

Charlestown Climate Resiliency Commission

4/10/25 Regular Meeting



- 1) **Call to Order:** 5:04pm (D. Prescott)
- 2) **Roll Call:** D. Prescott, S. Racine, M. Viola, S. Frattini, C. Beasley, C. Fox, D. Carney
- 3) **Approval of Minutes:** Motion to approve 3/13/25 minutes by M. Viola, 2nd by C. Beasley, approved by all.
- 4) **Presentation: Emily Diamond (URI)** Charlestown Breachway Restoration Project's Public Attitudes & Communication Insights. (See Attached)
- 5) **Public Communications:** None
- 6) **Outreach/Logo Design:** Commissioners reviewed the 3 finalist artist's logo revisions and selected one with an overwhelming majority.
- 7) **Upcoming May Meeting Agenda:** May will be a working meeting, no presentation. June: Water Resources
July: Wildfire August: Composting September: Energy
- 8) **Commissioner Updates:** C. Beasley installed the first wildfire warning sign at the Quonnie Fire Station on Rte 1. S. Frattini met with V. Hilton/Recreation Dept, updates Commission on educational signage and related budget (See Attached). Commission selects a preferred dune sign. S. Racine motion allocate up to \$500 to produce first run of logo stickers, 2nd by C. Beasley, approved by all. Commission to further review and discuss other budget items at the May Meeting.
- 9) **Adjournment:** S. Racine made a motion to adjourn at 6:58pm, 2nd by M. Viola, approved by all.

Minutes Recorded & Submitted Electronically by C. Fox (Secretary)

Charlestown Breachway Restoration Project & Public Attitudes & Communication Insights

Key Findings

- Users showed strong place attachment to, dependence on, & identification with Charlestown's coastal areas and the Breachway.

Charlestown's users prioritize climate resilience projects that address coastal erosion concerns through both hard (e.g. jetties and breachways) and soft (e.g. dune plantings) resilience solutions.
- The public has moderate familiarity with the Breachway Restoration and they prioritize safety, community & ecosystem balance, and swift repair timelines.
- Participants felt uninformed and disengaged in local resilience planning and management decisions. Wanting more information on socioeconomic impacts, next steps, and funding through digital and in-person forums.

What did we set out to do?

Identify relevant stakeholders engaged with Charlestown and the Breachway Restoration and analyze their outreach and engagement priorities. The goal was to better understand attitudes, preferences, and concerns about the restoration project, place values, and climate resilience approaches in Charlestown. This included exploring stakeholders' existing knowledge and information needs about the project, main priorities and concerns, and how sense of place influences users perceptions of resilience projects.

How did we collect data?

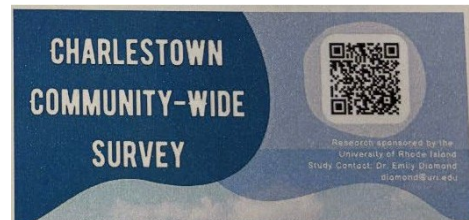
Four focus groups and three interviews were conducted with 34 stakeholders that were professionally or personally engaged with the Charlestown, as well as current or former coastal users. An online survey targeting residents and visitors was conducted, recruiting respondents from popular coastal areas in Charlestown totaling 754 responses.

Survey flyer distributed online and at over 20 - high traffic areas in Charlestown

What did we find?

Users showed strong attachment to the Town's coastal areas, visiting frequently and valuing outdoor space and recreation. Climate resilience is a priority with 84% of survey participants concerned about long-term climate change impacts, particularly coastal erosion.

30% of users were moderately familiar with the Breachway restoration prioritizing public and boater safety, socioeconomic impacts, and balancing community and ecosystem needs.

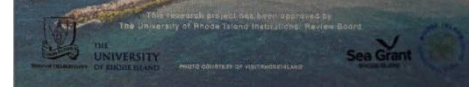


SHARE YOUR VIEWS ON COASTAL RESILIENCE, STORM SURGES, AND SEA-LEVEL RISE IMPACTING THE CHARLESTOWN BREACHWAY

FILL OUT OUR 10-MINUTE ANONYMOUS ONLINE SURVEY TO HELP US UNDERSTAND COMMUNITY PRIORITIES FOR COASTAL RESILIENCE

SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT: [HTTPS://BIT.LY/CHARLESTOWNBREACHWAY](https://bit.ly/charlestownbreachway)

OPEN TO RESIDENTS AND VISITORS 18 YEARS OR OLDER. RESPONDENTS CAN ENTER A RAFFLE FOR A \$200 AMAZON GIFT CARD.



Survey participants with strong place values favored a multifaceted approach using jetties/breachways, nature-based solutions, and sand replenishment. Higher-income participants supported using jetties/breachways and nature-based solutions, while higher-educated participants favored a do-nothing approach. Economic costs, environmental considerations, and social equity were the most important factors influencing user's support for climate change resilience policies.

