

Barre Up:

Community Flood Recovery Discussion and Focus Groups

September-October 2023



Vermont Council on Rural Development

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	3
II. Process	4
III. Key Themes	5
IV. Focus Group Notes, 10/18/23 meeting	8
● Housing	
● Social and Community Wellbeing	
● Planning and Infrastructure	
V. Forum Notes, 9/13/23 meeting	15
VI. Resource Team	23



Vermont Council on Rural Development

PO Box 1384, Montpelier, VT 05601-1384
802-223-6091 | info@vtrural.org | www.vtrural.org

Lauren Brady, *Community & Policy Associate*
Laura Cavin Bailey, *Climate Economy Program Manager*
Margaret Gibson, *Operations & Communications*
Alyssa Johnson, *Community Projects Manager*
Jenna Koloski, *Community Engagement and Policy Director*
Jessica Savage, *Director of Community Collaboration*
Charlie Smith, *Interim Executive Director*

I. Introduction

This report documents the process, themes, and action ideas and is publicly available and given to the Barre Up committee and their partners as a blueprint for what comes next.

Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) is an independent, actively nonpartisan nonprofit organization that provides neutral facilitation and technical assistance services to communities all across Vermont. The newly formed Barre Up (Long-Term Flood Recovery Committee) and the City of Barre invited VCRD to facilitate community conversations around the flood response and recovery in the late summer early fall of 2023.

The goal of these forums was to bring together the full diversity of Barre residents, organizations, and partners in an open, inclusive dialogue to build understanding around flooding experiences and recovery and resilience efforts to create ideas for action for the immediate and long-term future of the city.

VCRD convened and facilitated post-flood discussions in Barre City to:

- Hold a deep community discussion for people to listen to one another about what is going on in Barre, their flood experiences and their current and ongoing needs.
- Develop a set of actions and focus points for the work of resource and community leaders moving forward.
- Build understanding in the flood response and recovery efforts.
- Inform the organization, next steps, and actions of the Barre Up Flood Recovery Committee and other area organizations.

VCRD is dedicated to the support of the locally-defined progress of Vermont's rural communities. In the past 20 years, VCRD has worked with over 90 communities across the state to bring residents together through their facilitated and structured process to share ideas and move toward common solutions, including the *All in for Barre* (www.vtrural.org/barre/) Community Visit process in 2021.



II. Process

VCRD facilitated a two-part community conversation with all perspectives welcome.

On **September 13th, 2023**, community members gathered at the Barre Opera House for a full group discussion and then joined breakout group discussions on: Housing, Long-Term Recovery and Resilience, Helping Efforts, Individual and Youth Wellness, Recovery Resources, and Natural Resources and Climate. There was also a general open discussion via Zoom for folks unable to attend in person. The evening held a broad conversation about people's flood response experiences and ideas for actions. From the input received during those forums and from an online survey, VCRD distilled the ideas for action into eleven themes that fit into three "buckets" (Section III).

On **October 18th, 2023**, community members gathered to have deeper conversations about the three "buckets" that emerged from the themes:

- Housing
- Social and Community Wellbeing
- Infrastructure and Planning

Participants joined one of the topic area sessions to discuss both short and long-term gaps/challenges and action steps. Each focus group included local and state resource providers who listened to the discussion, reflected on what they heard, and offered ideas for action and resources (Section VI). Note that many resources and ideas are yet to be identified or are still in development.

These two community forums provided an opportunity for the Barre community and organizations with resources to hear a variety of perspectives, and for the community to collectively come up with creative approaches to the challenges Barre is facing.

At the end of the evening, there were signup sheets both for people who need assistance and for those that want to volunteer or provide assistance. Additionally, participants that provided email addresses through the process received a follow-up email with links to sign up for assistance or to volunteer via Barre Up.

For next steps Barre Up: A long-term recovery organization for Barre City, is working to support residents and build a resilient future together. They can be reached at barreup.org, at 6 Main Street, Barre City or via email at info@barreup.org.

1. If you are in need of assistance you can [sign up here](#) or drop in to the Resource Hub during open hours [found here](#).
2. If you would like to volunteer your time, you can [sign up here](#).
3. If you would like to join the Barre Up email list, you can sign up [using this link](#).



III. Themes

Three buckets of eleven key themes emerged from the community forums on September 13th and from the online survey that was open until October 15th, 2023:

Housing Themes:

Address Short-Term Housing Needs

While the exact number is not known, many homes in Barre remain uninhabitable which means many residents are living with family members/friends or in other temporary housing situations, or in some cases are unhoused. All of these residents are at risk of becoming unhoused during increasingly inclement weather. Barre must act quickly to connect with these residents and make a plan for emergency housing such as being ready to reopen the Auditorium as a shelter or to provide other short-term housing options. Any temporary housing solutions must be communicated effectively to people who need them. Creative solutions such as using currently vacant spaces, tiny homes or mobile homes could be viable options.

Support the Rebuilding/Renovating of Flood-Affected Housing

Many rental and owner-occupied housing units were affected by this flooding and will need as many resources to support residents and landlords alike. Barre can support and promote Restore/YouthBuild and Serve/Learn/Earn programs that provide opportunities for residents to share and learn skills to address some workforce challenges and communicate available options for resilient and energy efficient rebuilding. Indoor air quality, mold remediation and awareness, access to home heating systems, and other health impacts from the built environment should be top of mind and wrapped into all rebuilding efforts. In addition, coordinated access to resources for this phase should be provided in partnership with State and local organizations including a possible revolving loan fund to weatherize homes. Landlord and tenant communications and landlord accountability should also be considered during the rebuilding phase.

Support Long-Term/New Housing Development

Barre should continue, and expand, its focus on building more housing options. This housing should be abundant, affordable and reflect creative new solutions supported by long-term citywide planning and vision that supports young adults through seniors. Barre should conduct an Opportunity Inventory to show where new housing and infill development is possible including mixed-use buildings to revitalize downtown. In addition, Barre should create more landlord accountability measures and perpetually affordable housing options. Larger and taller housing options should be considered that are both less flood prone and available for development given the small geographic area of Barre City.

Support Homeowners/Landlords in Home Buyout Processes

Some flooded homes might not be rebuilt and homeowners/landlords will need support during the 1-4 years that process might take. Coordination between partners such as FEMA, the State, Regional Planning Commissions, nonprofit organizations and funders should create better wraparound services so that people have the social, mental health and financial resources they need during that process.

Social and Community Wellbeing Themes:

Support Community Connections and Care

The flooding highlighted Barre residents' ability to show up for one another. Barre should provide ongoing opportunities and venues for neighbors to be together including those residents who might not be able to currently live in Barre due to flooding. People will continue to need social, emotional, and wellbeing support as well as opportunities to socialize, connect and build relationships. Continue creative outreach, and building awareness and connection, to available mental health services including access to vaccine clinics and other health services. Highlighting existing events and workshops or creating new ones, such as block parties, door to door outreach, learning practical skills, senior and youth activities and volunteerism opportunities could happen year-round and get people out and about. Community spaces, both existing and new, could provide locations for community events: Barre could encourage and/or expand the use of the Old Labor Hall and other locations, and could consider building a YMCA or a Boys and Girls Club.

Create and Expand a Recovery Resource Hub

Barre residents will need continued, coordinated and easy access to support and recovery services. A physical resource and volunteer hub should be staffed with navigators and provide opportunities for connections, education, and mental/emotional support. This can be a catalyst for positive change and resilience in Barre and should meet as many people's needs as possible. This hub should be accessible in all ways, and provide coordinated access to all resource providers in Barre and beyond. Staff/volunteers should be available to provide grant writing, application assistance/completion, and other services. In addition, this space could provide civic engagement opportunities, matchmaking for mutual aid/volunteerism and flood recovery education.

