



Tropical Storm Chantal After Action Report

Survey Response Analysis and Updates

Draft Date: Aug. 20, 2025

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document includes several After Action Review items for the Tropical Storm Chantal event on July 6 and 7, 2025. It includes proposed resolution for the previously listed internal after action review items, summarized findings of four surveys, including elected officials, town staff and community members, following the event, and recommended next steps to increase the town's readiness and community confidence in the town's ability and capacity to manage larger emergency events.

The following resolutions are recommended to address the internally identified after action review items during and immediately following the storm. A number of these will also address concerns identified in the post-event surveys.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Temporary alternate locations have been secured for fleet vehicles. The replacement facility under construction will remove risk for Public Works vehicles. Alternate parking arrangements are being designed for Utilities vehicles as part of the Adron Thompson Water/Sewer Facility renovation. Procedure for significant rain events in the meantime will be to remove vehicles and equipment from the Dimmocks Mill Road facility's lower portion. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional training and experience with WebEOC is recommended. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus future training on the forms and materials already available. Save and re-use formats that were helpful during the event. Appoint a specific staff resource with responsibility to manage documentation. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Countywide after action review is underway, with meeting Aug. 25 for all-agency "hotwash" of event. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A specific staff resource should be assigned to manage the donation management plan if or when enacted. |

• Include budget and finance staff in future Emergency Management Team training and winter and summer kickoff events. Pre-plan for emergency purchase accounts. Publish procurement and transaction guidelines for operational staff in emergency events.
• Updated town code language regarding water supply emergencies was adopted Aug. 11.
• Work needs to be done on identifying alternates for key Emergency Management Team and Emergency Operations Center roles and getting them trained and exposed to Emergency Operations Center conditions.
• All Emergency Operations Center staff need to be trained and familiar with the audio/visual equipment, technology and software necessary to function in an emergency response. A supply of mobile internet hotspots and satellite internet options needs to be secured for future events.
• Water/Sewer Facility renovation is paused for redesign to a more flood-resistant level. Other projects will be evaluated as design is completed for their repair, replacement or upgrades.
• Clarify the role of Orange County as the contracted building inspectors for the town. Evaluate resources available through the current code enforcement contractor. Look into other systems of tracking and noting damage to property in town, such as index cards and geographic information system.
• Staff is researching available funding resources for floodplain buyouts and creating an inventory of priority property purchases.
• Planning staff will review and update processes to ensure availability to respond to future emergency events.
• OC Alerts concerns about opt-in and geographic targeting to be addressed in Orange County after action review.
• Staff will engage with Orange County to determine availability of easier access to Special Needs Registry for residents.
• Evaluate options to transfer the Water Treatment Plant phone number to another staff member to handle during an emergency. Utilize an existing administrative resource within the organization to be available to take calls and respond as needed.
• Alerts published by the town on the website will translate to the native language set on the user's phone, tablet or web browser. Facebook has the same capability. Orange County Emergency Services is collecting language preferences from OC Alerts subscribers to provide alerts in their preferred language.
• Staff will work on graphics and language with clear guidance for boil water situations and to ensure the guidance is consistent with the Orange County Health Department and surrounding utilities providers. A supply of small signs needs to be ordered and stocked, and replacement or repair of the digital message boards is needed. Staff should evaluate ahead of time where to place the physical and digital signs in an emergency event. Utilities has ordered 20 new signs as a stopgap. Communications is designing a new sign for long-term needs. A large number will be ordered to provide coverage throughout town. This is critical if

cell and internet coverage is down. Broad sign coverage will help address continual complaints during these situations that people were not aware of the advisory or notice.
• After situation reports are published to the town board and Emergency Management Team in future events, a specific staff resource should be tasked with sharing with additional staff. The team will need to determine the appropriate dissemination level – department heads, operations team, or all staff. Once established, this needs to be a consistent routine.
• Ensure that communications to board members go out via both text and email during emergency events so the information is received by all board members.

Post-event survey responses were collected from four groups: Mayor and Board of Commissioners, Emergency Management Team, key operational staff, and community members. A total of 140 survey responses were received collectively from those groups. A brief summary of the findings follows:

• Board survey results — Positive and noted Emergency Management Team performed well. Recommended reducing reporting burden and enhancing inclusion and resident support using pre-planned decision tools.
• Emergency Management Team survey results — Noted communication and coordination were generally strong. Noted challenges with timely public messaging, initial risk assessment, and reliance on limited staff resources. Highlighted need for clarity on Emergency Operations Center activation triggers, faster public information and ongoing preparedness improvements.
• Key operational staff survey results — Noted internal communication and training created an effective response. Noted gaps in cross-departmental coordination, clarity of roles and procedures, timeliness of public information and financial readiness. Recommended clearer policies, more training, and improved outreach to residents.
• Community survey results — Indicated respondents generally felt safe during the event. There were marked drops in the perception of the town’s preparedness and ability to respond to emergency events.
• The most common negative responses regarding post-storm impression of the town’s preparedness include: ○ Communication gaps and notification failures ○ Known infrastructure vulnerabilities not addressed ○ Development and land use policy ○ Responsiveness to the event (positive) vs. perception of preparedness (negative)
• Communication was cited frequently as a strength and a weakness. Many respondents valued the frequency and transparency of updates. Others found the messaging inconsistent, delayed or overly reliant on opt-in systems and social media.
• Respondents praised the dedication and response by town staff after the event, but raised concerns about vulnerable water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure and recurring flooding in specific areas.

- Responses emphasized the need for more resilient infrastructure, broader and more reliable communications systems, increased long-term planning for extreme weather and focused restoration of parks and community amenities after a storm.

Recommended Next Steps

The following action items are intended to address gaps or weaknesses identified internally or through surveys to address three major themes of preparedness and community support, emergency communications, and resilient infrastructure:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify and solidify Emergency Management Team roles, reporting chains and staff expectations during emergency operations. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule future tabletop or other planning exercises — some internally focused, some including broader partner agencies, and potentially a community planning exercise. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore creation or facilitation of community volunteer disaster response cohort for engagement before, during and after emergency events. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train staff on damage assessment procedures to improve timeliness and reporting for future events. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore implementation of town-owned opt-out emergency notification system or changes to OC Alerts to better facilitate emergency communications. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update town website capabilities for responsive emergency banners and real-time updates. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardize templates for boil water, road closures, damage reports and emergency briefing materials. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore feasibility of flood-mitigation measures for water plant and continue to pursue funding to execute relocation of vulnerable sewer pumping station and secondary water-supply interconnection with Orange Water and Sewer Authority. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and prioritize known flood-prone areas and plan for capital projects to address causes of flooding. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Orange County on establishing designated cooling and charging center locations. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reevaluate planning and development regulations to prevent worsening flooding or drainage issues. |

2. INTERNALLY IDENTIFIED AFTER ACTION REVIEW ITEMS

Pre-event

- Public Works and Utilities vehicles and equipment were located in a known flood zone and no steps were taken to relocate during the event.
 - The magnitude of the rainfall and flooding was unanticipated, and when staff secured the facility at about 2230 there was no flooding present.
 - Resolution: Temporary alternate locations have been secured for fleet vehicles, and replacement facility under construction will remove risk for Public Works vehicles. Alternate parking arrangements are being

designed for Utilities vehicles as part of the Adron Thompson Water/Sewer Facility renovation, and standing procedure for significant rain events in the meantime will be to remove vehicles and equipment from the lower portion of the Dimmocks Mill Road facility.

During Response

- Staff noted that there was not an established cadence for completing and refreshing Incident Action Plan (IAP) forms.
 - Emergency Management Team was following Incident Action Plan format on briefings and situation reports but did not take time to utilize WebEOC forms.
 - Resolution: Additional training and experience with WebEOC is recommended.
- Staff did not fully utilize WebEOC, Incident Action Plan, situation report formats that were prepared in advance and were operating off the cuff during the event.
 - Resolution: Focus future training on the forms and materials already available. Save and reuse formats that were helpful during this event. Appoint a specific staff resource with responsibility to manage documentation.
- Orange County Emergency Services was preparing to issue evacuation notices to residents in the Lake Orange inundation zone, which includes residences along the Eno River in Hillsborough. This was occurring at approximately 0100, while active flooding was limiting HPD availability and restricting travel. Staff was able to avert an unnecessary and confusing evacuation notice through multiple channels of communications, but this was a near miss.
 - Orange County Emergency Services and Orange County staff are completing their own after action review of this incident. For town staff, this reinforced the importance of communicating across departments and having a central resource collecting reports from across the operation so that a connection could be made in time to avoid a larger problem or waste of resources.
 - Resolution: Countywide AAR is underway, meeting to be held 8/25/25 for all – agency “hotwash” of event.
- During the event, calls and requests were coming in to staff regarding donations and volunteers, both from those looking to give and those in need. A plan and structured response are needed for future events.
 - Orange County Emergency Services has a donation management plan, but it was not active early in the event. Town staff needs to be familiar with this plan and possibly create a town-specific plan for smaller events.
 - Resolution: A specific staff resource and back-up person should be assigned to manage the donation management plan if/when enacted.
- Budget and finance staff were not included in the Emergency Management Team or Emergency Operations Center. Staff felt like they were in the dark on what was needed and/or how to assist operating departments. Operational staff reported that finance staff was non-responsive during the early stages of the event.
 - Resolution: Include budget and finance staff in future Emergency Management Team training and winter/summer kickoff events. Pre-plan for emergency purchase accounts. Publish procurement and transaction guidelines for operational staff in emergency events.

Post-event

- Current town code language regarding water conservation measures is specifically tied to water levels at the reservoir, potentially limiting options during other water-related emergencies.

- While an emergency declaration allows for great flexibility, it may make sense to review and establish pre-staged water conservation responses similar to the City of Mebane. That way, during an emergency event, there is not the added pressure of determining which users are impacted, the severity of the conservation measures needed, etc.
 - Resolution: Updated code language adopted Aug. 11.
- The Emergency Management Team transitioned to an Emergency Operations Center on very short notice. Staff has been building emergency management capacity and getting familiar with Incident Command System roles over the past few years, but further work is needed on building out a response structure for larger events.
 - Right now, limited staff are trained and capable of performing Incident Command System roles. In the event that key staff are missing or impacted by a larger event, the town's response could be negatively impacted.
 - Resolution: Additional work needs to be done on identifying alternates for key roles and getting them trained and exposed to Emergency Operations Center conditions.
- When setting up the physical Emergency Operations Center, staff did not initially know how to properly utilize the A/V equipment. The structure of the response to this event also was totally dependent on power and internet.
 - Resolution: All Emergency Operations Center staff need to be trained and familiar with the audio/visual equipment, technology and software necessary to function in an emergency response. A supply of mobile internet hotspots and satellite internet options needs to be secured for future events.
- What flood protection options are available to protect key assets such as the Water Treatment Plant, Wastewater Treatment Plant, River Pumping Station, Elizabeth Brady Pumping Station, smaller pumping stations, water supplies, Adron Thompson Water/Sewer Facility and raw water intake?
 - Staff to evaluate practicality and financial cost of flood mitigation options for key assets.
 - Resolution: Adron Thompson renovation paused for redesign to a more flood-resistant level. Other projects to be evaluated as design completed for their repair/replacement/upgrades.
- Physical damage to private property was somewhat limited in scope to the areas around the Eno River. It took several days to accumulate information about what homes and businesses were impacted. In a larger event with wider-scale damage, the town is not currently prepared to manage damage assessments or track impacted properties.
 - Resolution: Clarify the role of Orange County as the contracted building inspectors for the town. Evaluate resources available through the current code enforcement contractor. Look into other systems of tracking and noting damage to property in town – index cards, GIS, etc.
- During recovery phase, explore resources available to acquire flood-damaged (especially repeatedly damaged) properties in town.
 - Resources from the state or federal government may be available to purchase flood-prone properties to limit future losses and potentially restore some areas of the floodplain to a lower-impact environment.
 - Resolution: Staff is researching available funding resources for floodplain buyouts and creating inventory of priority property purchases.
- Planning and Engineering Services staff should review their operations and be prepared to respond to emergency repair issues through zoning compliance, building permits, utilities repairs, Historic District Commission approvals, etc.
 - Resolution: Planning staff to review and update processes to ensure availability to respond to future emergency events.

Communications

- OC Alerts – Information sent out on behalf of town did not receive all targeted audience since subscribers need to specifically opt in to receive alerts regarding the town’s utilities system. Complaints were received from residents.
 - Staff requested OC Alerts to override and send alerts to specific geographic areas regardless of opt-in.
 - Resolution: To be addressed in countywide after action review.
- Staff was requested to share information regarding Orange County Special Needs Registry
 - When evaluated, it was determined that applications must be submitted by mail or in person.
 - Resolution: Staff will engage with Orange County to determine if easier access to this service is available for residents.
- During this and most other emergency events, the Water Treatment Plant staff received numerous phone calls from the public as the facility is traditionally staffed 24 hours. Longer-term residents know the number and that the phone will be answered. Numerous calls limit staff ability to respond to urgent needs around the plant during an emergency.
 - Resolution: Evaluate options to transfer the number to another staff member to handle during an emergency. Utilize existing administrative resources and back-up within the organization to be available to take calls and respond as needed.
- Staff was asked about providing Spanish-language translation for OC alerts and town media releases
 - Resolution: Alerts published by the town on the website will translate to the native language set on the user’s phone, tablet or web browser. Facebook has the same capability. Orange County Emergency Services is collecting language preferences from subscribers to provide alerts in their preferred language.
- Boil water notices – There were issues residents and businesses misunderstanding what they should be doing. The small physical signs were limited in supply, and the digital message boards were damaged by flooding and unavailable for use.
 - Resolution: Staff to work on graphics and language with clear guidance for boil water situations and to ensure the guidance is consistent with Orange County Health Department and surrounding utilities providers. A supply of small signs needs to be ordered and stocked, and replacement or repair of the digital message boards is needed. Staff should evaluate ahead of time where to place the physical and digital signs in an emergency event.
- Situation reports were prepared and published by Operations Sections Chief for the Emergency Management Team and board. Some were shared further out to operational staff, but not all, leading to some confusion about what was going on in town.
 - Resolution: In future events, after situation reports are published to the board and Emergency Management Team, a specific staff resource should be tasked with sharing with additional staff. The team will need to determine the appropriate dissemination level – department heads, operations team, or all staff. Once established, this needs to be a consistent routine.
- Initial communications during event and response were done via text group. Not all commissioners received the messaging and there was confusion that could have been avoided.
 - Resolution: Ensure that communications to board members go out via both text and email during emergency events so that the information is received by all board members.

3. SURVEY FEEDBACK

Version Note —Anonymized survey results are included attachments.

- **Mayor and Board of Commissioners**

- Members rated communications during the event positively, approving of the relevance, timeliness and informative nature of information received from the Emergency Management Team.
- Members felt that their role and involvement during the event was well-defined, clear and appropriate.
- Members felt that the Emergency Management Team performed well, but were concerned about the amount of time needed to generate updates and reports to the board.
- Recommendations include adding the Mayor Pro-Tem to Emergency Management Team briefings, consideration for in-person wellness checks for vulnerable residents and looking for pre-planned reports/decision trees to ease the burden of generating updates.

- **Emergency Management Team**

- Respondents felt that internal communication during and after the event were clear and timely, with regular updates and coordination across departments.
- It was noted that a lot of time was spent discussing press releases and other public information, which reduced efficiency in getting information out to the public.
- Respondents noted that while pre-event communication was good, the severity of the storm was not clear until after it was over, suggesting a gap in initial risk assessment.
- Respondents felt that the Emergency Management Team structure was effective but put too much burden on a few staff resources, which could limit effectiveness in larger events, and that additional internal resources may be needed to ensure sustainability of the Emergency Management Team.
- Suggestions for improvement include establishing clear triggers for Emergency Operations Center activation, improving timeliness of initial public information, and continuous improvement through drills and planning.

- **Key Town Staff**

- 11 employees from multiple departments and disciplines responded to the survey.
- Staff noted effective communication between Emergency Management Team and field staff, but difficulty between operating departments and between on-site and remote personnel.
- Staff noted a need for clearer guidance on roles, reporting chains, and information detail standards (especially for things like damage assessments), along with regular check-ins to reduce confusion and improve coordination during emergency events.
- Staff felt that prior training was helpful for effective response and communications, but some departments were not well integrated or were not represented in the Emergency Management Team.
- Staff criticized delays in posting critical information like the boil water notice and slow setup of disaster budget accounts as gaps in readiness, and having remote staff and closed offices caused communication and response lags. Clearer direction and expectations for staff availability during emergencies are needed for future events.
- Further suggested improvements include more training, clarified emergency policies, damage assessment procedures and better access to shared electronic files.
- Staff felt that while internal communications and response were generally good, public outreach needs improvement and many residents didn't access or know where to find official updates, indicating a need for better messaging before and after events.

- **Public Survey**

A public survey was released on July 30 and responses were collected through Aug. 15. During that period, 120 respondents completed the 18-question review of their perception of the town's preparedness, communications, community safety, and priorities for future emergency response situations.

