Planning for Historic/Cultural Resources
Coastal Resiliency in Connecticut

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Agenda

- Introduction and Project Overview
- Historic and Cultural Resources
- Resilience
- What is at Risk?
- Incorporating Historic Resources into Resilience
- Example
- Deliverables to Communities
Program Sponsors

- Funded by the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013 (PL 113-2)
- Department of Interior – National Park Service
- Grant to SHPO
  - Funding limited to Sandy impacted Counties
Project Components

• Modernizing historic inventories ✓
• Serving data to users ✓
• Gap Analysis ✓
• 5 Regional Council of Government Charrettes ✓
• 28 Municipal Technical Assistance Visits and ★ follow on recommendations
• SHPP – Resilience Chapter Update ★
• Best Practice Guidance ★
An Emerging Area of Practice

• With few exceptions, natural hazard resiliency planning has not considered Historic Resources.

• Addressing hazard related issues for Historic Resources has been reactive and institution specific.

• Recognition of the need to incorporate historic resources into planning has increased since Sandy.

• CT will be among the first states to address these planning issues at the statewide level.
What are Historic Resources?

Districts, Buildings, Structures, Sites, and Objects that are important on a local, state, or national level

Historic Properties are cultural resources that are important in:

- American History
- Architecture
- Archaeology
- Engineering
- Culture

Elm Grove Cemetery, Mystic
Holmes House, Stonington
Orange Street Historic District, New Haven
Governing Legislation

• National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 created the NRHP, NHLs and SHPOs, and delegated funding and authority to SHPOs through NPS
• CT was a leader at the state level in heritage conservation, and established the CT Historical Commission in 1955
Resilience
Resilience Defined

- **Resilience** is “the ability of any system (infrastructure, government, business, and resources) to resist, absorb and recover from or successfully adapt to an adversity”

- **Community** Resilience is “the ability of a community to prepare for anticipated hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions.”

- **Coastal** Resilience is the ability to resist, absorb, recover from, or adapt to coastal hazards such as sea level rise, increased flooding, and more frequent storm surges.

Branford Coast During Irene
Image: Branford Eagle
Why Consider Historic Properties in Resiliency?

• A Proactive Approach at the local level will help:
  • Foster Appreciation for Heritage Resources
  • Assess Cultural Resource Data within the Context of Hazards Planning
  • Establish Preservation Priorities
  • Identify Tools & Strategies for Community-Based Preservation
  • Develop Action Plans that consider Historic Resources in Community Planning
  • Position for pre and post-disaster action and funding
What is at Risk?

Of more than 36,000 historic buildings within the four Connecticut coastal counties, more than 3,200 are at risk for flooding!
Hazards Considered

- FEMA 1% Annual Chance Flood
- 2080 Scenario Sea Level Rise

The risk assessment relies on sea level rise projections generated by The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Coastal Management.
Fairfield County Example: FEMA 1% Annual Chance Flood

Fairfield County
Total Number of Historic Structures in FEMA SFHA today = 900
Fairfield County Example: 3 feet of Sea Level Rise

Fairfield County
Total Number of Historic Structures in 3-ft. SLR Inundation Area= 261
SFHA and SLR Exposure

- Fairfield = 8,258 total historic buildings
  - SFHA = 900
  - SLR = 261
- New Haven = 15,603 historic buildings
  - SFHA = 619
  - SLR = 95
- Middlesex = 3,500 historic buildings
  - SFHA = 251
  - SLR = 18
- New London = 8,859 historic buildings
  - SFHA = 1038
  - SLR = 79
Incorporating Historic Resource Resiliency into Planning
Incorporating Resiliency

- **Understand** Resources & Vulnerabilities
- **Plan** for Risk and **Integrate** Planning Documents
- **Educate** stakeholders

- **Implement** Plans
- **Implement** Adaptation Measures
- **Execute** Emergency Operations Protocols

- **Plan** for Climate Change
- **Revisit** changing Historic Resources
- **Update** Planning Documents

- **Execute** Disaster Recovery Protocol
- **Enforce** Design Guidelines & Requirements
- **Communicate & Collaborate** with partners
Gap Analysis - What we reviewed

- Hazard Mitigation Plans
- Plans of Cons. and Dev.
- Coastal Resilience Plans
- NFIP Ordinances / Regulations
- Zoning Regulations
- Historic Preservation Ordinances
- Emergency Operations Plans
Best Practices – POCDs

• Historic resources chapter or element should address hazards
• Hazards chapter or element should address historic resources
• Use hazard data and historic resources point data to describe and quantify what is at risk
• Implementation matrix should include strategies that include historic resources in the context of hazards
Best Practices - POCDs

Recommendations

- Amend zoning and subdivision regulations to allow the Commissions to require archaeological and historic surveys prior to approval.
- Include historic assets and historic districts as critical features that merit protection and/or planning when considering Disaster Mitigation Plans, especially with regards to flooding, storm surge, sea level rise, and coastal erosion.
- Amend regulations to support redevelopment and creative reuse of historic properties while maintaining historic characteristics.
Best Practices – HMPs

• Capability Assessment
  • Describe the community’s understanding of its historical resources
  • Does the municipality designate staff or a commission to plan for these resources?
  • Does that staff or commission interact with those that address natural hazards?

• Critical Facilities
  • Are any critical facilities also historic structures?
  • Are any critical facilities located in historic districts?
Best Practices – HMPs

• Risk Assessment
  • Show or describe locations of historic resources in various hazard zones
  • Are any specific resources known to be at risk?
  • Quantify risk with available attributes
  • Are historic resources more at risk than other resources?
    • For example, would heavy snow be more or less of a concern?
Best Practices – HMPs

• Hazard Mitigation Strategies
  • Add one or more strategies addressing historic resources

• Hazard Mitigation Actions
  • Add one or more specific actions linked directly to risk
• Incorporate improved historic resources data into risk and vulnerability assessment

• Use neighborhood level concept planning for historic districts

• Ensure emergency access to historic properties
Best Practices – Historic Preservation Ordinances

• Utilize and update database of historic resources and rank preservation priorities

• Develop resiliency standards for local historic districts to complement existing standards

• Incorporate other classes of resources (i.e., archaeological, historic landscapes) in revisions to historic district ordinances
Historic resources could be addressed in an “annex,” similar to how all sectors are addressed.

Consider adding a recovery/damage assessment annex if one doesn’t exist.

Point data can be used by responders to understand resources.

The annex may describe how a specific department or individual is responsible for checking on the status of historic resources during and after a disaster.
Example
Downtown Branford
Existing Conditions

Abandon Opening

Flood Gate
Downtown Branford

2080s Daily High Tide gate open

2080s Daily High Tide gate closed
Next Steps

• 28 Municipal Technical Assistance Visits and follow on recommendations
• Best Practice Guidance
• SHPP Resilience Chapter Update
Questions

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