Benson, Vermont
2025 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

Stony Point Road Overtaken by Flash Flooding in December 2022 – DR4695

FEMA Approval Pending Adoption Date: May 7, 2026
Municipal Adoption Date: May 26, 2026
FEMA Formal Approval Date: June 3, 2026

Prepared by the Benson Hazard Mitigation Planning Team
Brad Barrett, Road Foreman/Emergency Management Coordinator
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Technical Assistance by the Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC)

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region 1
220 Binney Street
Cambridge, MA 02142

FEMA

June 3, 2026

Caroline Paske, Hazard Mitigation Supervisor
Vermont Emergency Management
45 State Drive
Waterbury, Vermont 05671-1300

Dear Caroline Paske:

As outlined in the FEMA-State Agreements for FEMA-4744-DR-VT, FEMA-4720-DR-VT, FEMA-4695-DR-VT, FEMA-4621-DR-VT, FEMA-4532-DR-VT, and FEMA-4474-DR-VT, your office has been delegated the authority to review and approve local mitigation plans under the Program Administration by States Pilot Program. Our Agency has been notified that your office completed its review of the *Benson, Vermont 2025 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan* effective **June 2, 2026** through **June 1, 2031** in accordance with the planning requirements of the Robert T. Stafford Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act), as amended; the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, as amended; the National Dam Safety Program Act, as amended; and Title 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 201.

Mitigation plans may include additional content to meet Element H: Additional State Requirements or content the local government included beyond applicable FEMA mitigation planning requirements. FEMA approval does not include the review or approval of content that exceeds these applicable FEMA mitigation planning requirements.

With this plan approval, the Town of Benson, VT is eligible to apply to the Vermont Emergency Management for mitigation grants administered by FEMA. Requests for funding will be evaluated according to the eligibility requirements identified for each of these programs. A specific mitigation activity or project identified in this community's plan may not meet eligibility requirements for FEMA funding; even eligible mitigation activities or projects are not automatically approved.

The plan must be updated and resubmitted to the FEMA Region 1 Mitigation Division for approval every five years to remain eligible for FEMA mitigation grant funding.

Thank you for your continued commitment and dedication to risk reduction demonstrated by preparing and adopting a strategy for reducing disaster losses. Should you have any questions, please contact Alexis Meehan at (202) 394-6439 or alexis.meehan@fema.dhs.gov.

Sincerely,

CHRISTOPHER J MARKESICH Digitally signed by CHRISTOPHER J MARKESICH
Date: 2026.06.04 12:52:34 -04'00'

Christopher Markesich
Floodplain Management and Insurance Branch Chief
Mitigation Division | DHS, FEMA Region 1

cc: Ella Ferguson, State Hazard Mitigation Planner, VEM
Richard Verville, Mitigation Division Director, DHS, FEMA Region 1
Alexis Meehan, Community Planner, DHS, FEMA Region 1

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1 INTRODUCTION

Community planning and action can reduce the impact of expected but unpredictable natural events. The goal of this Plan is to advance mitigation investments to reduce risks posed by natural hazards and increase Benson's resilience to natural hazard impacts.

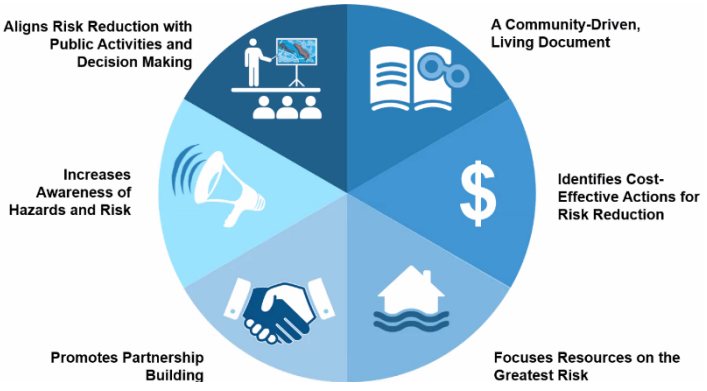
Hazard Mitigation is any sustained policy or action that reduces or eliminates long-term risk to people and property from the effects of natural hazards. All levels of government have come to recognize that it is less expensive to prevent disasters than to repeatedly repair damage after a disaster has struck. While hazards themselves cannot be eliminated, it is possible to identify local hazards, where their impacts may be most severe, and what actions and policies can be implemented to reduce the severity of their impacts.

This Plan recognizes that many hazards are interrelated and can cause cascading effects. Communities should therefore take a holistic approach to mitigation and integrate its principles and practices throughout government operations.

2 PURPOSE

This Plan identifies all natural hazards facing the Town of Benson, ranks them according to local vulnerabilities, and develops strategies to reduce the risks posed by these hazards. Once adopted, this Plan is not legally binding; instead, it outlines goals and actions to prevent future loss of life and property.

The benefits of mitigation planning include:

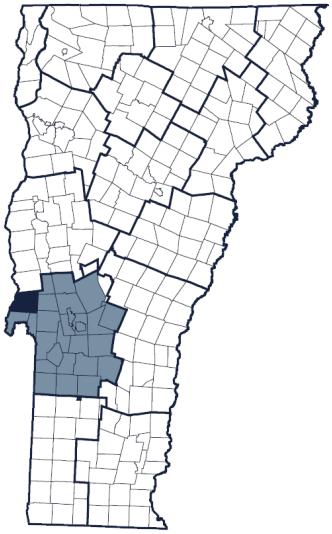


Source: FEMA LHMP Skill Share Workshop 2021

Furthermore, the Town seeks to be in accordance with the strategies, goals, and objectives of the 2023 State Hazard Mitigation Plan.

3 COMMUNITY PROFILE

Land Use and Development Patterns Chartered in 1780, Benson began as a thriving market center supported by traffic and trade that traveled on present-day Stage Road and present-day Lake Road. Benson Landing served as an access point to Lake Champlain after the completion of the Champlain Canal, connecting the Town to lucrative markets that used the lake to deliver goods. Two significant infrastructure developments in the nineteenth century diverted travel routes and dampened lake-based trading patterns: the completion of the Fair Haven Turnpike (now VT Route 22A) in 1810, and the laying of major railroad lines throughout Vermont during the 1850s. Town merchants and local farmers adjusted to the change by diversifying their economic activities. Herds of dairy cows became more common and eventually replaced sheep flocks as the primary agricultural enterprise.



Benson is the eighth smallest town in Rutland County, residing in the northwestern corner and straddling the Vermont/New York border. Located in the Champlain Valley, this rural community contains many historic hamlets. Farming is still a predominant land use, although a trend from many smaller farms toward fewer larger farms is apparent. Home businesses and a few commercial enterprises are also part of the Benson community.

The Village Center has a mix of closely spaced commercial and residential uses. Additional residential clusters exist in several other areas, including around Sunset Lake and Perch Pond, along areas of VT Route 144 and Howard Hill Road, and at Benson Landing. The remaining population is scattered throughout the countryside.

Noteworthy properties in the Village Center include the Benson Volunteer Fire Department, the Community Hall/Library, the Museum/Town Office, the United Church of Benson, and the Wheel Inn.

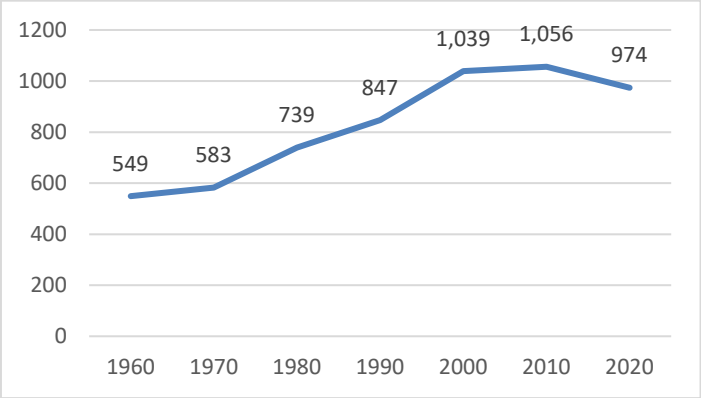
Structure fires in the late 2010s burned down several historic buildings in the Village Center, including the Grange apartment building and the Benson Village Store, which housed the U.S. Post Office. The Town recently received a grant from the Village Trust Initiative to rebuild the store; construction is estimated to be complete by Fall 2026.

Land Features Except for the relatively flat area in the Village Center and along VT Route 22A, the land making up the Town is mountainous, with hills bisected by meandering rivers. Elevations range from a low of around 100 feet along Lake Champlain at Benson Landing to nearly 1,050 feet at the peak of an unnamed hill northwest of Glen Lake and outside Half Moon Lake State Park. The ridgelines and higher elevation areas are largely undeveloped. Because of their shallow soils and steep slopes, the ecosystems at higher elevations tend to be fragile and susceptible to damage.

A dominant landscape feature in Benson is Shaw Mountain, a limestone uplift that rises over 500 feet from the surrounding land. Shaw Mountain contains eleven distinct natural communities preserved by the Nature Conservancy, including a shrub swamp, vernal pools, oak-hickory forests, and a calcareous outcrop community.

Demographics and Growth Potential The 2020 Decennial U.S. Census shows a population of 974 and 552 housing units, of which 438 are occupied. After modest growth in the second half of the twentieth century, the population has stabilized at around 1,000 people since 2000.

Between 2010 and 2020, the median age of Benson residents rose from 42 to 49, slightly above the median age in Rutland County of 47. Twenty percent of the population in Benson is over 65, and 17 percent are considered disabled. The Town's population density is 21 people per square mile, much lower than the overall state density of 68 people per square mile.



The Town has 89 seasonal units representing about 16% of the total housing stock, slightly greater than the 14% average for Rutland County. Of the permanent residences, about 79% are site-built single-family units, about 6% are multi-family units, and about 15% are manufactured housing. About 15% of residences are renter-occupied; 77% are owner-occupied.

Benson has natural growth constraints that help preserve its rural character and agricultural roots. Limited infrastructure—water, wastewater, and road capacity—and current land use regulations ensure that potential development remains small-scale and environmentally conscious. These measures support responsible, limited growth while maintaining Benson's scenic beauty and community spirit.

Precipitation and Water Features Benson has about 130 precipitation days per year, with an average annual precipitation of 40.8 inches of rain, with July being the wettest month. The average annual snowfall is 65.7 inches, with January being the snowiest month.

Projections from the University of California San Diego predict that by 2044, under scenarios of both intermediate and extreme greenhouse gas emissions, Benson will see 0-2 days of extreme precipitation per year.

The western side of town borders Lake Champlain's southern end. The northeastern corner features Perch Pond, most of Doughty Pond, most of Sunset Lake, and part of Sunrise Lake. Notable water bodies include Walker Swamp, Mud Pond, Bullhead Pond, Strong Swamp, Parsons Mill Pond, and Root Pond.

Several waterways flow through Benson: Hubbardton River from the east, Coggman Creek, South Fork East Creek, and Stacy Brook.

According to the Agency of Natural Resources, ~9.4% of the Town's land area (or 2,742.29 acres) is Class II Wetlands. These play an important role in water absorption and holding capacity, reducing flooding hazards and replenishing groundwater supplies.

Average Temperatures July is the hottest month in Benson, with an average daytime temperature of 82.6°F. There are 7.6 days annually when the high temperature is over 90°F, significantly warmer than most places in Vermont. January is the coldest month of the year, with an average nighttime temperature of just 9.9°F. There are 155.7 days annually when nighttime low temperatures fall below freezing, warmer than most places in Vermont.

Projections from the University of California, San Diego predict that by 2044, Benson will see 0-40 days above 90°F and 0-140 days below 32°F per year under an intermediate greenhouse gas emissions scenario. Under an extreme emissions scenario, Benson will see 40-80 days above 90°F and 0-140 days below 32°F per year.

The Vermont Climate Action Office reports the period from 2010-2020 was the warmest decade on record; if this trend continues, Benson will likely exceed 7.6 annual days of temperatures above 90°F by 2050.

Drinking Water and Sanitary Sewer There is no municipal water system in Benson. However, non-community public water systems serve Benson Heights (a senior housing complex) and the Benson Village School. Homes and businesses rely upon individual drilled wells and springs for portable water. Shallow soils, ledge formations, and density within the Village area have imposed summertime shortages for some residents and businesses.

Sewer lines are limited in Benson and run only along Stage and Lake Roads within the Village Center. A treatment facility is located on Stage Road, just southwest of the Kellogg Family Farm. As of 2025, the facility's permitted flow was 17,700 gallons per day. The remainder of homes and businesses rely on on-site septic systems for sanitary sewer disposal.

Transportation Benson covers ~45.5 square miles and is bisected by VT Route 22A, the secondary arterial highway connecting Vergennes to the north and Fair Haven to the south. This highway experiences heavy traffic from both light and heavy trucks, passenger vehicles, and farm machinery. VT Route 144 begins where Benson Road intersects with VT Route 22A and travels an east-northeast track as it heads out of Benson. The primary form of transportation is personal vehicles.

According to 2025 VTrans Town Highway data, the Town has 51.3 municipal road miles: 14.8 miles Class 2, and 36.4 miles Class 3. Approximately 86% are gravel, and 14 % are paved. In addition, there are 6.3 miles of State highway in Benson, for a total of ~61.9 miles of traveled highways, including Class 4 roads.

The Town's 2019 road erosion inventory shows that 51.4% of the road mileage is hydrologically connected—meaning it is within 100 feet of a water resource (e.g., stream, wetland, lake, or pond). Proximity to water resources can make these sections of road more vulnerable to flooding and fluvial erosion.

The Town's 2025 structures inventory (short structures and culverts) shows Benson has eleven (11) short structures (bridges with 6'-20' span), with four (4) owned and maintained by the State. There are ±574 culverts in the municipal road right-of-way; all were inventoried in 2025 by the RRPC. Of these, 41 culverts are classified as being in "poor", "urgent", or "critical" condition and should be considered for replacement and/or upgrade in accordance with the Town's Road and Bridge Standards.

According to VTrans, there are four (4) Town-owned long structures (bridges with >20' span). VTrans inspects long structures every two years through the Town Highway Bridge Program.

The local road network is maintained by a Town highway maintenance crew of two (2), whose newly-built garage is located on Hulett Hill Road.

Electric Utility Distribution System Green Mountain Power provides electric service to approximately 630 accounts via two primary circuits. Average annual outage statistics between 2021 and 2025 are summarized in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Power Outage Summary

Average Annual (2021-2025)	
Avg # of times a customer was without power in a year	4.09
Avg length of each outage in hours	4.06
# of hours the typical customer was without power	16.60
2025 only	
Avg # of times a customer was without power in a year	3.76
Avg length of each outage in hours	3.96
# of hours the typical customer was without power	14.86

The longest power outage affecting the greatest number of accounts between 2021 and 2025 was 10.23 hours, impacting 475 accounts in 2025. The longest outage overall occurred in 2022, lasting 78.08-hours and impacting 36 accounts. During that same year, there was a 33.10-hour outage that affected 470 accounts.

Public Safety The Benson Fire Department, a 12-member on-call volunteer department, provides local fire protection. The Department is a Rutland County Mutual Aid Association member, allowing for additional assistance from surrounding communities when resources within the Town are maximized.

As of 2024, law enforcement in Benson is no longer enforced by a locally elected constable. Vermont State Police provides primary coverage for law enforcement services.

Benson has a local volunteer first response squad for medical care, but primarily relies on the Fair Haven Rescue Squad for ambulance service. Two hospitals are equidistant from Benson by about 27 miles: the Rutland Regional Medical Center in Rutland City and the Porter Medical Center in Middlebury. Specialist/medivac support is available at Dartmouth Hitchcock (±80 miles) and the University of Vermont (±60 miles).

Emergency Management Per the Town's Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP), the town appoints an Emergency Management Director (EMD) and Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC). These individuals work with others in town to keep the LEMP up to date and coordinate with nearby towns and non-profit agencies that serve at-risk populations. The Town Office serves as the emergency operations center when needed, and the Town Garage serves as the primary local shelter (including as a cooling station during heat advisories).

Benson Town Office

4 PLANNING PROCESS

Plan Developers

A local Hazard Mitigation Planning Team participated in updating the Plan. Team members included the Town EMC/Road Foreman, two Selectboard representatives, and a Planning Commission representative. It should be noted that both Selectboard representatives participated in the 2019 plan update. The Planning Commission representative has supported the development of other Local Hazard Mitigation Plans in the past.

The RRPC assisted with this Plan update. FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) funds supported this process.

Plan Development Process

The 2025 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is an update to the 2019 single-jurisdiction mitigation plan. **Table 2** provides a summary of the process used to develop the 2025 update. **Appendix C** provides a detailed summary of public engagement throughout the Plan update, from kick-off to the final draft presentation.

Table 2: Plan Development Process

April 30, 2025 Planning Team Kick-off Meeting: discussed what an LHMP is; benefits of hazard mitigation planning; current plan status; planning process; and developed the public engagement strategy. Planning Team working meetings were not open to the public.

May–Jul 2025: completed Phase 1 public engagement activities - see **Appendix C**.

May 20, 2025 Risk Assessment Workshop: confirmed community profile (Section 3), completed risk assessment, and began developing profiles for highest risk natural hazards (Section 5). Subject matter experts attended the Workshop to assist with risk assessments for Invasive Species and Infectious Disease.

Jun 11, 2025 Planning Team Meeting: finalized Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (Section 5) with input from Phase 1 engagement. This is a critical milestone in the plan development process, and the draft plan was prepared for presentation to Selectboard and first public comment period.

Jun 23, 2025 Draft Plan Presentation: presented to Selectboard to encourage input from local government and the public that could affect the plan's conclusions and better integrate with Town initiatives. Meeting was recorded and available on Town website.

Jun 23-Jul 7, 2025 Draft Plan Public Comment Period: draft plan posted for first public comment period. Draft plan discussed at Jul 7, 2025 Selectboard meeting – coincided with close of first public comment period. Selectboard authorized proceeding with development of mitigation strategy on Jul 7, 2025.

Jul 9, 2025 Planning Team Meeting: discussed comments received on Jun draft; finalized Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (Section 5); and began work on hazard mitigation strategy (Section 6).

Jul-Sep 2025: completed Phase 2 public engagement activities – see **Appendix C**.

Jul 23, 2025 Mitigation Action Evaluation Workshop: evaluated broad range of possible actions to address the highest risk natural hazards. Subject matter experts attended the Workshop to assist the planning team with action evaluation.

Aug 13, 2025 Planning Team Meeting: developed actions proposed for implementation (Section 6); began work on Plan Maintenance (Section 7) and Changes Since 2019 (Section 4).

Sep 3, 2025 Planning Team Meeting: finalized actions proposed for implementation with input from Phase 2 engagement (Section 6); finished work on Plan Maintenance (Section 7) and Changes Since 2019 (Section 4).

Sep 15, 2025 Draft Plan Presentation: presented to Selectboard to encourage input from local government and the public. Meeting was recorded and available on Town website.

Sep 15 – Oct 14, 2025 Draft Plan Public Comment Period: draft Plan posted for last public comment period. Opportunity for public comments was provided at the Sept 29 Selectboard meeting. Draft Plan discussed at Oct 14, 2025 Selectboard meeting – coincided with close of last public comment period. At meeting, Selectboard granted approval to submit the draft Plan to Vermont Emergency Management for Approval Pending Adoption. Meeting was recorded and available on Town website.

In addition to the local knowledge of Planning Team members and other relevant parties, several existing plans, studies, reports, and technical information were utilized in the preparation of this Plan. **Table 3** provides a summary of these.

Table 3: Existing Plans, Studies, Reports & Technical Information

2025 Local Emergency Management Plan Primarily used to identify local organizations that support at-risk populations to ensure these organizations are invited to participate in the plan update.

2025 Structures Inventory (culverts and short structures) Referenced to develop the risk profile in Section 5 and mitigation actions to address floods in Section 6.

2025 FEMA NFIP Insurance Reports Used to determine how many structures are insured and number and type of repetitive loss properties in Section 5 and describe NFIP compliance in Section 6.

2025 FEMA Local Mitigation Planning Handbook & 2025 FEMA Local Mitigation Planning Policy Guide Used to ensure plan meets the Federal mitigation planning requirements.

2025 State of Vermont Highway Mileage Summary Used to develop Transportation information in Section 3.

2024-2020 Green Mountain Power Outage Data Used to develop Table 1 in Section 3.

2023 State of Vermont Hazard Mitigation Plan Primarily referenced to develop the risk assessment and profiles in Section 5.

2023 State of Vermont Municipal Vulnerability Indicators Tool Referenced to develop the Average Temperatures information in Section 3 and to develop the risk assessment and profiles in Section 5.

2022 Stormwater Master Plan Poultney River Watershed Referenced to develop the risk profile in Section 5 and mitigation actions to address floods in Section 6.

2021 Vermont Climate Assessment Referenced to develop the flood risk profile in Section 5.

2020 United States Census Report Used to develop the Demographics and Growth Potential information in Section 3.

2019 Road Erosion Inventory Referenced to develop the risk profile in Section 5 and mitigation actions to address floods in Section 6.

2017 Benson Town Plan Referenced to develop Mitigation Strategy Updates – Changes Since 2019 Plan in Section 4 and Community Capabilities and Integrating into Existing Plans and Procedures in Section 6.

2017 FEMA Region 1 Mitigation Ideas for Natural Hazards Used to develop mitigation actions to address impacts from severe winter storms, high wind, and floods.

2013 FEMA Mitigation Ideas Resource for Reducing Risk to Natural Hazards Used to develop mitigation actions to address impacts from severe winter storms, strong wind, floods, and extreme heat in Section 6.

2013 Stormwater Infrastructure Mapping Project Referenced to develop the risk profile in Section 5 and mitigation actions to address floods in Section 6.

2011 East Creek Corridor Plan Referenced to develop the flood risk profile in Section 5 and mitigation actions to address floods in Section 6.

2008 Flood Insurance Study for Rutland County, Vermont Referenced for community profile in Section 3; however, given the age of the document, it provided little in terms of assessing and profiling current flood risk.

VTrans Town Highway Bridge Inspection Reports Used to develop the risk profile in Section 5 and mitigation actions to address floods in Section 6.

Vermont Statewide Highway Flood Vulnerability and Risk Map Used to develop the risk profile in Section 5 and mitigation actions to address floods in Section 6.

VTrans Transportation Resilience Planning Tool Used to develop the risk profile in Section 5 and mitigation actions to address floods in Section 6.

Vermont Dam Inventory (VDI) Used to develop the risk profile in Section 5 and mitigation actions to address floods in Section 6.

RRPC Local Liaison Reports of Storm Damage Used to develop the risk profile and hazard history in Section 5.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric (NOAA) National Climatic Data Center's Storm Events Database Regional data for Rutland County used to develop the risk profile and hazard history in Section 5.

FEMA Disaster Declarations for Vermont Used to develop the risk profile and hazard history in Section 5.

GIS Data Layers Incorporated into base mapping to assess and profile hazards, including, but not limited to, FEMA National Flood Hazard Layers and State River Corridor Layers.

OpenFEMA Dataset: Public Assistance Funded Project Summaries for Vermont used to develop the risk profile and hazard history in Section 5.

Mitigation Strategy Update - Changes Since 2019

In 2019, Benson identified the following natural hazards that they believed posed the highest risk to the community:

- Rain/Thunder storms with associated fluvial erosion, inundation flooding, high winds, and/or hail.
- Winter storms with associated extreme cold, snow, ice, and high winds.

As the Town sought to implement the 2019 mitigation strategy, it looked for opportunities to incorporate information and recommendations from the 2019 Plan into other plans, programs, and procedures. Below are some examples.

Benson effectively integrated information from the 2019 Plan into budgets and other plans.

The Selectboard has worked closely with the Road Foreman and highway department to incorporate risk information and hazard mitigation goals into annual operating budgets and capital planning for municipal facilities and equipment. This remains an ongoing priority.

The 2019 Plan's mitigation goals and risk information helped inform two planning efforts in 2025: the local Planning Commission's update of the municipal plan and the Town's zoning bylaws.

In 2019, Benson completed its first road erosion inventory under the Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP). The MRGP is required by the Vermont Clean Water Act and aims to protect water quality by reducing stormwater-related erosion from municipal roads. Over 50% of Benson's municipal roads are regulated by the MRGP.

The Town has made significant progress in bringing its roads and drainage systems up to basic MRGP maintenance standards. Since 2019, the Town has improved approximately 13.54 miles of municipal roads and four (4) stormwater collection system outfalls. These infrastructure improvements protect water quality and make the roads more resilient to flash flooding. As of August 2025, only 5.3 road miles and one (1) outfall are non-compliant with MRGP standards.

Benson has made progress in completing other mitigation actions identified in the 2019 Plan – see **Appendix B**. One noteworthy accomplishment is the installation of several upsized culverts on multiple roads: Benson, Frazier Hill, North Cross, Perch Pond, Pleasant Valley, Root Pond, Stage, and Temple Roads.

