


# **Evaluating and Planning for Resilient Rural Dirt Roads in Blandford, Chester, & Middlefield**



**Blandford Listening Session – Council on Aging  
April 14, 2023**



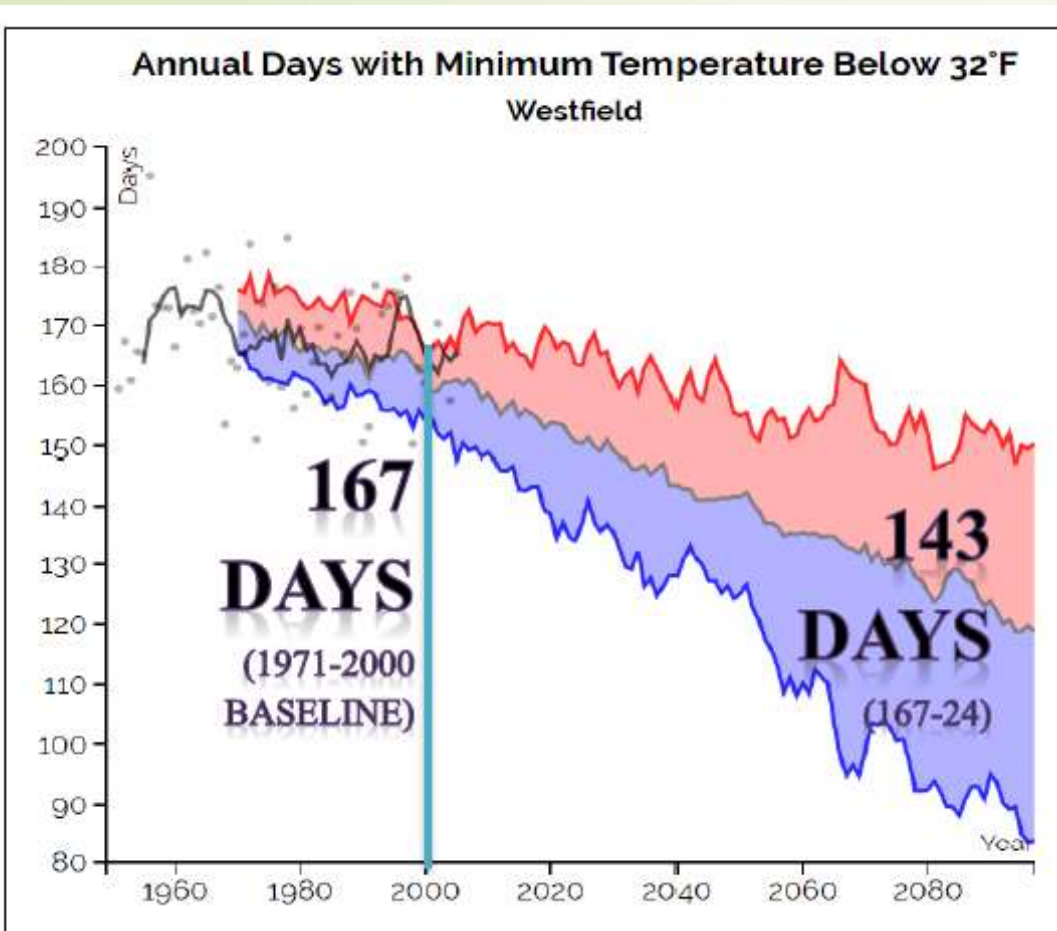
## Why focus on dirt roads?