- **Who responded?**
 - 68.3% (82) of the respondents reported that they were residents within town limits, 20.0% (24) were utilities customers outside of town limits, 4.2% (5) were business owners or employees within town limits and 7.5% (9) were "other".
- **Safety During the Event**
 - 73.3% of all respondents reported feeling somewhat or very safe during the storm.
 - 79.3% of town residents reported feeling safe during the storm versus 54.2% of utility customers outside of town limits. 80.0% of business respondents reported feeling safe, while 66.7% of "other" respondents reported feeling safe during the event.
- **Perception of Town Emergency Preparedness**
 - 55.8% of all respondents reported that their impression of the town's emergency readiness was either somewhat or very prepared before the storm, while the same impressions after the storm dropped to 52.5%. However, the percentage of respondents that held the impression that the town was somewhat or very Unprepared increased from 16.7% to 42.5%, a significant negative shift in opinion.
 - The share of town resident respondents that considered the town prepared dropped from 58.5% to 56.1% after the storm, while the percentage of residents that considered the town unprepared increased from 15.9% to 39.0%.
 - The out-of-town utility customer positive sentiment on town preparedness remained at 41.7% before and after the storm, but the impression of unpreparedness increased from 20.8% to 58.3%.
 - Business respondents reported no change in impression before or after the storm, with 60.0% considering the town prepared and 20% unprepared.
 - The "other" respondents reported a drop in their opinion of the town's preparedness from 66.7% to 44.4%, while the responses that considered the town unprepared increased from 11.1% to 44.4%.
- **Confidence in Town Emergency Response Capabilities**
 - 66.4% of all respondents reported that their confidence in the town's ability to respond to emergencies was high or very high before the storm, while only 58.5% reported the same level of confidence after the storm. Similarly, while only 5.0% of respondents expressed low or very low confidence in the town's emergency response abilities before the storm, 19.5% expressed the same opinion after the storm.
 - Town resident confidence fell from 68.3% to 61.7%, while negative opinion increased from 2.4% to 17.3%.
 - Utility customer positive sentiment fell from 58.3% to 45.8%, while negative sentiment increased from 12.5% to 29.2%.
 - Business respondent opinion remain unchanged after the storm, with 75% of responses indicating positive confidence in the town's ability to respond to emergencies.
 - Respondents in the "other" category showed a drop in positive confidence from 66.7% to 55.6%, and an increase in the negative response from 11.1% to 22.2%
- **Town Services and Support During the Event**

- When asked to rate the services or support received from the town during the storm event, the respondents gave an overall rating of 7.26 out of 10. 12.5% of the ratings were below 5 (negative), while 23.3% of responses were a perfect 10.
- Town resident ratings averaged 7.8, with 7.3% of ratings below 5 and 29.3% of ratings at 10.
- Utility customers provided an average service rating of 5.7, with 33.3% below 5 and 16.7% at level 10.
- Business respondents gave the town services a rating of 7.0, with no ratings below 5 or at 10.
- Respondents in the “other” category rated the town’s services at 6.3, with 11.1% of ratings below 5 and no perfect 10 scores.

The responses to these four questions indicate that while a majority of respondents felt and continue to feel that the town is prepared and able to respond to emergency situations, the proportion of respondents with negative opinions of the town’s readiness and capabilities increased significantly after the storm.

- The most common negative responses regarding post-storm impression of the town’s preparedness include the following:
 - Communication gaps and notification failures
 - Known infrastructure vulnerabilities not addressed
 - Development and Land Use policy
 - Responsiveness to the event (positive) vs. perception of preparedness (negative)
- On the specific topic of communications, survey results show the following:
 - Overall, respondents rated the communications received during the event 7.41 out of 10, with about 19.2% of responses with ratings below 5 (negative) and 31.7% of responses a perfect 10 rating.
 - Town residents averaged a rating of 7.8, with 15.9% of ratings below 5 and 41.5% of ratings a perfect 10.
 - Utility customer ratings averaged 6.3, with 33.3% below 5 and 20.8% a rating of 10.
 - Business respondents rated communications an average of 8.3, with no ratings below 5 or at perfect 10.
 - “Other” respondents gave the town an average rating of 6.4, with 22.2% of ratings below 5 and no perfect 10 ratings.
 - Social media (especially Facebook) was the town’s most commonly used and effective channel (47% of respondents)
 - The town website and traditional media were underutilized and described as difficult to navigate
 - OC Alerts were frequently used and positively rated, but there were numerous concerns about enrollment, lack of knowledge of the system and concerns for vulnerable populations and the reliance on technology.
 - There were concerns about conflicting information and lack of clarity and unified messaging around the boil water notice.

○ **Summary of Open-Ended Responses**

Seven of the public survey questions requested open-ended responses. A summary of the feedback is included in this document, and the full responses are included as an attachment.

Question: *“What gave you confidence or concerns before this event?”*

- Before the event, many survey respondents had not considered the possibility of such a severe storm and assumed the town was well-prepared based on; a) its history of effective maintenance, planning, and communication, b) past positive experiences with the town, emergency services, and public works, and c) the belief that certain areas (like Riverwalk and Gold Park) were intentionally designed to flood safely. Concerns centered on aging or vulnerable utilities infrastructure, repeated unresolved flooding in certain areas, inadequate targeted communication, and insufficient preparation for extreme, unprecedented weather events.
- Many of the respondents assumed readiness based on trust in local government and past storm responses but underestimated the potential for an extreme weather event such as Chantal.
 - “I didn’t think something like this would happen!”
 - “The Town is generally well-managed, fiscally responsible, and attentive to future needs... it’s hard to anticipate freak accidents.”
 - “Just sort of assumed that the town was well prepared.”
 - “I think Hillsborough, like most towns, prepared using past climate data and disaster events.”
- Respondents also expressed concerns about the location of water and sewer infrastructure, stormwater issues exacerbated by new development, and recurring flooding in specific areas.
 - “Our river is too close to the water plant... the plant should have a better location away from the ever flooding Eno River.”
 - “S. Churton by Gold Hill Way has had flooding issues for years and nothing continues to be done to fix the issue.”
 - “Too much new housing developments changing the flow of storm waters.”
 - “I had a false sense of confidence... I would have assumed... our systems would be well positioned to handle this type of event and have multiple levels of redundancies.”
- Respondents provided mixed opinions of the town’s communications and outreach...positive reactions for speed and quality, but negative reactions for broad or inconsistent messaging.
 - “The notification system that sends me text and emails... very effective.”
 - “We don’t have a targeted evacuation or public notification tool... people hear ‘flash flood warning’ and ignore it.”
 - “I hadn’t heard anything in the days prior to the storm reminding folks about emergency preparedness.”
 - “Communication was inconsistent... be prepared but didn’t give resources.”
 - “Earlier warning on first day would have been welcome... I’m sure I was not the only one to have used drinking water before the 9am warning.”

Question: *“What gives you confidence or concerns (after the event)?”*

- Post-event, respondents generally expressed confidence in the dedication and quick response of town staff, appreciating the transparent updates and the resiliency of the community. Significant concerns were expressed about inconsistent communications and infrastructure vulnerabilities in flood-prone areas, which were identified as the key challenges to be addressed for future events.
- Communications – while residents valued frequent updates and transparency, there were concerns about the timeliness or breadth of notifications.

- “The notification that our drinking water was not safe did not automatically go out to everyone via an emergency text... This led to hours of my family drinking potentially contaminated water.”
- “Lack of broad notification of water boil order... Suggest to auto-enroll in text updates with option to opt out.”
- “I was impressed with the quick action and transparent communication.”
- While respondents praised the work of town staff, there were concerns about future risks to facilities and equipment.
 - “Nothing has changed for decades concerning the location of the Water plant. This could be alleviated with better planning in location and infrastructure!”
 - “The vehicle[s] that were known in a flood zone should have been moved.”
 - “While the response itself was pretty well handled, having the town’s water facilities in the flood plain is a significant point of vulnerability.”
 - “We now know that a 100-year or even 500-year storm event can and will happen much more frequently.”
- Respondents generally approved of the speed and effort of the town’s response to the storm.
 - “The quick switch to Durham water was awesome.”
 - “The town dug in and got right to work with borrowing trucks and working as best as they can to get back to normal.”
 - “Community spirit! Everyone is working together.”
 - “We witnessed rapid and professional response to the flooding by the Town staff... the frequent communications from the Town was outstanding.”

Question: *“Was the communication clear, timely and accessible? What can be improved for future events?”*

- The responses to this question were largely divided...while there were positive notes about the frequency and clarity of town communications, there were also negative responses about the speed, fragmentation or reliance on social media during the event. General feedback suggests the need for broader outreach (beyond opt-in OC Alerts and Facebook) and clear, more consistent instructions during emergency events.
- Many responses indicated positive perception of town communications.
 - “Yes. Communications exceeded my expectations... I was impressed by the frequency of updates on flooding, the water supply and steps the town was taking to fix the problem.”
 - “Excellent communication.”
 - “Clear and brief communication. Leveraged Orange County messaging to amplify alerts... Businesses were also informed early.”
 - “Absolutely clear. Stellar work.”
- Other responses indicated that they didn’t receive alerts early enough, didn’t know where to get information, and reliance on secondhand information.
 - “I don’t even know exactly where to find communication from the town of Hillsborough.”

- “First found out about the boil water order while scrolling through Nextdoor... I finally received text and phone calls about the boil order but it was 2 hours later. The delay was unacceptable.”
- “My neighbor, who did not sign up for alerts and doesn’t use social media, didn’t know about the boil water alert.”
- Respondents encourage future communications to reach all residents and impacted areas, and more detailed or location-specific information.
 - “Need an emergency alert system or just a mass-text system.”
 - “Targeted, zone-based communication would be AMAZING. Also, why not use some voice speakers that can tell us what's happening (tornado, flood, etc)?”
 - “The town website... would have been much improved by having a large pop-up banner regarding the water advisory and other issues.”
 - “More explicit information about when and why water boiling is necessary would help everyone understand the necessity.”

Question: *“What factors influenced your sense of safety or vulnerability, as ranked above?”*

- Respondents indicated that their overall sense of safety was influenced by their personal location relative to flood-prone areas personal preparedness. Several responses indicated new or lingering concerns about communications and infrastructure even if they were not personally impacted by this event.
- Physical location played a major part in the safety rating.
 - “I live very close to the river.”
 - “Grateful I live on top of a hill and knowing my house can't flood.”
 - “I slept through the entire storm, my home sets at a high elevation... only indication was a seasonal creek pushed leaves 3 feet up a fence.”
 - “I live down a gravel road and I worried the creek would flood the road and we would be trapped.”
- Personal preparedness and strength of community relationships was also a major factor in how safe respondents felt.
 - “Self preparation... I had tools to purify water but had not thought of filling bathtubs.”
 - “We were prepared in our household with the necessities.”
 - “I live in a great neighborhood where I knew I could ask for and receive help if urgently needed.”
 - “Neighbors were sharing news too so there was a great sense of community.”
 - “I always have drinking water on hand. My neighbors check on me. My house has been here over 100 years.”
 - “Confidence came from knowing the town has a responsive Sheriff's office and community networks, but... it highlighted how tied-up EMS and first responders can strain resources quickly.”
- Uncertainty about the town’s utilities infrastructure and communications lead to some negative feelings of safety and security.
 - “The boil water advisory was surprising and made me feel somewhat unprepared.”

- “The water situation, the loss of parks, the fact that so much sewage was dumped into the Eno... and the pump station is temporarily fixed.”
- “Well, for example, I drank a bunch of tap water about 30 seconds before I got the notification that it was possibly contaminated.”
- “I felt like we were so left in the dark in terms of an idea of when things could be fixed.”

Question: *“What services or support were most helpful to you during the emergency response? What services were not available or accessible to you that would have been helpful?”*

- Communications and timely updates were most frequently cited helpful services during the event, as well as the bottled water distribution and rapid work to restore services. Improvements were suggested in the clarity and timeliness of information about road closures, power outages and water safety. Recommendations included dedicated cooling/charging centers and proactive outreach to vulnerable locations.
- Some respondents indicated that the frequency of updates helped reduce anxiety and allow for informed decision making.
 - “Communication was the most helpful. Knowing what is happening and what we are facing helps diminish anxiety.”
 - “Most helpful were timely updates by text about water safety.”
 - “Frequent updates about the water situation...the boil notice, estimated time before it would be lifted, and location of free bottled water.”
 - “Communications were first rate! We even received a phone call from the mayor following the event.”
- The town’s quick response to the emergency and the efforts to provide bottled water were appreciated.
 - “Water distribution events were helpful.”
 - “As seniors, we really appreciated the access to bottled water...we didn’t have to search stores during the Boiled Water Emergency.”
 - “The fact that they kept us updated daily and the quick response to having water piped in from Durham.”
 - “You guys turned the water back on faster than anticipated, which was appreciated.”
- Respondents provided suggestions for new or improved services during emergency events.
 - “More clarity on road closures within town limits.”
 - “Places to go if there is no power for prolonged periods of time for people to cool down and charge devices would be helpful.”
 - “Duke Energy’s updates were, as always, vague about the cause of the outage and the timeline for restoration.”
 - “I didn’t see the boil water notice until hours after it took effect.”

Question: *“What should be the top priorities for improving the community’s response to future emergencies? Feel free to include ideas on planning, resources, communications, support systems, etc.”*

- The top cited priority for respondents was strengthening critical infrastructure, followed by improvements in real-time communications and better long-term planning for resiliency.

- Many responses included security and updates for the town's utility and stormwater drainage systems.
 - "The main thing is hardening the water treatment system...move the water treatment plant when this becomes feasible."
 - "Improving the wastewater treatment infrastructure to prevent the flooding and subsequent untreated waste from discharging into the environment."
 - "Plan for floods like Chantal's to happen repeatedly. FIRST AND FOREMOST – secure the Town's water/sewage facilities."
 - "Fix S. Churton's flooding problem from the car wash to Gold Hill Way and other drainage issues."
- While communications were generally positively rated, there were suggested improvements for future events to reduce confusion and increase the spread of information.
 - "An official damage report, updated daily, would have been useful."
 - "Again, a separate front page on the town website when an event happens that all are automatically moved to."
 - "Better communication. I was receiving it, but many neighbors were unaware of communication channels."
 - "I feel like the boil water notice should be broadcast widely, on all channels and media types...as soon as you know it will be a problem."
- Many responses urged the town to plan ahead for future flooding and other climate-related disasters, and also encouraged ways to leverage other non-town resources.
 - "Coordinate with other OC agencies to stage equipment at higher elevation facilities."
 - "Have general locations for events that people know to go for resources...giving out the water was great."
 - "Citizens' Volunteer Disaster Response Corps...the town would train teams to respond to disasters and help with remediation efforts."
 - "Coordinating with mutual aid groups...volunteer coordination...educate the public about flood vulnerabilities and insurance options."
 - "Promoting hurricane/storm preparedness resources...so residents prepare ahead by stocking up on supplies."

Question: *"What additional information or feedback related to the Tropical Storm Chantal response would you like to share with the Town of Hillsborough?"*

- Respondents were generally appreciative of the town's response to the storm, while indicating concerns with restoration of amenities, long-term planning and emergency communications.
- Example positive responses included the following:
 - "Thank everyone for their hard work!"
 - "Kudos to Mayor Mark Bell for taking to social media."
 - "I would give the town an ABOVE 'Very High' rating for the post-storm response."
 - "I trust our town staff and am grateful for their devotion to this community."
- Multiple responses indicated concern for Riverwalk, Gold Park and other town amenities.
 - "We miss the parks. Have been watching for an update on when they might be reopened."

- “Please please please get the Riverwalk and connecting trails back up and running asap.”
- “I bought my home here because of the proximity to the Riverwalk and Occoneechee Mtn ... Sad realization that I should not have moved to this town based on natural areas that are so prone to environmental impact.”
- There were concerns about persistent existing flooding/drainage issues, infrastructure vulnerabilities and land-use planning.
 - “Fix the flooding! PLEASE!!!!!!”
 - “The Town and the Planning Department need to start taking the watershed impacts of uncontrolled development into consideration.”
 - “Partner with coastal towns that have experience with storms/hurricanes. Learn what they do to alert people before and during storms.”

4. NEXT STEPS

Based on the internally identified after action review items, the proposed resolutions, and the gaps and priorities identified in the post-event surveys, there are a number of follow-up steps for the town to consider and pursue. Some of these items may already be in motion or part of planned work.

- Preparedness and Community Support
 - Internal town staff and residents both expressed the need for continued and expanded training and planning for what is perceived as an elevated future risk of storm events.
 - Specific internal recommendations include establishing clearer policies for staff roles, emergency responsibilities and availability, expanding the number of trained personnel for emergency operations, and preparing briefing and decision-making materials ahead of time for use in emergencies.
 - Broader community recommendations included combined drills/exercises with both staff and residents, proactive outreach or wellness checks on vulnerable populations or locations, cooling/charging centers, and organized volunteer disaster response groups.
 - Action Items:
 - Clarify and solidify Emergency Management Team roles, reporting chains and staff expectations during emergency operations.
 - Schedule future tabletop or other planning exercises, some internally-focused, some including broader partner agencies, and potentially a community planning exercise.
 - Explore creation or facilitation of community volunteer disaster response cohort for engagement before, during, and after emergency events.
 - Train staff on damage assessment procedures to improve timeliness and reporting for future events.
- Emergency Communications
 - The reliance on OC Alerts, specifically in an opt-in capacity, and Facebook was seen as too restrictive for effective emergency communications.
 - Suggestions included exploring more town-wide notification tools such as mass text/voice systems, website banners, targeted neighborhood notifications.
 - It was recommended that boil water and other specific safety notices be distributed automatically to residents/customers/businesses in a more timely manner, and that the messaging be more specific and consistent.
 - Action Items:

- Explore implementation of town-owned opt-out emergency notification system or changes to OC Alerts to better facilitate emergency communications.
 - Update town website capabilities for responsive emergency banners and real-time updates.
 - Standardize templates for boil water, road closures, damage reports and emergency briefing materials.
- Resilient Infrastructure
 - It was recommended that the town take steps to strengthen or relocate vulnerable water and sewer facilities.
 - Specific locations that were identified as flood-prone areas should be catalogued and prioritized for drainage improvements.
 - The town should incorporate climate resilience into future land-use and development planning.
 - Action Items:
 - Explore feasibility of flood-mitigation measures for water plant, continue to pursue funding to execute relocation of vulnerable sewer pumping station and secondary water-supply interconnection with OWASA.
 - Identify and prioritize known flood-prone areas and plan for capital projects to address causes of flooding.
 - Work with Orange County on establishing designated cooling/charging center locations for future emergencies.
 - Re-evaluate planning and development regulations to prevent worsening flooding or drainage issues.

Attachment 1: Blank Survey Forms



TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH

Tropical Storm Chantal — After Action Review

Key Operational Staff

1. Name

2. Department or Division

3. How effective were internal communications between town staff and the Emergency Management Team during the response to Tropical Storm Chantal? What worked well, and what could be improved?

4. How would you describe the clarity and functionality of the emergency response's organizational structure during the event? Were the roles, responsibilities and reporting lines clear?

