

**THE DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE
HRPDC COASTAL RESILIENCY COMMITTEE
December 8, 2017**

1. Summary of the September 22, 2017 Meeting of the Hampton Roads Coastal Resiliency Committee

The summary and attendance record for the September 22, 2017 meeting of the Hampton Roads Coastal Resiliency Committee were approved as distributed.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Regional Priorities for Coastal Resiliency

Ms. Whitney Katchmark, HRPDC, presented on lessons learned from Hurricane Harvey's impact on Texas. Hurricane Harvey overwhelmed Houston and the Harris County Flood District in August with over 40 inches of rain in 48 hours. Ms. Katchmark highlighted the following issues made evident by Hurricane Harvey that also apply to the Hampton Roads region:

- Modeling efforts currently underestimate the risk of flooding because they do not adequately account for compound rainfall and storm surge flooding.
- Homeowners outside of the floodplain, who often lack flood insurance, still experience flooding. Roughly 10% of repetitive loss properties in Hampton Roads are located outside of the floodplain.
- Buyout programs can eliminate risk and reduce structural maintenance costs; however, buyout programs are also associated with a loss of property tax revenue.
- New development that increases the amount of impervious surface can exacerbate flooding issues and overwhelm stormwater systems.

Ms. Katchmark raised several questions and proposed solutions, such as increasing public outreach on flood insurance, identifying volunteers for buyout programs, and revising local ordinances to reduce imperviousness requirements.

Mr. Ben McFarlane, HRPDC, summarized discussion from the previous HRPDC Commission meeting in November. The Commissioners emphasized the importance of public outreach regarding flooding information and improving our understanding of the economic impacts of flooding and sea level rise. Commission Chair Ella Ward, City of Chesapeake, also suggested developing a subcommittee of the Commission to

specifically focus on regional resilience issues. The CAOs will review these comments and discuss priorities at their meeting on January 3, 2018.

Mr. Brian Swets, City of Portsmouth, proposed constructing a survey to determine regional interest in offering buyout programs. Mr. Swets also suggested conducting a study to identify the impact of lost property tax revenue from buyout programs. Ms. Meg Pittenger, City of Portsmouth, emphasized there are differences in public opinion about the level of responsibility local governments should assume for flood damage.

Mr. Brian Lewis, City of Hampton, stated that everyone should be encouraged to purchase flood insurance, even if you are located outside of required zones. Mr. Scott Smith, City of Norfolk, also cautioned that the realtor community may oppose distributing maps that show flooding outside of designated flood zones. Mr. Eric Martin, City of Chesapeake, identified vehicle flood losses as another information gap.

Ms. Whitney McNamara, City of Virginia Beach, described a grant program offered by the City to acquire properties vulnerable to flooding. Unlike FEMA funds which mandate an acquired property must remain as open space, the property can still be re-developed under stricter building standards. Ms. McNamara also referenced a funding mechanism used by the City of Charlotte, NC that designates a portion of stormwater funds towards resilience. Ms. McNamara, and Mr. Darryl Cook, James City County, stated that grants are available in their localities to complete flood protection projects (i.e. installing flood vents).

Mr. Pete Peterson, City of Hampton, described complications the City has experienced with buyout efforts, particularly regarding the planning and funding required to acquire an entire neighborhood.

Mr. McFarlane recommended HRPDC staff research the Charlotte, NC model and other funding mechanisms for resilience projects. Mr. McFarlane suggested HRPDC Coastal Resiliency Program staff discuss flood insurance outreach with Ask HR Green staff.

4. Joint Subcommittee on Coastal Flooding

Mr. McFarlane presented the HRPDC's regional legislative priorities to the Joint Subcommittee on Coastal Flooding in Richmond, VA on December 4, 2017. The regional legislative priorities related to resilience include supporting:

- Creation of a cabinet level position that would focus exclusively on coordinating local, state, and federal efforts on coastal resiliency.
- Long-term, additional state funding to provide at least part of the required match for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 3x3x3 studies.

- The appropriation of state resources to fund the collection of first floor elevations for the Hampton Roads region.
- Funding of the Virginia Shoreline Resiliency Fund, established in 2016.

Mr. McFarlane briefed the Committee on topics discussed at the meeting, including the following proposed legislative bills:

- Senator Lewis is re-introducing a bill creating a cabinet level position specifically for resiliency.
- Delegate Stolle is proposing to continue the Joint Subcommittee on Coastal Flooding, which is scheduled to end this year.
- Delegate Hodges has developed multiple bills regarding dredging, including pre-permitting sites for dredge spoil.
- Delegate Miyares is re-introducing a bill creating the Coastal Virginia Protection Authority, which would serve as the non-federal partner for projects with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

5. Mapping Areas of Recurrent Flooding in Hampton Roads

Ms. Ashley Gordon, HRPDC, presented a summary of local observational flooding data collected from locality staff. Eight localities have provided spatial flooding data. The cities of Chesapeake, Hampton, Norfolk, Virginia Beach and Southampton County have documented the location flooding occurrences associated with specific dates. The cities of Portsmouth and Suffolk, as well as Gloucester County, provided the locations of frequently flooded roads.

