Coastal Resilience Districts



Nantucket, MA

Date

Agenda

1. Coastal Resilience Districts Overview
2. Existing Authorities
3. Timeline
4. Definitions
5. Implementation

Coastal Resilience Districts

Coastal Resilience Districts are a funding mechanism for localized coastal resilience projects.

The purpose of Coastal Resilience Districts (CRDs) is to provide the Town of Nantucket with **a funding and regulatory model for specific island areas that benefit from coastal resilience interventions**. This includes funding and regulating the planning, construction, monitoring, maintenance, and removal of any resilience projects that disproportionately benefit localized areas within the municipality.

To be eligible, a project must:



Reduce risks from erosion, flooding, imminent sea level rise, shoreline change, or related coastal hazards.



Benefit a public asset such as a Town beach or access point, a parking lot, a Town road, or other Town infrastructure. If the project only benefits private resources, the project does not qualify.



Benefit existing structures, rather than enable or support future development.

Coastal Resilience Districts

Coastal Resilience Districts are a funding mechanism for localized coastal resilience projects.

The purpose of Coastal Resilience Districts (CRDs) is to provide the Town of Nantucket with **a funding and regulatory model for specific island areas that benefit from coastal resilience interventions**. This includes funding and regulating the planning, construction, monitoring, maintenance, and removal of any resilience projects that disproportionately benefit localized areas within the municipality.

Flexible

A new pathway to fund resilience projects above and beyond the capital program

Targeted

Provides a way to connect the cost of a specific coastal resilience project to the properties that benefit.

Fair

Projects with a primarily localized area of protection can be paid for by those who benefit. Residents who benefit the most contribute the most.

Authorities

Massachusetts State Law

Under General Laws Chapter 80, Massachusetts allows communities to charge betterments, or special property taxes, to property owners for the cost of public improvements that benefit them, such as sewer connections, water systems, or other infrastructure.

BUT Massachusetts currently lacks a general law that specifically authorizes municipalities to create **coastal resiliency districts** with the power to fund projects through betterment assessments.

Nantucket By-Laws Chapter 66A: Coastal Resilience Districts

Adopted in 2024, the Coastal Resilience Districts By-Law gives the Town the authority to define the boundaries of a CRD for a given project. The project may then be paid for by those who will benefit from the protection, with the proportion of payment aligning with the proportion of benefit received.

Timeline

April 2023 - CRDs first emerged as a potential funding model at neighborhood level engagements for resilience projects

July 2023 - The topic evolved to an island-wide discussion when it was brought to the SB as a key outcome of recent engagements.

September 2023 - CRDs presented to CRAC in bullet point outlines, and CRAC asked to pursue both a bylaw and a Home Rule Petition.

December 2023 - Draft text reviewed by CRAC and SB. Approved by both that winter.

May 2024 - Annual Town Meeting. Home Rule Petition failed. Bylaw passed.

Late 2024 though 2025, NRD looking at how to advance CRD bylaw through public education & considering whether to bring back the HRP.

December 2025 - CRAC meeting decision to table HRP for now, and implement a project using CRD for funding under existing authorities

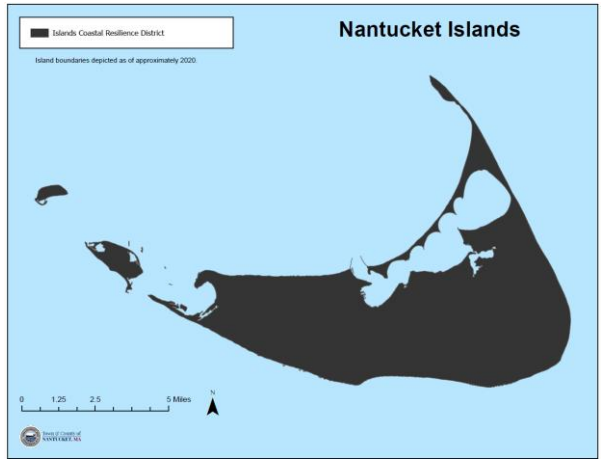
Summer 2026 - Presented CRD implementation framework to CRAC (July) and SB (Sept). Received SB endorsement for the framework.

Definitions

The By-Law defines two types of CRDs:

Islands Coastal Resilience District

The land constituting the Islands Coastal Resilience District (the “ICRD”) is the entirety of the Islands of Nantucket, Tuckernuck, and Muskeget as shown on a map on file in the office of the Town Clerk.



