Suffield

Suffield is a rural community located along the Massachusetts border. It encompasses about 42.2 square miles and has a population of about 15,735. Suffield’s terrain rises from an elevation of 22 feet above sea level at the Connecticut River to its highest point of 691 feet above sea level on West Suffield Mountain. Suffield’s land area contributes to three watersheds: the Farmington River Watershed to the west, the Stony Brook Watershed centrally and the main stem of the Connecticut River Watershed to the east. The Connecticut River runs the length of the eastern boundary of Town. Other major watercourses include Clay, Deep, Fourmile, Mountain Brook, Muddy, Philo, Rawlins and Stony Brooks. State routes 75, 168, 187 and 190 provide major transportation routes through town. Agriculture, manufacture of ice cream, industrial gases, small tools, and warehousing are the principal industries. Part of Bradley International Airport and the North Central Connecticut Correctional facility are also located in Suffield.

Challenges

Suffield has approximately 5,469 housing units of which 27 units are located in flood hazard zones. There are also another 31 structures located in flood hazard zones. There are a few areas throughout the town prone to street flooding during heavy storm events. Ensuring proper maintenance of drainage structures is a challenge due to decreased staffing and budget levels. Maintaining accessibility throughout Town during storms can be a challenge given the streams, steep slopes, and narrow roads in some areas. Also, certain areas in the more rural West Suffield are more vulnerable to power outages because of the large number of trees near the roads. Suffield has worked to reduce its vulnerability to natural hazards. There has not been any construction or demolition since 2008 in floodplain or other vulnerable areas of Suffield. In 2008, the Town added Section V.K. Flood Damage Prevention to the Zoning Regulations.

The National Flood Insurance Program has paid five property damage claims in Suffield totaling $5,733 to-date. Suffield has no Repetitive Loss Property claims to-date. Although flooding is not as large a concern in Suffield as in some other communities, a significant flood event could result in much damage. CRCOG used FEMA’s Hazus-MH model to analyze the risks that the Town of Suffield might face from a major flood. The model estimates that economic losses to the town including residential and commercial damage and business interruptions due to a flood having a 1% chance of occurring any given year (the 100-year flood) would be over $24 million. The impacts of such a flood are summarized below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Damages from 100-Year Flood</th>
<th>Households Displaced</th>
<th>258</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People Needing Shelter</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buildings at Least Moderately Damaged</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Estimated Economic Losses</td>
<td></td>
<td>$24,030,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Residential Building &amp; Content Losses</td>
<td></td>
<td>$14,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Commercial, Industrial &amp; Other Building &amp; Content Losses</td>
<td>$9,400,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Business Interruption Losses</td>
<td></td>
<td>$40,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CRCOG also used FEMA’s Hazus-MH model to analyze the risks that the Town of Suffield might face from a hurricane as powerful as the 1938 hurricane. The model estimates that economic losses to the
town including residential and commercial damage and business interruptions due to such a Category 3 hurricane would be nearly $56 million. The impacts of such a storm are summarized below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Damages from a 1938 Strength Hurricane</th>
<th>Household Displaced</th>
<th>People Needing Shelter</th>
<th>Buildings at Least Moderately Damaged</th>
<th>Buildings Completely Damaged</th>
<th>Total Estimated Economic Losses</th>
<th>Total Residential Building Losses</th>
<th>Total Commercial, Industrial &amp; Other Building Losses</th>
<th>Total Business Interruption Losses</th>
<th>Total Debris Generated</th>
<th>Truckloads (at 25 tons/truck) of building debris</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>$56,400,000</td>
<td>$44,700,000</td>
<td>$5,800,000</td>
<td>$5,900,000</td>
<td>49,404 tons</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to information from the Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, the three federally declared natural disasters of 2011 resulted in total expenses to the municipality of nearly $1.5 million. These expenses include debris and snow removal, emergency protective measures and repairs to damaged infrastructure and buildings but do not include damages experienced by private citizens and businesses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2011 Disasters Damage Amounts Eligible for 75% Reimbursement Under FEMA Public Assistance Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applicant: Municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Suffield</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

In the 2008 Plan, Suffield identified the following three goals and associated objectives; however, no strategic actions were identified. For the 2014-2019 update, Suffield has articulated a number of strategic actions to pursue to meet its goals and objectives.

**GOAL: PROTECT LIFE AND PROPERTY AND MINIMIZE ECONOMIC LOSSES FROM WINTER STORMS**

**Objective 1:**
Improve the ability of public works and residents to prepare and respond to severe weather.

**Strategic Actions:**

1.1 Conduct periodic educational outreach to residents on storm readiness and property maintenance issues.

Lead: Emergency Management Director
Priority: Medium
Objective 2:
Reduce the amount of debris and loss of power from severe winter storms through preventative tree maintenance.
  • The town has had several thousand cubic yards of tree material removed along the roads in the past two years.

Strategic Action:

2.1 Secure contractual tree removal services and equipment prior to storm response and cleanup.
   Lead: Public Works, Tree Warden
   Priority: Medium
   Status: This is a new strategic action
   Potential Funding Sources: Annual operating budget

GOAL: PROTECT LIFE AND PROPERTY AND MINIMIZE ROAD BLOCKAGES FROM FLOODING

Objective 1:
Reduce the likelihood of flooding by improving existing natural and artificial drainage systems.

Strategic Actions:

1.1 Amend zoning regulations to require low impact development techniques in new development.
   Lead: Planning and Zoning
   Priority: Medium
   Status: This is a new strategic action
   Potential Funding Sources: Annual operating budget
   Timeframe: Expected to be completed by end of 2014

1.2 Preemptively clean debris out of select drainage structures before and during heavy storm events.
   Lead: Highway Foreman
   Priority: Medium
   Status: This is a new strategic action. (Practice will be initiated in 2014 and carried out throughout the 2014-2019 plan period.)
   Potential Funding Sources: Annual operating budget
   Timeframe: 2014-2019
Objective 2:
Reduce flood threats to existing properties.

Strategic Actions:

2.1 Encourage property owners to refrain from dumping debris into stream channels and drainage culverts.
   Lead: Planning and Zoning, Conservation Commission
   Priority: Medium
   Status: This is a new strategic action
   Potential Funding Sources: Annual operating budget

2.2 Conduct a study to identify the worst areas of surface flooding and develop methods to alleviate the problem areas.
   Lead: Town Engineer
   Priority: Medium
   Status: This is a new strategic action
   Potential Funding Sources: Capital Improvement Funds
   Timeframe: 2015-2016

Objective 3:
Improve maintenance of waterways and structures.

Strategic Action:

3.1 Develop inspection program for culverts and other stormwater management structures.
   Lead: Public Works Director, Highway Foreman
   Priority: Medium
   Status: This is a new strategic action
   Potential Funding Sources: Annual operating budget
   Timeframe: Expect to complete first round of inspections in 2014

GOAL: PROTECT LIFE AND PROPERTY AND MINIMIZE ELECTRICAL DISRUPTIONS FROM TORNADO/HIGH WINDS

Objective 1:
Reduce the amount of debris and loss of power from severe storms through preventative tree maintenance.
Strategic Action:

1.1 Secure contractual tree removal services and equipment prior to storm response and cleanup.

   Lead: Public Works, Tree Warden
   Priority: Medium
   Status: This is a new strategic action
   Potential Funding Sources: Annual operating budget
Map 56: Suffield Population Density, Dams and Flood Zones
Map 57: Suffield Flood Plains, Repetitive Loss Areas, Dams and Important Facilities