

Melrose Re-development Frequently Asked Questions

- 1 Q. Did FEMA restrict this from becoming housing in the future?
A. They did prohibit housing in the area where their funding was used. That is the area that is now the flood mitigation acreage. The buildings and area remaining did not use any FEMA funding, so FEMA has no prohibition on them.
2. Q. Are the remaining buildings and acreage out of the flood plain?
A. FEMA has redrawn the map and they are all out including all the homes on Melrose Street.
3. Q. Who managed and funded the flood mitigation project?
A. Cooperation between BHP, Vermont Department of Public Safety, and FEMA. FEMA funded 75% of the work. BHP had funds that could only be used at Melrose which they used to match the FEMA funding. BHP was committed to doing the project as a benefit both to it and to the community at large.
4. Q. What could the remaining buildings and area be used for?
A. The area and buildings could be used for many uses but most pressing need in the area now is housing, so that is what BHP would like to use it for.
5. Q. When it floods, George Miller Drive floods in one area and washes out the land on the other side.
A. It was engineered for water to flow over the road, not to erode. The engineers designed it so the water would flow over the road and spread out onto the other side in order to hold more water. This helps slow down the rushing water. Modifications have been made to address the land wash out.
6. Q. When this was first proposed, there were to be walking paths and benches. It was more like a park. The park aspect is gone. Why? It would be good to let people know that it is not a park.
A. After the first couple of floods it was realized that it would be impractical and perhaps dangerous to encourage people to use the area as a park. When the water rises, it does so very quickly, moving very fast and dangerously. Flooding washed out the benches and flooded the paths. The primary purpose of the area is flood mitigation and that means that paths and benches would be inviting people into an area where they really should not be. People still use it, but it needs to be clear it is not a park. It is an area for fast rising flood waters to be stored. We will get the word out.
7. Q. There is a little island in the stream above the George Miller bridge at is being eroded away and some of the trees are in danger of falling. Is that a problem?
A. No, it actually would be a good thing if the whole island eroded away. Some of the trees are now and will be in danger of falling into the Brook. They should be removed. The Town is keeping an eye on the entire Brook and the trees will be remove as necessary.

8. Q. There is a safety issue where the boulders were dumped and then soil put on top of the boulders. Someone could fall into the crevices created between the boulders (one person said he already had)
- A. It is at the very southern end of the property where riprap was installed to facilitate the return of water to the Brook. It could be unsafe because of holes created by the moving rocks and soil washing and moving. We understand there was matting put over it before the soil was put on, and it should be safe. We will investigate the situation and discuss this with our engineers with an eye towards assessing possible dangers and solutions.
9. Q. Is it possible to change the curve of George Miller Drive as it comes up around the corner by parking area? It is too narrow, and drivers can't see the curb from their car because of the incline. It is a very dangerous area. A few people said they had blown tires hitting the curb and almost everyone admitted to hitting the curb at one time or another. It will be dangerous to have many people, particularly elderly, driving around that curve.
- A. This is a Town road – their engineers approved of the design when it was first done. We will be mindful of this problem as we work through Melrose redevelopment and discuss possible solution with the Town.
- 10.Q. Who will be living here? Will it be transitional housing?
- A. BHP wants this to be elderly housing. There is a need for all types of housing in the area, including a desperate need for elderly housing. That is what it was originally built for, and its BHP would very much like to return it to that use.
11. Q. How many units will there be?
- A. The Plan, at this time, is 31 one-bedroom units. That will mean that the large community room area on the first floor of the main building will be turned into living spaces and BHP will no longer have its main offices here. There will be a small office for Property Management and one for Service staff (SASH – Support and Services at Home – a program for the elderly) but all the other offices will be moved.
12. Q. Where will the offices be moved?
- A. That is still to be determined. When we know this project is a go, we will begin the search.
13. Q. We heard that as part of some of the funding you will have to make units available to people coming from homelessness.
- . A. One of the potential funders would require us to make six units available to those coming out of homelessness but that is within our whole portfolio – meaning all of our properties, not just this one. BHP has over 300 units of housing.
14. Q. How will the intersection with Melrose Street and Western Ave be dealt with during Route 9 bridge construction? And when will that happen?
- A. According to the VTrans website the bridge is not slated to be rebuilt until 2030. If all goes well, the new Melrose housing will be fully occupied by that time. We will work closely with them as they proceed.

15. Q. Once occupied how will people get out if George Miller Drive is flooded?
A. When George Miller Drive has flood water running over it, the road is closed. In that event, we will work with the Town to make sure that accommodations are made for people who must leave for appointments, etc. They, and neighbors on Melrose Street, will have to use the tricky intersection at Melrose and Western Ave. Good news is that the road does not stay flooded for long. It comes up quickly and goes down quickly.
16. Q. What is the timeline for this?
A. We are hoping that if all the funding is in place we could start construction early 2026 – a year from now.
17. Q. Where is the funding coming from?
A. . A major source will be historic tax credits, and then all the usual funding sources will be approached, - federal, state, private. Again, BHP has capital funds that can only be used at Melrose to help with the pre-construction funding.
18. Q. Will the buildings be demolished and rebuilt? What will it look like?
A. There is no intention of demolishing the buildings. Part of the requirement of the historic tax credits is that it remains historically accurate. So pretty much what you see is what you will see. The facades will remain, renovating for efficiency, usability, accessibility, etc. will be done on the inside.
19. Q. Will the maintenance garage stay?
A. Yes
20. Q. Will there be enough parking spaces for 31 units?
A. Our plan currently has 32 spots. Our experience says that one-bedroom elderly units usually have only one vehicle, or none, per unit.
21. Q. Will there be onsite facilities that bring in nonresidents?
A. No. There will be a small community room for the residents. Sometimes there are classes such as bone builders, Tai Chi, etc. that community members join but there will be no facilities that will attract nonresidents.
22. Q. What was the recent survey that was done?
A. It was surveying grade changes, elevations, etc. for the engineers and architects.
23. Q. Will you dig out the bank in front of the main building?
A. No