



Summary - Sustainable and Resilient Communities Work Group Meeting May 14, 2024 1:00-3:00 pm

Attendees:

Sara Powell
Elizabeth Hornstein
Sarah Schechter
Deb Visco Abibou
Alexa Fournier
Anthony Allen
Chris Eagler
Esther Nelson
Jennifer Street

Kathleen Fallon
Kathy Bunting-Howarth
Kris Masterson
Kristen Laccetti
Lillit Genovesi
Marty Garrell
Nancy Seligson
Nicole Govert
Owen Placido

Rebecca Shuford
Samarra Scantleberry
Sarah Watson
Shahela Begum
Sylvain DeGuise
Victoria O'Neill

1:00 PM Welcome and Introductions – Becky Shuford

- Requested any feedback on [SRCWG Meeting 2.13.2024 Summary.pdf](#)
- Management Committee approved to move forward the hiring of a 6th SRC EP for NYC; funding also approved to support USGS Outreach for Compound Flood Risk Modeling work
- SRCs shared feedback from the [Zoom “exit form”](#) from last meeting
 - We received 9 responses
 - All would like to continue involvement w/ SRC
 - Suggestions for additional partners: CT city reps (resilience integration needed)
 - How satisfied are you with the format of these meetings? Average of 4.8 (all 4's and 5's!)
 - Any suggestions for ways to make these meetings more engaging/useful to you?
 - Like the opportunity to share feedback in the breakout rooms
 - Prefer having some content to respond to
 - Like hearing from other WG members
 - Other feedback
 - Idea to invite someone from outside LISS area to share lessons learned or case studies (will consider where to fit this in - great idea to expand, esp for annual workshop)

1:10 PM Recap of 2024 Funding Workshops – Deb Visco Abibou

- The 4 workshops in February/March attracted over 200 attendees



- Westchester had a slightly different format as it was organized with Assemblyman Steve Otis
- Participants included state and other funding orgs, municipal officials, local nonprofits, regional planning orgs, conservation orgs, and academic institutions
- Elements included:
 - Lightning talks featured funding opportunities
 - Awardee panels where participants could hear from others who have been successful with grants they are interested in
 - Roundtables to interact directly with funders to explore ideas and get advice on improving applications
- Participants appreciated networking and collaboration. Funders also appreciated learning more about other programs and expressed interest in more coordination like this.
- Consider offering this type of workshop at strategic times throughout the year tied to annual funding opportunities; include federal opportunities
 - Feedback from Sarah Watson: these were really well done, they are still getting helpful feedback. It helped to demystify the whole process to people, and she would encourage us to hold these as often as possible.
 - Anthony echoed Sarah's comments: the recent awardee panel seemed to be really valuable. Western CT panel in particular was really great - it was very diverse and offered a great range of perspectives.

1:20 PM

Update: Long Island Sound Resilience Opportunities

- [LIS Resilience Grant Writing Assistance](#) Program - Elizabeth Hornstein
 - Reminder - program was launched in Fall of 2022, then the second round began in 2023. \$500K allocated to this program. Goal is to address capacity barriers of small municipalities or nonprofits so that we can advance more sustainable and resilient projects. Applicants need to select a contractor and target grant(s) and projects need to fit within LISS goals.
 - In FY22 we had a total of 26 applications, awarded 21, only 16 awards accepted (some decided not to proceed, others weren't able to get PO in place in time before grant deadline).



