

Municipal Resilience Action Plan for Ida-Impacted Communities

City of Lambertville

Meeting Subject: Site Visit

Meeting Date: 03/15/2024 11:00 – 3:00 PM

Location: Microsoft Teams Meeting

Participants:

Mayor Andrew Nowick (Lambertville)

Matthew Baumgardner (DEP)

Simon Kates (Ramboll)

Emory Lee (Ramboll)

Shelby Smith (Ramboll)

Anna Hochhalter (Ramboll)

Meeting Notes

1. Engagement Discussion

- Advisory Committee
 1. Mayor Nowick noted this would be comprised of an expanded Resilience Team to include himself, Cindy Edgy, Liz Pier, Julie Taylor and 2-3 more people. Virtual meetings will work well.
- First Public Workshop
 1. Timing: The 1st Public Workshop should be held before school is out, ideally in early June.
 2. Format: It will be an in-person meeting, with an optional virtual component to increase attendance/equity.
 3. Venue: The City's meeting hall can be used for this event and can accommodate up to 120 people. They may get a larger turn out than 120 people.
 4. Outreach: The meeting should be promoted heavily, and the Team should consider sending the agenda and potentially a brief questionnaire out to the public beforehand to act as a prompt for attendance and discussion. The questions could include asking residents for their top 3 climate-related concerns.
- Targeted Stakeholder Meetings:
 1. Mayor Nowick expressed interest in hosting small, targeted meetings/engagement opportunities in between the Public Meetings, which Ramboll would be able to join virtually.
 2. Ramboll also described the concept of a "Meeting in a Box" or a general project overview presentation which could be considered for these types of smaller engagements.
- Additional Engagements:

1. The team discussed conducting a brief survey as part of the engagement effort, touching on 2 – 3 major themes.
2. Mayor Nowick noted that there have not been many recent planning engagements, and that “planning fatigue” is likely low.
3. Mayor Nowick also noted that quantifiable data points (yes/no questions, ranking, etc.) as opposed to more subjective/qualitative insights, would be more helpful for the survey.
4. Mayor Nowick sends a weekly newsletter to residents.

2. Additional Data Requests/Information

- Post Ida Community Survey
 1. Mayor Nowick to share the results of the survey with Ramboll.
- Locally developed GIS files
 1. Mayor Nowick noted that the City does not have much in the way of GIS data, and to look at the county and state level.
 2. The City has a storm sewer map with inlet and outfall locations mapped. Mayor Nowick to share with Ramboll.

3. Existing Conditions and Opportunities

- Existing Conditions
 1. Development Capacity in the City:
 - a. Mayor Nowick noted that the City is almost completely built out (except for a large residential sub-division that is close to being approved).
 - b. The Mayor noted that a few properties were on a septic system.
 2. Private Property Considerations:
 - a. Mayor Nowick noted that flood mitigation building design guidelines would be challenged since elevating properties is not very feasible due to historic brick structures abutting each other (mostly private residences are at risk).
 - b. There are 86 Repetitive or severe Repetitive Loss Properties within the City.
 - c. Mayor Nowick noted that property values continue to rise, despite flood challenges.
 3. Existing/Prior City Planning:
 - a. The City amended a [Flood Damage Prevention](#) ordinance in 2023 that has a stricter standard than the FEMA Special Flood Hazard Area, and the public objected to including the 500-year floodplain to be included.
 - b. The City already has an ordinance in place that waives permitting fees for resilience retrofits.
 - c. The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) proposal for Alexauken Creek (2021) included a perimeter structure at the

Delaware River that had visual impacts and there were public concerns about it creating a bathtub effect.

- d. The City developed a “Flowing Together” website with videos and interviews about Swan Creek flooding.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/1ff4ecd9ca754bd69f06e4ce312f0fd2>

- e. As part of its stormwater management program goals, the City is undergoing a stormwater utility feasibility study. The study has identified past, current, and future needs. The short term goal is to put the question of enacting a stormwater utility to a voter referendum in fall 2024. The City Master Plan from 2019 is the most up-to-date.

- f. In 2009, the City passed a Historic Building Design Guide.

4. Stormwater Infrastructure Issues:

- a. Mayor Nowick noted that nuisance flooding exists that is directly related to stormwater infrastructure issues that result from both capacity and maintenance issues.
- b. Mayor Nowick noted that often the maintenance issues stem from jurisdictional questions that arise with NJDOT, as it can take too long to figure out who needs to respond.
- c. The City’s focus for the next 5 years is to evaluate the stormwater system.

5. Other Climate Challenges:

- a. Heat is not typically a concern. The City has emergency cooling shelters that are used.

6. City Demographics:

- a. There are a majority of year-round residents.
- b. Approximately 10% of the population is Hispanic and that number doubled recently from previous years.
- c. The population of underserved residents is small.
- d. Lambertville Station restaurant is the City’s largest employers.

7. Areas outside City limits:

- a. The land surrounding Lambertville is largely farmland that is in use. There may or may not be an opportunity to modify to increase water storage.
- b. Goat Hill is a Green Acres State Park nearby with a historic rock look out.

- Opportunities:

1. Resilience Action Plan considerations:

- a. Mayor Nowick noted that the focus of the Resilience Plan should be on a two-pronged approach to mitigation that considers both municipal actions and individual actions to increase resilience, preparedness, planning, and capacity-building.

- b. Education on what residents can do would be helpful as part of the effort.
 - c. Part of the capacity building should include an expectation around the frequency and intensity of storms (present-day and in the coming decades).
 - d. Mayor noted that this project effort should be less about stormwater but more about bigger watershed planning.
2. Regional Coordination Potential:
- a. Mayor Nowick noted that regional coordination is limited and does not present much of an opportunity.

4. Scope Discussion

- Implementation-focused:
 - 1. Mayor Nowick indicated that that project should have an implementation-focus, such that the final work product can be used later down the line to assist with grant applications.
 - 2. Ramboll is aligned with this approach and will tailor the work, as much as feasible, to this end.

5. Site Visit

- Please see the summary of the site visit notes and key takeaways on the following page.

6. Next Steps

- Coordination with Princeton Hydro and WSP.
 - 1. NJ Future put Ramboll in touch. Ramboll to set up a call to hear about their stormwater utility work to do.
- Public Engagement Plan
 - 1. Ramboll to develop draft PEP.
- Data sharing
 - 1. City of Lambertville to provide Ramboll with the inlet location map.
 - 2. City of Lambertville to provide the results of the post-Ida survey.
- Data Review
 - 1. Ramboll/Kleinfelder to complete review of all documents the City shared, and compile and review additional related documents and collect relevant datasets.