Section 4.0 – Listening Session

A listening session was held on Thursday, May 16, 2019 at the Amesbury Senior Community Center, from 7 pm – 8 pm (see invitation below). This session allowed members of the public to hear presentations about the Natural Resources Infrastructure Assessment project and to see the mapping products that were developed for Amesbury during this initiative. Community members were able to provide feedback to Amesbury leaders that can further inform the development of specific Nature Based Solutions for the Amesbury community. Ideas from the public were recorded on a flip board, and are noted in the table below:

Consider managing Lake Attitash water levels to create more flood storage capacity.

Amesbury should look for opportunities to collaborate with Merrimac about Lake Attitash. Merrimack just submitted an application for an MVP Planning Grant, so they are getting involved in the MVP process.



City of Amesbury Department of Energy & **Environmental Affairs** Thomas Barrasso.

Director

Community Resilience Building 📑 👑 🖗



Get on the right path to resilience today...

AMESBURY MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITIES PREPAREDNESS PUBLIC LISTENING SESSIONS:

ATTEND THE CITY OF AMESBURY MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITY PREPAREDNESS and NATURAL RESOURCES INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT LISTENING SESSIONS

WHEN: Thursday, May 16th, 6 pm - 8 pm WHERE: AMESBURY SENIOR COMMUNITY CENTER

> 68 Elm Street Amesbury, MA 01913

Questions? Call Tom Barrasso (978)388-8110 x314

MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITY PREPAREDNESS (MVP) LISTENING SESSION (6 PM - 7 PM): Come find out what your city has been doing to prepare for hazards resulting from our changing climate, such as: increased flooding due to severe storms and sea level rise, increased high heat and drought in the summer, and increased wind damage from storm events. Amesbury is in the process of achieving MVP certification, a pre-requisite for obtaining funding for state Action Grants that support community climate resiliency preparedness. The Amesbury MVP report will be available as of Monday, May 10th on the City of Amesbury's Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs website https://www.amesburyma.gov/energy-environment-affairs. Bring your questions and ideas!

NATURAL RESOURCES INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT LISTENING SESSION (7 PM - 8 PM): Immediately following the MVP Listening Session, a second listening session will be held. In support of the Amesbury MVP program, the city won a state grant to fund an assessment of natural resources within the city and opportunities to conserve, protect and restore ecological resources that provide flood storage, storm damage prevention, water quality improvement, pollution prevention, and fish and wildlife habitat. These services provided by wetlands, floodplains, forests and stream/river systems help protect Amesbury from the effects of climate change (heat, floods, storms). Come see the maps and results of the assessment and bring your questions and ideas. The Amesbury MVP report will be available as of Monday, May 6th, the Amesbury NRIA report will be available on the City of Amesbury's Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs website: https://www.amesburyma.gov/energy-environment-affairs.

Visit the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerabilities Preparedness Program website to learn more at:

https://www.mass.gov/municipal-vulnerability-preparedness-mvp-program



Invitation to MVP and Natural Resources Infrastructure Assessment Listening Sessions

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

AMESBURY CLIMATE RESILIENCY AND NATURAL RESOURCES MAPS

Resilient Sites for Conservation in the Eastern United States



Strongholds for Nature in a Changing Climate

Conserving the Stage: Climate change is creating an increasingly dynamic natural world by shifting species distributions and rearranging habitats. Consequently, conservationists need a way to identify important areas for protection that does not assume that the locations of existing plants and animals will stay the same. Rather than trying to protect diversity one species at a time, the key is to protect the different "stages" upon which the drama of nature unfolds. In the Eastern United States, these stages are based strongly on geology and consist of recognizable geophysical settings such as coastal sands, limestone valleys, granite summits, or silt floodplains, that each support a distinct set of species. Conserving a range of physical environments offers an approach to conservation that protects a diversity of plants and animals under both current and future climates.

Settings and Stages: The number of plants and animals in each state across the East is correlated with the number of geology types, the amount of limestone, the latitude, and range of elevation in the state. These geophysical factors form ecological regions across the landscape that support different species.



High Elevation Granite

High Elev. Limestone

High Elev. Mafic

Typical

geophysical

settings of the

Eastern United States



Low Elev. Sand

Low Elev. Sedimentary

Low Elev. Silt

Natural Strongholds: Lasting conservation depends on identifying and protecting places where the effects of climate change are buffered by the natural properties of the site. Conserving these places is vital to maintaining a diversity of species and natural processes regardless of changes in the climate.



Natural strongholds are places where the direct effects of climate change are moderated by **complex** topography and **connected** natural cover, and where the current landscape contains **high quality biodiversity** features. Natural Strongholds can serve as a bridge to grant safe passage into the future for thousands of species.

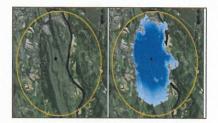
In these sites, species can find areas of suitable moisture and temperature within their local neighborhood. This allows resident species populations to remain strong and helps ensure that changes in the composition and structure of the communities will be more gradual.