Improve the Image, Reputation and Narrative of Barre City

Barre has been working for years on shifting its image to a more positive one and the flooding provided an opportunity to realize how powerful the Barre spirit is. Barre residents should continue their efforts to embody the safe, connected community that already exists here, while building the social resilience systems to deepen and expand that vision to all residents and to Vermont in general.

Infrastructure and Planning Themes:

Focus on City, Regional and Statewide Flood/Hazard Assessments and Planning

At the city, regional and state levels, Barre should provide vision and leadership towards future flood/hazard mitigation, assessment and planning efforts. Hazard mitigation plans, comprehensive and regional scale flood resilience planning and other efforts should be prioritized in partnership with other communities in the watershed and regional and State partners. In particular, Hazard Mitigation planning should go beyond public infrastructure and include individuals/homes and businesses.

Identify and Implement City Infrastructure Improvements to Support Flood Resilience

Barre City is and should continue to focus on improving infrastructure by identifying infrastructure needs, providing information on water, stormwater and wastewater rates and communication about the 1% sales tax and new infrastructure projects in the works. This infrastructure should be informed by planning at the local, regional and state levels around flood/hazard mitigation and plans for additional housing. Stormwater infrastructure in particular should be an area of focus. Additionally, expanding public transportation options and bike/pedestrian safety should be considered as new projects get underway.

Provide Deeper and More Inclusive Emergency Services Planning and Communication

Barre residents need to feel included and informed especially in an emergency. Barre should consider multimodal approaches to communicate with all residents including door-to-door, neighbor to neighbor communications, and backup plans for communications when there is no power or phone service available. All residents should be included in the planning and implementation of emergency services and communications. Emergency services planning should include both official and unofficial channels such as the City, churches, nonprofit organizations and others.

Advance River Corridor and Watershed Mitigation and Restoration Plans and Strategies

In order to develop mitigation strategies, Barre should research the cause and areas of flooding and stormwater impact including on the ground local observations/stories, GIS data, and other sources. Barre should work with local, regional and statewide partners, including other communities along the river(s) to investigate, identify and implement river management activities, some tactics to explore include floodplain restoration, dam management strategies, dredging the river, and other activities as appropriate.



IV. Focus Group Notes

Current Context, Short and Long-term Actions

At the October 18th meeting, a local resource team provided current context for the themes, then participants worked with a facilitator and a resource team to develop both short- and long-term action ideas and a list of human and financial resources to help achieve their goals.

► Housing

Current Context

- Downstreet has a project under development with housing available at the end of next year. They also have home repair (loan and grant) printouts.
- Barre Area Development Inc. (BADDC) is proposing the Prospect Heights project.
- Barre Housing Committee has a focus on all housing efforts. They are doing an inventory and will bring that to the community. They are considering possible mechanisms including revolving door funds.
- Mosaic Vermont had emergency and transitional housing, and two-thirds of it was damaged in the flood. Rebuilding on the current site is no longer an option.
- Capstone is the community action agency: has many programs, but limited availability for housing projects. Capstone has construction managers.
- Resource is anticipating a bottleneck to reconstruction because of lack of contractors so they are trying to train the workforce and plans to have 4 crews (2 crews currently) prepped to do that work, they're working with Barre Up.
- Barre Up Resource hub is trying to fill a gap and at their drop in center to provide a one stop place for people to access resources.

Short-Term Action

- Develop short-term housing options, possible options include renting rooms in houses, Barre outdoor recreation land, etc.
- Expand or shift service agencies open hours beyond the typical work day.
- Create better and more communication around available resources such as Barre Up.
- Create a clear vision (number units, where will they go) so that the funders can offer back a coordinated package through an inclusive process that articulates the full range of needs and possibilities.
- Map existing and prospective residential development-read parcels with a comprehensive in-fill study.
- Conduct a needs assessment building by building to develop a comprehensive vision. This mapping could include what's available and vacant, infill lots, and what people are willing to do. Put together baseline design info, then put together the needs assessment and mesh that with the big ideas.
- Prioritize housing at the city level, make it a major topic of discussion in the council chambers and the council needs to prioritize and lead on that front.
- Collaborate with the [Hope Coalition](#).

Long-Term Actions

- Expand the city's zoning and planning department through creative funding, volunteers, etc.
- Ease development restrictions or other zoning restrictions for creative infill and redevelopment, such as tiny homes, quadplex, etc.
- Repurpose unused and underutilized commercial spaces.

- Create a city department for housing and community development which could include a housing improvement program, grants for infill development, etc.
- Conduct a long-term community recovery planning process.

Resource Team Ideas, Reflections and Resources

- “Money is a terrific follower and a terrible leader.” For VHFA, set goals and get clear on numbers and then thoroughly seek out the resources. When a community comes with a clear goal and long-term vision then they will get the support of the state organizations. There are more unrestricted funds available now than ever before, there are catalytic investments available. They are also looking at modular development.
- Possible funders include VHCB, ACCD, and VHFA.
- Flood impacted community TIFs (Tax increment financing district).
- Existing state programs to create new housing (for example VHIP) could help with some of those tools that exist.
- Downstreet has money: they’re open 8-4 and available off hours for scheduled meetings. You can call or email or drop off letters/paperwork.
- [Homes for All](#) toolkit for design and technical assistance.
- [Statewide housing needs assessment](#): VHFA tool to help understand what your region needs and how to mitigate issues.
- [Homeshare Vermont](#).
- Come to the funders/state agencies at any stage whether it’s a community vision or there’s a developer, or there are developers contracted by city council and they will help figure out the next stage.
- Can talk to federal delegation if you’re experiencing specific challenges, they are fighting in congress to bring in transformational funding.
- Resource is working with Barre Up to provide support via their intake case workers for their Construction/Carpentry Services and Essential Goods programs.
- Green Mountain Home Repair.
- USDA Rural Development [Single Family Housing Repair Loans & Grants](#).
- Creating a new loan program to allow households to raise their homes above flood levels.
- Short-term action ideas-
 - Form a citizen housing committee that can take turns sitting in on City Council meetings and sharing info with impacted citizens.
 - Connect formally with Downstreet and Capstone to advertise their programs and benefits with the impacted citizens.
 - Host webinars/in person tabling with funders (DCHD, VHCB, RD) for impacted citizens to discuss options (housing resource table).
- Rebuilding/Renovating - using the citizen housing committee, do a walk through of impacted north end neighborhoods together, and invite all housing partners to a mtg in which the needs can be clearly identified and discussed. If the vision from the Governor’s office is the chosen direction, then the capital stack for the specific types of housing needs to be identified and the partners invited in to discuss development options.
- Buyout Process - identify a single point person who can liaison with Stephanie Smith at the Vermont Division of Emergency Management and Ben Rose at SRO. Translate the materials provided RE: Buyouts from FEMA into easily understood FPF posts, and Facebook posts. Then set up a tabling/resource day for those impacted and wanting the buy out and invite the resource providers to that table.

► Social and Community Wellbeing

Current Context

- Schools are stressed and a lot of kids are in crisis.
- On the changing narrative around Barre City: we are all showing up tonight and committing to each other, and presence is a key part of building and maintaining community.
- Changing Barre narrative: librarians work to get people in the building and Aldrich is working to get flowers out front & trash pickup, since welcoming starts at the curb.
- Grants secured for “Imagine Barre”.
- Everyone in the community is welcome to join and make a difference with Barre Up.
- Capstone is working on a number of programs that fit some of these named needs.

