

Appendix F: Copies of Communications

Appendix F: Copies of Communications Related to Planning Process

Correspondence with the chief elected officials, local planning teams, surrounding planning agencies, and the public included a sustained messaging about the development of a combined hazard mitigation and climate adaptation plan. For example, the initial email correspondence with the chief elected officials after the COG meeting of April 26, 2023, described the approach for incorporating climate adaptation into the hazard mitigation plan update:

Dear Hazard Mitigation Plan Coordinator,

The Capitol Region Council of Governments is working with the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) to identify unmet climate-related needs related to flooding and extreme heat through participation in the Resilient Connecticut program. CIRCA introduced this program in a public comment at the April 26, 2023 COG meeting.

CRCOG has elected to align the Resilient Connecticut planning process with the update of the region's Multi-Jurisdiction Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, which will result in development of a combined Hazard Mitigation Plan and Climate Adaptation Plan. Ideally, this will help position resilience efforts for the State's "resilience project pipeline."

The good news for your community is that we have combined the local Resilient Connecticut meetings with the local hazard mitigation plan update meetings to reduce your time commitments.

*To get started, please use the following poll to choose *only one* date and time for a meeting with your local planning committee: [link] The goal of this meeting is to review local, natural hazard vulnerabilities and mitigation capabilities with your staff, review the status of past mitigation activities, and the feasibility of new activities. You may remember participating in the last hazard mitigation plan cycle, which concluded in 2019.*

We are relying on you to invite your colleagues to this meeting. Staff from planning/land use, public works, building, emergency management, and the office of the mayor/first selectman should be present. Once you have selected a date and time, it will be unavailable to other communities, so please choose only one option. The available dates and times are listed below; note that in-person meetings will be on Mondays and Wednesdays whereas virtual meetings will be on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. Choose whichever format works best for you.

We look forward to working with you on this important and unique combined planning effort.

The meeting invitation for the first workshop continued with this messaging:

To the chief elected officials and "hazard mitigation plan local coordinators"

Immediately before the CRCOG Transportation and Planning meeting on July 24, we will hold a hybrid in-person/virtual workshop about the vulnerabilities and risks being addressed in the Capitol Region Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan (HMCAP). This workshop will be facilitated by the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA), serving as the consultant to CRCOG.

Presentation and discussion topics will include:

- *Purpose and Need for Hazard Mitigation Plan*
- *What's New – Why are we Expanding the Plan into a HMCAP?*
- *Deployment of the Resilient Connecticut program*
- *Other directives*
- *Vulnerabilities and Risks*
- *What Did We Hear from You During the Local Planning Meetings?*
- *Organization of Hazards in HMCAP*
- *Hazard Loss Estimates*
- *Discussion*
- *Next Steps*

Please share this invitation with members of your local planning team (i.e., emergency management, planning, land use, engineering, public works, and building).

The meeting invitation for the second workshop continued with this messaging:

Hello “Local Coordinators” and backup Local Coordinators:

Thanks for all your help with the local planning meetings for the Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan. As we discussed, this is your community's fourth hazard mitigation plan, and we are incorporating the “Resilient Connecticut” program administered by the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) to expand the scope of the plan and align with State and Federal grant programs.

Our second (of only two) regional workshops is scheduled for October 3rd from 9:30 am – 10:30 am. A draft agenda is:

- *A final brief reminder about the alignment of the Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan and “Resilient Connecticut”*
- *Updates on the planning meetings with the municipal teams (if needed) and from the August public meetings*
- *Summary of the major climate-driven and hazard mitigation needs in the Capital Region of Connecticut*
- *Adaptation and hazard mitigation strategies of Federal, State, and regional interest that we will “shop from” for example:*
 - *Critical facilities resilience*
 - *Cooling centers for extreme heat respite*
 - *Water supply issues (water supply watersheds, harmful algal blooms, water quality challenges, etc.)*
 - *Wastewater/sewer infrastructure such as WWTPs/WPCFs and pumping stations*
 - *Stream Crossings*
 - *Others*
- *Next steps*

Please join us on October 3rd. You may forward this to your colleagues.

Targeted outreach to environmental justice organizations and community foundations continued with this messaging:

Dear [organization / foundation name],

The Capitol Region Council of Government (CRCOG) is currently working on an update to the region's Hazard Mitigation Plan, with assistance from the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA, part of UConn) to incorporate planning for climate change impacts. The result will be a combined Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan (HMCAP), which will outline a set of actions that can be taken to reduce losses of property and life due to natural disasters like floods, severe wind events, winter storms, wildfires, droughts, extreme heat events, and earthquakes; and will outline a set of actions to reduce impacts of these events when made worse by the effects of climate change. Having an up-to-date plan is necessary for keeping the region's communities eligible for seeking hazard mitigation assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the State of Connecticut. The plan will also help align the region with new State funding programs that become available in the future.