- Network is critical to public safety, emergency evacuation, and as routes to schools and jobs
- Important part of rural character
- Impacts to local waterways with wash of road material into high quality, cold-water streams and rivers



## Why focus on dirt roads? (cont'd)

- Maintenance costs represent a large percentage of municipal expenditures based on care needed for roadway surfaces
- Climate change trends are making it all the more difficult

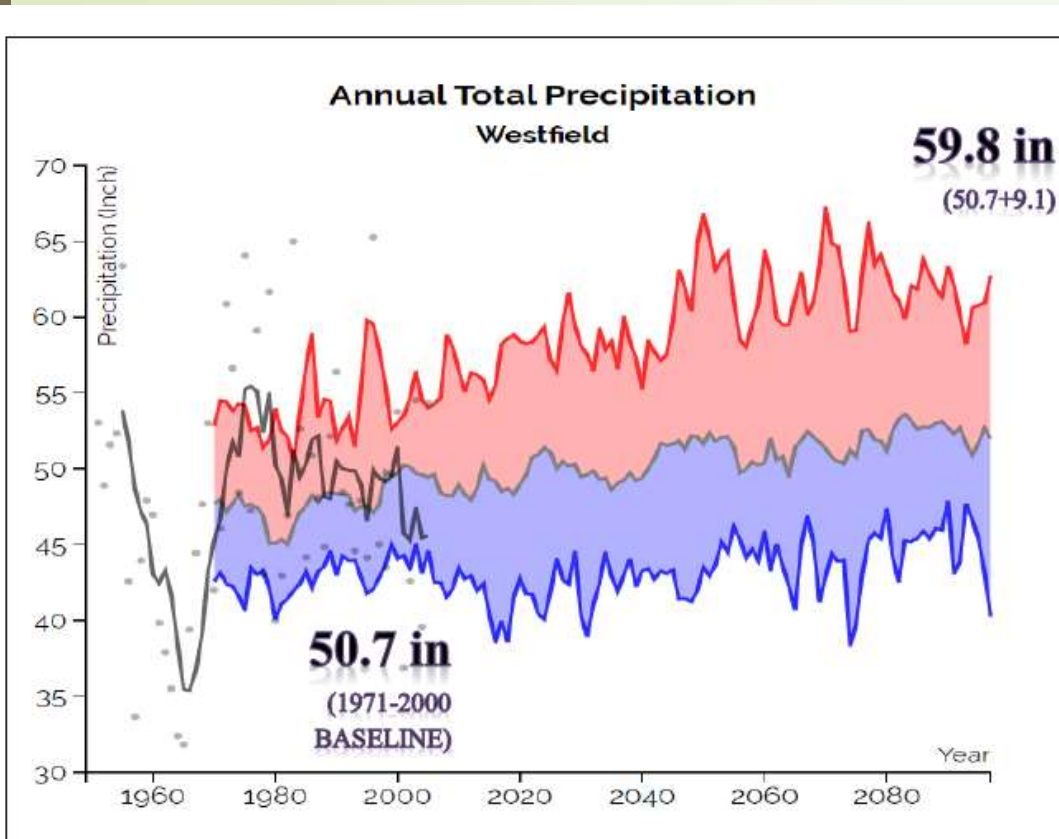


Source: Resilient MA – spring 2022

- Winters are getting warmer
- Number of days below freezing will decrease by as much as 24 days on average annually by 2090

Implications for dirt roads:

More freezing and thawing of roads, and a longer mud season



Source: Resilient MA – spring 2022

- Average annual precipitation expected to increase up to 9.1 inches by 2090
- Frequency of intense rainfall also increasing
- Days with 1 or more inches of rain could increase by up to 5 days per year by 2090

Likely implications for dirt roads:

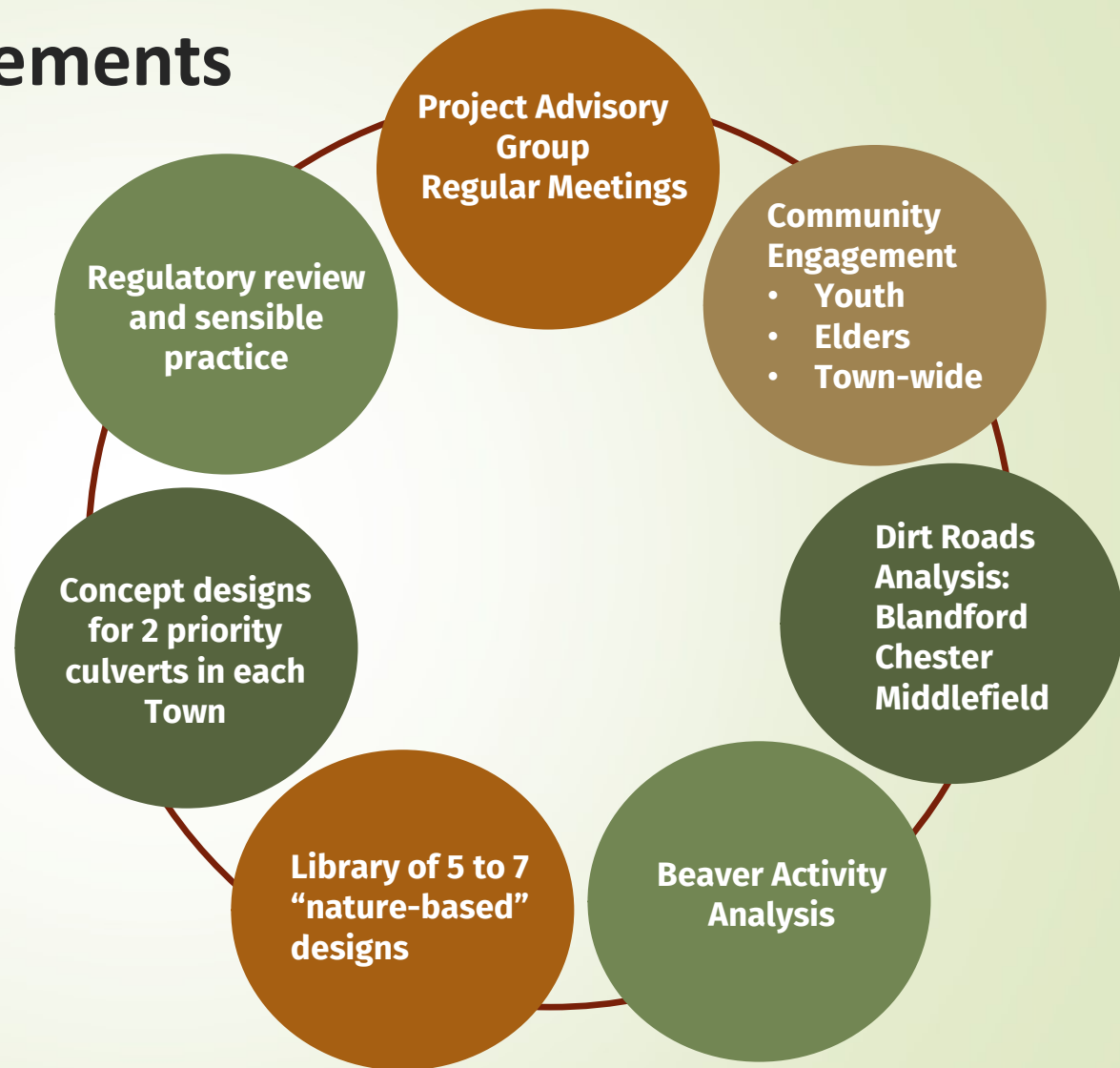
Stormflows moving in larger volumes and higher velocities, with increased erosion and localized flooding



## **MVP Action Grant - Chester (including Blandford and Middlefield)**

- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant of \$317,550 from MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
- Towns provide 10% match, both in-kind and cash
- Project has 2-year time frame (through June 30, 2024)

