Marion, MA



Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Workshop Summary of Findings

Submitted June 2018











Overview

The Town of Marion is a coastal community that relies on its seaside nature for preservation of its community character as well as its economy. The town has been impacted by severe storms in the past several years and anticipates that sea level rise and

future storms will require working together in both the short and long term to maintain the safety of its residents and infrastructure.

In October of 2017, the town completed a new Master Plan, which included for the first time a section on "Resilience to Climate Change." The three years of outreach that led to the plan highlighted the importance of nature-based solutions such as Low Impact Development (LID) and village-style, walkable, mixed use neighborhoods that preserve open space and benefit economic development and housing options for the community.



To help them consider and prioritize actions in town to be more climate resilient, the Town of Marion applied for and received a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to become a Certified Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Community. As part of this process, the Town hired the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) as their provider to guide them through the Community Resilience Building (CRB) process. SRPEDD then engaged its partners in the Resilient Taunton Watershed Network (RTWN), including The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Manomet, the Massachusetts Audubon Society, and the Environmental



Protection Agency (EPA).. The CRB workshops took place on two consecutive Wednesdays, May 23 and 30, 2018 at the Marion Town Music Hall.

Stakeholders from Marion were present as workshop participants, including representatives from the Sippican Land Trust, Police Department, Fire

Department/EMTs, Planning Board, Building Department, Burr Brothers Boats, Coastal Zone Management, and other residents. Attendees were divided into two distinct groups that remained consistent in both workshops.

Each group identified social, environmental, and infrastructural features in Marion visually with a map (see Appendix A), and verbally on a matrix (see Appendix A). Each feature is related to hazards that the town is concerned about and whether it was considered vulnerable to those hazards or a strength that helps Marion mitigate them. Each item listed on a group's matrix is numbered (Appendix B), and corresponds to a numbered dot on the group's map. Three colors used on the map visually represent the different feature categories of infrastructural (red), environmental (green), and social (blue).

Through facilitated discussion, workshop attendees:

- Defined top local natural and climate-related hazards of concern;
- Identified existing and future strengths and vulnerabilities;
- Developed prioritized actions for the community;
- Identified immediate opportunities to collaboratively advance actions to increase resilience.

Top Hazards

Participants discussed past hazards they've experienced, including:

- Coastal flooding
- Extreme winter storms
- Extreme heat and hurricanes in summer
- Stormwater management issues and flooding
- Septic leaching

Stakeholders agreed upon the current top four natural hazards to their community as:

- Sea Level Rise/Coastal Flooding
- Extreme Precipitation
- Wind
- Extreme Temperature



The harbor in Marion, just one area on the coast vulnerable to sea level rise

Sea level rise and coastal flooding can severely impact the town's built and natural infrastructure. Marion is in a low-lying, coastal watershed with much of its downtown located in a flood zone that is densely developed. Wastewater is handled, for about half of the town, through a municipal wastewater treatment plant, with pump stations located throughout the town, and almost all at low elevation. The remainder of the town's wastewater is managed by onsite septic systems. Saturated soil during coastal flooding

puts septic systems at risk of leaching, and contaminating the surrounding environment. Beaches and marshes act as barriers to the full impacts of storms, but many are shrinking in area. Erosion from storms is decreasing beach area, and sea level rise has a similar effect on salt marshes. Development along the shoreline prevents these ecosystems from migrating inland and adapting to these hazards, which in turn decreases their mitigation services to the town.

Extreme precipitation impacts public health and built infrastructure. Similar to concerns about coastal flooding, extreme precipitation also threatens the integrity of Marion's public wastewater system through inflow and infiltration, and potential inundation of the pump stations resulting in mechanical failure. Individual septic systems may also be functionally compromised by stormwater inundation. Extreme precipitation also impacts the ability of aging infrastructure (primarily culverts) to adequately convey stormwater; one resident cited 3.5 feet of water flooding the basement of town hall during Hurricane Bob. Flooding from stormwater, and coastal floods alike, have damaged private homes and municipal property. Many culverts in town do not have the capacity for the volume of water received currently and often get backed up (i.e. culvert at Hathaway Pond, culvert near Creek Road pump station). This will be especially difficult moving forward as more extreme and more frequent precipitation is expected.