- Note that we didn't have any applications from Westchester, but many of these communities applied to PSP program so we might expect more GWA apps in the future.
- Of 16 that were awarded and accepted, 3 were successful, 12 were unsuccessful, 1 TBD; success rate 25% [correction: 20%] is actually in alignment with typical grant success rates. Some groups will also reapply and still could get funded.
- FY23 - 10 applications so far, 6 awarded, 3 declined, 1 needing further clarification; not sure why we received less applications for LISFF this year, could have to do with higher match; hopefully people will apply for upcoming state opportunities; 1 was just awarded their grant from LISCF.
 - Sarah Watson: Asked if we could share the names of entities we have awarded assistance to.
 - Elizabeth responded that we could follow up.
- Planning to get further information from successful awardees.
 - Anthony (from chat): RE: Futures Fund applications, I absolutely think the higher match is part of it -- that's what I was going to say on our call yesterday. The grants that have been awarded to folks who have gone through the GWA program have been in the \$250K range -- and there is a big difference between \$62.5K and \$125K in match, particularly for smaller groups who may be less familiar with pulling grant applications together or meeting match requirements.
- [LIS Resilience Planning Support Program](#) RFEI & RFQ - Elizabeth Hornstein & Sarah Schechter
 - Overview: Last fall in 2023 we launched the new Planning Support Program because we recognized that some groups weren't ready for grants yet; allocated ~\$200K per region; intended for scoping and planning of projects.
 - Expressions of Interest were due in Dec and moved forward candidate projects in Feb/Mar; Put out RFQ to consultants in Feb/Mar; working on finalizing awards and plan to start projects this summer



- Had 28 total applications, 18 moved forward as candidate projects - 13 in NY, 5 in CT
- In CT - 6 consultants submitted bids; one project didn't receive any bids; had 3 SRCs review; working with UConn Purchasing to establish POs now
 - 1 - Alliance for Mystic Watershed - Climate Vulnerability Assessment
 - 2 - Groton Long Point Assoc - Conceptual Designs
 - 3 - SWCD - Norwalk River Watershed-Based Plan update; Did not receive any bids; Considering using remaining funds to fund this
 - 4 - Essex, Deep River, Chester - Climate Vulnerability Assessment & Pilot Project Scoping
 - 5 - Town of Madison - Climate Resilience Plan
- In NY - types of projects included climate vulnerability assessments/adaptation plans, conceptual designs, and flood mitigation.
 - Selected 11 projects to fund, pending final review by Cornell, would total ~\$750K
 - Haven't sent out award letters yet, but will share soon

- 1:40 PM LISS CCMP Revision; Updates & Brainstorming Activity - Sara Powell
- Reviewed revision timeline - the SRC workgroup helped provide initial ideas to kick off process; progress of writing teams has been shared with MC
 - We have cued up meetings in June and July to develop Actions under each SRC Objective.
 - Public engagement meetings
 - New Haven happened last week
 - Virtual over weekend
 - Another virtual meeting is today
 - Upcoming in-person dates are May 22 on Long Island and May 28 in Queens
 - Reviewed CCMP organization structure changes
 - 4 Writing Teams working on each Goal
 - Shared current SRC Goal Statement and Objectives
 - Have developed 3 Objectives; incorporated SMARTIE considerations for each; each has a sentence and we've developed metrics including who would track them



- 1. Informed Decision-Makers - includes tracking participation in trainings
- 2. Community-Driven Resilience Planning - want to keep track of plans being developed
- 3. Resilience Project Implementation - want to track initiatives completed as well as in progress recognizing that many take years to develop
- Today's breakout rooms will focus on Actions
 - There are currently 32 SRC IAs
 - Goal for revision to reduce total, condense down and make broader that can be more easily understood by the public
 - Want to develop 3-5 Actions for each Objective
 - Think about how people can align with actions when applying for futures fund, etc.
 - For context, we briefly reviewed Implementation Actions from current CCMP that are cited in the SRC Work Plan.
 - Vicky asked if we had a sense of what the turnout had been for the engagement sessions.
 - Sara P. responded that 50+ people were registered for this afternoon.
 - Deb added that there were 10-15 in the afternoon session and <10 in the evening session in New Haven.
 - Lili (chat): I think we had about 6 on Saturday
- Breakout Rooms to brainstorm the Actions (25 min)
 - [Link to Jamboards](#)
 - What general types of Actions should be included under each Objective?
 - What is missing?
- Report Back from Breakout Groups:
 - Objective 1
 - Could make sense to only have one Action for this objective that focuses on developing, delivering, and/or facilitating training programs (or more generally, resources).
 - Trainings/resources should be relevant and responsive to community needs, aligned with advancing sustainability and resilience
 - No way to develop an Action to cover each topic areas, and priorities may change, so keeping it broad might best help serve this purpose.