# Major project elements





## Timeline for analysis

### YEAR 1 (by June 30, 2023)

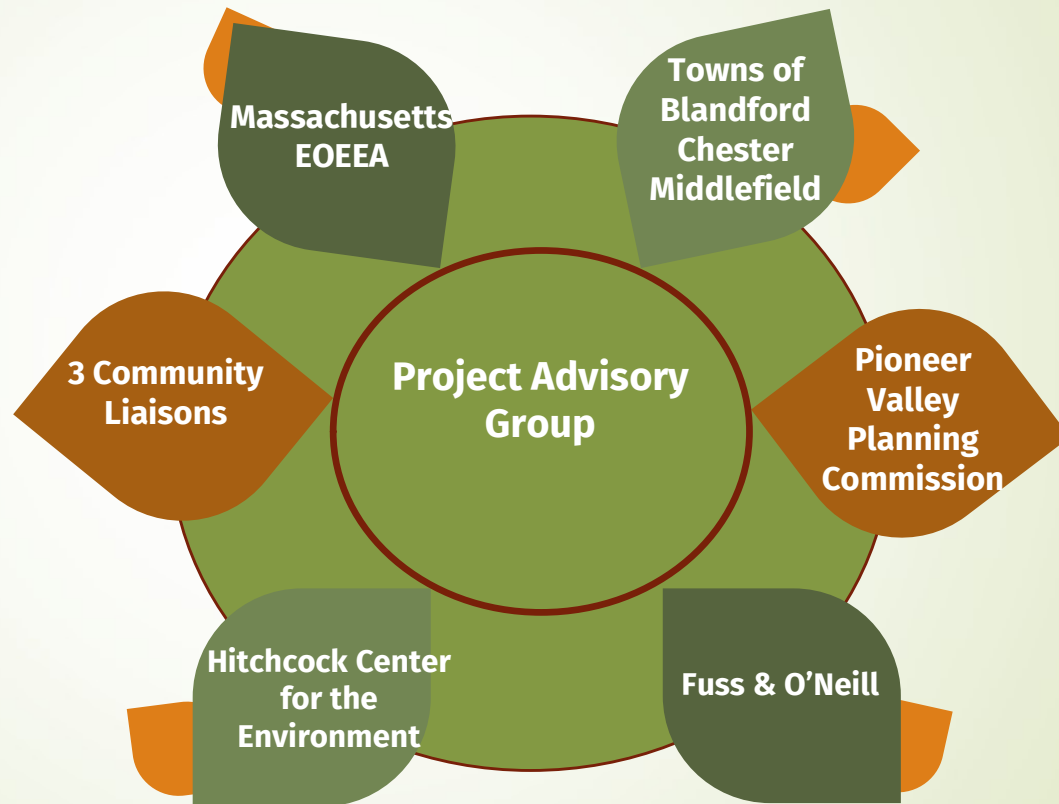
- Analysis of dirt roads - Blandford and Middlefield
- Analysis of beaver activity - Chester

### YEAR 2 (by June 30, 2024)

- Analysis of dirt roads - Chester
- Analysis of beaver activity - Blandford and Middlefield



## Project partners



# Builds from earlier MVP projects

## RURAL DIRT ROAD ASSESSMENT & RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT

June 2021

SLOW  
25 MPH

SANDISFIELD  
MASSACHUSETTS



SHEFFIELD  
MASSACHUSETTS



New Marlborough  
MASSACHUSETTS

BSC GROUP



## HUNTINGTON UNPAVED ROADS REPORT

Evaluation and Forecast of Roadway Conditions and Maintenance Requirements

June 2022



prepared by the  
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission



## Beaver Assessment Technical Memorandum

Town-Wide Road Stream Crossing  
Assessment and Climate Change Adaptation Plan  
TOWN OF BELCHERTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS



prepared by  
FUSS & O'NEILL

JUNE 2019



## Outcomes

- On-line mapping and ranking tools that demonstrates where to invest
- Design elements, recommendations that enable next steps fixes
- Recommended regulatory controls to avert additional problems





Are there any clarifying questions  
on material presented?




# Our questions for you!

*Responses to be noted on maps*

- Which dirt roads are most important to you and why?
- Where have you encountered specific problems?
- How would you describe those problems (*e.g.*, large potholes, flooding, wash out)?
- Are there locations where you see beaver activity?

# Thank you!



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