Wind events have impacted Marion primarily by blowing trees down during storms (primarily pines). Old growth pine trees are a staple of the local landscape and surround many main roads. With shallow root systems that prefer wet soil, concentrated (heavier) foliage toward the top of the tree, and exposure to the full force of strong wind when at the edge of an open road, pines are especially vulnerable to damage. Evacuation routes for residents in the high coastal risk areas (Appendix A) and access paths for first responders to reach residents in need are limited during storms, and road obstruction by fallen trees contributes to the risk of isolation. One participant described being isolated on Dexter Street earlier this year, the result of a fallen tree, with limited communication during a storm. Another town official was trapped on Route 6 in northeast Marion during a storm, and cites Delano Road as another at-risk area. Participants were also concerned about the options for those on the east side of town, especially along Point Road which is the main path for evacuation in that area. Fallen trees also damage above-ground utility lines. Communications and internet access have been repeatedly compromised during storms, which increases risks to residents and first responders. Sections of town have experienced power outages spanning from one day to over one week in the aftermath of utility line damages.

Extreme temperatures refer to higher temperatures on the hottest days of the year, and higher average temperatures overall. This increased heat has impacts on the health and safety of yulnerable populations.

Population is aging

impacts on the health and safety of vulnerable populations (elderly, low income), and changes the life cycles of insect

36% of Marion is 65+

populations. Invasive insects like Gypsy Moths become more difficult to manage, because extreme weather can vary their time of hatching and reproducing. These insects can degrade forest health, making a greater number of trees weaker/more vulnerable to damage in storms. Tick populations have also been increasing, and hotter average temperatures with longer summer season means more opportunity for ticks to interact with people. Increasing temperature also creates a positive feedback for organisms that thrive in nitrified waterways, which contributes to water quality degradation.

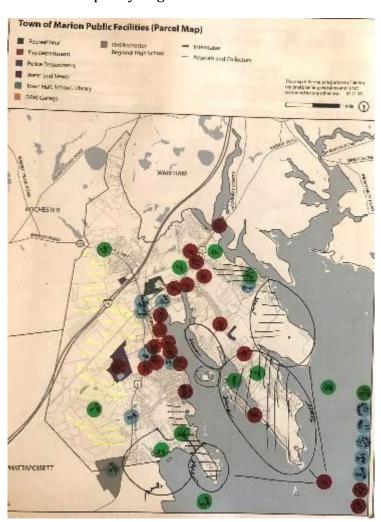
Areas of Concern

Several locations in town were identified as vulnerable, many of which were unsurprisingly along the coast. Groups noted that at different times of the year, different locations were vulnerable to storms - nor'easters in the winter (NE Marion, especially West County Rd and Bullivant Farm Rd) and hurricanes or tropical storms in the summer (SW Marion, especially Route 6 and Aucoot Cove area). Flooding was identified as an issue throughout the town, with some specific estimates of frequency and susceptibility in Appendix A. Prioritization (high, medium, low) and time anticipated to take each action is indicated in the digitized matrices (Appendix C)

Infrastructure

A number of infrastructural features – both green and grey – were highlighted in the workshops, including:

- Private septic systems are vulnerable due to the high water table
- Waterfront homes inundated by storms and coastal flooding
- Downtown buildings susceptible to sea level rise and strong storms



A marked up map from one group at the workshop noting several vulnerable locations along the coast. Red dots indicate infrastructural features, blue social, and green environmental.

