



# Middletown, RI Climate Resiliency Planning & Financing Strategy

## *Executive Summary*

Produced by the  
Southeast New England Program (SNEP) Network

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## PART I: INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

**Background.** This SNEP Network community assistance project was designed to provide a suite of actions that will advance one or more of Middletown's climate resilience goals based on hazards and assets identified during the process. These goals include: 1) reducing flooding frequency, severity, and duration on flood prone roadways; 2) improving access to and responsiveness of Emergency Services during extreme weather events; 3) reducing and preventing stormwater/wastewater discharge into streets and vulnerable coastal areas caused by flooding of wastewater pump stations; 4) improving the overall quality of flood prone and impaired waterbodies; 5) protecting the economic vitality of important waterfront properties, and 6) protecting and improving the health and well-being of Town residents, employees, and visitors.

**Deliverables.** Assistance provided to the Town resulted in four key deliverables:

- 1) A facilitated process to **refine and identify highest priority capital project needs.**
- 2) Consultant services, provided by the SNEP Network, to provide **order of magnitude cost estimates for highest priority projects.**
- 3) Technical support to enhance collaboration on Aquidneck Island through an **Aquidneck Island Regional Climate Resilience Leadership Exchange.**
- 4) **Recommendations for sustainable funding, financing, and investment** in climate resilience capital projects.

The findings and recommendations of this year-long technical assistance project have been compiled in this Climate Resiliency Planning and Financing Strategy.

**Deliverable 1: Resilience Capital Improvement Plan (RCIP).** Creating the Resilience Capital Improvement Plan (RCIP) consisted of identifying hazards, assets, and actions, as well as the prioritization of those actions. Highest priority hazards included: 1) point and nonpoint source (NPS) pollution; 2) flooding; and 3) severe weather. These hazards informed the asset prioritization, in which flood prone roads, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, flood prone and impaired waterbodies, beaches, and the Atlantic Beach District were identified as the highest priority asset categories. Highest priority assets within these larger categories included Wave Avenue and Paradise Avenue (Flood Prone Roads), Paradise Avenue and Coddington Highway Pump Stations (Wastewater Infrastructure), and Maidford River, Bailey Brook, and Paradise Brook (Flood Prone and Impaired Waterbodies). The RCIP includes projects for which the Town of Middletown is the responsible entity. The projects prioritized for inclusion in the RCIP are those that contribute to increasing Middletown's ability to meet one or more of their resilience goals and have not yet secured funding. Additional consideration was given to projects that address goals relating to the highest priority hazards and assets. **The RCIP is linked as an appendix to this report.**

**Deliverable 2: Cost Estimates.** As agreed upon in the project Memorandum of Agreement, the SNEP Network provided consultant services, free of charge, to the Town to produce cost estimates for several of the higher priority items that emerged from the RCIP prioritization process. These cost estimates include two (2) capital infrastructure projects and one (1) bundled programmatic project encompassing scoping and cost estimating for five interrelated projects. The final output for the Cost Estimates deliverable is a report from Fuss and O'Neill detailing the cost of each of the selected projects. The full report is available **here.**

**Deliverable 3: Aquidneck Island Climate Resilience Leadership Exchange.** The Aquidneck Island Regional Climate Resilience Leadership Exchange was a three-part workshop series cohosted by the SNEP Network partners, the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank, and the three island municipalities. The Exchange sought to leverage opportunities for collaboration on Aquidneck Island by bringing together local experts, municipal and state leadership, and other stakeholders to advance climate resilience across the Island. The Exchange’s workshops each focused on a different topic: 1) Stormwater and Water Resources (April); 2) Emergency Management and Preparedness (May); and 3) Transportation (June). The primary outcome of the Leadership Exchange was restarting important conversations on island-wide resilience topics, resulting in an informal agreement between the municipalities and Naval Station Newport (NAVSTA Newport) to coordinate regional resilience efforts. For more detailed information regarding the Aquidneck Island Climate Resilience Leadership Exchange, please refer to the [attached memorandum](#).

**Deliverable 4: Sustainable Funding and Financing Recommendations.** The Project Team has provided Middletown leaders with options to make phased changes to existing financing processes. To that end, we provide five specific recommendations within three phases (“tiers”) designed to progressively expand the Town’s capacity to implement and finance projects within the RCIP. Recommendations include the following:

**Tier 1: Foundational**

- 1a) Integrate the RCIP into the Town’s broader infrastructure and capital funding priorities and processes.
- 1b) Create a cross-departmental RCIP implementation strategy.

**Tier 2: Expanded Implementation**

- 2a) Leverage the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank’s Aquidneck Island Regional Resilience Coordinator.
- 2b) Expand and leverage existing grant funding opportunities.

**Tier 3: Sustained Funding and Financing**

- 3a) Develop an implementation plan for establishing a dedicated department and/or organization to guide and implement environmental infrastructure and resilience investments.

**Conclusion.** Through the completion of this technical assistance project, leadership for the Town of Middletown have demonstrated their commitment to addressing the municipality’s climate challenges. With a strong foundation of resilience actions identified, Middletown is well-positioned to take the next steps to ensure its resilience vision and goals—as reflected in the RCIP—are cost-effective, efficient, and successfully implemented.



*This report was produced by the dedicated team at [Throwe Environmental, LLC](#) in the company’s role as a core partner within the SNEP Network. Throwe Environmental is committed to developing climate resilience, environmental finance, and policy and governance solutions for its public, private, and nonprofit clients. As a SNEP Network partner organization, Throwe Environmental focuses on financing, training, and leadership development. Throwe Environmental is based in Bristol, RI and helps communities nationwide address their climate challenges.*