Wethersfield

Wethersfield is located in the south-central portion of the Capitol Region. It encompasses a land area of 12.4 square miles and has a 2010 population of approximately 26,668. Wethersfield’s land area contributes primarily to the main stem of the Connecticut River Watershed, although the northeast corner drains to the Park River Watershed. The Connecticut River flows along the eastern boundary. Other watercourses include Beaver, Folly, Two Stone, Collier and Goff Brooks. Wethersfield has several major transportation routes that run through town and intersect within its borders. These include Interstate 91 and State routes 3, 5/15, 99, 175, 287, and 314. Principal industries include professional offices, restaurants, retail, Kell-Strom, printing, several medical offices, and numerous state offices including Connecticut Departments of Corrections, Judicial, Labor Department and Motor Vehicles.

Challenges

Flooding is a major concern in Wethersfield. Thirty percent of the land area of the Town lies within the 100-year floodplain. Much of this area is within the Connecticut River’s flood plain and is zoned for agricultural use. The Agricultural (AG) Zone limits permitted uses to those normally associated with farming, open space and municipal recreation. A limited number of other uses are allowed by special permit only in this zone. Other floodplain areas in the Town are generally associated with watercourses such as Folly, Beaver, Cemetery and Goff Brooks. The Town has initiated and completed a number of drainage improvements to address localized flooding and continues to address problem areas primarily through the capital improvements program which is reconsidered annually in the budget process. Since the adoption of the 2008 Plan, the Town has not permitted any new homes within the 100 year floodplain. Applications for construction of minor improvements such as decks or lot grading have been permitted contingent on no loss of flood storage.

The National Flood Insurance Program has paid 66 property damage claims in Wethersfield totaling $340,703 to-date. Also, nine Repetitive Loss Property claims on four properties in Wethersfield have been paid to-date totaling $27,375. CRCOG used FEMA’s Hazus-MH model to analyze the risks that the Town of Wethersfield might face from flooding. 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 nearly $21 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>238</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People Needing Shelter</td>
<td>518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Buildings at Least Moderately Damaged</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected Damage to Essential Facilities</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Estimated Economic Losses</td>
<td>$20,960,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Residential Building &amp; Content Losses</td>
<td>$7,280,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Commercial, Industrial &amp; Other Building &amp; Content Losses</td>
<td>$13,560,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Business Interruption Losses</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The impacts of hurricanes, tropical storms, and winter storms are also a concern for the Town. 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 and local and private nonprofit agencies of $1,638,804. 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>Applicant: Municipality and Other (i.e., Fire Districts, Schools, Private Non-Profit Agencies)</th>
<th>100% of Amount Eligible for 75% Reimbursement</th>
<th>Total Damages Eligible for Public Assistance Due to 2011 Disasters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town of Wethersfield</td>
<td>$114,269.56</td>
<td>$152,522.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wethersfield Other</td>
<td>$4,222.19</td>
<td>$2,120.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wethersfield Total</td>
<td>$118,491.75</td>
<td>$154,643.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CRCOG also used FEMA’s Hazus-MH model to analyze the risks that the Town of Wethersfield 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 $154 million. The impacts of such a storm are summarized below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estimated Damages from a 1938 Strength Hurricane</th>
<th>Households Displaced</th>
<th>74</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People Needing Shelter</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings at Least Moderately Damaged</td>
<td>1,280</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings Completely Damaged</td>
<td>95</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Estimated Economic Losses</td>
<td>$154,000,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Residential Building Losses</td>
<td>$121,653,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Commercial, Industrial &amp; Other Building Losses</td>
<td>$15,500,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Business Interruption Losses</td>
<td>$16,680,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Debris Generated</td>
<td>30,500 tons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truckloads (at 25 tons/truck) of building debris</td>
<td>582</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

The Town of Wethersfield reviewed the Goals, Objectives and Strategies proposed in the 2008 Plan and determined that all previous goals, objectives and mitigation projects should remain. In addition, the Town proposed to initiate several additional strategic actions for the upcoming five years.