Short-Term Actions

- Everyone’s responsibility is to make connections and meet neighbors and do person-to-person work on a human level.
- Change or expand the food shelf hours to include times that align with working families schedules.
- Reduce the barriers to intermittent food pick up to reduce planning needed to access food (for example, people living in hotels or campers can’t store a month’s worth of food).
- Document the organic community-based work that responded to the flooding and the gained institutional knowledge and connections that were built. Continue to foster, support and grow those connections in order to respond to the future.
- Organize and mobilize ourselves as City residents who are struggling (for example show up at City Council, vote, get informed).
- Barre Up could reach out to the hospital: where did the disconnect occur and how can we make sure it does not happen again?

Long-Term Actions

- Coordinate relief efforts in a central location so multiple efforts are not made for the same things (for example multiple coat drives, food drives, etc.). This central location (such as the library) could hold key information (for example food shelf hours).
- A group could form to do rapid-response support of residents in immediate, urgent need. What is the practical system for this? The volunteer groups at the Aldrich were good but ad hoc. This will not be our last flood or other disaster.
- Build an on-ramp for volunteerism and involvement with the community.
- Identify one organization that will take charge as a hub for the dissemination of information in times of crisis.
- The Barre Up hub has brought together several agencies in the space, and could use more volunteers & be open more often.
- Identify and implement creative solutions to address the challenges of short staffing to address mental health services without a long wait time.
- Create regularly occurring community events scheduled monthly (for example a block party or gathering at a vacant space downtown) to bring people together on a regular basis.
- Create street captains, or other point of contacts for neighborhoods who can be a point person as well as an organizer for neighborhood events. Build a Boys & Girls club for kids to go to in order to create their own community.

- Create better communication and collaboration with Central Vermont Medical Center, Vermont Department of Health and People’s Health and Wellness to be able to respond to medical emergencies and medical hub needs (for example mobile medical hubs and tetanus shot locations during a disaster).
- Municipal and other investments into social infrastructure.
- Build out the mutual aid presence and volunteer network, keep those networks supported and built out for future response and for long-term community building.

Resource Team Ideas, Reflections and Resources

- Barre Up Hub: Space on Main Street is available in order to connect people with resources.
- Rainbow Bridge Community Center is giving out direct cash assistance.
- Vermont Arts Council understands the centrality of the arts in people’s lives as social connection tools: they provided a teaching arts grant through the Library.
- VT Arts Council Arts Project Grants <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/grants/find-a-grant/organizations/arts-project/>.
- VT Community Foundation Spark Grants: <https://www.vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/spark-connecting-community/>.
- VT Community Foundation Art and Social Cohesion Grants: <https://vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/arts-and-social-cohesion/>.
- Capstone is thinking about community building and how to move people out of survival mode. They will be more available to people on the brink through outreach.
- Aldrich Library can provide space for conversations and gatherings. They have an arts grant that will culminate in a show in February. They can provide a training ground for organizing and are hosting several events such as Efficiency VT 10/25 flood relief open hours and legal services 10/30 flood disaster relief.
- Washington County Mental Health (WCMH) noted that people aren’t as aware of connections or what’s going on in community through their programs such as Wellness Wednesdays, short-term flood mental health counseling with no wait list and no cost, the Access Hub in Montpelier meant to divert mental health crises from the ED and their Community Fun Day on Saturday 10/21.
- Becca Balint’s Office: federal offices can do casework around federal agencies and will be working with Barre Up. They can also be a storyteller to uplift stories and be at events where there is community-building and sense of joy.
- As we talk about re-imagining the North End, capture the rich history of this neighborhood to celebrate and honor its past. This can happen with the expertise of local historians, The Vermont Historical Society and The Granite Museum.
- Utilization of Green Mountain United Way’s Volunteer Connection database.
- Community Connections and Care - Look at the models being created in St Johnsbury with a ‘Community Hub’ that coordinates/provides support across age and demographic lines and is doing some of the work of a Turning Point center. Otherwise - connections between Barre Turning Point, Capstone, shelter, Rainbow Bridge, churches, to coordinate ‘care’ that is offered - types, times etc.
- Resource Recovery Hub -Provide a published schedule for public case management, including invitations to community resource providers to ‘table’ at those times, and bringing mobile equipment - printers, laptops, etc for residents to use.
- Host community celebrations with food and music, which are a great way to change the image of a place - for example: Rutland’s Friday Night Live series, St. Johnsbury’s downtown empty window campaign, both of which have helped to create a new dynamic for the ‘image’ of downtowns in those communities.

► Infrastructure and Planning

Current Context

- An active community task force developed from the All in For Barre community visit in 2019, from that the [River Access Task Force](#) was formed. Their focus is on river cleanups, water quality sampling throughout summer, advocate for the river and improvements, and educational events.
- The City Planning Commission's top priority is on flood recovery, along with identifying what the needs are short and long-term for planning in the city.
- The city is constrained in fiscal capacity and person-power in particular with river items. They are not in compliance with river road permits and there are ongoing wastewater FEMA plant violations. The city is in partnership with the Agency of Natural Resources. Currently is the first time the city has a capital plan, which outlines work in the next 10 years that equate to \$20 million in project work. The current city budget is \$13 million per year and has a gap of \$2.7 million. Barre City has one of the higher municipal tax rates in the state, and also has high poverty rates and 100 year old infrastructure.
- The existing flood infrastructure includes two trash racks installed to hold woody debris up Brook Street and the second by the landfill. Both trash racks held back immense amounts of wood and helped to slow the water in the 2023 flooding event.

Short-Term Actions

- Define what a river is and how it behaves to better understand the river and water systems of Barre City.
- Map the watershed and identify the municipalities included within it.
- Work with the state climatologist or other entities to assess the return frequency of a similar storm.
- Investigate short-term river corridor actions such as dredging the river to create more volume in the riverbed.
- Promote Vermont Alert program to residents and look at options for a Barre specific alert system. The City Manager is currently looking into possible communication channels, but many are cost prohibitive.
- Develop locations, or a mobile unit, for emergency backup power generation in coordination with Green Mountain Power.
- Review past flood mitigation studies (some are listed in Resources) and identify priority action steps that have not been implemented and could qualify for funding (for example the North End train trestle removal).
- Review all action steps here and from past reports, with short-term, long-term lenses, and develop implementation sequencing to do the work without impacting long-term vision and goals.
- Add to the substantial damage list that the City Planning department is developing. They believe additional damage exists than has been submitted, and want to hear from more people to fully document the impact of the damage.
- Continue, and expand, river outreach and education.

Long-Term Actions.

- Watershed wide computer modeling of different rain scenarios, often called inundation modeling, to identify critical areas for improvement and to look at the water system as a whole, not as individual occurrences throughout the city.
- Work with neighboring towns to understand watershed impacts of efforts to improve the river corridor.
- Collect information from residents and map Barre City river areas that flood to better understand water through the city.
- Add areas of floodplain restoration, in town and upriver, to allow water to have a place to slow down and spread out coming into the city.

- Investigate the role of existing and future dams in the watershed as possible water retention strategies during storms.
- Develop a communication plan that includes text alerts, flyers, neighborhood channels, (possibly resurrecting the granite shed whistle) to reach all Barre City residents.
- Develop an Emergency Services Communication process and procedural manual to alert residents, including power shut offs, access to services, etc.
- Perform hydraulic studies to influence development plans.
- Review city budget and possible reallocation of high budgets (ex: Police budget) to different services.
- Identify and support the process for flood prone properties to be bought out.

