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# TOWN OF BLANDFORD, MA

*November 25, 2019*

## Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Community Resiliency Building Workshop



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## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS



**Prepared and Presented by**

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Pioneer Valley Planning Commission



This project and the following report were made possible through funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs' Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Grant Program.

Cover image courtesy of Robin Stevens.

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## OVERVIEW

The need to increase planning for and implementation of extreme weather resilience and adaptation activities is strikingly evident in the Pioneer Valley, and the Town of Blandford is taking note. No stranger to extreme weather events, Blandford's emergency response team and residents have learned to expect roadway flooding, downed trees and tree limbs, and power outages on at least a yearly basis. Examples of recent events which disrupted routine activity in the town include:

- "Snowtober" October freak snow storm (2011), which caused extensive power outages. Heavy snow falling on trees that still retained full foliage caused tree limbs to crack and fall under the combined weight, resulting in many downed power lines. Residents across the region were without power for more than a week and many were trapped in their neighborhoods due to downed trees blocking roads.
- Hurricane Irene (2011), which washed out a number of roads in Blandford including North Blandford Road, Highland Blair Road, Blair Road, and Gore Road. The Hiram Blair Bridge, which connects a small number of homes to the main roads in Blandford, was lost during Hurricane Irene, and a small footbridge was built that allowed people to get to and from their homes. Many had to rent cars and leave them near the footbridge during the year-and-a-half period it took to re-build the automobile bridge. Blandford received FEMA funding after Hurricane Irene.
- Superstorm Sandy (2012) caused flooding due to stream swells, impacting a number of roads within the stream floodways.
- The late December 2019 Ice Storm caused power outages throughout town. Blandford emergency responders were deployed to 12 separate locations where power lines and utility wires were downed due to the ice, some of them pulling loose from its connection with a residence and causing thousands of dollars in damage. Weeks after the event, the town estimates costs of nearly \$100,000 for post-storm clean-up.

These and other recent events in nearby communities, such as the June 1, 2011 EF3 tornado which cut through Springfield, West Springfield, and Monson, have reinforced this urgency and compelled municipalities like Blandford to proactively plan and mitigate potential risks through a community driven process. Ultimately, the commendable leadership demonstrated by Blandford's efforts will reduce the exposure and vulnerability of its citizens, infrastructure, and ecosystems. This work also contributes to the greater climate resilience of the entire Pioneer Valley region.

Recognizing the importance of both mitigation and adaptation strategies to deal with the challenges of climate change, the Town of Blandford used the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Planning grant as an opportunity to integrate these objectives into existing programs. In 2019, the Town Administrator successfully pursued and received funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) to advance a Community Resilience Building workshop under the MVP program.



The core directive of the MVP program is to engage community stakeholders to facilitate the education, planning, and ultimate implementation of priority climate change adaptation actions. Completion of the MVP process will enable the Town to achieve MVP certified community status from EOEEA by June of 2020 and receive preference for future state grants.

This report provides an overview of the top hazards, current concerns and challenges, strengths, and proposed actions to improve the Town of Blandford's resilience to natural and climate-related hazards today and in the future.

## COMMUNITY RESILIENCE BUILDING WORKSHOP

The Town of Blandford employed a unique “anywhere at any scale” community-driven process known as the Community Resilience Building framework to host an eight-hour workshop on November 15, 2019. The list of workshop invitees and workshop content was guided by input from the core MVP planning team, and comprised Town elected officials, community members, and business stakeholders, and consultants from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. The workshop's central objectives were to:

- Affirm community consensus of the local meaning of extreme weather and local natural and climate-related hazards;
- Identify existing and future vulnerabilities and strengths;
- Develop and prioritize actions for the Town and a broad stakeholder network;
- Identify opportunities for the community to advance actions to reduce risk and increase resilience.

Approximately 18 participants from Town boards and committees, land holding organizations, community organizations, and other interest groups attended the workshop, which included a



A workshop participant reports out on the features his small group identified as assets and/or vulnerabilities for the Town of Blandford.

combination of large group presentations and small group activities. Pioneer Valley Planning Commission began the workshop with a presentation outlining the workshop process and goals, updating participants on past and ongoing local planning efforts, and presenting new state-provided climate projection data to enable both decision-support and risk visualization. Participants then broke out into three small groups and over the course of the two workshops assumed different participatory roles and responsibilities to engage in a rich dialogue and share ideas and experiences.

## TOP HAZARDS & VULNERABLE AREAS

Leading up to the workshop, the core MVP planning team worked with input from Town officials to identify some of the top ongoing concerns and challenges for Blandford. In order to ensure a bottom-up approach, the core Town planning team made the decision to allow the workshops' participants to identify their own top four hazards rather than pre-determining the hazards beforehand. To facilitate that process, PVPC presented a variety of past and current weather- and infrastructure-related challenges the town faces. These challenges were identified based on findings from previous planning processes such as Blandford's 2016 Hazard Mitigation Plan, stakeholder input, and new climate change projections. The participants used this information to talk through the suite of priority climate hazards and negotiate common agreement on their top four hazards. For the workshop as a whole, four hazards were selected as the most pressing for the town.

### TOP HAZARDS

The top four hazards for the workshops as identified by the CRB participants are listed below:

- Flooding
- Severe Weather, such as Severe Storms (including high winds) and Winter Weather
- Extreme Temperatures
- Drought and Wildfire

### AREAS OF CONCERN

Infrastructure: Pole-based electricity and communication lines, town and state-owned roads, road passability

Water Infrastructure: Dams, culverts, and bridges; drinking water pump and distribution system

Natural Resources: Tree canopy and hazard trees, invasive species, habitat change

Human and Social: Changing age-related demographics, residents with limited mobility, poverty-level and low- income populations, emergency shelter network, emergency communications platform (Blackboard Connect)

## CURRENT CONCERNS & CHALLENGES BY HAZARD

The Town of Blandford faces multiple challenges related to the impacts of climate change and natural hazard-related weather events. In particular, workshop participants expressed concern over the secondary impacts of severe weather, such as impassible roads and loss of electricity.



**Small groups work to identify the community actions needed to alleviate vulnerabilities and fortify assets in town.**

Blandford's MVP workshop participants were generally in agreement that the town and region are experiencing more intense and frequent storm events, the impacts of which affect the daily activities of all residents. There was also common concern about the challenges of being prepared for future severe weather events, including the ability to shelter residents close to home; the resilience of the transportation network to changing weather and temperature fluctuations and the need for the system to remain operational for emergency travel, at a minimum; and the desire to ensure aging residents are able to access the resources they need in the face of extreme weather. Furthermore, participants established a common directive to address the aging drinking water distribution system, which would both improve functionality during times of routine use and alleviate vulnerability during extreme events such as drought or wildfire.

## SPECIFIC CATEGORIES OF CONCERNS & CHALLENGES

### TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

The specific issues identified within Blandford's roadway network were two-fold: infrastructure maintenance and culvert functionality. Road passability is important for residents who may need to evacuate or travel in case of emergency, and it was noted the town features many roadways with only access point which, should they ever be blocked by flood or debris, could trap residents. Undersized culverts contribute to local street flooding on North Blandford Road, Russell Stage Road near Nye Brook, Birch Hill Road, Hiram Blair Road, and at South Street and Cobble Mountain Road. Many roads in Blandford lack winter maintenance and what may be a passable road in the summer becomes unpassable due to seasonal weather and debris build-up.

Cobble Mountain Road has been inaccessible to the public since 2001, when Springfield Water and Sewer Commission closed it due to terrorism concerns over the reservoir following the September 11 attacks. The road was historically a gateway for residents to have easier access to the Mass Pike and other important connections in the region. Closing the road increased commute times and reduced accessibility to emergency services for residents in neighboring Granville. Blandford participants noted that the road closure also eliminates access to one neighborhood in the southwest corner of town, colloquially referred to as "Land's End," via town roads. Anyone traveling to or from that area today must drive through the Town of Otis to get to this part of Blandford.

### ELECTRICAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Electricity is one of the most critical pieces of infrastructure in modern societies, and electrical service outages in Blandford can be caused or impacted by all of the hazards prioritized during the MVP process. Workshop participants identified the need to increase storage capacity for electricity generated by renewable resources and to ensure back-up power for a more resilient grid while also advocating for increased communication with Eversource for preventative tree-trimming.

### COMMUNICATION NETWORKS

Workshop participants noted a need to increase education about and uptake of the existing emergency communication system, Blackboard Connect—a reverse 911 system that can distribute information to any residents who sign up for alerts. It is important to note that the system can only help those residents who know about it and sign up, and participants stated a need to increase registration for the service. Participants also expressed concern over the social isolation that ensues from living alone, living rurally, and/or living in poverty, and the need to conduct more outreach to these vulnerable residents when preparing for a winter storm or during power outages.

### VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

Approximately 7% of the total population lives at poverty-level or below, although youth younger than 18 years old experience poverty at the rate of 19% and seniors aged 65 and older experience poverty at



2% of their total populations.<sup>1</sup> The number of low income residents (measured by 200% of the poverty level) is significantly higher than the number of poverty-level residents, with 18.5% of the average population measuring as low income and 36% and 25% of the youth and senior populations, respectively.<sup>2</sup> Poverty-level and low-income residents may lack the financial capacity to evacuate in an emergency or keep up with day-to-day costs of living when weather disrupts the local economy.

Approximately 22% of Blandford's population is aged 65 years or older; the greatest concerns with this population are isolation, power outages, and prolonged exposure to extreme cold or heat. Power outages, especially when concurrent with extreme temperatures, leave the elderly and medically vulnerable populations at extremely high risk. Approximately 16% of Blandford's seniors live alone<sup>3</sup>, and workshop attendees wanted to ensure that emergency response teams would know who these seniors were and where they were located for emergency check-ins. Almost 26% of the senior population self-reports as having one or more disabilities (visual, ambulatory, self-care, cognitive, independent-living, or hearing), as does 13% of the overall population.<sup>4</sup>

## DRINKING WATER RESOURCES

While only a portion of the town's residents rely on public drinking water, participants indicated that they were supportive of identifying actions to improve the water supply system's resilience. Existing infrastructure includes two aged water storage tanks which are in disrepair, town water lines, a pump house, public reservoir, and a water treatment plant (WTP). Because the pump station and WTP are not automated, they are currently not up to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)'s standards. Participants noted that the WTP sometimes experiences chlorine leaks due to outdated system technology. Gordon Avery, from the Town's Water Commission, noted that improvements to the water supply pipes would not only help the residents who rely on town water but would also increase Blandford's ability to fight fires.

## DAMS

Massachusetts Office of Dam Safety (ODS) lists eight dams within Blandford's boundaries, including two high hazard dams and one significant hazard dam. High hazard dams are classified as likely to cause loss of life and serious damage to public and/or private infrastructure should a dam failure occur; significant hazard dams may cause loss of life and damage to property and infrastructure. While Black Brook Dam and Borden Brook Reservoir, the two high hazard dams, are located within Blandford, they are owned and operated by neighboring municipal commissions. At their most recent inspections, Borden Brook Dam (owned by SWSC) was rated in satisfactory condition, while Black Brook Dam (owned by the Town of Russell Board of Water Commissioners) was rated in fair condition. Blandford itself does own the

<sup>1</sup> American Community Survey 2013-17 estimates, table DP03

<sup>2</sup> American Community Survey 2013-17 estimates, table B17024

<sup>3</sup> American Community Survey 2013-17 estimates, table S1101

<sup>4</sup> American Community Survey 2013-17 estimates, table DP02

significant hazard dam, Long Pond Dam, which is operated by its Board of Water Commissioners, and is rated in satisfactory condition.

## CURRENT STRENGTHS & ASSETS

As a result of Blandford's broad experience with extreme weather and the impacts of climate change, workshop participants were quick to point out their communities' strengths in responding to the challenges identified above. Reinforcing and expanding upon these strengths and community assets to increase resiliency against the impacts of climate change is a common theme to the proposed actions within this report.



A small group gathers around a basemap of Blandford to locate key features.

Some of the key strengths discussed included:

- An abundance of protected natural resources, including reservoirs, ponds, streams, rivers, and wetlands, that provide for environmental health, biodiversity, and recreational opportunities.
- Active Senior Center and Council on Aging that provides resources and strong programming.
- A strong faith community.
- A large amount of canopy cover, which adds to resilience and town character.
- A culture of neighborliness amongst residents.
- Self-sufficient, fiercely independent-minded residents.
- The Highway Department has adopted the use of environmentally-friendly products for winter weather road preparation, in place of sanding and salting.

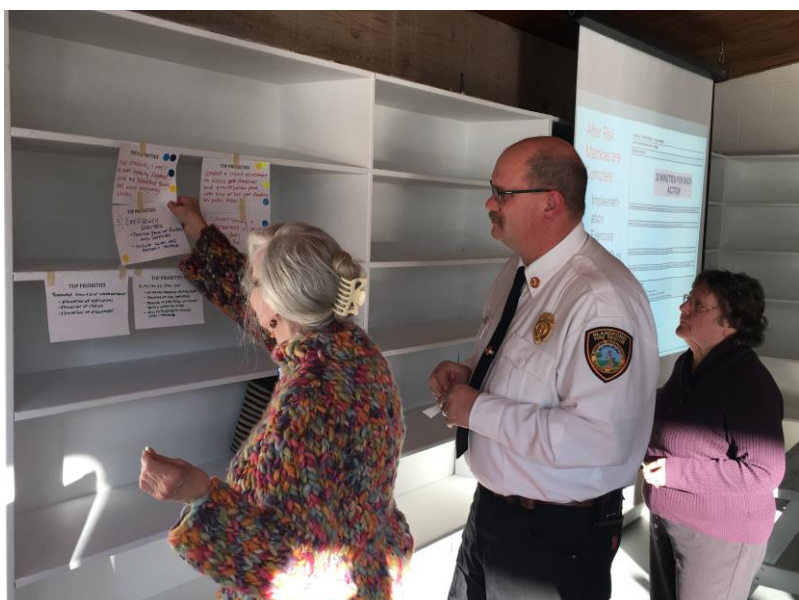
## TOP RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE RESILIENCE

Workshop participants identified 66 actions that the Town of Blandford, in collaboration with neighboring municipalities, regional partners, and state agencies, should take to improve resilience to climate change impacts.

Toward the end of the workshop, each of the three small groups presented its three top priority actions to the large group. These nine actions were assembled with like actions from the other small groups, resulting in the five priority actions listed below (in no specific order). The three highest priority actions, as subsequently voted on by the large group, are shown in bold.

- **Conduct a town-wide inventory and condition assessment of culverts and map of hot spot flooding in public rights-of-way, and prioritize maintenance, repair, and replacement for future investment.**
- **Meet MEMA and DPH standards and requirements to make Gateway Regional School and Blandford Town Hall active emergency shelters, including the securement of backup power. Explore the option of solar generation and battery storage for backup power.**
- Develop and implement a method of tracking hazardous materials transported on I-90 and MA Rt-23; train Fire Department, State Police, and others as appropriate on how to respond to spills of different types of chemicals, how to recognize and interpret Tier II symbols, etc.
- Educate applicators of roadway snow/ice management products about alternative products to minimize environmental impact, their use, and the equipment associated with their use.
- **Improve the resilience of and modernize the operations of the public water treatment and distribution systems to meet DEP compliance standards.**

All actions recommended during the CRB workshop were shared with 15 members of the public at a public listening session (PLS) on February 12, 2020 at the Town Hall. Participants at the PLS were provided with an opportunity to provide feedback on the top priority actions to help the town prioritize which to pursue first. Participants received a list of all 55 actions derived from the MVP workshop, and the Blandford MVP project team presented the top 5



Blandford CRB participants voted on their top priority actions.

priorities described above in more detail.

A full list of the final recommendations from the CRB Workshop, organized by high, medium, and low priority, follows on the next few pages. In addition to the actions identified at the CRB Workshop and Public Listening Session, the town solicited comments on the draft Summary of Findings Report from various town and public partners.

