

Portland Resilient Connecticut 2.0

4-25-22

Town Hall

Present: David Murphy (CIRCA), Mary Buchanan (CIRCA), Margot Burns (RiverCOG), Ryan Curley (Portland First Selectman), Bob Shea (Portland Fire Department)

Overview: CIRCA met with the Town of Portland 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 Portland 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/Objective	Activity Description	Status Reported by Location Planning Team
1	1-1	<p>Install Emergency Generators Install emergency generators for all critical facilities and essential town facilities including: Glastonbury Turnpike Water Supply Well Bartlett Street Water Pumping Station Portland Library Portland Senior Center Portland Transfer Station Brownstone Intermediate School Valley View School Gildersleeve School</p>	<p>Some progress has occurred here. Bartlett Street P.S. now has a generator. The town is working on getting a generator for the senior center with the DOH, which will make the senior center more effective as a temporary or backup shelter. At this time, the use of the senior center and library for cooling is limited because they cannot be cooled during power outages. The Police Department is adjacent and has a generator, and one potential solution for the senior center and library is to connect them to the Police Department generator. Locating a generator at the Glastonbury Turnpike Well is challenging due to sanitary radius restrictions, but the town is looking at possibly connecting it to a generator at the nearby highway garage. The schools (other than the high school) do not have generators, but this continues to be a goal.</p>

Activity #	Goal/Objective	Activity Description	Status Reported by Location Planning Team
2	3-1	<p>Develop GIS Application Acquire asset management technology and develop a GIS application to assist personnel to capture damages during a disaster for future public assistance or mitigation grant applications.</p>	<p>This is still a need. A GIS system would help with FEMA reporting requirements (the PA reimbursement process after T.S. Isaias was reportedly challenging). Portland could talk to Deep River about how they funded their recent GIS system with STEAP funds.</p>

3	2-1	<p>Engineering Studies to Assess Flooding Mitigation Options</p> <p>Engineering study needed to determine mitigation options and costs to accomplish drainage improvement throughout Portland, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culvert east of Thompson Hill Road • Portland Police Department • Portland Senior Center • Old Marlborough Turnpike culverts • Rose Hill Road • Collins Hill Road • Sage Hollow Road • Cox Road, east section • Main Street near intersection with Williams Street • Drainage system at YMCA Camp Ingersoll • 4 Freestone Avenue • 5 Edwards Road • Watercourse between Williams Street and Main Street • Watercourse between High School detention basin and Redberry Lane • 314 Main Street- Brown Intermediate School • Watercourse between Scenic Drive and Main Street • Main Street from Middlesex Avenue to bridge approach • Strong's Avenue near Route 17A • Isinglass Hill Road Bridge on Hales Brook • Old Marlborough Turnpike/East Cotton Hill Road on Reservoir Brook • Culverts on Cox Road • Cox Road Bridge by Kelsey Pond • Penfield Hill Road by Cox Road • Rose Hill Bridge on Carr Brook • Riverview Street near Yankee Boat Yard • Riverview Street at Grove Street • Bartlett Street at Route 17 • Strickland Street at Route 17 • Indian Hill Avenue at FC#2 picnic grounds • Tryon Street on the Connecticut River 	<p>This list includes numerous vulnerabilities rather than representing only a list of concrete projects. Many of these involve private residences. See later discussion for details that may be relevant for the project pipeline. Town staff will review this list and tell CIRCA whether some of these can be combined into larger projects and which are located near critical infrastructure. A discussion of the downtown drainage challenges near the Police Department, senior center, and library occurred during this segment of the meeting; this discussion is presented after this table.</p>
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Activity #	Goal/Objective	Activity Description	Status Reported by Location Planning Team
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access Road to Coe Ave Sewer Pump Station • Route 17A between Indian Hill Avenue and Route 17 • Riverview Street • Extension Street 	
4	1-1	Ice Jam Planning Develop and implement a plan to prevent roads flooding throughout the town due to ice jams	This has not been a major concern recently. Occasionally ice will cause damage at the marinas. Ice jam planning in general might be better served at the COG level.
5	1-1, 3-1	Earthquake Planning Develop an Earthquake Recovery Plan to repair broken water and sewer lines, and building or road damage in the event of a large earthquake	No direct progress for earthquake planning, but incorporating other system/power redundancies will help recovery capacity for earthquakes as well.
6	1-1, 3-1	Wildfire Planning Develop and implement a wildfire protection plan	Portland works closely with DEEP to utilize their tracking system, but fire-fighting responsibilities typically fall to the town rather than the state (even in the state forest). Most of the Portland open space is quite green, and not as prone to burning.
7	2-1	Install Water Storage Tanks Install water storage tanks adjacent to state forest to ensure ample water supply during a large fire	Existing water sources are used to fill the tankers. The town has off-road vehicles with tanks (500 gallons) that can be brought into the woods to fight fires. Tankers can also be brought in from other towns. The old reservoir is at one end of the state forest and Kelsey Pond at another access point; these are reportedly good sources of water. A hydrant near the old reservoir is available and shuttles can be run from this area.
8	2-1	Mitigate Severe Repetitive Loss/Repetitive Loss Properties Research grant options to acquire Severe Repetitive Loss and Repetitive Loss properties and convert to open space and implement if possible.	No acquisition has occurred; landowners are not interested. In general, people enjoy living near the Connecticut River. Access is more of a concern here than direct damage to the properties.