Resource Team Ideas, Reflections and Resources

- Review existing Reports:
 - [2017 Barre City Local Emergency Operations Plan](#).
 - [Stevens Branch Watershed River Corridor Management Plan 2009](#).
 - [Gunners Brook: Phase 1 Flood Mitigation Study 2015](#).
 - Waterbury, VT plans post-Irene that note long-term recovery actions that would be a good model to review. [Tropical Storm Irene: Waterbury Long-Term Community Recovery Steering Committee After Action Report](#).
- State Climatologist has information on the July 2023 storms and predictions for future events.
- Federal Congressional Delegation state there are a lot of moving pieces right now, identifying key projects will help to identify funding sources. For example some funding sources include: Community Development Block Grant, USDA Rural Development, water improvement projects with VTrans or Federal highway Department, plus other additional resources.
- FEMA money can be 20% more than project assessment to build back better (for example larger culverts).
- Existing FEMA hazard mitigation assistance funds provide funding for eligible mitigation measures that reduce disaster losses. <https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation>.
- EPA Community Change Grant Equitable Resilience technical assistance will provide free design and project development assistance, community engagement, and partnership development workshops that support climate resilience and environmental justice activities in disaster-prone areas. <https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/community-change-equitable-resilience-technical-assistance>.
- Vermont State Hazard Mitigation Funding Programs Property Buyouts Following the July 2023 Flooding: <https://vem.vermont.gov/funding/mitigation>.
- USDA loans and grant support - For example the water environmental program or other low interest loans.
- Vermont Emergency Management Resources, <https://vem.vermont.gov/>.
- Winooski River watershed tactical basin plan <https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/watershed-planning/tactical-basin-planning/basin8> (updated every 5 years) identifies a long list of possible projects, a lot of projects are good for resilience which is good for water quality. There is a real opportunity if a group wants to dig into what resonates on the ground as a community for projects to implement. It includes low cost things that can be done and where rivers and culverts go. These efforts will never prevent floods or avoid all damage but can avoid future catastrophe if implemented.
- Offer a community-wide charette-type process for reimagining the North End and incorporate results in the planning process.
- Short Term: Promote public engagement in the development process for the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (ongoing).
- Long Term: Work with state and regional partners as new hydrologic models are produced to identify projects to reduce flood risk along the river.

- VT Arts Council Cultural Facilities Grants: <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/grants/find-a-grant/organizations/cultural-facilities/>.
- Other Building Communities grants: <https://bgs.vermont.gov/sites/bgs/files/2021%20Building%20Communities%20Grants%20Programs%20One%20Pager-FINAL.pdf>.
- City, Regional, Statewide Flood/Hazard Planning - work with UVM's Institute for Rural Partnerships - apply for UVM assistance to do planning/GIS and create tools for Barre, plus local other cities and regions.
- City Infrastructure Improvements - city council appoint and designate a team to review the infrastructure changes - water and waste? drinking water? etc. assign town manager and team to be able to identify and work on specific projects.
- Inclusive Emergency Services Planning - identify the folks who did not receive emergency information and identify their community connections/point people. Work to incorporate the city news/emergency news into the channels of communication used locally.
- Work with ANR on the River Corridor and Watershed Mitigation/Restoration Plans.
- There is still much debris along the river sides and we should be sure it is removed. Study if there are additional areas where debris racks - like on Brook Street - can be installed.
- Review existing culvert studies and replace those determined to be undersized.
- Update the current Emergency Plan so that residents and businesses are fully aware of what the plan is in the event of a disaster. Better communication to effectively react to what's about to happen. Include Emergency drills during the year. Develop a network.

V. Forum Notes

From focus group discussions held in-person and virtually with over 90 Barre City community members on September 13, 2023, and through a paper and online survey.

Although the prioritization work requires more discussion and collaboration with existing organizations, nothing is lost in the Barre Up process from the long list of concerns and ideas expressed in the community focus sessions. Many interesting and diverse thoughts are represented here, and are presented as a reminder of issues explored, and a possible foundation for future projects.

Housing

FACILITATOR: Seth Leonard, SCRIBE: Jessica Savage

What was a bright spot/something that gave you hope/something good? What has worked/given you hope/is an asset?

- Hard to talk about bright spots right now.
- Despite houses being destroyed, people opened their doors, people are hosting people in multifamily clusters right now.
- Friends and family: disconnected by flooding but now helping each other.
- Creativity, ideas that the community maybe wouldn't have considered might seem possible ie rental requirements, are they still serving the people? Can we convert upper floors of commercial spaces into housing for example? Opportunity and idea generation.
- Flood made clear that the housing stock is really old, median age is 1940, opens up creativity and opportunity since this housing stock, so maybe we can really update our housing stock, lead and asbestos.
- Already in housing crisis so hard to id good things, seen the need for Good Samaritan Housing places, shelter up the hill, we don't know what's happening, where to send people.
- Maybe we have a catalyst for livable affordable housing for the most vulnerable in our community.
- Value of the diversity of skills and backgrounds in our immediate neighborhood, we found people with all kinds of skills, childcare workers, dump truck driver, communications. Diverse workforce in a small geographical region, body of neighbors who know each other, and we pulled on those skills, feel so grateful to live in that diversity of our neighborhood, all different housing types and household composition.
- Opportunity to build a walkable designed, mixed use, modern and has amenities and space, such an opportunity and optimistic and hope we continue to the fight to make housing better.
- Walkable and a defined downtown and houses that are relatively affordable and density: that is an asset that attracted people.
- Just moved to Barre this year, needed to feel safer and found an amazing house in Barre that could afford, surprised by how much I love it here, love my neighbors, feel safe there, people come out with dogs and kids, and really appreciate that about Barre.
- Gratitude for libraries and schools, spaces to have your bodies, even if your doubled up and not in a great situation, having those places, library open late with snacks, and schools with free food and clothes, this is a component, also our senior center, seeing these as assets of space where housing and neighborhoods grow out of.
- Wastewater and water is doing well here.
- Physical locations and homes for Capstone, Downstreet so they have an extra interest in building back.

What Hasn't worked? What was Challenging or Hard?

- Took a week or two to get out of your house.
- Don't have enough housing of all types.
- Don't have affordable places where you feel safe to out your head down at night.
- The homes that were in the worst shape and most vulnerable people were hit the worst.
- Challenge in that there is only so much area to build, so we might have to build up, the geography is a challenge.
- Already had a housing crisis before the flood, we have no family emergency housing, can put people in hotel, last year our church took in a family and they now could move but there is nowhere to move.
- People who don't have stable housing don't have family or trust funds to rely on are we going to ask people to leave the state?
- School year is beginning, we know that we are not seeing the people who are doubling up, sheltering in place or camping, haven't had the full experience yet.
- Haven't been able to find people to do the work of business recovery: all the skills and trades, there is a preexisting labor shortage that is now worse: how do we address this?
- Conflicting feelings with FEMA buyouts, that land isn't developable anymore, reduces the 4 square miles, reduces city tax income, and there still won't be housing on that land, decreased inventory, and that money means something to them, there is no win win in this, there is picking a path.
- Bureaucratic process, takes a long time and still have to pay mortgages.
- Someone unhoused living in woods, had to keep moving, kept getting booted out in the woods.
- Someone above Rainbow Bridge, had to leave.

- Displacement is a factor: Barre diaspora, people who no longer live here and we owe it to them to welcome them back to their home.
- Landlord accountability: landlords owning homes, they have a responsibility and if they don't then people shouldn't be with them, where is our safe shelter, VT tenant hotline, preferred tenant certificate, can do that work, where is the preferred landlord certificate? What are the rules and bare minimum they need to meet?
- Large property management company that doesn't rent to people with less stellar credit.
- Landlords show up and have time to do that and tenants don't.
- First street: whole street was evicted in June. How can that happen in this housing market? How is that morally acceptable? Free market leaves the poor behind always.

