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Craftsbury's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan - In Brief!

The purpose of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) is to assist Craftsbury in identifying hazards facing the town and to identify mitigation strategies to begin reducing our risks, as it is less costly to reduce vulnerability to disasters than to repeatedly repair damage. Federal and state regulations require all towns to undertake Hazard Mitigation planning to qualify for various disaster recovery-related funding streams, and to qualify for higher level of state reimbursement for disaster damages.

Hazard mitigation strategies alter a hazard by eliminating or reducing the frequency of occurrence; avert a hazard by redirecting the impact by means of a structure or land treatment; adapt to a hazard by modifying structures or standards; avoid a hazard by stopping or limiting development; or reducing a potential impact through education and outreach, all with an enhanced emphasis on community resilience. (A list of specific hazard mitigation examples can be viewed in the opening statement of the LHMP.) Our plan references, when relevant, tools and resources that can be used to enhance mitigation strategies.

The Craftsbury Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP), originally crafted in 2005 and updated through an intensive effort in 2022, has been formally approved by FEMA and the State of Vermont and is valid **October 20, 2022 through October 19, 2027**. The Selectboard-appointed working group responsible for overseeing the Plan update represented a cross section of local stakeholders with expertise essential to the development of the plan. Collectively, this group possessed a first-hand knowledge of natural hazards and how they affect the community. Committee members were also able to develop, evaluate, and prioritize mitigation actions that will counteract the effects of these hazards. The group consisted of two members of the Craftsbury Planning Commission (including the flood plain manager), two members of Craftsbury Neighbor to Neighbor committee (the Town designee for spearheading citizen wellbeing efforts in times of distress), a member of Craftsbury Conservation Committee, and a member of the Town Roads and Fire departments. (See p. 6 of LHMP.)

To stay abreast of progress and maximize opportunities to increase community resiliency, the LHMP calls for an annual interim review in tandem with the required annual May 1 update of the Town's Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP), a guidebook to be used in the early stages of disaster response. In this way the Town can look holistically at its abilities for Response, Recovery, and Resiliency in the face of adversity, and encourage collaboration between the multiple Town groups and assets that play a role in emergency management.

The annual interim review will be performed by the same or similar group in tandem with the Town officials charged with updating the LEMP. During this review, the LHMP working group will:

- reach out to entities responsible for mitigation/resiliency strategies outlined in the LHMP to check progress and any needs;
- bring those notes to the table with LEMP leadership;
- discuss whether any shifts in current strategies are advisable or any new strategies could/should be undertaken;

- update timeframes for strategy completions in accordance with the SOV recommendations and note interim progress of strategies;
- brief the Selectboard on strategy progress/updates.

The annual interim review is not submitted to the State, as the cumulative work will be reviewed during the 5-year formal LHMP update and renewal to take place in 2027.

It is important to note that the LHMP working group does not direct or conduct the work of the community; its role is to look for, support, and coalesce information about essential response and resiliency work occurring in our community. It is also a forum for watchfulness/discussion of new areas in which we might benefit from additional strategies, such as homelessness or other vulnerabilities.

Questions and suggestions are welcome – these efforts are here for all of us!