



31 Suffield

Community Overview

Suffield is a rural community encompassing about 42.2 square miles with a population of about 15,752. Suffield's terrain rises from an elevation of 22 feet above sea level at the Connecticut River to its highest point of 691 feet above sea level on West Suffield Mountain. Suffield's land area contributes to three watersheds: the Farmington River Watershed to the west, the Stony Brook Watershed centrally and the mainstem of the Connecticut River Watershed to the east. The Connecticut River runs the length of the eastern boundary of Town. Other major watercourses include Clay, Deep, Fourmile, Mountain Brook, Muddy, Philo, Rawlins and Stony Brooks. State routes 75, 168, 187 and 190 provide major transportation routes through town.

Approximately 40% of the Town is served by public water; Connecticut Water serves the east side of Town, Aquarian serves a portion of the west, and the rest of the Town is on wells. The east side of Town has a sewer system, and the rest of Town uses septic systems. Historically, sewer pumping stations would be installed in developments larger than 25-30 homes, and individual grinder pumps would not generally be permitted. This has changed in recent years, and now pressurized sewer systems with grinder units are installed in every new home that cannot reach the sewer system by gravity flow. This change is expected to open the way for new residential development.

Agriculture, manufacture of ice cream, industrial gases, and small tools, and warehousing are the principal industries. The largest employers are MacDougall-Walker Prison, Cadence Laser, HP Hood, Kongsberg Automotive, Praxair, and Suffield House Nursing Home. Part of Bradley International Airport and the entire North Central Connecticut Correctional facility are located in Suffield.

Suffield's development landscape predominantly revolves around single-family residential projects, with minimal concerns regarding flood risk due to limited vulnerable areas. The town's commercial development remains relatively stagnant, and the industrial zone has only witnessed the construction of a single new building in recent years. Suffield experiences light and sporadic development, primarily concentrated within the residential sector. Development/redevelopment is not increasing risk to natural hazards.

Critical Facilities

In Suffield critical facilities include Town Hall, four fire stations, a highway department garage and fuel center, an ambulance building that also serves as the Town's EOC, the Police Department, the Senior Center, the Wastewater Treatment Plant and 20 pumping stations, Suffield High School and Middle School, two Elementary Schools, the private Suffield Academy, three senior housing facilities, the MacDougall-Walker Correctional Facility, and a number of historic sites.

Table 31-1: Critical Facilities, Suffield

Facility	Shelter	Cooling Center	Generator
Town Hall			Yes
4 Fire Stations			Yes
Highway Garage & Fuel Center			Yes
Ambulance Building (EOC)			Yes
Police Department			Yes
Senior Center	Warming Center	X	Yes
WWTP			Yes
20 Pumping Stations			Yes
Suffield High School	Primary		Yes
Suffield Middle School	Secondary		Yes
2 Elementary Schools			Yes
Suffield Academy (private, residential)			Yes
Suffield By the River (Assisted Living)			Yes
Suffield House (Nursing Home)			Yes
Bridge Street Elderly Housing (3 buildings)			
McDougall-Walker Correctional Facility			Unknown
1 Eversource Substation			

During extreme heat events, the Suffield Senior Center can be opened as a public cooling center. This facility has stand by power consisting of generators.

Suffield High School at Sheldon Street is an overnight shelter.

The MacDougall-Walker Correctional Facility is a state facility housing around 1,600 prisoners.

Suffield contains many historic sites important to its community character, including the King House museum, the Hatheway House, First Baptist Church, Hilltop Farm, and Babb’s Roller Skating Rink.

All critical facilities have stand by power consisting of generators.

Capabilities

Hazard mitigation is incorporated, to some degree, into Suffield’s Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). POCD actions specifically address natural hazards.

There has not been any construction or demolition in floodplains or other vulnerable areas of Suffield since 2008. In 2008, the Town added Section V.K. Flood Damage Prevention to the Zoning Regulations.

The Town has designated a vacant area on Firestone Drive as an emergency debris storage area, and dumps snow there as needed.

Power lines are installed underground in new subdivisions. Routine tree maintenance is performed by Town personnel, with contractors brought in as necessary.

Suffield staff are proud of their road maintenance capabilities; with a team of eight employees they are able to clear 80 miles of road during snow events, and always plow ahead of first responders to clear the way to emergencies.

Suffield maintains memorandums of agreement at multiple levels (state, regional, municipal) that include all surrounding towns except for Agawam.