Benson's mitigation actions since 2019 have made the community more prepared and less vulnerable to future natural hazard impacts.

Looking back over the past five years, Benson has not experienced significant changes in land use, development, or population. There have been no expansions of municipal infrastructure, such as roads or sewer utilities. Approximately 30 zoning permits have been issued since 2019; a mixture of primary and secondary dwellings, mobile homes, camps, accessory structures, and a few businesses. Only one property (a camp) is in the FEMA-mapped flood zone, and vulnerability to place-based hazards appears minimal.

The Town believes its growth potential is limited by a lack of public water and (widespread) sewer utilities and soil conditions that limit land suitable for installing a septic system.

There is also a strong public sentiment to maintain its rural character and historic settlement pattern. Current land use regulations ensure that any potential development remains small-scale and environmentally conscious.

Only limited future residential growth is expected in Benson. This prediction is supported by the overall decline in population from 2000 to 2020, with only an average gain of 2 households per year (or 0.6%) during the same timeframe.

More significantly, the Town has seen some shifts in key demographics, primarily the median age of residents and the percentage of those over age 65. These demographic changes have increased the Town's vulnerability to natural hazards.

Changes in population demographics and weather patterns are the primary drivers for a shift in the Town's mitigation priorities in 2025.

Since 2019, the acceleration of climate change has been increasing the frequency, duration, and intensity of storms, floods, fires, and extreme temperatures in Vermont. Local communities are feeling the impacts of climate change now, and these multi-hazard trends are expected to continue to increase in severity over the next century.[1]

As a result, Benson considered the effects of future conditions, like climate change, on the type, location, and range of intensities of identified hazards when conducting the risk assessment and selecting mitigation actions for the 2025 Plan.

The 2025 risk assessment is presented in **Table 4**. The highest risk hazard impacts the Town believes they are most vulnerable to remain consistent to 2019, albeit strong wind has become more of a concern. The 8.00 risk score for Strong Wind in 2019 has risen to a risk score of 10.00, while the 10.00 risk score for Extreme Cold/Snow/Ice in 2019 has dropped to a risk score of 6.75.

[1] FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program and Policy Guide, March 23, 2023

Warming temperatures, a lack of significant severe winter storm events in recent years, and an increase in the frequency and damage of Strong Wind events, including an EF0 tornado in 2023, are likely responsible for this shift in thinking.

Since 2019, the Town's hazard mitigation strategy has evolved in response to more frequent and severe hazard events, which threaten both existing and future assets. This has led to a shift in Benson's mitigation goals and priorities.

The list of assessed hazards was also expanded in the 2025 Plan to include invasive species and infectious disease, which are identified in the 2023 State Hazard Mitigation Plan. Subject matter experts from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and the Vermont Department of Health assisted the Planning Team with the risk assessments for invasive species and infectious disease. Invasive species ultimately scored as a highest risk hazard for the Town.

Extreme heat is also a new addition to the list of highest-risk hazards. Recent hot summers and warmer-than-normal winters, coupled with extensive publicity regarding climate change, have brought Extreme Heat to the forefront. Likewise, the attention drawn to the Emerald Ash Borer has heightened awareness of the issues created by this species, adding this hazard to the highest-risk category.

Finally, to better address the needs of Benson's vulnerable populations, when ranking an action's implementation priority in 2025, those that directly benefit a vulnerable population were ranked first priority - see **Table 6**.

In this Plan, natural hazards are defined as:

- Geological hazards including landslides and earthquakes.
- Environmental and climatic hazards including flooding, wind, hail, snow and ice storms, extreme temperatures, drought, wildfire, and invasive species.
- Biological hazards including infectious disease that can become epidemics or pandemics.

5 HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Local Vulnerabilities and Risk Assessment

The Planning Team completed a risk assessment for a broad range of natural hazards, consistent with those in the 2023 State Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Hazards were ranked based on 1) probability of occurrence and 2) potential impact on community assets—people, infrastructure, the environment, and the local economy. The assessment considered the effects of future conditions, like climate change or potential development, on the type, location, and range of intensities of identified hazards.

The ranking process is presented in **Table 4** and reflects the **highest-risk hazards** the Town believes it is most vulnerable to. The **highest-risk** hazards are those with a higher probability of occurrence and/or more severe or extensive impacts on community assets.

A summary of the risk assessment, including input from Phase 1 engagement activities, is provided here:

	Risk Score	Phase 1 Engagement Input
Strong Wind	**10.00**	78% of survey respondents have experienced strong wind events; voted #1 of the top 3 hazards most likely to occur in the next 5 years
Extreme Heat	**8.00**	27% of survey respondents have experienced extreme heat; Tied with drought as #4 of the top hazards most likely to occur in the next five years.
Invasive Species	**7.00**	(Not surveyed)
Flash Flood/ Fluvial Erosion	**6.75**	39% of survey respondents have experienced flash flooding; voted #2 of the top 3 hazards most likely to occur in the next 5 years
Extreme Cold/Snow/Ice	**6.75**	56% of survey respondents have experienced severe winter storms; voted #3 of the top 3 hazards most likely to occur in the next 5 years
Inundation Flood	**6.00**	Compared to flash flooding, this did not rank highly as a concern among survey participants

Table 4: Community Hazard Risk Assessment

Hazards	Probability	Potential Impact					Risk Score
		People	Infrastructure	Environment	Economy	Average	
Strong Wind	**4**	**2**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**2.50**	**10.00**
Extreme Heat	**4**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**2.00**	**8.00**
Invasives	**4**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**1**	**1.75**	**7.00**
Extreme Cold/Snow/Ice	**3**	**3**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**2.25**	**6.75**
Flash Floods/ Fluvial Erosion	**3**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**3**	**2.25**	**6.75**
Inundation Floods	**4**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**1**	**1.50**	**6.00**
Drought	3	2	1	2	2	1.75	5.25
Infectious Disease	2	4	1	1	2	2.00	4.00
Hail	2	1	1	1	2	1.25	2.50
Earthquake	1	1	1	1	1	1.00	1.00
Landslide	1	1	1	1	1	1.00	1.00
Wildfire	1	1	1	1	1	1.00	1.00

*Score = Probability x Average Potential Impact

	Frequency of Occurrence: Probability of a plausibly significant event	**Potential Impact:** Severity and extent of damage and disruption to population, property, environment, and the economy
1	**Unlikely:** <1% probability of occurrence per year	**Negligible:** isolated occurrences of minor property and environmental damage, potential for minor injuries, no to minimal economic disruption
2	**Occasionally:** 1–10% probability of occurrence per year, or at least one chance in next 100 years	**Minor:** isolated occurrences of moderate to severe property and environmental damage, potential for injuries, minor economic disruption
3	**Likely:** >10% but <75% probability per year, at least 1 chance in next 10 years	**Moderate:** severe property and environmental damage on a community scale, injuries or fatalities, short-term economic impact
4	**Highly Likely:** >75% probability in a year	**Major:** severe property and environmental damage on a community or regional scale, multiple injuries or fatalities, significant economic impact

Infectious Disease and Invasive Species

This Plan must assess the risk of all hazards identified in the 2023 State Hazard Mitigation Plan, including infectious disease and invasive species. These hazards are unique and diverse. While their probability of occurrence in Benson may be high, potential impacts will be highly dependent on the specific infectious agent or invasive species.

When conducting the risk assessment, the Planning Team assumed an endemic level of spread for infectious disease. They concluded that the Vermont Department of Health (VDH), located in nearby Rutland City, is better equipped to mitigate any outbreaks; therefore, the team considered it a lower-risk hazard for the municipality.

For invasive species, the team focused on a specific forest pest of high concern, the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), due to confirmed detections in Benson and many nearby municipalities: Castleton, Fair Haven, Hubbardton, Orwell, and West Haven. They concluded that EAB infestation is highly likely and that minor to moderate impacts justified mitigation. Concern was also voiced about the spread of *Phragmites australis* along roadsides. This invasive wetland grass is capable of accelerating erosion and worsening flooding impacts.

Given the diverse nature of these hazards, this Plan cannot fully explore them. Readers should look to VDH for more information on infectious diseases and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources for more information on invasive species.

Each of the **highest-risk hazards** is profiled in this section. Lower risk hazards do not justify mitigation due to a lower probability of occurrence and/or negligible impacts and are not profiled in this Plan. See the State Hazard Mitigation Plan for information on lower-risk hazards.

Survey Respondents Said….

Natural hazard impacts they are concerned about:

#1 Damage or loss of roads, bridges, public utilities
#2 Loss of life or injuries, especially among vulnerable populations
#3 Damage or loss of agricultural operations

Highest Risk Hazard Profiles

Strong Wind, defined by FEMA's National Risk Index, is damaging wind exceeding 58 mph. It can occur alone, such as during straight-line wind events, or can accompany other natural hazards, including severe thunder and/or winter storms.

From 2001 to 2010, Rutland County experienced nearly $7.9 million in property damage, with the most significant damage totaling $4.5 million from an April 16, 2007 event.

From 2011 to December 2025, wind events caused above $3.7 million in property damage in Rutland County, with $802,000 in 2017 and $723,000 in 2022. In December 2022, a felled tree caused one death in nearby Castleton (DR-4695)[2] with an additional two injuries in Rutland County.

Strong wind is possible here; 78% of survey respondents have experienced a strong wind event. Benson is susceptible to high directional winds town-wide. Many storms with high winds can result in downed trees, damaged phone and power lines, buildings, and other property.

Strong wind was voted the #1 of the top three hazards likely to occur in the next five years. It threatens lives, property, and vital utilities primarily because of flying debris or downed trees and power lines.

Those relying on electric-powered medical devices are especially at-risk during power outages. Because there is no municipal water system, when there is a power outage, those who rely on a private well are also without water. Without a back-up supply of power, people need to be prepared to withstand potentially 24-hours or more without power or seek alternative accommodations.

As noted previously, a substantial power outage in 2022 lasted 33 hours and impacted nearly 75% accounts in Benson.

Downed trees within the road right-of-way are the root cause of many power outages. Roads that pass through dense wooded areas are prone to downed trees, which can lead to fallen utility lines – power and telecommunications.

Downed utility lines can cause power outages and disrupt communications, which are crucial in times of crisis. The loss of phone service is of particular concern for Benson's more remote homes and older populations. Landline phones that have been converted from copper wire to fiber rely on an in-home battery back-up. The battery life is typically less than eight hours, whether the phone is used or not. Notably, the Town Office and Library are hooked up to fiber phone lines.

Though many residents use cell phones, service in Benson is spotty, further complicating the problem of contacting emergency services during power outages.

Telecommunications are needed for warning systems before a disaster and for response during and recovery after. During a disaster, municipal response is managed by the local Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at the Benson Town Office. This includes all communications, from phone calls to internet browsing and two-way radio.

[2] While DR4695 is classified under severe storms and flooding, the mortality in Castleton is directly linked to a tree felled by wind.

The only municipal building with a dedicated standby generator is the Town Garage. Because the Town Office and Community Hall share a water well, the potential for onsite power generation is limited. However, these buildings do have wiring in place for hook-ups. Other critical facilities lacking generators include both fire station buildings and the Village School. In the 2019 Plan, it was noted that the cost of standby power for the school was too great to justify the benefits.

Although the municipal wastewater treatment facility is not equipped with backup power, it is not typically vulnerable to power outages. The predominantly gravity collection system discharges to an aerated lagoon facility with two lagoons. The facility has enough excess capacity to withstand a prolonged power outage. It also has an electric power failure plan in accordance with its State-issued discharge permit.

In addition to utility disruptions, downed trees can damage buildings and block road access. When downed trees become entangled in utility lines, clearing the debris from the roadway becomes more complicated, and it can take longer to restore access.

Benson's population density is relatively low, and most people are scattered across the countryside. This is a concern for the Town regarding accessibility via the roadway and emergency response time.

The primary environmental concern is tree damage or loss. Trees provide many ecological services and benefits, including stormwater management, improved air quality, carbon storage, shade, and wildlife habitat.

Benson's vulnerability lies in roadside trees falling on the road and/or overhead utility lines due to high winds. The resulting impacts include tree loss, utility disruptions, property damage, and road debris that requires cleaning.

Strong wind events with associated power outages and roadway debris can have a short-term impact on the local economy due to business closures or commutes blocked by downed trees or power lines.

Strong Wind Hazard History

These are the most up to date significant events impacting Benson. All damages are to property unless otherwise noted. Rutland County Disaster Declarations are depicted in **bold**.

8/4/2024: 50 mph winds: $3,000 local damage
4/3/2024: 52 mph winds: $100,000 regional damage
2/28/2024: 48 mph winds: $50,000 regional damage
7/13/2023: DR4720: An EF0 tornado (85 mph winds) touched down in Benson Landing: $50,000 local damage
7/9/2023: DR4720: 55 mph wind: $30,000 local damage
12/23/2022: 48 mph winds: $175,000 regional damage
3/1/2021: 39 mph winds: $55,000 regional damage
8/4/2020: 45 mph winds: $60,000 regional damage
2/24/2019: 48 mph winds: $50,000 regional damage
6/13/2018: 50 mph winds: $5,000 local damage
4/1/2018: 63 mph winds: $100,000 regional damage
10/30/2017: 40 mph winds: $200,000 regional damage
5/5/2017: 64 mph winds: $525,000 regional damage
2/29/2016: 39 mph winds: $20,000 regional damage
1/20/2013: 43 mph winds: $25,000 regional damage
12/21/2012: 61 mph winds: $100,000 regional damage
12/1/2010: 56 mph winds: $350,000 regional damage
2/26/2010: 50 mph winds: $75,000 regional damage
12/9/2009: 55 mph winds: $35,000 regional damage
6/30/2009: 50 mph winds: $15,000 local damage
8/16/2007: 55 mph winds: $25,000 local damage
6/19/2007: 50 mph winds: $5,000 local damage
4/15-16/2007: DR1698 "Nor'icane" 3" snow and rain, 60-80 mph wind: $4.5 mil regional damage
6/20/2006: 50 mph winds: $5,000 local damage
2/17/2006: 37 mph winds:$125,000 regional damage

Extreme Heat is an emerging concern for communities acclimated to a cooler environment. Excessive heat events involve a combination of significantly high temperatures and high humidities.

Multiple excessive heat event days in a row, during which the maximum temperature meets or exceeds 90°F, are known as heat waves. Vermont's "heat season" typically lasts from May to September.

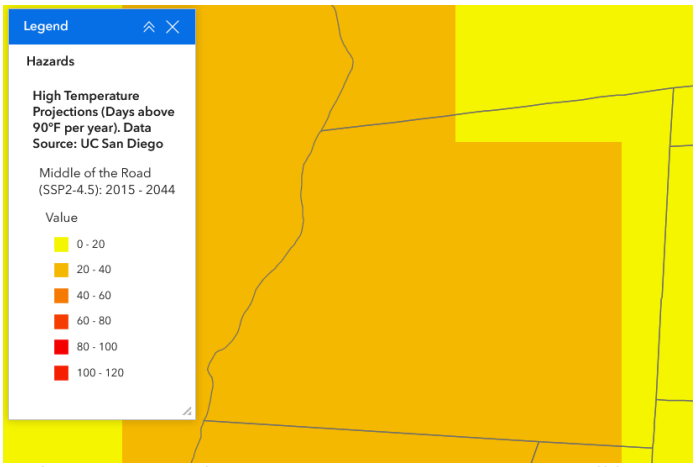
From 2001-2010, Rutland County experienced one heatwave in August 2006. From 2011 to December 2025, Rutland County experienced six heat waves, five of which occurred during the Vermont heat season. The sixth, which occurred in March 2012, resulted in $650,000 in damage to the regional maple sugaring industry.

Excessive temperatures have and will continue to impact Benson. 27% of survey respondents said they have experience with extreme heat events, while 22% believe one is likely to occur in the next five years.

Vermont Department of Health data indicates state residents experience heat-related illnesses at around 87°F. While everyone is affected by hot weather, the risk of heat illness is greater for vulnerable populations, outdoor workers, urban residents, and the homeless. Other at-risk indicators include living alone, having limited transportation options, and lacking air conditioning or other cooling options.

Benson's older population and those living in older houses lacking central air or air conditioning units are especially at risk from extreme heat impacts.

Benson does not have a system for monitoring the needs of at-risk populations before or during extreme weather events. However, it can provide aid if requested, and the Town can set up a temporary cooling center in the Town Garage if needed.



Under an intermediate emissions scenario, Benson will be one of the hottest municipalities in Rutland County by mid-century. (Source: Vermont MVI Tool.)

The materials used in transportation infrastructure exhibit a limited range of heat tolerance. Asphalt can melt and crack upon cooling, while concrete can buckle with limited room for the slab to expand. Thermal expansion may swell bridge connections and induce their collapse.

The Town has a high percentage of gravel roads and thus perceives a lower susceptibility to highway infrastructure damage, specifically asphalt cracking. Given Benson's reliance on drilled wells, increased evapotranspiration rates may hinder access to potable water, which has happened in the village area in the past (see page 3).

A gradually warming climate will increase soil drying rates, contributing to drought-like conditions. Heat-stressed trees are more likely to succumb to disease or pest invasions. Conversely, warmer air can hold more water vapor, which in turn influences the frequency and magnitude of extreme precipitation events that weaken tree integrity.

Drought-like conditions can also increase the potential for brush fires. Brush fire probability depends on local weather conditions (lightning, drought, extreme heat); outdoor activities (camping, debris burning); and the amount of "fuel" present in the environment. While Benson has not experienced a notable brush fire in recent years, other municipalities in Rutland County have.

Higher temperatures, especially if accompanied by drought, can significantly impact crops and other agricultural operations. While there are a few remaining active farms in Benson, extreme heat impacts on this and other sectors of the local economy are perceived to be minor.

Extreme Heat Hazard History

These are the most up to date significant events impacting Benson. All damages are to property unless otherwise noted. Rutland County Disaster Declarations are depicted in **bold**.

6/23-6/24/2025: 90°F temps with an excessive heat index of 100-110°F; no reported damages

7/7/2020: 95°F temps with an excessive heat index of 95-100°F for four days; no reported damages

6/18/2020: 90°F temps with an excessive heat index of 95-100°F for six days; no reported damages

7/1/2018: 90°F temps with an excessive heat index of 95-110°F for six days; no reported damages

3/17/2012: 70 and 80°F temps, with maximums 30-40°F above normal for four days; $650,000 regional damage to maple sugaring industry

7/21/2011: 90°F temps with an excessive heat index of 100-108°F for four days; no reported damages

8/1-8/2/2006: 90°F temps with an excessive heat index of 100-105°F; no reported damages

Invasive Species are typically introduced to non-native ecosystems by human activity, both intentional and accidental. Not every non-native species is invasive; the organism must be capable of causing harm to the environment, the economy, or human health. The exact nature of these harms varies by species, but commonalities include a change in native species composition, a disruption of natural ecosystem functions, and millions of dollars spent annually on control and spread prevention measures.

Though many aquatic and terrestrial invasives currently inhabit Vermont, forest pests are most relevant given their impacts on local trees. Examples include Asian long-horned beetle, oak wilt, and spotted lanternfly. Given the data available, this Plan examines the impacts posed by the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*), an exotic beetle. Emerald ash borer (EAB) is well established in Rutland County and was first detected in Benson in 2024.

EAB larvae burrow through the inner layer of the ash tree's bark, impeding the tree's ability to conduct water and nutrients throughout the tree. Lacking sufficient water and nutrients, healthy ash trees can die within 1-4 years of exhibiting the first signs of invasion.

Once detected, invasive species are virtually impossible to eradicate or contain. Millions of dollars are spent annually in Vermont on long-term management and asset protection.

Those working to remove an infested tree are at the greatest risk of injury. Once infested, the tree becomes brittle, significantly increasing the risk and complexity of its removal.

Infested trees along roads become hazards as they die, pulling down powerlines or falling into the roadway. During high precipitation events, they also add to riverine debris.

The Town does not have an ash tree roadside inventory, so it is currently unknown how many ash trees are within the road right-of-way in Benson.

Because 5% of Vermont's trees are ash, the State's forest composition is vulnerable to this invasive species. Signs of damage have already been observed in the roadside picnic and parking area (located off of VT Route 22A) for the Pond Woods Wildlife Management Area. While the State owns this particular plot of land, it is reasonable to assume that the established EAB population will spread from this point and, inevitably, along municipal road ROWs.

Photo Credit: State of Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets

EAB has serious financial implications for forest landowners and municipalities, including productive timber losses and costs to remove ash trees along roadsides. Assigning financial losses for Rutland County specifically would be difficult, so this information is not included.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Hazard History

Because invasive species often spread over a long period of time, identification of a hazard event concerning invasive species is rather difficult. FEMA also does not declare federal disasters for invasive species outbreaks.

Extreme Cold, Snow, and Ice events typically occur between December and March in the Rutland Region. They can include snow, sleet, freezing rain, or a mix of these wintry forms of precipitation. Events can also be associated with Strong Wind or Floods, increasing the potential hazard impacts.

The costs of these storms include power outages due to heavy snow or ice, damaged trees, school closures, and traffic accidents.

The southern boundary of the January 1998 ice storm passed through Benson, with historic impacts and week-long power outages occurring north of Hulett Hill Road. A Town Highway vehicle also became trapped between a pair of downed live wires for several hours on Stage Road.

From 2001 to 2010, Rutland County experienced $2.27 million in property damage and $100,000 in crop damage from winter storms, including Disaster Declarations DR1358 in 2001 and DR1698 in 2007. The Valentine's Day storm of February 2007 resulted in ~33 inches of wet snow and visibility hampered by sub-zero windchills and blowing snowdrifts.

From 2011 to December 2025, the County experienced $2.73 million in damage, with $300,000 in property damage due to a 10" - 20" heavy, wet snowfall across the county on December 9, 2014 (DR4207) and $1 million in crop damage due to a hard freeze in May 2023 (S5470).

33% of survey participants are concerned about extreme winter storms in the next 5 years. Winter weather impacts of greatest concern are extended periods of extreme cold coupled with a long-duration power outage.

56% of survey respondents have experienced extreme cold/snow/ice events. Severe winter storms create a higher risk of car accidents, and extreme cold poses a higher risk of hypothermia and frostbite. This threat is amplified if extreme temperatures coincide with power outages, which can cut off heat and communications.

The impacts of extreme cold and severe winter storms are hardest felt by Benson's at-risk populations—low-income residents, the elderly, and those living in substandard housing. About 37% of Benson residents are considered low-income, 20% of Benson residents are over the age of 65, and 75% of houses were built before 2000.

As mentioned in the extreme heat profile, Benson does not have a system for monitoring the needs of at-risk populations before or during extreme weather events. However, it can provide aid if requested, and the Town can set up a temporary warming shelter in the Town Garage if needed.

See the previous Strong Wind profile for more information about the Town's vulnerability to power outages.

Car accidents are a leading cause of death and injury during winter storms. To lessen roadway impacts, the Town maintains four trucks with plows (three dump, one pick-up), a front-end wheel loader, and a grader. However, the Town relies on a two-person crew to ensure all roads are accessible, even in major accumulation events. This can result in it taking around 6 hours to clear all roads.

As shown on the following map (page 18), roads historically prone to drifting include Benson Road, Carter Street, Frazier Hill Road, Mill Pond Road, Money Hole Road, and North Lake Road. However, snow accumulation and ice events typically do not result in a long-term loss of road accessibility. Roads adjacent to critical facilities (Community Hall, Fire Station buildings, Town Garage, Town Office, Village School) are well maintained.

Overhead utility lines that are covered in ice or wet snow accumulation pose the greatest risk to infrastructure. Trees along the roadside may also fall on the road or powerlines due to the weight of ice or wet snow accumulation. The resulting impacts include tree loss, utility disruptions, and road debris that requires clearing.

Like Strong Wind events, the primary environmental impact of concern is tree damage.

Given the Town's predominantly rural nature, agricultural products are vulnerable here. Beyond farm products, local businesses are at risk in the short term. Potential impacts include school and daycare closures, employee and customer inaccessibility, commute delays, and frozen pipes. The current perception is that even in severe weather conditions, people are not likely to shelter in place and go about their daily routines.

Extreme Cold, Snow, and Ice Hazard History

These are the most up to date significant events impacting Benson. All damages are to property unless otherwise noted. Rutland County Disaster Declarations are depicted in **bold**.

