

Center Avenue Bridge

Removal of the Center Avenue pedestrian bridge, channel widening, flood benching of areas upstream and downstream of the bridge, and streambank stabilization will allow floodwaters to flow unobstructed downstream to the Waverly Avenue Bridge (replaced in 2024). Property acquisition and relocation of underground utilities may be necessary. A thorough study will be conducted of traffic patterns in Washingtonville to determine if converting Plaza Avenue to a one-way street would facilitate the further widening of the Sheldrake River. The bridge would not be replaced. The Village has applied for grant funding to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation – Resilient Watersheds Grant Program in Summer 2025. We hope to hear back on the grant soon. The budget estimate for this project is \$5,700,000. Project timeline is contingent on funding.

Bridge Removal/Replacement

It has been well established in numerous studies conducted by the Army Corp, through the State DEC Resilient NY Program and the village's contribution to those studies, that the bridges in the community have undersized channel openings that can cause or exacerbate riverine flooding. More detailed modeling of flood mitigation benefit requires a more detailed analysis and that occurs during the design process. Certainly a goal is to advance our proposed bridge projects to that level of detailed modeling and analysis, and that requires the funding to do so. To that end, we aggressively pursue grants. With respect to bridges, our focus areas right now are Tompkins Avenue, Ward Avenue, the Center Avenue Pedestrian Bridge and the Pedestrian Bridge over the Beaver Swamp Brook in Shore Acres.

Stormwater Management Upstream

The village does not control how upstream communities manage their stormwater. An avenue to facilitate coordination of stormwater management, recently revived, is the Long Island Sound Watershed Intermunicipal Council – LISWIC. The group will, moving forward, provide elected officials and senior staff from sound shore communities a forum to share concerns, share ideas and jointly develop solutions. We are all impacted by flooding and there is a recognition that water does not respect municipal boundaries.

Flood Mitigation on Private Property

It has been suggested that there was a way to prioritize, expedite and/or reduce fees paid to the village for permits for work that would make flood prone structures more resilient. That is something that we, as staff, can take back and consider. We are also considering how best to provide the public with education on how to make their own homes more resilient and mitigate flooding on private property. The village is currently reviewing the stormwater code for potential amendment, to regulate how private properties mitigate stormwater flood risk.

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Flood Mitigation Strategy

The cause and effect of flooding in the village is well documented and studied. Those studies all make recommendations and propose alternatives to achieve flood mitigation benefit over the current conditions. The village is investing time, effort and funding towards creating tools that communicate to the public what has been done, what needs to be done and what is being done. To that end the village is working with a consultant to create a map in GIS that can be made publicly available that will map out flood mitigation projects. Each project will be accompanied by a description, cost, funding source and a link to available reference material.

Another planning effort that recently kicked off and the village will be participating in is the scheduled update to the Westchester County Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. That plan covers multiple hazards to which the village is vulnerable, not just flooding. The project is being completed at no cost to the village other than our time. This plan will be another tool for us to use as staff and the Board plot out a long-term strategy and prioritize projects for funding, will make the village a more competitive candidate for project grants and having such a plan in place is a requirement to apply to some federal grants.

Projects get prioritized based on need, cost, benefit and the availability of funding, specifically what grants become available and when. We have discussed in prior meetings the downstream to upstream approach, with exceptions where that makes sense based on the grant opportunity. The village is not simply pursuing a strategy of removing or replacing all the river crossings. Channel widening and streambank stabilization, flood bench construction, removal of debris and shoals, technology upgrades, emergency training and exercises, planning, are also being pursued.

Presentations have been made at public meetings of the Board, at the Flood Mitigation Committee, to neighborhood associations and the Board has scheduled a public hearing on proposed amendment to the stormwater code. Village staff can, in collaboration with the Flood Committee, work to identify how public engagement may be improved and how the FMC may be a forum for that engagement.

With respect to when floods occur, one of the village's funding proposals is to pursue the installation of stream gauges and surveillance cameras to monitor for flooding; maintaining the technology needed to communicate to residents before/during/and after an emergency (new alert and notification platform), maintain a cadre of trained responders – volunteers and employees, and the equipment needed to assist the public. The village has also submitted grant proposals to fund additional emergency planning, emergency response training and to conduct emergency drills of our volunteers and staff.