5. How did the Emergency Management Team perform during the event? How well did coordination occur across departments or agencies? Please include examples if possible.

6. What challenges or bottlenecks did you observe that may have hindered response efforts? Were the challenges the result of protocol, people, resources or some other reason?

7. What recommendations do you have to improve future disaster response efforts? Considering this event, what would you add or change?

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TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH

Tropical Storm Chantal — After Action Review

Mayor and Board of Commissioners

1. Name

2. How effective was communication between the Board of Commissioners, Emergency Management Team and other key partners during the event? What worked well, and what could be strengthened?

3. Was the Board of Commissioners' role and involvement during the event clear and appropriate? Were responsibilities and expectations well-defined and followed?

4. How would you evaluate the Emergency Management Team's organizational leadership and coordination during the response?

5. What key challenges or gaps did the board observe in governance, oversight or organizational response during the event?

6. What recommendations do you have for improving or adjusting the board's involvement in future emergency management situations? What changes — such as to policy, communications or training — would you like to see?



TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH

Tropical Storm Chantal — After Action Review

Emergency Management Team

* Required

1. Name *

2. Incident Command System position if applicable

3. How effective were internal communications within the Emergency Management Team during the response to Tropical Storm Chantal? What worked well and what could be improved? *

4. How would you describe the clarity and functionality of the emergency response's organizational structure during the event? Were the roles, responsibilities and reporting lines clear? *

5. How did the Emergency Management Team perform during the event? How well did coordination occur across departments or agencies? Please include examples if possible. *

6. What challenges or bottlenecks did you observe that may have hindered response efforts? Were the challenges the result of protocol, people, resources or some other reason? *

7. What recommendations do you have to improve future disaster response efforts? Considering this event, what would you add or change? *

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TOWN OF HILLSBOROUGH

Tropical Storm Chantal — After Action Review

Community Feedback

Paper copies can be picked up from the town clerk in the Administration Building on the Town Hall Campus, 101 E. Orange St. For more information or questions, contact the Communications Division at communications@hillsboroughnc.gov.

1. Before Tropical Storm Chantal, what was your impression of the Town of Hillsborough's preparedness for a disaster of this type?

- ☐ Very prepared
- ☐ Somewhat prepared
- ☐ Neither prepared nor unprepared
- ☐ Somewhat unprepared
- ☐ Very unprepared

2. What gave you confidence or concerns before this event?

3. After Tropical Storm Chantal, what is your impression of the Town of Hillsborough's preparedness for a disaster of this type?

- ☐ Very prepared
- ☐ Somewhat prepared
- ☐ Neither prepared nor unprepared
- ☐ Somewhat unprepared
- ☐ Very unprepared

4. What gives you confidence or concerns?

5. How would you rate the communications you received from the Town of Hillsborough during the event?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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6. Was the communication clear, timely and accessible? What can be improved for future events?

7. Before Tropical Storm Chantal, what communication methods were you using to receive timely information from the Town of Hillsborough?

- ☐ Town website at hillsboroughnc.gov
- ☐ Emailed town news releases (subscribe at hillsboroughnc.gov/subscribe)
- ☐ OC Alerts emergency notifications registration at ocalertsnc.com **with** Community Alerts subscription for Hillsborough water and sewer alerts
- ☐ OC Alerts emergency notifications registration at ocalertsnc.com **without** Community Alerts subscription for Hillsborough water and sewer alerts
- ☐ Town of Hillsborough social media
- ☐ Other

8. After Tropical Storm Chantal, what communication methods are you using to receive timely information from the Town of Hillsborough?

- ☐ Town website at hillsboroughnc.gov
- ☐ Emailed town news releases (subscribe at hillsboroughnc.gov/subscribe)
- ☐ OC Alerts emergency notifications registration at ocalertsnc.com **with** Community Alerts subscription for Hillsborough water and sewer alerts
- ☐ OC Alerts emergency notifications registration at ocalertsnc.com **without** Community Alerts subscription for Hillsborough water and sewer alerts
- ☐ Town of Hillsborough social media
- ☐ Other

9. What Town of Hillsborough social media are you now following?

- ☐ @hillsboroughnc.gov on Bluesky
- ☐ @HillsboroughGov on Facebook
- ☐ @HillsboroughGov on Instagram
- ☐ Town of Hillsborough, NC on Nextdoor
- ☐ @HillsboroughGov on X

10. During the event, how safe did you feel?

- ☐ Very safe
- ☐ Somewhat safe
- ☐ Neither safe nor unsafe
- ☐ Somewhat unsafe
- ☐ Very unsafe

11. What factors influenced your sense of safety or vulnerability, as ranked above?

12. How would you rate the services or support you received from the Town of Hillsborough during the event?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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13. What services or support were most helpful to you during the emergency response? What services were not available or accessible to you that would have been helpful?

14. What should be the top priorities for improving the community's response to future emergencies? Feel free to include ideas on planning, resources, communications, support systems, etc.

15. Please rate your level of confidence **before** Tropical Storm Chantal in the Town of Hillsborough's ability to respond to all types of emergencies

- ☐ Very High
- ☐ High
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Low
- ☐ Very Low
- ☐ No Opinion

16. Please rate your level of confidence **after** Tropical Storm Chantal in the Town of Hillsborough's ability to respond to all types of emergencies

- ☐ Very High
- ☐ High
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Low
- ☐ Very Low
- ☐ No Opinion

17. What is your relationship to the Town of Hillsborough? To determine if you're in town limits, see hillsboroughnc.gov/service-areas.

- ☐ Resident within town limits
- ☐ Resident outside of town limits but within water and sewer service area
- ☐ Business owner or employee within town limits
- ☐ Business owner or employee outside of town limits but within water and sewer service area
- ☐ Other

18. What additional information or feedback related to the Tropical Storm Chantal response would like to share with the Town of Hillsborough?

19. If you are interested in being contacted about your responses, please provide your name and email address.

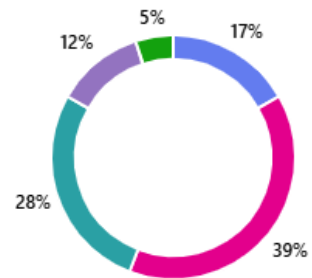
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T.S. Chantal – Post-Event Surveys: Quantitative Responses

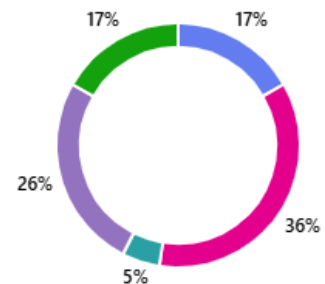
1. Before Tropical Storm Chantal, what was your impression of the Town of Hillsborough's preparedness for a disaster of this type?

Very prepared	20
Somewhat prepared	47
Neither prepared nor unprepared	33
Somewhat unprepared	14
Very unprepared	6

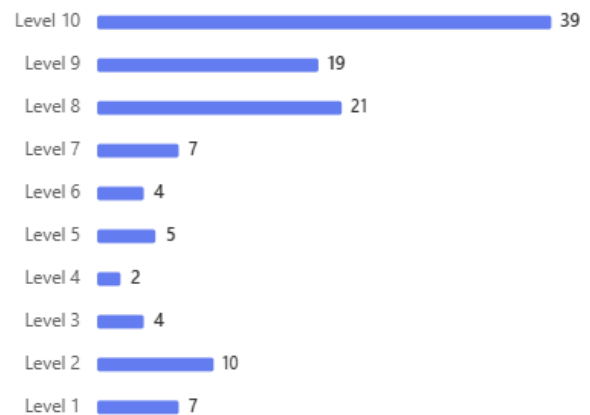


3. After Tropical Storm Chantal, what is your impression of the Town of Hillsborough's preparedness for a disaster of this type?

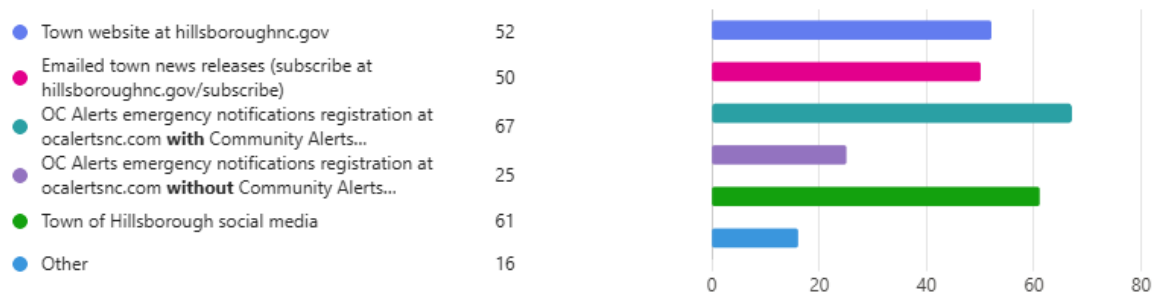
Very prepared	20
Somewhat prepared	43
Neither prepared nor unprepared	6
Somewhat unprepared	31
Very unprepared	20



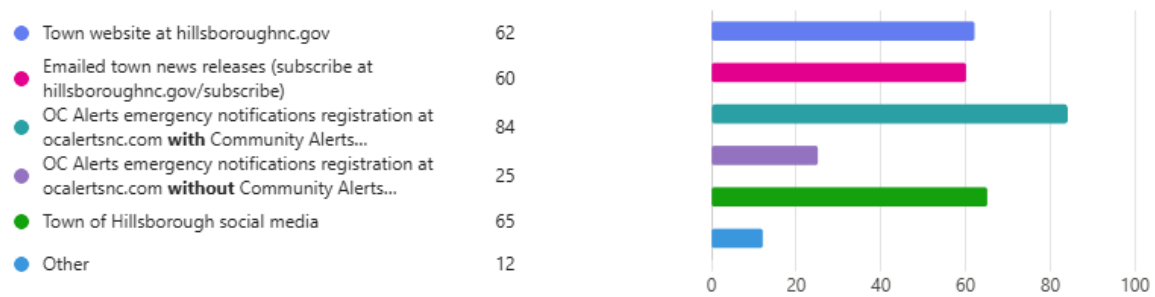
5. How would you rate the communications you received from the Town of Hillsborough during the event?



7. Before Tropical Storm Chantal, what communication methods were you using to receive timely information from the Town of Hillsborough?



8. After Tropical Storm Chantal, what communication methods are you using to receive timely information from the Town of Hillsborough?

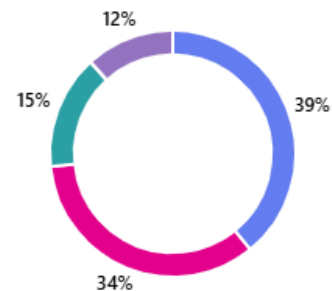


9. What Town of Hillsborough social media are you now following?

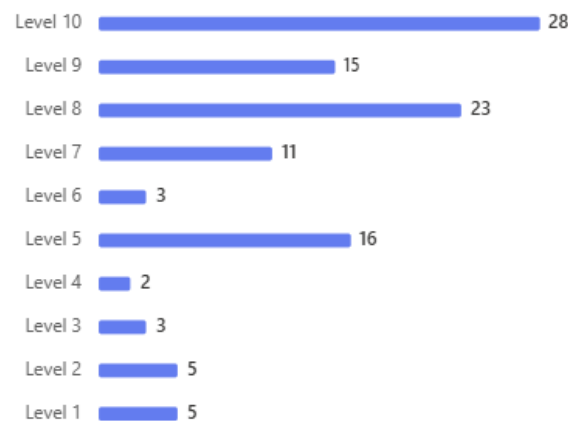


10. During the event, how safe did you feel?

Very safe	47
Somewhat safe	41
Neither safe nor unsafe	18
Somewhat unsafe	14
Very unsafe	0

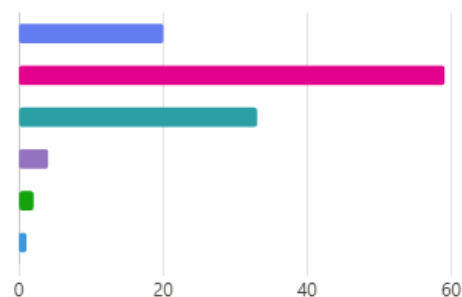


12. How would you rate the services or support you received from the Town of Hillsborough during the event?



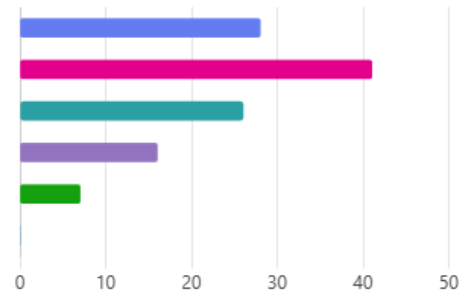
15. Please rate your level of confidence **before** Tropical Storm Chantal in the Town of Hillsborough's ability to respond to all types of emergencies

Very High	20
High	59
Moderate	33
Low	4
Very Low	2
No Opinion	1



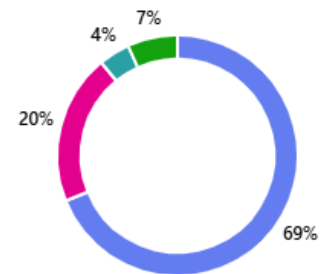
16. Please rate your level of confidence **after** Tropical Storm Chantal in the Town of Hillsborough's ability to respond to all types of emergencies

Very High	28
High	41
Moderate	26
Low	16
Very Low	7
No Opinion	0



17. What is your relationship to the Town of Hillsborough? To determine if you're in town limits, see hillsboroughnc.gov/service-areas.

Resident within town limits	82
Resident outside of town limits but within water and sewer service area	24
Business owner or employee within town limits	5
Business owner or employee outside of town limits but within water and sewer service area	0
Other	8



T.S. Chantal – Post-Event Surveys: Open-Ended Responses

1) Survey of Board of Commissioners

Question 2: *“How effective was communication between the Board of Commissioners, Emergency Management Team and other key partners during the event? What worked well, and what could be strengthened?”*

- Timely, relevant, professional, informative
- went very well, saw nothing wrong with the short amount of time to prepare and not knowing the extent of the storm.
- Good, I appreciated the time between each update wasn't too long.

Question 3: *“Was the Board of Commissioners' role and involvement during the event clear and appropriate? Were responsibilities and expectations well-defined and followed?”*

- Yes
- Only the mayor worked with the group and board basically was informed as things happened board was informed but to make things easier the EMT did the work.
- Yes, I felt I knew how and where to direct residents when questions were asked to me.

Question 4: *“How would you evaluate the Emergency Management Team's organizational leadership and coordination during the response?”*

- Appeared to be organized, implemented smoothly
- From what I was emailed things went well
- I thought the team did a great job getting together quickly and reporting in well timed intervals. I was also glad to hear the coordination with OC was active.

Question 5: *“What key challenges or gaps did the board observe in governance, oversight or organizational response during the event?”*

- None come to mind
- Considering the quickness of the group things went as well as possible. If there had been more warning, motor pool could have been less damaged to the extent that it was and water tanks could have been filled.
- None come to mind

Question 6: *“What recommendations do you have for improving or adjusting the board's involvement in future emergency management situations? What changes — such as to policy, communications or training — would you like to see?”*

- In the future, having an off the shelf communication/ decision tree ready to go. We got word to funnel our questions thru Mayor early on but it would be helpful to have that process standardized and documented as well as role of mayor pro tem. Not sure if MPT was briefed at same time as mayor or included in meetings/calls with mayor but probably should be included in all comms and meetings with mayor in case MPT has to step in at any point at the last minute
- Keep board informed as it was done, inform citizens of dangerous happenings as boiling water which was done considering citizens who don't have email or means of receiving what they need to watch out for , in a worse incident perhaps law encouragements check on the elderly who live alone if power goes out, depending on the type of disaster it will vary in response . Look at the results from this storm and learn from it. I think that operations went well considering the situation. Get the major problems left as damaged vehicles and motor pool and waste water tanks repaired as is the intention.
- I'm concerned about the report generation, was that time consuming? Could there be a VERY BASIC and simple private website that could contain information for the Board to access?

2) Survey of Emergency Management Team

Question 3: *“How effective were internal communications within the Emergency Management Team during the response to Tropical Storm Chantal? What worked well and what could be improved?”*

- They were effective, but too much time was spent discussing press releases and how to get information to the public. Each time we met, there was a conflict only in the public information category, which extended meetings when very little time was available.
- For me the initial communication just prior to the event were very good. We were getting constant updates on the storm. By late evening and bedtime the reports were advising 1-3" of rain which I feel for most of us did not seem to be a big deal when turning in for the night. For me I was not aware of the extent of the storm until I woke up the next morning and looked at my phone and noticed the EMT texts going back and forth. By then the rain had stopped and the flooding had peaked. During the aftermath I feel the communication was very effective.

- I think there was some initial miscommunication after the first wave of the response about the need for PIO to understand what is going on. Keeping the PIO informed on general progress is important so that we can communicate the public information effectively. I believe this got ironed out during the event.
- I believe they were very effective. From the beginning of the incident, there were frequent meetings, whether online or in person, to keep everyone abreast of what was going on. Everyone was also able to provide status updates via email and ensure that tasks were being completed as needed.
- The Emergency Management text thread worked well for many updates. It was great that [Utilities Director] called [PIO] to ask for the boil water notice because that need was easy to miss in the text thread. I was working on social media posts about the other information we were planning to share, so I didn't see the text message before [Utilities Director]'s phone call. (I think the call and [Town Manager]'s text took place at about the same time.) The meetings were important for communications because they were the primary way to receive information and to ask follow-up questions for clarity.
- "Getting updates via text for the team was good, especially in the early stages. If anyone was seeing the need to push communications out to the public, a specific request or phone call might have been needed in early morning hours to get the information out quickly. It takes time to gather and post information to the various methods we have, so it is always good to get information and requests early.
- I was told there were some issues during the Emergency Management Team meetings in which information seemed to be withheld due to possible concern that the communications team would publish the information. Communications is part of the incident command system and needs to be informed to prepare information so it can be quickly distributed if needed. Sometimes this involves being prepared for different scenarios, such as lifting of a boil water notice or the continuation of the notice following testing. The communications team does not share internal information with the public and does not make information public without approval. Discussion of information for news releases and other public information is an important aspect of the internal communications. Time needs to be specifically dedicated in the Emergency Management Team meetings to public information.