GEOPHYSICAL SETTINGS are unique combinations of geology, elevation, and landforms.



COMPLEX LANDSCAPES create "micro-climates" that buffer change by providing species with a variety of local climates.



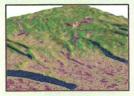
connected Landscapes offset the development, roads, and agriculture that can inhibit natural movements. Maintaining a connected area (BLUE REGION above) in which species can move ensures that the area can adapt to climate change.

Underlying data developed by The Nature Conservancy's Eastern Science Office with support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

View the report, papers, and full-sized maps at:

http://www.nature.ly/TNCResilience

A Complex and Connected Landscape



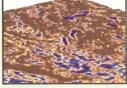


Complex Landscapes: are places that have an assortment of small, connected, local climates creating a range of temperature and moisture options for the resident species. In essence, complex topography and elevation gradients break the regional climate into a wide array of micro-climates.

Landforms

Landform Variety

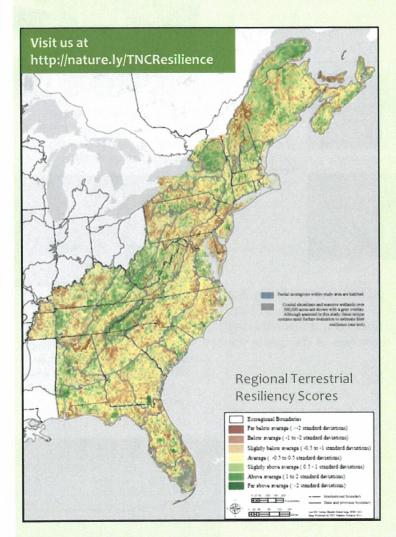




Connected Landscapes: are places that allow species to move and disperse, and processes like fire or water movement can occur unimpeded. This facilitates the adjustments necessary for the natural world to stay balanced with the climate. Permeable landscapes have an abundance of connected natural cover.

Elevation Range

Wetland Density



Resilient Sites: With a changing climate, many places may become degraded and lose species, but some places will retain high quality habitat and continue to support a diverse array of plants and animals. Sites that have both complex topography and connected land cover are places where conservation action is most likely to succeed in the long term.

Permanent conservation of the resilient areas should be prioritized to ensure they can continue to provide habitat for species.

Securing resilient sites safeguards natural benefits such as fresh drinking water and clean air for local communities now and into the future.

Resiliency Scores: The map shows areas that offer the greatest potential for species to adapt as the climate changes. A dark green color indicates that the area has high estimated resilience. Brown indicates areas vulnerable to climate change. The analysis estimates resiliency scores by each ecological region (gray lines) in the East.

Coastal shorelines and wetlands over 300,000 acres need further analysis.

Terrestrial Resilience Core Concepts

Resilient Site: An area of land with sufficient variability and microclimate options to enable species and ecosystems to persist in the face of climate change and which will maintain this ability over time.

Geophysical Settings: Broadly defined landscape types that contain a variety of plants, animals and natural habitats that occur in similar geologic environment (e.g. similar bedrock, soils and elevation zone). If conservation succeeds, each geophysical setting will support species and communities that thrive in conditions defined by its physical properties, although the species in the future may differ from those currently present. In this study, we defined geophysical settings by mapping and classifying combinations of geology and elevation.

Natural Stronghold: a resilient site that currently supports exemplary habitats, wildlife, or rare species, and may provide refuge for these elements as the climate changes.

Two Example Settings:



Coarse sand: Longleaf pine in Weymouth Woods SP, & Albert Herring.

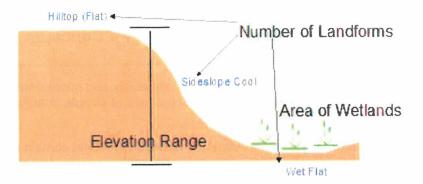


Sedimentary: Sandstone at the Altamaha Rocks, © Alan Cressler.

Resilience Score: A site's Resilience Score estimates its capacity to maintain species diversity and ecological function as the climate changes. The score is relative to all other sites with the same geophysical setting and is described on a relative basis as above or below average. For example, granite mountains were compared with other granite mountains, and coastal plain sands were compared with other coastal plain sands. Our goal was to identify the places most resilient to climate change for each type of setting. A site's final resilience score was determined by evaluating physical characteristics that foster resilience, particularly the site's landscape diversity and local connectedness.

Characteristics that Foster Resilience: A resilient site is one that offers many options to species and ecosystems. Such options, include topographic and elevation diversity that provide a range of habitat types and microclimates (landscape diversity), and minimal barriers that restrict adaptive movement of species or ecosystems (local connectedness).

Landscape Diversity: Refers to the microhabitats and climatic gradients available in one's immediate neighborhood. Topographic diversity buffers against climatic effects because the persistence of species in an area increases in landscapes with a wide variety of microclimates. In this study, we measure microclimates by counting the variety of landforms, measuring elevation range, and the density of wetlands in a 100 acre neighborhood around every point on the landscape.