- o Municipal: Town House, Sippican School, Building Department, Music Hall
- o Taber Academy
- All pump stations are in flood zones and identified as vulnerable
 - o Creek Road, Silver Shell Beach, Front Street, Bullivant Farm Road/River Road

- Public Schools, which act as shelters currently
- Marshes in the south west part of town are disappearing from sea level rise and storms
- Forested streets susceptible to blown down
 - Dexter Beach
 - o Point Road
 - o Converse Road

Planning for Communications, Sheltering, and Evacuating

Communications and evacuation plans were a top area of concern for the community. The generator at the Marion Department of Public Works (DPW) Repeater site was a specific site that was identified as being critical for communication. During storms January 2017-March 2018 and in previous years, the repeater became non-operational during emergencies where first responders needed to communicate. Radio communication is crucial for an efficient emergency response team,

As storms increase, evacuations may also become more common. Participants discussed the need to create an evacuation plan, which was not addressed in Master Plan. This can build from the existing emergency response plan. Specifically, the Town of Marion would like to:

- Plan for when trees obscure roads
- Increase capacity via staff and/or volunteers at shelters
- Ensure backup power at shelters
- Increase number of shelters available to residents

Similarly, those that shelter in place will also need accommodations. The Town would like to increase:

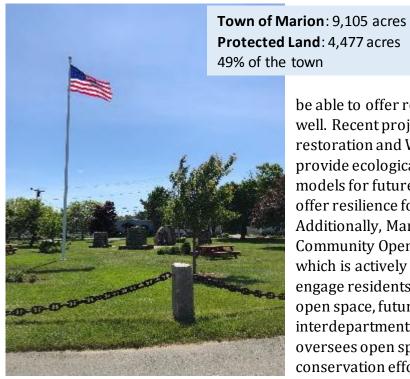
- Ability of shelters to accommodate residents for:
 - o The amount of time shelter is needed more than 24 hours
 - o The volume of residents who need shelter in Marion and regionally
- Accessibility of shelters to vulnerable populations, especially those in
 - Marconi Village
 - o Little Neck Village
 - o Delano

Finally, stakeholders noted that an updated Hazard Mitigation Plan is critical for both emergency responders and residents to accompany the Master Plan and their MVP program.

Current Strengths and Assets:

The community's willingness to educate themselves and have these types of planning dialogues is a sure strength in Marion. Their recently completed Master Plan and the current work to update their Open Space plan are also strengths. Willingness to initiate/engage in regional planning is also a strength.

The town's land use and number of local environmental resources provide another strength to the community. Currently, 49% of the town's acreage is protected (of which 16% is afforded temporary protection), most of it being located in western Marion. There are a



number of marshes that provide mitigation from storm impacts, such as Aucoot Cove, which may

be able to offer room for marsh migration as well. Recent projects such as Bud Island restoration and Washburn Park/Beaton Bog provide ecological services that may serve as models for future nature-based solutions that offer resilience for all four hazards identified. Additionally, Marion already has a Stewards of Community Open Space Committee (SoCOS), which is actively creating an education plan to engage residents on the multiple benefits of open space, future planning for resilience; interdepartmental partnership at the local level, oversees open space entities to coordinate conservation efforts.

Other strengths range from new infrastructure to social capacity and volunteer engagement with opportunities for even more improvement:

- New fire station that increases emergency response capacity
- Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteer in the evacuation shelter
- Stone Estates area, Kittansett Point offer marshland potential and the ecosystem services that could be maintained if the adverse impacts of hazards on this space is mitigated
- Waterfront infrastructure/businesses provide an opportunity to pool resources to study the impacts of sea level rise in that part of town
- Spring Street Town House, Schools, and Library are social and economic assets to the town (but are also in an area vulnerable to extreme storm or stormwater flooding)
- Sippican School is used as a short term shelter as recently as March 2018 and is currently run by volunteers from MRC

 Young people from Mattapoisett, Marion, and Rochester build relationships through attending Old Rochester Regional High School together; this provides an opportunity to use physical and social infrastructure as part of a long term shelter plan to benefit all three towns

Top Recommendations to Improve Resilience

Each of the two small groups identified their top 3-4 actions with their facilitator, then those were discussed as a whole group. Interestingly, both groups had nearly identical top three priorities, with one group adding the Forest Management Plan, which the other group had also discussed and wanted to include in their top recommended actions:



Enhance Communication systems

- Purchase generator to install at DPW Repeater site
- Hire an Information Technology support person either full or part time to manage more robust tech/communication systems
- Invest in an alert system for residents that can call and/or text residents of any town-wide happening, including road closures, detours, evacuation routes, etc.
- Purchase and install battery backup at Point Road Repeater Site

