



TOWN OF GREAT BARRINGTON MASSACHUSETTS

April 29, 2021 Selectboard and Planning Board Joint Meeting

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bannon opened the meeting at 6:00 pm, those “present” via zoom: Ed Abrahams, Kate Burke, Leigh Davis, Bill Cooke, Malcolm Fick, Jonathan Hankin, Jeremy Higa, Brandee Nelson, Pedro Pachano, Garfield Reed, and Town Manager, Mark Pruhenski.

2. CLIMATE ACTION, RESILIENCE, AND EQUITY (“CARE”) PROJECT

- a. Introduction of project and CARE team
 - i. Christopher Rembold gave a brief overview of the CARE project, team, and progress over the last year.
- b. Summary of cultural competency and climate change trainings
 - i. Maya Richards, Sustainability & Justice Program Director at BRIDGE, shared a presentation on trainings that took place regarding cultural competency.
 - ii. Natalie Narotzky, Director at Urban Sustainability Directors Network, shared a presentation on trainings that took place regarding climate change.
- c. Climate change facts and impacts
- d. Themes and takeaways that have emerged from trainings (please see attached presentation for more detailed information).
 - i. People living with vulnerabilities are most vulnerable to climate change.
 - ii. Centering under-represented voices
 - iii. It’s not just about carbon emissions
 - iv. We are all experts in our own experience
 - v. Repairing relationships
 - vi. Food justice is social justice
 - vii. Climate change concern exists in all communities
 - viii. Reliable transportation
 - ix. Climate change mitigation and preparedness is not climate justice
- e. SOAR discussion
 - i. Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results
 - ii. Gwendolyn VanSant and Maya Richards discussed the differences between SWOT analysis to SOAR framework.

- iii. The board members participated in an activity in which they discussed strengths, weaknesses, aspirations, and results.
- f. Project next steps
 - i. May 6th at 6:30 PM – Dinner, CARE SOAR & Project Brainstorming (Meal provide by Agaves)
 - ii. May 11th at 6:30 PM – Dinner CARE Project Conceptualize and Design (Meal provided by BRIDGE Women 2 Women group)
 - iii. May 19th at 5:00 PM – Dinner, CARE Project Presentations & Feedback (Meal provided by Koi or Steam)
- 3. CITIZEN SPEAK TIME
 - a. Jovanina Pagano explained how important this project is, and how participation is encouraged at the dinner events. moving to witness, everyone engaging, encourage members to join the dinner events as they are enlightening.
- 4. ADJOURNMENT Chairman Bannon adjourned meeting by unanimous consent at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brooke M. Morehouse
Recording Clerk

Climate Justice Overview for Select Board and Planning Board

April 29, 2021
Great Barrington MVP CARE Project
Slides by Natalie Narotzky

Foundational Practices (HOW)

Take a People-Centered, Equity-Focused Approach

Build Relationships and Collaborate with Community Partners

Institutionalize Sustainability Goals and Resources

Influence Key Leverage Points Beyond Local Authority

Take an Interdisciplinary Approach and Work Across Borders of Geographies, Institutions, Levels of Government, and Fields

Build Personal and Professional Competencies and Capacity

Pathways (WHAT)

Manage Climate and Environmental Risk and Reduce Exposure Disparities

Accelerate the Transition to Clean, Accessible, Resilient, and Equitable Mobility Systems

Catalyze the Construction and Retrofit of Healthy, Resilient, Zero-Carbon Buildings

Accelerate an Equitable Transition to Clean and Resilient Energy Sources

Invest in Ecosystem Regeneration and Access

You don't have to know all of the science to be part of the solution

“Some feel like they have to know the science inside and out before they can talk about it or do something about it. But here’s what I have learned: *You don’t have to know the details of the science to be part of the solution.* And if you wait until you know everything, it will be too late for you to do anything. That’s why we, the youth who are leading on climate, are calling this an *emergency*.”