The Town has received a grant (with 20% municipal match) to replace the Remington Street Bridge to address clogging of the existing 4-box-culvert structure; this was completed in 2020.

A flooding issue on Phelps Road has been corrected since the adoption of the 2014-2019 Capitol Region Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan Update (“2014 HMP”). The Town has also added curbs and sub-drains to 50 miles of roadway.

Since the 2019 HMP, the following actions have been incorporated as capabilities:

- Participate in EMI courses or the seminars and annual conference held by the Connecticut Association of Flood Managers.
- Conduct at least one annual hazard education and outreach campaign to residents using the Town website, Facebook pages, mailers, and information stationed at Town buildings.

Capabilities to address natural hazards and the losses that they have caused, have increased since the last plan has been adopted.

Challenges

Challenges Overview

Suffield has approximately 5,469 housing units, 27 of which are located in flood hazard zones. There are another 31 non-residential structures located in flood hazard zones. There are a few areas throughout Town prone to street flooding during heavy storm events. Flood issues are tracked in all developed areas, and problematic locations are addressed when possible. Ensuring proper maintenance of drainage structures is a challenge due to decreased staffing and budget levels.

Suffield faces a significant concern with the escalating severity of thunderstorms. The thunderstorms of 2021 resulted in extensive tree damage and extended power outages, with a pronounced impact on Griffin Road. During such storms, this area can become isolated due to fallen trees blocking the road. Griffin Road hosts a high density of old pine trees on private property, which Eversource can not access and remove. The town is actively collaborating with Eversource to find solutions and alleviate the recurrent power outages in this specific locality.

Suffield’s primary drought and extreme weather concerns revolve around disruptions to agriculture.

The town staff report notes an increase in early-season water quality issues in local lakes.

Town staff are actively assessing sewer and infrastructure issues, primarily related to flooding from Stony Brook. The concern centers around the vulnerability of the sewer interceptor at Stony Brook.

Hazard Losses

The economic losses faced by the community from natural hazards can be estimated by reviewing historic loss figures. Loss estimates are summarized below.

Average Annualized Losses

Average Annualized Loss (AAL) estimates are summarized below. Average Annualized Loss (AAL) figures are useful tools for comparison of the risks faced from different hazards with different likelihoods of occurring in a given time period. AAL estimates were prepared for each natural hazard which may impact Suffield. National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) data, from the last 20 years, was categorized by hazard and averaged based on the proportion of population within each town in the CROCG Region. National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) losses were calculated based on the 50 year span of the program. FEMA Public Assistance (PA) data from the past 11 years was categorized based on hazard and used to compute AAL. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) from the past 10 years was calculated to get AAL. Expected Annual Loss data from the National Risk Index (NRI) was downloaded and categorized to get AAL for the below hazards. Dam failure data was taken from the 2019-2024 CROCG Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) plan since no new dam failures have occurred in the past five years. The 2019 HMP Dam failures were sourced from the 2014 Connecticut Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, with dam failure data supplemented by the National Performance of Dams Program and the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection.

Table 31-2: Average Annualized Losses, Suffield

Hazard	Source	Average Annualized Losses (AAL)
Hurricanes/Tropical storms	NCEI	\$40,479.94
	NRI	\$616,590.43
	FEMA PA	\$10,271.30
Tornados/High Winds	NCEI	\$15,154.95
	NRI	\$161,685.54
Winter Storms	NCEI	\$12,005.43
	NRI	\$9,035.71
	FEMA PA	\$6,693.14
Flood	NCEI	\$12,270.05
	NRI	\$13,086.24
	NFIP	\$114.67
Drought	NRI	\$659,372.70
	USDA	\$470,156.85
Extreme Heat	NRI	\$19,354.24
Wildfire	NRI	\$1,012.82
Earthquakes	NRI	\$40,335.86
Dam Failure	HMP	\$28.00

Losses Summary

A review of the above loss estimates demonstrates that the Town of Suffield has experienced significant expenses as a result of natural hazards, and is at risk for additional losses if some of the less-frequent events were to occur. These actual and potential losses justify hazard mitigation actions to reduce losses in the future.

