

# Could New Bedford transform Kings Highway like Fall River's South Coast Marketplace?

Kings Highway has been a hot button topic of discussion as of late, specifically the old "Newport Creamery" building which has been vacant for quite some time. A resident posted in the New Bedford Facebook group wondering why the building is still vacant after so many years.

"When will someone buy that former Newport Creamery on Kings Highway this is getting sickening! That building has been abandoned for centuries. It's so freaking annoying looking at it."

This sparked a debate that led to an even bigger question, what is the future of Kings Highway as a whole?



*King's Highway Plaza. Steven Richard photo.*

Surely, Kings Highway can not stay as it currently is now with its several vacant buildings, vastly empty parking lots, and dollar stores next to...more dollar stores? "Ray Goyette" commented under this thread which caught some attention stating:

"The entire Kings Hwy plaza could benefit from a massive overhaul. I'm hoping with all the "upscale" improvements because of the train coming, a developer will wipe out Kings Hwy plaza and start over."

This is where other residents began mentioning how Fall River has done a fantastic job developing the "South Coast Marketplace" and New Bedford should maybe take some notes.



*King's Highway Plaza. Steven Richard photo.*

Since its opening in 2017 the South Coast Marketplace has flourished. We have now seen the additions of Chik-Fil-A, Starbucks, Ulta, Marketbasket, and several other huge names that has completely transformed that area of Fall River. Along with its plethora of popular stores and restaurants, the marketplace has also maintained a clean and modern aesthetic which really adds a nice touch to the area.

On the other hand, Kings Highway almost feels like its sadly been stuck in time. It looks exactly the same as when I was a kid except now there are just more empty buildings.

Rather than complain, I think it is more beneficial to throw out ideas and see if they could work. I think Kings Highway Plaza could become New Bedford's version of the "South Coast Marketplace", what would you like to see happen to Kings Highway?





*SouthCoast Marketplace in Fall River. Steven Richard photo.*

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# Massachusetts Governor Healey: Biden Can Help Put More Migrants Into Jobs

By Alison Kuznitz  
State House News Service

With the state's emergency shelter system increasingly strained by the influx of migrant families, Gov. Maura Healey reiterated her call to the Biden administration Wednesday to accelerate the monthslong work authorization process to help more people access job openings.

Healey, whose administration earlier this week opened a second immigrant resource center in Quincy to keep up with the demand among new arrivals and people experiencing homelessness, said in a radio interview Wednesday that migrants want to work and there are a "lot of employers here who want to put them to work."

"I think what we need to do is continue to push the Biden administration for work authorization; we need a streamlined and expedited process for getting people work," Healey said on WBUR. "We had offers when we put families at Joint Base Cape Cod (JBCC), we had employers begging to send up a bus to get people, to bring them back to the Cape to work, to put them to work. The numbers that we're seeing right now are unsustainable unless we figure out a way – the federal government really needs to act here."

Dozens of eligible families seeking aid at the state's Family Welcome Center in Allston have been directed to temporarily stay in townhomes at JBCC.

Boston Mayor Michelle Wu in an television interview last month estimated that "potentially hundreds of people are arriving each day" and heading to Boston Medical Center, among other places, seeking shelter.

Just over 40 hotels and motels in Massachusetts, which is a right-to-shelter state, are being used as emergency shelters, a spokesperson for the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities said earlier this week. As of Saturday, 5,356 families were staying in state-funded shelters.

It is unclear how many migrants may currently be waiting for

approval to work in the commonwealth.

Immigrants who are paroled into the United States from a border, airport or another port of entry need to apply for work authorization, said Heather Yountz, senior immigration staff attorney at the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute. Those individuals are allowed to be in the United States due to humanitarian or public benefit reasons, according to the Immigration and Nationality Act.

In a plea largely similar to Healey's, the state's congressional delegation urged the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Monday to streamline and expedite the "processing of new arrivals' work authorization requests," which can take six months or longer.