Elevate Pump Stations

 Assess existing pump stations for elevation and create a plan to elevate to make public water system more resilient to hazards like sea level rise and flooding

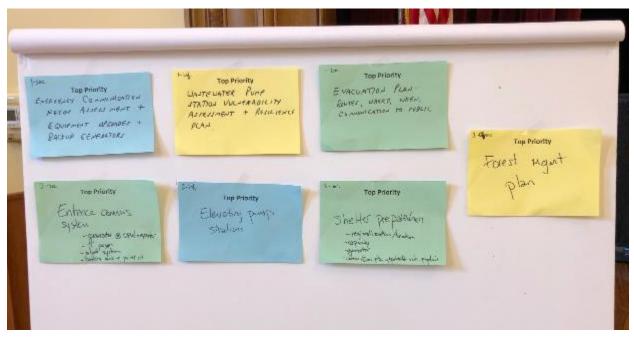
Ensure Shelter Preparedness and Evacuation Planning

- Plan that identifies where and when to evacuate and where and when to shelter
- Work with regional partners to create sheltering plan that addresses capacity and needs currently and into future
- Ensure shelters have generators for heating/cooling and charging necessary electronics
- Create communication and evacuation plan with private vulnerable group homes to understand evacuation and/or sheltering measures

Create Forest Management Plan

• Directly ties into evacuation and shelter access related to roads that experience tree blowdown

 Plan that prioritizes these roads to prevent damage from wind events while making land and soil more resilient



Top row of priorities are from group 1; the bottom row and to the right are from group 2. The priorities are surprisingly aligned.

In making these recommendations, this cohort was unique in its ability to cover almost all of the same points while in two separate groups for discussion. There was a remarkable amount of unity in perspective, and knowledge of environmental systems/vulnerabilities shared by participants, that seemed to go beyond their individual jobs and experiences. By the end of the workshops, both groups agreed on four priority next steps (above).

CRB Workshop Participants

Norman Hills, Marion Planning Board

Brian Jackvony, Marion Fire/EMS

Scott Shippey, Building Dept

Eileen Marum, Marion Planning Board

James Arruda, Resident

Jim Bride, Sippican Land Trust

Jean Mahor, Resident

Paul Dawson, Resident/Town Administrator

Tucker Buur, Burr Brothers Boats

Jennifer Francis, EMC

Gregg Nourjian, Resident

Gil Hilario, Marion Planning Board/Town Planner

Dave Janik, MA Coastal Zone Management/Resident

Isaac Perry, Marion Harbormaster

David Bramley, Resident

Shaun Coronier, Marion Town Music Hall

John Henry, DPW Superintendent

Citation

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CRB Workshop Project Team

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Town of Marion, Isaac Perry, Harbor Master/Core Team Member