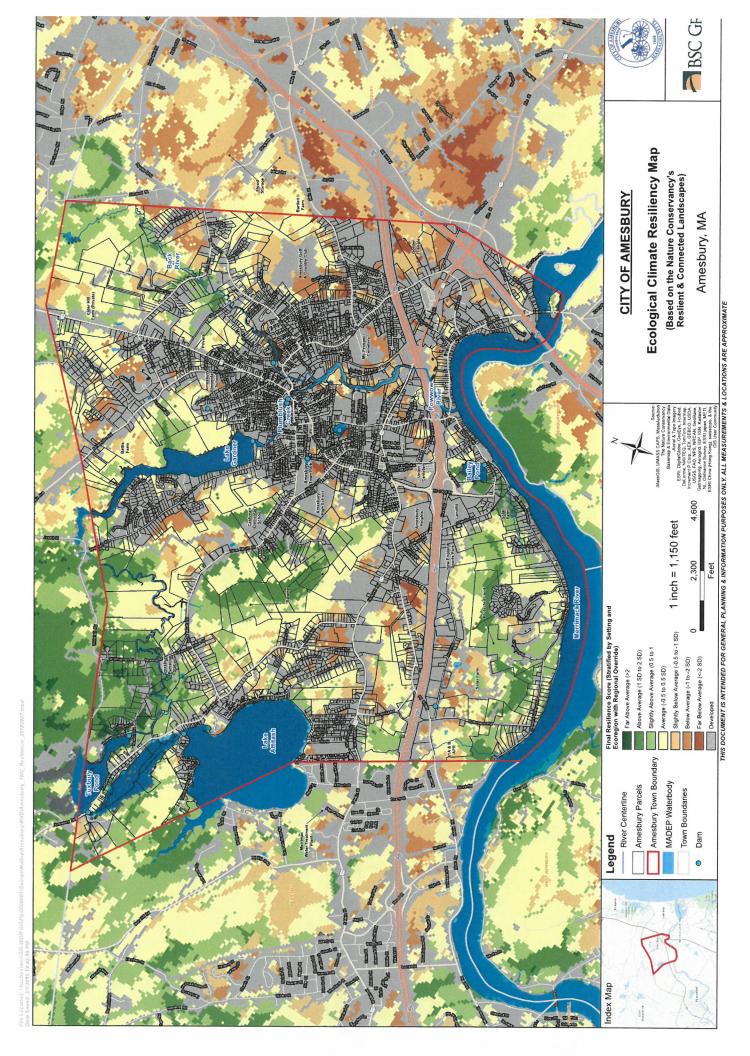
Local Connectedness: refers to the number of barriers and the degree of fragmentation within a landscape. A highly connected landscape promotes resilience by allowing species to move around the landscape and find suitable microclimates where they can persist. In this study, we measure local connectedness by measuring the amount of natural land cover and configuration of human-created barriers like major roads, developments, and agricultural land.