Coastal Resilience Sub-Districts

The Coastal Resilience Sub-Districts (the “Sub-Districts”) will be defined by geographical boundaries of a specific area of Nantucket to be determined by the Select Board.



Definitions

The By-Law defines two types of CRDs:

Islands Coastal Resilience District	The land constituting the Islands Coastal Resilience District (the "ICRD") is the entirety of the Islands of Nantucket, Tuckernuck, and Muskeget as shown on a map on file in the office of the Town Clerk.
Coastal Resilience Sub-Districts	The Coastal Resilience Sub-Districts (the "Sub-Districts") will be defined by geographical boundaries of a specific area of Nantucket to be determined by the Select Board.

Near term: These projects will continue to go through the capital program

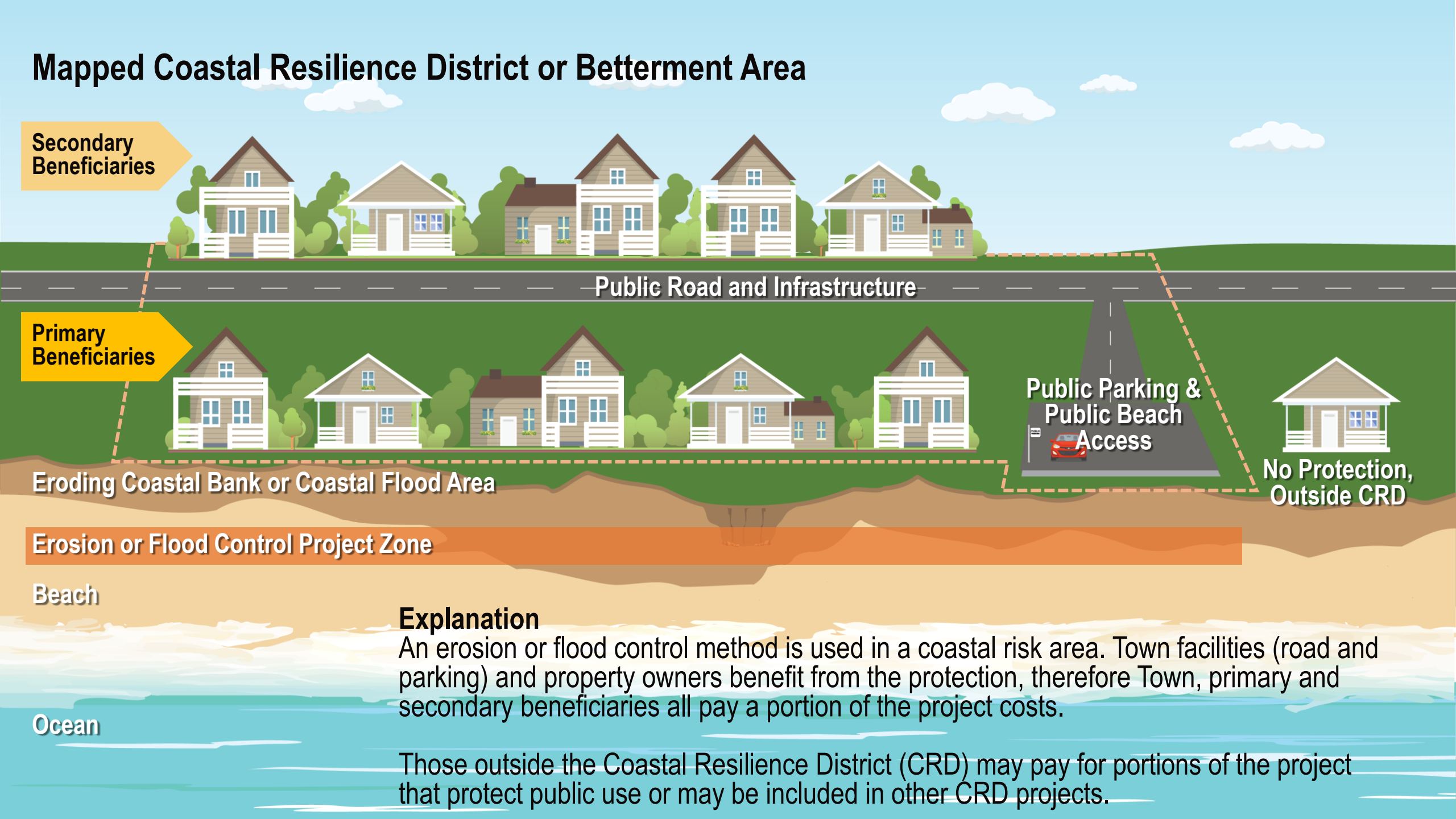
Long term: An additive funding mechanism to increase total funding or flexibility