Question 4: *"How would you describe the clarity and functionality of the emergency response's organizational structure during the event? Were the roles, responsibilities and reporting lines clear?"*

- This is an area where we are at our weakest due to a lack of experience in major incidents. Working all night Sunday and all day Monday put more on [Town Manager]

and [Assistant Town Manager], and it reduced their effectiveness. We need to review the levels of people in the structure to see who is available. I am always on call, but most people are not.

- For a small team I feel the roles and responsibilities were clear and the team involved more members of the town's staff as the event grew.
- I think that the structure is similar the town's normal structure, so it was not significantly different for me. The emergency response structure made public information approval much cleaner than news releases of that variety would typically be. I had no issues with the structure. Everyone had clear roles and it was easy to communicate with the appropriate parties. I think the roles, responsibilities and reporting lines were clear.
- Cannot answer this question as I was out of town and had limited involvement.

Question 5: *“How did the Emergency Management Team perform during the event? How well did coordination occur across departments or agencies? Please include examples if possible.”*

- Coordination was good between the emergency management team, but without [Assistant Town Manager] sending out updates, we would have been in trouble. A secondary person in operations to compile information for an AAR and real-time dissemination is necessary. I think I need to separate from the police department during these incidents, or find a way to be in the EOC as the Emergency Management Coordinator.
- I feel once the team got fully activated the communication and direction went very well. The team expanded to key personnel within the town that were directly involved in trying to control the losses and system failures. The town's departments worked as a team to get the town back online and safeguard the public. The only issue that comes to mind is during the peak of the event there was communication about area dams having issues which for me at least seemed confusing as to how it was affecting us. This confusion was cleared up by town management. I think if you look at the extent of the flooding and how much of the town's infrastructure was involved, the town's EMT and staff did a very good job of limiting the inconveniences to the town residents. Most roadway, water and sewer services were restored to near normal in a few days.
- I think that the team performed well and shared relevant information for the PIOs to publish. We had the ability to check-in and coordinate with other communicators across the county, if we had the time, but we did not. We are currently coordinating the storm response information with the county, which has some challenges.

- I believe they performed very well. Everyone worked together and clear instructions were always provided. All the department heads had specific roles they had to play during this incident and I was not made aware of any mishaps or issues. One example is how the police department assisted Public Spaces by helping with the parks being marked off.
- Orange County Emergency Management — particularly Hannah Tuckman and Ian Fowler — were responsive to our requests for county emergency notifications. Ian Fowler needed to send the final OC Alert on a Saturday when he wasn't working because we chose to end the "conserve" water messaging on the weekend instead of Friday.
- Limited answer due to being out of town. I know communications was in contact with county emergency services staff, and county staff were willing to help put out emergency alerts on the boil water notice and water conservation due to having a larger subscriber base for OC Alerts in Hillsborough. The county's public information and environmental health staff also were in contact with the town, and the county public information staff tried to gather local jurisdictions for a meeting. The timing of the meeting was not coordinated with the local jurisdictions, and Hillsborough staff did not participate because of conflict with the town emergency management meeting. Better coordination and participation of meetings among communicators is needed to ensure consistency in messaging and to help share information. County staff sought review and approval of messaging for various content, such as bottled water distribution in Hillsborough and the community giving fund news release. Having a relationship already with county emergency services regarding OC Alerts and with county public information and environmental staff was helpful and likely could be better leveraged.

Question 6: *“What challenges or bottlenecks did you observe that may have hindered response efforts? Were the challenges the result of protocol, people, resources or some other reason?”*

- A botched forecast hindered the initial response; aside from that, we need to put a mechanism in place to have a team start working during the event. I did not run into bottlenecks due to my direct involvement.
- Resources for a town of this size is always going to be a challenge. Trying to get personnel to the affected locations was difficult due to outlying areas also being affected. From my involvement the challenges weren't a result of protocols it was more just trying to determine the extent of damages at the time of the event and where to focus or priorities.

- Occasionally, it was difficult to get in touch with some people to approve public information, but persistence to reach people pays off.
- I am not aware of any.
- There was a morning meeting during which I was surprised that there was some pushback against communications asking for a clearer timeline for testing and eventually restoring the drinking water. Communicators in local government are accustomed to receiving information that is not for immediate dissemination to the public. We are not the media. We are not calling the media to share information that has not been authorized to be shared. I want our colleagues to trust us.
- "There are issues with the current registration process for OC Alerts in that subscribing for Hillsborough water and sewer alerts is an extra step in the process. Some people in town who had registered for OC Alerts had not registered for the community alerts from the town.
- Additionally, there is an issue with the Community Alerts registration portion of OC Alerts. It allows people to check a box next to the Community Alerts header, which subscribes people to both OWASA and Hillsborough alerts. Everbridge needs to remove that checkbox so that people must open the drop down and select which water system to subscribe to. Currently, the town has about 7,100 people subscribed to the community alerts, but a large number are not in the town's water system and are likely subscribed due to not opening the drop-down section (subscribed to both water systems due to checking the box next to the Community Alerts header).
- The opt-in nature of the OC Alerts program is problematic because we cannot ensure emergency notifications go out to everyone in our water distribution area. A small percentage of customers likely are subscribed to the alerts despite direct mail and campaigning last fall and spring and regular promotions over the years.
- There were issues with the automated voice for OC Alerts phone calls dropping the NC in the town's website URL in multiple alerts. County staff noted they could not self record the alerts because use of their phones ended up garbling the message. In at least one alert, a county staff member inputted the wrong extension (.com instead of .gov) for the town's website instead of copying and pasting the URL. The town's initial alert contained a URL that was far too long. A short (friendly) URL or just the home page needs to be given in alerts.
- Some people wrongly assumed that because they are water customers and get billing texts or emails that they automatically would get alerts about issues with the water.
- The alert on boiling water did not note how long to boil water.

- The alerts banner on the town's website can take an hour to populate. The banner needed to go up immediately with a link to the water advisories and notices page and links to key information, like the Ready Hillsborough page and boil water news release. A brief news release about the boil water notice needed to be posted immediately for people to verify that the alert was real and to help share the information and steps needed. People had trouble finding the specific instructions for the boil water notice despite drop-down sections on the advisories and notices page with clear headers for the various advisories and notices.
- The news release took too long to go out. Some of that is the approval process, timing with the Emergency Management Team meeting with all approvers in the meeting, and the desire to include all information possible. There were issues with an approver changing and adding large amounts of content to messaging, with some content not matching the information on the water advisories and notices webpage. The information on that webpage had been worked out with utilities staff several years ago, with review each year. Advice from the town, Centers for Disease Control and others on boiling water conflicted.
- Boil water signs did not immediately go out, there were too few, and the messaging was not appropriate (noted confirmed contaminant in the water).

Question 7: *“What recommendations do you have to improve future disaster response efforts? Considering this event, what would you add or change?”*

- Structure and an overall plan, which is in progress.
- One thing that I would consider is adding a trigger on when the team is to be fully activated. This event occurred in the late night and early morning hours and although the majority of our communication is through text and email a wakeup call or other notification could get the team to respond more quickly.
- Communications is planning to implement changes to the initial response, including adding the alert banner to the website earlier and putting a placeholder news release that will be updated so when people visit the site to confirm the emergency, information is there.
- During the initial response and recovery, people generally want to know more information. As a part of that, it would be best to reduce the amount of time between our initial emergency messaging and the detailed information. Reviewing our publish times, almost two hours passed between the initial boil water notice and the news release; I believe the review of that release was held up by the first EMT meeting. Also, people continue to ask for park reopening timelines. "
- Continuing to hone our craft and more practice working together will ensure improved performance.

- When a disaster involves utilities, I recommend that someone be assigned to answer the phone at the Water Treatment Plant, freeing up the staff at the plant to address the problems they are solving. When a disaster occurs again, the Communications Division will post a short news release to the website right away so that there is some information on the website when people receive the emergency notification. It can take a long time for the alert banner to appear on the website.
- "Check in with the county on whether the town can get access to a shape file for the water and sewer boundary to be able to send messages to everyone within that boundary subscribed to OC Alerts vs. just those subscribed for the town's community alerts portion.
- Otherwise, work with the county to have all alerts sent by the county, with town communications staff providing the wording for messaging for all town alerts. An issue with dropping the community alerts portion of the notification system would be the desire from utilities for alerts on water outages (they want this so they can drop the use of door hangers).
- Ensure the county copies and pastes town messages into the alerts system vs. typing the messages in to avoid errors.
- If needed, town communications staff can record messages for the county to use for phone messages to avoid the issue with the automated voice giving the wrong URL.
- Make OC Alerts an opt-out program.
- OC Alerts needs to have language options.
- Use the Tyler payment system to send text and email to water customers for systemwide issues (I am working with [Utility Billing Supervisor] on this).
- Review the boil water alerts templates to ensure they include boiling water for one minute, are streamlined and include only the main URL or a friendly URL.
- Prepare website alert banner templates for boiling water.
- Communications has changed the banner alert color to an orange that matches construction traffic cones vs. a town branding color to ensure it is seen.
- Communications will post a brief news release immediately and update it as needed so that town news subscribers get emergency information immediately and so there is information on the town website vs. just provided on social media and OC Alerts. (Browsers can translate the information.)
- Review water advisories and notices information and confirm it is consistent with the advice of neighboring water systems and the CDC.

- Break up the water advisories and notices page with each advisory and notice having its own page so a link to that specific information can be given to make it easier for people to understand what directions to follow.
- Communications needs to review boil water signs to ensure clear and appropriate messaging and design that can be easily read and understood. An estimated 150 to 200 signs needs to be ordered. There should be signs for every entrance into a neighborhood and for park space within the neighborhoods. Ideally each street would have a sign.
- Communications needs to try to get community contacts for each street to help ensure information is shared with neighbors.
- Time needs to be dedicated in Emergency Management Team meetings for discussing public information messaging.
- Have staff and electeds send frequent questions or misinformation they are seeing or hearing to communications staff. Communications will provide messaging to staff and electeds to share.
- Work with ham radio operators to share emergency information.
- A listing of damage needs to go out as soon as possible. A news conference should be held sooner after a disaster hits. The town should post its own recovery webpage as soon as possible and link to county page with countywide resources.
- The town needs a central call center to direct phone calls. The Water Treatment Plant gets lots of calls that are not directly related to water service and quality. During emergencies, other staff members with more available time need to be assigned to answer calls at the treatment plants.
- Customer service training for dealing with irate customers likely would be good across the town.

3) Survey of Key Operational Staff

Question 3: *“How effective were internal communications between town staff and the Emergency Management Team during the response to Tropical Storm Chantal? What worked well, and what could be improved?”*

- I think that communications went well but could always get better.
- During the event, communication was not the greatest from Public Works. Post-storm communication was good.
- Email and text comms were good- I found out there was a boil water notice about 2 hours before information got to the general public which was confusing when trying

to share the information with the Chamber and business owners but there wasn't anything on the town website to point to.

- It was clear that we were supposed to report "up the chain" but it wasn't clear how, when, or from who information would come back to us. This led to not knowing who was the lead on various tasks and what the priorities were. It was not clear when we were supposed to submit info for release or when public information was going out and what topics would be covered. To reduce delays and confusion, staff in the field need to be able to talk to each other rather than only working through the team. The EM team members should be trained on all of staff roles and responsibilities so they know who is responsible for what in an emergency. Some of them don't seem to have a good understanding of staff roles and job descriptions. Would help to have regular check in times.
- Communications between the management team and staff in the field were pretty good, the updates were helpful. It felt like this communication came at the expense of communication between staff at the field level, not everyone always knew what everyone else was up to. I also think staff working remotely struggled to communicate with staff in the field, it was often difficult to explain complicated subjects over the phone to staff that were not present.
- From what I saw, communication was very positive. I was brought in to help with the financial side of assessing damage costs. One thing that would have improved communication in this area was more consistency in how people gave me budget numbers. For example, public space provided detail on almost every individual item while public works gave just one figure for all damage together. This was not a major concern, but it may be helpful to have a more uniform understanding of how much detail is needed and what can be left out for future events.
- The situational reports were helpful. While not involved directly during response, having that information was helpful as residents contacted me and my staff after the storm.
- Constant updates were helpful. Public information was also very communicative.
- For us we didn't have any issues with communication.
- I thought communications was good. Improvements for communication to residents could be improved, but I'm not sure how. Communications with budget and finance was good, as we were able to purchase items and lease equipment quickly.
- I think it was good.
- Communications over was good. Had no trouble getting touch with whom I needed.

- Problem was overflow of calls from Annex. With everything going on. Plus, all of the phone calls. Was a lot to do.

Question 4: *“How would you describe the clarity and functionality of the emergency response's organizational structure during the event? Were the roles, responsibilities and reporting lines clear?”*

- Yes. I think that everything was clear from my standpoint.
- Reporting lines were clear, we just wish we were better informed of the situation in Town.
- Yes, mostly.
- It was clear what was supposed to be happening but the new structure itself isn't very flexible and leads to information vacuum. That said, Emergency Management Coordinator was very accessible and helpful throughout event and in days after.
- Somewhat. I felt like our division wasn't really included in the emergency response structure, so we turned into more of a floating labor pool that helped other field staff when needed.
- Yes, I found them clear from the limited role I was in. For example, it was very clear that every line of communication eventually ran through [Assistant Town Manager]. However, direct communication was best to run through our individual leaders, which in my case was [Police Major].
- They seemed to be clear, but given I was returning from Texas during the flooding I cannot make any specific comments
- I think things were really efficient. I didn't notice anything from my perspective that needed to be changed.
- Everything was clear for the D&C division.
- The training we had before the flood was very helpful. I think that is why we were successful in keeping everything going and communication to those who need the information. Refresher training should be done every year before hurricane season.
- Yes. Very clear.

Question 5: *“How did the Emergency Management Team perform during the event? How well did coordination occur across departments or agencies? Please include examples if possible.”*

- [Police Major] did a great job informing us of what was going on around town and what to expect.
- I did not hear anything from other departments, so I can't say. Post-event, everything was coordinated well with other departments and agencies.

- Overall, well. I thought email information output was timely and information was shared effectively.
- Coordination worked well when we reached out directly to other staff members for help and information but was slow and sometimes lacking when waiting for team members to respond. Felt disjointed at times and redundant at others. Even though there was supposed to be one point of contact, we still had to explain what was happening to multiple people which shows info wasn't getting back to boots on the ground people.
- I thought the Emergency Management Team that were onsite did fairly well, I don't think offsite staff were engaged with what was going on. I don't think requiring field staff to report to offsite staff makes a lot of sense, the offsite staff are effectively just repeating what they are told and struggle to contextualize what they are hearing.
- I found the team effective. Again, I had limited exposure, but I felt that all activities and events (such as the AG visit) were effective, efficient, and well communicated, especially considering the large variety of things going on.
- Based on my contact with staff immediately after the storm while still on vacation, it appeared that the Emergency Management Team did a good job with coordination efforts. Again, coming home from vacation did not allow me to observe specific examples.
- Updates from the team were timely. I saw no problems with communication.
- I think for us we all pulled together and did a great job with the resources we had. I had Durham reach out to me and OWASA to see if we did any help or supplies. I also checked on Orange Alamance to see if they needed anything. The vendors we used where onsite first thing Monday morning to see if we needed anything or help.
- I handled the wastewater plant flooding and did not need the Emergency Management Team. I just kept [Utilities Director] up to date on what was happening and she communicated with the team.
- Great. Had no trouble getting other Depts. help. The Engineering Dept. was a big help for the WTP. The whole crew pitched in. Helped with pumps and hoses. Helped get the driveway at the raw water intake repaired. Couldn't have done it as fast without them.

Question 6: *“What challenges or bottlenecks did you observe that may have hindered response efforts? Were the challenges the result of protocol, people, resources or some other reason?”*

- I personally did not observe any challenges or bottlenecks.
- Trusting the weather forecast was our biggest mistake.

- It took a long time to get a banner on the website and/or signs out about the 'boil water' notice.
- Remote workers who serve in a leadership role during emergencies create a fundamental issue...they don't know what's happening on the ground and aren't always available by text or phone. Closing the town offices meant that Finance staff was not available the first day. We need to have access to Finance staff at least by phone. Town workers should be available in an emergency even if they can't get to the office. It took a few days to get budget accounts set up. We should have disaster accounts set up prior to emergencies with quick access to acct #s.
- Not everyone seemed to understand we had an emergency, and were sometimes slow to respond as they were occupied with work that wasn't associated with our response. We need to have a clear way of communicating our emergency status to support staff, and a clear directive that support staff need to drop what they are doing and assist if able.
- Again, just having more clarity on what can and can't be included in the damage assessment/more uniformity on how much detail should be provided would be helpful from the financial side.
- While I did not observe anything directly, I did get the sense there was a bit of a lag between emergency needs and Finance getting disaster funds/accounts set up. Since I don't know what effort was involved to get those set up, I can't say for sure it was an issue, but perhaps that process could be looked at and streamlined if possible.
- I saw none.
- N/A
- The 1970's design of the River Pump Station made the flood damage exponentially worse than it should have been. Unfortunately, that issues was being addressed by building a new pump station. However, that pump station has yet to be constructed.
- I can't think of anything.

Question 7: *“What recommendations do you have to improve future disaster response efforts? Considering this event, what would you add or change?”*

- I would like to look at the everything before making a comment.
- Response was good post flood and went according to plan.
- Faster response to getting emergent information to the public. More training/information on how we interface/work with Orange County EM operations. Potential to-dos before any future events are to train a staff member to be a Certified Floodplain Manager and also how to fill out FEMA flood damage reports?