Town of Marion, John B. Garcia, Chief of Police/Core Team Member

Town of Marion, Brian Jackvony, Fire Chief/Core Team Member

Town of Marion, John Henry, DPW Superintendent/Core Team Member

Town of Marion, Scott Shippey, Building Commissioner/Core Team Member

SRPEDD, Bill Napolitano, Facilitator

Mass Audubon, Stefanie Covino, Facilitator

The Nature Conservancy, Sara Burns, Scribe

EPA, Trish Garrigan, Scribe

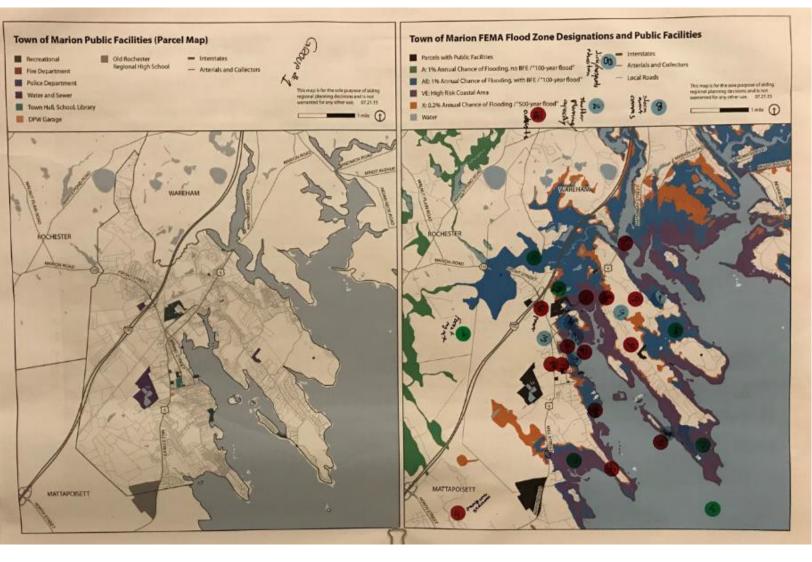
Mass Audubon, Daniel Brown, Scribe

Mass Audubon, Ariel Maiorano, Scribe

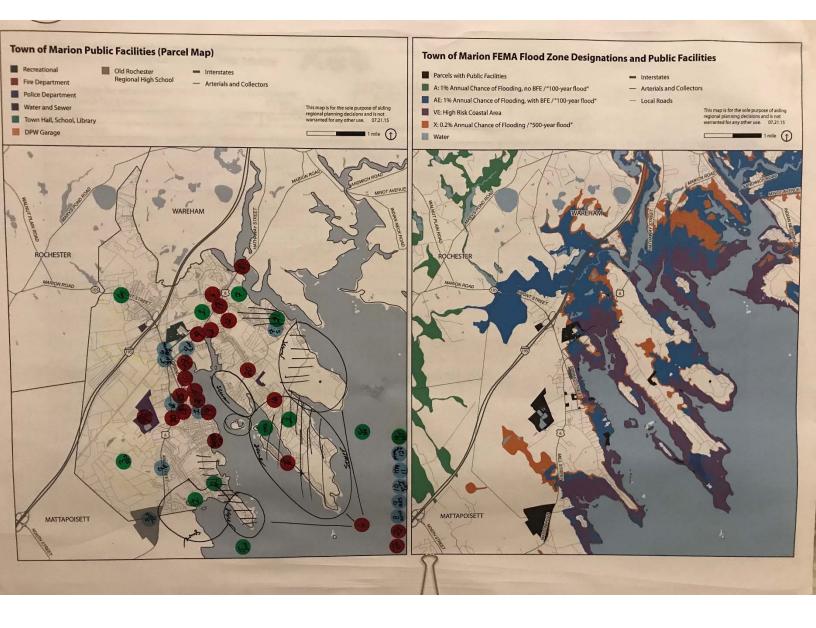
Acknowledgements

The Marion Core Team and Facilitation Team would like to thank the following for their contributions to the MVP Workshop process: Marion Music Hall for providing a wonderful meeting space, staff for setting up the workshop space, and tech support; the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, EEA, Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program for their funding support for these workshops, and; all of those who participated in the workshops and contributed to the plan resulting from these workshops.

Appendix A: Group 1 Map, pulled from the current Master Space Plan, marked with corresponding features numbered on matrices



Group 2 Map, pulled from the current Master Plan, marked with corresponding features numbered on matrices



Appendix B: Group CRB Matrices

Group 1 Environmental Feature Matrix

-M-L priority for action over the Short or = Vulnerability S = Strength	Long term (and			SLR	Wind	Extreme	ought, sea level rise, h	Priority
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Group 2 Environmental Feature Matrix

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Group 2 Social Feature Matrix

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Appendix C Digitized Feature Matrix, Group 1

				Sea Level		Future	Futus	Priority	Time
Features	Location	Ownership	v or S	Rise/ Coastal Flood- ing	Wind	Precipi- tation	Extreme Temp- eratures	HML (high, med, low)	Short Long On- going
Infrastructural									
Spring St. (Town House, Schools, Library)	off-Harbor west	Town	V/ S	-	_	idy of the presented so		M	
Front St. (Fire Station, Tabor, MH, Boat Yard)	Harbor west	Town	V			> elevate cat long-te	where rm managed	. н	
Point Rd. (Fire Station)	off-Harbor east	Town	V		to acco	its existing ount for clir	plan and nate change	M	
Pump Stations in vulnerable areas	Townwide	Town	V	Applied	for a Co	oastal Resil	iency Grant mp station;		
Utility (power & water)	Townwide	Town & Utility Companies	V/ S	1	r to com	_	th the utility a resiliency	М	
Back-up generators (need	Townwide	Town	V	Do an ir	ventor	y/needs up		. Н	
replacement) Evacuation Routes	Townwide	Town & State	V	1	esignati	X nning>ev on>impr X		Н	
Waterline- Planting Island Causeway		Town	V		icture ir	ency plan in case of los	•	L	
Delam Rd./Point/conver se		Town	V	I		tree health vithin ROW	along '; work with	L-M	

