

East Haddam Resilient CT 2.0 Meeting

3-8-22

9 – 10:30 am

*Present: David Murphy (CIRCA), Mary Buchanan (CIRCA), James/Jim Ventres (EH Land Use), Bernie Gillis (EH Conservation Commission), Steve Hedler (EH Public Works, super), Margot Burns (RiverCOG), John Olin (EH Conservation Commission), Irene Haines (EH First Selectman)*

**Overview:** CIRCA met with the Town of East Haddam 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 East Haddam 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:**

Jim and Steve explained that many of the bridges and culverts in East Haddam were replaced in kind after the devastating flood of 1982. Because they had not been designed for specific flows prior to 1982, this lack of design was carried forward when they were replaced. The Town is therefore attempting to apply current design standards when these structures need to be replaced due to their 40+ year age. This discussion applies to actions #1, 2, and 3.

Activity #	Activity Description	Status Reported by Local Planning Team
1	<b>Coordinate with DOT</b> to address culverts, pipes, bridges, etc. on state owned roadways to mitigate flooding and overtopping problems. Create list, request meeting with DOT, annual reminders (refer to the list in Table 13)	DOT has been working on this; ongoing on case-by-case basis
2	<b>Conduct engineering studies</b> to mitigate various Town-owned structures in need of repair, culverts, pipes, bridges, etc., on Town-owned roadways that are causing flooding and overtopping problems. Replace 1-2 annually. (refer to the list in Table 13)	Addressing them one by one, WMC Consulting has a list of culverts that will be addressed next
3	<b>Support mitigation projects</b> that will result in protection of public or private property from natural hazards through stormwater management improvements for areas identified by the Town. Identify and implement one per year.	Similar to #2, case-by-case basis
4	<b>Identify funding</b> to assist flood prone properties along the Connecticut River and inland streams for acquisition. Prioritize Repetitive Loss properties.	No real progress, reluctance to give up waterfront property before a disaster

Activity #	Activity Description	Status Reported by Local Planning Team
		has occurred – perhaps recast/remove in next HMP
5	<b>Update the existing Debris Management Plan.</b> Identify locations for large volumes of debris and comply with DEMHS debris management plan standards.	No written plan but a protocol is in place to use Public Works Garage, where debris can be quantified for FEMA funds. Many property owners are capable of addressing debris on their own properties.
6	Budget appropriate money necessary to maintain and remove dead, dying, dangerous, and diseased trees in rights-of-ways and on other town-owned land.	Budget has been increased from \$50,000 to \$150,000, plus whatever is left over from snow removal funds after winter
7	<b>Culvert Construction.</b> Oversee the completion of construction of the three culverts along East Shore Drive that started with 2018 FEMA Public Assistance funding.	In progress; waiting on engineering for culverts
8	<b>Culvert Construction.</b> Oversee and complete construction of the Mitchell Road culvert improvements to reduce flooding	Completed
9	<b>Critical Facilities.</b> Install generators at Elementary Schools and Transfer Stations.	Generator for transfer station has been budgeted for; schools have generators now.
10	<b>Promote use of Everbridge.</b> Place postings on the community website and social media promoting registration to the Everbridge system to grow it use.	Ongoing, Everbridge is still in use.

**Follow-up Items From HMP Discussion:**

- We will acquire the list of upcoming culvert replacements collected by WMC Consulting for updating action #2.

**Discussion Questions Posed to the Group:**

- Where are intersections of assets and flooding challenges?
- Where are intersections of assets and heat challenges?
- Are there unique climate challenges and drivers in East Haddam?

Participants identified road conditions as a persistent challenge that may be related to climate change due to changes in temperature extremes combined with changes in freeze/thaw cycles. For asphalt

roads, the rapid transitions between hot and cold days leads to great wear-and-tear on the pavement; the asphalt will crack and then get further plowed away by snowplows. For gravel roads, the warmer winters means there isn't a solid freeze but instead multiple freeze/thaw cycles, plus lots of road salt needed to reduce ice. Furthermore, many roads don't have solid bases because they were originally gravel, even if tar was added later. There are up to 15 miles of town-owned gravel roads. Paving these roads elicit local opposition because residents prefer to "keep the country charm." One previous project (Pettico Lane?) was 3 miles and approximately \$ 1 million.

#### **Follow-up Items from Discussion of Challenges:**

- Ask Town of Somers how they have addressed making unpaved roads more resilient to freeze/thaw, snow and ice conditions, and intense precipitation.
- Consider a new type of ZSR for this road challenge. However, the ZSR cannot simply envelope the entire town; some type of distinction would need to be made.

#### **ZSR Discussion:**

- General agreement from the group that the ZSR near the Opera House / Bridge / Succor Brook is a consistent challenge area. Succor Brook flows alongside and beneath a number of both private and public structures. Jim noted that the town doesn't own some of the properties that are affected and thus is limited in its ability to address the challenge.
- Concerns voiced from the group about a beaver dam at or near the headwaters of Succor Brook, which is on private property.
- Future development and investment is planned for the town center/Opera House/Bridge area, so addressing the flooding challenges will benefit these future plans also.

#### **ZSR Follow-up Actions:**

- The Salmon River corridor is lightly developed and flooding does not affect people and infrastructure. CIRCA should consider changing the Salmon River ZSR designation to a Natural Protection ZSR.
- Add Proximity ZSR on the west side of the lake. (Densely populated, antiquated stormwater management system.) Stormwater has been observed surcharging from catch basins during intense precipitation events.
- Extend the Succor Brook ZSR along the course of the waterway upstream to the beaver dam.
- Look at the sewage treatment plant location and sewer service area for possible consideration as a sewershed ZSR. The wastewater treatment plant may be at risk of flooding, given that key elevations were based on prior FEMA flood risk mapping and elevations. This should be investigated as time allows.

#### **Discussion of Cooling Centers and Generators:**

- The East Haddam Senior center is the main cooling center; high school and libraries could also work. There is a pick-up service for seniors to get to cooling center.
- Charging stations get a lot of use when the power goes out.

- The gas station and the grocery stores do not have generators.
  - o Margot would like this to be included in the HMP.
- The town does have a few portable generator stations.
- They will check to see if the senior housing complexes have generators.
- The open space and level of vegetation reduce the threat of extreme heat – the town cools off at night, it's not difficult to find shade, etc.
- Eversource is often a delaying factor during storm recovery periods.

**Other Notes:**

- East Haddam likely does not have any EJ census tracts. EJ tracts may help capture DEEP climate resilience funding in the future.
- John wants to include public education and community engagement in future projects. Perhaps Katie Lund could attend a town forum or similar meetings.
- John asked for more information on the resilience corridors concept. David said this is generally used within towns rather than across broader scales, but could also influence where investment decisions are made.
- The contact person for this project for East Haddam going forward will be Jim.