Please note that within each category, the actions are not in any specific order.



Public Health	Emergency Response	Energy	Transportation	Water Mgmt	Open Space Land Mgmt	High Priority Actions
x	x					Update MOUs with all 6 communities in the Gateway Regional School District sending region to maintain regional shelter there.
x	x		x			Create an emergency transportation/evacuation plan which identifies residents who many not have reliable transportation to get to Gateway Regional regional shelter or the Town Hall local shelter, and identifies means and methods of providing adequate service to get them there.
x	x	x				Meet MEMA standards for the Town Hall to be approved as an official emergency shelter, including securing a back-up generator.
x		x				Explore solar electricity generation and battery storage for back-up power to the Town Hall.
x	x					Meet DPH standards for the Town Hall to be approved as an Emergency Dispensing Site (EDS) to provide medicine, vaccines, and medical treatment, etc.
x	x					Develop an actionable plan to use EMS staff to act as visiting nurses for wellness checks/administering medication/conducting tele-visits with doctors.
x	x					Create an opt-in list of seniors/disabled residents who want to be checked-in on in event of emergency/institute an “Are You Okay” call list in collaboration with Southern Hilltown Consortium.
x						Continue the application process to become a CDBG community.
x			x			Identify a funding source for maintenance and upkeep of the Council on Aging vehicle.
x	x					Encourage the Land’s End neighborhood, and other single-access neighborhoods, to identify a captain for emergency response and communications.
x	x					Improve Town outreach and communication to residents for emergency response preparedness education, improved communication channels to reach the community in case of emergency, and improved tracking of higher-risk properties for emergency responders.
x						Conduct a marketing campaign to de-stigmatize the use of CoA services and expand CoA outreach to a broader population.
x		x				Investigate grants to help support continuity of private small businesses.
x						Support existing social programming services at library/town store/transfer station and work to adapt to

						meet existing needs for “third places.”
Public Health	Emergency Response	Energy	Transportation	Water Mgmt	Open Space Land Mgmt	High Priority Actions, cont.
x				x		Replace the two antiquated water storage tanks with one modern tank and conduct a feasibility study for the locations and sizing of the new tank. Consider removing the North Street Salt Shed tank (totally degraded) and repurposing the other tank for fire suppression.
x				x		Update the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) operation system and automate the plant to bring into compliance with DEP regulations and avoid chlorinated water spills.
x				x		Extend influent pipe from WTP further into the reservoir by ~30-40 ft for improvements to water quality/temperature/quantity.
x	x			x		Increase drinking water pipe size to a minimum of 8”, which will increase water pressure and allow for use for fire suppression.
x	x			x		Conduct a conditions assessment of drinking water pipe system and hydrants and develop a prioritization plan for maintenance and replacement.
x	x			x		Update the drinking water pump house operating system and automate to bring into compliance with DEP regulations.
x	x			x		Evaluate pump house piping structures for repair and replacement.
x	x			x		Conduct a risk assessment for whole drinking water supply system and develop a maintenance prioritization plan.
x	x		x	x		Conduct a culvert conditions assessment to North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative standards (including creating a town-wide map of “hot spot” flooding locations within public rights-of-way to better understand impact on local transportation) and develop a prioritization plan for maintenance and replacement, with a focus on nature-based solutions.
	x			x		Encourage SWSC to conduct a culvert assessment and actively maintain roads and drainage ditches on their watershed lands.
			x	x		Educate applicators of roadway snow/ice management products around environmentally-friendly products, their use, and the equipment associated with their use; purchase equipment as needed.

Public Health	Emergency Response	Energy	Transportation	Water Mgmt	Open Space Land Mgmt	High Priority Actions, cont.
			x	x		Review research on road salt impacts and model policies to date.
			x	x		Organize with neighboring municipalities to work with legislative delegation to hold MassDOT more accountable on road salting practices.
x	x		x			Continue training for Town departments and Fire Department/emergency responders on response to hazardous chemical spills, including those chemicals passing through on I-90 and Rt. 23.
x	x		x			Develop a method of tracking specific hazardous materials being transported along I-90 and Rt. 23 and understand appropriate response to such spills.
x	x			x		Evaluate standards of chemical storage associated with water treatment.
			x	x		Obtain funding to do collective, integrated hydrologic and hydraulic (H&H) analysis for improved roadway crossings on given stream systems (to avoid the high cost of doing H&H analysis project by project).
x	x		x	x		Work with MassDOT to mitigate I-90's stormwater and air pollution effects by improving drainage, building a sound barrier, planting improved vegetated buffers, etc.

Public Health	Emergency Response	Energy	Transportation	Water Mgmt	Open Space Land Mgmt	Medium Priority Actions
x			x			Identify vehicle drivers for the CoA vehicle and develop policies and procedures for its use.
x			x			Research grant opportunities to secure a handicap accessible vehicle for the CoA.
x						Conduct a study to identify local services needed to increase the social and financial resilience of residents in poverty.
x						Keep CoA Brown Bag grocery program up and running for low income seniors.
x	x					Explore establishing a wood bank to help low income residents reliant on wood heating.
x	x					Conduct outreach to residents on sheltering in place, including providing a checklist of supplies and preparation necessary.

Public Health	Emergency Response	Energy	Transportation	Water Mgmt	Open Space Land Mgmt	Medium Priority Actions, cont.
x	x	x				Explore with Eversource and MassDOER potential rebates, credits for generators, especially for senior citizens and those on private water supply.
x	x					Continue to promote the installation of broadband internet (last mile project).
x	x					Promote Blackboard Connect Reverse 911 service and educate residents on how to sign up.
	x		x			Acquire UTVs with flat beds/stretchers capabilities for emergency response/extrication to circumnavigate closed/impassable roads.
	x		x	x		Work with MassDOT to address stormwater management on the Mass Pike, including it overflowing onto town roads.
	x		x			Install better signage to avoid drivers accidentally getting stuck on roads without winter maintenance (GPS mistakes, visitors, etc.)
	x		x			Conduct preventative tree maintenance for hazard trees/limbs within public rights-of-way.
	x		x			Increase town budget for road maintenance.
	x		x			Maintain and improve emergency access to the Mass Pike and coordinate to ensure other agencies and neighboring towns understand policy (such as the ambulance service).
	x	x				Reorganize the use of municipal buildings (move Fire operations to current Highway Department, and build a new Highway Department facility) and explore options for capital improvements and/or facility usage.
	x	x				Improve efficiency and maximize use of existing resources to best support emergency response.
x	x					Inventory hazardous materials stored in town, and maintain the list moving forward.
x	x					Look into establishing purchasing policies for the town that avoid the purchase of hazardous materials when possible.
x	x					Provide education/training on correct handling of hazardous materials to any staff/employees at facilities with these materials, and to emergency response teams.
x				x	x	Update the expired Open Space and Recreation Plan.
			x			Continue to participate in discussions around the proposed Blandford Mass Pike exit with stakeholders, such as MassDOT and PVPC.



Public Health	Emergency Response	Energy	Transportation	Water Mgmt	Open Space Land Mgmt	Medium Priority Actions, cont.
x					x	Explore options for increased forest stewardship, including identifying climate resilient species for possible assisted migration/replacement of lost species.
				x	x	Assess and explore strategic beaver population control, combined with use of beaver deceiver technology.
					x	Continue outreach to state forester regarding post-cut “slash” woody debris being left in forests, which causes drainage issues and could create a possible problem relative to wildfires.
					x	Promote roundtable conversation prior to forest cutting, to include the Conservation Commission, other relevant town boards, the state forester, and property owner.