"Stakeholders across the state — from local governments to housing nonprofits to legal aid groups — are being stretched to capacity as they work tirelessly to meet the needs of immigrant families that are left housing insecure because they cannot work legally and support themselves during their periods of parole," lawmakers wrote in a joint letter. "The federal government can help relieve the strain on available resources in the Commonwealth by removing obstacles new arrivals face when trying to work legally."

Healey said the commonwealth's migrant situation is not "unique," as she noted other states are also seeing "huge numbers of people" coming from Central and South American countries, as well as Haiti. The Biden administration understands "the urgency of the moment," Healey said.

"We're going to continue to press them," Healey said on WBUR. "I think there is a real recognition there. The question is: Are they going to help at this point?"

Meanwhile, the federal government on Tuesday announced new guidance aimed at helping stateless noncitizens who are trying

to access immigration benefits or have submitted “other requests” to USCIS, according to a news release from the DHS.

Stateless noncitizens are not legally considered citizens of any country, which means they “may be denied legal identity, and struggle to access education, healthcare, marriage, and job opportunities,” DHS said. New policies and procedures will be established for officials tasked with determining people’s status and making decisions about their applications or benefit requests, the agency said.

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# **Massachusetts Offshore Wind Project Plans Mid-October Power Delivery**

By Colin A. Young  
State House News Service

The first clean wind power generated by the Vineyard Wind 1 project is expected to flow onto the regional grid by mid-October and the first-in-the-nation offshore wind project should be fully operational by this time next year, project officials said Wednesday during a boat tour of the construction.

Project developers have maintained for years that the \$4 billion project they are building about 15 miles south of Martha’s Vineyard would start to generate cleaner energy by the end of 2023, but they told a group of state lawmakers, clean energy advocates, organized labor representatives and others Wednesday that the target is now mid-October, or just over two months from now.

At first, the project will send power generated by a string of six turbines onto the grid, totaling about 78 megawatts, with plans to ramp the project up to between 200 and 300 MW by the end of the year and full commercial operations of 806 MW expected by mid-2024, according to Sy Oytan, Avangrid's chief operating officer for offshore wind.

Vineyard Wind, a joint venture between Avangrid and Copenhagen Infrastructure Partners, began offshore construction activities in June by setting the foundations for the 62 turbines that will make up the 806-megawatt project that has been years in the making.

On Wednesday, about 15 representatives and two senators were among those who got to see the progress of that construction from aboard the Captain John and Son II, which was chartered for the tour by Avangrid, the Environmental League of Massachusetts and the New England for Offshore Wind Coalition.

When they are fully assembled, each of Vineyard Wind 1's 62 turbines will stretch about 850 feet above the Atlantic Ocean – taller than any building in New England. There was not much to see in the way of towers or turbines Wednesday – those on the boat tour saw a series of foundations with “transition pieces” sticking up out of the water, each arranged one nautical mile away from others in a grid pattern.

More visually interesting was the offshore substation that Oytan said is the first to be installed in the United States. Each turbine will eventually connect into the substation, which accounts for about \$900 million of the \$4 billion project cost. Oytan said the facility will take power in at 66 kilovolts from each turbine and step up the voltage to 220 kV before sending it over an export cable that will connect to the regional power grid in Barnstable.

“One of the takeaways for me is that determination and follow-through is the name of the game. This fight to save the planet



and create clean wind is literally the work of our lifetime. But how wonderful it is to realize that you can actually win. That's what we're seeing today," Sen. Michael Barrett, who co-chairs the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy, said. "All you hear about, and understandably, is how tough the climate problem is. And of course it's every bit as tough as people say. Today, we're gaining ground, we're pushing back we're making genuine progress."

Once it is fully operational, Vineyard Wind 1 is projected to generate cleaner electricity for more than 400,000 homes and businesses in Massachusetts, produce at least 3,600 jobs, reduce costs for Massachusetts ratepayers by an estimated \$1.4 billion over 20 years, and eliminate 1.68 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions annually.