5/18/2023: S5470 record low in the 20s: $1,025,000 regional crop damage
1/16/2021: 3-6" wet snow: $60,000 regional damage
2/7/2020: 8-12" snow; ¼" ice: $35,000 regional damage
1/19/2019: 10-18" snow; -10 to -20 below zero degrees with 30+ mph winds creating windchills colder than 20-40 below zero: $25,000 regional damage
3/7/2018: 8-10" snow: $20,000 regional damage
3/14/2017: 12-22" snow; 35 mph wind creating whiteout conditions: $50,000 regional damage
2/1-2/2015: Record cold month with 15-20+ days below zero and 10" snow: $25,000 regional damage
1/7/2015: 0-10 degrees with wind of 15-30 mph creating wind chills colder than 20-30 below zero: no reported damage
12/9/2014: DR4207 10-20" snow: $29,400 local damage; $300,000 regional damage
3/12/2014: 8-24" snow: $55,000 regional damage
4/28/2012: sub-freezing temps in 20s for three consecutive nights: $100,000 regional crop damage
5/11/2010: sub-freezing temps in 20s: $100,000 regional crop damage
2/23/2010: 6-30" snow: $300,000 regional damage
12/11/2008: 5-9" snow/ice glaze: $75,000 regional damage
2/14/2007: 15-35" snow and 0-10 degrees, with wind of 15-25 mph creating windchills colder than 10 below zero; $275,000 regional damage
2/10/2005: 8-12" snow: $40,000 regional damage
4/4/2003: 10-20" snow: $40,000 regional damage
3/20/2002: 3-5" wet snow/ice: $20,000 regional damage
3/5/2001: DR3167 20-30" snow: $5,100 local damage; $100,000 regional damage

Floods can damage or destroy property, disable utilities, destroy or make impassable roads and bridges, destroy crops and agricultural lands, disrupt emergency services, and result in fatalities.

People may be stranded in their homes without power, heat, or communication, or they may be unable to reach their homes. Long-term collateral dangers include disease outbreaks, livestock losses, septic system washouts which pollute the water supply, downed power lines, fuel storage tank losses, fires, and the release of hazardous materials.

As noted in the 2023 State Hazard Mitigation Plan and 2021 Vermont Climate Assessment, flooding is the most common recurring hazard event impacting Vermont communities. There are two types of flooding: inundation and flash flooding. Inundation flooding occurs when water rises onto low-lying land. Flash flooding is a sudden, violent flood that often entails stream bank (i.e., fluvial) erosion.

While inundation-related flood loss can be a significant component of flood disasters, the more common mode of damage in Vermont is fluvial erosion. Fluvial erosion is often associated with physical adjustment of stream channel dimensions and location during flood events. These dynamic and often catastrophic adjustments are due to bed and bank erosion of naturally occurring unstable stream banks, debris and ice jams, or structural failure of or flow diversion by human-made structures.

"Damage from high flows is the single most costly type of disaster in Vermont, primarily due to the erosive power of water. Many roads and culverts conflict with the room needed by streams and rivers."
2021 Vermont Climate Assessment

Several major flood events have recently affected Rutland County, resulting in multiple Disaster Declarations. From 2001 to 2010, the County experienced roughly $2.6 million in property damage due to flood events. The worst flood came in August 2011 from Tropical Storm Irene (DR4022), which dropped 7-8 inches of rain. Irene caused 2 deaths, $55 million in property damage, and $2.5 million in crop damage in Rutland County.

Although Irene was technically a tropical storm, its effects are profiled in this flooding section since the storm brought only large rainfall and flooding to the Town, not the strong wind typically associated with tropical storms. This caused most streams and rivers to flood, in addition to widespread and severe fluvial erosion. Benson experienced approximately $148,500 in local damage during Irene - $3,080 Individual Assistance and $145,416 Public Assistance. (There were no National Flood Insurance Program claims for DR4022 in Benson).

From 2012 to 2020, Rutland County experienced approximately $3.6 million in property and crop damage and three Disaster Declarations: $420,000 in June & July 2013 (DR4140), $2 million in July 2017 (DR4330), and $1 million in April 2019 (DR4445).

According to the NOAA Storm Events database, Rutland County experienced approximately $200,000 in property damage in July 2023 (DR4720). However, FEMA's Public Assistance Project Summary indicates this number to be as high as $4.4 million. The only other instance of significant damage from flooding in Rutland County is in July 2024 (DR4762), with approximately $50,000 in property damage.

Benson is vulnerable to inundation flooding at Benson Landing and along sections of significant waterways: Hubbardton River, Coggman Creek, South Fork East Creek, and Stacy Brook. Roads that are impacted by inundation flooding include the western edge of North Lake Road, Brown's Bay Road, Morris Lane, and Root Pond Road. However, the severity and extent of damages from inundation flooding are typically minor.

There are 36 buildings in the FEMA-mapped floodplain, as well as roads, culverts, and bridges. No properties are located in the FEMA floodway.

36 buildings (3% of community structures) are in the Special Flood Hazard Area; a mixture of boat docks, camps, and single family dwellings.

According to FEMA, 0% of properties have flood insurance.
There are no repetitive loss properties.

Unlike inundation floods, flash floods can occur whenever the area has heavy rain. These flood events are inherently sudden and unpredictable and can impact areas outside of designated floodplains, namely River Corridors. River Corridors encompass an area around and adjacent to the river where fluvial erosion is most likely to occur. The River Corridor map for Benson can be viewed on the Vermont Flood Ready Atlas and is also delineated on the following map.

A wide range of assets is at risk from flash floods. There are nine buildings in the State-mapped River Corridors- multiple single family dwellings, two mobile homes, a seasonal home, and a development site- as well as roads, culverts, bridges, and dams.

Inundation Flooding at Benson Landing is common, but its impact tends to be minor

44% of survey respondents have experienced floods. According to the National Weather Service, floods kill more people than any other weather-related hazard. Most flood-related deaths occur while driving a vehicle into flood waters.

For those sheltering in place, the greatest risk beyond the floodwaters themselves is their ability to isolate. The rapid and erosive destruction of nearby infrastructure may render flooded areas inaccessible. The result is people becoming trapped and requiring swift water rescues, or critical assets such as medical services becoming unavailable. At-risk populations, especially those with limited range of motion, face the greatest risk of isolation.

With inundation floods, there are cascading impacts involving infectious disease. Mosquitos, for example, breed in standing water, and when their population increases, so does the risk of diseases they transmit – e.g., West Nile Virus and Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE).

The most common type of flash flood damage is road washouts. When runoff volumes exceed the capacity of the stormwater drainage system (i.e., ditching and culverts), washouts can occur.

The Town's structures and road erosion inventories, ANR's Municipal Vulnerability Indicators Tool, VTrans Highway Flood Vulnerability and Risk Tool, and VTrans Transportation Resilience Planning Tool (TRPT) were used to help identify locations and assets at risk from flash flooding. Areas of concern are shown to the right and on the following map.

Culvert failures and road washouts can have a significant negative impact on the Town, especially if they occur on roads considered locally important routes for through-traffic, short-cuts, detours, and/or access to critical facilities. When roads are impacted by flooding, the Town coordinates with the Fire Department and State Dispatch to close roads and set up detours. Road closures can create longer commute times and longer emergency service response times.

In addition to road stormwater runoff, ice or debris jams, and dam failures may result in flash flooding in Benson. Except for VT Route 22A, the Town has minimal potential for ice or debris jams.

There are five (5) dams in Benson listed in the Vermont Dam Inventory, a database managed by the VT Dam Safety Program:

1) Munger Dam is on the Hubbardton River, east of East Road and near the Hubbardton border. It is owned by the Kubin Family Partnership and is classified as a significant hazard potential dam. Last inspected in 2024, its condition is poor.
2) Parsons Mill Dam is on the Hubbardton River, near the intersection of Howard Hill Road and Mill Pond Road. It is privately owned and classified as a low hazard potential dam. Last inspected in 2003, its condition is poor.
3) Perch Pond Dam is on Perch Pond Brook. It is owned by the State and classified as a low-hazard potential dam. Last inspected in 2023, its condition is satisfactory.
4) Sunrise Lake is on the Hubbardton River, east of Sunset Lake Road. It is privately owned and classified as a significant hazard potential dam. Last inspected in 2023, its condition is poor.
5) Sunset Lake is on the Hubbardton River, west of Sunset Lake Road and near the Orwell border. It is owned by the Town and is classified as a low hazard potential dam. Last inspected in 2023, its condition is satisfactory.

There are no high hazard potential dams in Benson.

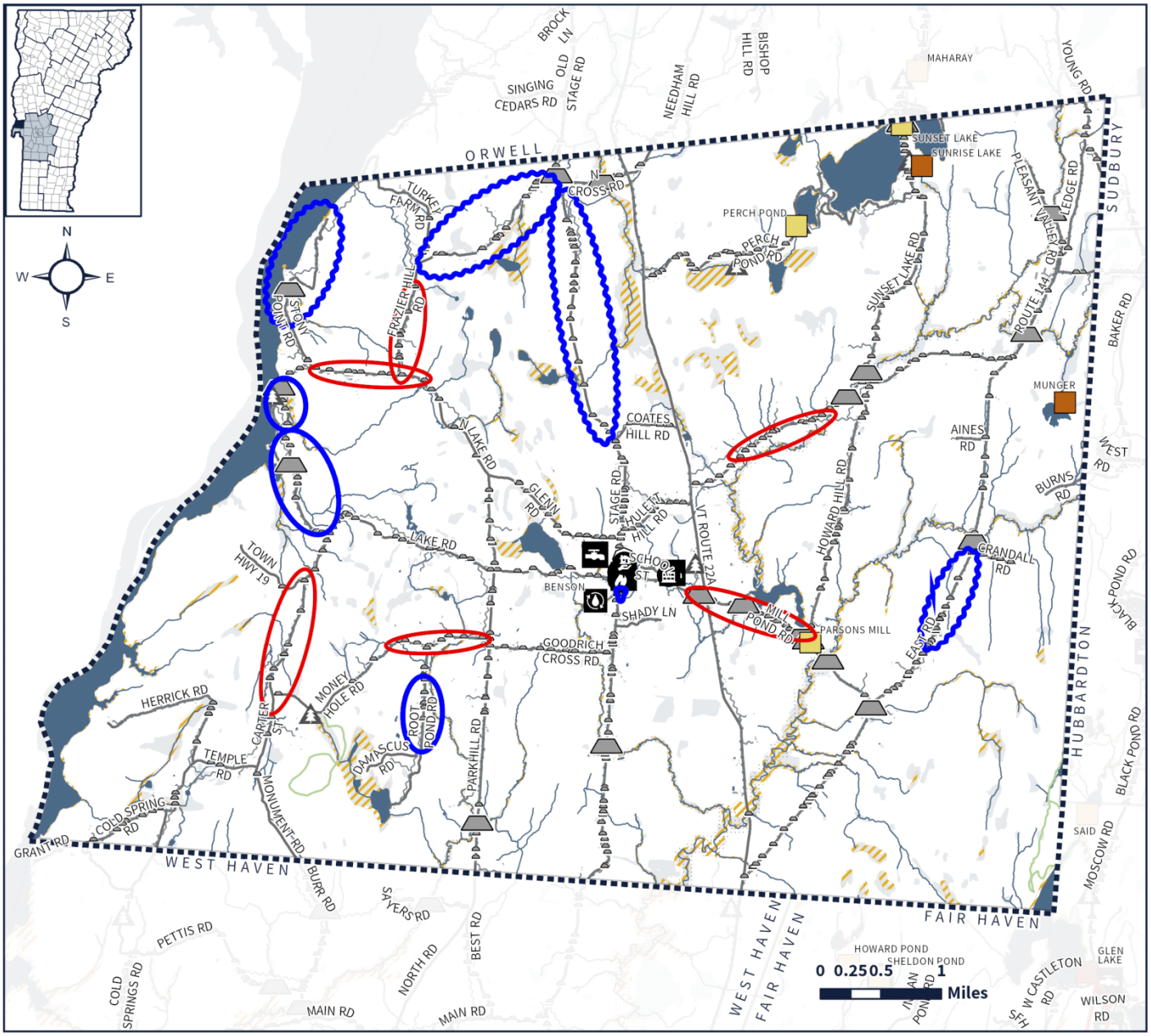
Road segments, culverts, and bridges that exhibit high flood risk according to the TRPT are shown in red. These include:

- Road segments: Frazier Hill Road, Howard Hill Road, VT Route 22A
- Culverts: Frazier Hill Road, Goodrich Cross Road, Money Hole Road, North Lake Road, VT Route 22A
- Bridges: None

VTrans TRPT Flood Risk Results for Benson

The Town identified other locations as having a high flood risk based on past experience: East Road, Lake Road, Stage Road, and Stony Point Road. Many locations listed as a risk for inundation and flash flooding in the 2019 Plan have since been mitigated by the Town, such as North Cross Road, Perch Pond Road, and Pleasant Valley Road (see page 7 for more details).

BENSON



- Designated Downtown/Village
- Critical Asset
- Buildings
- Power Lines

Flood Area of Concern

- Flash Flood
- Inundation Flood

Winter Areas of Concern

- Extreme Cold/Snow/Ice

- Lakes & Ponds
- Rivers & Streams
- River Corridors

Wetlands

- Wetlands

FEMA Floodplain

- FEMA Floodplain
- Public Water Sources

- Waste Water Facilities

Dams

- Significant Hazard Potential
- Low Hazard Potential
- Emergency Operation Centers
- School
- Firehouse
- Parks

- Shelter
- Hospitals
- Bridges
- Culverts
- Bridges
- Roads
- Trails
- Town Boundaries

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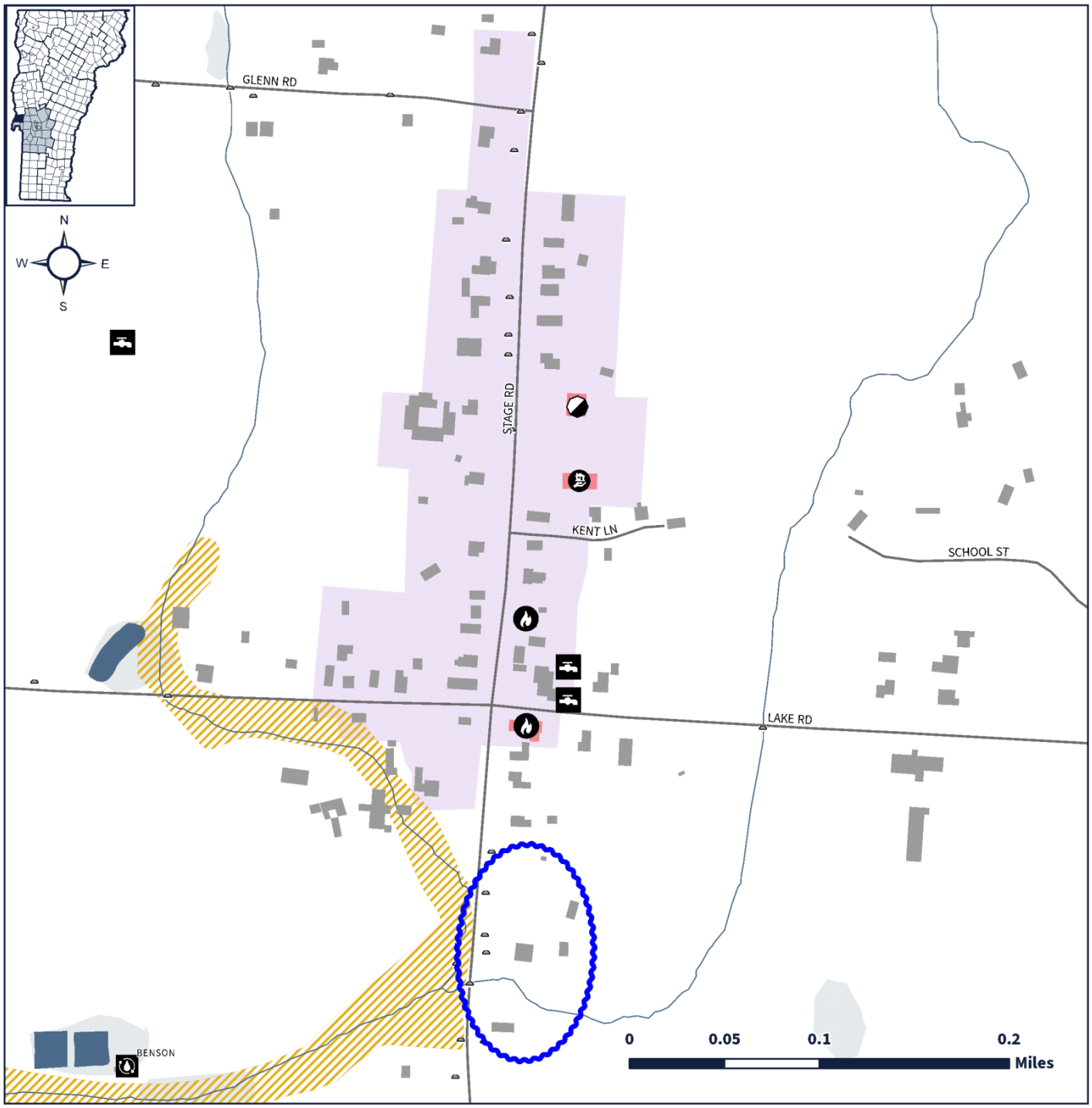
VCGI, Green Mountain Power, Local governments, RPCs (regional planning commissions), VT Lidar Program, VT Imagery Program, public domain., E911, Vermont River Corridor and Floodplain Protection Program
VT Dept of Environmental Conservation, ANR, See dataset specific metadata.

BENSON VILLAGE



Designated Downtown/Village
Critical Asset
Buildings

Flood Area of Concern

Flash Flood
Lakes & Ponds
Rivers & Streams
Wetlands

FEMA Floodplain

FEMA Floodplain
Public Water Sources
Waste Water Facilities
Emergency Operation Centers
School
Firehouse
Shelter
Hospitals
Culverts
Bridges
Roads

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As mentioned previously, flash floods often entail stream bank or fluvial erosion. Excessive erosion can trigger land or mudslides.[3] It also has a negative impact on water quality and may result in increased turbidity, increased phosphorus transport, or the release of legacy pollutants. The sediment mobilized by fluvial erosion additionally contributes to aggradation and dammed streams.

Existing studies helped identify other locations and assets at risk from fluvial erosion. These include Stream Geomorphic Assessments (Phase 1 and Phase 2), a River Corridor Plan for East Creek completed in 2011, and the Stormwater Master Plan (SWMP) for the Poultney River Watershed completed in March 2022.

Stream Geomorphic Assessments (SGAs) provide information about the physical condition of streams and factors that influence their stability. There is no recent SGA of the Hubbardton River; the last to be completed (year unknown) is too antiquated to have any modern relevance, according to the Poultney-Mettawee Natural Resources Conservation District (PMNRCD).

The 2011 East Creek Corridor Plan studied one stream segment in Benson and recommended some river corridor restoration and protection projects, such as planting stream buffers, removing debris, or removing or replacing structures (e.g., undersized or misaligned culverts). The East Creek Corridor Plan did not identify any suitable locations requiring streambank stabilization, floodplain or incision area restoration, or berm removal.

Stormwater Master Planning involves identifying stormwater, sediment, nutrient, and septic inputs to waterways and designing projects to mitigate those inputs; either eliminating them at the source through green stormwater infrastructure, septic system improvements, back road projects, or improving floodplain access within the stream network to increase sediment attenuation.

The 2022 Poultney River Watershed SWMP recommended 51 projects, including 12 in Benson, to reduce environmental impacts of nutrient and sediment loading to Lake Champlain, as well as mitigate flood vulnerability to municipal or state road and drainage infrastructure. These primarily consist of addressing road and gully erosion issues and implementing green stormwater management practices: bioretention areas, infiltration basins, and dry swales.

As weather patterns shift and we see larger storms and more frequent freeze-thaw cycles, the Town will monitor for signs that rivers that have historically been stable becoming less stable, with increased erosion, widening, trees falling in from its banks, etc.

Environmental impacts from flooding may cut off access to recreation areas, which in turn have an adverse impact on local tourism. Flood events with associated road closures can also have a short-term impact on the local economy due to fewer shopping trips and commuter delays.

Floods Hazard History

These are the most up to date significant events impacting Benson. All damages are to property unless otherwise noted. Rutland County Disaster Declarations are depicted in **bold**.

7/11/2023: DR4720 3" rain: $4.4 mil regional damage
8/24/2020: 2-3" rain: $10,000 regional damage
4/15/2019: DR4445 1-2" rain with significant snow melt: $1 mil regional damage
7/1/2017: DR4330 3-4" rain the previous 3-4 days with flash flooding on 7/1/17: $18,000 local damage: $1.9 mil regional damage
6/25-7/11/2013: DR4140 heavy rain over multiple days: $420,000 regional damage
8/28/2011: DR4022 Tropical Storm Irene with ±5" rain: $148,000 local damage; $55 mil regional damage
6/14/2008: 3-5" rain: $2 mil regional damage
1/18/2006: 1½-2½" rain with significant snow melt: $50,000 regional damage
4/13/2002: 1-3" rain plus snow melt: $30,000 regional damage
12/16/2000: DR1358 2-4" rain: $100,000 regional damage
7/16/2000: DR1336 heavy rain: $200,000 regional damage

[3] While DR4720 damages included land and mudslides linked to fluvial erosion, these hazards did not manifest in Benson and are thus omitted from this Plan, based on a lack of recent available data.

Vulnerability Summary

Strong Wind

Vulnerable Assets people (especially at-risk populations, those living in sub-standard housing, and homeless); Town Office; Community Hall; Fire Station buildings; Town Garage; Village School; roads; power lines; telecommunications systems; trees; local businesses

Location Town-wide

Extent EF0 Tornado (85 mph winds); 60-80 mph wind

Past Occurrence $50,000 local property damage; $3,500,000 regional property damage

Future Probability Highly likely, >75% probability in a year

Outlook Ongoing risks for existing and future assets without targeted mitigation measures

Extreme Heat

Vulnerable Assets people (especially vulnerable populations, those living in sub-standard housing, and homeless); highway infrastructure; drilled wells; crops/agricultural products

Location Town-wide

Extent up to 95°F temps and heat indices up to 110°F

Past Occurrence $650,000 regional damage to maple sugaring industry

Future Probability Highly likely, >75% probability in a year

Outlook Ongoing risks for existing and future assets without targeted mitigation measures

Invasive Species

Vulnerable Assets people; roads; power lines; telecommunications systems; trees

Location Pond Woods Wildlife Management Area; unknown

Extent Unknown

Past Occurrence first detection in Benson in 2024

Future Probability Highly likely, >75% probability in a year

Outlook Ongoing risks for existing and future assets without targeted mitigation measures

Extreme Cold, Snow, and Ice

Vulnerable Assets people (especially at-risk populations, those living in sub-standard housing, and homeless); highway infrastructure; power lines; telecommunications systems; trees; building plumbing and service lines; local businesses

Location Town-wide

Extent 15-20+ days below zero; up to 35” snow; ½” freezing rain/sleet; ¼” ice

Past Occurrence $29,400 local property damage; $300,000 regional property damage; $1,025,000 regional crop damage

Future Probability Likely, at least 1 chance in next 10 years

Outlook Ongoing risks for existing and future assets without targeted mitigation measures

Floods

Vulnerable Assets people (especially at-risk populations and homeless); residential dwellings; mobile and seasonal homes; development sites; camps; boat ramps and docks; recreation facilities; highway infrastructure; dams; rivers and streams; local businesses

Location *Inundation Flooding:* along sections of the Hubbardton River, Coggman Creek, South Fork East Creek, Stacy Brook; Browns’ Bay Road, Morris Lane, North Lake Road, Root Pond Road

Flash Flooding: East Road, Frazier Hill Road*, Goodrich Cross Road*, Lake Road, Money Hole Road*, Stage Road, Stony Point Road.

Fluvial Erosion: Coggman Creek, Hubbardton River

Extent ±5” rain; extent data for fluvial erosion is unavailable

Past Occurrence $148,000 local property damage; $55,000,000 regional property damage

Future Probability Likely, at least 1 chance in next 10 years

Outlook Ongoing risks for existing and future assets without targeted mitigation measures

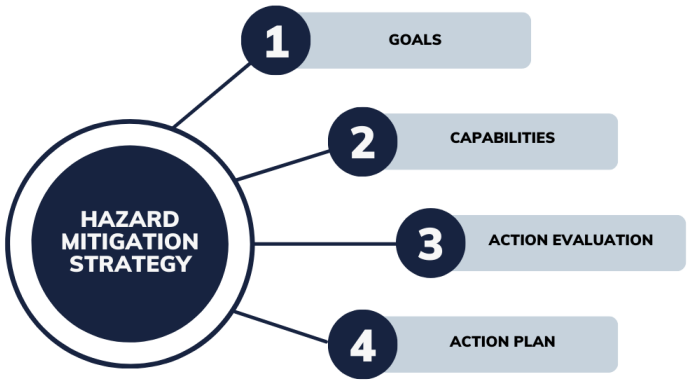
* = road contains TRPT flagged culvert

The Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment is the foundation for the Mitigation Strategy.

6 HAZARD MITIGATION STRATEGY

The highest-risk natural hazards and vulnerabilities identified in the previous section of this Plan directly inform the hazard mitigation strategy, which is the core of the mitigation plan.

The mitigation strategy has four main components: goals, community capabilities, action evaluation, and an action plan with the most appropriate activities for the Town to undertake to reduce future risk from potential hazards.