- We need to make sure we have all the equipment and tools necessary to respond in an emergency. We need a better way to share people and resources across divisions. We need on call contracts for emergencies and disasters. We need to get boil water signs out faster and in all neighborhoods. Need to develop a shared folder that all can access for photos and files. We need to move all facilities, equipment and storage areas, out of areas that are likely to flood. Should map areas and buildings that flooded for future events. Should collect and organize contact info for private property owners/tenants that are likely to flood.
- I think we need to do a better job of having the necessary equipment onsite in advance, a great deal of time was wasted accessing emergency, backup equipment at greater expense (it's cheaper to just buy it now). We also need a better policy and more clarity on what is an emergency.
- Maybe having a Hillsborough specific damage assessment form with specific financial categories (item, projected cost, quoted cost, etc.) that people practice during tabletop events would be helpful for when a real disaster strikes. I got the feeling that people were developing their own process of getting numbers together. There was also not clarity on what should and shouldn't be included (labor hours for example). This is understandable as costs continue to change as we get more information on the actual extent of the damage/start to receive quotes. However, having a more uniform submission process for damage assessment would probably be easier in the long run.
- From what I was able to observe, disaster response was well coordinated. While I believe the PIO did a good job providing information on outages, status of water and wastewater plant operations, etc. the general public didn't seem to read that information based on social media posts I saw or they didn't know where to find it or perhaps they just didn't take the time to go to the town website.
- Overall though I thought response during/immediate after the storm was good. Where improvements could be made is in the weeks following. Given that this was a rain event, my division fielded a lot of calls and conducted site visits based on citizen requests. There is still a lack of understanding about what the town can and can't do regarding private property. Some of the issues are due to infrastructure owned by NCDOT or NCRR. Getting messaging out about this before storms and on a regular basis might help. I will be interested to see results of how the public perceived things."
- I think the way the event went was desirable. I was not receiving communication that I did not need. Things from the Fleet end were hectic, and I need things to be short and to the point.

- I think having more cameras in areas where we can monitor the towns sites by cell phones. Have something in place to when the river gets to a level, we move equipment and supplies safely. If need be, shut down the water plant and go online with Durham. I think this should be an eye opener for moving forward with the Star Field BPS. So, we can receive water from OWASA if we can't receive water from Durham in an emergency situation.
- Modifications to the River Pump Station will be completed to reduce future flood damage and accelerate repairs if needed.
- I think the Town should look into is it cheaper to rent pumps or maybe buy one to have on hand. A faster response time. Instead of having to wait for a vendor. I am not sure of the price. It may make better sense to just rent. Just thinking out loud.

4) Community Survey Responses

Question 2: *"What gave you confidence or concerns before this event?"*

- Nothing - only realized concerns when event happened.
- I had no previous experience with this type of situation and i've only lived here a few years so I wasn't sure.
- Quick alerts
- There have been previous floods that closed the parks and Riverwalk, and my understanding is that they were designed with this in mind (particularly Gold Park).
- The town is used to handling the normal flooding of streets and downed trees but no way could a storm of this magnitude have been foreseen
- My concern, Funding that had been taken away by doge that would have been used for needed upgrades on our water treatment infrastructure.
- I have lived in the area for over 20 years and have had a business in Hillsborough since 1997, I have never seen a storm like Chantal! I do not know if it has ever happened in the last 100 years, so how do you prepare?
- Concern: I had somehow gotten removed from OC Alerts and had to "re-apply"!
- Power outages that lasted a couple of days
- Honestly, I didn't give too much thought to it.
- The Town is generally well-managed, fiscally responsible, and attentive to future needs. The only concern is that it's hard to anticipate freak accidents, like a tropical storm deciding to stall right over Orange County and dump its entire moisture content.

- "Our River is so close to the water plant on Dimocks Mill Road which has caused flooding problems before, such as Hurricane Fran. We were without water for a long period then as well. The plant should have a better location away from the ever flooding Eno River."
- I was blissfully not thinking about it happening here. That's on me.
- The emergency responses
- Lack of concern for consistent flooding at Orange Grove and Churton. There has been nothing done by the town nor the developer of Collins Ridge who created the mess.
- I didn't know anything about their preparedness so I had no confidence or concerns. I didn't think about it.
- I honestly didn't think our area was at risk for this kind of disaster so it didn't occur to me to assess our level of preparation.
- We don't receive extreme events often
- I've lived here for over 23 years. I don't ever remember there being a problem with boiling water. Though there was the pathogen in the water in the early 2000s which probably contributed to a couple of my wife's miscarriages. So, Hillsborough water has always been a joke
- general impression
- Concerns existed around areas that already previously experienced flooding in Town during normal rain storms. Prime example is the intersection of Orange Grove Rd. & South Churton St. The flooding has been really bad there ever since Collins Ridge was developed.
- How the town has handled past large storms and flooding, particularly within the Gold Park area.
- It was clear that the riverwalk and gold park were in the flood zone and that these areas were designed with that in mind
- I feel like they were aware of the threat and prepared as well as is possible.
- The town seems to plan and publish what they are doing to prepare for storms
- Any other town run event has been well planned and executed.
- The two raw sewage leaks into the Eno River prior to Chantal should be a fair warning that our waste water system needs to be made much more secure from contaminating our fresh water supply and our watershed. There doesn't seem to be any urgency to address the poor development decisions made in the past and redesign the water and sewer system so that we don't continue poisoning our water over time.
- Knew River Pump Station was a real risk in a serious flood.

- The Town has typically developed detailed plans (ex. Sustainability plan)
- Our town usually is responsible and ready for anything
- Major Flooding Events (1995–2025)
 - Hurricane Florence (September 2018)
 - Hurricane Matthew (October 2016)
 - Tropical Storm Andrea (June 2013)
 - Hurricane Irene (August 2011)
 - Hurricane Fran (September 1996)
- Everything was so maintained
- communication was inconsistent.....be prepared but didn't give resources.
- I had a false sense of confidence in our water and sewer systems. I would have assumed when we have one of, if not the HIGHEST water/sewer rates in the state (if not the US) our systems would be well positioned to handle this type of event and have multiple levels of redundancies in place to ensure the continuation of service in an event such as this.
- We don't have a targeted evacuation or public notification tool. What we do have is a broad whole community update. So when people hear "flash flood warning" they ignore it because their home has never flooded before...messages should go to the people who need them. That way there is no alert fatigue.
- Orange County has always flooded along the River Walk whenever it has rained several inches.
- Over the years I have not noticed anything being added to help with any type of flooding near or at Gold Park or the Downtown area. More should have been focused on those areas.
- The town/county staff always seem to be on top of maintenance, etc.
- I guess my opinion is based on giving the town the benefit of the doubt. I don't know what is in place, but I would hope there are measures. Now that it has happened, I am sure there are many lessons learned.
- The notification system that sends me text and emails about items of concern like floods and storms. Very effective
- I had not really thought of it because I didn't think something like this would happen!
- There seemed to be no forward thinking action/activities. preparation for the usual... is NOT preparation.
- Too much new housing developments changing the flow of storm waters
- Who knows? We are not informed about these issues.
- The quality of town staff experience and expertise.
- Seems that the town is prepared in advance for other storms

- I had not really thought about it
- Information on preparing for disaster or extreme weather has been shared through town publications and is available to anyone with a computer on the town's website.
- Overall condition of public spaces The town works hard to make sure our spaces are well maintained
- I did not understand the town had submitted federal funding request and how far along the process was. Earlier warning on first day would have been welcome - I'm sure I was not the only one to have used drinking water before 9am warning that day.
- Buildings and walkways in the flood plain.
- The belief that Hillsborough was the sort of town that did things right, in terms of long term leadership planning and short term town employee effort.
- The excellent communications citizens receive from the Town related to its preparedness and its recommendations to residents on how they can be better prepared for weather events and other difficult situations gives me great confidence.
- Good coordination among the Town and County agencies; good Community involvement; many options available for training and resources.
- The Town has been proactively preparing financially and overall in its planning ahead of possible storms. Beyond the recent storm, the Town has been working consistently on projects/developments to mitigate future disasters (moving public works and water plant improvements).
- Hillsborough seems to be on top of things and cares about its residents.
- Little mention of this until after the fact, and even then the response was muted.
- Excellent intergovernmental relationships, prioritizing storm water and environmental protections
- Town officials tend to be very good at preparing for contingencies and communicating issues to residents.
- I was surprised by the boil water order and did not expect our water to be impacted by the storm.
- The town seems very serious about preparedness and good at forecasting worst-case scenarios.
- Parks and downed trees were always fixed quickly
- I knew the wastewater treatment plant was near capacity and could potentially be in trouble even with average rainfall.
- My confidence is based on the good people I know who work for the Town. They are some of the smartest, nicest, hardest-working people I've ever met, and if anyone could meet the challenge, it's them. What gives me concern is that I know that the

park always floods in these heavy rainfalls and that the water treatment plant is close to the water. Also, we always have service interruptions because of big, old trees that fall during these events.

- Past discussions with Town Commissioners
- Have read the staff response document that was prepared post event.
- Historically there was flooding in front of the Collins ridge neighborhood. Nothing has been done about it
- Just general impression of town thoughtfulness
- Power gets restored fairly quickly
- The four way intersection leading to our community floods with any rain we get causing road closures and pot holes. S Churton and Orange grove leading to Collins ridge behind the quickie mart.
- Just sort of assumed that the town was well prepared.
- Overgrown brush, drainage ditches blocked and the amount of prior water run off in previous storms.
- I am always updated on when severe weather is coming and the potential impact.
- Town leaders do a good job of communicating
- it is patently clear that the walk area was in a flood area. also, why did the town leave vehicles in a low lying area?
- Always received persistent text and call alerts regarding weather events.
- local community investments in waste water management infrastructure
- There is local flooding after a typical heavy rainstorm at the bottom of Gold Hill Way/Churton Street coming out of the Collins Ridge development. The Quickie Mart parking area around Churton typically floods during a heavy rain. Any overflow from a heavy rain in the retention pond adjacent to our home was getting released on the other side of the retention pond and was sitting right next to the railroad tracks, possibly weakening the tracks and gravel underneath them.
- Why haven't our water and sewage been updated
- I have a very positive view of the town's emergency services - police, fire, met, hospital ER
- I've observed the quick action on minor repair of bridges in Gold Park and contractors acting on parts of the Riverwalk near the Speedway. The Dept. of Public Works is on top of things.
- It seemed like flooding was a natural part of life by the Enos so I didn't worry about it, because I didn't expect anything so extreme.
- Quick response by the town to issues that arose in the past
- While we lost a lot of infrastructure/property, the response was phenomenal

- I moved to Hillsborough only about a year ago and did not have a comprehensive understanding of our emergency plans.
- The vehicle that were known in a flood zone should have been moved. That should be apart of preparing for this weather event.
- Confidence: the town is generally on top of such things, and communications had occurred via OCAAlerts regarding the impending storm.
- Previous storms
- I'm embarrassed to say I hadn't thought much about emergency preparedness, but I've had high confidence in our town's administration and staff for most things, so if asked I'd probably have assumed high preparedness.
- I think Hillsborough, like most towns, prepared using past climate data and disaster events. The response was great but the location of the infrastructure was unfortunate. I was very impressed with the arrangement we have with Durham.
- My job gave me confidence
- I never really considered the town's preparedness for a major storm before this event.
- I hadn't heard anything in the days prior to the storm reminding folks about emergency preparedness, or stating what systems/responses the town has in place for flooding.
- The apparent quality of the town's priorities
- The staff is routinely forward thinking about matters in general. That would carry over in emergencies.
- West Margaret Lane south side home at 325 is continually inundated with storm water from town's raising the level of the street during repaving over the years. There is no curb or gutter system to protect this house which is now below street level.
- Not sure anyone would expect it. Town tends to focus and allocate money on other things (eg equity and diversity)
- I moved here recently so was unsure
- I don't think our neighborhood was concerned because the Eno does not typically rise to a dangerous level even during large rain events.
- Storm and flood zone reports
- S. Churton by Gold Hill Way has had flooding issues for years and nothing continues to be done to fix the issue. The fact that the flooding hasn't been addressed didn't give me hope in alleviating concerns about the Eno overflowing and the protection of businesses along the way.
- I was unaware of any preparedness.
- Didn't have any concerns

- I follow the Sheriff's office on Facebook and am aware of some community events. This provided some reassurance that basic communication channels and outreach efforts were in place, but I had lingering concerns about how well-integrated these were with day-to-day services like schools and daycares, especially for working families.
- Phone/text/and email warning

Question 4: *"What gives you confidence or concerns (after the event)?"*

- Lack of communication with citizens - should not have to subscribe to texts to be aware of water boil advisory.
- I appreciated the fast action and information displayed
- I think it was as prepared as it could have been, given the circumstances. I think it has learned a lot from this disaster and will adjust accordingly for future events.
- I hadn't appreciated how vulnerable the water system was to flooding. But I understand that plans have been developed to fix that, and also that funding is threatened now by the destructive and incompetent current Federal administration.
- I understand all the damage from the flooding but I also know the town dug in and got right to work with borrowing trucks and working as best as they can to get back to normal as much as possible in short time mainly getting the trash and brush back up and going
- I think we fared as well or better than the surrounding communities, at least our dam was not at critical stage for rupture. As a lesson learned I would hope that the critical infrastructure will be located above the Chantal flood stage and mobile equipment moved to higher ground.
- Confidence: I appreciated the frequent updates about the boil water advisory and the water distribution events.
- Concerns: As a relatively new Hillsborough resident (we have lived in Orange County for years but moved to Hillsborough in summer 2024) I would like to know more information about the flood potential in different areas of town. My community theatre - Orange Community Players - was building sets in a shed behind the Exchange Club and it got completely flooded. If I had understood how close we were to the river there, we could have moved our tools and sets."
- The amount of damage done to the Riverwalk area and the damage done to water treatment/sewer plant.
- I don't think it's the town of Hillsborough's fault, but I think all towns are going to need to up their game and be more prepared for what life looks like right now. More

storms more often. Just this year in NC we've had catastrophic flooding in the mountains and now in our area. I think of the rivers and creeks of the veins running through our community, and it's not if they will flood again it's when. So, there's that!

- The speed with which water service was restored (and power, but that's Duke Energy, not Hillsborough), the immediate availability of large amounts of free bottled water during the boil notice, and the frequent and timely updates.
- "Nothing has changed for decades concerning the location of the Water plant. This could be alleviated with better planning in location and Infrastructure!
- Confidence: Regular updates and progress after the Storm
- Concerns: The infrastructure (particularly the pumping station) was not equipped to handle the storm"
- I do not have a cell phone, so don't receive texts. It was some time before I learned of the boil water edict via email or phone. I heard about it through a friend before I heard about it from the town. I would have liked more info on what exactly boil water meant. That's my only concern. After that, I was very grateful for the way the town handled things, keeping updates (and now I like being updated on the state of the parks) and providing free water several times.
- The responses
- **BUSINESSES FLOODED.**
- I was impressed with the quick action and transparent communication
- On one hand, it seems that the town understood the risk which is why it applied for a FEMA grant. When that funding didn't come through, I'm not sure what else could be done. It seems there was an effort to move public vehicles to high ground, which probably saved some.
- The notification that our drinking water was not safe did not automatically go out to everyone via an emergency text or alert system. This led to hours of my family drinking potentially contaminated water. It's also frustrating because water is expensive in Hillsborough... yet, we received word through our own friend network.
- We did not have to go into 0 water use like Mebane did. But I was supposed to get a text message from the water Co. and I never did. I almost killed my cats thanks to your screw ups... Hillsborough utilities is such a disaster. I'd do a better job running it.
- It seemed to take a very long time to stop dumping raw sewage in the Eno.
- Im not sure we could have been prepared for the storm surges and the water's rising so rapidly as it did with the Eno.
- This was an extreme event. Appropriate preparation was made. Only greater preparation would be not to use this land at all.

- The quick switch to Durham water was awesome.
- The communications sent out by the town and how fast streets were reopened
- While actions were relatively quick, there didn't seem to be a common playbook.
- The Town employees worked very hard on our behalf and should be commended but the decisions surrounding land use and watershed conservation have been horrible and need to be addressed
- I have very high confidence in the people charged with emergency response, ie, town staff. My concern is that there are things beyond their control that mean they don't have the right resources (including the resources to fix things like the pump station without local taxes and fees being the sole source) to be more resilient to the next event.
- What I look for is the response to the emergency and Hillsborough had the personnel in place to tackle the job and communicate with citizens.
- It seems everything fell apart and there's no timeline to know when it will all be functional again
- Though extreme, events of this type have not been that rare. The sewage pump station problems were a disaster waiting to happen. The town knew it, but prioritized expansion projects over taking care of existing infrastructure in a timely manner.
- Community spirit! Everyone is working together.
- Good staff.
- Completely disappointed with what my monthly (out of town) fees pay for to ensure safe and accessible water/sewer services. The fact that we have our water treatment plant in such a state of disarray even after collecting such high rates is very disappointed.
- Town crews should have had areas cleared and repaired. What are they doing???? hanging flags downtown?
- Literally no one could be totally prepared for an incident like we had. The most important thing is to learn from these types of events. When you know better you do better.
- I heard about the flooded vehicles and wonder why they are stored anywhere near a flood zone (maybe they aren't?!). I have questions- were residents who were in danger of flooding notified that they were in harm's way? Flooding happens fast, but often can be predicted. This occurred on a Sun in the middle of the night, so who was on call to mobilize? Did that all happen as it should or is there room for improvement? I have 3 friends who's residence flooded. I don't believe any of them received a warning. All of them relied on neighbors to help them.