For Rep. Jeff Roy of Franklin, who handles offshore wind policy for the House as co-chair of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy, it was the gargantuan effort in the 1920s to marshal government and industry to power the western states by building the Hoover Dam that came to mind.

"When I look out at what we saw today ... we're looking at our generation's Hoover Dam, right here off the coast of Massachusetts," Roy said. "This power is going to provide the energy independence that we have long wanted and needed for the commonwealth of Massachusetts, and it's also going to provide the robust clean energy source that we need to make the transition to fossil fuel-free by 2050."

### **Activity on the Water**

Aboard the Captain John and Son II, the trip out to the Vineyard Wind lease area took about two hours. The lawmakers, staffers and advocates onboard took advantage of the time to enjoy the sun, chat about the recent flurry of legislative activity and share news on various summer plans.

Early in its journey, the boat tour took attendees close to the site proposed for the 130-turbine wind farm known as Cape Wind, which won federal approval in 2010 and was expected for a time to be the first offshore wind development in the country. That project was never built, largely due to opposition to its location at Horseshoe Shoal within Nantucket Sound.

The Vineyard Wind 1 project will be located in federal waters about 15 miles south of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. The project's lease area is adjacent to where other developers are also preparing their own wind energy projects. Project officials said Vineyard Wind 1's turbines will not be visible from land, even on the clearest of days.

The first sign of construction activities was a ship that was working to connect joints in the export cable that will carry Vineyard Wind 1's power from the substation to Barnstable. About 40 miles of cable (of about 98 miles total) has been installed, Oytan said, and the onshore work necessary to accept the export cable is complete.

There was very little activity in the wind lease area, though there was plenty of wind. Oytan said the relatively shallow waters off of Massachusetts are "the premium place in the world for offshore wind production" because of the combination of ocean depths of about 100 feet, which allows for construction, and wind speeds of up to 36 feet per second.

Next week, Oytan said, workers will begin to install the towers that soar hundreds of feet skyward from the foundations, followed by installation of the energy generation components and lastly installation of the three 351-foot blades that will catch the wind and turn the turbine.

### **The First of a New Industry**

As the first utility-scale offshore wind project in the United States, Vineyard Wind 1 is at the front edge of a growing new

industry that Massachusetts policymakers hope will be an economic engine in the Bay State – not to mention a key contributor to decarbonization efforts.

During the project's development phase between 2017 and 2021, direct Vineyard Wind employment in Massachusetts was 278 full-time equivalent job years. The payroll for those jobs and the project's other expenditures supported an additional 137 indirect jobs during development. In turn, the direct and indirect jobs induced an additional 251 jobs in development, a report to the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources found.

The development phase – which was longer than anticipated due to federal delays – generated 666 jobs, \$59.3 million in labor income, \$79.1 million in value added, and \$166.6 million in economic output, according to the report from UMass Dartmouth and Spring Line Research.

There was little active construction taking place at the lease area on Wednesday since the vessel that does the actual installation of monopiles was away making a trip to Halifax, Nova Scotia, to pick up additional supplies. But about 25 to 30 people were working on the project offshore presently, including 16 union piledrivers, Oytan said. He said those workers spend two or three weeks offshore at a time, sleeping on an "accommodation vessel."

In July 2021, Vineyard Wind signed a project labor agreement with the Southeastern Massachusetts Building Trades Council to guarantee that at least 500 union workers will have a hand in building the country's first significant offshore wind farm.

The continued development of the offshore wind sector is seen as crucial to meeting the new climate goals Massachusetts has adopted, specifically the requirement to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Vineyard Wind 1 was the first offshore wind project selected

by Massachusetts utility companies with input from the Baker administration to fulfill part of a 2016 clean energy law, and is likely to be the only Massachusetts offshore wind project to become a reality until at least 2028 as subsequent projects have run into economic headwinds that developers say threaten their ability to finance their projects.

Both projects, including the Commonwealth Wind project that Avangrid is also behind, are seeking to terminate contracts they already agreed to with plans to bid the same projects at higher prices in the state's next round of offshore wind procurement next year.