Mitigation Goal

The community's mitigation goal, which was supported by 97% of survey respondents, is to:

Increase Benson's resilience to natural hazards by advancing mitigation investments. These investments will ultimately reduce or avoid long-term risks to:

- ***People,***
- ***Homes and neighborhoods,***
- ***The local economy,***
- ***Cultural and historic resources,***
- ***Ecosystems and natural resources, and***
- ***Community Lifelines such as transportation, energy, and communications.***

See results in **Appendix C** for which assets engagement respondents thought were most important to protect against potential future extreme weather impacts.

Community Lifelines

Community Lifelines enable the continuous operation of critical government and business functions and are essential to human health and safety or economic security. The goal of the lifeline concept is to focus response efforts on stabilizing or re-establishing these most fundamental services during and after a disaster. Mitigating lifelines should reduce cascading impacts across government and business functions and lessen system-wide damage.

Community Lifelines are organized into seven categories:

1. Law Enforcement
2. Fire Service
3. Search & Rescue
4. Government Service
5. Community Safety

1. Food
2. Water
3. Shelter
4. Agriculture

1. Medical Care
2. Public Health
3. Patient Movement
4. Medical Supply Chain
5. Fatality Management

1. Power Grid
2. Fuel

1. Infrastructure
2. Responder Communications
3. Alerts, Warnings, & Messages
4. Finance
5. 911 & Dispatch

1. Highway/Road/Motor Vehicle
2. Mass Transit
3. Railway
4. Aviation
5. Maritime

1. Facilities HAZMAT, Pollutants, Contaminants

Community Capabilities

Each community has unique capabilities, including authorities, programs, staff, funding, and other resources available to mitigate and reduce long-term vulnerability. Benson's mitigation capabilities that reduce hazard impacts or that could be used to implement hazard mitigation activities are listed below.

Administrative & Technical This capability refers to the Town's staff and their skills and tools that can be used for mitigation planning and to implement actions. Such resources are limited in Benson: for example, the Selectboard Chair, the Road Foreman, and the Emergency Management Coordinator positions are all currently filled by one individual. Other municipal staff that can be used for mitigation planning and to implement specific mitigation actions include: a full-time Town Clerk/Treasurer; a part-time Zoning/Floodplain Administrator; one part-time Road Commissioner and two full-time Highway Department employees; and one part-time Wastewater Department employee.

In addition to paid staff, there is a 5-member Selectboard, 5-member Planning Commission, 5-member Development Review Board, Town Health Officer, Tree Warden, and Fire Warden.

To augment local resources, the Town has formal mutual aid agreements for emergency response – fire and public works. Technical support is available through the RRPC in the areas of land use planning, emergency management, transportation, GIS mapping, and grant writing. Technical support is available through the State ANR for floodplain bylaw administration and VTrans for hydraulic analyses.

Strengths Staff are trained on hazards and mitigation • Coordination between local departments is effective • Past success in securing grants for public infrastructure improvements

Areas for Improvement Maintenance programs to reduce risk could be more robust, particularly that for tree trimming within the municipal road right-of-way • There are delays between requests for assistance and resources being paged.

Planning & Regulatory These capabilities are the plans, policies, codes, and ordinances that prevent and reduce the impacts of hazards. Examples of planning capabilities that can either enable or inhibit mitigation include land use plans, capital improvement programs, transportation plans, stormwater management plans, disaster recovery and reconstruction plans, and emergency preparedness and response plans. Examples of regulatory capabilities include the enforcement of zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and building codes that regulate how and where land is developed and structures are built.

The Town does not have any local building codes. Vermont has adopted statewide codes for commercial building fire safety and energy standards. The energy code also applies to residential buildings. Codes enforced by Vermont's Division of Fire Safety are the 2015 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1 Fire Code; 2015 NFPA 101 Life Safety Code; the 2015 International Building Code (IBC); 2017 NFPA 70 National Electrical Code; 2021 International Code Council (ICC) International Plumbing Code; and the 2015 National Board Inspection Code from the National Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors.

Town Plan

Description: A framework and guide for how future growth and development should proceed.
Relationship to Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning: Includes goals and policies related to flood resilience and land use.

Road Erosion and Structures Inventories

Description: Prioritizes those infrastructure projects necessary to improve transportation network resiliency to floods and water quality.
Relationship to Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning: Improvements are designed to minimize or eliminate flood impacts on municipal roads.

Stormwater Infrastructure Mapping Study

Description: Municipal drainage system maps and established locations for BMP stormwater retrofit sites.
Relationship to Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning: Identified several structural projects to improve stormwater drainage system capacity.

Sewer Utility Mapping
Description: Municipal sanitary sewer utility mapping of distribution and collection piping.
Relationship to Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning: Maps are a core component of asset management and utility planning.

Poultney River Watershed Stormwater Master Plan
Description: Identify stormwater inputs and develop prioritized projects to mitigate stormwater water quality problems.
Relationship to Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning: Projects accomplish multiple goals-water quality and mitigation.

Local Emergency Management Plan
Description: Establishes lines of responsibility and procedures to be implemented during a disaster and identifies high risk populations, hazard sites, and available resources.
Relationship to Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning: Includes actions for tracking events and response actions including damage reports to facilitate funding requests during recovery. This type of information can be essential to preparing hazard mitigation project applications for FEMA funding.

Road and Bridge Standards
Description: Provide minimum codes and standards for construction, repair, maintenance of town roads and bridges.
Relationship to Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning: Standards include management practices and are designed to ensure travel safety, minimize damage to road infrastructure during flood events, and enhance water quality protections.

Fire Department ISO Rating
Description: The Benson Fire Department's ISO Rating is 9/10.[4] This rating is a score from 1 to 10 that indicates how well-protected the community is by the local fire department.
Relationship to Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning: Everyone wants to keep family, home, and business safe from fires. The ISO rating is a measure of the effectiveness of a community's fire services.

Land Use Development Regulations
Description: Provides for orderly community growth promoting the health, safety, and general welfare of the community.
In Benson, the regulations include **zoning bylaws**, **subdivision regulations**, and **flood hazard area regulations**.
Relationship to Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning: Establish site plan review requirements and zoning districts, including Flood Hazard Overlay Districts, with specific standards for proposed development. Requirements are designed to prevent overdevelopment; to mitigate negative impacts to the natural and human environment; minimize effects to the historical and aesthetic character of the community; and ensure design and construction of development in flood and other hazard areas are accomplished in a manner that minimizes or eliminates the potential for flood loss or damage to life and property.

[4] Given the lack of municipal water, Benson's ISO rating cannot go any higher.

Strengths Existing land use ordinances are effective at reducing hazard impacts and they are adequately enforced • Codes and standards are adequately administered and enforced • Elements of hazard mitigation are included in other local plans

Areas for Improvement Protect river corridors from new encroachment (River Corridor Bylaws) • Capital planning • Continuity of operations planning • Expand LEMP to include procedures for extreme weather sheltering (e.g., Hot Weather Annex)

Financial These capabilities are the resources that a community has access to or is eligible to use to fund mitigation actions.

Benson's 2025-2026 town operating budget is $331,283 with a Highway Department operating budget of $640,020. In addition to property tax revenues, the Town collects fees for sewer services.

Although the Town has not done so in the past, it is eligible to incur debt through general obligation bonds to fund mitigation actions.

Strengths Maximizing grant opportunities, especially through VTrans for transportation infrastructure projects

Areas for Improvement Capital improvement planning and budgeting for the reserve funds

Outreach & Education Benson has several outreach and education opportunities that could be used to implement mitigation activities and communicate hazard-related information:

- The municipal fire department is actively involved in presenting fire safety programs in the school.
- There is an active supervisory union and local school safety committees.
- The United Church of Benson hosts a senior meals program, and there are several well-established community groups – CATS ATV Club, EAST Snowmobile Club, Benson Fish & Game Club, Benson Burdock Festival & Family Day, Benson Youth League, and Benson Busy Buddies – 4-H Group.
- Town Website, Front Porch Forum, Town Facebook pages (municipal, library).

Strengths Multiple programs/organizations are already in place in the community • Use of social media • Strong following for the bi-monthly Benson Bulletin community newsletter and on Front Porch Forum

Areas for Improvement Better coordination is needed to help implement future mitigation activities

National Flood Insurance Program Compliance The Town joined the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in 1985. The effective date of the current Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) is August 28, 2008. Benson's regulations, specifically Attachment A of the Zoning Regulations adopted 04/16/2018, meet or exceed the NFIP requirements. They outline detailed minimum standards for development in flood hazard areas defined as FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas and Floodway Areas.

Substantial improvement and substantial damage determinations are reviewed by the Benson Zoning Administrator and the Development Review Board. They are regulated under the Benson Flood Hazard Area Regulations and incorporated by reference in Section 104 of the Benson Zoning and Subdivision Bylaw. Article V of the regulations requires any substantial improvement to an existing structure to receive conditional use approval from the Development Review Board prior to permit issuance by the Zoning Administrator. The Board evaluates compliance with the standards set forth in Article VI, which meet or exceed the requirements of the NFIP. Article IX outlines procedures for application submission, referrals, proper filing and record maintenance, permit validity, hearings, decisions, and appeals. Article X establishes procedures for addressing violations and assigns enforcement responsibilities to the Zoning Administrator. Article XII defines "substantial improvement" and "substantial damage" consistent with 44 CFR Part 59, including the federal provision that "'substantial improvement' includes structures which have incurred 'substantial damage,' regardless of the actual repair work performed.

The Town discussed the following as possible actions to continue NFIP compliance:

1) Prepare, distribute, or make available NFIP insurance explanatory pamphlets or booklets at the Town Office.
2) Participate in NFIP training offered by the State and/or FEMA.
3) Work with ANR Regional Floodplain Manager to address the administering of the NFIP following a major storm.

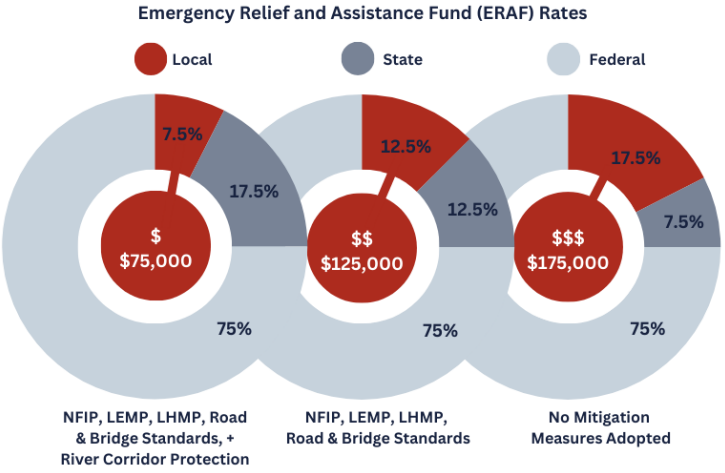
State Incentives for Flood Mitigation Vermont's Emergency Relief Assistance Funding (ERAF) provides state funding to match FEMA Public Assistance after federally declared disasters. Eligible public costs are generally reimbursed by FEMA at 75% with a 7.5% State match. The State will increase its match to 12.5% or 17.5% if communities take steps to reduce flood risk as described below.

12.5% funding for communities that have adopted four (4) mitigation measures:

1) NFIP participation;
2) Town Road and Bridge Standards;
3) Local Emergency Plan; and
4) Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

17.5% funding for communities that also participate in FEMA's Community Rating System OR adopt Fluvial Erosion Hazard or other river corridor protection bylaw that meets or exceeds the Vermont ANR model regulations.

Benson will attain 12.5% ERAF rate with adoption of the 2025 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. To increase their ERAF rate to 17.5% the Town would have to adopt River Corridor Bylaws.



In the event of a $1,000,000 recovery project, the dollar value shown would be the municipality's responsibility.

Mitigation Action Identification

The Hazard Mitigation Planning Team discussed the mitigation strategy, reviewed projects from the 2019 Plan, and identified possible new actions from the following categories for each of the highest risk natural hazards identified in Section 5.

Local Plans & Regulations These actions include government authorities, policies, or codes that influence the way land and buildings are developed and built.

Structure & Infrastructure Projects These actions involve modifying existing structures and infrastructure to protect them from a hazard or remove them from a hazard area. This applies to public or private structures as well as critical facilities.

Natural Systems Protection These actions help minimize damage and losses and preserve or restore the functions of natural systems.

Outreach & Education Programs These actions inform and educate the public about hazards and potential ways to mitigate them. Although this type of action reduces risk less directly than structure projects or regulation, it is an important foundation. Greater awareness is more likely to lead to community support for direct actions.

Local Plans & Regulations Examples

Integrate Mitigation into Capital Improvement Programs: Incorporate risk assessment and hazard mitigation principles into capital planning.

Reduce Impacts to Roadways: The leading cause of death and injury during winter storms is automobile accidents, so it is important to plan for and maintain adequate road and debris clearing capabilities.

Develop a Road Right-of-Way Vegetation Management Plan: Identify community priorities and plan of action for site-specific tree and roadside forest management to increase roadside resilience.

Improve Flood Resilience with a Flood Study: The aim of a flood study is to define existing flood behavior for a particular catchment, river, or creek. The study helps inform building, land use planning, community awareness and disaster management.

Improve Stormwater Management Planning: Rain and snowmelt can cause flooding and erosion in developed areas. A community-wide stormwater management plan can address stormwater runoff-related flooding.

Manage Development in Erosion Hazard Areas: The intent of River Corridor Bylaws is to allow for wise use of property within river corridors that minimizes potential damage to existing structures and development from flood-related erosion.

Structure & Infrastructure Project Examples

Protect Power Lines: Protect power lines by 1) inspecting and maintaining hazardous trees in the road right-of-way and 2) burying power lines.

Protect Critical Roadways: Use snow fences or living snow fences (e.g., rows of trees) to limit blowing and drifting of snow.

Retrofit Critical Facilities: Critical facilities can be protected from the impacts of high winds and winter storms by 1) retrofitting them to strengthen structural frames to withstand wind and snow loads; 2) anchoring roof-mounted mechanical equipment; and 3) installing back-up generators or quick connect wiring for a portable generator.

Remove Existing Structures from Flood Hazard Areas: FEMA policy encourages the removal of structures from flood-prone areas to minimize future flood losses and preserve lands subject to repetitive flooding.

Improve Stormwater Drainage Capacity: Minimize flooding and fluvial erosion by 1) increasing drainage/absorption capacities with green stormwater management practices; 2) increasing dimensions of undersized drainage culverts in flood-prone areas; 3) stabilizing outfalls with riprap and other slope stabilization techniques; and 4) re-establishing roadside ditches.

Conduct Regular Maintenance for Drainage Systems: Help drainage systems and flood control structures function properly with 1) routine cleaning and repair; 2) cleaning debris from support bracing underneath low-lying bridges; and 3) inspecting bridges and identifying if any repairs are needed to maintain integrity or prevent scour.

Protect Infrastructure and Critical Facilities: Minimize infrastructure losses and protect critical facilities from flooding by 1) elevating roads above base flood elevation to maintain dry access; 2) armoring streambanks near roadways to prevent washouts; 3) rerouting a stream away from a vulnerable roadway; and 4) floodproofing facilities.

Natural Systems Protection Examples

Protect and Restore Natural Flood Mitigation Features: Natural conditions can provide floodplain protection, riparian buffers, groundwater infiltration, and other ecosystem services that mitigate flooding. Preserving such functionality is not only important for the ecosystem but also for protecting public safety and infrastructure. Examples include 1) adding riparian buffers; 2) stabilizing stream banks; 3) removing berms; 4) minimizing impervious area development; 5) restore floodplain; and 6) restore incision areas.

Outreach & Education Program Examples

Educate Residents about Extreme Temperatures: The impacts of extreme temperatures (cold and hot) on public health can be lessened if residents know how to prepare and protect themselves.

Educate Residents about Flood Insurance: Flood insurance is available to anyone living in Benson as the municipality participates in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Residents can better protect their assets from flood damage if they are insured and know what steps to take to provide their homes when flooding is predicted.

Mitigation Action Evaluation

As described in **Appendix C**, the Planning Team invited several subject matter experts with local knowledge to participate in a mitigation action evaluation workshop.

For each mitigation action, workshop participants evaluated its potential benefits and/or likelihood of successful implementation. Actions were evaluated against a range of criteria, including a planning level assessment of whether the costs are reasonable compared to the probable benefits. Results of this evaluation are presented in **Table 5**.

Mitigation Action Plan for Implementation

After careful evaluation, the Planning Team agreed on a list of actions that support the mitigation goals of this Plan and are acceptable and practical for the community to implement.

Actions without overall public support/political will were not selected for implementation, and actions whose costs were not reasonable compared to probable benefits were also not selected.

A community survey was used to gauge public reaction to the proposed mitigation goal and actions. 97% of respondents agreed with the mitigation goal and there was wide support for the proposed actions - see **Appendix C**.

For proposed actions, the Planning Team then 1) assigned a responsible party to lead the completion of each action; 2) identified potential funding; 3) defined a timeframe for implementation; and 4) ranked each action's priority (first, second).

Natural hazards pose a unique threat to the Town's vulnerable populations. Data has shown that underserved and marginalized populations tend to live in at-risk hazard-prone areas or in homes with substandard construction. The data also suggests that this segment of the community is less likely to fully recover after a disaster.[5] When ranking an action's priority, those that directly benefit a vulnerable population were ranked first priority.

Proposed actions also ranked first priority if they 1) represented routine activities critical to Benson's ability to limit the impacts of natural hazards, or 2) addressed an ongoing need that would provide significant benefit to the Town if pursued sooner rather than later. The action plan is presented in **Table 6**.

[5] FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Program and Policy Guide, March 23, 2023

Table 5: Mitigation Action Evaluation and Prioritization

Mitigation Action	Life Safety	Prop Protect	Tech	Political	Admin	Other Obj	Benefit Score	Est Cost	C/B
Local Plans & Regulations									
Recommended for Implementation									
Integrate Mitigation into Capital Improvement Programs and Planning*	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes
Plan for and Maintain Adequate Road and Debris Clearing Capabilities	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes
Plan for Road ROW Vegetation Management, Including an Ash Tree Inventory	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes
Update Road Erosion and Culvert Inventories	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes
Inspect Town Short-Structures and Review VTrans Bridge Inspection Reports for Town Long-Structures and Plan for Repairs to Prevent Flood-related Impacts like Scour	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes
Examine Zoning Regulations and Ensure Identified Hazard Areas are Addressed*	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes
Improve Extreme Temperature Resilience with Cold/Hot Weather Response Plan	1	0	1	1	1	1	5	1	Yes
Update Personnel Policy to Recommend Vaccinations*	1	0	1	0	0	1	3	1	Yes
Not Recommended for Implementation									
Improve Stormwater Management by Completing a Stormwater Master Plan	Not evaluated because the PMNRCD completed this work with the development of the 2022 Poultney River Watershed Stormwater Master Plan.								
Improve Flood Resilience with a Flood Study	Not evaluated because there are no known locations in need of study.								
Determine if There Is Public Support to Manage Development in Erosion Hazard Areas by Adopting River Corridor Bylaws	Not evaluated because there are too few properties located within River Corridors to justify the adoption of bylaws. Additionally, no new significant development is expected.								
Adopt Local Building Codes for Structural Wind and Snow Loads	Not evaluated because the Town relies on statewide codes – see page 23 for additional information.								
Update Land Use Bylaws to Require New Development to Bury Power Lines	Not evaluated because Green Mountain Power has authority over the power lines, and the Town has little say over whether the lines are buried or not. Additionally, no new significant development is expected.								
Structure & Infrastructure Projects									
Recommended for Implementation									
Protect Power Lines by Inspecting and Removing Hazard Trees in Road ROW	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes
Use Snow Fence on Critical Roads Prone to Drifting	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes
Install Batteries or Back-up Generators at Critical Facilities	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes
Routinely Clean and Repair Stormwater Infrastructure	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes
Stabilize Culvert Outfalls	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes
Install/Re-establish Roadside Ditches	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes
Increase Dimension of Drainage Culverts in Flood-Prone Areas	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	2	Yes
Increase Drainage/Absorption Capacities with Green Stormwater Management Practices	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes

Mitigation Action	Life Safety	Prop Protect	Tech	Political	Admin	Other Obj	Benefit Score	Est Cost	C/B
Routinely Clear Debris from Support Bracing Underneath Low-Lying Bridges	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes
Not Recommended for Implementation									
Bury Power Lines	Not evaluated because Green Mountain Power has authority over the power lines, and the Town has little say over whether the lines are buried or not.								
Retrofit Critical Facilities to Current Structural Wind and Snow Loads	Not evaluated because there are no critical facilities that require retrofitting.								
Anchor Roof-Mounted Mechanical Equipment on Critical Facilities	Not evaluated because there are no critical facilities with roof-mounted mechanical equipment.								
Insulate Shallow Buried Utility Mains/Services	Not evaluated because existing utility mains are buried with sufficient depth.								
Remove Existing Structures from Flood-Prone Areas	Not evaluated because none of the structures in the floodplain are identified as repetitive loss properties, and the costs would not outweigh the perceived benefits.								
Elevate Roads Above Base Flood Elevation to Maintain Dry Access	Not evaluated because the Town has designated improved drainage as a priority and has also made substantial progress in upsizing culverts.								
Floodproof Critical Facilities	Not evaluated because there are no critical facilities that require floodproofing.								
Natural Systems Protection									
Not Recommended for Implementation									
Remove Significant Hazard Potential Dams	1	1	1	-1	0	1	3	2	No
Stabilize Stream Banks	Not evaluated because most of these project types are not included as recommendations in the 2011 East River Corridor Plan or the 2022 Poultney-Mettawee Stormwater Master Plan (see page 20). "Establish Vegetative Buffers" is identified as a recommended project in the River Corridor Plan; however, the stream reach is located on private property, and the Town has indicated there is no political will to proceed with implementation.								
Remove Berms and/or Accumulated Debris from Stream to Restore Flood Capacity									
Establish Vegetative Buffers in Riparian Areas									
Restore Floodplain									
Restore Incision Areas									
Outreach & Education Programs									
Recommended for Implementation									
How to Prepare for Extreme Temperatures – Cold and Hot	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes
National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes
How to Identify and Report Invasive Species	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1	Yes
Keep the Ditches Clean Campaign	0	1	1	1	1	1	5	1	Yes
Infectious Disease Prevention Through Vaccination	1	0	1	0	0	1	3	1	Yes

*These actions are not included in Table 6 but rather are listed as examples of how the actions in this Plan will be incorporated into other plans and procedures – see page 37

Table 5 Evaluation Criteria:

Life Safety – Will the action be effective at protecting lives and preventing injuries?
Property Protection –Will the action be effective at eliminating or reducing damage to structures and infrastructure?
Technical – Is the action a long-term, technically feasible solution?
Political – Is there overall public support/political will for the action?
Administrative – Does the community have the administrative capacity to implement the action?
Other Community Objectives – Does the action advance other community objectives, such as capital improvements, economic development, benefit a vulnerable population, environmental quality, or open space preservation?

Rank each of the criteria in Table 5 with a -1, 0, or 1 using the following table:
1 = Highly effective or feasible
0 = Neutral
-1 = Ineffective or not feasible

Estimated Cost – 1 = less than $50,000;
2 = $50,000 to $100,000;
3 = more than $100,000

C/B – Are the costs reasonable compared to the probable benefits? Yes or No

Table 6: Mitigation Action Plan

Plan for and Maintain Adequate Road and Debris Clearing Capabilities: A leading cause of death and injury during winter storms is from automobile accidents, so it is important to plan for and maintain adequate road and debris clearing capabilities. This includes capital planning and annual funding to support the facilities (highway garage and equipment), and an appropriate number of staff and/or contracted services needed to maintain the transportation network in Benson.

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

Extreme Cold, Snow, and Ice
Primary Hazard

Strong Wind

TYPE OF PROJECT

Local Plans & Regulations

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Safety & Security

Transportation
Primary Lifeline

Area of Impact
Town-wide; ±51 mile road network

LEAD PARTY
Road Foreman

FUNDING SOURCES
- Town Highway Budget

PARTNERSHIPS
- Selectboard

PROJECT TIMEFRAME
Oct-Dec Annually

PRIORITIZATION = FIRST

Road Right-of-Way (ROW) Vegetation Management Plan: Hazard trees in the road ROW can contribute to power and communication outages as well as debris in the roadway during winter storms and wind events. This hazard is exacerbated by the possibility of Emerald Ash Borer infestation. To increase roadside resilience, Benson will develop a plan to 1) identify community priorities and 2) define a plan of action for site-specific tree and roadside forest management. This will include an inventory of ash trees to assess the scope of impact from EAB and, if warranted, prioritize trees for treatment and removal.