Sprauges Cove		Town	V	_	_	alysis unde unctioning X			S & L
Doggetts Brook culvert	105	State		X		Culvert gets like			
Benson Brook culvert	105	State				a dam in heavy			
County Rd short span bridge/Sippican River		Town	V			rain events; should be		M	
Grassy Bog culvert		Town				replaced; evaluatio n study needed			
2 or 3 culverts on Rte 6	6	State	V	(MassD0		nt culvert ar		М	
				X Work w	i+h huci	X ness/econd	amic		
Waterfront Infrastructure	Harbor	Town	V/ S	interest rise	s to loo	-	s of sea level	M-H	
Bridges over Weweantiv	Weweantic River	State	V	Monitor replacer appropr event, a	ment pri iately o	Н			
Environmental				X		X			
Stone Estates area (marshland migration potential)		Private	S						
Kittansitt Point (marshland migration potential)		Private	S						
Sippican River corridor (marshland migration)		Private/Pub lic	S						
Bird Island		Public	S/ V	2017 regets in t			good as it		L
			v	Х	Х	Х	X		

Washburn Park/Beaton Bog		Public/Priva te	S/ V	for expa		-based solu pportuniti		M	
l any beaton bog			•	X		X			
Aucoot Cove			S/ V		•	ected but narsh migra X	nas potential ation	M	
Forests and trees	Townwide		S/ V		assessi into acc y and a	gement plan ce provided nto a	M-H		
Societal									
Evacuation Plan for vulnerable neighborhoods	Townwide	Town/State	V						
Emergency shelter planning for disaster/cold/he at	Townwide & Regional	Town/Othe	S/ V	V Plan reg establis	hing cap				
Marconi Village	Elderly & Handicapp ed		V		ine requ k with t	o operate ore resilient	Н		
Littleneck Village	Elderly	Private	S	Determ	ine requ k with t	uirements t hem to mo	o operate ore resilient	Н	
East Marion (isolation as a result of extreme storm events)		Public/Priva te	V	Address		ue in our H	MP which is	Н	
Tabor Academy	Front St.	Private	V/ S			Emergenc practices	y Plan with	Н	
Boat ramps (social/recreatio nal)		Town	S/ V	Update conside	_	vel rise	L		
Communication pre & during extreme events			S	Develor for first			cy capabilities	Н	
Vector borne diseases			٧	Continu as need		ach efforts	and update	Н	

Digitized Feature Matrix, Group 2

				Sea				Priority	Time
Features	Location	Ownership	V or S	Level Rise & Coastal Flood- ing	Wind	Extreme Precipi- tation	Extreme Temp- eratures	HML (high, med, low)	Short Long On- going
Infrastructural									
Silver Shell Beach pump station	Lewis St	Municipal	V	• Elevate	e pump	stations (n	naybe more	Н	S/L
Front St. pump station	Front St	Municipal	V	inland? F • Implen		-	tions from	н	S/L
Creek Rd pump station	Creek Rd	Municipal	V	feasibilit if get \$)	y study	(applied; J	uly will hear	н	S/L
Harbor Master office	Front St	Municipal	V					М	S
Point Rd pump station	Point Rd	Municipal	V	x		Х		Н	S/L
Private septics	South	Private	V	Increase decrease		ze needs to	Н	0	
Planting Island causeway		Municipal	V	Explore t work wit		L	0		
Mario/Wareham bridge		State	V	N/A					
SW remediation center (Creek Rd)		Municipal (?)	V	Feasibilit XXX	y study	X		L	L
SW remediation center (Silver Shell)	#1	М	V	Feasibilit	y study	,			
Tabor Academy		Private	V		g and fe	_	an for dents, esp. if	н	S
Point Rd Fire Station				• Forest	manage	oward Rte ement plar can cut pin	n, including	М/Н	L/S/O
Town Hall		Municipal	V	Fiberlink station	betwee	en town ha	all and police	Н	S
WWTP		Municipal	V	• Reduce • Expand		to change	permit	Н	О

