

Clinton Resilient Connecticut 2.0

5-5-22

Town Hall

Present: David Murphy (CIRCA), Mary Buchanan (CIRCA), Margot Burns (RiverCOG), Vincent DeMaio (Clinton Police Chief), Todd Hajek (Clinton Department of Public Works), Karl Kilduff (Clinton Town Manager), Christine Goupil (Clinton Town Council, State Representative), Michael Neff (Clinton Emergency Management Department), Richard Pleines (Clinton Building Department)

Overview: CIRCA met with the Town of Clinton and RiverCOG to describe the expansion of Resilient Connecticut into the RiverCOG planning region and provide a forum to the local hazard mitigation plan team to comment on the status of actions in the Clinton annex of the Hazard Mitigation Plan adopted in 2021. These meeting notes will be provided to the Town and RiverCOG for appropriate filing related to the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

David commenced the meeting by providing an overview of the Resilient CT project and Resilient CT 2.0 future plans. During the discussion, the local planning team reviewed the Town’s hazard mitigation actions, and attendees had an open discussion about the Town’s needs related to climate change and natural hazards.

Review of HMP Actions:

Activity #	Goal/Obj	Activity Description	Status Reported by Location Planning Team
1	1-1	HMP Plan Integration - Incorporate additional natural hazard mitigation concerns into Zoning Regulations and Subdivision Regulations. Incorporate additional natural hazard mitigation concerns into the Inland Wetland Regulations, including prevention of runoff near waterways (carried over and modified).	No progress here. David noted that this might be appropriate to address whenever other revisions to regulations are next needed.
2	2-1	Design Standards - Implement the results of the SHPO historic and cultural resources resilience project to develop guidelines for historic buildings in Flood Hazard Zones to minimize loss of life and property as well as preserve our historic neighborhoods. (new)	No progress here. David asked if any changes in historic designations have occurred in the last few years and attendees noted that recent historic resource surveys had been conducted. The Commerce Street/Leffingwell area may be designated as a historic district in the future; the town has begun the application process with SHPO.

Activity #	Goal/Obj	Activity Description	Status Reported by Location Planning Team
3	1-1, 3-1	<p>Flood Zone and Sea Level Rise Study – Town Council (TC) should establish an ad-hoc committee to research medium and long-range impacts to coastal areas from SLR, to investigate possible mitigation actions and to assess legal, financial and policy implications. Work with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), DEEP, educational institutions, and state federal agencies to study impacts of sea level rise on (SLR) coastal flooding in Clinton.</p> <p>Update flood zone study for the town to incorporate SLR mapping study to evaluate coastal flooding. (carried over and modified)</p>	<p>The committee has not been created. A coastal resiliency study for the town was completed by UConn engineering students and presented to the town recently. This study is being used as groundwork for the Town’s participation in the Long Island Sound Futures grant application in coordination with Westbrook and Old Saybrook.</p>
4	3-1	<p>Infrastructure Improvements - Develop a priority list for road reconstruction and elevation for routes which experience frequent flooding or are integral to evacuation. Make a consideration for ongoing PW road evaluations. (Carried forward but modified)</p>	<p>This will likely happen after the study referenced in action #3. The town is partnering with DEEP and Ducks Unlimited to seek NFWF funding to increase flood resilience on Beach Park Road by elevating the bridge and increasing the size of the opening; they may also install floodgates. The town may also apply for FEMA grants in the future.</p>
5	2-1	<p>Inventory Generators at Essential Facilities.</p> <p>Some non-critical facilities are essential for public function during an emergency, such as grocery stores and gas stations. For these essential facilities, inventory which have functional generators. Encourage gas stations and grocery stores without generators to add them. Provide technical assistance and support identifying funding. (New)</p>	<p>No additional generators have been added, but existing generators have been kept up to date on maintenance and replacement. The two major grocery stores each have generators: Big Y has a generator that can run the entire store, while Shop Rite has a generator that can run the store at limited capacity. Both of these stores may be in the floodplain – to be confirmed.</p>
6	1-1	<p>Business Recovery Plan. Regional level to develop business recovery plan cooperatively with other region towns and distribute to town businesses. Clinton will support a regional effort, not carry out this task on its own. (Carried over but modified)</p>	<p>The town staff suggested that this would be best addressed at the COG level. Clinton will cooperate with the regional effort.</p>