- The water station seems to need work/adjusting but the tree removal and communication were good. I do wish there were text notifications we could get but Facebook has given me lots of info.
- Look forward, not behind. Prepare for worse than Chantal. Example: Park the vehicles in safe places (for goodness safe!!!)
- Too much development of housing re routings of storm waters, not developing water projects that were allocated fund nearly 10 years ago.
- Same as above. Plus what happened with the water and sewer issues.
- I don't understand why you parked so many town vehicles in low lying spots.
- With the overflow and damage to the water system there is concern about the infrastructure. Water updates were quickly provided which was very helpful.
- It seems like it would have been a foreseeable and fixable issue to plan for emergency storage of moveable equipment on higher ground when flooding is forecast and I hope that the town will take real steps to secure safe parking for the future.
- Given the timing of power outages and heat advisories it would have been good to make sure some public and local cooling facilities were available for those who may not be able to pick up and find a place to go outside of the power impacted area.
- Clean water sharing also could have been publicized more widely and made available more quickly.
- I have been concerned about new construction taking place in the flood zone and wondered how the town could justify that.
- I was surprised to learn that all (most?) of the town fleet was garaged beside the river. Knowing what we now know, I expect that may change."
- This was an unprecedented storm, looks like some future planning is needed to protect assets like vehicles and equipment. May need to invest in 4 in diesel pumps to mitigate SSO overflows.
- Town has provided ongoing information about the water problem, but I'm very concerned about costs if FEMA funds do not come through - which looks unlikely. What then?
- Town vehicles parked in the flood plain.
- My concerns are basically that infrastructure everywhere, including ours, is built to adequate standards, not good standards, certainly not ideal or optimal standards. In this case it sounds like the elevation was something that would flood every 20 or 30 years, particularly during the sort of tropical weather events that were known to occur back in the 1960s and 70s. Rivers swelling to extraordinary levels is not some unforeseeable act of god, or some new climate related event, this is just standard Mother Nature.

- We witnessed rapid and professional response to the flooding by the Town staff, including emergency repairs to the wastewater treatment plant pump station, which is located near our home. Again, the frequent communications from the Town was outstanding for several days and weeks following the event.
- The fast turnaround from disaster to providing resources, repairs and information updates.
- Clear and brief communication. Leveraged Orange County messaging to amplify alerts to community members. Provided the necessary information through email and phone (SMS and voice) multiple times a day. Businesses were also informed early. After the disaster, the Town immediately began documenting and assessing damages while also providing more insights to the community. The emergency board meeting was also helpful to approve financial decisions to go ahead with new vehicle purchases that were time sensitive.
- The Town also leveraged behind-the-scenes partnerships with Durham (water connection) and maintained strong levels of service throughout.
- My confidence comes from the Town's awareness for years in planning ahead of a storm like this to prevent disaster. Although the timing was not ideal, it shows that the Town is working to ensure we are prepared. "
- I appreciated the updates, and it was nice to know we had a deal with Durham for water.
- Responses seemed both slow and soft.
- The Town is still small and limited in staff/resources for impacts of this scale.
- Having critical town vehicles parked in a flood-prone area seems like a lack of planning.
- The city had a slow response to the flooding of the water treatment plant.
- The town acted quickly to respond to issues and there was as little disruption as possible overall.
- Emergency services responded to help keep the community safe in the face of 1,000 year unexpected flooding.
- This was historic flooding. You all did the best you could.
- Wastewater treatment is obviously a continuing concern. The drinking water treatment problem was, I think, solved by buying water from Durham. It is good that we have reciprocating agreements with Durham, OWASA, and (I think) Chapel Hill.
- What I am concerned about now is money. We've been defunded by over 7 million dollars, thanks to the fascist regime in power in Washington, money that was going to update our water treatment facility. How are we ever going to make that up? Meanwhile, I have confidence that our stormwater team is doing the best they can

to convince citizens to do their part to help. CITIZENS MUST GET INVOLVED! People need to maintain their culverts and creeks; we need to plant more rain gardens, use rain barrels, and collaborate to prevent the negative effects from increasing rain events.

- Nobody in the larger area was well prepared for this event. The staff review plan shows some of the weaknesses of the town's preparedness
- Flooding continues at the bottom of Collins ridge neighborhood. Also, train tracks were eroded due to retention pond spillover. Town was notified but nothing done because they believe it's a private matter. It's causing serious concern. Continued deferment of the problem brings lack of confidence that the town cares
- The level of destruction, particularly the trucks flooding.
- The water issue, which was the biggest concern, was dealt with quickly and communicated thoroughly through OC Alerts. I think awareness of OC Alerts should be distributed more, many of us weren't aware of that alert notification system and would not have received any info if neighbors hadn't told us.
- The four way intersection leading to our community floods with any rain we get causing road closures and pot holes. S Churton and Orange grove leading to Collins ridge behind the quickie mart.
- The actual magnitude of the storm was far greater than what anyone could have foreseen. Hopefully a lot has been learned from the storm. One thing that stands out, better/faster response to communicating with the public is needed.
- There needs to be more maintenance to public utilities, parks and recreation areas as well as roads. Trees, brush and areas of drainage need to be maintained and cleared every month or every other month.
- Quick to close trails, parks, and walkways for safety, but a month after the fact I wish finding information about projected reopenings was easier (it may be there, I just haven't found it).
- We were told what to expect and the progress that was being made. I appreciated the decision for the boil water notice. It helped me feel like the town was looking out for me.
- Town asking for feedback from this survey suggests they care.
- I haven't seen a real plan to have this not happen again.
- Alerts
- Lack of broad notification of water boil order. I did not learn how to receive updates until a neighbor told me. Suggest to auto-enroll in text updates with option to opt out. A communications campaign of how to enroll could also be helpful.

- We live directly adjacent to the retention pond closest to the railroad tracks within the Collins Ridge community. The force of the heavy rains pushed through the feeding tunnel of the retention pond and pooled on the side of the retention pond pushing water forcefully against the railroad tracks. The tracks were compromised. Trains could not run for a couple of days. The NCRR had to quickly install a temporary repair by putting in a metal pipe under the railroad tracks to allow the excess water flow to feed out away from the railroad tracks. We as residents of Collins Ridge are very concerned that this temporary repair is not strong enough or built safe enough to withstand the immense weight of the freight trains from Norfolk Southern and the Amtrak trains. We are requesting the Town of Hillsborough hire an independent engineering firm to come in and inspect this temporary repair done by the NCRR and informing all residents in the Collins Ridge community of its standing. If the permanent repair needs to happen in order for it to be done safely, then that needs to happen because there are people living here, directly behind the railroad tracks where this problem exists, and we do not want a derailment. We are hoping the NCRR is not putting profits over safety.
- I feel that this was an unusually severe event and the losses were not as severe as they might have been
- Quick action in closing areas impacted by flooding and mud.
- I thought you did a great job. You got the boil water notice out quickly, and you kept reminding people and communicating what was going on. You fixed things faster than anticipated, and the emergency system with the pipe to Durham, which I still have trouble understanding (such a long pipe!), seemed to work great. I appreciated the places to donate to help.
- Our water treatment systems are built in a vulnerable area and could easily flood again.
- See above
- While the response itself was pretty well handled, having the town's water facilities in the flood plain is a significant point of vulnerability. Preparedness for a disaster means anticipating and avoiding problems, not just solving them after they occur.
- I know that there were plans to move those facilities that were left without funding, and I can't imagine how frustrating that was for those involved in planning the project who were trying to prevent exactly the type of flooding that occurred.
- The vehicle that were known in a flood zone should have been moved. That should be apart of preparing for this weather event.
- Concern: If the town had truly been prepared, we maybe could have found an alternative place to park the vehicles that were affected. Regarding water treatment

facilities, there is only so much that can be done about aging machinery located in flood zones, so I don't really blame the town for that. I am not at all concerned about parks and greenways flooding, as we know they are in flood zones and it's a good use of such spaces.

- The size & intensity of Chantal
- I know that the town had already been planning to reconstruct the water treatment plant so it wasn't in the flood plain, and of course the storm came before it was possible to accomplish that. But I was surprised that the vehicles hadn't been moved. I'm very sorry about the damage to the Arts Mill, the River Walk, Gold Park, so many trails. I don't have enough knowledge to know how we could have prepared those places better for a storm like Chantal. But we've had two devastating storms in the last few years, and I suspect they will continue to come, so I want to be sure we devote necessary resources to preparing.
- I'm hopeful more attention will be paid to the changing climate crisis we're heading into so infrastructure can be updated or moved. There is no such thing as too much planning.
- Preparedness tips and clear communication
- The location of the water treatment plant in an area vulnerable to flooding seems like it will lead to future issues. Overhead power lines throughout much of the town also seems to be risky. However, resolving those risks seem like extremely expensive endeavors.
- I got most of my updates on flood response from WRAL or other local news, rather than directly from the town or county.
- Flood-worthy storms can't be prevented. But the town's proximity to the Eno River should long ago have prompted "worst case scenario" disaster prep. The sewage and water treatment facilities should NEVER have remained in harm's way. And we all know that we can no longer blame our fate on the likes of "100 year storms". Such storms are coming yearly nowadays. Sadly.
- As #1. Also this was an unusual event and the staff was very open about the processes
- The issue with water for about a week.
- I was impressed by the bottle water distribution events and newsletter communications. I felt informed about the storm response.
- All the (expensive) service vehicles were stored in the flood area and destroyed. Town approved new homes and schools built in flood area which were destroyed or contributed to worsening of the flood. Ongoing closure of highly valued town parks

which reduces quality of life. Total failure of waste water system which discharged entire towns sewage into the river for days.

- Clean up started quickly and the Town was in constant communication with the residents. Water service returned quickly even though much of the town infrastructure was damaged or destroyed.
- We now know that a 100 year or even 500 year storm event can and will happen much more frequently.
- Huge need for water repair, relocating issues
- Never received communication about flooding of S Churton or the Eno River. Only started receiving notices about Water Boil notice after a lot of people had already left for work, so had used the water.
- Water supply and sewage issues.
- I felt like we were a little reactive—I dropped my child off at daycare on Monday morning, encountered closed roads on the way back, and by the time I got home, the daycare was calling and telling us to pick up our kids. Perhaps this is partly the fault of myself and the daycare for not checking updates sooner, but it seems like officials were scoping and finding out the damage at the same time we were. On the positive side, once the impacts were clear, road closures were handled efficiently, and there seemed to be fewer widespread issues compared to neighboring areas like Mebane, where flooding led to more severe business disruptions and infrastructure damage.
- I previously lived next to Ellicott City, Maryland in Howard County, Maryland which reminds me a lot of Hillsborough, and they had ""once in 1000 year storms"" twice over the span of several years, resulting in the loss of life and destruction of personal and commercial property. They had to undergo significant flooding prevention.
- Not sure given the amount of water that any precautions could have been done at the water plant or transfer station. Could berms help? Perhaps vehicles need to be moved to maybe town hall lot if there is adequate notice or always parked on higher ground

Question 6: *“Was the communication clear, timely and accessible? What can be improved for future events?”*

- No - faster response time & wider reach with communication
- Yes.

- I think I learned about alerts faster on Facebook than through oc alerts, but that might be because orange county had a lot going on and more concerning threat of life and loss than Riverwalk flooding, for example.
- I mostly relied on OCAAlerts emails Facebook posts, which were informative and timely. I'd have liked a bit more ongoing updates about the damage and repair work on the Riverwalk and parks, with estimates for reopening.
- It was clear I think going forward there should be barriers maybe built in place that at lockable I. The future to keep residents out so safety and repairs can be done on local parks
- I think I received most of my information from Facebook
- I don't feel like I got any communication from the town during the actual event. The flood warnings came through my weather app. Since then, I have joined the FB pages for the town and the police.
- Boil advisory should have been emailed to all Hillsborough water customers who have electronic accounts. If I hadn't been in social media, I would've had no idea.
- More information/status on places, roads and areas to avoid is always better.
- I don't even know exactly where to find communication from the town of Hillsborough. Social media? I heard about closures after the flood directly from businesses or via social media.
- Yes, yes, and yes; without power, of course, I couldn't use my laptop to read my e-mails, but I could check my phone briefly. I made it easier by taking a room at the Colonial Inn for the night, where I could use their wi-fi and recharge all my devices.
- Just to alleviate the problem entirely by building a better infrastructure in the Town!
- Yes
- yes - except for the initial alert notice
- Great customer service
- Yes.
- Yes. Communications exceeded my expectations. I was already signed up for OC alerts and following the town on social media. I was impressed by the frequency of updates on flooding, the water supply and steps the town was taking to fix the problem.
- No it was not. Need an emergency alert system or just a mass-text system.
- I never got the text notification that I signed up for. So, you need to fix that. I also never got an apology when I complained. In fact, one of your councilmen was very rude to me. I won't be voting for him ever again!
- I wish the boil water advisory came in before I'd already had 2 cups of coffee. That being said, it always felt like folks were doing their best.

- Yes, no suggestions to improve
- All good
- FB announcements worked for us. We also got about 20 reposting on Nextdoor from word of mouth.
- More transparency regarding water supply treatment decisions. Currently tap water is smelling too full of a mix of chemicals. We are not currently drinking the Town supplied tap water despite assurances.
- Yes but social media helped a lot more
- I had information coming on text, email, and social media. It was clear timely and accessible for me. My neighbor, who did not sign up for alerts and doesn't use social media, didn't know about the boil water alert. So - perhaps a layer (neighborhood block by block news?) for health notices would help.
- Excellent communication
- Alerts via landline phone came very late. I got alerts via landline but I don't think this was something I had signed up for. Also, many residents had not signed up to receive alerts via their cell phones. I had not, but did during the aftermath.
- Post storm did not have much info on resources. Needed people checking on homes and businesses effected by the storm.
- Communication was well done by the town.
- Targeted, zone-based communication would be AMAZING. Also, why not use some voice speakers that can tell us what's happening (tornado, flood, etc)?
- Closed signs only seen and info in newspaper.
- I don't know how to get communication from the town.
- Yes, it was clear, very timely, and accessible. Saw lots of reposts by neighborhoods or businesses of the Town's post.
- The text and email system works well for me.
- Yes. Maybe text updates people could sign up for, too! Edit to add: I see below we can get texts. Sharing this more frequently would be good! I only get texts telling me there's bad rain or tornado so I wonder if more can be done with that.
- were seniors and other vulnerable people notified except electronically?
- N/A
- After the fact
- I am happy with the communication.
- For the most part they were helpful. One issue to consider is a way to update the website for these types of issues where the key message points are front and center with an easy way to review all communications.

- More explicit information about when and why water boiling is necessary would help everyone understand the necessity. For many of the water looks okay out of the faucet then boiling could be skipped. Once you understand that not only is treatment compromised but sewage is entering possible water supply on an ongoing basis is the need and safety risk made clear.
- it was accessible to anyone who maintained power, as our side of town did. i no longer subscribe to OCAerts so i don't know what was transmitted through that channel.
- Communication was clear, but a little slow (probably understandable slow given the disaster.)
- no
- In hindsight it would have been reassuring to know that it was possible to get water from Durham.
- Yes, it was. But we're wondering if some kind of special alert can be raised when the Eno River rises to highly dangerous levels that put homes in low-lying areas in danger.
- All good - thank you!
- Yes. Clear and brief communication. Leveraged Orange County messaging to amplify alerts to community members. Provided the necessary information through email and phone (SMS and voice) multiple times a day. Businesses were also informed early.
- I appreciated all the updates.
- After the 'warning' given by Helene, I would have expected more awareness of what might come. Still I've seen little retrospective on the damage, other than to the water purification station. Were police cars, garbage trucks, police stations hurt, and cost? Yet I've seen that for Durham, Cary, Chapel Hill. Put it in the News of Orange!
- No fault of the town, but can be confusing to have different messages from different jurisdictions...would like to see more joint messaging with the county in disaster situations.
- No. Communication seemed unclear and slow, and I was left to rely on social media posts from citizens that I wasn't sure I could trust.
- Great use of social media to keep us informed.
- Hillsborough communications officers are tip-top, website posts were great.
- It was very clear and consistent as long as a person was signed up for OC alerts.
- I was without power for about 24 hours. As far as I know, there was no effort to notify people who didn't have electricity if their cell phones weren't charged.

- Absolutely clear. Stellar work.
- The speed of the event was a challenge for any organization. We subscribe to OC alerts and received regular updates during the event. Post event the towns communications did a bit muddled as staff determined what the real impact was and how actions like boil water advisory would be shared. Future communications would be helpful if they are very specific and actionable even if it takes longer to develop this type of communication.
- I only received comms about water plant. Helpful but not thorough
- I haven't paid that much attention.
- It was timely. I think awareness little more detail would benefit. It was a little difficult to find the specifics about what you could or could not do with the boil water advisory, so maybe put a link to that information with each update regarding the stats of boil water advisory.
- No, the drainage needs to be solved. This has been an issue for years.
- See answer to #4 above.
- No
- I thought it was excellent.
- Yes
- yes
- After enrolling, i feel the notificaitons were timely and helpful.
- The communication was clear and timely and accessible. Thank you.
- Earlier warning for prepared for post
- Perhaps follow-up communication on when closed areas will reopen.
- I'm not sure if this is possible but I get up at 5 AM so I did drink two glasses of water before the notice arrived. So maybe some kind of preliminary notice/warning (like a tornado watch level of warning) when you anticipate a problem? But that might freak people out more than necessary.
- Yes
- OC Alerts were awesome. The town pushing text messages were great. I would hope that the town does a better job in the future in providing guidance to local business owners.
- No. I received no communication from the town in the days after Chantal. My email address and phone number are associated with a water and sewer account, but I only heard about the boil water notice (start and end) from a neighbor. Not a single email or text from the town.
- Yes, great on keeping everyone informed.

- I appreciated the OCAAlert messaging system. However, communications via the town website were not adequate. Information about the water advisory was difficult to find on the town website. It was buried in the News section, updates were slow to happen, and the only message on the home page was a very small ribbon at the top of the page. Also, at first, only available on Facebook, which I do not have and I do not think should be used for official town communication. The town website would have been much improved by having a large pop-up banner regarding the water advisory and other issues. Town of Mebane did this following Chantal, and Orange County Schools uses a pop-up banner when sharing urgent information.
- I received alerts, and I've always been impressed by the alert system in Hillsborough. But my home is not in a flood plain.
- More information is always welcome. I appreciated the attention to getting details out to us as events unfolded. There were some conflicting notes though about using hand sanitizers after hand washing. Perhaps I overthought it or you assumed that was self-evident, but when it came to showering, that was ok though there was no mention about hand sanitizers after showering.
- It can be improved
- I got all the communication I needed.
- I did not receive any communications.
- This is a "compared to what?" question.
- It was clear. No changes needed for me.
- The communication was clear and timely. If the information is sent via text, no need to call or email.
- It was timely and accessible; however, as someone working in local government I feel more familiar with which services are town vs. county. I think it would be helpful to consider ways to message during off-storm times to make sure people know which services are town services vs. what the county handles so folks can sign up for the relevant newsletters/communications from these departments.
- It was pretty good honestly. Better than expected.
- Yes
- Yes, but the town communication folks were no more prepared than the rest of us. All storms need to be taken seriously!
- Yes clear and timely
- Never received communication about flooding of S Churton or the Eno River. Only started receiving notices about Water Boil notice after a lot of people had already left for work, so had used the water.