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

Extreme Cold, Snow, and Ice
Primary Hazard

Strong Wind

Invasive Species

TYPE OF PROJECT

Local Plans & Regulations

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Energy
Primary Lifeline

Communications

Transportation

Area of Impact
Town-wide; ±51 mile road network

LEAD PARTY
Road Foreman

FUNDING SOURCES
- VT Urban & Community Forestry Grants

PARTNERSHIPS
- Tree Warden
- VT Urban & Community Forestry
- VT Dept of Forests, Parks, & Rec

PROJECT TIMEFRAME
Partner outreach by December 2025
Complete plan by October 2026

PRIORITIZATION = FIRST

Update Road Erosion (REI) and Culvert Inventories: Both inventories, which form the basis for asset management, were completed in 2019 and last fully reviewed in 2025. These should be updated annually, with a comprehensive reassessment every five years.

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

Floods

TYPE OF PROJECT

Local Plans & Regulations

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Safety & Security

Transportation
Primary Lifeline

Area of Impact
Town-wide; ±51 mile road network and 574 culverts

LEAD PARTY
Road Foreman

FUNDING SOURCES
- VTrans Grant Programs[6]

PARTNERSHIPS
- Rutland RPC
- ANR Municipal Roads Program

PROJECT TIMEFRAME
REI 2030 construction season
Culverts 2030 construction season

PRIORITIZATION = SECOND

Plan for Bridge Repairs: The Town will inspect short structures and review long structure VTrans inspection reports (completed once every two years) to support VTrans in planning for flood-related bridge repairs, such as scour and channel maintenance, as needed, based on the inspection results.

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

Floods

TYPE OF PROJECT

Local Plans & Regulations

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Safety & Security

Transportation
Primary Lifeline

Area of Impact
7 Short Structures: See 2025 structures inventory for complete list
4 Long Structures: B17 Benson Rd; B19 Mill Pond Rd; B20 Mill Pond Rd; B21 Mill Pond Rd

LEAD PARTY
Road Foreman

FUNDING SOURCES
- VTrans Grant Programs[6]

PARTNERSHIPS
- VTrans District 3

PROJECT TIMEFRAME
Short Inspections: Annually in June
Long Inspections: Review 2026, 2028, 2030 construction seasons

PRIORITIZATION = SECOND

Improve Extreme Temperature Resilience with Cold/Hot Weather Response LEMP Annex: To supplement the Town's sheltering plan outlined in the local emergency management plan, the Town will prepare an annex that focuses on sheltering procedures for extreme cold and extreme hot weather to better support extreme temperature resilience in the community.

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

Extreme Cold

Extreme Heat

TYPE OF PROJECT

Local Plans & Regulations

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Safety & Security

Area of Impact
Town-wide

LEAD PARTY
Emergency Management Coordinator

FUNDING SOURCES
- Not Applicable

PARTNERSHIPS
- Rutland RPC
- Vermont Department of Health

PROJECT TIMEFRAME
Develop in 2026 for adoption in May 2027

PRIORITIZATION = SECOND

[6] See the Vermont Agency of Transportation's "Show Me the Money" Guidance for a complete list of potential funding sources.

Remove Hazard Trees in Road ROW: Benson will remove hazard trees within their road ROW and/or request removal by Green Mountain Power if also within the power line ROW in accordance with their Road ROW Vegetation Management Plan.

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

Extreme Cold, Snow, and Ice
Primary Hazard

Strong Wind

Invasive Species

TYPE OF PROJECT

Structure & Infrastructure

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Energy
Primary Lifeline

Communications

Transportation

Area of Impact

Town-wide; ±51 mile road network

LEAD PARTY

Road Foreman

FUNDING SOURCES

- Rural Roadside Ash Tree Removal Grant
- Town Highway Budget

PARTNERSHIPS

- Tree Warden
- Green Mountain Power

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

See ROW Vegetation Management Plan

PRIORITIZATION = FIRST

Install Live Snow Fence or Equivalent Technique on Critical Roadways: Using live snow fences or equivalent to limit blowing and drifting of snow over critical road segments can reduce the risks of auto or other transportation accidents.

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

Extreme Cold, Snow, and Ice
Primary Hazard

Strong Wind

TYPE OF PROJECT

Structure & Infrastructure

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Safety & Security

Transportation
Primary Lifeline

Area of Impact

1. Benson Road
2. Carter Street

LEAD PARTY

Road Foreman

FUNDING SOURCES

- Town Highway Budget

PARTNERSHIPS

- Private Property Owners

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

1. Implement by Winter 2026
2. Implement by Winter 2027

PRIORITIZATION = FIRST

Install Back-up Power at Critical Facilities: Battery storage cells and generators (standby or portable) are emergency equipment that provide a secondary source of power to a facility. The Town has identified the following critical facilities requiring dedicated back-up power. This action was listed in the 2019 Benson Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and remains a priority.

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

All Hazards

TYPE OF PROJECT

Structure & Infrastructure

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Energy
Primary Lifeline

Food, Water, Shelter

Area of Impact

Municipal Building (Town Office, Library, Community Hall)

LEAD PARTY

Selectboard

FUNDING SOURCES

- Annual appropriation

PARTNERSHIPS

- Benson Free Library

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

Acquire by December 2025

PRIORITIZATION = FIRST

Routinely Clean and Repair Stormwater Infrastructure: Regular maintenance is one of the most effective ways to mitigate the impacts of floods. Routine cleaning and repairs of catch basins, ditches, and culverts will be done according to the Highway Department's maintenance schedule and the Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP).

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

Floods

TYPE OF PROJECT

Structure & Infrastructure

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Safety & Security

Transportation
Primary Lifeline

Area of Impact

Town-wide; ±51 mile road network, 574 culverts, and open stormwater collection system

LEAD PARTY

Road Foreman

FUNDING SOURCES

- Town Highway Budget

PARTNERSHIPS

- ANR Stormwater Program

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

See Highway Department's Maintenance Schedule, MRGP

PRIORITIZATION = FIRST

Stabilize Culvert Outfalls: Erosion at culvert outlets is common and can cause structural failure with serious downstream consequences. Properly stabilized outfalls protect channel bank stability and reduce erosion. Benson has identified the following locations where culvert outlet stabilization is needed. This action was listed in the 2019 Benson Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and remains a priority.

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

Floods

TYPE OF PROJECT

Structure & Infrastructure

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Safety & Security

Transportation
Primary Lifeline

Area of Impact

1) Lake Road

LEAD PARTY

Road Foreman

FUNDING SOURCES

- VTrans Grant Programs[7]

PARTNERSHIPS

- ANR Municipal Roads Program

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

1) 2027 construction season

PRIORITIZATION = FIRST

Install/Re-work Roadside Ditches: Properly installed and stabilized roadside ditches are critical to protect the integrity of the road. As of August 2025, Benson has 7 road segments (1 segment = 328 ft) with ditches that must be improved to current municipal road standards. Of these, 4 are very high priority and 3 are high priority. This action was listed in the 2019 Benson Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and remains a priority.

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

Floods

TYPE OF PROJECT

Structure & Infrastructure

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Safety & Security

Transportation
Primary Lifeline

Area of Impact

1) See MRGP Road Erosion Inventory for non-compliant road segments

LEAD PARTY

Road Foreman

FUNDING SOURCES

- VTrans Grant Programs[7]

PARTNERSHIPS

- ANR Municipal Roads Program

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

See MRGP Improvement Schedule

PRIORITIZATION = FIRST

Adequately Size Culverts in Flood-Prone Areas: Undersized culverts can lead to road washouts and floods. Benson has identified the following location where upsized culverts are needed. This action was listed in the 2019 Benson Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and remains a priority.

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

Floods

TYPE OF PROJECT

Structure & Infrastructure

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Safety & Security

Transportation
Primary Lifeline

Area of Impact

1) Coates Hill Road
2) Sunset Lake Road

LEAD PARTY

Road Foreman

FUNDING SOURCES

- VTrans
- FEMA/VEM Hazard Mitigation

PARTNERSHIPS

- ANR Municipal Roads Program
- ANR River Engineer
- VTrans District 3

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

1) 2026 construction season
2) 2026 construction season

PRIORITY = FIRST

Install Green Stormwater Management Practices: Green infrastructure uses vegetation, soils, and other elements and practices to restore some of the natural processes required to manage stormwater. The Town has identified the following location suitable for green stormwater management projects – an extended detention basin or bioretention area.

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

Floods

TYPE OF PROJECT

Structure & Infrastructure

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Safety & Security

Transportation
Primary Lifeline

Area of Impact

1) Stage Road – see Poultney SWMP
2) Subwatershed 13 – see Stormwater Infrastructure Mapping Project

LEAD PARTY

Road Foreman

FUNDING SOURCES

- VTrans Grant Programs[7]
- South Lake Champlain CWSP

PARTNERSHIPS

- Poultney-Mettawee NRCD

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

2026 construction season

PRIORITIZATION = SECOND

Routinely Clear Debris from Low-Lying Bridge Support Bracing: Regular maintenance will help structures continue to function properly and not create a hazard during a flood. Benson has identified two (2) low-lying bridges.

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

Floods

TYPE OF PROJECT

Structure & Infrastructure

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Safety & Security

Transportation
Primary Lifeline

Area of Impact

B20 and B21 on Mill Pond Road

LEAD PARTY

Road Foreman

FUNDING SOURCES

- Town Highway Budget

PARTNERSHIPS

- ANR River Engineer

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

As needed

PRIORITY = SECOND

Educate the Public about Severe Winter and Extreme Heat-Related Hazards: Benson will undertake education and awareness efforts by publishing information in the Benson Bulletin and on Front Porch Forum and Facebook on ways to prepare for 1) severe winter related hazards (e.g., freezing pipes) and 2) extreme heat related hazards (e.g., heat stroke).

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

Extreme Cold, Snow, and Ice

Extreme Heat

TYPE OF PROJECT

Outreach & Education Programs

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Safety & Security
Primary Lifeline

Area of Impact

Town-wide

LEAD PARTY

Emergency Management Coordinator

FUNDING SOURCES

- Not Applicable

PARTNERSHIPS

- Ready.gov Tool Kits
- VT Department of Health

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

Spring and Fall Annually

PRIORITIZATION = SECOND

Educate the Public about Flood-Related Hazards: Benson will undertake education and awareness efforts by publishing information in the Benson Bulletin and on Front Porch Forum and Facebook on 1) the importance of keeping roadside ditches and culvert clear of yard waste and other debris and 2) the availability of flood insurance through the NFIP and how to prepare for/recover from a flood event.

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

Floods

TYPE OF PROJECT

Outreach & Education Programs

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Safety & Security
Primary Lifeline

Area of Impact

Town-wide

LEAD PARTY

Emergency Management Coordinator

FUNDING SOURCES

- Not Applicable

PARTNERSHIPS

- FloodSmart.gov Tool Kits

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

Spring Annually

PRIORITIZATION = SECOND

Educate the Public About Invasive Species and Infectious Disease: Vermont has many organizations that offer information and resources on the threat, identification, and management of invasive species. The Vermont Invasives website provides a landing page for Vermonters interested in learning more about invasive insects, plants, and pathogens. It also guides visitors to the appropriate place to learn more about and become involved in various monitoring and outreach efforts. For Infectious Disease, the Vermont Department of Health has an Immunization Program with numerous resources related to infectious disease control. Benson will promote these topics in the Benson Bulletin and on Front Porch Forum and Facebook.

ADDRESSED HAZARDS

Invasive Species

Infectious Disease

TYPE OF PROJECT

Outreach & Education Programs

COMMUNITY LIFELINES TARGETED

Safety & Security
Primary Lifeline

Area of Impact

Town-wide

LEAD PARTY

Emergency Management Coordinator

FUNDING SOURCES

- Not Applicable

PARTNERSHIPS

- Town Tree Warden
- Vermont Invasives
- Vermont Department of Health

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

Spring and Fall Annually

PRIORITIZATION = SECOND

Navigating Table 6

The Mitigation Action Plan includes a series of "mini-project profiles", one for each action recommended for implementation in **Table 5**. Each profile consists of the following elements:

Mitigation Action Description: Explains the action's relevance to Benson and whether it was previously listed in the 2019 Plan or another plan with ties to hazard mitigation.
Addressed Hazard: Indicates the type of highest risk hazard the action addresses.
Type of Project: Indicates the project type category to which the action belongs (see page 26).
Community Lifelines Targeted: Indicates which critical government and business functions responsible for preserving human health and safety or economic security will benefit from this action (see page 22).
Area of Impact: Indicates the location where the action will be implemented and the spatial extent of the action's outcomes. "Town-wide" is used for actions that apply throughout the municipality.
Lead Party: Identifies who is responsible for administering each action.
Funding Sources: Identifies a potential funding source to implement the action. The Town is ultimately responsible for determining the specific funding source to be utilized when the action is implemented. Where the funding source is "not applicable", work is completed by town officials who volunteer their time.
Partnerships: List individuals, agencies, or resources that may be able to help identify funding sources, complete grant applications, and/or implement the action.
Project Timeframe: Provides the expected schedule for completion based on available time and resources.
Prioritization: Indicates the relative importance of each action based on a set of criteria (see page 27).

An example of a flood hazard mitigation educational opportunity at the 2025 Benson Burdock Festival.

Integrating Into Existing Plans and Procedures

For Benson to succeed in reducing long-term risk to natural hazards, the goals, vulnerability information, and mitigation actions in this Plan will be integrated throughout government operations. When activities are connected, they not only reduce risk and increase resilience but also accomplish other objectives such as environmental protection, economic development, financial stability, and land use planning.

The Town can achieve integration into existing plans and procedures to support risk-informed community planning in the following ways:

- Funding for mitigation actions can be prioritized in capital planning for facilities and equipment and in the annual operating budget process. This was a 2019 action and remains a priority.

- To support workplace health and safety for employees, the Town's personnel policy can be updated to recommend vaccinations for municipal employees.

- The mitigation goal and risk information can inform the Planning Commission's current work to update the Town's Zoning Bylaws. These regulations support the goal of mitigating risks to public safety by ensuring development does not increase vulnerability to existing and future assets.

- The mitigation goal and risk information can inform the response and recovery procedures outlined in the Local Emergency Management Plan, especially by developing an Extreme Temperature (Hot and Cold) Response annex.

- The mitigation goal and risk information are helping inform the ongoing update of the Town Plan, particularly its flood resilience and land use policies and actions. These policies and actions support the goal of mitigating risks to public safety, critical infrastructure, historic structures, and municipal investments posed by floods and fluvial erosion.

- Flood-related mitigation actions to increase road resiliency can be implemented under the Municipal Road General Permit to control stormwater discharges from town roads.

- Flood-related mitigation actions can be implemented under the stormwater management plans for the Poultney River Watershed.

- The mitigation goal and risk information can be integrated into the mission of the Rutland Regional Disaster Cooperative (RRDC). This county-wide organization is currently being developed through a joint effort by the RRPC and Vermont Department of Health. The RRDC will coordinate knowledge and resources among the Whole Community to help those affected by natural hazards. By strengthening the coordination and sharing of resources, RRDC may play a crucial role in bolstering the administrative, outreach, and education capabilities of the municipalities in Rutland County.

Section 406 – Public Assistance Program

Section 406 mitigation measures are funded under the FEMA Public Assistance Program. 406 funding provides discretionary authority to fund mitigation measures in conjunction with the repair of disaster-damaged facilities, so is limited to declared counties and eligible damaged facilities. Section 406 is applied on the parts of the facility that were damaged by the disaster and the mitigation measures directly reduce the potential of future, similar disaster damages to the facility.

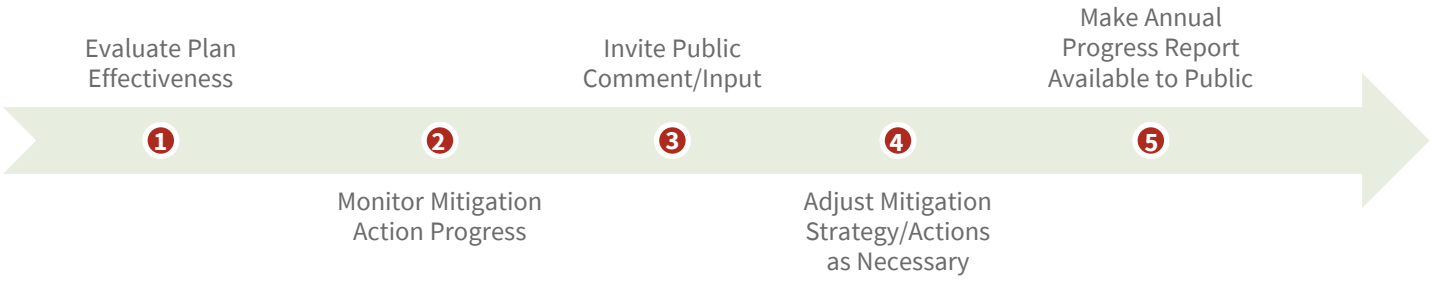
Benson will make every effort to maximize use of future Public Assistance Section 406 Mitigation opportunities when available during federally declared disasters.

7 PLAN MAINTENANCE

This Plan is dynamic. To ensure it remains current and relevant, it should be annually evaluated and monitored and updated every five years, in accordance with FEMA guidelines in effect at the time.

Annual Evaluation and Monitoring

Within 12 months of FEMA Final Approval, the Plan will be annually evaluated and monitored as follows:



1. The Selectboard and Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) will evaluate the effectiveness of the Plan in meeting the stated goals. Things to consider during this evaluation:

   - What disasters has the town (or region) experienced?
   - Should the list of highest risk natural hazard impacts be modified?
   - Are new data sources, maps, plans, or reports available? If so, what have they revealed, and should the information be incorporated into this plan?
   - Has development in the region occurred and could it create or reduce risk?
   - Has the town adopted new policies or regulations that could be incorporated into this plan?
   - Have elements of this plan been incorporated into new plans, reports, policies, or regulations?
   - Are there different or additional community capabilities available for mitigation implementation?

2. Next, the Selectboard and EMC will monitor mitigation action progress. Things to consider:

   - Is the mitigation strategy being implemented as anticipated?
   - Were the cost and timeline estimates accurate?
   - Should new mitigation actions be added?
   - Should proposed actions be revised or removed?
   - Are there new funding sources to consider?

   The status (e.g., in progress, complete) of each action should be recorded in **Table 7**. If the status is "in progress", note whether the action is on schedule. If the action is not on schedule, describe any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will impair the ability to complete the action.

3. The Selectboard and EMC will seek public comment from the Whole Community on plan implementation. Things to consider:

   - Are there any new stakeholders to include?
   - What public outreach activities have occurred? At minimum, the Town will publicly post notice of meetings when the plan is being evaluated.
   - How can public involvement be improved?

4. Based on input received, the mitigation strategy and/or actions will be modified, if needed.

5. A report (or record in the form of meeting minutes) of the annual evaluation and monitoring will be made available to the public.

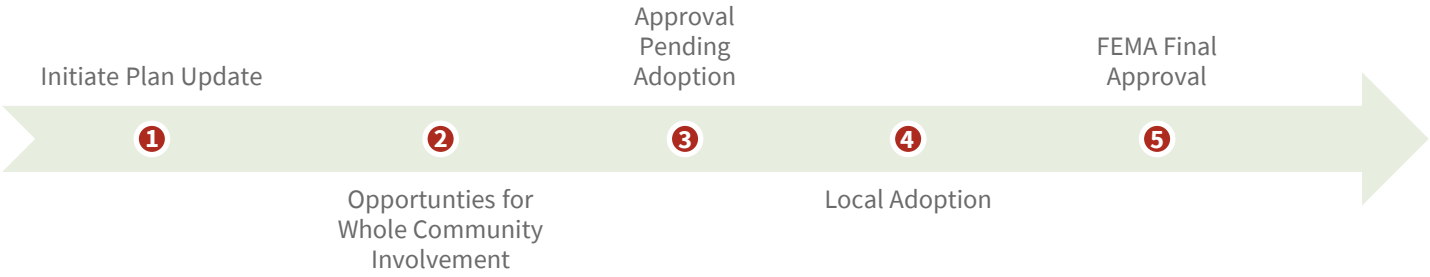
Table 7: Mitigation Action Status

Mitigation Action	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Local Plans & Regulations					
Plan for and Maintain Adequate Road and Debris Clearing Capabilities PRIORITY: First LEAD PARTY: Road Foreman TIMEFRAME: Oct-Dec annually					
Right-of-Way Vegetation Management Plan PRIORITY: First LEAD PARTY: Road Foreman TIMEFRAME: Dec 2025-Oct 2026					
Update Road Erosion (REI) and Culvert Inventories PRIORITY: Second LEAD PARTY: Road Foreman TIMEFRAME: REI 2030 construction season; Culverts 2030 construction season					
Plan for Bridge Repairs PRIORITY: Second LEAD PARTY: Road Foreman TIMEFRAME: Short Inspections annually in June Long Inspections Review 2026, 2028, 2030					
Improve Extreme Temperature Resilience with Cold/Hot Weather Response LEMP Annex PRIORITY: Second LEAD PARTY: Emergency Management Coordinator TIMEFRAME: Develop in 2026 for adoption in May 2027					
Structure & Infrastructure Projects					
Remove Hazard Trees in Road Right-of-Way PRIORITY: First LEAD PARTY: Road Foreman TIMEFRAME: See ROW Vegetation Management Plan					
Install Live Snow Fence on Critical Roadways PRIORITY: First LEAD PARTY: Road Foreman TIMEFRAME: By Winter 2026 and Winter 2027					
Install Backup Power at Critical Facilities PRIORITY: First LEAD PARTY: Selectboard TIMEFRAME: Acquire by Dec 2025					
Routinely Clean and Repair Stormwater Infrastructure PRIORITY: First LEAD PARTY: Road Foreman TIMEFRAME: See Highway Department's Maintenance Schedule and MRGP					
Stabilize Culvert Outfalls PRIORITY: First LEAD PARTY: Road Foreman TIMEFRAME: 2027 construction season					
Install/Rework Roadside Ditches PRIORITY: First LEAD PARTY: Road Foreman TIMEFRAME: See MRGP Improvement Schedule					

Mitigation Action	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Adequately Size Culverts in Flood-Prone Areas PRIORITY: First LEAD PARTY: Road Foreman TIMEFRAME: 2026 construction season					
Install Green Stormwater Management Practices PRIORITY: Second LEAD PARTY: Road Foreman TIMEFRAME: 2026 construction season					
Routinely Clear Debris from Low-Lying Bridge Support Bracing PRIORITY: Second LEAD PARTY: Road Foreman TIMEFRAME: As needed					
Outreach & Education Programs					
Educate the Public about Severe Winter and Extreme Heat-Related Hazards PRIORITY: Second LEAD PARTY: Emergency Management Coordinator TIMEFRAME: Spring and Fall annually					
Educate the Public about Flood-Related Hazards PRIORITY: Second LEAD PARTY: Emergency Management Coordinator TIMEFRAME: Spring annually					
Educate the Public about Invasive Species and Infectious Disease PRIORITY: Second LEAD PARTY: Emergency Management Coordinator TIMEFRAME: Spring and Fall annually					

5-Year Updates

This Plan will be updated at a minimum every five (5) years as follows:



1. As of April 2025, BRIC funding is no longer available to assist municipalities in paying for planning services to update the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. If BRIC or a similar federal grant were to become available, the Benson Emergency Management Coordinator should contact Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) to apply for funding in 2028 – approximately 2 years before the Plan expires. It is assumed that the Emergency Management Coordinator will serve as the primary point of contact for the Plan update.

   Once funding is secured and the grant agreement between the Town and State is in place, the Selectboard can issue a request for proposals (RFP) to procure planning services in accordance with the grant agreement. The RFP should be issued approximately 14 months before the Plan expires.

   Once a consultant is procured, the Plan update can begin with a kick-off meeting including the consultant and local hazard mitigation planning team. The kick-off meeting should be scheduled approximately 12 months before the Plan expires. The Town should allot approximately 8 months for the Plan update process.

2. Opportunities for Whole Community involvement throughout the Plan update process need to be factored into the schedule. These opportunities may include community surveys, pop-up events, planning workshop, and public meetings at critical milestones agreed to at the project kick-off meeting.

3. Once the local hazard mitigation planning team has prepared a final draft, they can seek authorization from the Selectboard to submit the Plan for VEM/FEMA approval. Plan approval is accomplished in two steps – the first is Approval Pending Adoption. The Town should submit for Approval Pending Adoption approximately 4 months before the Plan expires to allow for time to respond to any review comments received from VEM/FEMA.

4. Once the Town receives Approval Pending Adoption, the Selectboard should adopt the Plan as soon as their next regular meeting.

5. Once adopted, the Town can submit the Plan for VEM/FEMA Final Approval. The Town should submit for Final Approval approximately 1 month before the Plan expires to ensure there is no gap in coverage between updates. The FEMA Final Approval date starts the clock on the effective dates of the 5-year Plan.

CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION
Town of Benson, Vermont Selectboard
A Resolution Adopting the Benson, Vermont 2025 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

WHEREAS the Benson Selectboard recognizes the threat that natural hazards pose to people and property within the Town of Benson; and

WHEREAS the Benson Selectboard has prepared a natural hazard mitigation plan, hereby known as the Benson, Vermont 2025 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan in accordance with federal laws, including the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended; the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968, as amended; and the National Dam Safety Program Act, as amended; and

WHEREAS the Benson, Vermont 2025 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies mitigation goals and actions to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property in the Town of Benson from the impacts of future hazards and disasters; and

WHEREAS adoption by the Benson Selectboard demonstrates its commitment to hazard mitigation and achieving the goals outlined in the Benson, Vermont 2025 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN OF BENSON, VERMONT, THAT:

Section 1. In accordance with 24 VSA §872, the Benson Selectboard adopts the Benson, Vermont 2025 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. While content related to the Town of Benson may require revisions to meet the plan approval requirements, changes occurring after adoption will not require the Town of Benson to re-adopt any further iterations of the plan. Subsequent plan updates following the approval period for this plan will require separate adoption resolutions.

ADOPTED by a vote of 4 in favor and 0 against, and 1 (Absent) abstaining, this 27th day of May 2026 ~~2025~~.

By: Brad Barrett (signature)
Selectboard Chair

Brad Barrett (print name)
Selectboard Chair

ATTEST: By: Heidi Chandler (print name)

MITIGATION ACTIONS FROM 2019 PLAN

Mitigation Action	Lead Party	Timeframe	2025 Status
Local Plans and Regulations			
Integrate Mitigation into Capital Improvement Programs	Selectboard	Ongoing	Ongoing
Complete Road Erosion and Culvert Inventories and Develop Road Stormwater Management Plan	Road Foreman	7/1/19 – 12/31/19	Complete
Plan for and Maintain Adequate Road and Debris Clearing Capabilities	Selectboard & Road Foreman	Ongoing	Ongoing
Evaluate the need for a Stormwater Management Plan	Selectboard & Poultney-Mettowee Conservation District	1/1/20-12/31/20	Complete
Examine Town Plan and ensure identified hazard areas and needed strategies are addressed	Planning Commission	At next Town Plan update in 2025	Remains ongoing priority until Town Plan Completion
Examine zoning regulations and ensure identified hazard areas are addressed	Planning Commission	1/1/20 – 12/31/21	Incomplete – Remains a priority
Manage Development in Erosion Hazard Areas by Adopting River Corridor Bylaws	This action was not selected for implementation because it lacks political support.		
Structure and Infrastructure Projects			
Stabilize Outfalls: (1) Cold Springs Road (2) Young Road (3) Lake Road (4) East Road (5) Stony Point	Road Foreman	(1) 2019 (2) 2019 (3) 2020 (4) 2022 (5) 2022	(1) Complete (2) Complete (3) Incomplete (4) Complete by end of 2025 (5) Complete
Re-establish Roadside Ditches: (1) See Road Stormwater Management Plan (to be developed in 2019)	Road Foreman	In accordance with Municipal Roads General Permit	Ongoing
Routinely Clean and Repair Stormwater Infrastructure	Road Foreman	Annually or as needed	Ongoing, as needed
Routinely Clear Debris from Support Bracing Underneath Low-Lying Bridges (1) Small amount of debris noted at Bridge #21 (2) Gravel on abutment noted at Bridge #20	Road Foreman	7/1/19 – 10/31/19, then annually or as needed	Ongoing, as needed
Review VTrans Bridge Inspection Reports and Plan for Identified Repairs to Prevent Scour: (1) Bridge #17 (2) Bridge #19 (3) Bridge #20 (4) Bridge #21	This action was not selected for implementation because there are no identified repairs for scour. Per the 2017 inspection reports, all town-owned bridges are in good condition. The Road Foreman will monitor future reports (the next are due in 2019) and address repairs as needed.		
Protect Power Lines by Inspecting and Removing Hazardous Trees in Road ROW	Road Foreman	Annually or as needed	Ongoing
Increase Dimension of Drainage Culverts in Flood-Prone Areas (1) Root Pond Road (2) Temple Road (3) Frazier Hill Road (4) Stage Road (5) Benson Road (VT Route 144)	Road Foreman	(1) 2020-2022	(1) Complete (2) Complete (3) Complete by end of 2025 (4) Complete (5) Complete

Mitigation Action	Lead Party	Timeframe	2025 Status
Elevate Roads Above Base Flood Elevation to Maintain Dry Access	Selectboard	2020-2025	Incomplete - no longer a priority due to the Town's decision to focus on culvert upgrades and improving stormwater drainage
Install Back-up Generators or Quick Connect Wiring at Critical Facilities: (1) Town Office (2) Community Center (3) Upper Fire Station (4) Town Garage	Selectboard	1/1/20 – 12/31/30	(1) Incomplete – remains a priority[7] (2) Incomplete – remains a priority[7] (3) Complete (portable) (4) Complete
Increase Drainage/Absorption Capacities with Low Impact Development Practices	This action was not selected for implementation because there are no known projects at this time. In 2010, with assistance from the Poultney Mettowee Conservation District, the Town installed two bioretention swales at the intersection of Lake and Stage Roads.		
Bury Power Lines	This action was not selected for implementation because it lacks political support.		
Natural Systems Protection			
Conduct a Study to Evaluate Need for Vegetative Buffers in Riparian Areas	Selectboard & Poultney Mettowee Conservation District	1/1/20 – 12/31/20	Incomplete – no longer a priority due to a lack of political will
Study on Eroding Stream Banks	Selectboard & Poultney Mettowee Conservation District	1/1/20 – 12/31/20	Incomplete – no longer a priority due to a lack of political will
Education and Awareness Programs			
Educate Property Owners about Freezing Pipes and other winterization practices by including mitigation information in Benson Bulletin & Front Porch Forum	Selectboard	Annually in October	Incomplete – Remains a priority

[7] This building has generator hook-ups (i.e., Quick Connect wiring) but does not have a dedicated portable generator available for use.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Community Engagement Strategy

During the kickoff meeting, the Benson Hazard Mitigation Planning Team came to a consensus on a 2-phase Community Engagement Strategy – see **Appendix Table 1**. This Strategy was designed to ensure that at-risk populations had an opportunity for equitable involvement throughout the entirety of the plan development process (i.e., from kickoff to final draft).

This Strategy also ensured the involvement of the Whole Community. For the purposes of this plan, the Whole Community is comprised of 1) local and regional agencies involved in hazard mitigation; 2) entities with authority to regulate development; 3) neighboring towns; 4) representatives of business, schools/academia, and other private organizations that sustain community lifelines; and 5) representatives of community-serving nonprofit organizations that work directly with frontline populations.

A Goal Statement was developed to guide the planning team's public outreach throughout the planning process:

The Town of Benson will:

- ***Notify the Whole Community about the plan update at the kickoff, mid-point draft, and final draft;***
- ***Solicit feedback from the Whole Community about the frequency and impacts of various natural hazards, and strategies and mitigation methods that should be prioritized; and***
- ***Integrate from the Whole Community perspectives and information about hazard impacts and likelihoods, and priorities for potential mitigation actions.***

Phase 1 Engagement Activities

Kick-off To notify the Whole Community of the Plan Update, the Town conducted a robust advertising campaign. A landing page was created to provide a dedicated online source for all information related to the planning process and opportunities for community engagement. The landing page url is: tinyurl.com/Benson-LHMP25.

Physical flyers were posted at the Benson Town Office, Benson Community Library, G&L General Store, and the Wheel Inn. Online notices were posted on the Benson Town Facebook Page, Benson Town website, the RRPC website, and the RRPC Facebook Page. Kick-off engagement materials are included in the following pages.

Project communications were sent to the following segments of the **Whole Community**:

1) Hazard Mitigation Agencies: Benson Road Foreman, Benson Town Clerk, Benson Volunteer Fire Department, Poultney-Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District, South Lake Champlain Clean Water Service Provider, VDH Emergency Preparedness Specialist, VTrans District 3 Projects Manager.
2) Authorities Regulating Development: Benson Selectboard Chair, Benson Selectboard members, Benson Planning Commission Chair, Benson Planning Commission members, Benson Zoning Administrator.
3) Neighboring Municipalities: Selectboard Chair, Planning Commission Chair, Town Clerk, and EMD/EMC for Towns of Castleton, Fair Haven, Hubbardton, Orwell, Sudbury, and West Haven.[1]
4) Business, Schools, Private Orgs.: Benson Village School, Council of Economic Development of the Rutland Region, Fair Haven Union Middle and High School, Slate Valley Unified School District, Solid Waste Alliance Communities.
5) Non-profit Organizations: Advocacy Resources Community Rutland, Bayada, Bennington-Rutland Opportunity Council, Cornerstone Housing Partners, Fair Haven Rescue Squad, Rutland County Health Partners, Rutland County Pride, Rutland Mental Health Services, Rutland Regional Medical Center, Slate Valley Cares, Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging, United Way of Rutland County, Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Vermont Center for Independent Living, Visiting Nurses Association & Hospice of Southwest Vermont.

No inquiries or comments received from Town officials or the public in response to project kick-off notices.

[1] See page A-6 for outreach specific to Dresden, NY, and Putnam, NY

Gather Data & Assess Risk To inform the Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment section of the plan, the Town employed five (5) engagement methods: survey, workshop, pop-ups, presentation to the Selectboard at a public meeting, and public comment period.

A survey was administered online and was open from May 1-May 30, 2025. Physical surveys were also available at the Town Office and Transfer Station pop-ups (see below). Notice of the survey was included in plan kick-off communications. **A total of 101 surveys were received.** A summary of the survey results is provided below.

The Town conducted a workshop on May 20, 2025 with the planning team and two subject matter experts to complete the community hazard risk assessment. Noah Hoffman, from the Agency of Natural Resources, and Eric Pulver, the Emergency Preparedness Specialist with the Vermont Department of Health attended the workshop to assist with the risk assessments for Invasive Species and Infectious Disease. Results of the risk assessment are presented in **Table 4** in the Plan.

The Town conducted two "pop-up" events at the Town Transfer Station on May 14 and May 17, 2025. By "meeting people where they are", the Town collected additional input from demographics that may not have otherwise been engaged. At the pop-up, people placed dot stickers on the natural hazards of most concern and vulnerable assets. **This method captured a total of 17 responses.** A summary of pop-up feedback is provided below.

The draft Plan was provided to the Selectboard at their regular meeting on June 23, 2025 to encourage input from the local government and public on the Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment results. Input at this milestone is critical as feedback could affect the plan's conclusions and ensure that it integrates with other Town initiatives. The meeting was recorded and is available on the Town website.

The draft Plan was posted for a 2-week public comment period from June 23-July 7, 2025. It was available on the landing page and at the Town Office. Notice of the comment period was posted in the Benson Bulletin (a bi-monthly local newsletter) as well as the Town's website, Facebook page, Front Porch Forum, RRPC Website, and Facebook page. The draft plan and notice of the comment period were direct emailed to all five segments of the Whole Community.

Notices included instructions to email comments to the Rutland Regional Planning Commission. Review of the draft Plan by the Selectboard and public concluded on July 7, 2025.

Positive reception from local officials. No input received from the public or Whole Community partners during public comment period.

The Selectboard did not have any comments on the draft Plan. They authorized the Planning Team to proceed with developing the mitigation strategy at their July 7, 2025 meeting.

Phase 2 Engagement Activities

Develop Mitigation Strategy To inform the Mitigation Strategy section of the plan, the Town employed two (2) engagement methods: workshop and survey.

The Town conducted a workshop on July 23, 2025 with the planning team, the Road Commissioner, and the VDH Emergency Preparedness Specialist to complete the mitigation action evaluation.

Several other subject matter experts were invited but unable to attend the workshop - ANR Floodplain Manager, ANR River Engineer, and Planning Commission Chair. Results of the evaluation are presented in **Table 5** in the Plan.

A survey to seek public reaction to the proposed mitigation goal and actions was administered online and was open from Aug 1 – 25, 2025. Notice of the survey was provided via social media and direct email to segments of the Whole Community listed above in Phase 1. The Planning Team also promoted the survey during the annual Burdock Fest on August 10 and distributed physical copies at the Transfer Station on August 23, 2025. **A total of 36 surveys were received.** A summary of the survey results is provided below.

Finalize Draft Plan To help finalize the draft, the Plan was presented to the Selectboard at a public meeting and posted for a final public comment period. Online notices of the public presentation at the Sep 15, 2025 Benson Selectboard meeting were posted on the landing page, Town Facebook Page, Front Porch Forum, RRPC Website, and RRPC Facebook page.

The final draft Plan was presented at the Sep 15, 2025 Selectboard meeting to encourage input from the local government and public on the mitigation strategy and final draft plan. Input at this milestone is critical as it is the last opportunity to weigh in on the plan contents before submittal for Approval Pending Adoption. The meeting was recorded and is available on the Town website.

The final draft Plan was posted for a 2-week public comment period from Sep 15 - 29, 2025. It was available on the landing page and at the Town Office.

Notice of the comment period was also posted on the Town's Facebook page, Front Porch Forum, RRPC Website and Facebook page. The final draft plan and notice of the comment period were directly emailed to all Whole Community segments.

Notices included instructions to email comments to the Rutland Regional Planning Commission. Review of the final draft Plan by the Selectboard and public concluded on October 14, 2025.

Outreach to Adjacent Municipalities in New York In September 2025, the Approval Pending Adoption review of a draft LHMP in nearby Fair Haven, VT flagged that outreach to neighboring communities should have included adjacent municipalities in New York. For Benson, this applies to the Towns of Dresden, NY and Putnam, NY.

On September 23, 2025, the draft Plan was shared with the following parties: the Public Safety Director for Washington County, NY; the Town Clerks in Dresden and Putnam, NY; the Town Supervisors in Dresden and Putnam, NY; the Highway Superintendents in Dresden and Putnam, NY; and the Town Council Chair of Dresden, NY.

(Note: the Town of Putnam declined to provide the contact information for their Town or Planning Board.)

To grant sufficient time for review and input, the original 2-week public comment period was extended from September 29, 2025, to October 14, 2025.

Positive reception from local officials. No input received from the public or Whole Community partners during public comment period.[2]

The Selectboard did not have any comments on the final draft Plan. On October 14, 2025, they authorized to submit the final draft Plan to Vermont Emergency Management for Approval Pending Adoption.

[2] Putnam provided a comment that stated they had "no concerns" about the Plan

Appendix Table 1. Benson Community Engagement Strategy

Engagement Phase	Project Milestone	Outreach Method	Purpose	Target Date
1	Kick-Off	Landing page, flyers, press release, social media, email blast	Notify (inform the Whole Community of the plan update)	4/30/2025
	Gather Data & Assess Risk	Survey	Solicit (feedback from Whole Community on potential natural hazard impacts)	5/1/2025 – 5/30/2025
		Workshop	Integrate (evaluate broad range of risks)	5/20/2025
		Pop-up Events	Solicit (see above)	5/14/2025[3] & 5/17/2025
		Selectboard Presentation	Notify (inform local officials of plan progress)	6/23/2025
		Public Comment Period	Solicit (feedback from Whole Community on draft Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment)	6/23/2025– 7/7/2025
2	Develop Mitigation Strategy	Workshop(s)	Integrate (evaluate broad range of mitigation actions)	7/23/2025
		Survey (including Transfer Station handouts)	Solicit (reaction from Whole Community on mitigation strategy and actions)	8/1/2025 – 8/25/2025
	Finalize Draft Plan	Selectboard Presentation	Notify (inform local officials of plan progress)	9/15/2025
		Public Comment Period	Solicit (feedback from Whole Community on final draft plan)	9/15/2025 – 10/14/2025

[3] The first pop-up event was originally scheduled for May 3, but inclement weather postponed it. Notice of the rescheduling was posted on the Town's website and Facebook page.

Examples of Phase 1 Engagement Materials

Physical Flyer
Email Blasts
Social Media Postings
Survey with Results
Pop-up Posters with Results

KICK-OFF FLYER

Benson

LOCAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

Plan Purpose

- **Increase Awareness**
- **Identify Actions**
- **Focus Resources**
- **Communicate Priorities**

The Local Hazard Mitigation Plan outlines our long-term strategy to reduce natural disaster losses and break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage.

Take our online survey to share what natural hazards you are most concerned about:

HELP US

PREPARE FOR RESILIENCY!

Planning Schedule

- Apr 2025: Plan Update Kick-off
- May–Jun 2025: Assess Risks & Identify Hazards
- July–Aug 2025: Develop Mitigation Strategy
- Aug–Sept 2025: Finalize Draft Plan
- Oct–Nov 2025: Adopt Plan

ACT NOW!

For More Information

tinyurl.com/benson-lhmp25

KICK OFF EMAIL BLAST

Benson Launching our Hazard Mitigation Planning Process

Every five years, municipalities update their Local Hazard Mitigation Plans, or LHMPs. Ours is due to be updated. We do an LHMP for a few reasons:

- It qualifies us for a higher rate of reimbursement for work we do after declared disasters.
- It makes us eligible for a variety of State and Federal grant programs.
- Most importantly, it helps us focus Town time and investments on the hazards that are most likely to occur, and most likely to have economic and public-safety impacts.

The Rutland Regional Planning Commission will guide us through the renewal of our LHMP, thanks to a grant we received from Vermont Emergency Management. The Town's planning team includes: Brad Barrett, Road Foreman/Emergency Management Coordinator; Daryl Burlett, Selectboard Member; Paul Davoren, Emergency Management Director; and Jean-Sebastien Valois, Planning Commission Member.

Throughout the planning process, we have targeted opportunities for community input. As we get the plan update underway in May, we'll be completing a risk assessment and identifying the natural hazards that are of greatest concern. We want to hear from our residents about what natural hazards you are most concerned about! Share your feedback by:

- Visiting the Transfer Station for informational pop-ups on May 3 and May 17, 2025.
- Taking our online survey: **tinyurl.com/Benson-lhmp25-survey.** The survey will remain open until May 30, 2025.

For more information visit: tinyurl.com/benson-lhmp25

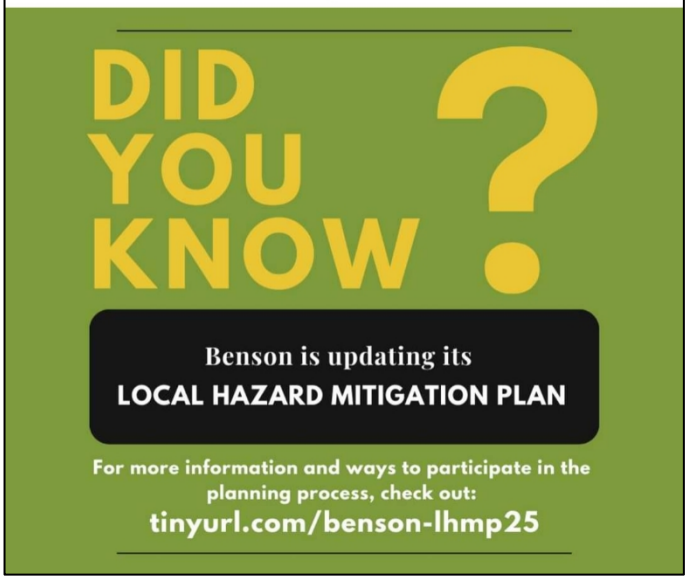
KICK OFF SOCIAL MEDIA POSTINGS

Rutland Regional Planning Commission
5d ·

GET INVOLVED TODAY!

Benson is updating its 2019 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan!
The Plan serves as a guidebook for identifying and addressing local risks and vulnerabilities, helping Benson become more resilient to natural hazards.

Learn more about the process and opportunities to participate at **https://tinyurl.com/benson-lhmp25**.



Town of Benson, Vermont
Update: Due to inclement weather, the May 3 pop-up has been moved to Wednesday, May 14. During these events, we will also have paper surveys available at the Transfer Station. We still want to hear from you and hope to see you there!

on Thu **Like** **Reply**

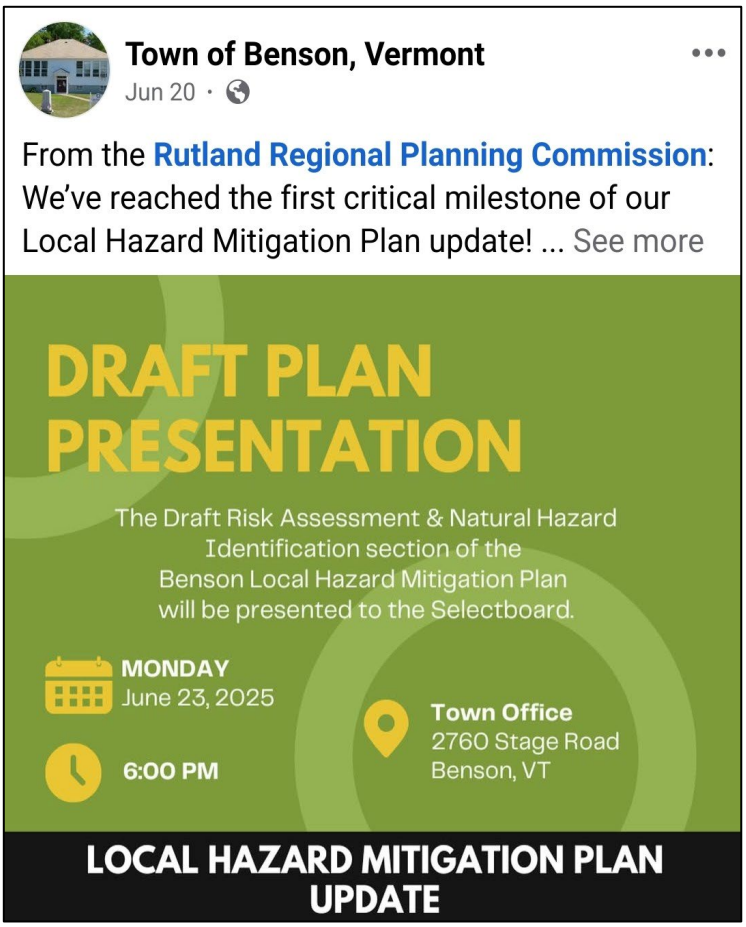
Town of Benson, Vermont
6d ·

We're updating our 2019 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan! The Plan serves as a guidebook for identifying and addressing local risks and vulnerabilities, helping Benson become more resilient to natural hazards.

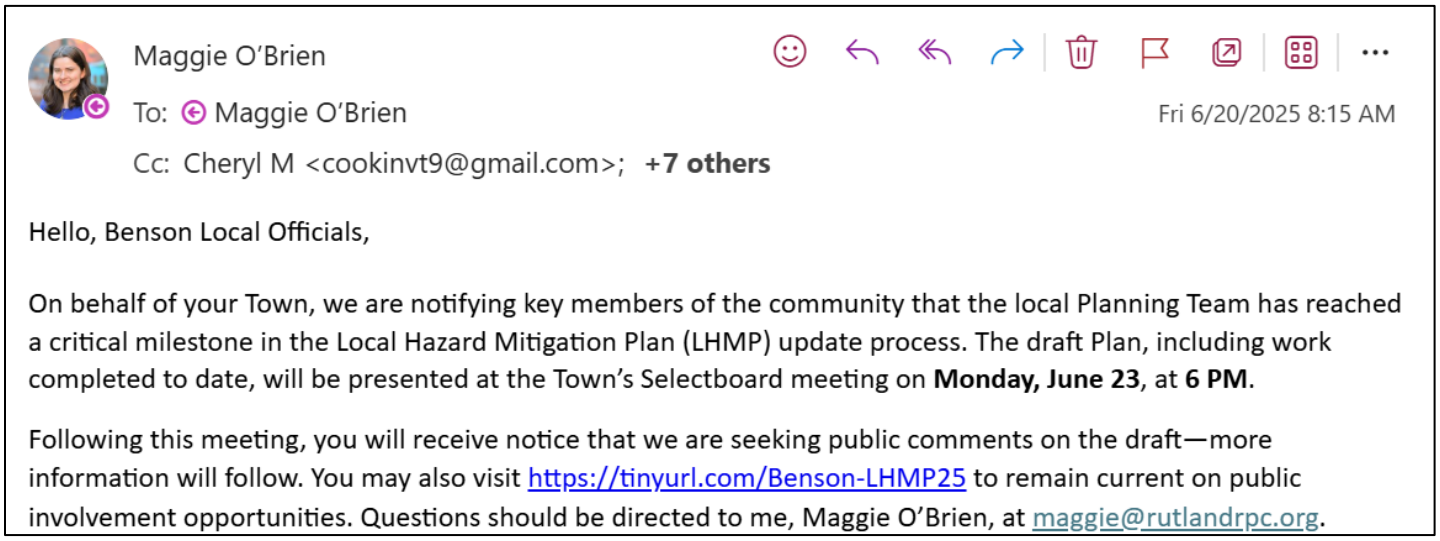
For the month of May, we want to hear from our residents about what natural hazards you are most concerned about! Share your feedback by visiting our information table at the Transfer Station on Saturday, May 3 and Saturday, May 17, or take our online survey at **https://tinyurl.com/benson-lhmp25-survey**.

Paper copies are also available at the Town Office and must be submitted to the Town Clerk by May 30, 2025. To learn more about the process and opportunities to participate, visit **https://tinyurl.com/benson-lhmp25**.