Xiye Bastida, Essay “Calling In” in *All We Can Save*, 2020



Bastida demonstrating with Greta Thunberg outside the United Nations headquarters in New York. | Photo by Felix Kunze. Source: [PBS](#)

Climate Change Science and Justice

#1 - Climate change is real

#2 - It is caused by humans

#3 - It is happening TODAY

#4 - Those that are most marginalized are most vulnerable to climate change, being impacted first, worst, AND longest

U.S. 2020 Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters



This map denotes the approximate location for each of the 22 separate billion-dollar weather and climate disasters that impacted the United States during 2020.

Northeast Impacts Are Less Acute but Still Severe

- Northeast specific impacts are detailed in the National Climate Assessment
- Most of these impacts impact public health - keep in mind the social determinants of health.



Flooding in Kent CT as the result of ice jam on the Housatonic River at Kent School on Jan. 14, 2018. (Twitter/ AParsons79). Source : [Accuweather](#)

Impacts to Highlight

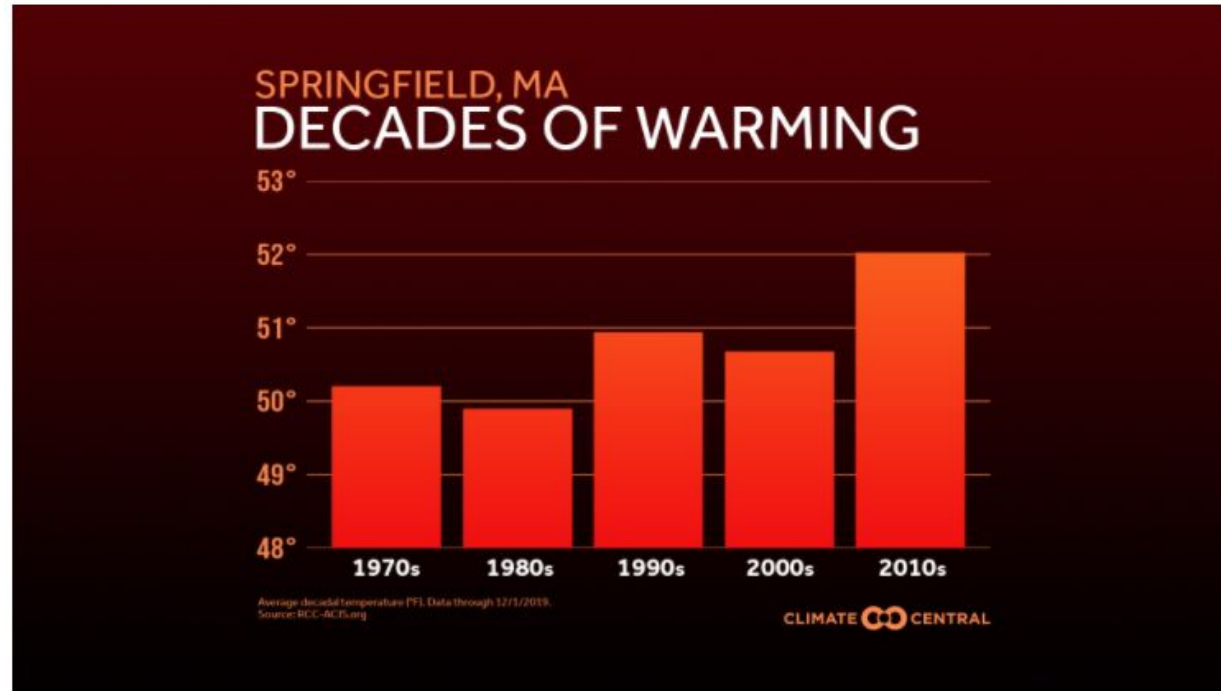
- Extreme heat
- Seasonal changes
- Extreme precipitation and flooding
- Mental Health and well being

This is a sample - there are more and many helpful references to be found in the [National Climate Assessment for the curious.](#)



Extreme Heat

“By 2035, and under both lower and higher scenarios (RCP4.5 and RCP8.5), the Northeast is projected to be more than 3.6°F (2°C) warmer on average than during the preindustrial era. This would be the largest increase in the contiguous United States and would occur as much as two decades before global average temperatures reach a similar milestone.”