- "I was alerted to the flooding from a friend stuck in Chapel Hill who needed helped. I searched Facebook pages and local news and found almost nothing. I was aghast, especially, that local news had nothing. Police FB - nothing. Town FB - one post that streets had water. Nothing to warn people of the actual danger, nothing showing people what was happening.
- I'm from a coastal town, the lack of communication was incredible. Especially after what happened with Helene.
- First found out about the boil water order while scrolling through next door. This is after I had drank my morning coffee. The official website was not updated until much later. I finally received text and phone calls about the boil order but it was 2 hours later. The delay was unacceptable. There needs to be better timely communication.
- The communications were mostly clear once they started rolling out, but timeliness was an issue in the early hours when flooding began escalating—many of us were already on the roads or at work/school before full alerts went live. Accessibility was decent via official channels like OC alerts, but not everyone checks those in real-time. Improvements could include more consistent outreach on social media sites (e.g., regular updates on X, Facebook, and Instagram), cross-sharing on Facebook pages from community leaders like the Sheriff's office, posting on neighborhood platforms like NextDoor, and integrating with apps used by schools/daycares for faster notifications to parents.
- Very satisfied

Question 11: *"What factors influenced your sense of safety or vulnerability, as ranked above?"*

- Distrust in town communicating issue
- I live very close to the river.
- Self preparation (having experienced immediate family issues affected by Helene), timing. Vulnerability about living near a stream and neighborhood retention pond (I watched those closely). Vulnerability with water supply (I had tools to purify water but had not thought of filling bathtubs, for instance).
- We live at Pinewood Station on S Churton St, and our apartment is very close to the lake there. The lake rose over its banks and came into our front door, and then the sewer backed up and clogged and we had raw sewage in the apartment for several days (and no toilets). It was not managed well by the apartment administration, and the OC Health Department had to be called in to get them to address the problem.

- The damage was contained mostly to areas around the river and low land areas
- I slept through the entire storm, my home sets at a high elevation, the only indication at my home was a seasonal creek pushed leaves 3 feet up a fence.
- My house has an intermittent pond, managed by the Town, that fills when it rains. The pump for the pond just kept going all night and it made me uneasy. I didn't know if the water would come up to my house. The boil water advisory was surprising and made me feel somewhat unprepared.
- It wasn't until the next day that we learned of all the damage.
- I live down a gravel road and I worried the creek would flood the road and we would be trapped.
- While life was seriously disrupted, I did not feel UNSAFE; I had food and water/juice, and a roof over my head, and I could always drive to a nearby town if the power was out for a protracted period.
- "The quality of the water then and even now. It still has a fowl smell and the pressure where I live is not the best. I live in Eno Haven and the water pressure here seems to be a lot slower than in previous years.
- The water situation, the loss of parks, the fact that so much sewage was dumped into the Eno (heartbreaking) and the fact that, as I understand it, the pump station is temporarily fixed.
- Great customer service
- I was safe. I was worried for my business and other owners.
- I wasn't home during the storm and didn't know about it until after the fact.
- It seemed the storm was outperforming forecasts. My home is less than 10 years old and we live near a creek. As reports of flooding were coming in, I was unsure if our area would be impacted. In the end, we were fine.
- Personal preparedness
- I felt like we were so left in the dark in terms of an idea of when things could be fixed. Even if you had no idea, fake it until you make it.
- I generally feel safe in my home.
- We were actually out of town for the event
- I live high above the eno and stayed home during the storm
- I'd never expected nor experienced this much rain and flooding
- We aren't in a flood zone.
- I was flooded out of my painting studio at the Eno Arts Mill and lost product and supplies due to the Chantal flooding.
- Wasn't sure of road conditions for a few hours
- Was not in town for the event.

- Higher elevation
- Grateful I live on top of a hill and knowing my house can't flood
- I live in an elevated area of town away from any bodies of water.
- water lapping at the back steps...
- Just not having been directly affected by the water was enough for me to feel safe.
- My house is on a hill - not at a flood risk
- I am fortunate to be in an area that did not flood.
- I was aware of my surroundings and vulnerabilities
- During the heaviest moments of rain, the drains that go across all the yards in my neighborhood overflowed and covered my driveway. That was scary.
- I'm not in historic downtown so we have a well and still had power so we had water. Trees down on the road were a concern but they were removed quickly and we just stayed home.
- the site where my house is
- Lucky enough to be in an area with no flooding chances.
- The weather situations can happen. Sadly, I think the situation was underestimated by all prediction sources.
- The quality of town staff
- We were prepared in our household with the necessities.
- I live in a great neighborhood where I knew I could ask for and receive help if urgently needed.
- at first, we did not know the extent of the damage until we walked downtown. talking with folks there, we definitely felt more vulnerable, and as the extent of damage unfolded, became aware how much many people had suffered.
- Danger of trees falling.
- Well, for example, I drank a bunch of tap water about 30 seconds before I got the notification that it was possibly contaminated
- We have experienced flood (and hurricane) events in the past, so we felt capable of addressing most of the difficult situations that can arise. We were also confident of our Town and County emergency services.
- Overall concern for our home and the community.
- Our home is FAR ABOVE the Eno.
- We live in an area that is not at risk of flooding.
- The area I live in is not at risk of flooding.
- I have always felt safe in our town.
- We just moved to Hillsborough so were unsure of how to get info.
- My house is not in a flood zone and I had access to clean water

- I always have drinking water on hand. My neighbors check on me. My house has been here over 100 years and was built without electricity. Electricity is certainly nice, but I don't consider it a necessity.
- Ha ha! Our house is on one of the highest points of land in town. And we have a solar generator.
- The quick ride in our creek was unprecedented and was cause for alarm
- Vulnerable to the overflow of water from Collins ridge retention pond. Train tracks are behind my house. Could have been a train derailment like PA.... Very skeptical of the town
- I worry about the ditches and culverts getting backed up and flooding my house. I live at a low point where there are culverts, some of which I have routinely seen blocked. If the culverts had been blocked during this storm, my house would have flooded. As is, I had water half way up my yard. The ditches in my neighborhood are also insufficient - even after multiple attempts to get the town to improve them - so I had heavy flows of water coming down from my neighbors yard, across mine, and into my crawlspace.
- Same as above but also good neighbors talking to each other and keeping everyone updated just in case someone hasn't received the updates
- The four way intersection leading to our community floods with any rain we get causing road closures and pot holes. S Churton and Orange grove leading to Collins ridge behind the quickie mart.
- Storm water runoff in our neighborhood Cornwallis Hills.
- I take care of my land and the drainage away from my structures all the time, have a generator and more than enough food and water as well as other necessities.
- we didn't have to depend on Orange County or Hillsborough
- The Town was responding cautiously.
- Town was communicating. Neighbors were sharing news too so there was a great sense of community.
- i wasn't near any of the affected areas. I always try to understand where i am with my car, as well
- I did not know about the boil water order until a concerned neighbor informed me. As a new resident, I had no idea that I needed to enroll or how to do so. Suggest to include enrollment as part of town services (ex: enroll based on receiving Hillsborough water bill)
- We were very concerned regarding the amount of rain/water spilling over onto the railroad side of the tracks, which is directly adjacent to our home. We live on Brightleaf Road. All townhomes on Brightleaf Road have the railroad tracks directly

behind us. We were fearful of a track washout (which happened) and a possible derailment in the process.

- The variability of weather now causes us to be concerned. We feel more vulnerable to weather events and this is not related to public entities, it's just increasing severity of weather events.
- I live on the top of a hill and I have a new roof. I do have some large trees but I don't think there's anything I can do about them. I'm not cutting them down. And I have homeowners insurance.
- Also, tropical storms aren't usually any worse than our regular thunderstorms so I wasn't thinking about it much. I'm glad I was home that night and in the future will pay more attention to flood warnings and not going out."
- Location- we experienced no flooding
- My home is not on the flood plain; we experienced no damage.
- The alerts and info shared during the inclement weather
- Our primary concerns were about the safety of the town water supply.
- House some distance from flooded areas
- My home is not in a flood plain. I feel vulnerable to power outages, especially since I care for my 99yo mother in my home.
- Just general storm damage concern to personal property.
- Our particular living situation is secure. High and dry house, well water, generator if needed.
- My place of residence did not experience flooding levels of water, just seeing the runoff go by the house in a river.
- The location of my home
- Communication and my location
- My safety was mostly attributed to the fact that my property didn't flood, more so than anything the town did or didn't do. I knew that the town was going to communicate true concern. i.e. we were told when not to drink the water and run appliances like washing machines when it was necessary.
- I got trapped in my car in a flood. Once I got rescued I felt safe after that.
- I live in a solid house well above the flood plain.
- I felt safer once I knew my house would not flood, my power worked and my water was safe to drink.
- We had done water intrusion repair on our house in the past before the storms
- I had no idea how bad it was as there were no issues within my neighborhood and wasn't trying to leave.
- We were out of town

- We weren't experiencing flooding issues.
- Confidence came from knowing the town has a responsive Sheriff's office and community networks, but overall, it highlighted how tied-up EMS and first responders can strain resources quickly in a flooding event.
- As community members, steps we can take to protect ourselves when EMS are occupied include:
 - Creating neighborhood watch groups or text chains for sharing real-time updates on local hazards (e.g., flooded roads or downed trees) to avoid relying solely on official channels.
 - Stocking basic emergency kits at home with items like flashlights, non-perishable food, water, first-aid supplies, and portable chargers to sustain families for 72 hours without external help.
 - Participating in or organizing community trainings like Stop the Bleed or CPR courses through local organizations, so residents can provide immediate aid if professional responders are delayed.
 - Establishing family emergency plans, including backup communication methods (e.g., walkie-talkies or designated meeting points) in case cell networks overload.
 - These steps would help build resilience not just for storms but for any emergency where resources are stretched thin.
- I do not live in a low lying area but the intensity and amount of rain was concerning.

Question 13: *"What services or support were most helpful to you during the emergency response? What services were not available or accessible to you that would have been helpful?"*

- Text to entire town to notify of water boil advisory - it was very difficult to find information on it & the reach was not wide enough. Not enough people knew about it as soon as they should have
- Places to go if there is no power for prolonged periods of time for people to cool down and charge devices would be helpful
- Emergency info was pretty good and quick. I think In the future, specific recommendations about our tenuous water supply would be helpful (like full your bathtubs, etc)
- Besides alerts, I didn't receive any direct support from the Town. But OC Health Department was helpful in addressing the sewer backup issue on our property.

- Just getting the word out to citizens and keeping them as informed as possible makes everything better
- Did not need any assistance, we already have bottled water at our facility, and really do not use that much water other than filling tanks
- Water distribution events were helpful
- More information on the details of the boil water advisory would have been helpful
- We didn't lose power and luckily we woke up to no standing water on our property.
- I think it's necessary to know what roads are closed, if water is unsafe for drinking, when power will be back on.
- Most helpful: Frequent updates about the water situation - the boil notice, the estimated time before it would be lifted, the necessary steps before it COULD be lifted, and the time it actually ended (early!); and the location of free bottled water, provided with no bureaucratic hassle.
- What would have been more helpful? Duke Energy's updates were, as always, vague about the cause of the outage and the timeline for restoration, but again, that's a Duke issue, not a Hillsborough one.
- The fact that they kept us updated daily and the quick response to having water piped in from Durham. Being prepared for this kind of problem in the future.
- OC Alerts
- OC Alerts
- Great customer support
- NA
- For me, this was mainly the timely alerts and updates. However I also took note of the resources made available to everyone including bottled water distribution and a disaster fund.
- You guys turned the water back on faster than anticipated, which was appreciated.
- thank you for the water.
- The clear communications from the town were most helpful. Having access to potable water and a clean Eno River would have been helpful.
- The boil water notices
- I did not seek support but was aware of water distribution. I boiled water
- Water information
- Police, fire and street maintenance
- Water and road outage updates.
- Information regarding water quality. The Town should go beyond Federal disclosure requirements when informing the news media and the citizens regarding water quality.

- Text updates
- Info about status of water and sewer plants very timely and helpful.
- Communication was great and water distribution was great. To my knowledge nothing could be improved
- Water/Sewage alerts were very good, once I was fully signed up.
- Friends and having flood insurance. Running into Stephanie Trueblood talking to a group of people.
- N/A
- We live in the Cedar Grove Community
- I assume roads were cleared by town, parks are being repaired, etc.
- Frequent OC alerts were helpful when had poor signal to check social media.
- I was fortunate not to lose power but my daughter lost power and I know that the city work too quickly restore that.
- none come to mind
- Safe water
- None. Some people from Orange Co. came around and talked to those of us who suffered damage from the Eno flooding, but no one from Hillsborough came around. Just the emails about the water situation.
- I had everything I needed
- Communication was the most helpful. we were fortunate in that we did not sustain any damage
- See #4 above
- i think the NextDoor reports were most helpful.
- with hillsborough's experience following on the heels of the disaster in central Texas, there definitely was a feeling that danger may not always be obvious in storm situations.
- Services were adequate
- I reckon the bottled water was nice. It was nice to get any communication at all.
- Communications were first rate! We even received a phone call from the mayor following the event.
- Information and free the case of free water bottles - thank you!
- I appreciate 1) clear communication regarding the status of the drinkable water (boil notice) and 2) continuity of services through the Durham water connection to provide water to the community. 3) Shortly after the storm, despite all the damages to Public Works vehicles, the Town staff worked tirelessly to fix equipment and borrow from neighboring county/towns to continue providing services. Thank you Public Works - you all are awesome, especially the staff who've been working to

make the most of the salvaged vehicles/equipment. 4) Communication around our parks has been great.

- Our home was not affected, so we thankfully didn't need more updates beyond the water ones.
- Didn't know anything was available!
- More clarity on road closures within town limits.
- Email were helpful. I would have been happier if I had clear communication on which roads were inaccessible.
- Ability to borrow water to resolve the issue quickly was a great plan.
- Water distribution during the boil order was awesome.
- Information about road safety. Information about drinking water safety.
- There was a woman driving around going door to door to ask if people knew about the boil water. This seemed like a poor use of resources but also necessary if not everyone gets the emails/phone calls.
- I checked the website and my tech-savvy neighbors. I think there should be some way to notify people who don't have electricity.
- Texts about water advisories and being able to pick up a case of water
- I think the stream of communication was very important. Knowing what is happening and what we are facing helps diminish anxiety.
- Alerts and emails
- Flooding support, the area by the Quickie Mart on Churton was cleaned quickly after the storm. PLEASE REPAVE THAT WHOLE AREA AND LOOK AT DRAINAGE REPAIRS
- The road is just completely shut down, no service
- No support was there and maintaining the town and it's infrastructure is key to surviving.
- OC Alerts
- Normal service
- Most helpful were timely updates by text about water safety. Suggest to offer maps of closed roads & estimated time of repair if possible.
- We received updates regarding the water usage. The information given was clear.
- Water supply was very helpful.
- Notification of boil water notice; public notifications on water & sewer damages, road damages, river walk status
- As seniors, we really appreciated the access to bottled water. We took advantage of the free water being given at Mayo St. We didn't have to go and search at various stores during the Boiled Water Emergency.

- The communication was what I needed. The water was a nice idea but I didn't want to use plastic bottles and boiling it wasn't that hard for me. I was lucky to have power though. Having the library for air conditioning would have been nice had I lost power.
- OC alerts, water distribution
- More guidance to food and bev. We were all basically making our own rules with what the town issued.
- I didn't receive specific services or support related to the storm, nor did I need any, so I rated a neutral 5.
- Removing felled trees and debris removal
- Communication
- We did not need take advantage of many services. I appreciated that bottled water was distributed. We would have appreciated better communication about the town water supply, roads that may have been inaccessible, and pauses in town services (such as trash pick up) via the town website and not just social media.
- Communication was excellent, public safety services were quick to respond
- n.a. since I did not need help. I do wish we had an estimate of when trails would reopen. Doesn't have to be exact, but an estimate would be nice.
- The town website was great for getting information and finding other ways to become informed.
- N/A
- I didn't see the boil water notice until hours after it took effect.
- Updates about water usage.
- Information
- Water support. I did not receive any water as we are able to provide but was great to see it available for those that need it.
- Bottled water distribution was incredibly helpful and well communicated on the newsletter and social channels. It would have helped to know where to go for access for power to charge devices. I went to Weaver Street at the recommendation of coworkers to charge devices and cool down.
- It was helpful that people were out in the horrible storm closing roads that were unsafe
- Don't think I needed anything else.
- The continuous communication about the situation were helpful.
- You cannot have too many email and text alerts and social media posts during a major disaster like that.
- Water and debris mitigation

- If something had happened and I needed services none would have been able to reach our neighborhood due to flooding of the only entry way to our neighborhood.
- Better and more timely communication.
- The most helpful services were the Orange County alerts for road closures and flood warnings, which allowed me to navigate around dangers once I was aware, and the Sheriff's office updates on Facebook that provided some real-time context. Local news coverage also helped track the storm's progression.
- perhaps more info on the availability of free water

Question 14: *“What should be the top priorities for improving the community’s response to future emergencies? Feel free to include ideas on planning, resources, communications, support systems, etc.”*

- Securing water supply; advance identification of commonly flooded roads and relayin that info to public
- The main thing is hardening the water treatment system, which I know is being held up by circumstances beyond your control.
- Maybe have some people out and about looking when storms are approaching
- Coordinate with other OC agencies to stage equipment at higher elevation facilities. elevate infrastructure to avoid damage in the future.
- Most of the damage reports I saw were from random people on Facebook. An official damage report, updated daily, would have been useful.
- Updating the water & sewer plants.
- I think future planning around flood prone areas, designated safe places advertised before flooding begins, a known hotline or number to call if you are trapped or home is flooding or road is flooded.
- Only two improvements I can think of:
 - (1) Keep building resilience into our systems; move the water treatment plant when this becomes feasible.
 - (2) Charging stations! None of the Town's communications will work if your laptop and phone are dead. Maybe provide lots of power strips to places which tend to get power back quickly, like the Library? Charging was one of the reasons I stayed at the Colonial Inn during the blackout - that, and the lack of air conditioning in my house.
- I responded to that in a previous question. Planning for the future by building a more efficient pump station and moving the current one to a better location.