**GOAL: REDUCE LOSS OF LIFE, PROPERTY DAMAGE AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES AS A RESULT OF WINTER STORMS**

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

1.1 Replace/enlarge sand/salt storage facility.
   Lead: Public Works, Administration
   Priority: Medium
   Status: Funds for design and site preparation were identified in the 2013-14 CIP
   Potential Funding Sources: Local CIP funds
   Timeframe: Completion by 2016

1.2 Expand capacity for public works trucks and equipment storage. Because this is expected to be a long term, multi-year project, for the 2014-2019 Plan period, the action to be taken is to develop a scope of work for this project.
   Lead: Public Works, Administration
   Priority: Medium
   Status: Deferred. Not presently funded
   Potential Funding Sources: Local CIP budget, STEAP grants

1.3 Consider relocation of public works facility out of flood hazard area. Because this is expected to be a long term, multi-year project, for the 2014-2019 Plan period, the action to be taken is to develop a scope of work for this project.
   Lead: Public Works, Administration
   Priority: Medium
   Status: New Initiative. This project depends on property availability. Current town owned sites are inappropriate.
   Potential Funding Sources: Local bond funds
   Timeframe: 2014-2019

GOAL: MINIMIZE DAMAGE CAUSED BY HIGH WINDS

Objective 1:
Improve preventive tree maintenance in local right-of-way and on town properties.

Strategic Actions:

1.1 Conduct a tree inventory.
   This is expected to be a long term multi-year project.
   Lead: Public Works, Administration
   Priority: Medium/Low
   Status: 50% completed. Remaining work is in remote open space parcels and is lower priority.
   Potential Funding Sources: Operating budget using local DPW and GIS staff
1.2 Formulate maintenance plan based on inventory and integrate it into Public Works operating budget.
Lead: Public Works, Administration
Priority: Medium
Status: Facility database completed, using for roof and fleet maintenance. Maintenance plan is currently in use and updated annually. Need to develop reports for future forecasting.
Potential Funding Sources: Local CIP and operating budget
Timeframe: 2014-2019

Objective 2:
Minimize power outages and related impacts.

Strategic Actions:

2.1 Determine areas in Town with frequent outages.
Lead: Engineering, Administration
Priority: Medium
Status: Town Manager and EMD working with CL&P for enhanced tree trimming. Underway for past 2 years; 3 more to go.
Potential Funding Sources: Private CL&P funds
Timeframe: Completion estimated by 2017/18.

2.2 Work with Connecticut Light & Power for aggressive tree pruning program
Lead: Engineering, Administration, CL&P
Priority: Medium
Status: New Initiative. Town Manager and EMD working with CL&P for enhanced tree pruning. Underway for past 2 years; 3 more to go.
Potential Funding Sources: Private CL&P funds
Timeframe: Completion estimated by 2017/18.

2.3 Work with Connecticut Light & Power to relocate distribution underground in repetitive outage areas, or harden facilities remaining overhead. This is expected to be a long term multi-year project.
Lead: Engineering, Administration
Priority: Medium
Status: In the 2008 Plan, this effort focused on relocating transformers underground. It is recommended that the scope of this mitigation activity be broadened.
Potential Funding Sources: Private CL&P funds, STEAP
Timeframe: 2014-2019

2.4 Consider full time emergency power generators at all MDC sewage pump stations.
Lead: Engineering, MDC
Priority: Medium
Status: New Initiative. Several stations underway; remainder have been outfitted with plugs for portable generators.
Potential Funding Sources: MDC CIP funds
Timeframe: Completion estimated by 2017/18.

2.5 Consider full time emergency power generators at fuel tank distribution terminals. This is expected to be a long term multi-year project.
Lead: Engineering, Private vendors
Priority: Medium
Status: New Initiative
Potential Funding Sources: Town (for outreach to businesses), private fuel company resources (for generator purchase and installation)

2.6 Consider full time emergency power generators at all private cell service providers and at all shelters and back up shelters.
Lead: Engineering, Administration
Priority: Medium
Status: New Initiative. Certain vendors (Verizon) have generators at all sites. Others may be mandated due to new DEMHS regulations.
Potential Funding Sources: Cell service providers; Capital Improvements Program (General Fund or grant funding as available)
Timeframe: Completion estimated by 2017/18.

**GOAL: REDUCE LOSS OF LIFE, PROPERTY DAMAGE AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES AS A RESULT OF FLOODING**

**Objective 1:**
Implement remaining recommended measures from 1995 town-wide watershed management study and other priority drainage and infrastructure projects.