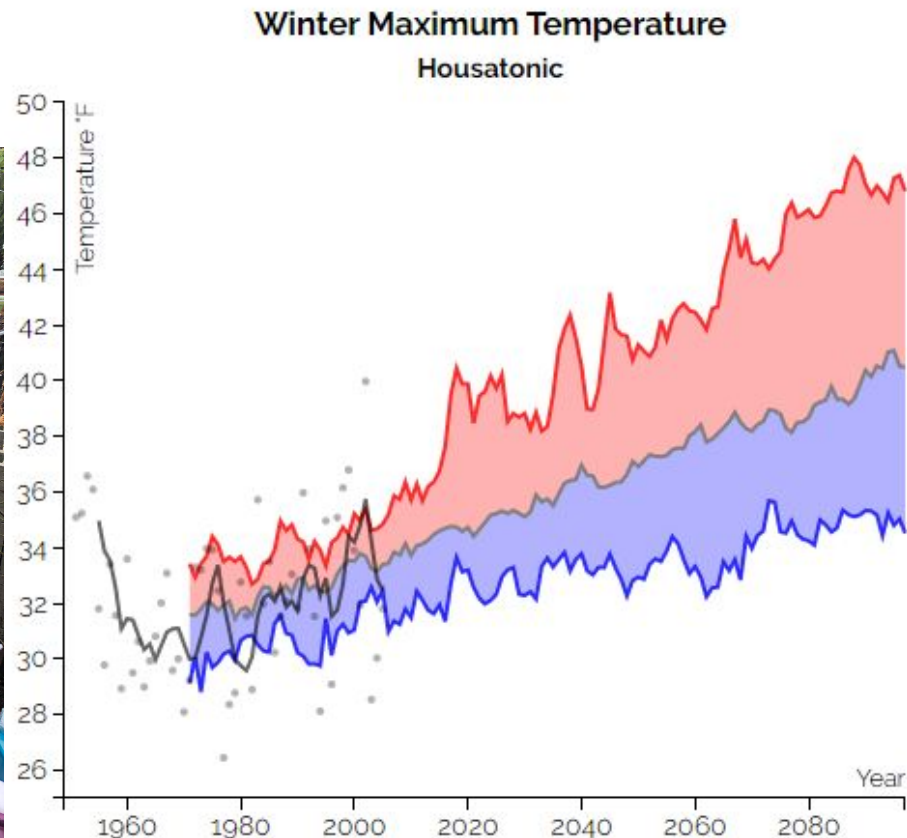


Sources: National Climate Assessment (2018) and Climate Central
Slide by Natalie Narotzky, 2021

Seasonal Changes



Sources: National Climate Assessment (2018)
and resilient.org.
Slide by Natalie Narotzky (2021).