Activity #	Goal/Obj	Activity Description	Status Reported by Location Planning Team
7	2-1	<p>Retrofit and expand or construct new Fire Station</p> <p>Clinton is evaluating the future feasibility of its fire station. It needs resilience improvements and expansion. Evaluate the cost effectiveness and feasibility of enhancing the existing facility vs. replacing with a new facility in a safer location. (replacement action)</p>	<p>A presentation has been made to the Town Council on the need to replace the fire station with a facility that is outside floodplain boundaries. The new site has not yet been acquired, and preferred sites are not owned by the Town. There will be a significant cost to this project. Another presentation will be made to the Town Council for the benefit of the new council members. The town anticipates a time frame of 5 years for moving forward on this project.</p>
8	3-1	<p>Local Social Resources.</p> <p>Coordinate with Town Human Services, Estuary Council of Seniors, and Shoreline Basic Needs Task Force to assist with those populations (i.e. elderly, disabled, non-English speakers, who may frequent, reside, or work) in Clinton. (Carried forward but modified)</p>	<p>A community assistance team (UR Community) consisting of volunteers helps seniors and vulnerable groups with yard work, home tasks, etc. This is not an official Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) but is reportedly adequate for meeting the local need.</p>
9	1-1	<p>Possible Open Space Criteria. The Conservation Commission should include possible inundation by future sea level rises to its considerations for preserving open space. Review and update open space plan developed in 2013. Modify to create contiguous space with acquisitions informed by TNC and CIRCA SLR reports. (Carried forward but modified)</p>	<p>There is a local land trust; acquisitions have been driven by whatever is feasible to acquire. Most of the land trust targets for future acquisition are inland rather than coastal. A small number of coastal parcels have been donated, given that they would be difficult to develop.</p>
10	1-1	<p>Update Recovery & Reconstruction Plan. Develop a post-disaster recovery and reconstruction plan to re-establish infrastructure and public services, etc. damaged or destroyed by any NH event, including establishment of a "rainy day" fund in case Federal assistance is insufficient or delayed.</p>	<p>The town has an undesignated fund balance. Neighboring towns such as Branford and Guilford have designated funds specifically for coastal resiliency projects (but have not been consistent about funding them), so this is a topic of discussion in Clinton.</p>
11	3-1	<p>Evacuation Routes.</p> <p>Identify and sign evacuation routes throughout town to aid public in evacuating. Evacuation routes should follow roads which will not flood during storms. Upgrade current evacuation routes for adequacy. (Carried Forward)</p>	<p>Some signs have been posted on local roads; state-owned roads are not in the town's remit.</p>

Activity #	Goal/Obj	Activity Description	Status Reported by Location Planning Team
12	2-1	<p>RL and SRL Properties. Encourage property owners of repetitive loss and several repetitive loss properties to obtain assistance for hazard mitigation funding from DEEP/FEMA for elevation of structures and repairs where applicable. Provide assistance as needed. (Carried forward but modified)</p>	<p>A fair number of elevations have taken place, either elevating the original structure or demolishing and then replacing at an elevated level; it is not known how many of these are RL properties. Many properties have changed hands in the last few years. There has been pressure on homeowners to make these changes from insurance companies, and in some cases the elevations are needed because Substantial Improvement thresholds are reached. The town has a number of homeowners in floodplains who have not been able to acquire FEMA flood insurance and are interested in other forms of funding. Some of the properties flooded in the rain event of September 2018 are believed at high risk.</p>
13	2-1	<p>Road Reconstruction. Develop a priority list for road reconstruction and elevation for routes which experience frequent flooding or are integral to evacuation. Build into PW evaluation criteria. (Carried over and modified)</p>	<p>This action might be redundant; see action #4.</p>
14	2-1	<p>Upgrade Culverts. Evaluate and reconstruct culverts in town to meet 100-year storm standards where feasible (carried over and modified)</p>	<p>Two bridge projects are complete; a third is underway. All of these have been elevated to allow more water conveyance or higher water elevations.</p>
15	2-1	<p>Elevate Road and Bridge. Evaluate and reconstruct Beach Park Road in several spots to be above Base Flood Elevation (BFE). Reconstruct Causeway in several locations to elevate above BFE Evaluate and reconstruct Route 1 (Boston Post Road) in several spots to be above Base Flood Elevation (BFE). Evaluate and reconstruct Nod and River Roads in several spots to be above Base Flood Elevation (BFE). (Carried forward but modified – strategies merged)</p>	<p>Beach Park Road has been completed as noted above in #4. Causeway culvert was replaced after Irene but could not be increased in size without bringing in Army Corps. No progress on Boston Post Road, Nod, or River Roads. As noted above, the upcoming resiliency planning will help with prioritization.</p>

