

**PLAINFIELD FLOOD RECOVERY PLANNING MEETING**  
**Tuesday, October 1, 2024 @ 11 a.m. to 12:30 pm.**

Attending:

Karen Hatcher (KH)- unavailable  
Michael Zahner (MZ)  
Gary Smith (GS) not available  
Josh Pitts (JP)  
Karl Bissex (KB)  
Michael Billingsley (MB) - unavailable  
Denise Wheeler (DW)  
Arion Thiboumery (AT) – unavailable  
Bram Towbin (BT)

Guests:

Ross Gouin (RG) – State Vtrans – FHWA Liaison  
Joel Perrigo (JPer) – State Vtrans – Mngr. Municipal Assistance Program  
Matthew DiGiovanni, PE (MD) – Federal Eng. & Operations Supervisor  
Larkin Wellborn (LW) – Federal Emergency Coordinator

Primary Purpose of Meeting:

Vtrans & Federal Hwy. officials re: future funding for repairs of Brook Rd. and bridges as a federally designated highway.

RG – Recommended that the Town, State and Feds meet to get all on the same page. State needs info from Town to get grants to be eligible for Fed. funding. Still need info from 2023.

BT – Said 2023 billing information is 95% complete – difficulties in getting mile marker info since everything was washed away.

Using East Hill Rd as an alternate route is creating lots of complaints and issues - steep and winding narrow road and speeding traffic has resulted in an injury to a town highway employee and a flipped dump truck. This is not the best solution.

In 2023, it cost \$320K to repair Brook Rd. – probably doesn't make sense to repair it again. The Town is experiencing a severe cash flow problem including the significant loss of the tax base. It is estimated to cost between \$8-10M to rebuild the Brook Rd. w/ a 10% match from the town – this is not doable w/ current financial resources.

JP – Relocate Brook Rd. further from the water course and out of hazard area – cheapest option.

KB – Brook Rd. has experienced landslides and undercutting of the road. It doesn't make sense to keep repairing the road. What are our best options in terms of design and cost?

RG – Need an engineering study to determine the best options. Offered a pre-approved list of engineers who are available.

MD – Agrees it doesn't make sense to rebuild Brook Rd again.

RG – Will send screen shots of "pins dropped" identifying projects on Brook Rd - some didn't get mapped as areas were not accessible. Last year (2023) there were 4 sites – 11 sites in 2024. No cost estimate for landslide sites. The reason there are federal funds available is because Brook Road is collector road from Route 302 to Route 2 and federally designated.

BT – Gray Rd. & Fowler Rd. are both very steep – residents have been notified that the Town can't safely get a plow truck down and up Gray Rd this winter. Other options need to be explored.

RG – When Vtrans District No. 6 site visit, did they do an analysis of all bridges on Brook Road? If those bridges are found to be structurally sound, they are not eligible for emergency repair even though they might be drastically undersized resulting in major washouts of roadway approaches to the bridges.

MZ – What are "enhancement" options under, slopes, raising road, larger bridges, etc. under FHWA? Ross and Matt - very limited under FHWA ER (Emergency Repairs).


RG – Some enhancements may be eligible for federal aid for bridges w/ 10% town match

LW – The Brook Road must be a Rte. 302 & 2 connector and be Town must maintain the road to be eligible for federal FHWA ER funds.

MD – Eligible for federal funds but not to include ongoing maintenance. There is the option to apply for designation of a new connector route to be eligible for federal funds in the future.

JPer – Vermont statute requires winter maintenance.

JP – Possibility of shifting Brook Rd federal designation to East Hill or another road to serve as an east/west collector.

RG – What is the official town position on repairing Brook Road? In order to qualify for federal funding (100%) the town must do so within the “270-day window.” The deadline for completion of construction is April 6, 2025, or the Town must pay the bill 


KB – The Town cannot decide until more precise costs are known. If it is a \$10-15M project to completely repair and rebuild Brook Road, then it is probably not feasible.

RG – If a portion of Brook Road is to be raised out of the valley above the flood stage as recommended by Josh, then the biggest issue will be obtaining ROW with abutters and landowners without resorting to “eminent domain.” Could be a 10 to 15 year project.

