

Aquidneck Island Climate Resilience Plan

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Event	Date
RFP Issued	June 16, 2025
Proposal Due	July 11, 2025
Project Kickoff	July 2025
Anticipated Project Completion	July 2027

1. Introduction

Background

The most urgent need facing Aquidneck Island in its climate resilience efforts is the **capacity to act**. The municipal planning departments in Newport, Middletown, Portsmouth, and Naval Station Newport have voiced their need for regional staff to **support the development, management, and implementation of important climate resilience projects**. Additionally, there are many opportunities for collaboration and learning from each other. The island has been in need of an entity to facilitate these efforts and learnings across jurisdictional and organizational boundaries.

[Aquidneck Resilience](#) is an emerging initiative that seeks to fill these gaps. Hosted at the [Aquidneck Island Land Trust](#), **Aquidneck Resilience is a partnership between the City of Newport, The Town of Middletown, The Town of Portsmouth, and Naval Station Newport**. Representatives from each of these five entities constitute an Advisory Group guiding the effort. This island-wide program is grant-funded by [NOAA's Climate Resilience Regional Challenge](#) (CRRRC) and builds on over 3 years of momentum working across the three municipalities, the Navy, community-based organizations, and other local partners.

Aquidneck Resilience has grown from a Regional Resilience Coordinator pilot position at the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank in 2022 – 2024, to now a **team of five employees**:

- Paige Myatt, Director of Climate Resilience
- Jamie Haines, Resilience and Sustainability Specialist
- Glennie LeBaron, Community Engagement Manager
- Jamie-Lynn Ward, Project Coordinator (NOAA Coastal Resilience Fellow)
- Emma Polinsky, Engagement Coordinator (NOAA Coastal Resilience Fellow)

The three core staff members are currently funded until September 30, 2028, and the two fellows are funded until June 2027. At the end of the grant period, one goal of Aquidneck Resilience is to become a sustainable, stand-alone organization. This Climate Resilience Plan will become a valuable resource, for both resilience staff and the broader community, providing a framework for project implementation across the island.

Aquidneck Resilience

aquidneckresilience.org

42 Spring Street, Newport, RI

Purpose & Objective

Aquidneck Resilience, representing its core partners, seeks a qualified firm to create a comprehensive Climate Resilience Plan (CRP) for Aquidneck Island. The purpose of this plan will be to **organize, prioritize, create action strategies for, and share information on resilience projects across the island, particularly those of island-wide importance**, in addition to **sharing lessons learned**. The consultant should realize the breadth of work that has already been completed and able to be built upon, including, but not limited to, action updates from the state's **Municipal Resilience Program (MRP)**, the Southeast New England Program (SNEP) Network's **Community Assistance Projects**, Aquidneck Island's completed, but soon to-be-adopted **Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP)**, Naval Station Newport's **Military Installation Resilience Review (MIRR)**, and the **Municipal Comprehensive Land Use Plans**.

Mirroring the four core priorities of NOAA's CRRC grant program, the Climate Resilience Plan should address **risk reduction, regional coordination, community engagement, and enduring capacity**. The firm should be able to draw from experience and research solutions to similar climate challenges in similar places across the country and the world; **solutions must be at the forefront of this effort**. Most importantly, the firm should be innovative in their delivery of the plan, including bringing experience creating content for web-based platforms or dashboards.

2. Scope of Work

Overview

The selected consultant will develop a comprehensive Climate Resilience Plan for Aquidneck Island, focused on **adaptation efforts, not on mitigating energy emissions**. The CRP should focus on projects that will reduce the island's risk to more frequent and intense weather events, highlight opportunities for regional collaboration, and develop sound strategies for implementation, all while complementing Aquidneck Resilience's community engagement strategy.

This process will be informed by extensive community engagement facilitated by the Aquidneck Resilience team. The consultant should be prepared to participate in this process, but they will not be expected to lead engagement efforts. Aquidneck Resilience is in the process of developing topic-based working groups to serve as island-wide forums for climate resilience areas including, but not limited to, **water quality; transportation; flood mitigation; emergency management and preparedness; coastal resilience; food systems; land use; circular economy and sustainability**. These Working Groups will inform the CRP as a "built-in" method for organized community engagement, as these topic areas will be reflected in the CRP.