Opportunities: What do you think should be done in this area in the future? What are your hopes for the future for Barre in this area? What is your vision for this area? Any ideas for action based on what you've heard?

- Affordable senior housing.
- Have to go up not out.
- Even the bare minimum would be a vast improvement, like tiny homes, we can start small because the need is so great.
- We can think of individual people AND we need the 30,000 view: what is the number of housing units in Barre? What is the total that have had damage? Important to keep names and faces but also need to think big. Estimate 4200 households, 500 disrupted, 12-13% of homes disrupted, let's invite more people here and have more households.
- Lack of affordable housing, landlords raising rents and wages not keeping up, protecting houses with rent control beyond one year, keeping that housing affordable in perpetuity, ensuring houses are being bought for second or third homes.
- Capstone does amazing work, want to see some protections on all housing that will be build.
- Landlord accountability: city needs to have as a governing body and own something, create an entity to oversee that and or ensure that landlords aren't just into it for their own pocket books.
- Floods are becoming more common and can't move the river: raising the homes, costs a lot of money, but basements aren't a good idea now.
- Yellow tag buildings without heat and hot water: worried about them as the weather turns, auditorium is on standby right now, hate to think we have to open that up for housing but maybe we do, short term we need a plan.
- How do we think about workforce bureaucracy? Can we cut through that to get places back up and running as soon as possible?
- Larger projects will need to be envisioned.
- Build back abundantly.
- Youth Build on Granite Street, training people for construction field, training on actual sites in community, also Serve Earn and Learn, labor force issues but we have young people being trained on construction, Rebuild/Restore is eager for the phone to start ringing when it's time to rebuild.
- BADC: housing and bringing a big project before Congresswoman Balint.
- Lots of spots in town where we could subdivide and build new homes, and we can't get stuck on any one strategy.
- We need short term emergency housing too: small houses/tiny houses.
- Removing barriers for working with developers.
- Look for places to build new neighborhoods.
- Build 100 homes in 5-7 years: need political will on city council to build housing.
- Political will in statehouse and with Governor, we have to ask the state for permission for many things, so many landlords in statehouse and that is an obstacle.
- City government zoning: need to regulate where appropriate but know when to get out of the way, housing first is the most important thing, no one is going to get everything they want, be smart when we make those compromises and decisions.
- People have the power: if we don't get involved, it isn't going to happen. There are many positions open on our subcommittees so we need to get involved.
- Opportunity inventory: GIS overlay of where all those opportunities exist, show those to people and get them excited.
- Consider the concept of social housing in Vienna: interesting process of soliciting bids from developers to build housing, let community decide which bid to go with, keep 50% of houses.

Recovery Resources

FACILITATOR: Kate McCarthy, SCRIBE: Jenna Koloski

What was a bright spot/something that gave you hope/something good? What has worked/given you hope/is an asset?

- Lots of social groups online and community.
- Pastor.
- The Rainbow Bridge was a huge help.
- Random people were helping (guy from Bristol showed up to do work)—house was full of people.
- Facebook (Mutual Aid Groups). Help people volunteering feel connected. Lots of people were offer resources (furniture, help, people). Chaos breeds opportunity to participate in recovery and aid.
- There are two businesses that have essentially dropped to zero revenue for 6 weeks. They set up a go fund me. I have no idea what that is but people have helped them.
- There is physical help and money help.
- We have signed up for a lot of places and we still have calls coming in asking what we need. About 2 weeks after the

flood we got a call from 211 with a group of people. It ended up being a family here visiting – and I went to school with them! They stayed with us for 3 hours and helped rip out the bathroom.

- It is incredible that people from all over the US and even outside of the country also helped.
- The grassroots response was amazing. Our shop had minor flooding – there was local help and then a ton of resources from out of state – red cross, etc. That was a huge help.
- A group helped me fill out the forms. I couldn't fill out another form. They came to the house to help with an inspection.

- The City saw an outpouring of support from other communities that were not as impacted. Help hauling debris, excavators, etc. Outpouring of support from other communities and local communities.
- We are grateful for private donors to support people that have lost belongings.
- Legal aid was helping with forms and making claims.
- Sean – a local resident – was running door to door with sump pumps. Running for 22 hours on Tuesday and Wednesday

What Hasn't worked? What was Challenging or Hard?

- 211 showed up three weeks later.
- There are about 20 flood relief lists and they are all disconnected – the outpouring is positive but the disconnectedness is a challenge.
- Needing to use more water and electricity – bill has doubled for one month. I can't afford it.
- Burn out with the forms.
- Challenge with resources is finding them in the first place. There is no one place to go. I hear about all these programs but I don't know how people find out about them. And the entire world is not on Facebook.
- Working for WaCo Mental Health was trying to get everyone to organize in a way that we were all connected to each other. No lists mentioned the local mental health agency – only national resources. I was working 60 hours day at the auditorium for 6 weeks. There were also other resources we couldn't seem to get together. We couldn't seem to coordinate.
- We are finally coordinated this week – there is a link for flood resources on the Barre City webpage that does list what you can apply for. BUT how would people know that – we need to connect all resources and coordinate.

- Getting enough volunteers to come with Rebuild on flood effected houses. Qualified contractors. Suitable to do the work.
- Contractors and people who can do the work are busy.
- My challenge is how to deal with where to go to get to resources. Elderly people don't have smartphones, don't have computers, don't have a car, home bound – they have no way to get to resources unless someone shows up at their door. I have heard people complain about that.
- Transportation is a challenge.
- People called City Hall – they were talked to rudely and dismissed. People are starting to gut homes and there is another level of trash happening. Email response from City to letter that was written: "The City provided trash collection 6 weeks post flood and debris was marked...over 3,800 tons of debris were picked up so clearly something was going right..." There continues to be a need for trash removal.
- If you didn't know how to mark your garbage it stayed there. I had to have a personal trash hauler come at my expense.
- I am still traumatized and I'm trying hard to keep it in the box

Opportunities: What do you think should be done in this area in the future? What are your hopes for the future for Barre in this area? What is your vision for this area? Any ideas for action based on what you've heard?

- Some kind of coordinated site where we can point to resources.
- I would like the communication to be a lot more solid before the event occurs – have to think about all of the different ways that people engage – TV, radio, in person, print, etc.
- All of the groups should come together to start a single request form that asks for all of the questions to be answered – a universal intake form rather than 40.
- No matter what we end up doing here, the fact is that all of the flooding raised the resource need level, there is still a ton of people in this city who will need the resources we are talking about from the flood.
- There is a Barre area relief fund – how would I know where to sign up?
- There is a website and a paper application to fill out at the library.
- Our longterm focus of the recovery committee is to have agencies come together and have one entry point. Goal is to get all the partners working together so you don't feel overwhelmed having to relive your story over and over again.

- At our church we like to be a communications hub so I am very interested in the recovery center.
- That is a part of Barre Up – if you are a person who wants resources, we will have them available. If you have no clue where to start, we want to be able to help. We want to be able to help assist – quick or a longer road. Barre Up Longterm Recovery.
- I would like to see information on preparing for disasters, what to do during disaster, short term and who to reach out to, and what to do in the longterm.
- How do I record my needs some place where my privacy is not impinged on? There are people out there that want to take advantage of these things and we want to avoid that at all costs.
- I want to see emotional support available.
- I want to see representatives from area agencies who can easily point towards the resources available.
- For people that live in flood affected homes that might be bought out for use as a flood plain – they should be reimbursed for their relocation and moving costs.