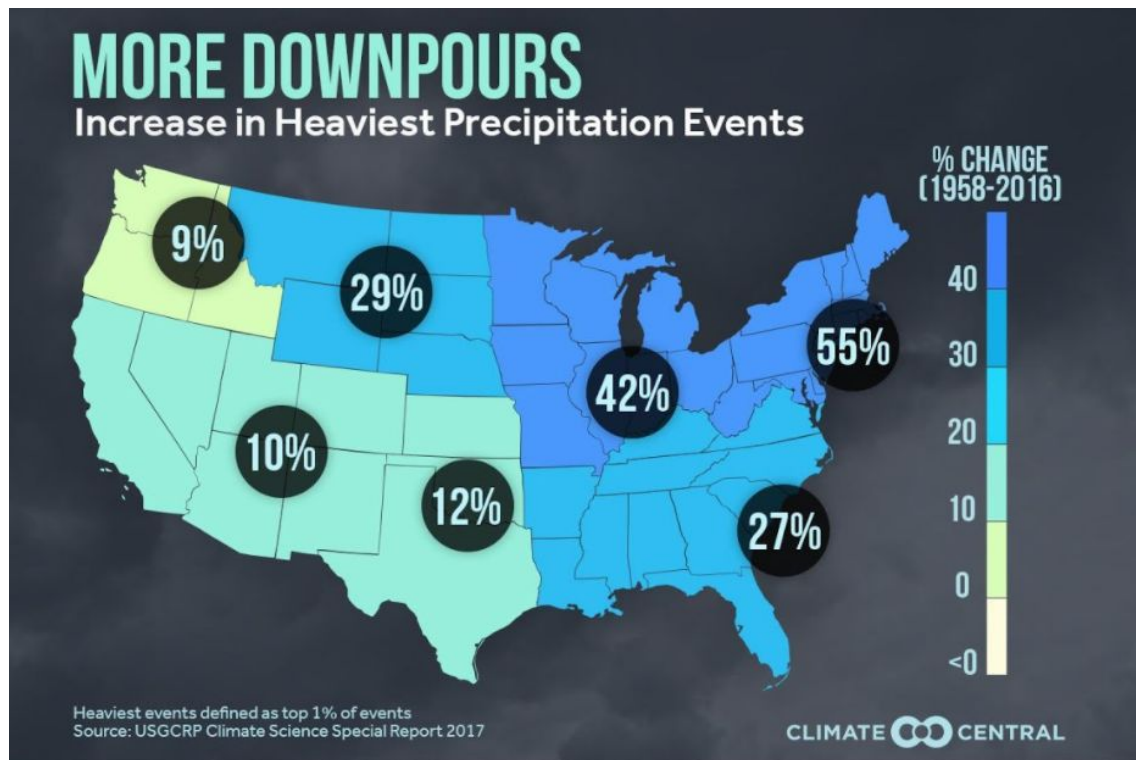


Resilient MA

Climate Change Clearinghouse for the Commonwealth

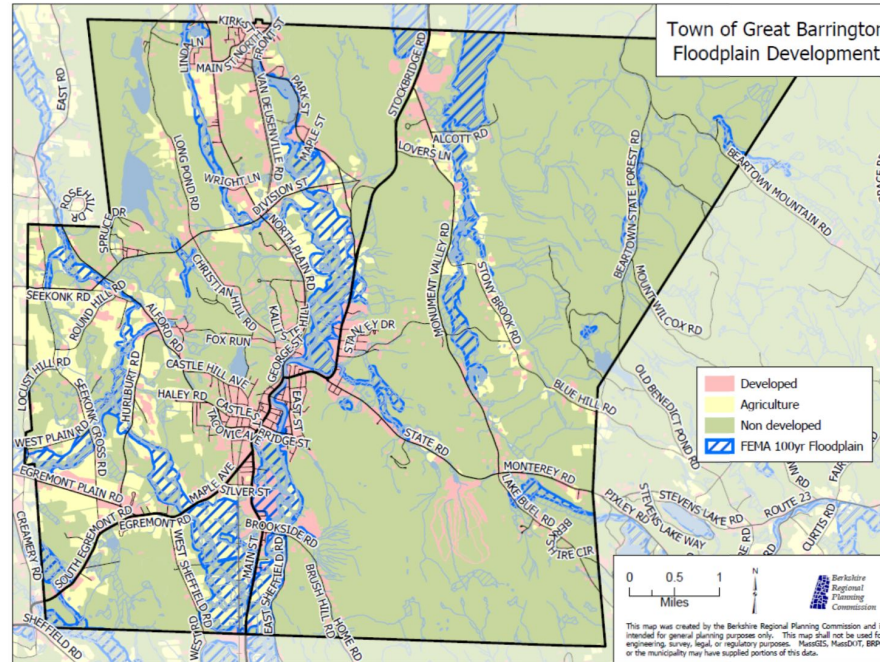


Intense Precipitation - Already Happening & Impacting Agriculture



Sources: Climate Central and National Climate Assessment (2018)
Slide by Natalie Narotzky, 2021