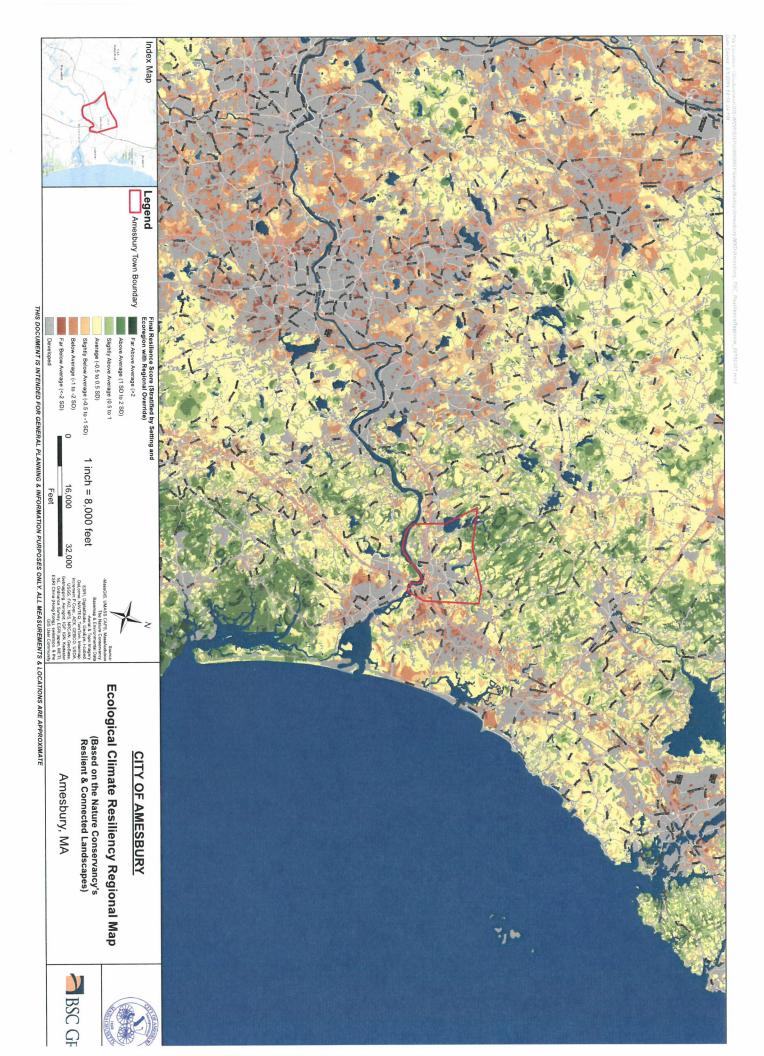


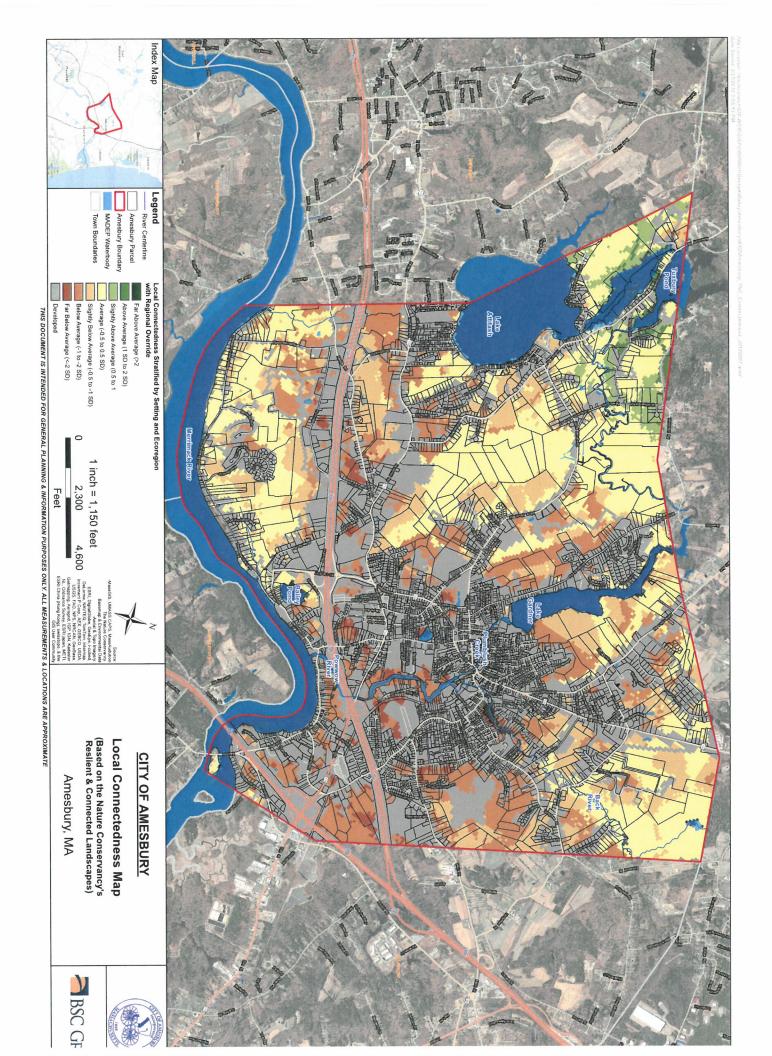
No barriers. High Local Connectivty

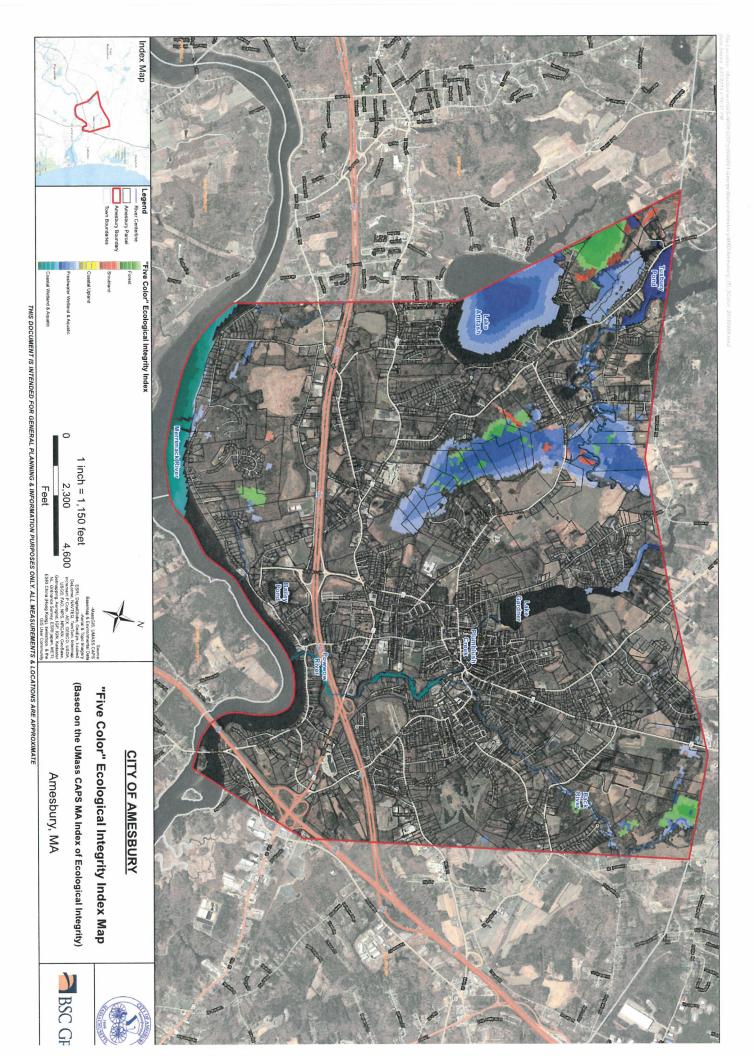
Riparian Climate Corridors: Riparian areas are the floodplains and zones along water bodies that serve as interfaces between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. With respect to climate change, riparian areas feature micro-climate refugia that are significantly cooler and more humid than immediately surrounding areas. Our objective was to identify intact riparian floodplain areas that serve as natural corridors to facilitate movement of plants and wildlife linearly, taking advantage of the cooler moister environment within these areas.