### **The Long and Winding Road**

That Vineyard Wind 1 would be constructed at all has not always been a sure thing and the project has had to navigate choppy waters to get to this point.

Project developers originally planned to financially close on the project and begin on-shore construction work in 2019, put the first turbine into the seabed in 2021 and begin generating electricity in 2022.

But under the Trump administration, the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management in the summer of 2019 decided to undertake a broad study of the potential impacts of offshore wind projects planned up and down the East Coast, holding up a key permit approval for Vineyard Wind 1.

After meetings between the U.S. Department of the Interior, Baker and members of the Congressional delegation proved fruitless, Vineyard Wind announced on Dec. 1 of that year that it was pulling its project out of the federal review pipeline. The Trump administration declared the federal review of the project "terminated."

But Vineyard Wind's decision to yank its plan from review also meant the project's ultimate fate would not be decided under

Trump, who frequently expressed concerns about wind power and held the project back while his administration looked into impacts that the burgeoning industry could have on commercial fishing.

Less than a month into Joe Biden's presidency, in February 2021, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management announced that it was resuming the federal review of the Vineyard Wind 1 project from the point at which the developer withdrew it. By May, the Biden administration had approved the project's construction and operations plan and cleared the way for construction to begin.

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## **Dunkin is giving away “Free coffee for 1 year” to 100 people at Dartmouth location**

Want free Dunkin coffee for 1 year? Get over to the Dunkin located at 823 Reed Road in Dartmouth at 9am on Friday, July 28th. The newly remodeled “Next generation Dunkin” is hosting its grand reopening and is celebrating by giving 100 people free coffee for a year!

The grand reopening celebration will be held from 9am-11am with a ribbon cutting at 10am. There will be a check presentation to “My Brothers Keeper” as well as Dunkin Swag and Prize wheel giveaways. Hangout with the Dunkin mascots Cuppy and Sprinkles.

Remember, the 1 year of free coffee giveaway starts at 9am!





Steven Richard's Photo

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# Should citizens have been able to vote on New Bedford "nip bottles" ban?

The Licensing board officially voted to ban the sale of nip bottles in the city of New Bedford. The ban is estimated to take in order starting November 1st as the board decided to give business owners time to sell their current stock.

This comes after a fiery meeting between citizens on both

sides of the matter on Monday night. Most notably Mark Riley, the owner of "Freitas Package Store" has been voicing his objection to the ban.

"This decision was made by a hand picked committee appointed by the mayor, because the mayor knows if you put this in front of the voters it would not pass."

Mark Riley gave an interview after the ruling which was captured live by Carlos Pimental Felix:

City Councilman Ian Abreu also voiced his opinion to the board in opposition of the ban, "I believe in adults being able to make adult decisions for whats best in their lives." Abreu went on stating, "Lets not punish these commercial tax paying hard working individuals, because they have a right to earn a living."

Several other members of the community that were in opposition of the ban announced they will be filing an ethics complaint in regards to the ruling from the licensing board. Mark Custodio announced to reporters, "Tomorrow we will file an ethics complaint that the debate took place outside public view and the board did not debate this issue in a public room."



*Carlos Pimental Felix photo.*

There was a heavy presence of individuals who supported the ban on nips as well, some bringing bags full of bottles they collected off of the ground as an example of the issue they are causing on New Bedford streets.

Regardless of what side citizens are on, this seems to be a critically important topic for many. Which leads to the question, should citizens of voted on this matter rather than leave it to a board to decide?





*Carlos Pimental Felix photo.*

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## **City of New Bedford awarded \$1.7M RAISE Grant from U.S. DoT**

“The U.S. Department of Transportation has awarded the City of New Bedford a \$1.7 Million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The RAISE Program focuses on planning and capital investments that support roads, bridges, transit, rail, ports, and intermodal transportation.