Public Health	Emergency Response	Energy	Transportation	Water Mgmt	Open Space Land Mgmt	Low Priority Actions
			x			CoA should explore expanding use of their vehicle for low-income residents when not in use by seniors.
	x		x			Improve maintenance of town roads to allow for connectivity to the Land’s End neighborhood.
x					x	Improve outreach to utility companies and residents about best practice in wood pile offering and specifically address Highway Department concern that wood piles not be left in drainage swales/areas.
x	x					Better coordination between departments to share and maintain information on the spread out population (i.e. if the building inspector is out at a property and sees that driveway to access the property is not passible – share this information with the fire department).
x	x					Inventory the services offered by places of worship in town and continue to engage to develop and maintain relationships with these organizations.
	x		x			Continue to work with SWSC to re-open Cobble Mountain Road and address security concerns.
			x	x	x	Coordinate planning efforts with SWSC around Cobble Mountain Reservoir and Long Pond Reservoir watershed lands and continue to collaborate and build trust.
					x	Continue dialog with private landowners regarding public recreational access to private lands in

						conservation.
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Note: In most cases, actions are presented in the table above as written by CRB Workshop participants. Where proposed actions in their original form lacked clarity or detail, the project team expanded upon the action in order to promote project-readiness.

CDBG	Community Development Block Grant, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
COA	Council on Aging
MassDOER	Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources
MassDOT	Massachusetts Department of Transportation
Mgmt	Management
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MEMA	Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency
PVPC	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
SWSC	Springfield Water and Sewer Commission
UTV	Utility Task Vehicle

## ACTION IMPLEMENTATION DESIGN

Once participants at the CRB Workshop voted on the top priority actions, each team was asked to select one action and begin to develop an implementation plan. For each action, the small groups filled out an Action Implementation Design worksheet, providing information on the project feasibility and management, ideas on community outreach and engagement around the proposed project, an estimated cost for the project, known or potential funding sources, and implementation milestones. This exercise was a tool for Blandford decision makers to get a head start on the thought process that would be required to apply for a MVP Action Grant. The completed Action Implementation Design worksheets are provided in Appendix C.

## WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

Approximately 18 participants from Town departments, committees and boards, large land owners, community organizations, and businesses were in attendance at the MVP workshop. The participant check-in list is provided in Appendix C.

## CITATION

Blandford Community Resilience Building Workshop Summary of Findings (2019). Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. Blandford, Massachusetts.

## MVP WORKING GROUP

- Joshua Garcia, Town Administrator
- Ed Harvey, Fire Chief and Emergency Manager
- Rene Senecal, Highway Superintendent
- Emily Slotnick, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

## WORKSHOP FACILITATORS

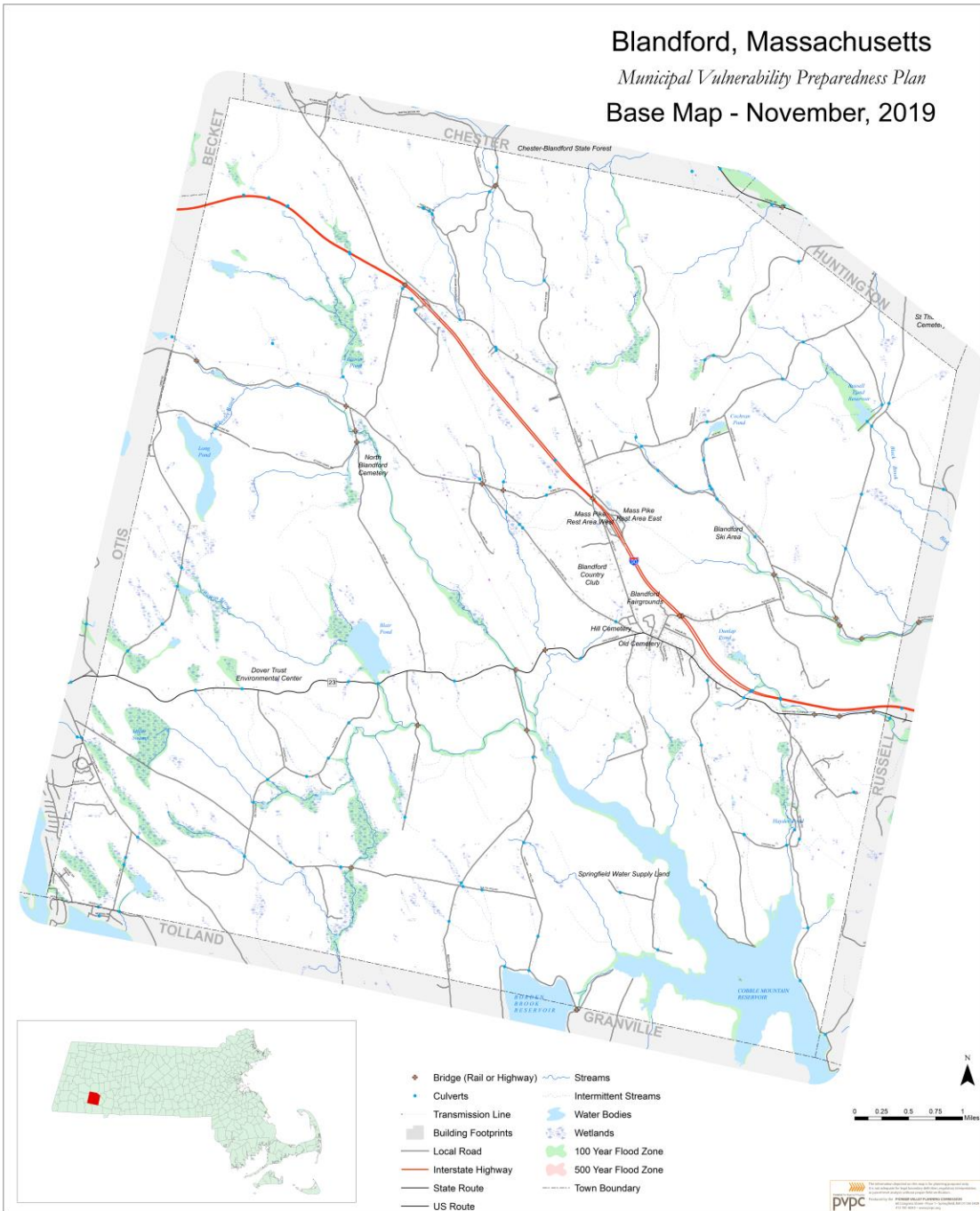
- Emily Slotnick, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Patty Gambarini, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Corrin Meise-Munns, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission
- Jill Decoursey, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