Key Tasks

Inspiration Gathering, Document Review, Data Collection – 30%

- **Inspiration Gathering:** Research existing studies, plans, and projects applicable and transferable to climate resilience on Aquidneck Island, including but not limited to the following examples, which highlight elements we found particularly inspiring:
 - [Cape Cod Commission's "Resilient Cape Cod"](#)
 - [Martha's Vineyard Commission's "The Vineyard Way Climate Action Plan"](#)
 - [Nantucket's Coastal Resilience Plan](#)
 - [Resilient O'ahu's Resilience Strategy](#)
- **Document Review:** Review existing work on Aquidneck Island and at the state level to avoid duplication of efforts; identify areas where the CRP could be integrated across municipal plans, particularly to align with future iterations of municipal Comprehensive Plans and the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan; and ensure new strategies complement previous and ongoing projects. Documents to review and align with include, but are not limited to:
 - Municipal Comprehensive Land Use Plans
 - Town of Middletown nearing end of update, due November 2025
 - City of Newport starting update due in 2027
 - Town of Portsmouth last updated in 2022
 - [Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan for Aquidneck Island](#)
 - [SNEP Community Assistance Projects](#)
 - [Aquidneck Island Leadership Exchange](#)
 - [Military Installation Resilience Review \(MIRR\)](#)
 - [Municipal Resilience Program \(MRP\)](#)
 - Ongoing [Compatible Use Study](#) with Naval Station Newport, including overlapping topics such as transportation, water and sewer capacity, and land use (anticipated completion Fall 2025)
 - Ongoing Resilient Rhody 2025 Statewide Coastal Resilience Plan (anticipated completion end of 2025)
- **Gap Analysis & Data Collection:** Identify areas where more data is needed to support project identification and scoping, with particular focus on learning how water moves on the island and contributes to flooding; collaborate with entities who have existing relevant data; utilize this information to support the development and scoping of new priority projects.

Plan Development – 50%

- Confirm or restate regional risks and areas of priority based on previously completed plans (many listed above)
- Develop clear goals and performance metrics for the CRP as a whole, aligning with municipal guiding documents, such as the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan and Comprehensive Land Use Plans, as able

Aquidneck Resilience

aquidneckresilience.org

42 Spring Street, Newport, RI

- Overlay previous plans and pull out currently relevant climate resilience projects and efforts to be included in the CRP
- Analyze and identify new projects and resilience initiatives
- Create action strategies for previously and newly identified projects and initiatives, both at an individual municipal level and an island-wide or regional scale
 - Projects of island-wide importance could mean projects that cross jurisdictional boundaries, or projects in individual municipalities that may be applicable to learn from and apply to other island locations
 - For each action item: establish measurable outcomes; outline potential timeline or climate threshold considerations; include order of magnitude cost estimates; identify other plan(s) where the project is mentioned (i.e. HMPs, Comp Plans, etc.); provide potential funding opportunities; and work with the community to identify and assign responsible entities to support accountability.

Community Engagement & Stakeholder Collaboration – 15%

- Collaborate with the topic-based Working Groups, facilitated by Aquidneck Resilience staff, to ensure local perspectives and needs are incorporated into the plan.
- Work with Aquidneck Resilience staff, focusing on collecting community feedback and participating in presentations, during five (5) key community engagement workshops anticipated to be at the following times:
 - Fall 2025
 - Spring 2026
 - Fall 2026 (2 meetings)
 - Spring/Summer 2027
- Integrate information and data collected during community engagement and key stakeholder collaborations into the CRP.

Enduring Capacity – 5%

- Provide strategies to build and sustain capacity for climate resilience efforts beyond the creation of the CRP.
 - Organize actions and goals to allow for regular progress updates.
 - Create protocol for long term progress updates and action additions.
 - Develop a process for formally adopting new actions into the plan.
- Translate CRP Content for an Online Dashboard
 - To avoid having this work “live on a shelf”, translate the content and data from the CRP to be used in a dynamic, publicly accessible, web-based dashboard to easily track project progress and implementation, working alongside a web-developer
 - Develop a template for integrating content from the CRP, in a dynamic and publicly accessible web-based dashboard.
 - Create a template for progress updates to track individual project progress and implementation.