Activity #	Goal/Obj	Activity Description	Status Reported by Location Planning Team
16	2-1	Dune Restoration. Implement dune restoration and marshland protection techniques for flood storage and surge protection. (Carried Over)	No progress regarding dunes. There has been some limited work behind the town hall to remove Phragmites on a land trust property. The future 3-town plan will help to identify potential sites for further restoration.
17	3-1	Circulate Existing Literature. Access existing literature prepared by regional groups and the chamber of commerce and FEMA and display for public distribution in the Town Hall and Library. (Carried Over)	There is nothing specific on the town social media or website. The town Facebook does not get much traffic. Individual departments have more active social media.
18	3-1	Preparedness and Recovery Webpage. Keep up-to-date Town website with NH preparedness information, including hazard areas, evacuation routes deemed appropriate per NH event and locations of shelters. Include information about recovery assistance following NH events.	See action #17.

Open Discussion on the Town’s Needs:

- David opened the discussion by describing examples of the types of efforts where CIRCA can add value, including the seven projects in Fairfield County and New Haven County described in the presentation. He noted that critical facilities are often the easiest path to assistance, and asked about the fire station. The Town explained that the site of the greatest interest for the fire station project is in the hands of a private individual, and attendees agreed that CIRCA is not likely to add value here.
- The town hall is the cooling/warming center. There is some flood risk in the parking lot but the building has reportedly not experienced flooding. The town hall has a generator.
 - o People mostly drive themselves to access the town hall. The fire department has vehicles that can be used to retrieve people from flooded areas if needed.
 - o The town has not noticed much demand for the town hall and the official shelter during storms; usually people stay with relatives or in hotels.
 - o If there is a power outage, the need for the town hall services (cooling/charging) may be higher.
 - o The fire department and police department keep a list of vulnerable citizens so that people who are on oxygen or otherwise require power for medical equipment can be checked on during power outages. Residents can also reach out ahead of storms.
 - Eversource also has a list of people who require electricity for medical products.
 - o The town reportedly sometimes is challenged with communication, as Everbridge participation is well below 100%.

- There is some concern about private dams and how they discharge water. Some of these are owned by neighborhood associations or Connecticut Water Company. The dams in question include Lockwood Lake Association (a private association) and MacKenzie Reservoir (CWC).
 - o The dam emergency protocol was first activated during the flood of September 2018. This revealed the need for more education and clarification of the process for dam management.
 - o The town has the EAPs for the dams and has “exercised them often”.
 - o Responsibility for dam management often relies on volunteers.
 - o The Town would like DEEP to be more proactive regarding privately-owned dams.
- David urged the Town to identify unique climate-driven needs. One such need is related to sanitary sewage disposal and management. There is currently no sewer system in the town, and properties rely on individual septic systems. Rising sea level is raising the groundwater table and limiting septic system effectiveness. Town staff expressed the desire for a “go or no-go” determination on how to proceed.
 - o The town is under a consent order for DEEP related to water pollution control. There has reportedly been limited staff support from DEEP.
 - o The cost of the sewer system would be significant, as would the impact on the town’s bonding. Funds to cover some of this project would make this process easier to pitch to the taxpayers and users.
 - o This study would need to consider how the land loss in some coastal areas should be navigated when planning the potential sewer implementation.
 - o Bonding is by public referendum, and is reportedly politically complicated.
 - o State Revolving Funds are loans, and infrastructure funding can be challenging to obtain.
 - o Town staff suggested that a potential use of Resilient Connecticut resources could be a benefit-cost analysis to inform the decision whether or not Clinton should apply for FEMA BRIC (or similar) to fund the installation of a sewer system in some parts of the town.
- The town is about to launch an update to the harbor management plan.

Follow-up:

- Please take a look at the map viewer for the Zones of Shared Risk and offer any corrections/additions. Link here:
<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/9a4f68dd99f44dc58b93fd85bcfe1255/>
- (Note: the Editor tool within the viewer does not always save reliably, so please email mary.buchanan@uconn.edu with any changes you’d like to see reflected in the Clinton ZSR layer.)

Karl will be the point of contact going forward.