

HARRISON ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

Town/Village of Harrison
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Michael J. Amodeo, P.E., CFM
Town Engineer



To: Supervisor Belmont and Members of the Town Board

From: Michael J. Amodeo, P.E., CFM, Town Engineer

Date: October 7, 2021

Re: **Flood Information & Recommendations**

The last couple of decades have brought Harrison several sizable rainfall events which produced significant, and now, historic flooding.

This includes two storms in 2007, one in 2011, and various other smaller-scale intense rainfall events. For perspective, the last comparable storm before the turn of the century was in 1972.

Throughout these more recent experiences we have tried to document as many observations as possible throughout Town; performing many resident interviews, damage inspections, and flood elevation assessments.

We have also previously teamed with flood consultants to assess flooding issues in numerous areas of town; along with vetting any practical solutions.

As a Certified Flood Plain Manager for more than 10 years, our department has helped keep the town enrolled in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), helped adopt a flood protection chapter of town code, and has also been an active member of FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) since 2014.

We have also spearheaded the establishment and maintenance of a Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) for the town, in which flooding is listed as the town's primary hazard.

During the last Town Board meeting, residents from the Trails and West St areas spoke out about the trauma they experienced, expressing various concerns stemming from the most recent flood event, which included (but was not limited to) the following:

- Communication between Town and residents regarding flood matters and storms
- Storm and Flood Warning system
- Infrastructure improvements to reduce flood impacts
- Formation of a Flood Committee

In order to assist the Board in forming a response to the affected community and developing a path forward, I offer the following recommendations for consideration.

1. Adoption of Town Flood Zone Mapping

Currently, the Town utilizes the 2007 FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM's) to delineate areas of flood hazard. These maps function as guidelines for insurance companies to handle flood related policies. However, not all areas prone to flooding were studied and depicted on these maps.

It is recommended to form an official town flood map showing all known areas of flooding, and extend the requirements of Town Code Chapter 146 "Flood Damage Prevention" to these areas.

2. Modification to Town Code Chapter 146 "Flood Damage Prevention"

Increase the protection requirements of this chapter by altering the definition of "Base Flood" from 100-year storm to 500-year storm. This will better reflect the results observed in the previous flood.

3. Modification to Town Code Chapter 146 "Flood Damage Prevention"

Prohibit large-scale, multi-family, dense-residential buildings within the Base Flood Zones

4. Establishment of a Town Flood Damage Prevention Committee

The formation of a Flood Committee consisting of Town officials and community members would provide a working forum that could discuss various flooding matters and help create critical improvements to the following areas:

- Community outreach and education
- Flood Warning & Response System
- Code requirements / modifications
- Mitigation Project Assessment Recommendations

While in most cases the Town cannot prevent the floods from occurring, we believe there are actions that can be taken to better prepare the community and help reduce impacts.