**Strategic Actions:**

1.1 Pursue opportunities to implement further dredging and drainage projects through the capital improvement program and any other available funding sources.
Lead: Engineering, Administration
Priority: Medium
Status: A number of flood study, culvert replacements, drainage and dredging projects and other structural projects have been identified in the Town’s Five –year Capital Improvements Program.
Potential Funding Sources: General Funds, bonding, grant funds as available
Timeframe: Fiscal years 2013/2014 – 2017/2018

1.2 Improve natural and artificial drainage areas that affect road flooding.
Lead: Engineering, Administration
Priority: Medium
Status: A number of culvert replacements, drainage and dredging projects and other structural projects have been identified in the Town’s Five-year Capital Improvements Program.

Potential Funding Sources: General Funds, bonding, grant funds as available

Timeframe: Fiscal years 2013/2014 – 2017/2018

1.3 Investigate making improvements to channel and underground conduit of Folly Brook with Army Corps of Engineers. Because this is expected to be a long term, multi-year project, for the 2014-2019 Plan period, the action to be taken is to develop a scope of work for the project.

Lead: Engineering, Administration

Priority: Medium

Status: Efforts were initiated; however the project has not been completed. It is recommended that this project be retained in the Plan Update and a more specific schedule for implementation be established.

Potential Funding Sources: Federal Army Corps of Engineers


1.4 Develop plan for relocating public works equipment in the event of flooding of Town Garage. Because this is expected to be a long term, multi-year project, for the 2014-2019 Plan period, the action to be taken is to develop a scope of work for the project.

Lead: Public Works

Priority: Medium

Status: Efforts were initiated; however the project has not been completed. It is recommended that this project be retained in the Plan Update and a more specific schedule for implementation be established.

Potential Funding Sources: Local operating budget


Objective 2:
Ensure safety of residents and businesses in all areas of Wethersfield during flood events.

Strategic Actions:

2.1 Educate residents on new flood zone maps via website, public access portals.

Lead: Engineering, Administration

Priority: Medium

Status: Efforts were initiated and will be expanded to include outreach through the Town’s website and other means of digital public access.

Potential Funding Sources: Annual Operating Budget- General Fund

Timeframe: 2014-2019

2.2 Explore participation in FEMA’s Community Rating System program to reduce flood insurance premiums for residents.

Lead: Planning, Engineering, Administration

Priority: Medium
2.3 Ensure that any future development within town Agricultural (AG) zone will not increase the risk of flooding and is built to withstand flooding.

**Lead:** Planning, Engineering, Building

**Priority:** Medium

**Status:** In the 2008 Plan, this strategy proposed to ensure development in the Interchange Zone/Elm Street area would not increase risk of flooding. This area is now within the Agricultural Zone. Much of the Agricultural Zone is coterminous with the floodplain and subject to the Town’s Floodplain Regulations. Any development activity here requires approval from the Inland Wetlands Agency. Proposed developments are reviewed as they are submitted.

**Potential Funding Sources:** Annual Operating Budget

**Timeframe:** 2014-2019

2.4 Actively participate in and monitor planning and implementation of MDC’s Clean Water Project.

**Lead:** Engineering, Administration, MDC

**Priority:** Medium

**Status:** Projects are ongoing over next 5 years. The Clean Water Project is a fifteen-year effort scheduled to be completed in 2021.

**Potential Funding Sources:** Annual Operating Budget - General Fund

**Timeframe:** 2014-2019

2.5 Evaluate impact of flooding on Historic District significant buildings and provide protective measures.

**Lead:** Engineering, Historic District Commission (HDC), Administration, Planning

**Priority:** Medium

**Status:** New Initiative

**Potential Funding Sources:** Small Cities grants, Historic preservation grants

**Timeframe:** Develop priority list based on GIS over next 2 years (2014-2016)

2.6 Investigate and train with City Hartford on operation of levee flood gates.

**Lead:** Public Works, Administration

**Priority:** Medium

**Status:** New Initiative. Town to participate in City exercise of the flood gates annually.

**Potential Funding Sources:** Annual Operating Budget - General Fund

**Timeframe:** 2014-2019: Annual exercise
Map 64: Wethersfield Population Density, Dams and Flood Zones
Map 65: Wethersfield Flood Plains, Repetitive Loss Areas, Dams and Important Facilities