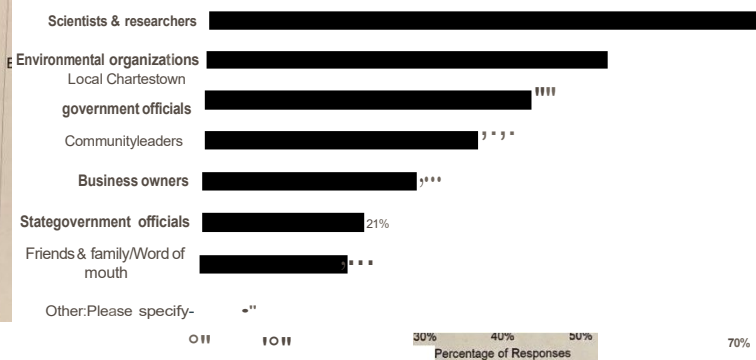
Focus group and interview participants stated, **ambiguity regarding the definition and applications of "resilience" has led to public confusion of the term** and its ecological uses. However, outreach events have boosted individual and ecosystem-based resilience actions, involvement, and education among users.

45% of users do not feel informed and engaged in planning and management decisions in **Charlestown**. Regarding the Breachway Project, participants wanted more information about navigation safety, economic impacts, completion timeline, and next steps. They wanted clarification on project ownership, funding sources, and more community involvement through in-person and online forums.

Trusted sources of information included scientists and researchers, environmental organizations, and local Charlestown government officials.

Distrust in **state and federal government as a communicator was exacerbated** by perceptions of leadership avoidance in Breachway maintenance. Other potential pitfalls of trust building included limited updates, shoreline access concerns, historical mistrust, and rumors.

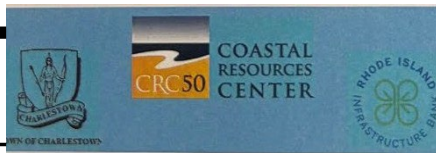
Who do you most trust to communicate information about coastal resilience in Charlestown, including the Breachway Restoration Project?



Who participants trust most to convey Charlestown's coastal resilience information based upon their top 3 choices.

Communication Recommendations

- Post regular updates on Breachway status and coastal resilience efforts in a central and easily accessible location (Town website, email newsletter, social media, DEM website)
- Emphasize strong place attachment to motivate action, and focus resilience updates on coastal erosion, local economic impacts, and implications for coastal habitats
- Leverage trusted sources by continuing to partner with scientists, local business people, and local environmental organizations to share information



Charlestown Educational Signage / Ideas - Budget Estimate a/o 4/10/2025

*Note estimates will require quotes based on # and final design. ** Assume custom logo added, CCRC

Location	Size	Amount	Est. Cost	Est. Total	Description	Webeml
Charlestown Public Beach - Main Entrance	18" x 24"		\$60.00	\$120.00	Left and Right of Main Entrance from road	http://trafficaiansadafetyoom/
Charlestown Public Beach - Beach	12" x 18"	4	\$49.95	\$199.80	Looking from Beach to Road, staged left and right of the entrance	http://trafficignvndsafatycom/
Exisiling Charlestown Public Beach 'Rules'	12" x 18"	1	\$49.95	\$49.95	Put Text on the existing sign by public beach.	
Town Lot42 - Public Walkway/Ocean side	18" x 24"	2	\$65.00	\$130.00	Beach Dunes, L & R of walkway	
PostMaterials & Installation, TBD						
Vinyl Stickers - Round	3"? round	200	\$150.00	\$150.00	estimate Sticker Mule	
Other Materials, Social media ?						
SmartSign Option - currently at Public Beach, need to be reinstalled 2025.	18" x 12" x 15"	2	\$60.00	\$120.00	Protect the environment Stay off the dunes'	https://www.smartsign.com/
Charlho HS Student Artist Honorarium			\$250.00	\$250.00	Winner of Project	Do we want to consider donation to other 2?
Subtotal Estimate				\$1,019.75		
30% Contingency				\$305.93		
Total Estimate				\$1,325.68		

Other Ideas & Dune Restoration

Town Beach Entrance - Beach Grass		800 - 1500		Estimate based on today Sq. footage		Voci-y to discuss w/Steve M. and Matt
Town Beach Entrance, Sand Build Up & Fencing			\$2,000.00	Estimate based on today Sq. footage		
Professional Installation Fencing Co.			?			
Installation: Volunteers ?						
Breachwey Monumental Sign (TBD)			\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	Estimate based on creative (Steve M. & Cyrus dilc:usaion)	
Charlestown Beach Road RAnalr						