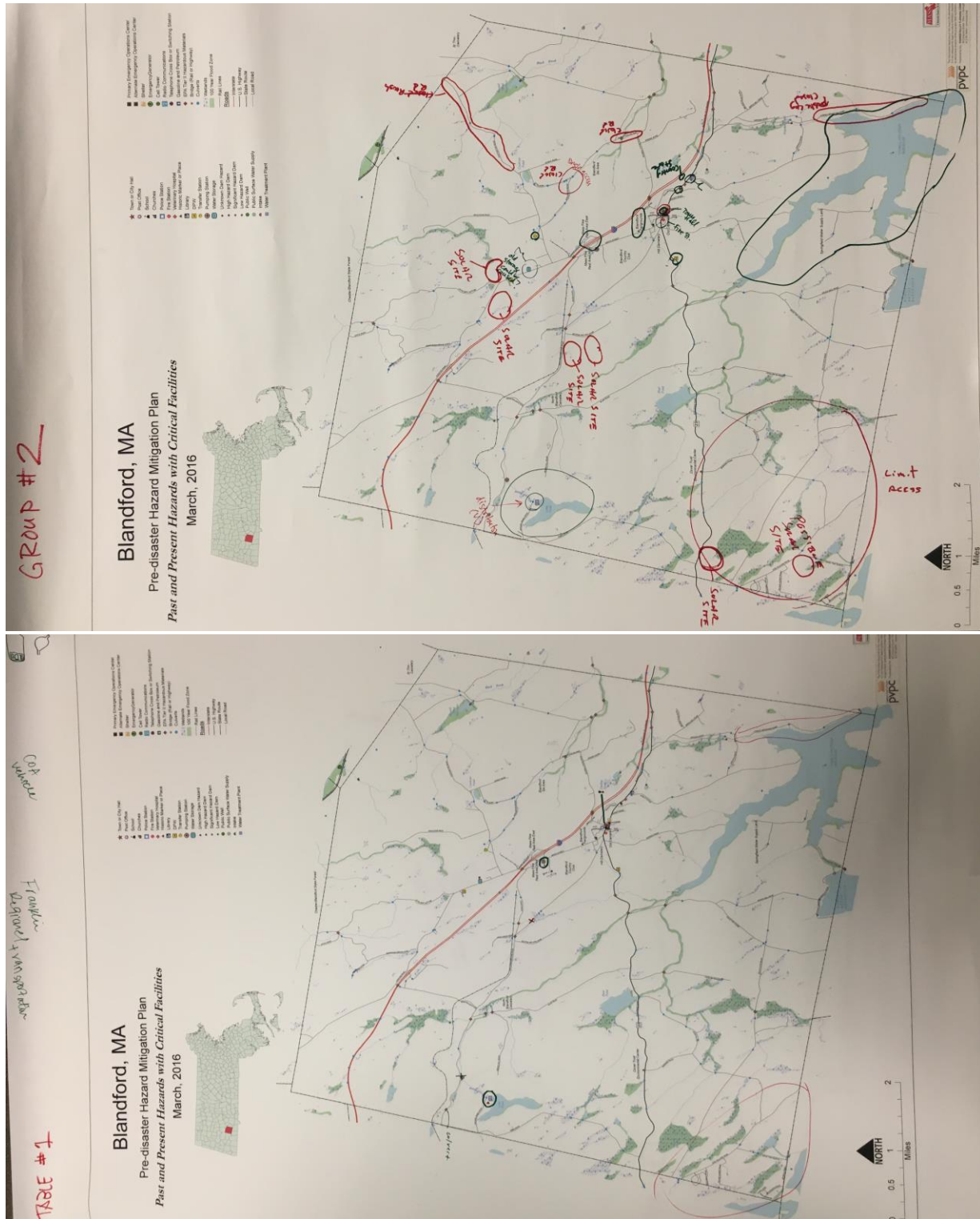
Special thanks to the Town of Blandford staff for their willingness to enhance this process, and to Ski Blandford for providing the facilities to convene. This project was made possible through funding from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.



## APPENDIX A: WORKSHOP BASE MAP



## APPENDIX B: PARTICIPATORY MAPPING RESULTS





## APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT HANDOUTS (CRB WORKSHOP)

### AGENDA

#### Blandford Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Workshop

**DATE:** Friday, November 15, 2019  
**TIME:** 8:30a.m. – 4:00p.m.  
**PLACE:** Blandford Ski Area  
41 Nye Brook Road

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### AGENDA

- 8:15 a.m.                      **Registration**
- 8:30 a.m. – 10:20 a.m.   **Introductions**  
                                 **Presentation:** MVP, Climate Data, Local Conditions
- 10:20 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. **Break**
- 10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. **Select Hazards**
- 10:45 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **Morning Small Team Workshop**
- Identify Community Vulnerabilities and Strengths
  - Report out (11:45 a.m.)
  - Identify and Prioritize Community Actions
- 12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. **Lunch**
- 1:00 p.m. – 2:25 p.m.   **Afternoon Small Team Workshop**
- Identify and Prioritize Community Actions (continued)
  - Identify Priority and Urgency
  - Report Outs
- 2:25 p.m. – 2:35 p.m.   **Break**
- 2:35 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.   **Report Outs**  
                                 **Large Group Vote on Top Priorities**
- 3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.   **Implementation Design and Final Report Outs**
- 3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.   **Wrap-up and Next Steps**



## SIGN-IN SHEET

Blandford MVP Workshop Sign-In

15 Nov-19

Initial if Present	Table Number	Name	Affiliation	Email Address	RSVP (Y or N)
✓	3	Tom Ackley	1 of 3 Select Board members	tjackley@gmail.com	yes
	1	Rosemary Arnold	Kestrel Land Trust, Winding River Land Conservancy	windingriverlc@gmail.com	yes
✓	1	Gordon Ivory	Water Commission	gaveiii@verizon.net	yes
✓	1	Linda Barnard	Council on Aging		yes
✓	3	Rick Barnard	Planning Board Chair	rickb36nyebrook@gmail.com	yes
✓	3	TJ Cousineau	Cemetery Commissioner	tedcousineau@yahoo.com	yes
✓	3	Ron Crozier	Blandford Ski	rcrozier@skiblandford.com	yes
✓	2	Joshua Garcia	Town Administrator	administrator@townofblandford.com	yes
✓	2	Dick Gates	Conservation Commission	dickgates12@verizon.net	maybe
✓	2	Jen Girard	Board of Health and owner of the Country Store	blandfordboh@gmail.com	yes
✓	2	Ed Harvey	Blandford Fire Department	firechief@townofblandford.com	yes
✓	1	David Hopson	Resident, farmer, school superintendent	dhopson@grsd.org	yes
✓	2	Janet Lombardo	Finance Committee	ilombardo52@yahoo.com	yes
✓	2	Margaret Mikuski	Director, Council on Aging	mmikuski@townofblandford.com	yes
✓	1	Angela Mulkerin	Hilltown Ambulance	angela@hilltownambulance.org	yes
✓	3	Nicole Sanford	Spfld Water & Sewer	nicole.sanford@aterandsewer.org	yes
✓	3	Rene Senecal	Highway Department	rsenecal@townofblandford.com	yes
✓	1	Eric Weiss	PVPC working on energy issues	eweiss@pvpc.org	yes

Bob Weaver  
and Susan Ory

SWSC

Bob Weaver

<b>Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness</b>	
<b>Action Implementation Design</b>	<i>unfunded mandate</i>
<b>COMMUNITY ACTION</b>	
What are the project objectives, how will the project positively impact the site and community and address identified climate change impacts/problems? How will it improve resilience for vulnerable populations?	
<i>Will ensure a more consistent and safer supply of drinking water, and ensure a reserve of volume and pressure of water adequate for fire suppression and provide a multi-day H<sub>2</sub>O reserve.</i>	
<b>PROJECT FEASIBILITY AND MANAGEMENT</b>	
Who is the primary implementing agency/ department, and what partners will be needed to implement the project? (Local boards, departments, neighboring municipalities, State actors, local non-profits and land trusts, community groups, etc.) Is there any evidence of landowner, public, or partner support? Are there any regulatory hurdles to completing the project?	
<i>Lead - Blandford Water Dept.</i>	<i>Regulatory hurdles - none</i>
<i>Partners - Select Board, DEP, PVPL</i>	
<i>Support - Town-owned land, need support from town meeting, rate payers</i>	
<b>COMMUNITY OUTREACH, EDUCATION, AND ENGAGEMENT</b>	
How will the project engage socially vulnerable populations? What community engagement strategies and mechanisms will you use? How will community feedback be incorporated into the project?	
<i>Roughly 240 (?% of households) are serviced by water. Public education forum, outreach &amp; public education campaign. Identify # of single households, # seniors, # low income.</i>	
<b>COST</b> (Dollar estimate, or Low: < \$50,000, Medium: \$50,000 – \$100,000, High: > \$100,000) and <b>FUNDING SOURCES</b> (Capital Improvement Plan, Staff Time, Chapter 90, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), etc.)	
<i>High - whole project</i>	
<i>Scoping alone (weight + price) - \$10,000</i>	
<b>INCORPORATION OF NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS</b>	
How are low impact design, green infrastructure, natural flood protection, or other nature-based solutions incorporated? How do those elements reduce maintenance costs, and what co-benefits do they provide?	
<i>Extended intake line deeper into reservoir will naturally provide better quality</i>	
<i>Improving operation system (SCADA) will reduce impacts of chlorine pollution &amp; incidents DEP health violation</i>	
<b>IMPLEMENTATION MILESTONES</b>	
Examples: 1. Create and convene a committee to oversee progress; 2. Disseminate 300 information packets to raise awareness about the initiative; 3. Apply for a grant to fund more robust public outreach, education, and awareness campaign.	
<i>1. procure an engineering firm to scope project &amp; cost; outline 2. Town confirming project outline 3. Elements to BID &amp; public outreach campaign 4. town mtg for project approval 5. implement project</i>	



# Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness

TABLE 1

## Action Implementation Design

### COMMUNITY ACTION

What are the project objectives, how will the project positively impact the site and community and address identified climate change impacts/problems? How will it improve resilience for vulnerable populations?