MD – Federal government is not likely to continue to fund rebuilding of Brook Road if there is repeated major flood damage.

JPer – Can do an emergency repair (FHWA ER) while working on a permanent solution(s) to be completed later.

MZ – FEMA (Hazard Mitigation) may fund an in-depth study recommending long term enhancements to mitigate the impacts of repeated flooding in the community. The Town has applied for such a grant through Vermont Emergency Management (VEM). The website indicates the existence of \$90 million for hazard mitigation funding statewide.

RG – Recommends pulling Bridge #21 on Brook Road and replace with green space, riparian buffer, floodplains, buyouts, etc. 

MZ and MD - The Town has asked VEM for exactly that type of grant. (google Vtrans Jeffersonville project for a template on how to approach this situation)

MD – Highly recommends repairing any damage now for 100% funding, figure out how to partially reopen Brook Road with “emergency repair” option within the 270-day window for completion on or before 4/6/2025. Replace box culverts if they are damaged (and other flood related damage) – currently the Town have FAS\* designation and that work will be 100% reimbursable.


JPer – Must hire a consultant and bid project follow the federal procurement process for the ER work.

RG – Town can hire someone off the Vtrans ready roster – they will be a liaison, handle paperwork, etc. and reimbursement is available (RG to send out email after this meeting with more info.)

JP – Will work on a detailed spreadsheet(s) identifying – location, project and documentation.

RG – Brook Rd. up thru Mill St. & Cameron Rd. intersection – Town pays upfront costs w/ 10% match otherwise fully reimbursable. Open the four (4) bridges – stabilize and repair w/n 270 day deadline (4/6/2025) then seek federal funding for more permanent repairs to mitigate long term hazards.

MD – Emergency repair projects must be done w/n 270-day deadline – long term repairs may then also be eligible for federal funding.

RG – Use hazard mitigation grant for Bridge #21 replacement and/or removal 

MZ – The Town has filed a Hazard Mitigation grant request through VEM to be used for design, engineering study and master plan for complete rebuild, etc.

MD – Encourages long term planning for resilience and hazard mitigation.

JP – Need to provide emergency services until buyouts are completed (estimated 2 years). Mill Street Bridge cannot be removed for permanent rebuild until the buyouts can be completed and design studies concluded. During any reconstruction of the Mill Street Bridge, Bridge # 21 will need to remain open for provision of emergency services and to maintain an east/west corridor.


MD – From Brook Rd. to Gray Rd. south to Gray Rd. north to last house – do these first as “emergency repairs,” using 100% FHWA ER funding. Use hazard mitigation grant for RFP for design study of bridges for eventual “enhanced” replacement and/or removal.

MD - Federal “hazard mitigation” money is available to conduct long term studies, design and engineering for bridges and to create a Village Master Plan while concurrent with completion of “emergency repairs,” to create safe travel ways along, at least, portions of Brook Road.

BT – Proceed as if reopening but on a temporary basis – reopen Brook Road. Bridge(s), then look at long term solutions and funding.

RG – Yes, reopen safely w/n 270-day deadline as an emergency repair.

### **Action Steps:**

1. Critical to request funds and complete FHWA ER "emergency repairs" within 270-day window, completion before April 6, 2025;
2. Ross Gouin - Town can hire someone off the Vtrans ready roster – they will be a liaison, handle paperwork, etc. and reimbursement is available (Ross to send out email after this meeting with more info.) 
3. Hire consultant and bid project(s) following the federal procurement process for "emergency repairs."
4. Josh to compile spreadsheet of all project(s).

*\*FAS stands for Federal Acquisition Service, which is part of the General Services Administration (GSA) and is responsible for procuring goods and services for the government.*

Next meeting is Tuesday, October 8 at 10 am.

GS back from vacation Friday, 9/27.  
KH unavailable 9/25 to 10/11  
AT gone first 2 weeks Oct.

**Mission Statement: Identify, explore and secure resources for flood recovery – no dollar left behind.**