



Resilient Coastal Projects Initiative July 2022 Update

The Resilient Coastal Projects Initiative is entering its final stages in Wisconsin. Twelve communities along Lake Michigan will receive technical assistance for priority coastal projects, with mayors reconvening for a project close-out and next steps by October. Projects in Wisconsin include off-shore resilience measures such as breakwaters that add habitat and protect the coastline from storm surge events and erosion; onshore green infrastructure and related flood management solutions.

In Southeast Michigan, thirteen communities along the Detroit River and Lake St. Clair met with project leaders to discuss their hazards and brainstorm solutions. Issues in this region include flooding, legacy pollutants in soil and sediment, storm surges, and shoreline erosion.

In West Michigan, Mayor Nathan Bocks of Holland and Mayor Richard Lewis of Traverse City co-hosted a virtual kick-off event on June 1st. Communities were asked to express interest in joining the initiative by mid-July, and the Cities Initiative and its technical consultant partner, Stantec, will begin meeting with communities in August.

Illinois and Indiana outreach will begin soon - stay tuned for more information in the coming weeks.

The Resilient Coastal Projects Initiative is funded by grants from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Fund for Lake Michigan, and the Erb Family Foundation. This program, which began in Wisconsin in 2021, engages local decision-makers, regional climate experts, and world-class engineers to advance nature-based solutions in Great Lakes coastal communities through the development of projects aimed at strengthening coastal resilience and protecting assets in shoreline areas. The goal is to address critical coastal resilience needs and take advantage of upcoming state and federal funding opportunities, including new programs created through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021. Participating communities will receive technical support to scope priority projects as well as assistance in securing financing for their implementation.

The program emphasizes nature-based solutions because of the many documented benefits to people and the environment, including enhanced biodiversity, water quality, and soil health, and reduced vulnerability to extreme weather events. Nature-based solutions in coastal areas can also improve community access to beaches and bluffs and offer residents and tourists an array of social, recreational, and economic opportunities.

The Cities Initiative is pursuing additional grant opportunities to expand this work into Ontario and Quebec and to additional U.S. communities along the Lake Superior, Lake Erie and Lake Ontario shorelines and the St. Lawrence River.

Contact Bridget Brown, Special Programs Director, with any questions: bridget.brown@glslcities.org