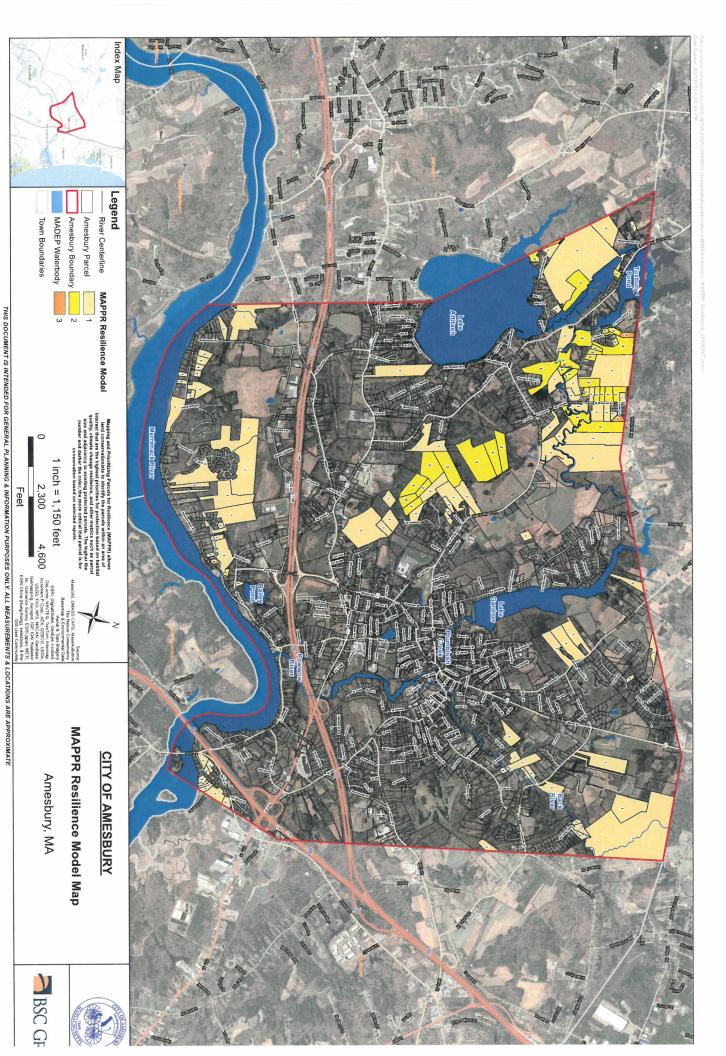
- 1. High Flow Riparian Corridors, largely within resilient land: These riparian corridors have high regional terrestrial permeability flow and have >75% of their land area within resilient land. They have a minimum size of 1,000 acres and are considered highly intact and resilient.
- 2. High Flow Riparian Corridors, largely outside resilient land: These riparian corridors have high regional terrestrial permeability flow, but are <75% within resilient land. They have a minimum size of 5,000 acres and touch at least 3 prioritized diversity features. They are considered more vulnerable given a significant portion of their area falls on non-resilient land.</p>