This planning grant will be allocated to advance the design, permitting, and continuation of public outreach for the City’s Blue Lane Working Waterfront Connector Project (BLWWC). THE BLWWC project will reconstruct three continuous major roadways

in the Port of New Bedford and is a project based on a feasibility study prepared by the City in 2020. Planned improvements along MacArthur Drive, Herman Melville Boulevard, and North Front Street will enhance access to waterfront industries, the intercity rail, recreational opportunities, and tourist destinations fostering safe, non-motorized travel for all, especially for waterfront employees.



*City of New Bedford photo.*

The project ultimately would include underground infrastructure, including the replacement of water, sewer, and stormwater pipelines to improve climate change resiliency along with the incorporation of green infrastructure elements to meet the state's Clean Water Act municipal stormwater discharge requirements.

It would also include the installation of fiber optic cable to serve areas in need of high-speed internet access. Streetscape improvements would include the construction of a shared-use pathway accompanied by pedestrian-scale street lighting and Americans with Disability Act-compliant crosswalks and access ramps to foster walking and biking along the corridor. Traffic signal upgrades would enhance the safety of many of our fishing industry workers who live in the surrounding neighborhoods and walk or bike to work.



“This planning grant will enable us to tie together various neighborhood improvement and economic development efforts,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell. “I want to thank the Biden Administration and the Congressional delegation for making these resources available.”

“New Bedford’s working waterfront is home to the top fishing port in the nation, the hub of the offshore wind industry, and is a top tourist destination in the region, and this RAISE grant will improve access to the waterfront for workers, residents, and tourists alike while taking cars off the road and improving water quality,” said Congressman Bill Keating. “In passing the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, President Biden promised to create jobs, modernize our infrastructure, and turn the climate crisis into an economic opportunity – and this RAISE grant for the BLWVC Project does just that. I commend the City of New Bedford for submitting this successful grant application that I was proud to support.”

“The BLWVC Projects aligns with the Planning Department’s ongoing waterfront planning, recognizing the significance of the City’s strategic port location to advance economic development,” said Director of City Planning, Jennifer Carloni. “The proposed infrastructure planning supports a future vision of a waterfront that continues to represent New Bedford’s rich history, supports industries of today and tomorrow, and broadens public access.”

The BLWVC Project would fill a critical network gap in the City’s Blue Lane network, an 11-mile waterfront pathway network spanning the City’s shoreline. The BLWVC will connect the Blue Lane’s existing CoveWalk and HarborWalk (pathways atop the New Bedford Hurricane barrier) as well as the RiverWalk (a planned pathway along the shoreline of the Acushnet River). This connection will provide safe and convenient access to the working waterfront, State Pier, downtown, nearby neighborhoods, and the intercity rail station.”-City of New Bedford.

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# Liquor store fighting back against the City of New Bedford's "Nip Bottle Ban"

"Freitas Package Store" located at 1295 Cove Rd, New Bedford is making a vocal push against the idea to ban the sale of "nip bottles" in the City of New Bedford.

The store is currently displaying a message reading, "Stop NB Nip Ban Sign Petition Inside" on their sign outside the store. They also posted this message on social media:

*"New Bedford did you know the city is trying to ban nips without resident vote!?"*

Let's push the conversation away from banning nips town by town without city wide vote. Instead let's encourage our city representative and lawmakers to move this issue to the state and update the bottle bill that has not been updated since 1982. That's 41 years ago...

Banning nips is not the solution.

Sign the petition.

City meeting Monday July 24th 6pm"

Other towns and cities across Massachusetts have already passed the ban on nips, including Fairhaven which made the decision at a town meeting on May 6th 2023. Some will say this is an overstepping of local government restricting small businesses, while others believe this is a step in the right direction in regards to a cleaner environment.



*Steven Richards photo.*

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**BREAKING: New Bedford, Police**

# Union reach agreement on salary increase, body-worn cameras

On late Wednesday morning of July 12th the City of New Bedford put out this press release regarding the ongoing negotiation between the City and The New Bedford Police Union:

**New Bedford, MA** – After months of negotiation, the City and the New Bedford Police Union have entered a new collective bargaining agreement, which will increase police wages and benefits to address the Police Department's staffing shortages. The agreement also paves the way for the use of body-worn cameras by all officers. The agreement runs from July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2024, and is subject to City Council approval.

