

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT

Marc Strange, MStrange@agawam.ma.us or 413-786-0400 ext. 8738

TOWN OF AGAWAM SEEKS INPUT ON HOW RESIDENTS ARE EXPERIENCING CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is increasing the frequency of extreme weather and the Town of Agawam invites its residents to respond to a survey about local experiences associated with this change.

Planning and Community Development Director Marc Strange notes, “With survey results, we are hoping to get a better sense of experience throughout town and to also gauge support for efforts that could help the Town better adapt to climate change and improve quality of life.”

The survey has a total of 12 questions and respondents will have the option to enter to win one of four \$25 prepaid gift cards.

Agawam residents can take the survey at the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AgawamClimate>

The survey, prepared by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in collaboration with Town officials and engineering consultants Woodard & Curran, is part of a larger project related to assessing

Agawam’s current and future vulnerability to localized flooding as resulting from more frequent and more intense precipitation events.

The project, implemented with funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs under the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant Program, includes the development of a town-wide stormwater master plan by Woodard & Curran; an artist-in-residency program among Agawam Public School’s fifth grade classes, led by Enchanted Circle and the Hitchcock Center for the Environment; and a review of municipal code for best practices in climate resilience conducted by Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

The project is scheduled to complete by June 30, 2021.

This project was selected and refined from a list of priority strategies related to climate change adaption created by Town staff and stakeholders in 2019 at the Agawam Community Resilience Building Workshop and described in the resulting Summary of Findings report, also funded by the Municipal Vulnerability Grant Program and facilitated by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

The MVP Grant Program emphasizes “nature-based solutions” to the challenges posed by our changing climate. Nature-based solutions are so-called because they tend to stress working with, or mimicking, natural systems in order to solve or alleviate infrastructural, environmental, and/or social vulnerabilities to climate change impacts.

Nature-based solutions have been shown to have wide-ranging co-benefits not associated with traditional “gray” infrastructure (such as storm sewer pipes). Examples of nature-based solutions can include:

- alleviating stormwater flooding by reducing impervious cover, such as pavement, and installing vegetated systems, such as planted raingardens or bioswales, in parking lots or along roadways to slow the flow of stormwater runoff and provide an opportunity for infiltration into the ground
- reducing the effects of extreme heat and associated reduction in air quality by installing trees along public rights-of-way and in public spaces to shade hard surfaces and reduce ambient air temperature through evapotranspiration.

By responding to the survey, residents will be able to help shape how and where the Town prioritizes nature-based solutions in tandem with gray infrastructure to reduce flooding and other impacts of climate change.

A recorded presentation about Agawam’s current MVP grant project can be found here: <https://youtu.be/RF9YBZ4ZTZY>

And the town’s original Summary of Findings report, from which came the idea for the current project, can be found here: <https://www.agawam.ma.us/565/Municipal-Vulnerability-Preparedness-MVP>

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