Open Discussion:

- The high school is the main shelter and it has a generator for standby power.
- Flooding and Critical Infrastructure: The area behind the police station has experienced consistent flooding challenges that affect the police department and the senior center. The library is also in this area, although it has experienced a lesser degree of flood damage. This area has been delineated as a CIRCA Zone of Shared Risk.

- The senior center is sometimes used as a temporary and/or backup shelter. The library can be used as a cooling center.
- The police station has a generator.
- They've had consistent flood damage and insurance issues in this area, including damage in the senior center elevator shaft that was very expensive to fix.
- There has been some discussion of linking the library to the power from the senior center.
- Contributing factors here include an aged, undersized brownstone culvert that runs under a private residence at Freestone Avenue and backs up from Main Street, as well as topography that creates a bowl. When the parking lot floods, water runs down a tapered sidewalk and through double doors in the basement of the senior center. This damages the elevator and elevator mechanicals. There is a drain by these doors but when the water table is high enough the drain is ineffective.
- The Town's drainage system discharges to the DOT's drainage system along Route 17A. Engineering studies have been done in the past for this area, investigating the possibility of bringing the water out to the system farther north on Route 17A to be discharged elsewhere. Regardless of these solutions, stormwater still needs to be delivered and discharged to the DOT's system.
- This issue becomes especially pressing when a lot of rain falls straight down in a short time. Two to three inches of rain in a short duration is reportedly a problem.
- David described this potential opportunity area as similar to the City of Danbury's challenges along East Ditch and Main Street, which ultimately was advanced to the design phase under Resilient Connecticut 1.0. The Town of Portland may be interested in a resiliency project focused on this area.
- Town staff confirmed that the Scenic Drive area should be delineated as a CIRCA Zone of Shared Risk.
- The stream from the reservoir that runs along Old Marlborough Turnpike is flashy and affected by other sources of water such as an old cranberry bog.
- Sewer pumping stations on Riverview Avenue and Indian Hill Avenue were relocated to reduce flood risks.
- Extreme heat has not been a major concern for the town so far, and people seem able to cope using the existing resources.
- There is a van service that generally assists the elderly with medical services; this could be used to assist for improving access to the cooling centers if needed.
- Exchange Club Property / Fairgrounds Along CT River: Seasonal (spring) floods happen every year and significant erosion has occurred along the riverbank. The Exchange Club owns this property and the fair leases the property from the Exchange Club to serve as the fairgrounds. The property is becoming increasingly wet for a longer period of time each year. Beavers have also exacerbated the issue, especially along the watercourse adjacent to the barn. The fair has been looking for other properties to use in the future. When it rains, the water stays on the property, and in order to hold the fair there needs to be a long stretch of dry weather. Despite the private ownership, the property provides public access and recreational space.
- The past 3-4 years have become increasingly wet – larger volumes of water are falling at one time.

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 Portland ZSR layer.)

Town staff will review the list of drainage areas in HMP action item 3 to see if any concerns can be combined into larger projects or if any are close t