- That first morning, we came together to find out how we can help at the Good Shepherd Church. Now we're at the point where there are still so many resources out there – how can we meet a need that has not been met. How can we be a part of filling some of the gaps? As we build a list of resources, we should think about not just the “official” resources but the “unofficial” groups that are able to help out – like churches and other community groups.
- Identify the gaps so that volunteer and local groups can help to fill them.
- People who have needs should be able to walk in the door and see a bulletin board as an “index” of what is available. Clearinghouse of resources.
- I had a question after the City Council recovery group presented last night. How can you scrub out the personal information to display the not so personal information. Where does the data live? How is it going to be collected and organized?
- Capstone has been doing some good work – in the present they are a strong partner and moving forward. Rainbow Bridge, Good Shepherd – these are organizations we want to see in the future.
- We need affordable housing in the future. We need to come to a consensus – we need to take state action in addition to local action.
- One of our biggest assets are our neighbors. The way the community came out in full force- we need more third spaces – Rainbow Bridge and Good Shepherd are good examples. We need more spaces like this to provide opportunities for more neighbors.
- There are a lot of vacant spaces right now. It would be cool to see those spaces revitalized and used for those third spaces.
- There are spaces in town that could serve that third space purpose – like the Old Labor Hall.
- There is a lot of unresolved trauma. It makes things difficult moving forward. WCMHS has been going door to door in many neighborhoods across the county to now and say how are you, what do you need? We have a 12 person crisis counseling team. People can get 3-5 free counseling sessions – crisis counseling. There to listen. After those initial sessions, we would do an intake.

Helping Efforts

FACILITATOR: Jessica Savage, SCRIBE: Adam Jacobs

What was a bright spot/something that gave you hope/something good?

- There was a real sense of community and neighborliness, with moments of heroism as people helped each other and even disregarded their own personal safety.
- Organizationally amplified helping efforts, even before the flood. THRIVE, CAPSTONE, WCMH, RBCC, ENOUGH, CITY VOLUNTEERS, OUTSIDE FAITH GROUPS all provided services around homelessness, housing, meals, distribution, laundry.
- Pet shelter was well organized and heartwarming to see that pets were considered an important part of needs.

What Hasn't worked? What was Challenging or Hard?

- Lack of an overall warehouse to utilize the right people directed to the right places.
- The uncertainty of what to do with residents and friends who have been displaced.
- Are we doing the best we can possibly do for our people?
- Canvass more to double check on people. I honestly feel like we have fallen short and that we have not been able to check in on everyone.
- The difficulty of navigating federal grants and loans, even when you are a well-informed and privileged person.

Opportunities: What do you think should be done in this area in the future? What are your hopes for the future for Barre in this area? What is your vision for this area? Any ideas for action based on what you've heard?

- Calibrate expectations around the time projections and clicking clock. These are long timelines and slow systems. Apply Deny Reapply.
- These are not necessarily human systems even at the highest level of financial benefit. That is part of the path, even if it is heartbreaking.
- Our community needs to prepare that these will not be pretty recoveries. And this is hard won knowledge.
- A council, committee, or subgroup on resiliency that could hold informational resources to help various actors.
- Flexibility and versatility in working with diverse people together to deal with different types of disasters.
- It's going to happen again, communities are going to be inflicted by challenges.
- Disaster Mitigation Plans always stop at the end of public services and infrastructure. How can it move one step forward into individual assistance to help out people?
- The engineering analysis is systems wide: floods have impacts both wide and far, downstream and upstream of us. 100 years ago, the construction laid the impact of this flood: as the waterways were channelized, moved, and reinforced with granite so they could put down railroads.
- In 2015, over in Brookstreet, 5 houses were bought-out. We built an award-winning system, broadening the river and putting in granite pillar trash racks. That area worked exactly as it should this flood.

Long Term Recovery and Resilience

FACILITATOR: Jenna Koloski, SCRIBE: Laura Cavin Bailey

What was a bright spot/something that gave you hope/something good?

- Nicolas as city manager, bring excellent experience and leadership and supports individual groups that are working on these efforts.
 - Have people in the social service agencies that are the most creative problem solvers, who have managed people out of multiple crisis.
 - Strong set of volunteers with long depth of skills.
 - Barre City services, public works, and auditorium was a great staging ground and often overlooked asset until we really need it.
 - This discussion and opportunity to come together is an opportunity from the flood.
 - Sense of unity of residents “grab a shovel and make friends as you dig each other out” has been monumental.
 - Apparent there are lots of new residents of Barre that want to be engaged and showed up in recovery efforts, created an introduction to the new residents with the old.
 - Ground swell of grassroots volunteers that stepped up and did anything and everything to help their neighbors. If you had a skill to offer, people were willing to connect you with those who needed that help.
 - 1% sales tax is on track to finance infrastructure projects as projected.
 - VT Economic resilience initiative effort post Irene many identified projects were implemented
-

What Hasn't worked? What was Challenging or Hard?

- Traffic congestion with closed roads and there are talks about long term closure of West Patterson Rd. Still closures impacting daily life.
 - Long term can we maintain and keep these roads that seem so essential.
 - Infrastructure of debris still exists.
 - City staff working on infrastructure improvements, but some road maintenance has been lacking in the last 10 years.
 - Community of large population of residents below poverty line, and a number of disabled to be excluded from conversations and planning efforts, need to make conversations inclusive of all Barre residents.
 - Degree of slope of hills and number of streams we don't even know about, and not enough buffer from the streams.
 - Need to look at development uphill of Barre City, and some are supported by town water/sewer.
 - Housing conversation is challenging and now a bigger conversation.
 - Small geographic area and land is at a premium so not a quick fix for how to add housing, and conflict in how to build back versus what is feasible, no one real solution to make it better.
 - Individual residents don't know how to be involved in future process.
 - Rent prices increasing and 27% water rate increases impacting all residents right after flood (but notified before flooding), which is not working for a lot of people.
 - Increase of cost of living has not been sustainable.
 - Challenge of timing that winter is coming and decisions need to be made now and don't have time/money to make improvements that would be beneficial for long term.
 - Communication channels between families made younger residents were accountable for their actions, today police aren't responding to those little thing. Poverty is linked to drugs, poverty, access to food
-

Opportunities: What do you think should be done in this area in the future? What are your hopes for the future for Barre in this area? What is your vision for this area? Any ideas for action based on what you've heard?

- Thriving downtown adds to a resilient barre that provides commercially driving revenues.
- Green spaces to handle large volumes of water and overflow.
- Build back more, more affordable with economy of scale and grow Barre.
- Long term-multifaceted infrastructure and housing problems.
- Social connectivity improvements.
- Attendance and involvement in city council meetings, we need more voices to get back to where we want to be.
- No wrong door hub for volunteer effort to go to and be able to tap into needs.
- More 3rd spaces, great churches, LGBTQ, but need more 3rd space opportunities would be beneficial.
- More life –.
- Solidify social structure when people are out but starts with hammering on crime issue/drug use. Playgrounds scattered around the city, but hard to take children there now. Make Barre a place where people want to be out and about together.
- Perception of reality needs to shift, issue to address is perception of crime.
- Build up, more condensed, more apartments, duplex, triplex, build smart and address the fact there is a river running through town and hidden streams.
- New vision for Barre – new name, new slogan, start by not calling ourselves “scary Barre”.
- Better public transportation as a tool for long term resilience.
- Spreading the word positive of new residents “why they moved to Barre” and why the actively sought out this community.
- Mentor programs to empower people to learn the skills we need, ex land survey, plumbers, electricians.
- Provide transportation to bring people, students together and offer options.