Definitions

The By-Law defines two types of CRDs:

Islands Coastal Resilience District	The land constituting the Islands Coastal Resilience District (the "ICRD") is the entirety of the Islands of Nantucket, Tuckernuck, and Muskeget as shown on a map on file in the office of the Town Clerk.	**Near term**: These projects will continue to go through the capital program **Long term**: An additive funding mechanism to increase total funding or flexibility
Coastal Resilience Sub-Districts	The Coastal Resilience Sub-Districts (the "Sub-Districts") will be defined by geographical boundaries of a specific area of Nantucket to be determined by the Select Board.	**Current implementation focus**

Mapped Coastal Resilience District or Betterment Area



Explanation

An erosion or flood control method is used in a coastal risk area. Town facilities (road and parking) and property owners benefit from the protection, therefore Town, primary and secondary beneficiaries all pay a portion of the project costs.

Those outside the Coastal Resilience District (CRD) may pay for portions of the project that protect public use or may be included in other CRD projects.

Implementation

What is the process to set up a Coastal Resilience District to fund a project?

1. **INITIATE:** A project is brought forward by the Town or community members as a candidate for funding through a Coastal Resilience District. Community-led projects must include a petition to the SB.

2. **APPROVE:** The Town reviews the project for eligibility as a CRD, and if eligible, categorizes the project as an ICRD or Sub-District. CRAC review and recommendation to SB; SB final decision.

3. **LISTEN & INFORM:** The Town conducts public engagement within the applicable engagement area. Engagement will focus on the importance of the project and the proposed solution.

4. **DEFINE:** The Town determines who will benefit from the project using the Benefit Framework and draws the boundaries of the Sub-District. Legal discussions may begin related to setting betterments.

5. **VOTE:** The Town must bring a project to ATM for approval of both appropriation of initial funds AND approval of the use of betterments to fund the project within the mapped CRD.

6. **ALLOCATE:** If approved, the Select Board will consult legal support and set the betterments according to Massachusetts law.

Getting Started

1 INITIATE

2 APPROVE

3 LISTEN & INFORM

4 DEFINE

5 VOTE

6 ALLOCATE

INITIATE

A project is brought forward by the Town or community members as a candidate for funding through a Coastal Resilience District.

Community-led projects must include a petition to the Select Board, signed by at least 60% of anticipated benefitting property owners. The petition must include a commitment to pay betterments assessed to them by the Town.

APPROVE

The Town reviews the project for eligibility as a CRD, and if eligible, categorizes the project as an ICRD or Sub-District.

Once classified, the project will be brought to CRAC for review and recommendation to the Select Board. The Select Board will then make the final decision on whether the project should move forward as a CRD.

Public Engagement

1 **INITIATE**

2 **APPROVE**

3 **LISTEN & INFORM**

4 **DEFINE**

5 **VOTE**

6 **ALLOCATE**

Areas where CRDs are most likely to be proposed:



The Town will conduct public engagement in the general area that will benefit from the resilience project.

Goals:

- Focus on the importance of the project and the proposed solution
- Inclusive engagement open to all residents, with a focus on those living in the area surrounding the project
- No discussion of CRD boundaries or payments, since the project first needs to go to ATM before these aspects are considered

Delineation and Town Voting

1. **INITIATE**
2. **APPROVE**
3. **LISTEN & INFORM**
4. **DEFINE**
5. **VOTE**
6. **ALLOCATE**

DEFINE

The Town determines who will benefit from the project using the Benefit Framework and draws the boundaries of the Sub-District. Beneficiaries will be split into two groups:

- Primary Beneficiary: A property owner who will receive greater benefits from a project, within a two-tiered system of primary and secondary beneficiaries.
- Secondary Beneficiary: A property owner who will receive lesser benefits from a project, within a two-tiered system of primary and secondary beneficiaries.

VOTE

The Town must bring a project to ATM for approval of both appropriation of initial funds AND approval of the use of betterments to fund the project within the mapped CRD.

ALLOCATE

If approved, the Select Board will then set the betterments according to Massachusetts law.