Mitigation Strategies and Actions

This HMCAP includes new goal statements that are aligned with *Resilient Connecticut* and the efforts of the GC3. The five new goals developed for this HMCAP were developed with cooperation from CIRCA in the *Resilient Connecticut* planning process, and are:

- Ensure that critical facilities are resilient, with special attention to shelters and cooling centers.
- Address risks associated with extreme heat events, especially as they interact with other hazards.
- Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.
- Reduce losses from other hazards.
- Invest in resilient corridors to ensure that people and services are accessible during floods and that development along corridors is resilient over the long term.

The previous goals of the 2019 HMP have been replaced and incorporated into these five new goals in accordance with the explanation in the Multijurisdictional document.

Noted Hazard Mitigation Needs

Over the course of Plan development, multiple hazard mitigation needs were noted:

- The town should continue to work with Eversource to remove hazardous trees. The town could investigate investing in underground power lines to reduce storm-related power outages on Griffin Road.
- The town should consider implementing drought-resistant farming practices, offer support for water conservation, and explore the development of irrigation systems or water storage solutions for agricultural purposes.
- Enhance water quality monitoring and management protocols, promote responsible land use around lakes, and engage in community education on reducing pollution to maintain the health of local lakes.
- The town should continue to conduct regular maintenance of the sewer interceptor at Stony Brook and look into funding to replace the interceptor.
- Conduct a study to identify the worst areas of surface flooding and develop methods to alleviate the problem areas.

Status of Previous Mitigation Strategies and Actions

The Town of Suffield reviewed the mitigation actions proposed in the 2019 HMP and determined the status of each. That information is included in the table below.

Table 31-3: Status of Previous Mitigation Strategies and Actions, Suffield

No.	Action	Notes	Status
8	Conduct a study to identify the worst areas of surface flooding and develop methods to alleviate the problem areas.	Town staff said they do not believe a town wide study has been done. This action likely came from the former engineer. However, the town evaluates and deals with specific areas as needed. The town would like to keep this action in case funding becomes available for town wide studies.	Carry Forward
1	Develop a list of flood prone areas and share that list with police and fire.	Town staff are aware of the areas where potential flooding occurs. There is one area near Stony Brook on Hale St before Taintor St, that they keep an eye on. If this area floods, the town can experience some traffic issues but this affects farmers more than residential areas. The same stream crosses under Taintor St which causes some small flooding issues.	Complete/ Retire
3	Preemptively clean debris out of select drainage structures before and during heavy storm events, particularly on Susan & Diane Lanes.	Town staff said this has been happening and is still in process. Town would like to check on Susan and Diane lanes specifically.	Carry Forward
10	Encourage property owners to refrain from dumping debris into stream channels and drainage culverts.	Town staff said they are unsure if anyone in town specifically deals with this but the town staff think this action can be retired.	No Longer Needed/ Retire
9	Encourage low impact development techniques in new development in accordance with the POCD.	Town staff said they adopted their most recent POCD last year. Zoning commission is supportive of LID but there has been no move to change regulations. However, LID is happening in town and the intent of this action has been met.	Complete/ Retire
5	Coordinate with NEMO and CROG to share resources and gain technical support for hazard mitigation actions involving stormwater management and public outreach, which have parallel benefits related to MS4 stormwater permit compliance.	Town staff said they are compliant with MS4.	Complete/ Retire
6	Participate in EMI courses or the seminars and annual conference held by the Connecticut Association of Flood Managers.	Town staff said they participate in some trainings. This is a capability.	Capability/ Retire
4	Conduct outreach to local small businesses with the aim of preventing the accidental release and pollution from chemicals stored and used at their facilities during or following natural hazard events.	Town staff said they haven't done much with this, but they don't have a lot of businesses that might have releases. The town does have a lot of farms/nurseries where runoff could be an issue. Revise to watch the DEEP training video.	Carry Forward with Revisions

No.	Action	Notes	Status
7	Conduct at least one annual hazard education and outreach campaign to residents using the Town website, Facebook pages, mailers, and information stationed at Town buildings.	Town staff said that if there is a threat of severe weather there is a notice that goes out on the website/social media. If there are heat concerns, the town uses the website to notify people and let them know about cooling centers. The town does not have a CERT team but have an Emergency Management website with info. This is a capability.	Intent is complete/ Retire
11	Coordinate with CT SHPO to conduct historic resource surveys, focusing on areas within natural hazard risk zones (such as flood or wildfire hazard zones and areas near steep slopes), to support identification of vulnerable historic properties and preparation of resiliency plans across the state. This action leverages existing resources and best practices for protection of historic and cultural resources through an ongoing statewide initiative by CT SHPO.	<p>Town staff said they worked with SHPO and conducted two rounds of historic and cultural research surveys (one finished in the last 5 years) with a couple hundred properties, most residential, that were looked at. However, they don't think the focus of these studies were on floodplains.</p> <p>Given that the Town has demonstrated experience participating in resource surveys, CIRCA advises to change this action to acquire and review SHPO layer.</p>	Carry Forward with Revisions
2	Enter the Sustainable CT program through Registration and review actions that can be undertaken to pursue Certification. Make progress with the actions related to hazard mitigation.	Town staff said they have entered the SCT program and bronze certified. They would like to move forward in the program and obtain silver certification.	Complete/ Retire