PHASE 1 PRESENTATION/PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD WEB POSTINGS



PHASE 1 PRESENTATION/PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD EMAIL BLASTS



Maggie O'Brien

To: Maggie O'Brien

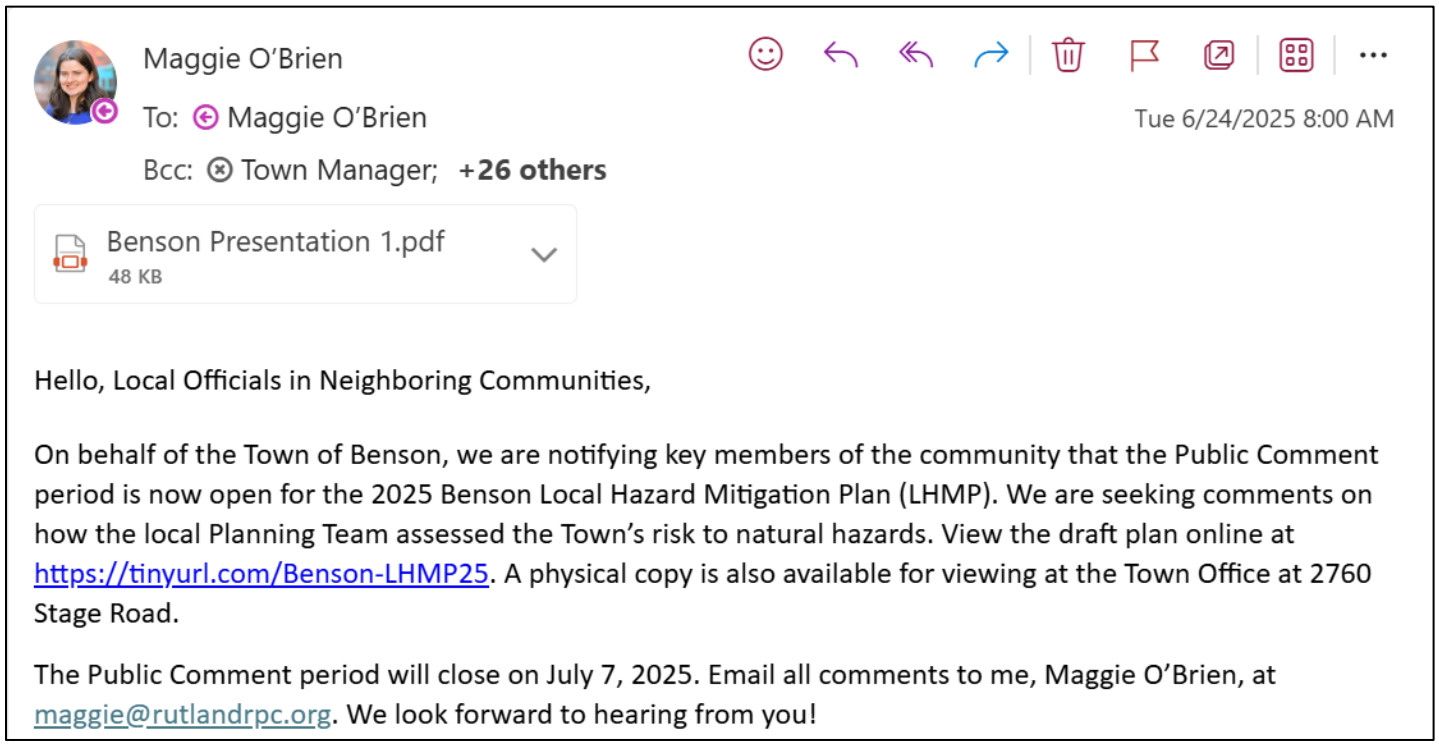
Fri 6/20/2025 8:15 AM

Cc: Cheryl M <cookinvt9@gmail.com>; **+7 others**

Hello, Benson Local Officials,

On behalf of your Town, we are notifying key members of the community that the local Planning Team has reached a critical milestone in the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) update process. The draft Plan, including work completed to date, will be presented at the Town's Selectboard meeting on **Monday, June 23**, at **6 PM**.

Following this meeting, you will receive notice that we are seeking public comments on the draft—more information will follow. You may also visit https://tinyurl.com/Benson-LHMP25 to remain current on public involvement opportunities. Questions should be directed to me, Maggie O'Brien, at maggie@rutlandrpc.org.



Maggie O'Brien

To: Maggie O'Brien

Tue 6/24/2025 8:00 AM

Bcc: Town Manager; **+26 others**

Benson Presentation 1.pdf
48 KB

Hello, Local Officials in Neighboring Communities,

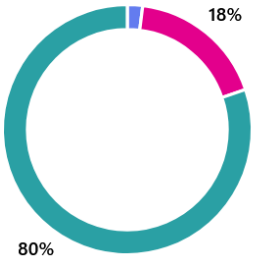
On behalf of the Town of Benson, we are notifying key members of the community that the Public Comment period is now open for the 2025 Benson Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). We are seeking comments on how the local Planning Team assessed the Town's risk to natural hazards. View the draft plan online at https://tinyurl.com/Benson-LHMP25. A physical copy is also available for viewing at the Town Office at 2760 Stage Road.

The Public Comment period will close on July 7, 2025. Email all comments to me, Maggie O'Brien, at maggie@rutlandrpc.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT SURVEY RESULTS – 101 SURVEYS RECEIVED

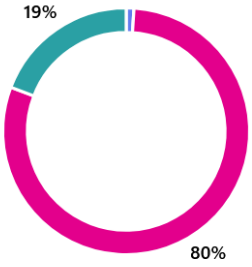
1. **How long have you lived in or owned a business or property in Benson?**

Less than one year	2
One to five years	18
More than 5 years	81



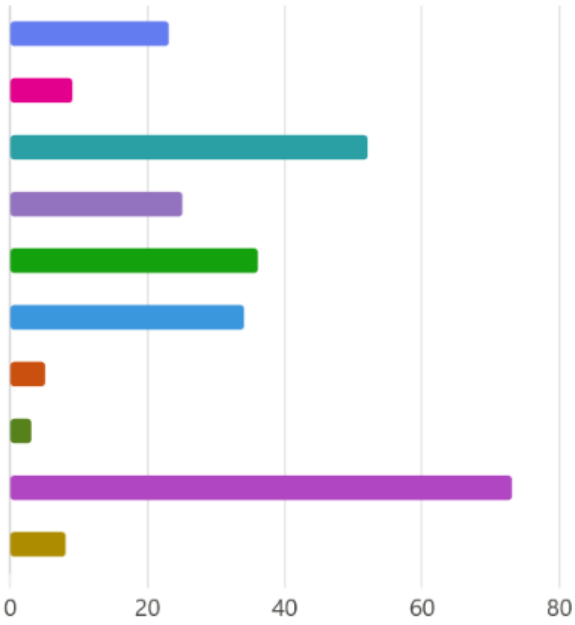
2. **Is your home or business property located in a FEMA designated floodplain?**

Yes	1
No	79
I don't know	19



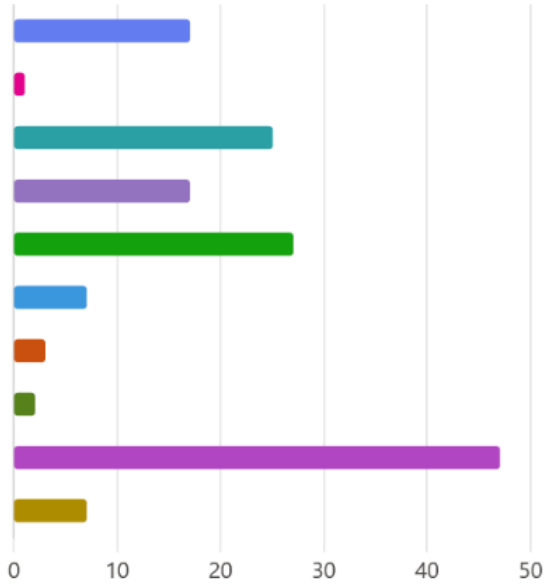
3. **Which of the following natural hazards have you or some you know experienced while living or doing business in Benson?**

Drought	23
Earthquake	9
Extreme Cold/Snow/Ice	52
Extreme Heat	25
Flash Flood/Fluvial (Stream) Erosion	36
Hail	34
Inundation Flood	5
Landslide	3
Strong Wind	73
Wildfire	8



4. **Of the natural hazards listed in Question 3, what are the top three you think are likely to occur in the next five years?**

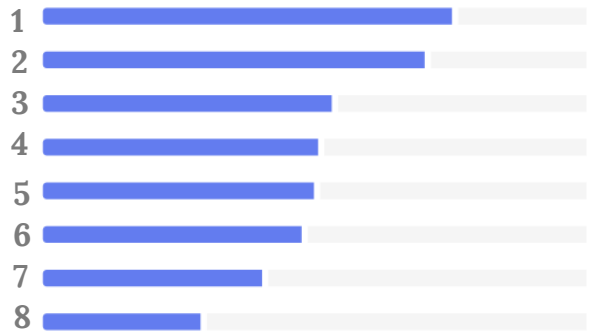
Drought	17
Earthquake	1
Extreme Cold/Snow/Ice	25
Extreme Heat	17
Flash Flood/Fluvial (Stream) Erosion	27
Hail	7
Inundation Flood	3
Landslide	2
Strong Wind	47
Wildfire	7



#1 Strong Wind **62%**
#2 Flash Flood/Fluvial Erosion **35%**
#3 Extreme Cold/Snow/Ice **33%**

5. **Which potential natural hazard impacts are most concerning to you? Rank from 1 to 8. It would be most concerning to experience damage or loss in regards to...** *(49 valid responses)*[4]

1	Damage or loss of roads, bridges, public utilities (e.g., sewer)
2	Loss of life or injuries, especially among vulnerable populations
3	Loss or damage to agricultural operations
4	Business closure or loss
5	Damage to schools and other public properties (e.g., parks, buildings)
6	Damage to environmental resources (e.g., wetlands, lakes, ponds, rivers, forests)
7	Loss of wildlife
8	Damage or loss of cultural/historic properities



[4] Unfortunately, many people misinterpreted this question on the paper surveys, which comprised the majority (94%) of responses. Responses that provided non-numerical markings for each asset or contained duplicate numbers were omitted due to insufficient data.

6. Are you aware of any location(s) in Benson that appear more prone to the impacts of flooding, ice, wind, or wildfires? Describe any past damages or recurring incidents in these areas.

Lake Champlain, Mill Pond for flooding.

No

along the shore of Lake Champlain

Flooding near the town main intersection; pretty much all the electric/phone/internet lines next to roads

Roadside of 22A for wildfires.

culvert flooding

low lying areas

lowlands and lakes

Roads; especially dirt/gravel roads

Clay Knob, East Rd, Lake Rd

Benson Landing

Flooding and washout in lower laying areas especially roads + bridges

Town roads

Roads, ag land

Rural single lane roads with poor drainage

Roads, Benson Landing

Fields Flooding

Wet Lands

Wind, flooding, freezing

Benson (outskirts)

Our home

Near the lake

Don't know. Too many scenarios

River banking

Powerline-wind knocking branches and trees down.

Powerlines, Roads

roads

Low hanging area

Lowlands and dirt roads

Flooding, Ice, Wind

By the river

Benson Landing flooding

Root Pond Road; dealt with flooding wind damage and extreme cold and snow yearly

Near streams

low lying areas/gravel roads

Outlying areas, flood and wind damages, road closure on dirt roads

Benson Landing, Lake Champlain

Near Lake

Shore Line

Floods at Champlain in Benson

Along the river

Low lying areas wildlife management areas

Lower elevation

Benson Landing

22A Flats

Flooding down from 2538 Stage Rd

New to area, not informed

Landing
Rivers, wet land

Stage Rd/Lake Rd at 4 corners- flood, Ice-Everywhere, Wildfire- remote fields/forests- Benson is very rural

Towns

Stony Pt. Rd. -couldn't get home because of water across the road, driveway washing out because of culvert blockage in the village

RT 22A: Major hazardous risk potential from tractor trailer accidents that could involve chemical spill. They only fix roads in Chittenden County and won't fix 22A.

East Rd – wind

Ice, wildfires

14 respondents (25%) answered roads for this question.

7. **List any specific community assets you are concerned about losing because of natural hazard impacts. Examples might include a local business or employer, a community gathering place, or a cultural or historical site.**

None.

wildlife/natural habitats

Benson Landing due to flooding?

Fire house, town office, Town garage, school

Cobble Knoll Orchard – loss due to freeze, wind, hurricane, hail damage. Drought

Loss of roads

Youth

Integrity of Roads

Roads + Bridges

State Lands

Schools, Business

Town buildings and historical sites

electrical services, home flooding

Local Business

Sound Lane

The Binding Site, the Town Garage

Church, Wheel Inn

Roads are biggest risk

Youth are leaving

Local farms and cemetaries

Making sure municipal buildings are up to natural disaster problem; power outages are an example

All of the above will impact our town

Town office, Wheel Inn

Shore Line

Store

Town Resources, roads, people, trail,

All apply

Roads & Bridges

House

Post Office, local markets, flooded road

People's Homes, Wheel Inn, ATV trails/class 4 roads

Ice clogs the culverts on 22A-floods flow over the road on 22A, wind causes trucks to swerve off road. Fix 22A Fairhaven to Shoreham-TOP PRIORITY

The Wheel Inn, Town Office

Benson Village Store

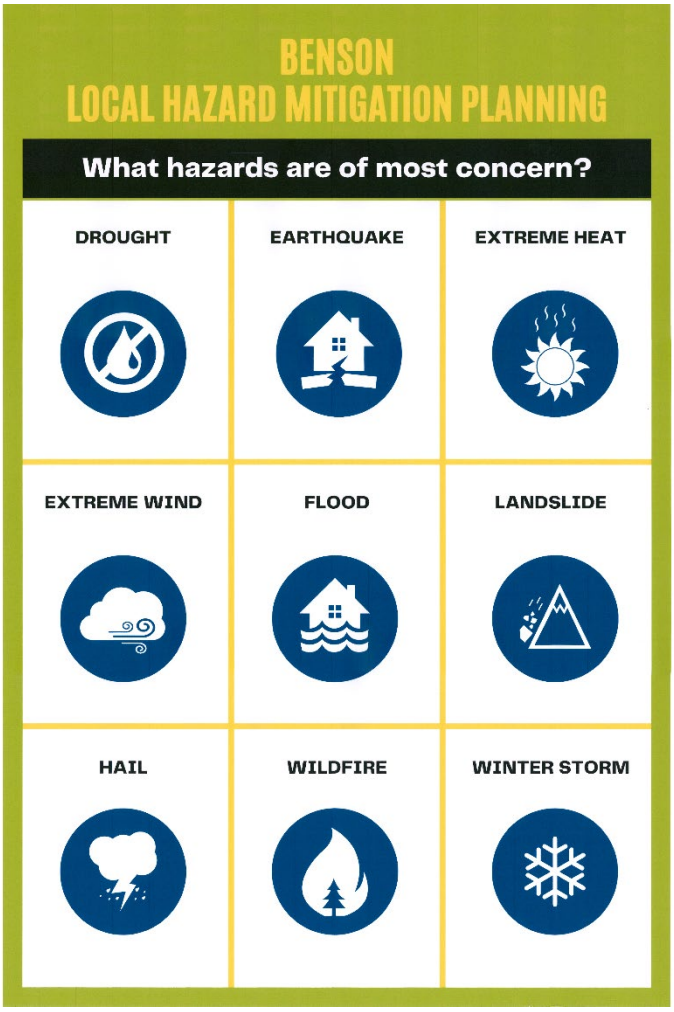
9 respondents (26%) answered roads for this question.

8. **Anything else related to natural hazard risks or impacts you would like to provide for consideration and incorporation into the Benson Local Hazard Mitigation Plan?**

ID ↑	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	The dirt roads are being constantly washed away or severely damaged after winter and during rain. Can some of these dirt roads be considered for paving
2	anonymous	Road flooding
3	anonymous	We need a regular hazardous material dropoff more often
4	anonymous	Maybe fire/flood
5	anonymous	Hail, wind, ice, flood alerts to phone if opt in
6	anonymous	Good idea to have a plan
7	anonymous	High winds, extreme heat
8	anonymous	Clean out ditches and rivers
9	anonymous	Roads
10	anonymous	Just keeping up with culverts and roads
11	anonymous	Fix 22A Fairhaven to Shoreham, our biggest hazard and the biggest cause of loss of life. I could care less about natural disasters you can't predict or do anything about. Just fix 22A-we know it's a hazard we know how to fix it. Just do it, put the money where it's needed.

4 respondents (36%) answered roads for this question.

PHASE 1 ENGAGEMENT POP-UP RESULTS



Pop-Up Poster Results

When developing the public engagement strategy, the planning team used multiple approaches to capture as many potential respondents as possible. The goal was to appeal to a broad audience with various interpersonal styles and preferences.

May 2025 was unusually damp; despite rescheduling, both pop-up events were hindered by rain and wind, making it difficult to interact with the posters outdoors. In addition, the municipal staff member on duty brought paper surveys to the transfer station and saw more success promoting this method of engagement with residents. This scenario highlights the strength of having multiple avenues to garner public input. However, the inherent consequence of this outcome is insufficient information from the pop-up posters to create any form of data visualization. For example, tables ranking the hazards of most concern or the local community assets that residents believe are most at risk are omitted from this Plan.

Examples of Phase 2 Engagement Materials

Email Blasts
Social Media Postings
Survey with Results

PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT SURVEY #2 EMAIL BLASTS AND WEB POSTINGS

From Maggie O'Brien <Maggie@rutlandrpc.org>
Date Fri 8/1/2025 8:00 AM
To Maggie O'Brien <Maggie@rutlandrpc.org>
Cc Benson Roads <bensonroads@gmail.com>

Hello, Local and Regional Hazard Mitigation Agencies,

On behalf of the Town of Benson, we are notifying key members of the community that the local Planning Team has reached the next milestone in updating their Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). The Town has developed a draft goal and actions to mitigate the impacts of natural hazards in Benson. Let us know what you think about the proposed goal and actions by taking the online survey at https://tinyurl.com/benson-lhmp25-survey2. Physical copies are also available at the Town Office (2760 Stage Road) and will be handed out during Benson's annual Burdock Festival on August 10.

The survey will be open until **August 25, 2025**. Questions should be directed to me, Maggie O'Brien, at maggie@rutlandrpc.org. For more information on the Benson LHMP update process, visit https://tinyurl.com/benson-lhmp25.

Best,
Maggie

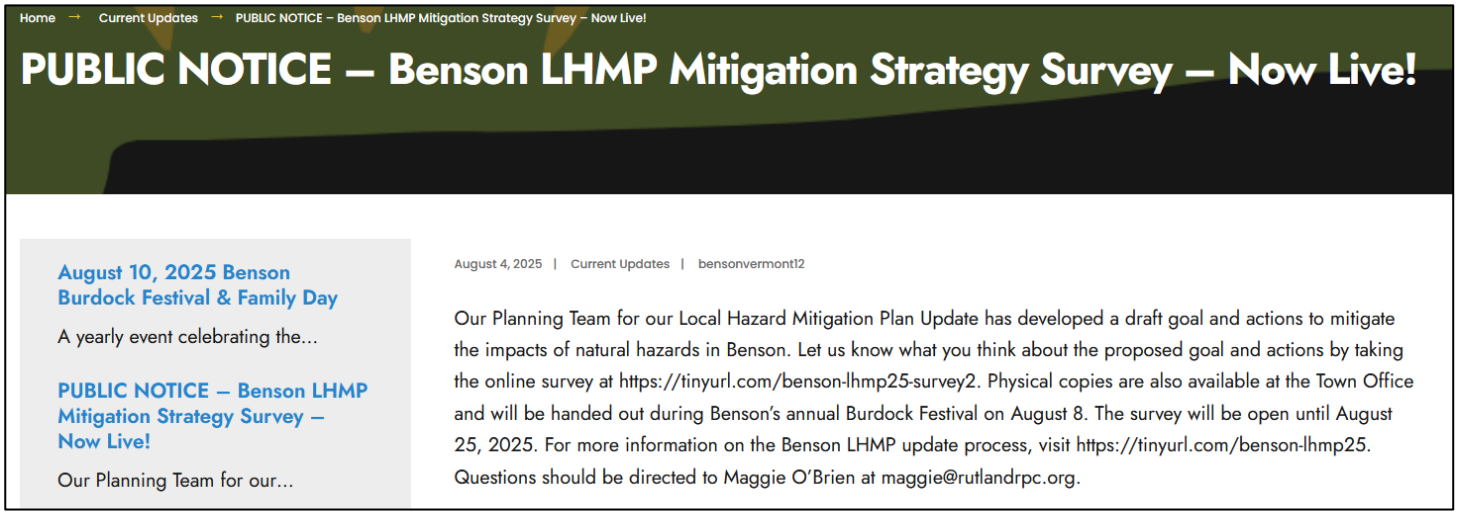
Rutland Regional Planning Commission
July 31 at 3:04 PM ·

Benson Mitigation Strategy Survey – Now Live!

Benson has developed a draft goal and actions to mitigate the impacts of natural hazards in the Town. They want to hear from the public about the goal and actions being proposed to inform their Local Hazard Mitigation Plan update. Provide your feedback by taking their online survey at https://tinyurl.com/benson-lhmp25-survey2.

Physical copies are also available at the Town Office and will be handed out during Benson's annual Burdock Festival on August 10th.

The survey will be open until August 25, 2025. For more information on the Benson LHMP update process, visit https://tinyurl.com/benson-lhmp25.



PHASE 2 PRESENTATION/PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD WEB POSTINGS

BENSON Vermont

Latest News (Current Updates) | For Residents | Calendar of Events | Municipal

Town of Benson, Vermont | Contact Us

Home → Current Updates → Local Hazard Mitigation Plan update!

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan update!

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan update!

We've reached the next critical...

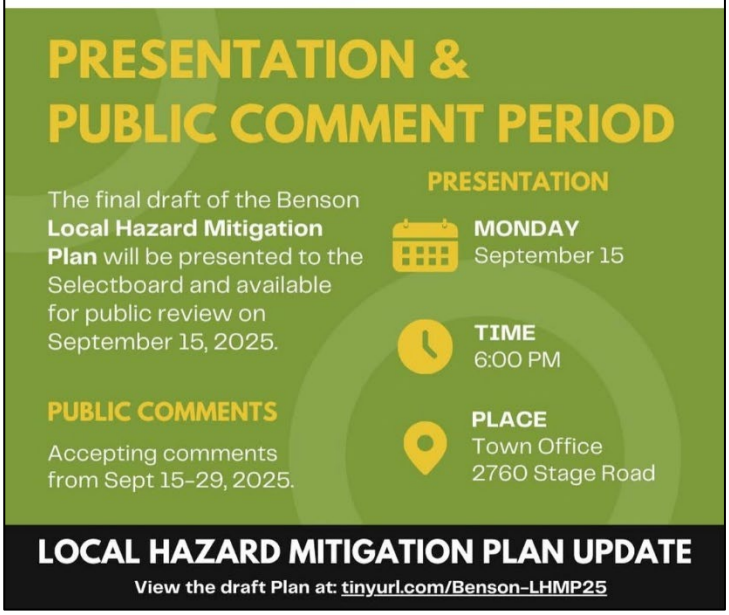
Forest Agencies Urge Caution with Campfires

September 13, 2025 | Current Updates | bensonvermont12

We've reached the next critical milestone of our Local Hazard Mitigation Plan update! Come to the Selectboard meeting on 9/15 to learn more about what the Town has accomplished since June and how to submit your own comments for consideration. More to come in the following days once the public comment period opens. You can also stay up to date on our efforts at https://tinyurl.com/Benson-LHMP25.