CIRCA would like to ensure that vulnerable communities and populations disproportionately impacted by climate change and natural hazards across the CRCOG region have the opportunity to offer input during this planning process, so that we can make sure their concerns are reflected in the plan. I am reaching out to [organization name] because of the work you do in [specific town(s)]. Would it be possible for you to share the following opportunities for feedback with the populations you serve on your social media and/or organization website? A flyer is attached for easy sharing.

An online, internet-based experience called a "story map" has been developed and can be accessed at <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/ce49080668d14e6eac9f26f0d5128a0c/>. An optional survey is embedded in the story map – we are interested in hearing about any experiences with natural hazards or climate change impacts so we can make sure the plan reflects these concerns.

We will be holding a virtual public meeting on [date/time] to share information about the hazard mitigation and climate adaptation planning process and to answer questions. Anyone is welcome to register for this meeting here [link]

We will be holding an in-person public meeting on [date/time] at [location] to share information about the planning process and answer questions. Anyone is welcome to attend this meeting, no registration needed.

Comments about the Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan for the Capitol Region of Connecticut can also be sent directly to the CRCOG office at: mgoulet@crcog.org.

Thanks very much for your consideration and your help in spreading the word!

Press releases employed the same narrative. The main press release for the project was issued on August 1, 2023, after the majority of local planning meetings and one virtual workshop with the local planning teams had occurred, giving all local planning teams an opportunity to express their needs and concerns before public engagement.

August 1st, 2023 – In recent weeks, the Capitol Region in Connecticut has been contending with the impact of flooding from storms. These storms are a strong reminder of the risks posed by natural disasters. The region’s communities have shared in the development and adoption of a natural hazard mitigation plan for two decades, with updates incorporated every five years. The region’s communities are again working with the Capitol Region Council of Government (CRCOG) to update the plan, and this time the challenges associated with climate change will be incorporated directly into the plan to produce a “Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan (HMCAP)”. The plan will outline a set of actions that can be taken to reduce losses of property and life due to natural disasters like floods, severe wind events, winter storms, wildfires, droughts, extreme heat events, and earthquakes; and will outline a set of actions to reduce impacts of these events when made worse by the effects of climate change.

The hazard mitigation and climate adaptation planning effort is being led by the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA), which is located at UConn’s Avery Point Campus. CIRCA is also leveraging this update to expand its “Resilient Connecticut” program from a narrow pilot region to the entire state, with a strong focus in the Hartford region.

People living and working in and near the CRCOG region have several opportunities to provide input to the planning process. An online, internet-based experience called a “story map” has been developed and can be accessed at <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/ce49080668d14e6eac9f26f0d5128a0c/>. An optional survey is embedded in the story map.

Comments about the Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan for the Hartford Region of Connecticut can also be sent directly to the CRCOG office at: mgoulet@crcog.org.

The Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan for CRCOG will continue to make the region’s communities eligible for seeking hazard mitigation assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the State of Connecticut. The plan will also help align the region with new State funding programs that become available in the future.

The narrative used in the letters to surrounding planning agencies and entities is provided below:

July 13, 2023 – The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) is in the process of updating the Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan for its member municipalities. CRCOG is leveraging its participation in the Resilient Connecticut program administered by the Connecticut Institute for Resilience and Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) to more directly incorporate climate adaptation into the hazard mitigation plan. The goal is to develop the second “Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan” in Connecticut.

We invite you and your member communities to participate in the planning process by providing comments regarding the update of the Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan and its transition to a Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan. The current plan can be found at <https://crcog.org/natural-hazards-mitigation-planning/>. Some questions to consider are:

- Are any hazard mitigation and climate adaptation efforts being planning in your communities that might affect downstream, adjacent, or nearby communities of the Capitol Region of Connecticut?*
- Have any hazard mitigation or climate adaptation needs been identified in your communities that might benefit from participation and support from CRCOG communities?*
- Are any hazard mitigation or climate adaptation needs evident or apparent for critical facilities, critical infrastructure, transportation routes, or regional assets that are shared among your communities and those of the Capitol Region of Connecticut? For example, Windham Water Works serves southern Mansfield in the CRCOG region and western Windham in the SCCOG region; for another, MDC's dams are located in the NHCOC region, yet CRCOG towns along the Farmington River need to participate in dam failure exercises.*

We invite you to provide comments directly to Maureen Goulet at CRCOG (mgoulet@crcog.org) and the undersigned. A project Story Map with an embedded survey is another opportunity to participate, and is available at <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/ce49080668d14e6eac9f26f0d5128a0c/>.

Please circulate this letter to your member communities if appropriate.