

Zoning and Floodplain | Resilience and Adaptation Update May 2026

Flood resilience and recovery work is a long-term effort. These projects move forward incrementally and require sustained coordination, funding, and community engagement. This is a marathon, not a sprint.

Each project typically advances through three distinct phases, each requiring its own scope, timeline, and funding source. The first phase is scoping, feasibility, or alternatives analysis, where we define the problem and identify potential approaches. The second phase is design and engineering, often advancing to a 30% level to establish costs, constraints, and permitting pathways. The final phase is full design and implementation, where projects are constructed on the ground.

This body of work represents multiple concurrent projects across planning, design, and implementation phases, supported by a range of state and federal funding sources, and coordinated across agencies, consultants, and community partners. These combined efforts are aimed at reducing long-term flood risk, limiting repetitive losses, and stabilizing key housing and commercial areas.

This level of activity reflects a full project pipeline across multiple funding sources and phases. At this time, my capacity for managing additional grant-funded projects has been reached, and prioritization of existing commitments will be necessary as new opportunities arise

This work spans multiple geographic focus areas within the community, including East Hardwick, the Route 14 corridor, the downtown Lamoille River reach, and the Granite Street Historic District.

Project Updates

Municipal Plan Community Survey

The Community Survey for the Municipal Plan Update remains open through June 5. Responses currently represent over 5% of the population, with a goal of reaching at least 10% participation.

Paper copies and survey links will be distributed at Town Meeting on May 19 to help increase participation.

Flood Insurance Workshop A free Flood Insurance workshop will be held on June 8 at Atkins Field at 6 pm, in conjunction with the summer community meal. The workshop is intended to improve understanding of coverage, requirements, and how home insurance can be structured to assist.

FEMA Floodplain Map Updates

New draft working maps for the Federal Emergency Management Agency floodplains have been released and will be reviewed on May 13.

Once the draft maps are available, information will be provided directly to property owners who may be impacted, including targeted notifications and opportunities for property owners to ask questions as the maps move through the final process.

Preliminary indications show that a greater portion of the Granite Street Historic District and the downtown area may be included within the mapped floodplain, while some properties outside of the village have been adjusted and removed. This will require careful communication and coordination.

Buyout Program

The most current buyout list is available in Select Board folders and on the Town website.

In East Hardwick, two properties funded through FRCF are scheduled to close on May 22. Following closing, the Town will issue an RFP for demolition services and complete asbestos testing. A neighborhood survey regarding next steps will be distributed shortly, and an initial outreach note has already been sent to maintain communication with that area.

The FEMA pipeline has reopened. The first two properties on Route 15 West have been awarded funding and sent to appraisal. These parcels are anticipated to be transferred to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department following acquisition.

One property, 24 Charlevoix, has been withdrawn from the program.

Demolition and Site Progress

65 Brush Street is scheduled for demolition in June.

Funding for environmental assessment and cleanup of buyout sites has been secured through Two Rivers RPC, allowing the Town to ensure that acquired properties do not have outstanding environmental concerns.

Granite Street Flood Resilience Planning

SLR International has been working with the Granite Street Historic District to develop site-specific flood resilience strategies based on hydraulic modeling and recent flood impacts.

They will present their findings to the community in early summer (2026), in conjunction with a community meal. This session is intended to ground-truth concepts with property owners, incorporate local knowledge, and provide an opportunity for questions and feedback before advancing recommendations.

Eleven properties in the district have requested participation in the State-funded utility elevation program through the State of Vermont CRDMF. These projects focus on elevating

critical building systems above flood levels and are an important step in retaining housing and maintaining building viability.

Route 14 Floodplain Mitigation Planning

The Town has invited the Caledonia County Natural Resources Conservation District to partner on two Town-owned parcels along Route 14.

They are pursuing Clean Water funding to support early-stage planning and feasibility work for floodplain mitigation. The Town will assist with community outreach in the surrounding neighborhood, including direct engagement with adjacent property owners and early opportunities for input as concepts are developed.

CDBG-DR Downtown Flood Mitigation Planning

The Town received six strong submissions in response to the CDBG-DR planning RFP and anticipates Select Board action to award the contract.

This project will focus on the Lamoille River corridor from Hay's garage to the Cottage Street Bridge, an area that has experienced bank instability, channel adjustment, and repeated flood impacts. The work will evaluate structural and nature-based mitigation strategies and identify feasible, fundable projects in a phased approach.

Following contract award, work is anticipated to begin in late May, with initial community involvement expected later this summer.

CDBG-DR Floodplain Restoration

The Town is advancing its CDBG-DR implementation project focused on restoring the Lamoille River floodplain near the confluence with Cooper Brook.

This work is intended to reconnect the river to its floodplain, reduce downstream flood risk, and improve overall river function. It will move through environmental review, permitting, and final design and complements ongoing work in the downtown corridor and Cooper Brook watershed.

Next steps include completion of environmental review and advancement into final design and construction.

NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program

Separately, the Town is working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program to address site-specific erosion and bank instability.

This includes work near Buffalo Mountain Market, a private residence along Cooper Brook, and the buyout property at 41 Brush Street. The engineering designs have been completed and are currently under review by NRCS. Pending approval, the Town anticipates moving forward with an RFP to hire the contractor for the installations.

Watershed and Community Initiatives

Cooper Brook Cleanup

The Cooper Brook cleanup brought together 47 volunteers and resulted in the removal of 175 tires from the brook. The effort was supported in part by the Greensboro Association

Beaver Resilience Talk

The recent beaver talk attracted 37 attendees. A key takeaway was the value of proactive culvert design and management to reduce long-term maintenance costs and flood impacts.

Riparian Planting

Riparian planting in the Fisher's Folly area was completed by the Caledonia County NRCD and Streamwise, with Town coordination to ensure compatibility with future bridge work. 500 trees were planted on the property.

Watershed Forum

The Lamoille River Watershed Forum will be held on September 9, 16, and 23 in the evening at the Jeudevine Memorial Library. Topics will include landslides, wetlands, and sediment, with a focus on improving understanding of how water moves through the landscape.

Ongoing Coverage

Ongoing coverage and discussion continue through the Hardwick Gazette in a newly branded section: "From the Watershed."