- School is working to change the narrative, inviting people to come to the school and volunteer.
- Watershed conversations to form with Montpelier and others to talk across town borders for solutions. Liaisons to cross town communication to share ideas, as solutions aren't unique to one town.
- Layering climate impacts, more frequent flood challenge on top of housing crisis, addiction crisis, but there becomes opportunity to break down silos between areas to find solutions that can meet multiple challenges/silos. And opportunity to engage more people as they touch one everyone.
- Approach challenges as a catalyst for positive growth in the city and will take everyone getting on board. By first meeting everyone's needs. Let's be who everyone else learns how to do it from!

Individual and Youth Wellness

FACILITATOR: Jessica Kell, SCRIBE: Seth Leonard

What was a bright spot/something that gave you hope/something good? What has worked/given you hope/is an asset?

- I just came to Vermont in January...I've been amazed at the way this community pulled together. But on the flipside, I wonder if that sense of togetherness would have occurred without the flood? How can we make that sense of caring and togetherness the bedrock of our identity.
- The sense of community needs to outlive the flood.
- Human infrastructure is important for us to focus on.
- How can we identify common needs, instead of making people feel like they categorized.
- Barre is a hive of non-profits doing great work. It is part of our response infrastructure.
- We come together strong when there is a crisis. Wellness is what togetherness looks like without a crisis.
- The flood has given a microscope: we can see the problems/challenges more clearly that were already there.
- How do we prepare for resiliency? Use the crisis as a way to build the connective infrastructure. Solutions for "Bowling Alone".
- There are some neighborhoods that are really strong. Some are not, we could make those neighborhood connections stronger.
- Events like Heritage festival that bring people together.
- Playgrounds/3rd spaces that et people together.
- Children/kids responding with fear of rain...build supports for children who experienced trauma.
- Church communities in Barre are a social/response infrastructure – lots of volunteer organization and responding to needs.
- When I need to spread information, the first place I go to is the church community. They thrive in being nimble because they are micro-communities.
- Non-religions entities can also be formed. Rainbow bridge is an example. A small model of community.
- Doors/Windows/and homes were suddenly open. People walked through or showed up and felt welcome to help. People opened up their doors TO BE helped. That felt like wellness to me.
- People who don't usually talk to each other, or are unwilling to be vulnerable, have opened up and connected.
- Irony: It took a flood to destroy homes, or expose how tenuously housed some people are...how can we build off that and be sure we don't need that to be connected in the future. How do we used this to go the next step where people are accepting help and helping each other.
- Why is there no YMCA?
- I don't like "wellness" as a term.
- Lack of afterschool programming for Barre City. Town offers it, but City doesn't take advantage of it.
- Transportation is difficult, access to healthcare.
- Volunteers cannot do fingerprints for long periods of time (sometimes a couple week delay). Some people are excluded because of background checks.

Opportunities: What do you think should be done in this area in the future? What are your hopes for the future for Barre in this area? What is your vision for this area? Any ideas for action based on what you've heard?

- Volunteerism has been off the charts.
- The school is doing impactful volunteering, and instilling a sense of volunteerism.
- Connectivity of volunteers with school, city and other social institutions.
- How do we keep the momentum going?
- My office is located where the recovery center was stationed. They quickly packed up and left, and the air went out of the balloon.
- We've stalled/experiencing a shift in energy.
- 100 houses in 100 days: they are doing it, but it is unclear how much they can do in Barre. Zoning and permits are making the volunteers for that effort feel frustrated.
- Momentum and champions may get burned out....need to be responsive to their needs and ideas.
- Youthbuild: doing remediation, sheetrock work.
- Concern about cold weather/shorter days: will it slow us down and make people stay inside? Maybe, but it could also become a good opportunity to have recovery events that get people out and about during the winter.
- Leverage holidays as way to bring people together, but it is also a rally call to get people to help meet needs. What can

we do for people who don't have the ability to have holiday traditions/be at home?

- Encourage people to congregate in communities (driveways? Block parties?).
- There are many upcoming and regular events we could focus on.
- Wellness is when we are collectively supporting kids. "Could you feel comfortable correcting or providing feedback to someone's kid?"
- What does wellness look like: Absence of wellness – respiratory health, mental health impacts, skin.
- People are talking more about mental health challenges.
- Connectivity and ability to rely on a network. How do we build a healthy ecosystem? More and different connections. Help people see where to get the help they need and find community.
- The way people can help is less visible. We cannot run downtown with shovels. Need to do a better job of clarifying what the issues are and what all community members can do to help.
- Is there a way to get scientific measurements of who is impacted? Could we identify how many kids were impacted? Power in saying "200 kids were impacted". That could help

quantify the problem and scale the resources needed to respond.

- Could we do the same for those whose homes are impacted?
- How do we get to the point of a baseline understanding of "how people are doing."
- What causes "unwellness"? In some cases, people don't know they are not well...and don't recognize what they need.
- One visited home by city staff was untouched by flooding. But the two houses on each side were ravaged. The person in the untouched home broke down with anxiety after being asked "what do you need" the impact wasn't the water, it was trauma of watching the suffering around them.
- Survivor guilt for people who do not have visible damage.
- Do we need to keep asking and continuously trying to hear what challenges people are experiencing? How do we keep asking?
- Asking people how they are doing is important.
- Wellness: seeing and perceiving everything. It means there are no hidden people, no hidden problems, or unidentified challenges.
- That gives us what we need to move towards finding solutions and potential.

Natural Resources and Climate

FACILITATOR: Laura Cavin Bailey, SCRIBE: Leigh McCaffrey

What was a bright spot/something that gave you hope/something good?

- Restoring the path along the river post flood.
- Seeing effects of previous mitigation efforts re debris catching that worked (trash racks).
- Better understanding of movement of debris AND water- "listening" to the river.
- River corridor easements worked well to increase floodplain.
- Commercial buildings on north end of main street were rebuilt above the 100 yr flood plain and didn't flood.

What Hasn't worked? What was Challenging or Hard?

- Rivers are too shallow.
- Roads need to be engineered to divert water.
- Storm water management needed in general.
- Terracing on hills is not managing drainage.
- Neighbors need to work together to improve drainage.
- Frequency and intensity of storms in changing and previous solutions might no longer work.
- Hard to know what will work.
- Harrington Avenue and North End mitigation did not work – even raising structures did not work.
- Did road construction add to flood damage?
- Warning system did not reach everyone with weather forecast.
- Many older residents won't get updates by email or text.
- Lack of communication in general across the community.
- Development uphill of downtown is not always clearly regulated and impacts overall water system/floods.

Opportunities: What do you think should be done in this area in the future? What are your hopes for the future for Barre in this area? What is your vision for this area? Any ideas for action based on what you've heard?

- Dredging the rivers worked in the past, considering bringing this back as maintenance.
- Keep front yards clean and water able to flow around buildings.
- Petition the legislature for action.
- We need to retrofit housing and residential for current climate to be resilient and flood proof.
- Development uphill needs adequate drainage by knowledgeable professionals.
- Buyouts of properties for increasing the flood plains.
- Re-engineering infrastructure for future volumes and frequencies.
- Workshops for homeowners and tenants on managing property for resilience.
- Pre-existing housing problem made worse in the flood; we need housing solutions that are sustainable.
- We need to "listen" to rivers and Mother Nature.
- Residents need to clean debris to protect storm drains.