Objectives are to provide back-up power & supplies for sheltering at Town Hall ~~and at Gentry Regional School District~~. This will provide necessary life saving facilities for vulnerable populations and residents impacted by severe events. & to update now for use of Gentry schools as emergency shelter.

### PROJECT FEASIBILITY AND MANAGEMENT

Who is the primary implementing agency/ department, and what partners will be needed to implement the project? (Local boards, departments, neighboring municipalities, State actors, local non-profits and land trusts, community groups, etc.) Is there any evidence of landowner, public, or partner support? Are there any regulatory hurdles to completing the project?

Emergency management under guidance of the Town Board of Selectmen for Town Hall at Bradford.

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH, EDUCATION, AND ENGAGEMENT

How will the project engage socially vulnerable populations? What community engagement strategies and mechanisms will you use? How will community feedback be incorporated into the project?

Vulnerable populations are less able to shelter in place. And providing a public shelter will serve all residents. ~~Gentry~~ Town will provide education to residents using all ~~best~~ communication tools available to the Town.

**COST** (Dollar estimate, or Low: < \$50,000, Medium: \$50,000 – \$100,000, High: > \$100,000) and

**FUNDING SOURCES** (Capital Improvement Plan, Staff Time, Chapter 90, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), etc.)

\$217,000 = Generator & to install | \$2,000 - Cuts, Brackets, Pillars, etc.  
Funding sources = MUP, FEMA/MEMA, DOER, Red Cross, Salvation Army

### INCORPORATION OF NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

How are low impact design, green infrastructure, natural flood protection, or other nature-based solutions incorporated? How do those elements reduce maintenance costs, and what co-benefits do they provide?

Solar + Battery  
This will make the building much more resilient & self-sufficient & will reduce utility cost.

### IMPLEMENTATION MILESTONES

Examples: 1. Create and convene a committee to oversee progress;

2. Disseminate 300 information packets to raise awareness about the initiative;

3. Apply for a grant to fund more robust public outreach, education, and awareness campaign.

- 1) Emergency Mgmt. will oversee progress/project
- 2) Cost Benefit Analysis
- 3) Procurement (develop RFP, Assess proposals, Select vendor)
- 4) establish contract
- 5) ~~Implement~~ Install

**Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness**

Table 3

**Action Implementation Design** *CULVERT ASSESSMENT / REPLACEMENT***COMMUNITY ACTION**

What are the project objectives, how will the project positively impact the site and community and address identified climate change impacts/problems? How will it improve resilience for vulnerable populations?

*IMPROVE ROADWAY SAFETY / STABILIZE EMBANKMENTS /  
PROTECT THE ROADS / IMPROVE PUBLIC SAFETY FOR ALL /  
HABITAT IMPROVEMENT / PROPERLY SIZING CULVERTS FOR MORE FREQUENT RAINFALL  
ADEQUATELY FLOW OF STREAMS + ROAD DRAINAGE TO STABILIZE SURROUNDING AREAS*

**PROJECT FEASIBILITY AND MANAGEMENT**

Who is the primary implementing agency/ department, and what partners will be needed to implement the project? (Local boards, departments, neighboring municipalities, State actors, local non-profits and land trusts, community groups, etc.) Is there any evidence of landowner, public, or partner support? Are there any regulatory hurdles to completing the project?

*TOWN OF BIANFORD, CON. CO., HIGHWAY DEPT., MASS DOT, SPRINGFIELD SEWER  
+ WATER, DEP, ARMY CORP OF ENGINEERS, NHESP*

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH, EDUCATION, AND ENGAGEMENT**

How will the project engage socially vulnerable populations? What community engagement strategies and mechanisms will you use? How will community feedback be incorporated into the project?

*POSSIBLE PUBLIC HEARING OR TOWN INFORMATIONAL MEETING ON PROJECT  
FACE TO FACE ENGAGEMENT W/ HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT,  
ENGAGE W/ SPRINGFIELD SEWER + WATER DEPT. + WESTFIELD WILD + SENIC*

**COST** (Dollar estimate, or Low: < \$50,000, Medium: \$50,000 – \$100,000, High: > \$100,000) and

**FUNDING SOURCES** (Capital Improvement Plan, Staff Time, Chapter 90, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), etc.)

*MEDIUM ~~HIGH~~ MEDIUM  
HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT*

**INCORPORATION OF NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS**

How are low impact design, green infrastructure, natural flood protection, or other nature-based solutions incorporated? How do those elements reduce maintenance costs, and what co-benefits do they provide?

*NATURAL GROWTH OF SURROUNDING SPECIES, PLANTS, WILDLIFE, ~~ASTH~~  
NATURAL BEAUTY OF SURROUNDING AREAS.*

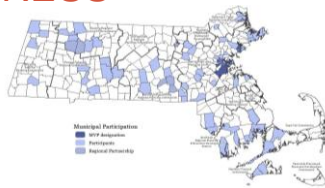
**IMPLEMENTATION MILESTONES**

- Examples: 1. Create and convene a committee to oversee progress;  
2. Disseminate 300 information packets to raise awareness about the initiative;  
3. Apply for a grant to fund more robust public outreach, education, and awareness campaign.

## APPENDIX D: MVP WORKSHOP PRESENTATION

# MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITY PREPAREDNESS

Town of  
Blandford, Ma



## Introductions

1. Name
2. Your role in / relationship to Blandford (staff, board and committee members, business owner, resident, etc.)



## MVP Planning Grant Purpose and Goals

- **Community-led process** that employs local knowledge
- **Mainstream** climate change data
- **Look to communities** as local innovators
- **Coordinate** statewide efforts

Complete workshop – vulnerability assessment and action plan

Preference for projects that propose “Nature based solutions”



## Blandford MVP Purpose and Goals

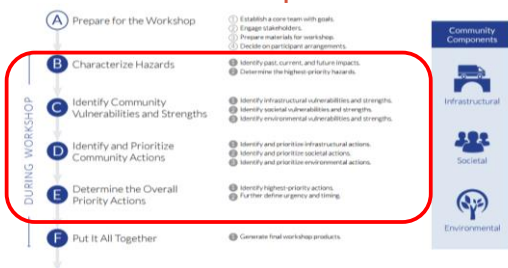
- Share ideas about climate change, impacts, and actions to reduce vulnerabilities
- Become a “MVP “Certified” Community
- MVP Action Grant and regional coordination



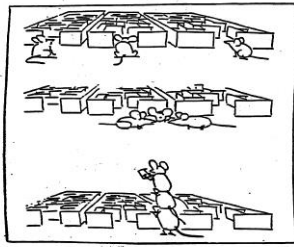
## COMMUNITY RESILIENCE BUILDING WORKSHOP



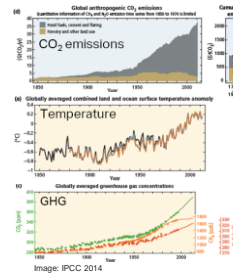
## Outline of Workshop



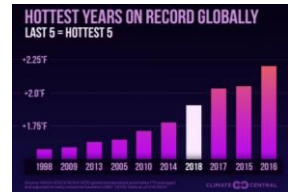




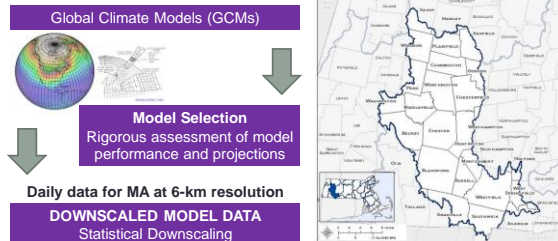
## Global Climate Trends



- 20 hottest recorded years since 1998
- July, August 2016, then July 2017 – hottest months on record