				X		XX			
Sprint St Fire				Relocate	to Rte	6 (west)			
Station		Municipal	V	Х		XX		М	L
Roads with blow downs (access)	Cross hatched area on map	Municipal	V	Forest manual regree	_	nent plan a ilities	ind	Н	O (Fore st Mgm t) L (Utilit ies)
Substation power		Eversource	V	N/A					
Energy	Through			Undergro	und ut	ilites			
system/power lines	out				XX				
Burr's and	_						nd Barden's		
Barden's fuel above storage	2 dots on map	Private	V	- Plan? Re	etreat?	Elevate?		М	S
tanks	On map			XX		XX			
Cell tower and [?] communication		Verizon (Private/Munic ipal?)	V	Generat or at cell town with autostar t	XX			н	S
	Frant Ct.			• Rt 6 - d		l t grates to	dacrassa		
Increasingly vulnerable roads	Front St; Spring St; Rte 6; Water St, Lewis St	Municipal	V	pine nee into TCTF • All - for	dles clo est mai	_	ncorporate plan	H (marsh)	0
Environmental									
Aucoot Marsh & 2 areas, Bullivant Farm	SW	Private	S/ V	need to e		ve/protect ?	, explore	L	О
Dunivant Farm	Dexter			X					
Trees	Beach, Point Rd, Convers e Rd	Private/Munici pal	s/ V	Forest ma	anagem	nent plans		Н	S/O
Protected open space	West Marion	Municipal/Priv ate	S	Working	on OSP	, support p	olan	L	0

(49% protected highlight) Northeast facing coast (winter)					X				
Southwest facing coast (summer)				xxx	Х				
Sippican River & Hathaway Pond		Private	V		-	sewering I nundation X	to septics		
Hershman property (deforested, erosion, water quality issues)		Private	V			with Cons remediate	ervation	L	0
Meadow Island			S/ V	Commun owner X	ication	and moni	toring with	L	0
High water table			V	N/A					
Kitansett Marsh		Private	S/ V	Commun	ication	with own	er		
Societal									
Flood insurance rates & property	All (esp.	Private	V	population	ons re:	ion to vuln insurance nation with	rates;	Н	S
value	village)					rnally to m income de	ake up for crease for	M	О
Sippican School - sheltering (short-term		Municipal	S/	Add ge Add em		rs cy access o	n Rt 6		S
shelter and limited access in/out)		Municipal	V		Х			Н	3
ORR HS - regional		Marion, Mattapan,	S		R offici	al regional	sheltering - shelter?	Н	О
sheltering		Rochester		Part time emergen	_	ional share agers?	ed	М	S
Littleneck village - vulnerable population		Private	V	shelterin • Hit buil for requi	g) ding co ring ne	rs (reduce ode at state w/renovat rator capac	e - options ion to have	Н	s/o

				Work with private owners - Evacuation plan? Sheltering? Emergency plan - coordinate with town					
Sippican HCC healthcare		Private	٧						
Marconi village (affordable housing, apartment complex for seniors)		Private	V						
Group home	Delano Rd & Rt 6; Mill St	State; Private	V						
SoCos			S	Continue to support					0
MRC (medical reserve corp.) - running shelters, clinics		Collaboration	S	Continue to support					0
Wireless communication & alert system			V	 Natural gas generator @ repeater DPW & battery backup @ Point Rd Increase redundancy of internet access @ police station & hire IT (host externally, cloud-based to always have internet Explore "reserve 911"-type text communication 				Н	S
HMP - none yet		Municipal	٧	Support					0
Plymouth Power Plant (affects how? action? Communication ?)		Private	V	Increase communication - plan?				М	0