- Barre is based on the world of 200 years ago; what we need now is different. We need to listen to scientists to figure out what we need to do now.
- We need to better understand how the flood happened from scientific and narrative evidence from residents. Then make a comprehensive plan for flood resilience.
- Need to understand root cause of flood events and cloudbursts.
- Resilient retrofits of commercial and residential properties.
- Zoning regulations may need to change.
- Develop a build out plan for regional development.
- Minimize damage in commercial district even though it is expensive.
- Find alternatives to inventory storage in basements for commercial enterprise.
- Warning system needs to be developed that will reach older people whether or not there is power.
- Architecture of wastewater management needs to regional, not just Barre City – current regional planning committees not effective.
- Need state-wide building codes need to be adequate for climate change.
- Good Samaritan clause to protect pro-bono professionals who advise property owners get advice without fear of being held liable.
- Need to re-think passive retention at East Barre dam and also other dams.
- Land needs to be managed to reduce debris.
- Municipalities in the same watershed need to work together, regional collaboration.
- Keep community conversation on-going w/ the city and other organizations.
- We need to look at health of trees if we have a wet fall and winter.
- Trusted network of contractors to do quality work.
- Think about short term and long term timescales and property to watershed scale.

VI. Resource Team

Housing

Facilitator: Jenna Koloski, VCRD

Local Resource Team Members:

Angie Harbin, CEO, Downstreet, <https://downstreet.org/>, (802) 476-4493, (877) 320-0663
aharbin@downstreet.org, 22 Keith Avenue Suite 100, Barre

Tom Longstreth, Executive Director, ReSource, tlongstreth@resourcevt.org, Household Goods & Building Material Store: 30 Granite Street, Barre, VT 05641, 802.477.7800

Tess Taylor, Co-Chair, Barre City Housing Committee, tmtaylor24@gmail.com

Kimberly Welch, *Housing Counselor*, Capstone Community Action, kwelch@capstonevt.org

State/Regional Resource Team Members:

Alex Farrell, *Interim Commissioner*, VT Department of Housing and Community Development, alex.farrell@vermont.gov

Seth Leonard, *Managing Director of Community Development*, Vermont Housing Finance Agency, SLeonard@vhfa.org

Jenny Hyslop, *Director of Housing*, VT Housing and Conservation Board, jenny@vhcb.org

Sarah Waring, *State Director*, USDA Rural Development, sarah.waring@usda.gov

Social & Community Wellbeing

Facilitator: Jessica Savage, VCRD

Local Resource Team Members:

Denise Bailey, *Director of Equity, Engagement and Advocacy*, Capstone, <https://capstonevt.org/>,
dbailey@capstonevt.org, 20 Gable Place, Barre, VT 05641-4128, 1-800-639-1053 or (802) 479-1053

Tawnya Kristen, *CEO*, Thrive/Green Mountain United Way, <https://www.gmunitedway.org/>, (802) 613-3989,
tkristen@gmunitedway.org

Leigh McCaffrey, *Pastor*, Barre Congregational Church (not present), <https://www.barrecongregational.org/>, 802-476-3065, pastorleigh@barrecongregational.org

Sue Minter, *Executive Director*, Capstone, <https://capstonevt.org/>, sminter@capstonevt.org, 20 Gable Place, Barre, VT 05641-4128, 1-800-639-1053 or (802) 479-1053

Shawna Trader, *Executive Director*, Rainbow Bridge, <https://rainbowbridgevt.org/>, s.trader@rainbowbridgevt.org, 802-622-0692 (currently offline due to flood damage)

State/Regional Resource Team Members:

Michele Bailey, *Senior Program Manager*, Vermont Arts Council, MBailey@vermontartscouncil.org

Washington County Mental Health, <https://www.wcmhs.org/>, (802) 229-0591, 885 South Barre Road, Barre, VT 05670, Jessica Kell, COO, Interim Director, Children Youth & Family Services, jessica.kell@wcmhs.org, Rebecca Roebuck, rebecca.roebuck@wcmhs.org, Heather Slayton, heather.slayton@wcmhs.org

Infrastructure & Planning

Facilitator: Laura Cavin Bailey, VCRD

Local Resource Team Members:

Rosemary Lynn Averill, Barre City Planning Commission, <https://www.barrecity.org/planning-commission/>

Jim Deshler, Barre River Access Task Force, <https://winooskiriver.org/barre-rivers>, Email BarreRivers@gmail.com, Call/Text 802-505-7345

Janet Shatney, *Director*, Planning, Permitting & Assessing Services Barre City, Office: (802) 476-0245 | Direct: (802) 477-1465, PPADirector@barrecity.org

State/Regional Resource Team Members:

Bronwyn Cooke, *Planning and Policy Manager*, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Bronwyn.Cooke@vermont.gov

Shaun Fielder, *Community Programs Specialist*, USDA Rural Development, Shaun.Fielder@usda.gov

Christian Meyer, *Executive Director*, Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, meyer@cvregion.com

Julie Moore, *Secretary*, Agency of Natural Resources, Julie.Moore@vermont.gov

Zoom discussion

Facilitator: Alyssa Johnson, VCRD

Local Resource Team Members:

Barre Up Committee Member

State/Regional Resource Team Members:

Kheya Ganguly, *Director of Trauma Prevention and Resilience Development*, State of Vermont, kheya.ganguly@vermont.gov

Doug Farnham, Chief Recovery Officer for the State of Vermont, Douglas.Farnham@vermont.gov

Additional Resources

Melissa Bounty, *Executive Director*, Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation, p. 802.595.3175, mbounty@cvedc.org - Business related support available.

Rebecca Ellis, *State Director*, Office of Senator Peter Welch, rebecca_ellis@welch.senate.gov

Kristie Farnham, *NBRC State Program Manager and Director of Business Support*, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, State of Vermont, 802-398-5268, Kristie.Farnham@vermont.gov

Nicole Killoran - Director, VLS Entrepreneurship Legal Laboratory (VLSELL), Vermont Law and Graduate School. 802-831-1302, nakilloran@vermontlaw.edu, Free Legal Education to anyone

Kate McCarthy, *Senior Program Officer*, The Vermont Community Foundation, kmccarthy@vermontcf.org, (802) 388-3355, x. 234 vermontcf.org

Michelle Monroe, *Communications and Outreach Representative*, Office of US Senator Peter Welch, michelle_monroe@welch.senate.gov

Northern Borders Regional Commission, Chris Saunders - fedcochair@nbrc.gov, Business Relations Manager at ACCD Natalie Elvidge, 802-461-6869 Natalie.Elvidge@vermont.gov

Danielle Osarski - Barre River Access Task Force, <https://winooskiriver.org/barre-rivers>, Email BarreRivers@gmail.com, Call/Text 802-505-7345

Recovery Vermont, <https://recoveryvermont.org/> (802) 279-9069

Stephanie A. Smith, State Hazard Mitigation Officer, Vermont Emergency Management, Cell: (802) 989-6793, Stephanie.A.Smith@vermont.gov

Carolyn Wesley, Vermont Director of Operations and Culture for Congresswoman Becca Balint, carolyn.wesley@mail.house.gov

For More Information

For next steps, Barre Up: A long-term recovery organization for Barre City, is working to support residents and build a resilient future together. For more information or to get involved, contact them at 6 Main St, Barre VT or by email at info@barreup.org.

Committee Members: Amanda Kay Gustin, Keith Jache, Leigh McCaffrey, Stephanie Quaranta, Nicolas Storlicastro, Shawn Trader, Pamela Wilson

barreup.org



Vermont Council on Rural Development
PO Box 1384, Montpelier, VT 05601-1384
802-223-6091 | info@vtrural.org | www.vtrural.org

The Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the support of the locally-defined progress of Vermont's rural communities. VCRD is a dynamic partnership of federal, state, local, nonprofit and private partners. Actively non-partisan with an established reputation for community-based facilitation, VCRD is uniquely positioned to sponsor and coordinate collaborative efforts across governmental and organizational categories concerned with policy questions of rural import. The organization has successfully completed 90 community visits, resulting in locally defined projects like new childcare centers, wastewater infrastructure, downtown redevelopments, and much more.