## NECSC CLIMATE PROJECTIONS



## CLIMATE PROJECTIONS: Westfield River Basin Overview

- Increase (↑) in:
  - Average temperatures (annual and seasonal)
  - Min and max temperatures
  - # of days with temps over 90, 95, and 100
  - Cooling degree days (65 and above)
  - Frequency of heavy precipitation (winter and spring)
  - Consecutive dry days, especially in the fall
- Decrease (↓) in:
  - # of days below 32 and 0
  - # of heating degree days (65 and below)
  - Fall precipitation (potential)

## Concerns and Challenges

- Uneven distribution of snow/rain
- Transportation infrastructure and accessibility
  - Downed trees blocking roadways
  - Dirt roads washing out during flash thaws
- Pole-based electricity and communication lines

## Concerns and Challenges

- **Water Infrastructure:** Dams, culverts, and bridges; drinking water pump and distribution system
- **Natural Resources:** Tree canopy and hazard trees, invasive species, habitat change
- **Human and Social:** Changing age-related demographics, residents with limited mobility, poverty-level and low-income populations, emergency shelter network, emergency communications platform (Blackboard Connect)





## Blandford's Assets and Features

- An abundance of **protected natural resources**, including reservoirs, ponds, streams, rivers, and wetlands, that provide for environmental health, biodiversity, and recreational opportunities.
- Active **Senior Center and Council on Aging** that provides resources and strong programming.
- A strong **faith community**.
- A large amount of **canopy cover**, which adds to resilience and town character.
- A **culture of neighborliness** amongst residents.
- Self-sufficient, fiercely **independent-minded residents**.
- The **Highway Department** has adopted the use of environmentally-friendly products for winter weather road

## Risk Matrix Exercise

Community Resilience Building Risk Matrix		Top Priority Risks				Priority	
Community Vulnerability / Preparedness		Risk Description				Risk Level	
1 = Vulnerability, 2 = Strength		Risk Description				Risk Level	
1 = Location, 2 = Exposure, 3 =		Risk Description				Risk Level	
Risk Category		Risk Description				Risk Level	
HIGH PRIORITY	1 = Location, 2 = Exposure, 3 =	Risk Description				Risk Level	
		Risk Description				Risk Level	
MEDIUM PRIORITY	1 = Location, 2 = Exposure, 3 =	Risk Description				Risk Level	
		Risk Description				Risk Level	
LOW PRIORITY	1 = Location, 2 = Exposure, 3 =	Risk Description				Risk Level	
		Risk Description				Risk Level	
Risk Category		Risk Description				Risk Level	
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Risk Category							

## MVP Priority Projects (cont.)

4. Educate applicators of roadway snow/ice management products about alternative products to minimize environmental impact, their use, and the equipment associated with their use.



## MVP Priority Projects (cont.)

5. Improve the resilience of and modernize the operations of the public water treatment and distribution systems to meet DEP compliance standards.



Questions?

Comments?

What did we miss?



## MVP Action Grants: Project Types

- Detailed Vulnerability and Risk Assessment\*
- Community Outreach and Education
- Local Bylaws, Ordinances, Plans, and Other Management Measures
- Redesigns and Retrofits\*\*\*
- Nature-Based Flood Protection, Drought Mitigation, Water Quality, and Water Infiltration Techniques\*\*
- Nature-Based, Infrastructure and Technology Solutions to Reduce Vulnerability to Extreme Heat and Poor Air Quality

\* Most common project type

\*\* Second-most common project type

\*\*\*Third-most common project type

## MVP Action Grants: Project Types (cont.)

- Nature-Based Solutions to Reduce Vulnerability to other Climate Change Impacts
- Ecological Restoration and Habitat Management to Increase Resiliency

### NEW IN 2019

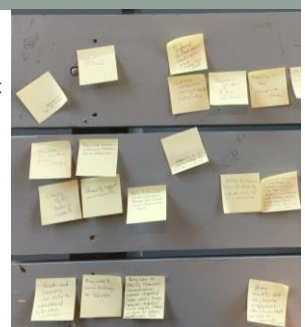
- Energy Resilience
- Chemical Safety
- Land Acquisition for Resilience
- Subsidized Low-Income Housing Resilience Strategies
- Mosquito Control Districts

+ Expanded eligibility of project location

## Group Activity

Each participant should fill out two sticky notes:

1. One thing/action that I, as an individual, pledge to do to become more resilient and reduce my vulnerability to climate change
2. One thing I want the town/my elected officials to pledge to do to reduce our vulnerability to climate change



## Thank You and Next Steps

- Finalize Summary of Findings Report
- Apply for 2020 MVP Action Grant
- Questions? Comments?
  - Blandford Town Administrator  
[administrator@townofblandford.com](mailto:administrator@townofblandford.com)



## APPENDIX E: PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION

### HANDOUTS



### **Blandford Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Public Listening Session**

**DATE:** Tuesday, Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>  
**TIME:** 6:00p.m. – 7:30pm  
**PLACE:** Blandford Town Hall  
1 Russell Stage Rd

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#### **AGENDA**

- 6:00 p.m. **MVP Workshop Process Overview and Summary of Findings**
- 6:40 p.m. **Public Q&A**
- 7:00 p.m. **Conclusion and Closing Input**
- Each participant should fill out two sticky notes:
    - One thing/action that I, as an individual, pledge to do to become more resilient and reduce my vulnerability to climate change
    - One thing I want the town/my elected officials to pledge to do to reduce our vulnerability to climate change
- 7:30 p.m. **Adjourn**



## TOWN OF BLANDFORD

1 Russell Stage Road  
www.townofblandford.com

### Introduction:

The Town of Blandford is collaborating with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), residents, and stakeholders on strategies to reduce vulnerability and adapt to our changing climate through the State's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP program).

The core directive of the MVP program is to engage community stakeholders to facilitate the education, planning, and ultimate implementation of priority climate change adaptation actions. Completion of the MVP process will enable the Town to achieve MVP Certified Community status from the State's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs by June of 2020 and receive preference for future state grants.

### Recommended Actions:

In November 2019 a **Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP)** workshop was held in which department heads and key stakeholders discussed climate vulnerabilities and identified more than 65 actions that the Town of Blandford, in collaboration with neighboring municipalities, regional partners and state agencies, should take to improve resilience to climate change impacts.

Toward the end of the workshop, participants selected their highest priority actions from the 66 that were developed during the workshop. The selected actions were then grouped together into the five highest priority actions which will be talked about in more detail in the presentation tonight.

The following table lists all actions developed during the November workshop and are presented here in no specific order. The actions shown in bold were selected by the workshop participants as being the highest priority.

Public Health	Emergency Response	Energy	Transportation	Water Mgmt	Open Space Land Mgmt		High Priority Actions <sup>5</sup>
x	x					1	Update MOUs with all 6 communities in the Gateway Regional School District sending region to maintain regional shelter there.
x	x		x			2	Create an emergency transportation/evacuation plan which identifies residents who many not have reliable transportation to get to Gateway Regional shelter or the Town Hall local shelter, and identifies means and methods of providing adequate service to get them there.
x	x	x				3	<b>Meet MEMA standards for the Town Hall (and Gateway Regional School) to be approved as an official emergency shelter, including securing a back-up generator.</b>
x		x				4	<b>Explore solar electricity generation and battery storage for back-up power to the Town Hall.</b>
x	x					5	Meet DPH standards for the Town Hall to be approved as an Emergency Dispensing Site (EDS) to provide medicine, vaccines, and medical treatment, etc.
x	x					6	Develop an actionable plan to use EMS staff to act as visiting nurses for wellness checks/administering medication/conducting tele-visits with doctors.
x	x					7	Create an opt-in list of seniors/disabled residents who want to be checked-in on in event of emergency/institute an “Are You Okay” call list in collaboration with Southern Hilltown Consortium.
x						8	Continue the application process to become a CDBG community.