Town of Benson, Vermont
4d ·

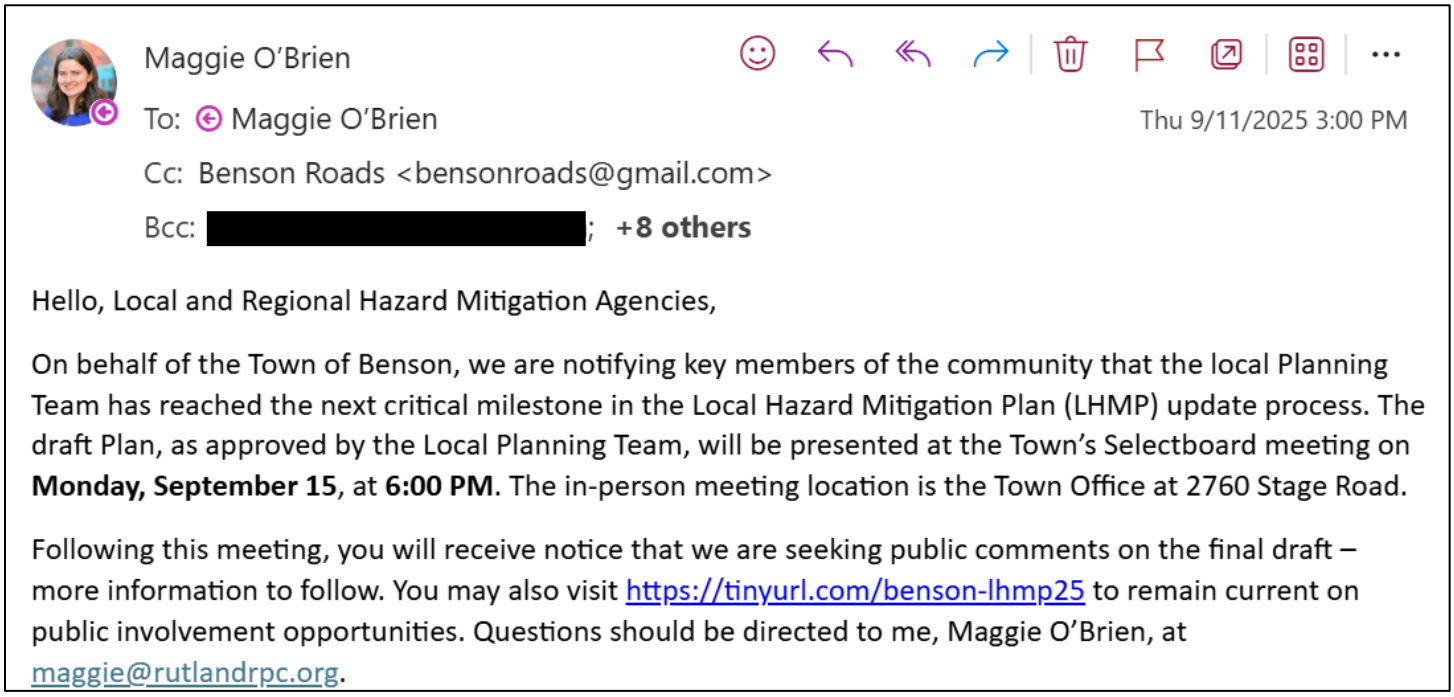
We've reached the next critical milestone of our Local Hazard Mitigation Plan update! Come to the Selectboard meeting on 9/15 to learn ... See more



Rutland Regional Planning Commission
1d ·

Benson residents: the final draft of the 2025 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is available for your review! From September 15 to 29, sub... See more

PHASE 2 PRESENTATION/PUBLIC COMMENT EMAIL BLASTS



Maggie O'Brien

To: Maggie O'Brien

Thu 9/11/2025 3:00 PM

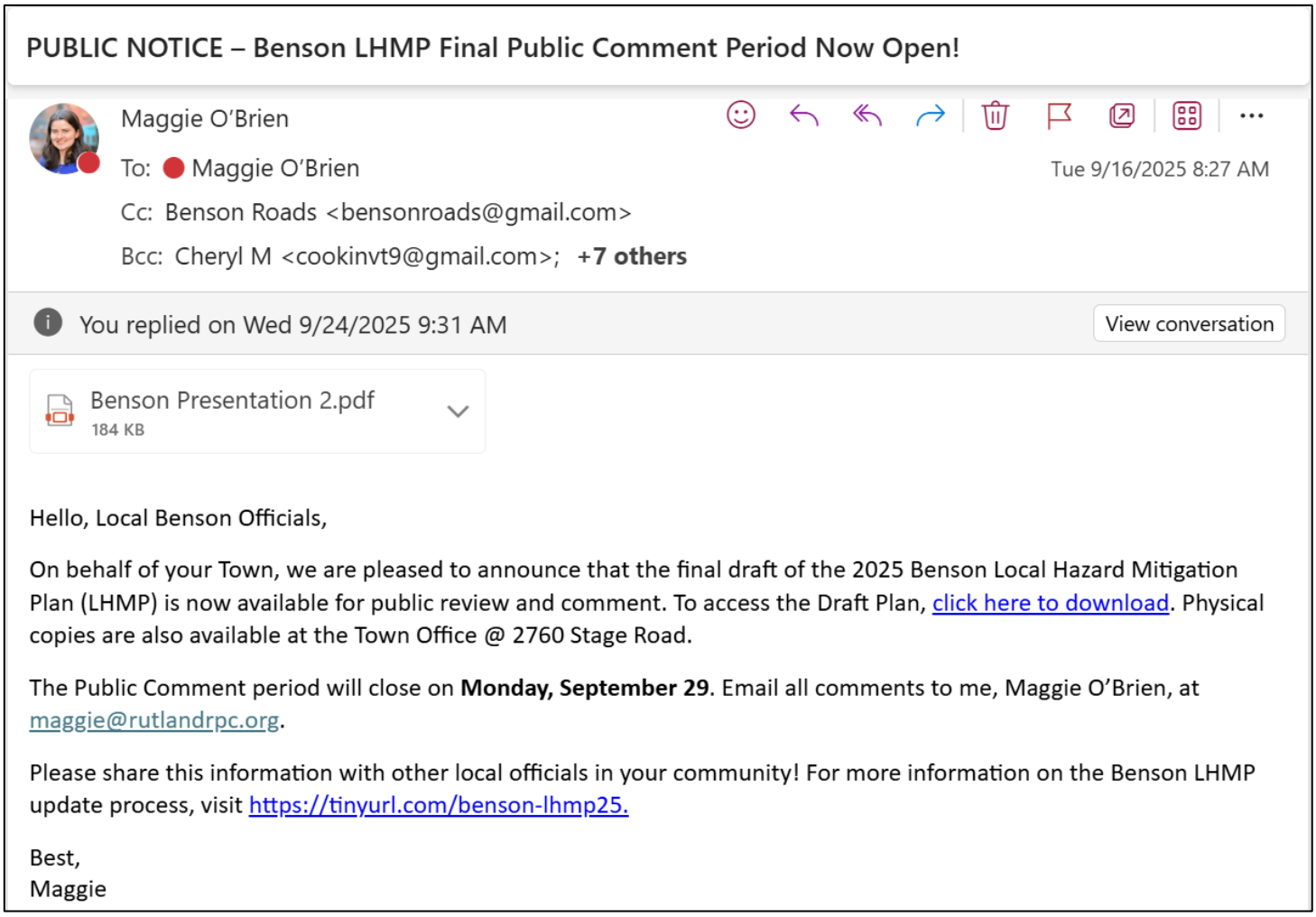
Cc: Benson Roads <bensonroads@gmail.com>

Bcc: [redacted]; **+8 others**

Hello, Local and Regional Hazard Mitigation Agencies,

On behalf of the Town of Benson, we are notifying key members of the community that the local Planning Team has reached the next critical milestone in the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) update process. The draft Plan, as approved by the Local Planning Team, will be presented at the Town's Selectboard meeting on **Monday, September 15**, at **6:00 PM**. The in-person meeting location is the Town Office at 2760 Stage Road.

Following this meeting, you will receive notice that we are seeking public comments on the final draft – more information to follow. You may also visit https://tinyurl.com/benson-lhmp25 to remain current on public involvement opportunities. Questions should be directed to me, Maggie O'Brien, at maggie@rutlandrpc.org.



PUBLIC NOTICE – Benson LHMP Final Public Comment Period Now Open!

Maggie O'Brien

To: Maggie O'Brien

Tue 9/16/2025 8:27 AM

Cc: Benson Roads <bensonroads@gmail.com>

Bcc: Cheryl M <cookinvt9@gmail.com>; **+7 others**

You replied on Wed 9/24/2025 9:31 AM View conversation

Benson Presentation 2.pdf
184 KB

Hello, Local Benson Officials,

On behalf of your Town, we are pleased to announce that the final draft of the 2025 Benson Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) is now available for public review and comment. To access the Draft Plan, click here to download. Physical copies are also available at the Town Office @ 2760 Stage Road.

The Public Comment period will close on **Monday, September 29**. Email all comments to me, Maggie O'Brien, at maggie@rutlandrpc.org.

Please share this information with other local officials in your community! For more information on the Benson LHMP update process, visit https://tinyurl.com/benson-lhmp25.

Best,
Maggie

PHASE 2 PUBLIC COMMENT EXTENSION AND NEW YORK EMAIL BLASTS

Maggie O'Brien

To: Maggie O'Brien

Tue 9/23/2025 10:40 AM

Cc: publicsafety@washingtoncountyny.gov; **+1 other**

Bcc: supervisor.wilson@townofputnamny.com; **+6 others**

You replied on Tue 9/23/2025 12:03 PM View conversation

To the Local Officials of Dresden, NY and Putnam, NY:

I am writing to you today in my capacity as the Emergency Management Planner for Rutland County, Vermont. Among other duties, I assist our municipalities with Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) updates. (This is the Vermont equivalent of County HMPs, as we do not have county government.) This email is an invitation to review and provide comments for the final draft of the Benson, Vermont LHMP.

The Local Hazard Mitigation Plan aims to reduce risks from natural hazards. We encourage community involvement through various methods such as email updates, surveys, workshops, presentations, and public comment opportunities. Our goal is not just to inform people about the Plan, but also to gather feedback on the natural hazards and strategies the Town should focus on. We want to include different viewpoints and information about the impacts and likelihood of hazards, as well as priorities for mitigation actions.

We are in the final public comment period for the Benson LHMP, originally slated to close on Monday, September 29. However, to make sure we have enough time to allow for your voluntary review and participation, I will be extending this by two more weeks (**Monday, October 13**). You can find out more about the Planning process at https://tinyurl.com/Benson-LHMP25. You may also view a downloadable PDF of the final draft here.

Maggie O'Brien

To: Maggie O'Brien

Wed 9/24/2025 9:28 AM

Cc: Benson Roads <bensonroads@gmail.com>

Bcc: amy.roy@svuvt.org; Lyle Jepson; jpaquette@svuvt.org; **+21 others**

Community Organizations and Partners:

This is an update pertaining to the Benson Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). The public comment period for the final draft of the Benson LHMP has been extended to **October 14, 2025**. Until then, you may continue to email your comments to maggie@rutlandrpc.org. We still encourage you to attend the September 29, 2025, Selectboard meeting to give your remarks in person if you wish. An updated version of the final draft, which includes language about public outreach conducted to adjacent communities in New York, can be found at https://tinyurl.com/benson-lhmp25.

Best,
Maggie

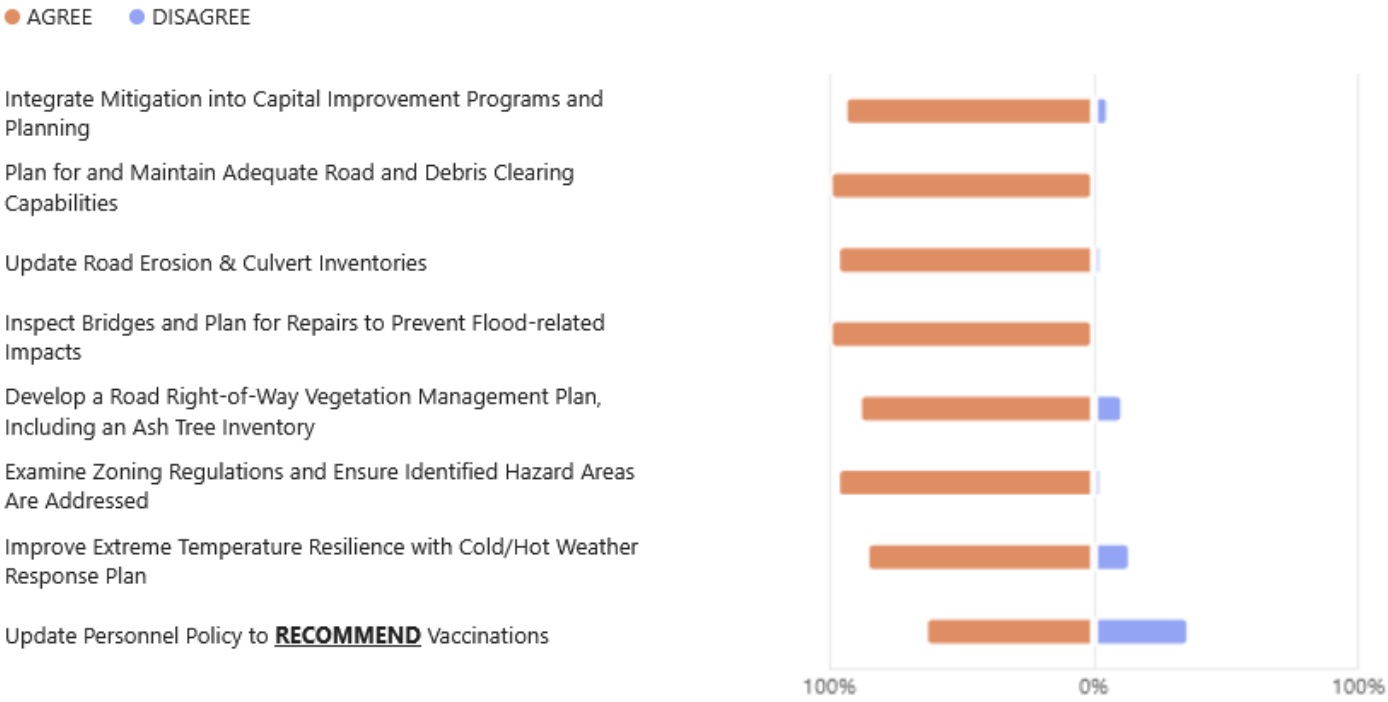
PHASE 2 SURVEY RESULTS – 36 SURVEYS SUBMITTED

1. **Evaluate the community's primary mitigation goal: "To increase Benson's resilience to natural hazards by advancing mitigation investments. These investments will ultimately reduce or avoid long-term risks to people; homes and neighborhoods; the local economy; cultural and historic resources; ecosystems and natural resources; and Community Lifelines such as transportation, energy, and communications."**

2. **If you disagree with the goal statement, explain why. Is there something missing we should consider?** *(1 response)*

   We need community actions and meetings by the people

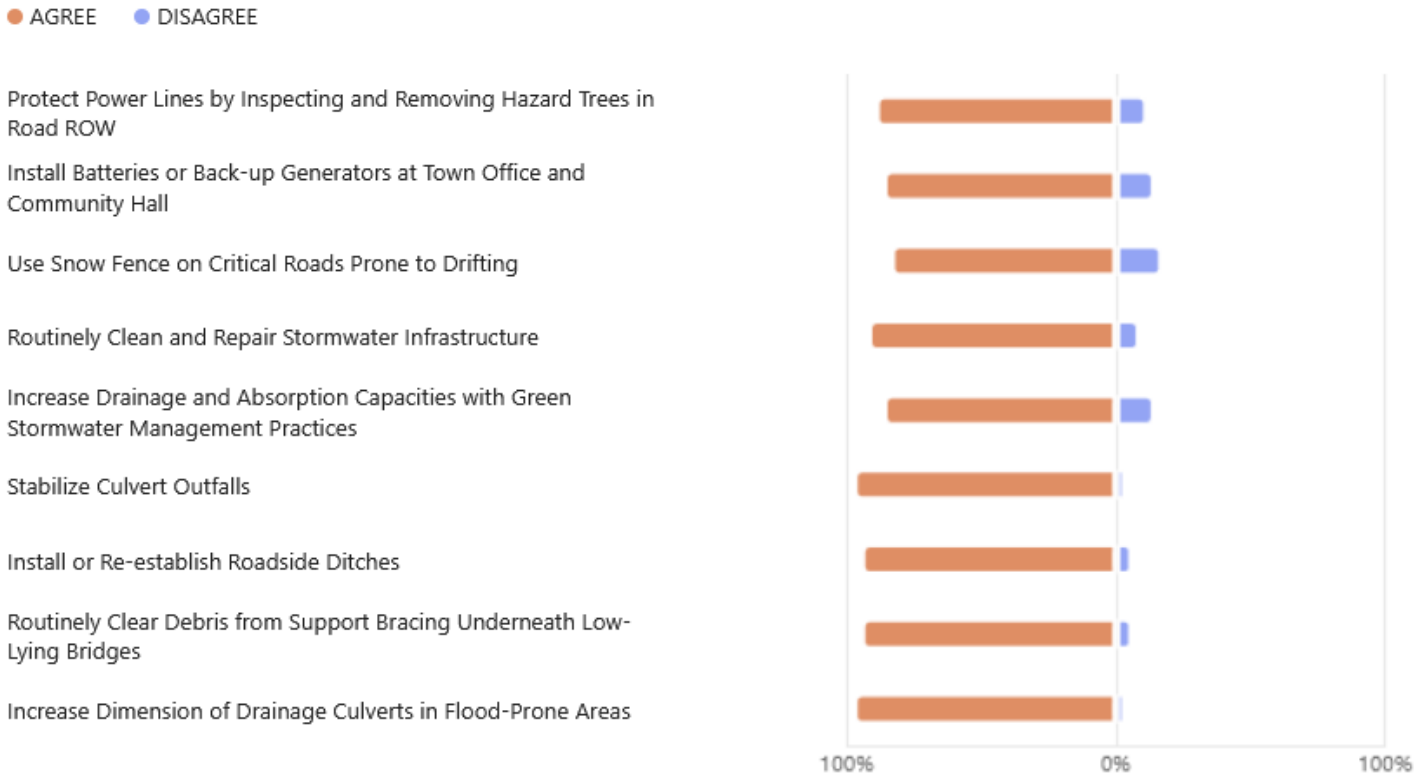
3. **Indicate if you agree or disagree that the following Planning and Regulatory mitigation actions are acceptable and practical for Benson to implement over a five-year period. These actions include plans, policies, or regulations that influence the way land and buildings are developed and built.**



4. **Is there something missing we should consider?** *(1 response)*

   Fix 22A - Chittenden County gets all the funding. Make a 40 MPH zone in front of G+L store. I nearly get killed there once a week.

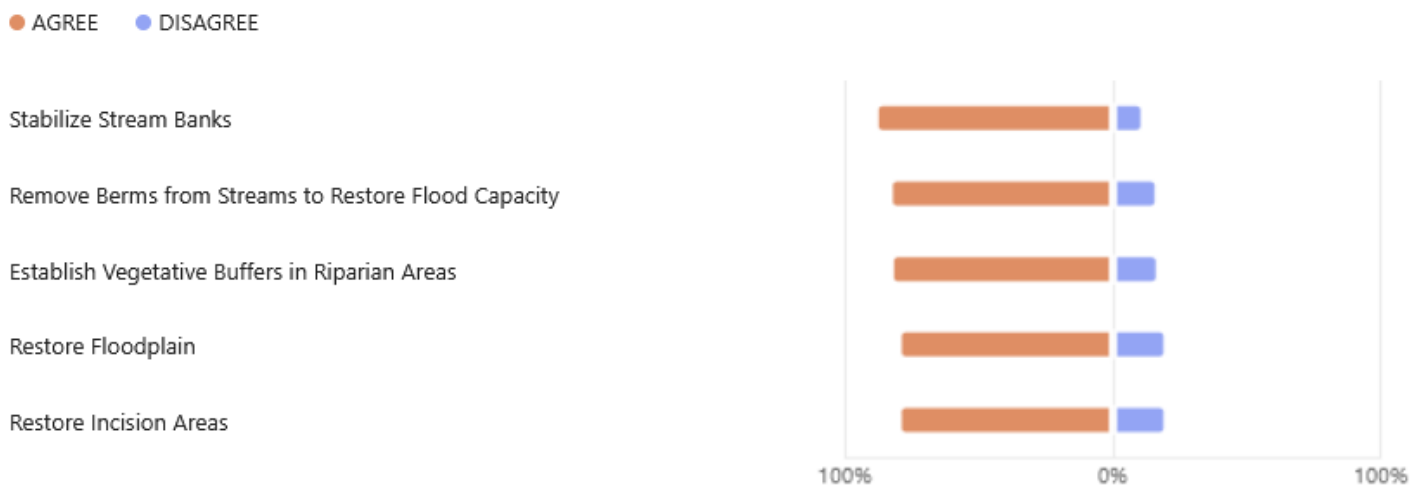
5. **Indicate if you agree or disagree that the following Structure & Infrastructure Project mitigation actions are acceptable and practical for Benson to implement over a five-year period. These actions involve modifying existing structures and infrastructure to protect them from a hazard or remove them from a hazard area.**



6. **Is there something missing we should consider?** *(1 response)*

   When fixing ditches ensure road crew has the proper grader training to not just get them filled in again. Seems like this has happened in the past.

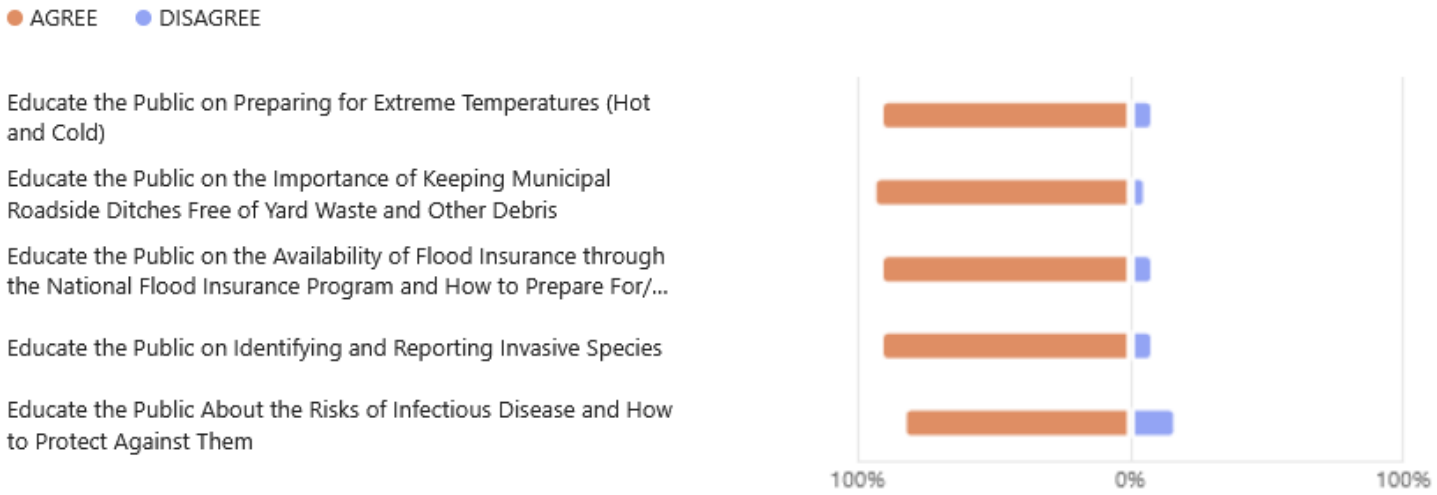
7. **Natural Systems Protection projects help minimize damage and losses and preserve or restore the functions of natural systems. Benson currently has no known locations requiring these actions. However, if the Town monitors and seeks to implement projects as needed, would you be in support of any of the following? Indicate if you agree or disagree that these actions are acceptable and practical for Benson to potentially implement.** *(See next page.)*



8. **Is there something missing we should consider?** *(1 response)*

   Sounds good, but how expensive?

9. **Indicate if you agree or disagree that the following Outreach and Education mitigation actions are acceptable and practical for Benson to implement over a five-year period. These actions inform and educate the public about hazards and potential ways to mitigate them.**



10. **Is there something missing we should consider?** *(2 responses)*

    Good luck educating the public. Those who want to know or care already know this. Flood insurance is unaffordable. People don't want to be educate.d

    Demand the state fix 22A which is our highest hazardous exposure risk. Due to potential of a truck crashing carrying waste.

11. **Out of all the mitigation actions presented, which three (3) are the most important for Benson to implement?** *(14 responses.)*

Road erosion, bridges inspections

Vegetative buffers in Riparian areas, backup power at town offices and maybe community hall (if affordable), inspect/repair bridges

Educating public on the importance of keeping roadsides free of waste and debris. Educating the public on identifying and reporting invasive species. Improve temperature resilience with a cold/hot response plan.

Update road erosion and culvert inventories; Remove berms and/or accumulated debris from stream to restore flood capacity; Protect powerlines and roads by inspecting and removing hazardous trees in Road ROW

Maintaining roads and bridges; Free educational/informal community meetings

1. Fix 22A. 2. Make a 40 MPH zone in front of G+L Store 3. Start implementing the 22A Repairs that are already designed. We don't need to plan to reduce hazard mitigation for our children when they will most likely get killed in a crash on 22A by out of staters passing on the double yellow at 85 mph every day!

Roads, ditches, bridges

Emergency power; culvert maintenance; road and debris clearing

Educating the public on the importance of keeping ditches and roadsides clean of waste and debris; increasing culvert sizes to ensure good waterflow during heavy rain; educating the public on identifying and reporting invasive species

Educate on extreme hold + cold; educate on risks of ID + how to protect; plan for and maintain adequate road and debris clearing capabilities

Got to preserve roads, hilly ground

Flood mitigation; bridge repair; extreme temps

Culvert size; ditching; good road grading (eliminate edge build up)

protect power lines; stabilize culverts; install roadside ditches