

**Hartford Hazard Mitigation Plan
Working Group
Approved Minutes of December 22, 2025**

A meeting of the Hartford Hazard Mitigation Plan Working Group was held on Monday, December 22nd in Room 2 of the Hartford Town Hall. Member John Reid called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and proceeded to read the hybrid meeting script followed by a roll call.

Working Group Members:

John Reid	Planning Commission/Climate Action Steering Team
Bruce Riddle	Planning Commission
Kyle Katz	Resilient Hartford
Sally Mansur	Resilient Hartford
Lee Michaelides	Climate Action Steering Team & Conservation Commission
Cathy Geiger	Energy Commission

Staff:

Dana Clawson	Environmental Sustainability Coordinator
Tom Peltier	Hartford Fire Marshal
Matt Osborn	Town Planner, Department of Planning and Development

Others Present:

None.

- 1. Review of the Minutes of December 10th:** Matt asked if there were any corrections to the minutes of the December 10th Meeting. There were none. Bruce made a motion to approve the minutes of December 10th as written. The motion was seconded by Sally and unanimously approved.
- 2. Hazard Assessment:** Matt noted that the hazard assessment is an important part of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMP). He stated that we will go through the assessment exercise with the public at the January 15th community meeting.

Dana reported that he assembled the results of the working group hazard assessment that members finished. Cathy stated that she would like to base the ranking on data and not intuition. Kyle responded that the intent of the assessment is to base it on our own experiences in Hartford and Vermont.

- a. Flooding & Fluvial Erosion: Dana noted that there was consensus that flooding is a major concern in Hartford. Comments included:
 - Not all floods have the same impact.
 - Funds to mitigate the impact of floods divert funding from other projects.
- b. Extreme Heat: Dana noted that there were consistent responses to this item. Comments included:
 - This is becoming a greater concern due to increasingly warmer summers.
 - The heat is impacting schools since they don't have air conditioning.

- It would be good to quantify.
- c. High Winds: Dana noted that there was some variation in responses. Comments included:
 - The Connecticut River and White River valleys are somewhat protected from wind events except for winds from the south.
 - Microbursts with damaging winds have become more common in recent years.
 - It would be nice to know how many power outages occur annually.
- d. Snow: Dana noted that there were consistent responses to this item. Comments included:
 - Hartford is equipped to handle most snowstorms with the exception of major blizzards.
- e. Ice: Dana noted that there were a variety of responses to this item. Comments included:
 - The ice storm of 1998 had major impacts across Vermont including the higher elevations of Hartford.
 - There was a smaller ice event in 2023 that impacted higher elevation areas of Hartford.
 - It would be good to quantify.
- f. Drought: Dana noted that this category had the most deviation. Comments included:
 - With climate change, droughts are a new reality.
 - Even though it is winter, we are still in a severe drought.
 - During the summer and fall drought, the Hartford Water Department did not issue any water restrictions.
 - We don't know how many wells in Hartford have gone dry due to the drought.
 - VT Digger had a recent story on the State's lack of financial assistance for those who have a well that goes dry.
- g. Infectious Diseases: Dana noted that there was some variation with this category. Comments included:
 - Vermont dealt well with Covid-19. It helped that Vermont is a rural state.
 - Covid-19 was a 100-year event since the last major pandemic (Influenza outbreak of 1918).
- h. Extreme Cold: Dana noted that there was agreement that it is likely to happen but there was disagreement on the impact.
- i. Invasive Species: Dana noted that there was some variation in responses. Comments included:
 - Invasive species have an impact on water.
 - The Emerald Ash Borer is having a significant impact on our forests and street trees.
 - Poison Parsnip is very dangerous.
 - With climate change, there are some tick species that are migrating north.
- j. Landslides: Dana noted that responses varied on this topic.
- k. Wildfires: Dana noted that this category had a range of responses. Tom Peltier noted that Hartford has been fortunate not to have major wildfires. Most brush fires have been isolated and controlled. Comments included:
 - With a drought, this hazard is becoming an increasing risk.
 - The State Hazard Mitigation Plan noted that there is potential for wildfires but there haven't been major wildfires in the recent past.
- l. Earthquakes: Dana noted that there was general agreement with this category. Comments included:
 - It was noted that there have been three earthquakes locally in the last twenty years with very little damage.
- m. Hail: Dana noted that there were consistent responses with this category. Comments included:
 - It was noted that in isolation, the impacts of hail are minor. However, combined with an event like a tornado, the impacts could be severe.
- n. Hazardous Materials Storage/Spills: Dana noted that this category drew a range of responses. Tom noted that with two interstate highways, three state highways and rail lines, this category

poses a risk although there isn't much history of major events. He stated that there have been motor vehicle accidents with fuel spills. He noted that the VA Hospital complex has the potential for hazardous material spills.

- o. Structural Fires: Dana noted that this category had a range of responses. Tom noted that structural fires are decreasing nationwide. His position as Fire Marshal is fire prevention and to mitigate fire risk. He is involved in permitting and public education.
- 6. Next Steps:** Matt noted that it is his understanding that we need to include a narrative for all hazards identified in the LHMP and that he could use assistance with the narrative. Kyle responded that he thinks we can refer to the State Hazard Mitigation Plan. He suggested looking at the recently approved Braintree, Vermont LHMP. Matt will seek clarification from Vermont Emergency Management. John volunteered to work on the drought section.
- 7. Next Working Group Meeting:** Matt asked the working group if they wanted to meet next week. There was consensus not to meet next week. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 8th at 5:00 p.m. Dana agreed to send out the data from the hazard assessment exercise.
- 8. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 6:11 p.m.