<sup>5</sup> Actions in **BOLD** were identified by MVP workshop participants as top priorities

Public Health	Emergency Response	Energy	Transportation	Water Mgmt	Open Space Land Mgmt		High Priority Actions <sup>5</sup>
x			x			9	Identify a funding source for maintenance and upkeep of the Council on Aging vehicle.
x	x					10	Encourage the Land's End neighborhood, and other single-access neighborhoods, to identify a captain for emergency response and communications.
x	x					11	Improve Town outreach and communication to residents for emergency response preparedness education, improved communication channels to reach the community in case of emergency, and improved tracking of higher-risk properties for emergency responders.
x						12	Conduct a marketing campaign to de-stigmatize the use of CoA services and expand CoA outreach to a broader population.
x		x				13	Investigate grants to help support continuity of private small businesses.
x						14	Support existing social programming services at library/town store/transfer station and work to adapt to meet existing needs for "third places."
x				x		15	Replace the two antiquated water storage tanks with one modern tank and conduct a feasibility study for the locations and sizing of the new tank. Consider removing the North Street Salt Shed tank (totally degraded) and repurposing the other tank for fire suppression.
x				x		16	<b>Update the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) operation system and automate the plant to bring into compliance with DEP regulations and avoid chlorinated water spills.</b>



Public Health	Emergency Response	Energy	Transportation	Water Mgmt	Open Space Land Mgmt		High Priority Actions <sup>5</sup>
x				x		17	Extend influent pipe from WTP further into the reservoir by ~30-40 ft for improvements to water quality/temperature/quantity.
x	x			x		18	Increase drinking water pipe size to a minimum of 8", which will increase water pressure and allow for use for fire suppression.
x	x			x		19	Conduct a conditions assessment of drinking water pipe system and hydrants and develop a prioritization plan for maintenance and replacement.
x	x			x		20	Update the drinking water pump house operating system and automate to bring into compliance with DEP regulations.
x	x			x		21	Evaluate pump house piping structures for repair and replacement.
x	x			x		22	Conduct a risk assessment for whole drinking water supply system and develop a maintenance prioritization plan.
x	x		x	x		23	<b>Conduct a culvert conditions assessment to North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative standards (including creating a town-wide map of "hot spot" flooding locations within public rights-of-way to better understand impact on local transportation) and develop a prioritization plan for maintenance and replacement, with a focus on nature-based solutions.</b>
	x			x		24	Encourage SWSC to conduct a culvert assessment and actively maintain roads and drainage ditches on their watershed lands.
			x	x		25	<b>Educate applicators of roadway snow/ice management products around environmentally-</b>

Public Health	Emergency Response	Energy	Transportation	Water Mgmt	Open Space Land Mgmt		High Priority Actions <sup>5</sup>
							<b>friendly products, their use, and the equipment associated with their use; purchase equipment as needed.</b>
			x	x		26	Review research on road salt impacts and model policies to date.
			x	x		27	Organize with neighboring municipalities to work with legislative delegation to hold MassDOT more accountable on road salting practices.
x	x		x			28	Continue training for Town departments and Fire Department/emergency responders on response to hazardous chemical spills, including those chemicals passing through on I-90 and Rt. 23.
x	x		x			29	<b>Develop a method of tracking specific hazardous materials being transported along I-90 and Rt. 23 and understand appropriate response to such spills.</b>
x	x			x		30	Evaluate standards of chemical storage associated with water treatment.
			x	x		31	Obtain funding to do collective, integrated hydrologic and hydraulic (H&H) analysis for improved roadway crossings on given stream systems (to avoid the high cost of doing H&H analysis project by project).
x	x		x	x		32	Work with MassDOT to mitigate I-90's stormwater and air pollution effects by improving drainage, building a sound barrier, planting improved vegetated buffers, etc.

Public Health	Emergency	Energy	Transportation	Water Mgmt	Open Space		Medium Priority Actions
x			x			33	Identify vehicle drivers for the CoA vehicle and develop policies and procedures for its use.
x			x			34	Research grant opportunities to secure a handicap accessible vehicle for the CoA.
x						35	Conduct a study to identify local services needed to increase the social and financial resilience of residents in poverty.
x						36	Keep CoA Brown Bag grocery program up and running for low income seniors.
x	x					37	Explore establishing a wood bank to help low income residents reliant on wood heating.
x	x					38	Conduct outreach to residents on sheltering in place, including providing a checklist of supplies and preparation necessary.
x	x	x				39	Explore with Eversource and MassDOER potential rebates, credits for generators, especially for senior citizens and those on private water supply.
x	x					40	Continue to promote the installation of broadband internet (last mile project).
x	x					41	Promote Blackboard Connect Reverse 911 service and educate residents on how to sign up.
	x		x			42	Acquire UTVs with flat beds/stretchers capabilities for emergency response/extrication to circumnavigate closed/impassable roads.
	x		x	x		43	Work with MassDOT to address stormwater management on the Mass Pike, including it overflowing onto town roads.
	x		x			44	Install better signage to avoid drivers accidentally getting stuck on roads without winter maintenance

Public Health	Emergency	Energy	Transportation	Water Mgmt	Open Space		Medium Priority Actions
							(GPS mistakes, visitors, etc.)
	x		x			45	Conduct preventative tree maintenance for hazard trees/limbs within public rights-of-way.
	x		x			46	Increase town budget for road maintenance.
	x		x			47	Maintain and improve emergency access to the Mass Pike and coordinate to ensure other agencies and neighboring towns understand policy (such as the ambulance service).
	x	x				48	Reorganize the use of municipal buildings (move Fire operations to current Highway Department, and build a new Highway Department facility) and explore options for capital improvements and/or facility usage.
	x	x				49	Improve efficiency and maximize use of existing resources to best support emergency response.
x	x					50	Inventory hazardous materials stored in town, and maintain the list moving forward.
x	x					51	Look into establishing purchasing policies for the town that avoid the purchase of hazardous materials when possible.
x	x					52	Provide education/training on correct handling of hazardous materials to any staff/employees at facilities with these materials, and to emergency response teams.
x				x	x	53	Update the expired Open Space and Recreation Plan.
			x			54	Continue to participate in discussions around the proposed Blandford Mass Pike exit with stakeholders, such as MassDOT and PVPC.
x					x	55	Explore options for increased forest stewardship, including identifying climate resilient species for

Public Health	Emergency	Energy	Transportation	Water Mgmt	Open Space		Medium Priority Actions
							possible assisted migration/replacement of lost species.
				x	x	56	Assess and explore strategic beaver population control, combined with use of beaver deceiver technology.
					x	57	Continue outreach to state forester regarding post-cut “slash” woody debris being left in forests, which causes drainage issues and could create a possible problem relative to wildfires.
					x	58	Promote roundtable conversation prior to forest cutting, to include the Conservation Commission, other relevant town boards, the state forester, and property owner.

Public Health	Emergency	Energy	Transportation	Water Mgmt	Open Space		Low Priority Actions
			x			59	CoA should explore expanding use of their vehicle for low-income residents when not in use by seniors.
	x		x			60	Improve maintenance of town roads to allow for connectivity to the Land’s End neighborhood.
x					x	61	Improve outreach to utility companies and residents about best practice in wood pile offering and specifically address Highway Department concern that wood piles not be left in drainage swales/areas.
x	x					62	Better coordination between departments to share and maintain information on the spread out population (i.e. if the building inspector is out at a property and sees that driveway to access the property is not possible – share this information with

Public Health	Emergency	Energy	Transportation	Water Mgmt	Open Space		Low Priority Actions
							the fire department).
x	x					63	Inventory the services offered by places of worship in town and continue to engage to develop and maintain relationships with these organizations.
	x		x			64	Continue to work with SWSC to re-open Cobble Mountain Road and address security concerns.
			x	x	x	65	Coordinate planning efforts with SWSC around Cobble Mountain Reservoir and Long Pond Reservoir watershed lands and continue to collaborate and build trust.
					x	66	Continue dialog with private landowners regarding public recreational access to private lands in conservation.

## SIGN-IN SHEET

## Blandford MVP Public Listening Session

Wednesday, February 12, 2020, 6:00 PM  
Blandford Town Hall

## Sign in

Name	Affiliation	e-mail
Joann Martin	Board of Selectmen	selectboardadmin@townofblandford.com
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