

Chapter X Hazard Mitigation

The Town of Lyme is committed to protecting its residents from natural disasters to the greatest extent possible. While the Town cannot prevent weather related events, it can try to minimize their impacts on residents.

FEMA requires Towns to have a Hazard Mitigation Plan in order for the Town to receive certain grant monies and to be able to participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. As part of the Hazard Mitigation Plan FEMA recommends that the Town include a Hazard Mitigation chapter in the Master Plan.

Flooding and Storm Water:

According to the Town of Lyme's Hazard Mitigation Plan, the greatest potential for damage is from flooding and storm water runoff. Wetlands and the surrounding areas act as natural buffers by collecting storm water and then slowly releasing it over time. The Town should continue to protect wetlands and the buffers around them.

Shore lands along streams, rivers and ponds can become inundated with storm water runoff. Development within these areas can be damaged by the storm water or restrict the flow causing greater damage elsewhere. Limiting development in these areas will prevent potential property damage and keep these passages open for increased water flow events.

The Town of Lyme has several areas that have been defined by FEMA as having a higher risk of flooding during a 100 year flood event. Due to the risk of inundation, these areas should not be developed. In the areas where development has already occurred, any major renovation or change to the structures should require that steps be taken to flood proof the structure.

Clearing and building on steep slopes can lead to increased velocity of storm water runoff and erosion that can cause the blockage of water ways from silt and debris. Construction on steep slopes should be prohibited to the greatest extent possible.

New driveways should be constructed in a manner that will reduce the possibility of storm water runoff damaging the roads they connect to. Where necessary, the home owner should be required to correctly install properly sized culverts within the curb-cut to ensure proper flow within the road side ditches. The road end of driveways should have a proper grade to divert water away from the road.

The Town should ensure that the Town's storm water drainage system is in good condition and can handle increased storm water flow as has been seen in recent years.

Fire:

Protecting structures with long, difficult access ways from wild fires is challenging and dangerous for firefighters. The Town should restrict the distance at which a structure is located from the road. Where long driveways are required, accommodations should be made to the design that will allow Fire apparatus to pass each other. New major subdivisions should provide onsite water for firefighting in the form of a fire pond with a dry hydrant or in ground cisterns.

New building heights should be limited to those which can be reached with the equipment available to the Lyme Fire Department.

Building setbacks within the village and other high density areas should be maintained to limit the possibility of fire spreading between buildings and to allow the access of fire fighters and their equipment.

Agricultural Soils:

With the unknowns of Global Climate Change, the need to maximally cultivate Lyme's agricultural soils may well increase. These soils should be protected for the benefit of both current and future generations of Lyme residents.

At Risk Roads:

Several of Lyme's roads are at risk for damage from adjacent water ways. The Town should work with Federal and State agencies to try to minimize damage by reducing dramatic changes in water levels, repair existing damaged areas and proactively prevent new damage.

Recommendations:

- The Town Highway Department should undertake a Culvert Inventory to ensure that the Town's culvert system can handle future large storm water events.
- The Town should continue protecting its residents and infrastructure through zoning by limiting development within areas that pose identifiable risks.
- The Planning Board should review current ordinances and regulations with the Fire Chief, the Emergency Management Director and other First Responders to ensure that the Ordinances and Regulations meet the requirements for protecting Lyme's residents to the greatest extent possible.