- I don't know - but I would like to thank everyone who worked so hard on our behalf - from the boots on the ground water and sewage, to the police and sheriff's departments, to the administration.
- Improving the wastewater treatment infrastructure to prevent the flooding and subsequent untreated waste from discharging into the environment.
- Anything that we can do to protect our water and sewage treatment systems.
- I'm not sure what else can be done for homes and businesses in flood prone areas.
- Communications. That's the biggest gripe I had with the response. Everything else was fine.
- fix up the water plant, fix your mistakes with the text notifications
- Having a way to prevent so much raw sewage from dumping into the Eno when a similar event happens in the future should be a priority.
- Update infrastructure as well as building codes with the understanding/expectation that Chantal was the type of storm we could start seeing frequently.
- No response
- Water and road closures
- Unknown
- A moratorium on upzoning and development that adds additional impervious surfaces within a 1/2 mile of streams and rivers. Immediate reform of UDOs based on peer-reviewed, scientific field research regarding Urban Stream Syndrome.
- Have general locations for events that people know to go for resources help etc giving out the water was great
- Planning and figuring out how to reduce damage to pump center
- Be Proactive
 - - feasibility study on upper Eno watershed retention options
 - - inclusion of climate resilience in water/sewer capital improvement plans
- assign someone to check on homes and businesses in flood plain as to needs.
- N/A
- Coordinating with the mutual aid groups, finding storage for those groups to access so they manage and distribute donations, volunteer coordination for individuals and groups that are overwhelmed, mobilizing volunteers for those in need, create a recovery resource page, educate the public about flood vulnerabilities and insurance options, connect with Helene organizers and learn from their lessons.
- When we have enough notice that a storm is coming, perhaps add preparation tips to the communications. I primarily read the text and not the emails so maybe a link in a text would reach me better.

- Sidewalks on orange grove from cedar ridge highschool all the way to downtown. So many people walk there anyways but if you're stuck or can't drive your car having a safe place to walk is very important.
- bolter safe trails, plan for city vehicles to be parked in safe place, does town have boat and high wheeled rescue vehicles? were shelters opened and announced prior to actual flooding? was transportation to shelters made available prior to flooding
- Stop draining resources with too much development.
- Not sure. But I plan to move from my home of 20 years in the next year due to this flood.
- fix water supply
- Tell us how we can help repair the parks. We want to volunteer
- Again a separate front page on the town website when an event happens that all are automatically moved to.
- See #4 above
- i don't know
- Establish an SSO mitigation plan to stop, contain, recover, and restore the site. Deploy mutual aid requests immediately for this level response. Relocate public works to higher ground to protect assets. Rehab pump station to protect from 100 year flood,
- We need a designated town official on standby for events after hours, on weekends and holidays.
- It did kinda take a while to get details, photos, and explanation, a timeline
- Again, perhaps instituting some sort of emergency flood warning (via OC Alerts? Some kind of loud alarm system?) that goes beyond the current flash flood warnings that are also helpful for normal flooding events.
- Continue information and training to plan ahead.
- I know the Town is planning for LONG-TERM solutions, which were impacted by several federal grants that were taken away and others that just require time to develop. Continue prioritizing those initiatives. They cost a lot and don't provide much short-term, but in the long run, the Town's plans will pay off and it's a good direction.
- There should be surveys undertaken to assess possible dangers ahead of time. Have surveys been done for fires, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes?
- The impacts could have been much worse if the areas along the river had not been protected from development.

- Town of Hillsborough should seek to be the single source of truth for public information. The news agencies in our area don't prioritize Hillsborough and citizen information is unreliable. We really need the Town to fill that gap.
- Communication was solid; water treatment plan needs to be improved.
- Safe drinking water.
- Making sure word gets out to people who don't check email often. Setting up community phone trees to help elders and new parents and such.
- All of the above with emphasis on communication.
- To repeat: I think we need to start a Citizens' Volunteer Disaster Response Corps. The town would train the Teams to respond to disasters and help with remediation efforts. All hands on deck!
- Clear, concise communications that articulate what the town is doing and what it recommends residents do.
- Push DR Horton and the NCRP to fix the darn retention pond. A bandaid fix isn't thorough enough.
- Better communication. I was receiving it, but many neighbors were unaware of communication channels.
- Better planning and just proactive monitoring during storms - I saw the creek rising up towards a neighbor's car and called her to move it. It saved her car. Why wasn't someone checking on the town vehicles when they realized how much rain we were getting?
- Better attention and more resources put into monitoring stormwater flows, ensuring ditches work appropriately during heavy downpours, and ensuring culverts aren't blocked.
- From my perspective, the next step is to improve repairs of the parks. We've had no updates on if/when they will be cleaned up. Riverwalk, Speedway, Eno state park, etc all remained closed and I can't find any info about the repairs/clean up.
- Fix drainage and pot holes
- Everything !
- move village infrastructure out of flood zones
- Communication is always key.
- Continued communication.
- Suggest to enhance communications strategy, consider an annual campaign and automated enrollment with enrollment in utilities. Suggest to provide advance notice when water service may be disrupted to allow residents to prepare.
- We know the intersection of Churton Street and Gold Hill Way always floods out during a heavy rainstorm. We know something needs to be done to correct this

situation. We cannot go on indefinitely not being able to drive through this flooding which happens on a regular basis with a heavy rain.

- Prepare for more flooding to occur
- Prepare for possible political violence/terrorism given the current climate
- Future planning for inundations of the public areas like Riverwalk.
- Jeff Jackson suing the government to get our \$6 million back is a good start! I appreciate that your communication about it have not been politically biased, but I wish more people (like my conservative parents) would connect the dots.
- I don't know if things like the Riverwalk can be more resilient. It doesn't seem like there's any way to prepare for something so extreme.
- Widespread efforts to enroll residents in OC alerts- possibly use an opt-out system. I was not aware that OC alerts existed until the storm.
- Understanding flood zones and preparing for large rains
- Move the water facilities.
- Communication and removing debris
- Move vulnerable water treatment systems out of flood zones or update aging machinery, as budgeting allows (I know this is a huge undertaking). Move town vehicles to less vulnerable location. If it was not done, perhaps clean up parks prior to storms in an attempt to limit damage. Better communication on town website; don't rely on social media because we don't all have it.
- It seems important to be able to move all public vehicles to safe ground during a major storm. Rebuilding with storms in mind is essential. As is communication. I think we're doing well with communication.
- I think the response was great. Perhaps finding ways to make us more aware of the resources like the OC Alert and town website. I'm not on social media so other methods are crucial for folks like me.
- Safety
- I feel like the boil water notice should be broadcast widely, on all channels and media types (and all social media platforms) as soon as you know it will be a problem.
- Plan for floods like Chantal's to happen repeatedly. And, therefore - FIRST AND FOREMOST - secure the Town's water/sewage facilities. Then, when flooding comes, it will only be physical destruction ... and not environmental contamination. Too, ANY type of building in flood plains should not be allowed. Period. Also, storm sewers should be examined and kept clean on a regular basis.
- Promoting hurricane/storm preparedness resources similar to the Orange County heat awareness resources throughout hurricane season. This may help residents

prepare ahead by stocking up on supplies and knowing how to handle the immediate aftermath of a storm. Overall I felt the town handled the storm very well considering its severity was unexpected.

- Park expensive vehicles elsewhere or have an out of hours plan for them to be relocated in emergency.
- Try to reduce the time that all the parks are closed.
- Don't approve homes and schools in flood plains
- Work on flood proofing water and sewer facilities.
- To state the obvious, the town should be given the resources promised to repair/replace the old infrastructure!
- Creating areas for water runoff and natural areas for flood zones
- Fix S. Churton's flooding problem from the car wash to Gold Hill Way and other drainage issues.
- Traffic cameras so people can see conditions in real time. Safety, preparedness, evacuation information. Timely updates on conditions.
- Better and more timely communication.
- To enhance Hillsborough's emergency responsiveness, the town should prioritize a multi-layered approach that addresses natural disasters like Tropical Storm Chantal while also preparing for broader threats, including man-made emergencies such as potential terrorist attacks. This is crucial because experts like former CIA analyst Sarah Adams (@TPASarah on X) and former Navy SEAL Shawn Ryan have highlighted vulnerabilities in U.S. communities and have emphasized proactive local preparation for multi-city strikes targeting infrastructure, hospitals, public transport, and first responders—drawing parallels to events like the 7/7 London bombings or October 7th in Israel. Similarly, Ryan's discussions on his podcast point to border-related terrorism risks that could overwhelm EMS, much like how flooding tied up resources during Chantal. By expanding preparedness beyond storms, Hillsborough can build a more resilient community.
- Key priorities, ranked by urgency:
 - Enhanced Planning and Training: Develop comprehensive all-hazards emergency plans that include scenarios beyond weather events, such as active shooter or terrorist incidents. Collaborate with the Sheriff's office to conduct regular drills for residents, schools, and businesses, incorporating urban warfare simulations and response to chemical/biological threats. Partner with state/federal agencies for funding, but focus on local initiatives like community ""preparedness fairs"" teaching skills (e.g., evacuation routes, digital hygiene to avoid terrorist monitoring via social media).

Integrate lessons from Chantal, like pre-identifying flood-prone areas, with broader threat assessments—e.g., securing critical infrastructure like local hospitals against sabotage.

- Resource Allocation and Infrastructure Upgrades: Invest in resilient infrastructure, such as elevating roads, improving drainage systems, and stockpiling supplies (e.g., generators, medical kits) at community centers. Create a local "resilience fund" for rapid deployment of resources, including backup EMS teams or volunteer networks trained in basic response. Ensure daycares and schools have emergency protocols tied to town alerts, reducing family vulnerabilities seen during Chantal.
 - Additionally, revise zoning regulations to address stormwater runoff, particularly from large impervious surfaces like commercial parking lots. Convert underutilized lots into permeable pavements or green infrastructure (e.g., bioswales, rain gardens) to reduce flooding and wastewater overflow, which exacerbated Chantal's impacts. For example, rezone areas near downtown to incentivize businesses to replace asphalt with porous materials, and offer tax credits for retrofitting to manage runoff more effectively, easing strain on sewer systems during heavy rains.
 - Improved Communications: Build a unified plan combining OC alerts, social media (X, Facebook, NextDoor), and SMS for real-time, targeted updates—e.g., geo-fenced notifications for specific neighborhoods. Cross-train community leaders to amplify messages and combat misinformation. For terrorism risks, include "see something, say something" campaigns tailored to local spots like public transit or events, with anonymous reporting tools.
 - Support Systems and Community Engagement: Foster neighborhood-level support networks, such as buddy systems for vulnerable residents (elderly, families with young children) and mental health resources post-event.
 - Implementing these would not only mitigate storm impacts—like the record Eno River flooding and road washouts during Chantal—but also position Hillsborough as a model for holistic emergency preparedness, protecting against evolving threats like terrorism that could exploit divided resources.
- Try to improvement drainage in some areas that frequently flood (ex Churton/Orange Grove) perhaps require more plantings and drains for some new buildings and carefully adhere to impervious service limits. Implement mutual water aid sooner. Designate community volunteer service day(s) for cleanup.

Question 18: *“What additional information or feedback related to the Tropical Storm Chantal response would you like to share with the Town of Hillsborough?”*

- I'm grateful to everyone who has been working to get the parks and trails reopened, both in town and in the surrounding area.
- As many photos as possible of all damages
- Thank everyone for their hard work!
- Make incremental changes and do not get burdened with debt to fix this all at once, water and sewer rates are already high!
- Nothing
- Beyond the most important things (people having homes and water and power and safety), I'm bummed about the Riverwalk and Bolin Creek trail being inaccessible. We used them all the time for exercise. I'd love for the city to invest in infrastructure that can withstand flooding.
- Congratulations on a difficult job well done.
- None at this time.
- Great job with the frequency and detail of your updates. It would be helpful to see timelines as they become available (for example, an expected opening date for portions of the Riverwalk and Gold Park), and also to hear if you are working with the State to re-open Occoneechee Mountain which is a local resource we love but haven't heard any updates on.
- Great Customer Service
- Fix the flooding! PLEASE!!!!!!
- If you're looking for companies that can help you with emergency preparedness, contact Infranet Technologies Group or True IP Solutions. Both are experienced with these types of alert systems and can help.
- Thank you all for your service to the community!
- None
- The handling of road closures on 70a near the I section of Churton was “handled” in the worst possible way. I would LOVE to elaborate.
- The Town and the Planning Department need to start taking the watershed impacts of uncontrolled development into consideration when making land use decisions.
- Thank you.
- Thank you to the town team- you are awesome!
- I think the town is learning a lot from this and will do better in the future
- Kudos to Mayor Mark Bell for taking to social media
- N?A

- Check out genasys.com - EVAC and Acoustics look like they would be great. I know Texas is now looking at them.
- When will Gold Park and Riverwalk be open?
- Thanks to everyone working long hours to keep everyone informed! Especially appreciate the responsiveness on social media to comments.
- We miss the parks. Have been watching for an update on when they might be reopened and what exactly the damages that has made them close.
- Thanks for all you did! Please get the parks open asap!
- N/A
- I bought my home here because of the proximity to the Riverwalk and Occoneechee Mtn and now understand how tenuous access to those amenities is. Sad realization that I should not have moved to this town based on natural areas that are so prone to environmental impact. Lesson learned.
- i appreciate the amount of information shared from the town as the storm and clean-up progressed. i trust our town staff and am grateful for their devotion to this community.
- I am a grade 4 waste water operator and work for a local municipality so I understand the challenges the town faced, mitigation of the type of event is not pleasant, your crews should be proud of their efforts to protect the environment and public spaces. I would do a media campaign recognizing the staff for their long hours and the work performed to restore the greenway and clean and restore from the SSO. Also have an after action review and include field staff and leaders from local municipalities to see what continuous improvement can be made to your emergency action plan
- The town needs to concentrate on the basic services; water, sewer, police, fire, trash; not multiple non-essential services.
- I think the current town leadership and staff did as well as it could be expected to. I think the fault is the U.S.'s historical half assed approach to infrastructure design, which is not really something that is fixable.
- Thank you for asking these questions of town residents.
- Sincere appreciation to all members of the Town agencies!
- Continue providing communications around the long-term plans and steps the Town is taking to help mitigate disasters or make our key infrastructure and services more storm resilient. You all are doing a fantastic job and you are appreciated. The Town of Hillsborough is very lucky to have town staff like you all.
- Everyone did a great job!

- We just moved here from Raleigh, NC. We are impressed with the sense of community and the support and information we received. We feel Hillsborough did a great job responding given the surprise of the emergency and the limitations of the infrastructure.
- Please please please get the Riverwalk and connecting trails back up and running asap
- I think you all did a great job. But we have to be realistic: These disasters are only going to increase in frequency and, since money doesn't grow on trees, we need to engage the hands-on efforts of community members to help in disaster response.
- Regarding ditches: We really need the town's help with this because maintaining ditches and culverts needs to be community-side. I can ask the town to work on my ditches, but my ditches don't affect me as much as my next door neighbor's ditches affect me - both upstream if they aren't sufficient and downstream if they are clogged.
- These types of downpours and storms aren't going away. They just get more common. This wasn't a once in a 100 years event .
- I think the response was well done and the community came together to help each other.
- Fix the drainage and pot holes
- Natural disasters are hard to anticipate or prepare for and the town did a good job.
- I trust that our town will figure this out.
- Would like to know more about time line for opening trails...
- thanks for asking for feedback to help better serve residents! its great to have a way to share what went well and could be improved. Please use surveys to get feedback again in the future!!
- Please listen to your residents in the Collins Ridge community and hire an independent engineering firm to examine the temporary repair done on/under the tracks directly behind our community. This needs to be looked at. We need to hear about this being done. People live here. We do not want a catastrophic emergency taking place directly behind us because the culvert that was put in as a temporary repair was not done up to code. Was it done with any oversight? Is it truly safe for these heavy freight trains and Amtrak trains to pass through day and night? How long will this temporary repair be able to hold up? We need answers.
- I think the town (and residents) were taken by surprise at the severity of this storm. The town has done a good job responding to the event, so thank you to everyone who has helped and is helping with the remediation
- Thank you.

- I think you're doing a good job.
- Disappointed the vehicle that were known in a flood zone were not moved. That should be apart of preparing for this weather event. Now it cost the town money we could have spent on other needs in town.
- I expect that our administrators and staff will do all they can to increase preparedness and communication. It takes time and resources, so my confidence is probably not as high as I expect it will eventually be. I do trust those employed by the Town of Hillsborough.
- I just want to thank all the people who worked tirelessly to get us back in shape. I'm sure it's a mostly thankless job. So I hope you hear more appreciation than petty criticism.
- I appreciate the quick work to get the Eno River Farmer's Market up and running at River Park.
- Na
- I would give the town an ABOVE "Very High" rating for the post-storm response. My neighbors and I all thought Riverwalk would be closed much longer. Thank you to everyone involved in clearing the path to open it in sections.
- Great work!
- More frequent updates from the town during storms about road closures, but overall address the flooding issues on S. Churton since there is only one entry/exit for our neighborhood and are stuck when it rains heavily and consistently.
- Partner with coastal towns that have experience with storms/hurricanes. Learn what they do to alert people before and during storms. The after response getting things fixed was great. The pre-and during responses were abysmal. You could learn a great deal from folks with extensive experience in this area.
- Thank you so much for providing the opportunity for us to submit feedback.
- Now we can use this as a learning opportunity to prepare for a future event.