

## Middlefield Resilient Connecticut 2.0 Meeting

4/20/2022

1 pm, Held remotely

*Present: David Murphy (CIRCA), Mary Buchanan (CIRCA), Margot Burns (RiverCOG), James Irish (Middlefield Board of Selectmen), Robin Newton (Middlefield Town Planner), Jason Wickham (Middlefield Public Works)*

**Overview:** CIRCA met with the Town of Middlefield 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 Middlefield 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.

### **The town staff raised some initial concerns:**

- James voiced the concern that Middlefield is land-locked (i.e., not a coastal town) and may not hold much relevance for this conversation.
  - o David assured Middlefield town staff that Resilient CT is very much looking beyond the coastal towns, and in fact some of the projects from Resilient CT 1.0 are inland projects.
- Flooding and drought issues are linked to the Coginchaug River and its tributaries and culverts.
- Drought is a concern for farms.
- Town staff confirmed that the single access point to the lakeside community (currently depicted on the CIRCA map viewer as a Zone of Shared Risk) is a frequent flood concern because the road crosses two streams; this lakeside area should remain a CIRCA Zone of Shared Risk.
- One culvert that was not listed in the HMP, located on the west side of Lake Beseck, has since washed out twice in 2021 and once took out part of Lakeshore Drive. The damage from the T.S. Ida was worse than the prior storm. Repairs are in the six figures and the Town has not yet completed this work. This experience underscores the need for culvert action.

### **Review of Hazard Mitigation Plan Actions:**

Activity #	Goal/Obj	Activity Description	Status
1	1-1	<b>Formalize Debris Management Plan.</b> Update and formalize Debris Management Plan for tree debris only, to recognize Powder Ridge Ski Area or the Strickland Farm as possible sites. Also include potential sites for hazardous debris, required for DEMHS approval	The plan has been formalized. The Strickland Farm site has been designated as the debris management area for trees, etc. Powder Ridge has been removed from consideration. State approval has been obtained.
2	2-1	<b>Culvert Repair and Drainage Studies.</b> Undersized culvert, low road/roadway floods, only access road to hundreds of homes on west side of Lake Beseck, tributary to Lake Beseck.  Conduct a drainage study, replace with larger culverts, raise road.	A culvert study was done across the entire town last summer (Jacobson), including this area. The study may have addressed only the 36" and greater diameter culverts. No action has yet been taken on this item, but the Lakeshore Drive damage (see list of above concerns) has highlighted the urgency of this need.
3	2-1	<b>Culvert Repair/Replacement.</b> Coordinate with CT DOT to address undersized culvert, low road/roadway floods, Ellen Doyle Brook. Drainage study. replace with larger culverts.	No progress. The culvert study mentioned in the item above was for town-owned roads with 36-inch-and-above culverts, so state-owned roads were not included.
4	2-1	<b>Town-wide Culvert Study.</b> Complete scheduled town-wide culvert survey to identify undersized culverts and other requiring replacement to reduce flood damages and hazardous conditions.	This study is complete (see previous two items).
5	1-1	<b>Back-up Power.</b> Provide technical assistance to gas station and deli toward identifying funding to install back up power generation.	The gas station/deli in question went out of business several years ago. Margot notes that other businesses may have this same need. David suggested that if this site might be used by another business in the future, resilience considerations could be incorporated.
6	1-1, 3-1	<b>Update Town Code to Include back-up power for gas stations.</b> Codify requirement that newly permitted / constructed gas stations must have backup power generation.	The code has not been updated. Robin is not sure the town regulations or ordinances can mandate this; suggests recommending rather than requiring.
7	1-1, 3-1	<b>Drought Management Plan.</b> Develop a drought management plan to address water conservation and the risk of drought and disease on commercial agriculture in Middlefield. Should reference updated State of CT Water Plan	No progress. A drought management ordinance was considered but there would be challenges with determining water usage and enforcement, since the town does not have a municipal water supply and water is drawn from private wells and agricultural ponds.

**Open Discussion:**

- Middlefield has a community center that is open to the public, which can be a warming center in the winter and a cooling center in the summer. They also have access to one of the school buildings (Memorial School) for a warming center and are working with the Region 13 school district to enhance the ability of the school to serve as a shelter or other emergency use. The school in Durham is the primary shelter for Middlefield.
- David asked how people can be transported to shelters and cooling centers. There is a dial-a-ride program, although it is not set up specifically for emergency circumstances; it is intended more for medical appointments and groceries.
- Middlefield has been actively addressing flooding through the culvert study. There are two remaining culverts in the northern part of town that are problematic to residences.
  - o One is on Cedar Street (the easternmost of the two culverts on Cedar Street.)
  - o The other is off Peters Lane on Woodland Heights. This is an issue during larger storms. A main contributing factor here is the blockages by debris blocking the pipe, leading to overflow over the road and erosion.
- Trees down in the Coginchaug River contribute to flooding issues, particularly flooding laterally in the Coginchaug region due to impeded water flow. Upgrading culverts will not fix this issue, and it will remain a challenge in the flatter parts of the floodplain.

CIRCA will continue thinking about how Middlefield's needs can fit into Resilient CT project pipeline. Middlefield is certainly interested in funding opportunities for infrastructure projects such as culvert replacements.

**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](mailto:mary.buchanan@uconn.edu) with any changes you'd like to see reflected in the Middlefield ZSR layer.)

Going forward, Robin Newton will be the point person for Middlefield and Resilient CT.