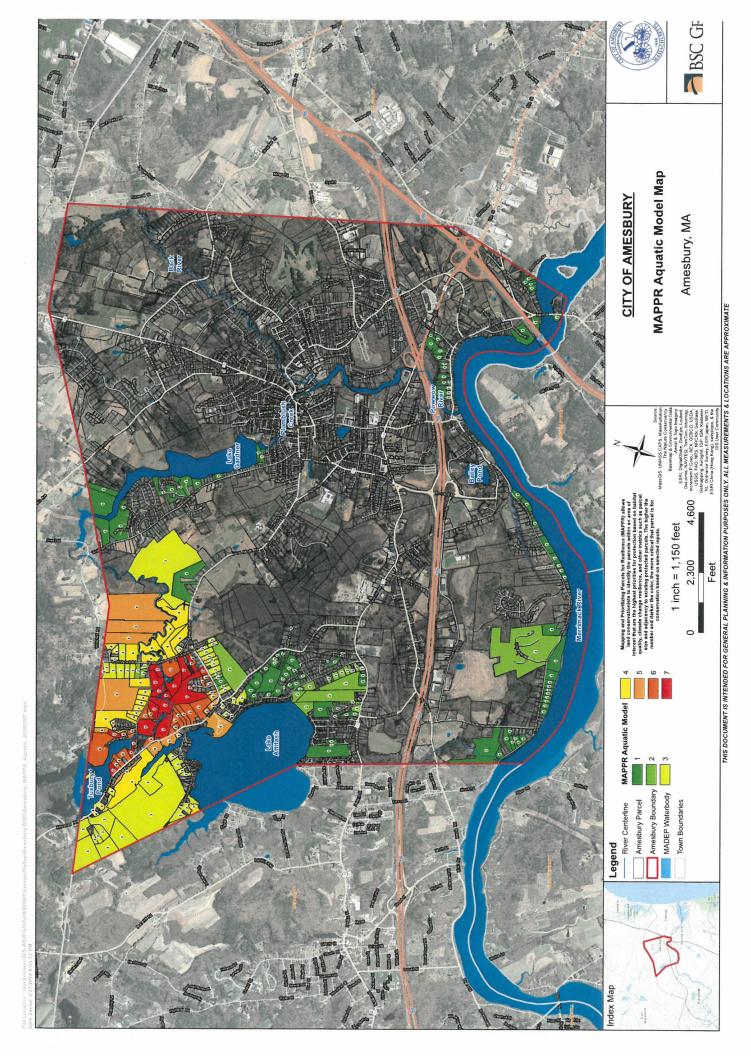


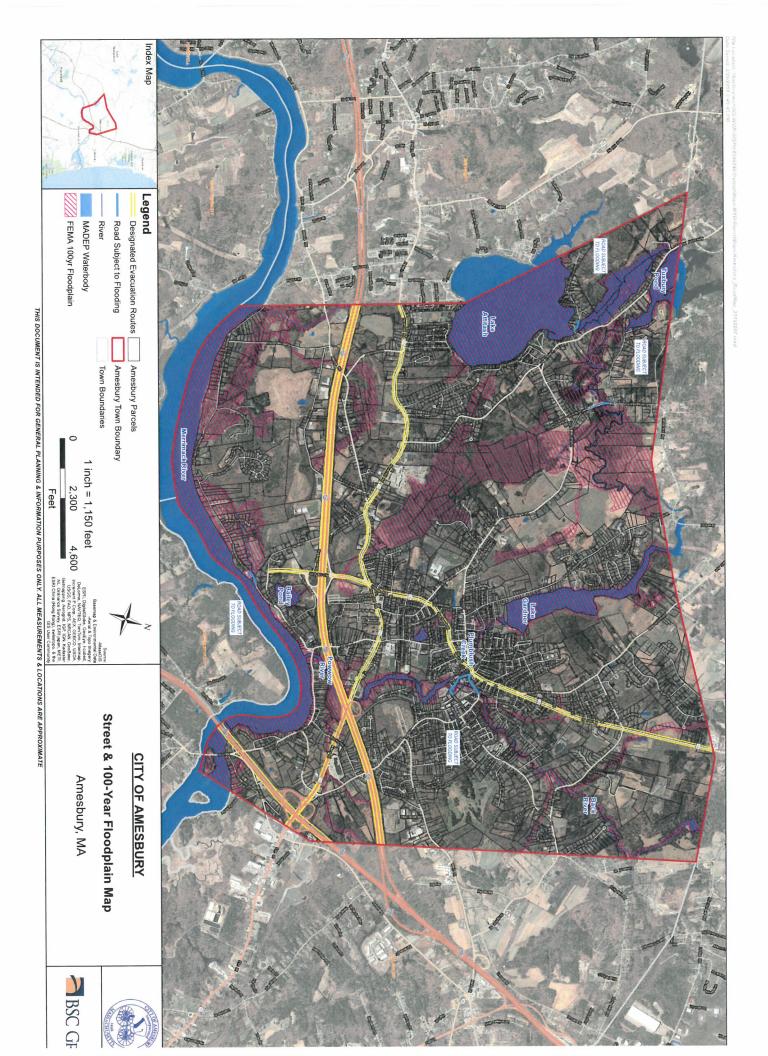


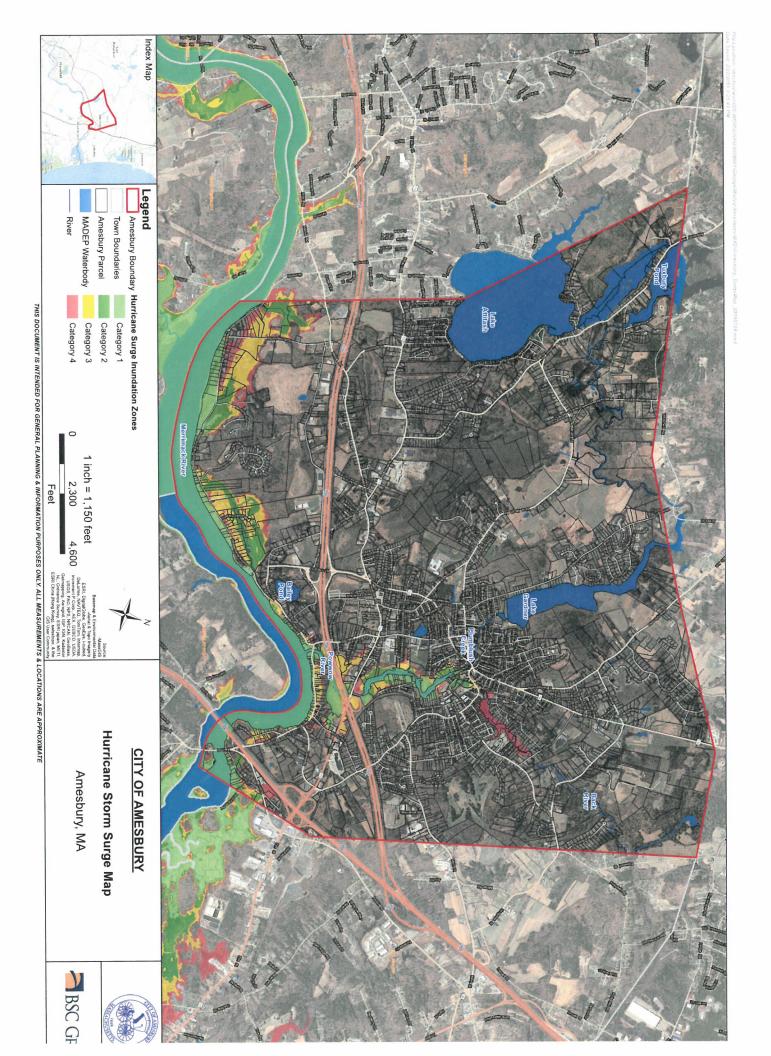