Active Mitigation Strategies and Actions

The Town proposed to initiate several new mitigation actions for the upcoming five years. Additionally, a number of actions from the previous planning period are being carried forward or replaced with revised actions. These are listed below.

Each of the following actions has been prioritized based on FEMA guidelines, listed from highest to lowest priority, and numbered.

Table 31-4: Active Mitigation Strategies and Actions, Suffield

Number	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Actions	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Goal	Type of Action	Responsible Department	Approx. Cost Range	Potential Funding Sources	Timeframe	Priority	Hazard(s)	EJ?	PERISTS Score	STAPLEE Score	PERISTS x STAPLEE =
SU1	Ensure that transportation and transit options are available to bring people to cooling centers.	Address risks associated with extreme heat events, especially as they interact with other hazards.	Preparedness & Emergency Response	Emergency Management	\$10,000 - \$50,000	Transit; IJJA BBFP	07/2024 - 06/2026	High	Extreme Heat	No	19	3	57
SU2	Conduct a town wide assessment of stream crossings to identify vulnerabilities and develop a priority list for maintenance and upsizing.	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.	Structural Project	Public Works	\$10,000 - \$50,000	DCRF; Municipal CIP Budget	07/2025 - 06/2027	Medium	Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	18	6	108
SU3	Complete a design plan for the sewer Interceptor at Stony Brook which is causing flooding concerns.	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.	Structural Project	Public Works	\$50,000 - \$100,000	DCRF; FEMA HMA	07/2025 - 06/2027	High	Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	19	6	114
SU4	Conduct a study to identify the worst areas of surface flooding and develop methods to alleviate the problem areas.	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.	Prevention	Public Works	\$50,000 - \$100,000	DCRF; FEMA HMA	07/2025 - 06/2026	Medium	Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	18	6	108

Number	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Actions	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Goal	Type of Action	Responsible Department	Approx. Cost Range	Potential Funding Sources	Timeframe	Priority	Hazard(s)	EJ?	PERISTS Score	STAPLEE Score	PERISTS x STAPLEE =
SU5	Preemptively clean debris out of select drainage structures before and during heavy storm events, particularly on Susan & Diane Lanes.	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.	Prevention	Public Works	\$0-\$10,000	Municipal Operating Budget	07/2025 - 06/2027	Medium	Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	18	8	144
SU6	Collaborate with Eversource to develop a comprehensive plan for addressing power outages in the Griffin Road area during storms, and implement a strategy to provide access to houses when the roadway is blocked by downed trees.	Reduce losses from other hazards.	Preparedness & Emergency Response	Emergency Management	\$0-\$10,000	Municipal Operating Budget	07/2025 - 06/2026	Medium	Hurricanes and Tropical Storms/Tornadoes and High Winds/Severe Winter Storms	No	17	7	119
SU7	Ensure that options are available to help property owners make their water supply wells resilient to droughts, floods, and loss of capacity	More than one goal.	Water & Wastewater Utility Projects	Planning	\$0-\$10,000	DWSRF; FEMA HMA; STEAP	07/2025 - 06/2026	High	Riverine and Pluvial Floods/Drought	No	19	10	190
SU8	Expand public water systems to areas served by private wells when needed to address drought impacts and provide fire protection	Reduce losses from other hazards.	Water & Wastewater Utility Projects	Fire Department	>\$1M	DWSRF; FEMA HMA; STEAP	07/2026 - 06/2028	High	Drought/Wildfire	No	19	8	152
SU9	Watch the DEEP Chemical Management and Climate Resilience Webinar: https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/P2/Chemical-Management-and-Climate-Resilience/Chemical-Management-and-Climate-Resilience	Reduce flood and erosion risks by reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.	Education and Awareness	Emergency Management	\$0-\$10,000	Municipal Operating Budget	01/2025-12/2025	Low	Riverine and Pluvial Floods	No	17	7	119
SU10	Review the Connecticut Cultural Resource	Reduce flood and erosion risks by	Property Protection	Planning	\$0-\$10,000	SHPO; Municipal	01/2026 - 12/2026	Medium	Wildfires/Tornado	No	18	9	162