## **The agreement includes the following new provisions:**

- The residency requirement for new officers would be reduced from ten years to four years, and the City is authorized to waive the requirement if the Department's staffing needs demand it.
- 2% cost of living adjustment in each year of the contract.
- 2% added to the base pay for the officer's certification by the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission, effective January 1, 2024, and again on June 30, 2024.
- Effective on July 1, 2022: Step 1 on the pay scale is eliminated.
- Effective on July 1, 2023: Step 2 on the pay scale is eliminated and a new step, Step 6, is created at 2% above Step 5.
- For officers with 15+ years of service in the New Bedford Police Department, a new 15-year step is created at 4% above Step 5.

- Step 5A becomes the 25-year step at 6% above Step 5 for officers with 25+ years of service.
- Rank differential is increased to 18%.
- \$3,000 retention payment for officers who remain employed with the City 30 days after City Council funds the contract.
- Education incentive payments are increased, and additional degrees are added to the list of qualifying degrees.
- Vacation time added for officers with 15-20 years of service.
- Added pay for officers who work on Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- Restrictions on the use of sick time.
- The police chief may use retired officers to conduct background checks.
- After training, the department can begin to introduce body-worn cameras.

*“I am pleased that both sides worked toward a resolution that enables us to address staffing shortages with which departments across America are struggling,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell. “I am proud of the work our officers do to keep New Bedford safe, and I believe that this new contract will put them in a stronger position to achieve professional success.”*

*“I’m very pleased that the City has reached an amicable agreement with the union and settled this contract,” said Police Chief Paul Oliveira. “I look forward to working with the union leadership as we continue to serve the citizens of New Bedford. As always, I remain very proud of the men and women of this department.”*

**The term of the contract is estimated to cost \$3.5 million from the City’s General Fund.**

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# New Bedford jewelry store to open second location in Dartmouth Towne Center

“Paradise Jewelry” is opening up its second location at 440 State Road in Dartmouth within the “Dartmouth Towne Center” shopping plaza.

Their flagship location is located at 71 County Street in New Bedford and offers gold jewelry, ring resizing, new watches, jewelry repair, as well as Portuguese gold products!

They have yet to announce an official opening date but did post this message on social media:

*Exciting news coming soon!!*

*We are opening our second location at 440 State Road in Dartmouth, MA.*

*Look for us in the Dartmouth Towne Center next to T.J. Maxx this summer!*

The Dartmouth Towne Center is in the middle of a shopping renaissance with the blend of several stores closing and several businesses opening. We have now seen the addition of Crumbl Cookies, Open Doors Yoga, a Tesla charging Station and Paradise Jewelry in recent months.

Hopefully this a new chapter of a strong future for business in Dartmouth Towne Center, the tall task ahead is to find a new home for the vacant Bed, Bath and Beyond & the Circuit City buildings.



*Steven Richards photo.*

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## **24 luxury apartments being built within walking distance of Dartmouth Mall**

Rockwood Apartments are building 24 luxury apartment units Coming in "Spring 2024" on Cross Rd in Dartmouth. The building is located extremely close to Target and other popular stores which will make this a very attractive destination for renters in the south coast.

Below is a Google Earth screenshot showing the apartments location. The white circle is where the apartments are being built, and the lot to the right is the plaza with Target, Dicks Sporting Goods, and other stores.



*RockwoodApartmentsma.com photo.*

The apartment will offer 2 bed 1 bath units, EV charging stations, a fitness area, an elevator, and common laundry according to the property website.

Its becoming more and more popular for developers & Investors across America to build apartments within or in close proximity to shopping plazas. Maybe this could be a possibility in Dartmouth Towne Center where the old Circuit City was?





RockwoodApartmentsma.com photo.