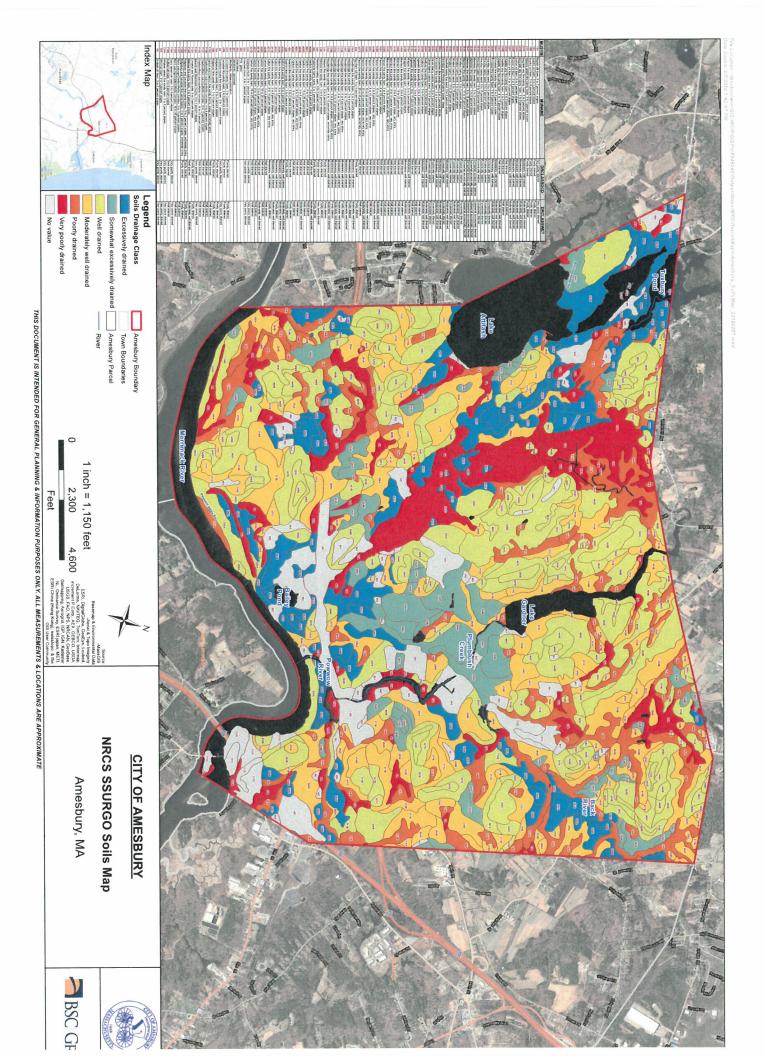












RIMMER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING, LLC 57 BOSTON ROAD NEWBURY, MA 01951