Number	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Actions	Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Goal	Type of Action	Responsible Department	Approx. Cost Range	Potential Funding Sources	Timeframe	Priority	Hazard(s)	EJ?	PERISTS Score	STAPLEE Score	PERISTS x STAPLEE =
	Information System (ConnCRIS) to identify and understand historic and archaeological resources in areas of hazard risks found here: https://conncris.ct.gov .	reducing vulnerabilities and consequences, even as climate change increases frequency and severity of floods.				Operating Budget			oes and High Winds/Riverine and Pluvial Floods				
SU11	Update town website to include hazard mitigation and emergency preparedness tips for town residents, including sections corresponding to each hazard considered in this Plan Update.	More than one goal.	Education and Awareness	Information Technology	\$0-\$10,000	Municipal Operating Budget	01/2025 - 12/2025	Medium	All Hazards	No	17	7	119

Figure 31-1: CIRCA Environmental Justice Rank and Critical Facilities, Suffield

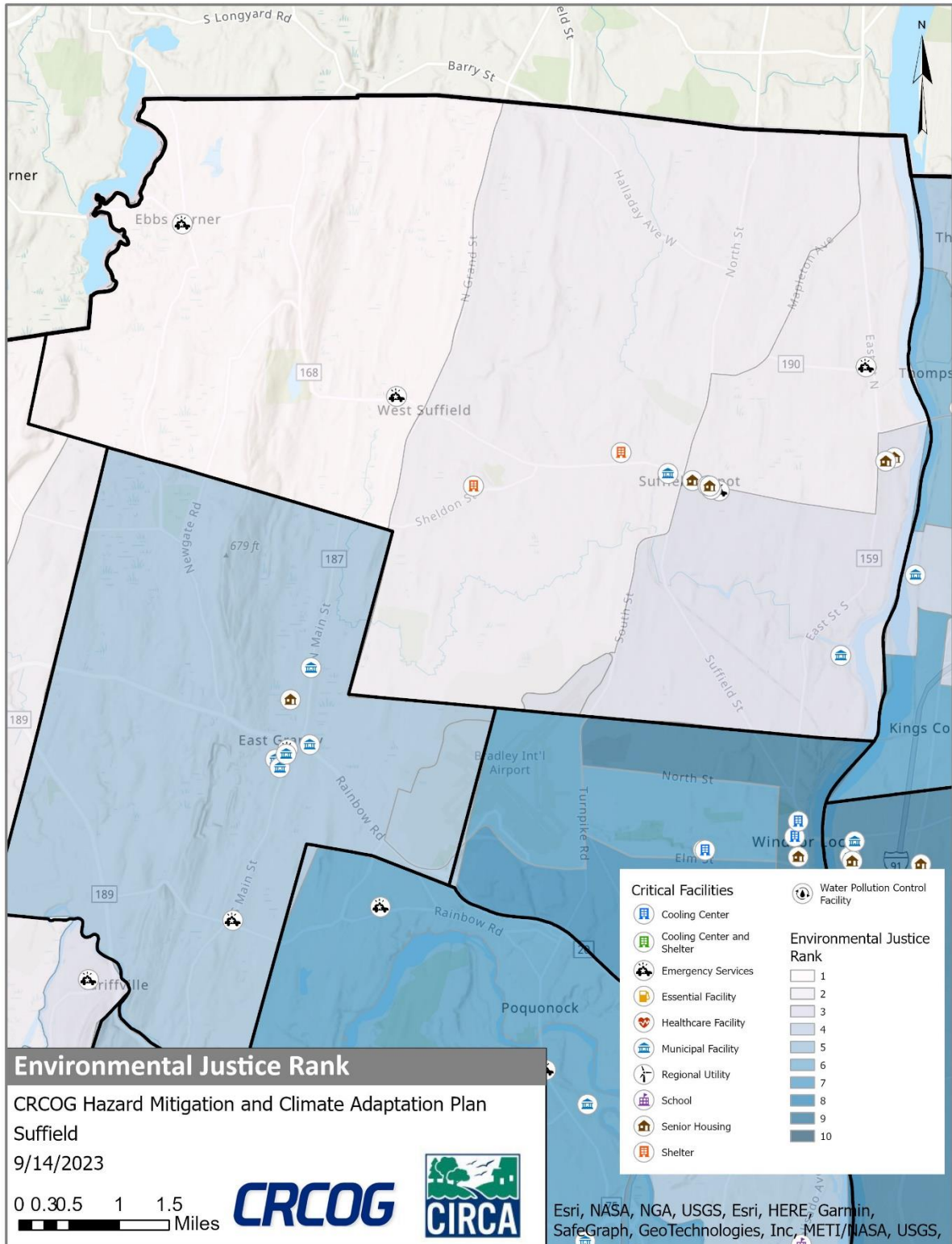


Figure 31-2: FEMA Flood Zones and Critical Facilities, Suffield

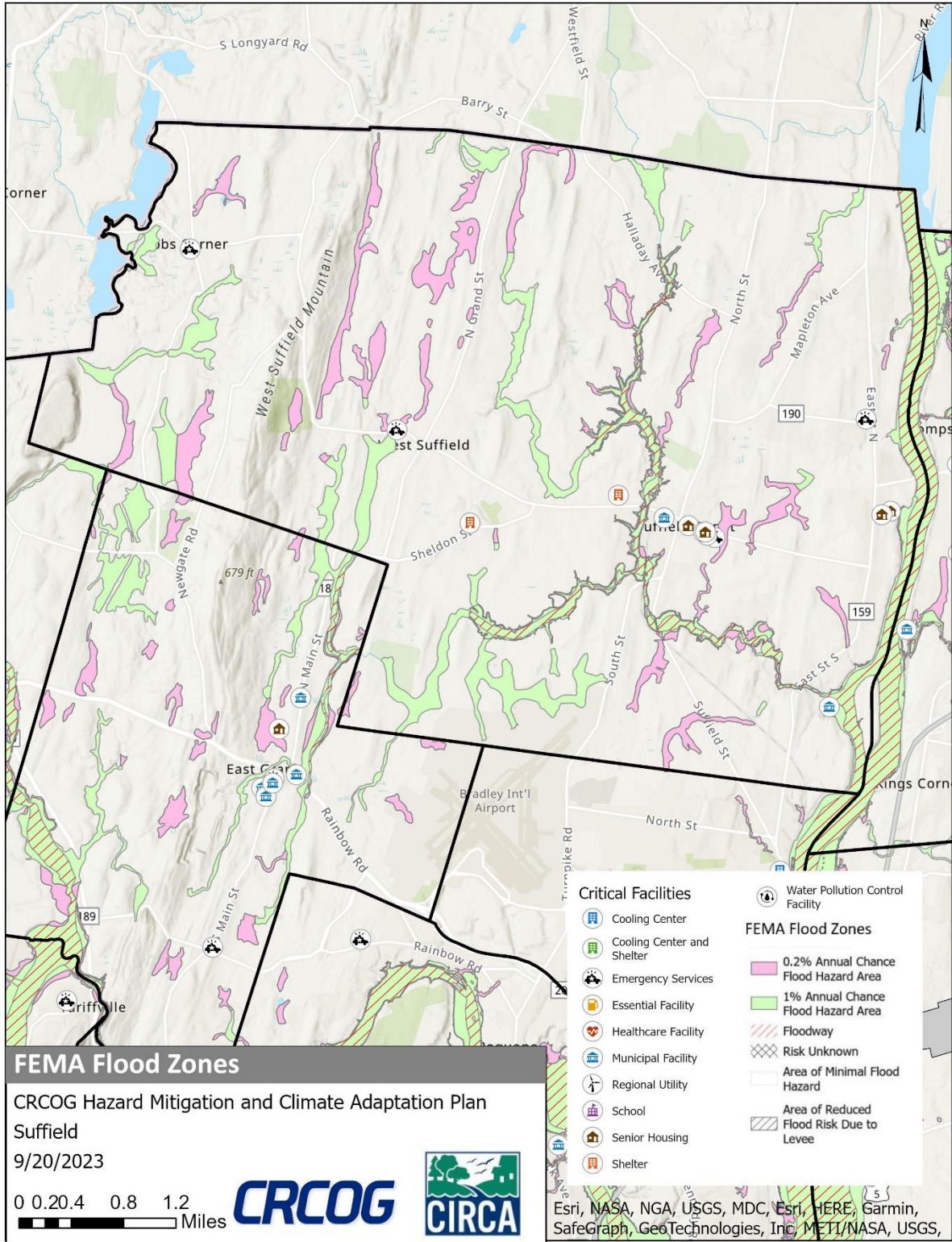


Figure 31-3: CIRCA Flood CCVI and Critical Facilities, Suffield

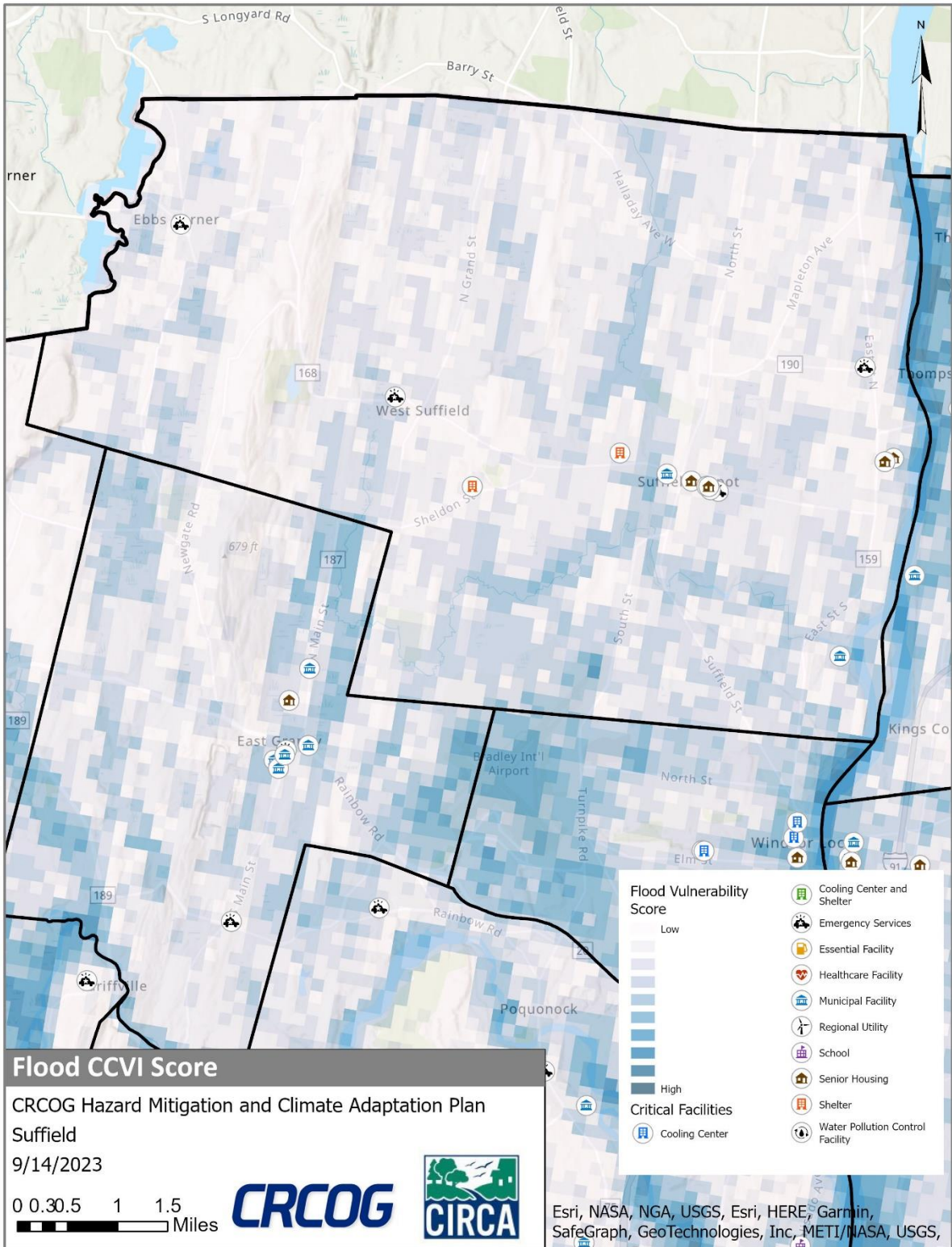


Figure 31-4: CIRCA Heat CCVI and Critical Facilities, Suffield