Vulnerability of Development Adjacent to Waterways



data

Historic

Source: National Climate Assessment (2018)
Slide by Natalie Narotzky, 2021

Image of 100 Bridge Street Development from
iBerkshires via CDC of South Berkshire

Mental Health and Well-Being



Source: National Climate Assessment (2018)
Slide by Natalie Narotzky, 2021

A view from Monument Mountain in Great Barrington,
Massachusetts
Photo: Getty Images



TRADITIONAL APPROACH

RESILIENCE

The ability of our community to anticipate, accommodate, and positively adapt to or **thrive** amidst changing climate conditions or hazard events and **enhance quality of life**, reliable systems, economic vitality, & conservation of resources for present & future generations

THREE RESILIENCE MODES

USDN

urban sustainability
directors network

Everyday (non disruption)	All infrastructure and services are available No major disruptions are present Primary focus is on community services and programming and relationship-building
Disruption	Disruption to normal everyday function for any duration. Disruptions can include natural disasters, health-disasters (pandemic) and human-influenced disruptions. Disruption can vary from minutes to months or years.
Short-term	Related to shocks or events that hit relatively quickly
Long-term	Related to disruptions that last longer and impact “everyday mode” such as global pandemic or war
Recovery	Process of returning to everyday mode. The aftermath of the disruption during which the community works to restore normal or better conditions. Can last days to years.



How Decades of Racist Housing Policy Left Neighborhoods Sweltering

By Brad Plumer and Nadja Popovich
Photographs by Brian Palmer Aug. 24, 2020

Stance towards community	0 IGNORE	1 INFORM	2 CONSULT	3 INVOLVE	4 COLLABORATE	5 DEFER TO
Impact	<i>Marginalization</i>	<i>Placation</i>	<i>Tokenization</i>	<i>Voice</i>	<i>Delegated Power</i>	<i>Community Ownership</i>
Community Engagement Goals	Deny access to decision-making processes	Provide the community with relevant information	Gather input from the community	Ensure community needs and assets are integrated into process and inform planning	Ensure community capacity to play a leadership role in implementation of decisions	Foster democratic participation and equity by placing full decision-making in the hands of the community; bridge divide between community and governance
Message to Community	<i>"Your voice, needs, and interests do not matter"</i>	<i>"We will keep you informed"</i>	<i>"We care what you think"</i>	<i>"You are making us think (and therefore act) differently about the issue"</i>	<i>"Your leadership and expertise are critical to how we address the issue"</i>	<i>"It's time to unlock collective power and capacity for transformative solutions"</i>
Activities	Closed-Door Meetings Misinformation Systematic Disenfranchisement Voter Suppression	Fact Sheets Open Houses Presentations Billboards Videos	Public Comment Focus Groups Community Forums Surveys	Community Organizing & Advocacy House Meetings Interactive Workshops Polling Community Forums	MOUs with Community-Based Organizations Community Organizing Citizen Advisory Committees Open Planning Forums with Citizen Polling	Community-Driven Planning Consensus Building Participatory Action Research Participatory Budgeting Cooperatives
Resource Allocation Ratios	100% systems admin	70-90% to systems admin 10-30% to promotions and publicity	60-80% to systems admin 20-40% to consultation activities	50-60% to systems admin 40-50% to community involvement	20-50% to systems admin 50-70% to community partners	80-100% to community partners and community-driven processes that ideally generate new value and resources that can be invested in solutions

Engagement to Ownership Framework

This tool was developed by Rosa González of Facilitating Power, in collaboration with Movement Strategy Center, in part drawing on content from a number of public participation tools, including Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation and the Public Participation Spectrum created by the International Association for Public Participation.