- Discussed adding in components to count for credit and encouraging regional coordination.
- Objective 2
 - Strong interest in regional planning options and focusing on partnerships (between towns/villages, but also on a higher level with COGs and regional orgs.
 - Focus on community engagement to help inform decision-making
 - Consider how to move past the planning phase and work toward implementation and sustainability
 - In CT can use required POCDs to pinpoint actions
 - Partnerships could be valuable (COGS, CIRCA, NY Climate Smart Communities, etc.)
- Objective 3
 - People liked broad action buckets
 - Discussed how to track and communicate progress - could create a dashboard
 - How to evaluate effectiveness of various nature-based solutions so that we can learn how to adapt and refine them
 - Discussed how to coordinate with state partners that exist to leverage SRC work and get other orgs to provide assistance to other parts of the watershed beyond SRC's capacity

2:30 PM

LIS Resilience Resource Hub Updates – Deb Visco Abibou

- Resource Hub was launched at the end of February. It is currently getting monthly maintenance and support from the developers and SRCs are updating content on a weekly basis.
- Shared ongoing promotion efforts
 - Includes a physical version of the Resilience Planning Guide and an SRC postcard that will have QR codes.
- Shared Google Analytics insights
 - Have had a little over 300 users since the analytics were set up in April. Most people are engaging with the homepage and the Funding Database. We can look to see if engagement matches up with website usage.
- Remind WG members that we can give demonstrations



- Vicky asked if we made a tutorial video & suggested posting it to the LISS website if so.
- Sylvain asked what may have caused the use increase in early May and if we are planning additional efforts to continue to draw attention to it.
- Deb responded that this could have been in response to newsletters.
- Discussed how we could now check regularly on website usage after events/promotions.

2:40 PM

Other Updates from the Work Group – Open to all

- Kris Masterson, USGS - Phase I - Risk Map over entire area and individual drivers as well as effects of compounding
 - Wrapping up documentation and reporting for completed analyses for each flood risk driver;
 - 4 journal articles/reports to be completed; release planned for mid-June; clearing w/ USGS review so that mapper can go live
 - Liv and Kris have been in Port Jefferson this week to tour and evaluate flood concerns in the Village as part of Phase II work to develop process-based models
 - Workshopping and planning analyses over the summer.
 - Marty Garrell: Asked if users will be able to look at the end product/map and see what the risk looks like for their communities and what the timeline for the risk is
 - Kris: In mapper you will be able to put in an address to reach a grid cell of 900m x 900m; will see a representation of potential flood risk from rain events, coastal events, and shallow groundwater emergence. Risk categories will be assigned for flood drivers (0-5) and then overtop of this there is an analysis to indicate whether there is a probability of compound risk based on past occurrences.
 - Sea level rise scenarios are factored into coastal and groundwater risk.
- Nicole Gover - CIRCA recently completed 7 projects in Southwestern CT for Resilient Connecticut 1.0 and final reports are on the website. They are kicking off 5 more projects in Eastern CT for Resilient Connecticut 2.0.
 - Flooding along Yantic River - Norwich, Bozrah, and Franklin
 - Downtown Portland - flooding of critical facilities (and heat)



- Mystic - coastal flooding
- East Haddam - flooding along Sucker Brook impacting Goodspeed
- Jewett City - flooding impacting condominiums
- Projects will be about a year long; have hired consultants who will provide concept designs and benefit/cost analyses and a final report that the towns can use to apply for federal funding for implementation

- Shahela - LISCIF Press Release - Thursday is in Bridgeport and Friday is in the Bronx (see chat for details).
- Noted Marcy Balint's retirement from DEEP as of June 1st

2:50 PM Wrap up and Next Steps – Sylvain DeGuise

- 2024 SRC WG meetings: 08/13/2024 & 11/12/2024

2:55 PM Adjourn