3. Deliverables

We are seeking two main deliverables: **(1) a Climate Resilience Plan in PDF format**, and **(2) content from the CRP to be translated to a web-based dashboard**, which will be created by a consultant who specializes in web development. If your team has expertise in the development of web-based climate dashboards or would like to include a sub-contractor for this portion of work, please include this information in your proposal.

1. Climate Resilience Plan

- A draft which includes:
 - Summary of the climate risks faced by Aquidneck Island
 - Goals and metrics of success for the implementation of the CRP as a whole
 - Climate adaptation and risk reduction strategies/actions that examine local natural, built, and community systems, each of which should include:
 - Clearly stated need for project or initiative
 - Project phases, if applicable, and anticipated timeline, intentionally structured to allow for regular progress updates
 - Measurable outcomes of implementation
 - Order of magnitude cost estimates
 - Responsible entity/entities
 - Wherever possible, pair local projects with example solutions from similar efforts, ideally drawing inspiration from coastal New England or other similar communities.
 - Criteria for project selection and scoping that realizes the need for creative project prioritization methodology considering:
 - The opportunistic nature of some projects
 - Potential for shifting priorities
 - Will of responsible entities
 - Funding availability
 - Potential for climate thresholds to be used in place of years in timelines
 - Project management template
- A final PDF version which includes the elements listed above while incorporating feedback from Aquidneck Resilience staff, their Advisory Group, the topic-based working groups, and broader community.

2. Information for a web-based dashboard

- Develop a template for integrating content from the CRP in a dynamic and publicly accessible web-based dashboard.
 - Provide a method to easily update the website dashboard to track individual project progress and implementation.

4. Anticipated Project Timeline

Project Kickoff	July 2025
Research, Existing Document Review, Data Collection	July – September 2025
Community Engagement & Stakeholder Meetings	October 2025 – June 2026
Draft Plan Submission	October 2026
Final Plan Submission	March 2027
Completion of materials for online dashboard	July 2027

5. Budget Proposal

Provide an estimated budget for the entire project, **broken down by the Key Tasks listed above under the Scope of Work**, including:

- Fee Schedule for consultant services
- Breakdown of each team members' time on project, and availability of team members to work on this project
- Materials needed for community engagement, such as graphics, maps, etc.

6. Proposal Submission Requirements

Consultant Qualifications & Experience

- Concise description of the consultant's qualifications, experience, and expertise in climate resilience, community engagement, and planning.
 - Consultant should have experience in Climate Adaptation Planning and/or hazard mitigation and comprehensive land use planning.
- Examples of previous similar work, particularly with creating climate resilience plans, working in multi-stakeholder environments, and integrating community considerations.

Proposed Approach

- A detailed approach to meeting the objectives, key tasks, and deliverables of this RFP.

Budget Proposal

- Detailed breakdown of fees and any other associated expenses.
- Proposed level of effort in line with the Scope of Work items.

Timeline

- Consideration given to Anticipated Project Timeline and justification with estimated hours by sufficiently qualified personnel.

References

- At least three references from previous clients or projects relevant to climate action or similar planning efforts.

7. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

	Possible Points
Consultant Qualifications & Experience	25
Proposed Approach	25
Budget Proposal	20
Timeline	15
References	15
Total	100

8. Submission Instructions

Deadline for Submission

Proposals must be received by **5:00 PM Eastern on Friday, July 11, 2025.**

Submission Method & Contact Information

Proposal submissions and any questions should be submitted electronically to both Paige Myatt, Director of Climate Resilience, at paige@aquidneckresilience.org and Jamie Matthews, Resilience & Sustainability Specialist, at jamie@aquidneckresilience.org.

9. Terms and Conditions

Confidentiality

All proposal materials and data provided during the RFP process are confidential and should not be shared with third parties.

Right to Reject Proposals

The issuing organization reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

Contractual Obligations

Upon selection, the successful consultant will enter into a contractual agreement with Aquidneck Island Land Trust to deliver the Climate Resilience Plan as outlined in the RFP.