Source:
https://www.usdn.org/uploads/cms/documents/community_engagement_to_ownership_-_tools_and_cases_studies_final.pdf

We're Building the Bridge as We Walk It....



“Moving from a persistent legacy of systematic marginalization to a conscious practice of collaborative governance among community groups and government agencies is not only difficult, it is an emerging field of practice; the path is literally being made by walking.”

Photo from [bridgehunter.com](https://www.bridgehunter.com)

Source: [From Engagement to Ownership](#)

Slide by Natalie Narotzky, 2021

Portland OR - Equity and Climate Planning

I can't tell you how many trees to plant but can tell you where there aren't trees and who should get knowledge on how to care for a tree...Why not talk about what community is concerned about, like housing, transportation, jobs, or a green economy and then ask 'how is this a climate issue?' to breakdown silos?"

instead of a question like "How do we get more people on the bus?" we should instead be asking more probing questions like, "Who can't ride the bus safely, and why?"



Images from Portland 2015 Climate Action Plan

Sources: [FastCompany](#) and [Engagement to Ownership](#)

Providence - Racial and Environmental Justice Committee

- How do you keep warm in the winter? What do you like about that and what would you change?
- How do you keep cool in the summer? What do you like about that and what would you change?
- How do you get around the city? What is good about that and what would you change?
- What in your community keeps you and/or your family healthy? What do you think makes you or your family sick?

“This work is critical, and we’re building the plane as we’re flying it, without a rule or guide book for how to do it. And it should be that way to an extent, because it’s different everywhere based on history and personalities. It’s super complex and dynamic...Whether you’re organizing or governing, we’re trying to create space in the middle, which is foreign in many ways, and that hasn’t happened in Providence, especially because we’re used to being at odds...There’s discomfort in approaching a new way of working together - City Staff REJC Member”



What We Heard

Priorities

- Adequate heat and insulation
- Energy efficient heating
- Improving public transit, specifically buses
- Efficient central air
- Public indoor play facilities, access to clean public water/cooling centers in summers open until late
- Better windows in homes
- Be able to control heat
- Ability to open windows
- **Renewable energy**
- Move away from natural gas
- Improve street cleaning
- Waste Management
- Bike paths

Concerns

- Rodents/roaches
- Trash/Dirt
- Gas Leaks
- Smog
- Contaminated Air - especially in Port area
- Lack of maintenance in subsidized housing
- Water quality concerns, especially lead in schools
- Support for obtaining electric energy/solar panels
- High pollen
- Food access
- More/better park areas
- Highways, transportation causing pollution
- Cars not up to standards
- Poorly paved streets
- Smoke from industrial facilities and other **emissions**
- Highway **emissions**

"There are not enough places for kids to play and be near nature. Even Roger Williams Park is surrounded by highways!"

"Those huge tanks at **the Port** are just scary. They look like they could blow up anytime. Wait, I think something did a few months ago! And then nasty stuff spilled on Allens. **What are they bringing in and out of there anyway? Definitely not benefiting me, just adds to traffic pollution and make me wish I could move.**"

"Every time our community gets cleaned up, white folks want it and start moving us out. ... **We need to make sure we won't get kicked out before we push to make good things happen.**"

"Why are buses in RI so hard to use? Not enough routes and stops. Not on time. **You just need a car around here,** and if you can't afford one it is really difficult to get around."

"Not every room in my house has heat! **Radiators are missing or broken.** Windows are a mess and the outside air come right through the walls. Gotta use space heaters, but can't really afford it. ...

[Summer is] so hot I have to go outside. Can't even open windows in my apartment. **More access to AC would make a big difference for my family."**