

## Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program Action Grant Case Study

**Municipality:** Blandford  
**Project Title:** Resilient Community-Driven Master Plan + Resilient Regulatory Work  
**Award Year (FY):** 2021  
**Grant Award: \$** \$102,824  
**Match: \$**  
**Match Source:**  
**One or Two Year Project:** One Year  
**Municipal Department Leading Project:** Town Administrator  
**Project Website URL:** [www.blandfordmasterplan.pvpc.org](http://www.blandfordmasterplan.pvpc.org)

### Community Overview:

- What is the population size of your community and where is it located?

*Population of 1,260; Hampden County*

- Do you have any [Environmental Justice](#) or other Climate Vulnerable communities? (Think about both those who live and work in your town.)

*There are no environmental justice communities in Blandford.*

- Other unique traits of your municipality like who the top employers are, geography, history, etc.

*The rural landscape of forests, fields, lakes, and streams is the greatest asset to the town of Blandford. The land now called Blandford, Massachusetts, was Mohican and Pocumtuc Territory, where originally due to its rugged upland terrain and the general absence of agriculture suggests that this community was the site of small, seasonal fishing and hunting camps. Its proximity to natural ponds and streams, like Long and Blair Ponds and Wheeler and Bedlam Brooks, would provide food for the native people.*

*In 1741, when Blandford was incorporated as a town, development along Route 23 sprung up, particularly homes and taverns due to its major traveling route between Albany and Springfield. In addition, Russell Stage Road served as the primary route between the Westfield River and Blandford Center, thus Blandford's place as an important pass-through community has been secured. Now primarily a bedroom community for people working in the larger communities of Westfield and Springfield, Blandford continues to offer a rural landscape and the peace and quiet of small-town life. The community has also become an important recreation destination.*

*Today, Blandford is a rural community of 53.5 square miles located in the Berkshire Hills of western Hampden County. Made up of rolling hills, elevations throughout town range*

*widely as it overlooks the Connecticut River Valley. The town is bordered by Chester and Huntington to the north, Tolland, and Granville to the south, Russell to the east, and Beckett and Otis, of Berkshire County, to the west.*

### **Project Description and Goals:**

- Where was the project located? *Town-wide*
- What climate change impacts did the project address? *Actions to mitigate flooding*
- What were the specific goals and tasks of the project as stated in your application?

*Assure a long-term sustainable and resilient future for our community such that our people, our natural resources, and our physical buildings and other infrastructure are safe and sound regardless of the weather and other impacts of our changing climate;*

*Update the OSRP to ensure thoughtful, purposeful protection of the natural resources which already contribute to our local climate resilience and to maintain our eligibility for state funding to protect open space and develop recreational resources; and*

- Did your project meet the goals set forth in your application in terms of:
  - Employing nature-based solutions *Yes*
  - Improving equitable outcomes for and fostering strong partnerships with EJ and other Climate Vulnerable Populations *To an extent*
  - Providing regional benefits *Yes*
  - Implementing the public involvement and community engagement plan set forth in your application *Mixed*
  - Finishing the project on time *Yes*

### **Results and Deliverables:**

- Describe, and quantify (where possible) project results (e.g. square footage of habitat restored or created, increase in tree canopy coverage, etc.). Report out on the metrics outlined in your application. *The Town completed the Resilient Master Plan, Open Space and Recreation Plan, and regulatory review for nature-based solutions.*
- Provide a brief summary of project deliverables with web links, if available. *All deliverables will be posted to the project website at <https://blandfordmasterplan.pvpc.org/>*

### **Lessons Learned:**

- What lessons were learned as a result of the project? Focus on both the technical matter of the project and process-oriented lessons learned. *COVID presented unique challenges to engagement with residents, both in identifying the abilities of participants and their*

*comfortability with technology and opining on the community-driven processes usually identified with a master planning process. Another lesson learned is although you may think you have two similar planning processes occurring – Resilient Master Plan and Open Space and Recreation Plan – the enthusiasm for completing both can be mixed where the likely players in one process will not necessarily be as enthused about the other.*

- What is the best way for other communities to learn from your project/process? *There may be an opportunity to build upon traditional written content and graphics to provide another alternative to story-telling – the story map.*

#### **Partners and Other Support:**

- Include a list of all project partners and describe their role in supporting/assisting in the project. *Barrett Planning Group (provided assistance with community engagement), Wildscape Design (provided assistance with the Open Space and Recreation Plan Update)*

#### **Project Photos:**

- In your electronic submission of this report, please attach (as .jpg or .png) a few high-resolution (at least 300 pixels per inch) representative photos of the project. Photos should not show persons who can be easily identified, and avoid inclusion of any copyrighted, trademarked, or branded logos in the images. MVP may use these images on its website or other promotional purposes, so please also let us know if there is someone who should receive credit for taking the photo.