Invoice

Date	Invoice#	1
4/4/2019	1969	

Bill To

Conservation Commission
Town Hall
62 Friend Street
Amesbury, MA 01913

P.O. No.	Terms	Project
,	Net 30	8632.10 Global Prop

Quantity	Description	Rate	Serviced	Amount
2	Project Meeting	130.00	2/13/2019	260.00
1.5	Peer Review		2/27/2019	195.00
	revised plan, OOC	SERVICE SERVICES		175.00
	Peer Review	130.00	2/28/2019	260.00
	revised plan, OOC			200.00
2.5	Peer Review	130.00	3/1/2019	325.00
	revised plan, OOC			
1	Site Inspection	130.00	3/21/2019	130.00
	soil inspection			
	review OOC	130.00	3/25/2019	32.50
	review OOC	130.00	3/27/2019	130.00
	Tel. Consult.	130.00	3/29/2019	195.00
	Peer Review	130.00	4/1/2019	260.00
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2	Conservation Commission Hearing	130.00	4/1/2019	260.00
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RIMMER ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING, LLC 57 BOSTON ROAD NEWBURY, MA 01951

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Date	Invoice:#
4/4/2019	1969

Bill To				
Conservation Commission Town Hall 62 Friend Street Amesbury, MA 01913	2			

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	revised plan, OOC			1,53.00
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	revised plan, OOC			
2.5	Peer Review	130.00	3/1/2019	325.00
	revised plan, OOC			1
1	Site Inspection	130.00	3/21/2019	130.00
0.25	soil inspection review OOC	41		
	review OOC		3/25/2019	32.50
	Tel. Consult.	130.00		130.00
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APPENDIX B: NRIA TEAM MEETING MEMORANDA

MEMORANDUM



33 WALDO STREET, WORCESTER, MA 01608 - www.bscgroup.com TEL 508-792-4500 - 800-288-8123

То:	Tom Barrasso and John Lopez	Date:	December 17, 2018
From:	BSC Group	Proj. No.	89492.46
Re:	December 17, 2018 MVP Natural Resources Infrastructure	Assessment Mee	eting Outcome Summary

Meeting Attendees: Tom Barrasso (Director of Energy & Environmental Affairs), John Lopez (Conservation Agent), Robert Desmarais (DPW), Gillian Davies (BSC Group)

Purpose

- 1. To review existing natural resources information that the City of Amesbury has and that BSC has generated, and to identify information that should be provided to BSC for review;
- 2. To have an in-depth review and discussion of ecological climate resiliency mapping of the City of Amesbury (TNC Resilient Land and Audubon MAPPR mapping);
- 3. To review priority hazard locations in the city;
- 4. To review, with priority hazard locations in mind, existing natural resource infrastructure and opportunities for nature-based solutions that will support community and ecological climate resiliency.

A summary of discussion outcomes is provided below.

Outcomes

- 1. Existing Resources:
 - a. 2007 Hazard Mitigation Plan needs updating
 - b. Open Space Plan needs updating
 - c. Master Plan likely has not incorporated flooding issues
 - d. MVPC staff: Girard Witten (GIS mapping), Joe Cosgrove (environmental), Jim Terlizzi (traffic, etc.)
- 2. Discussion and review of maps: evaluation of large areas of open space
 - a. Woodsom Farms large city-owned property in upper watershed that drains to downtown area. Potential to identify a future project to do detailed analysis of opportunities to preserve and enhance flood storage capacity of wetlands and floodplains, while still accommodating city needs for building in upland areas. Planning for this property has not likely included assessment of flood storage ecosystem services.
 - b. Natural Resources Assessment should focus on horseshoe arc of land from Merrimac River to Woodsom Farms to Powwow River and the Lakes to the downtown area. Other open/less developed areas are largely privately owned or constrained for other reasons. Downtown area can be assessed for LID and Green Infrastructure opportunities. Could lead to proposal for more detailed studies & specific projects in the future.
- 3. Public outreach and education is needed (potential future project)
 - a. City leadership
 - b. Citizens and stakeholders
- 4. Regional planning and coordination is needed (potential future project)
 - a. Amesbury receives water from adjacent and upstream towns (Massachusetts and New Hampshire). Flood control planning could be coordinated on watershed/bi-state basis.

Next Steps

- b. Schedule January Core Team Meeting
- c. Schedule January Natural Resources Assessment Meeting with site visit to Woodsom Farms and downtown area.
- d. Amesbury provides documents in item #1 to BSC
- e. BSC coordinates with Amesbury to select Community Resilience Building meeting date.

f. Amesbury compiles contact information for invitees to the CRB meeting.

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