more equitable distribution of resources
- Pair residents lived experiences with nature based solutions
- Understand why our communities look the way they do
- Prioritize changes residents would like to see to the built environment and how resources are distributed
- Climate Resilience Project planning year 1 / Implementation year 2



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LRC committee Framework:

- **Consist of NERD District community members**
- **Residents work on the environmental transformation of their neighborhood**
- **Supported by GWSC in leading priority goal setting, attend monthly training meetings**
- **Present a neighborhood climate improvement plan at the end of year one**
- **Recruit members for year two and move towards action**



LRC committee Framework:

10 meetings for the year (2 months off) and are compensated for their time, labor and expertise:

- LRC committee members receive a rate of \$50 per meeting for a total of 10 meetings @1.5 hrs each. Payments will be made quarterly:
 - a. Quarter 1: 4mtgs @1.5hrs each meeting = \$200
 - b. Quarter 2: 4mtgs @1.5hrs each meeting= \$200
 - c. Quarter 3: 2mtgs @1.5hrs each meetings = \$100



The LRC committee will achieve its goals in 4 phases

Phase 1: Recruitment

- **Centering individuals with lived experiences who reside in the NERD resilience district (Durfée st to Brooklawn park and Acushnet River to Rt 140)**
- **Residents, gardeners, alumni, LRC referred folks**



Phase 2: Orientation/ Launch

- Introductions/ ice breakers, get to know each other, learn about GWSC and Climate Safe Neighborhoods (CSN Story Map), NERD district CSN dashboard
- Group norms, self assessment, set priority goals, inquiry, (what is most important to you, what impact do we want to have?)
- Identify barriers and opportunities to advance key transformations



Phase 3: Training

Leadership sessions include:

- Communication, Public Narrative, Climate Impact, Community mapping, Legacy Project
- Strategic Plan/ Climate Resilience Plan: (increasing tree canopy, heat island reduction, flood mitigation, public and community climate narratives, etc)
- Community campaign, gather resident input, recruit additional members
- Advocacy and action

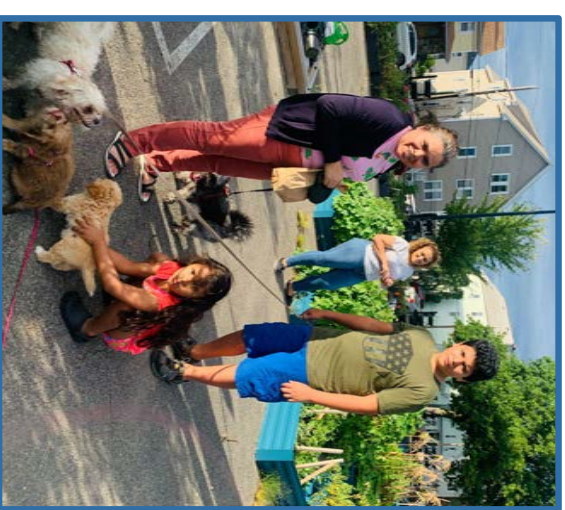
Phase 4: Climate Resilience Plan

Present Legacy Project

- Presentation to NERD committee
- Capture stories/ share history/ lead tours
- Climate impact/ story map
- LRC lead yr 2 expansion/ move towards action



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Implementation of Climate Resilience Plan

LRC committee leads action for year 2:

- Incorporate legacy project panel feedback and update/ finalize their plan and move into the action phase
- Implement their plan, document and evaluate their challenges/ successes
- Assessing plan to ensure self-sustaining goals



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 **Phone.**
508.974.3535

 **Email.**
info@groundworksouthcoast.org

 **Address.**
90 Hatch St
New Bedford MA 02745

FINAL: NERD Vision/Mission/Goals

5 April 2022

Crafted from [NERD brainstorm on Mural](#)

VISION {where we are going} A resilient North End where both people and the environment are equally valued, celebrated and interconnected. Riverside Park is the center of community resilience, where the North End community is connected to and invested in their land and water through shared responsibility and partnership.

MISSION {what we are doing to get there}

Identify community needs through existing data and analysis:

- Gather and analyze data and planning documents to improve area's ability to adapt to climate events, and identify resilience zones and empty parcels for shovel ready projects.

Identify and implement **nature-based solutions** for the North End.

Create a **community engagement leadership team** (creating a "Friends of Riverside Park").

Create an **action plan** with recommendations of next steps for moving forward

- Monitor and evaluate

Considerations: overlap with Climate Safe Neighborhoods program,

GOALS & VALUES {how we will do the work}:

- **GOAL: Prioritize cultural sensitivity and respect — Be explicit and intentional about how we work with the community**
 - Integrate native history and healing practices (into the process)
 - Lift up and celebrate the different cultures in the neighborhood
 - Honor local experiences/expertise & cultural practices
 - Address power dynamics by co-creating with the community
 - Center community voices
 - Promote community decision-making and ownership
 - Deliver messages in people's native language to make sure everyone has equal access to information about this effort

- **GOAL: Create a sense of place — Build neighborhood pride and love for Riverside Park**
 - Design and post signage, QR codes, educational materials, etc. to educate residents on the natural & social environment surrounding them
 - Tell story of the river
 - Use history and community stories (to progress forward)
 - Connect to the “why” that brings us all together
 - Show that positive change is possible by showing progress
 - The Riverwalk project
 - Train young people in the community
 - Invest in the people and skill-building
- **GOAL: Shift community engagement from informing to leading transformation** — Make space for people to take on more of an active role
 - Identify community champions to implement (lead?) work
 - Connect with community leadership?
 - Acknowledge that community time is valuable through compensation (stipends, collaborative funding?)

POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS:

- Coordinate with Eric on Climate Safe Neighborhood work
 - Possible presentation on how NERD work fits into previous plans
 - Community profile?
 - Community Leadership Team (possible partnership with NPS?)
- Potential prototype project: bioswale with Groundwork Rhode Island