Ms. Gordon presented synthesized maps of flooding information, which separated named storm events from other causes of flooding. Frequency counts indicated 10 acre areas of repetitive flooding over the past 3 years. Comparison of observed flooding locations with the 100 year floodplain, repetitive loss areas, and the NOAA Shallow Coastal Flooding layer, resulted in low levels of agreement (between 3 and 45%). This suggests the boundaries of these layers do not sufficiently reflect the magnitude of regional flooding, resulting from both rainfall and tidal events.

Recognizing the existing data variability between localities, Mr. Vincent Jones, City of Portsmouth, and Mr. Randy Wheeler, City of Poquoson, supported the idea of developing a standard flooding data collection approach across the region. However, Mr. Wheeler also noted that due to limited staff time, being able to document the location of flooding events is challenging, and a standardized approach may be difficult to implement.

Mr. Eric Martin, City of Chesapeake, recommended a specific list of desired flooding information be shared with localities when requesting data because several datasets for the City were excluded.

Ms. Shanda Davenport, City of Virginia Beach, suggested summaries of observational flooding data could be useful as an outreach tool; however, if a uniform data collection approach was developed, more detailed information regarding the depth and extent of flooding would be desirable.

6. Proposal for Regional Resiliency Action Plan

Mr. McFarlane presented a proposal for developing a regional planning document that would provide policy recommendations for local governments and regional organizations. The proposal would not entail significant new work for locality staff, but would rather provide a method of synthesizing existing work in the region. The resulting document would be routinely updated and serve as a resource for grant proposals, as well as a communication tool.

The proposal would contain five main components:

- A succinct policy statement emphasizing the importance of these issues to the Hampton Roads region and a commitment to collaboratively address them.
- A summary of the current impacts of recurrent flooding on the region and the potential future impacts of sea level rise.
- Descriptions of policy recommendations regarding sea level rise and flooding that localities, the HRPDC, the HRTPO, and others can consider adopting.
- Guidance for localities on implementation of policy recommendations.
- Metrics for tracking progress of participating localities and other organizations.

Ms. Pittenger asked whether the scope of the plan will include issues such as increasing temperatures and storm intensity. Mr. Swets also mentioned considering climate change impacts on economic development. Mr. Wheeler and Mr. Smith recommended the action plan focus specifically on flooding and sea level rise, while recognizing there are additional factors to be considered in the initial narrative.

Mr. McFarlane suggested the PDC staff further develop the concept of the plan and discuss the idea with the CAO's in January.

7. Tracking Resiliency Projects in Hampton Roads

In response to expressed interest at the September meeting of the Coastal Resiliency Committee, Mr. McFarlane prepared a proposal for tracking resiliency projects in Hampton Roads. The proposal included an example of the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan online project viewer as a template for documenting local and regional resiliency projects. The primary goal of developing an official tracking document or portal would be to provide a resource that summarizes the status and scale of resilience projects across the region. Creating an inventory would require no additional funding costs. This document or portal could support grant writing efforts and facilitate knowledge sharing of resilience initiatives between local government staff.

Mr. Lewis stated that it could be useful to identify the approaches of other local governments and discuss what is working well, and recommended reviewing projects awarded SLAF Grants. Mr. Martin suggested that this product could provide a useful inventory of funded projects or those under construction, but advised against including projects that are currently unfunded. Mr. Peterson expressed support for the project, and Mr. Smith stated it could be a useful tool for advocating for regional funding at the state level. Mr. McFarlane suggested PDC Staff begin reviewing Capital Improvement Plans in the upcoming year for projects regarding sea level rise and flooding.

8. Local Approaches to Communicating Flood Risk

Ms. Gordon presented the results of two surveys conducted by the HRPDC in collaboration with Michelle Covi of Old Dominion University. The objectives of the surveys are to compare local communication strategies regarding coastal flooding and identify opportunities for improvement and collaboration. Fourteen survey responses were received from local floodplain managers and planners for the flood risk and preparedness outreach survey. Eleven responses were received from emergency managers for the flooding notification survey.

Overall staff satisfaction level was higher for flooding notification system performance than flood risk and preparedness outreach programs. For outreach programs, the greatest challenges identified by respondents include staff time and funding, as well as identifying methods to measure the effectiveness of outreach programs. Regarding flooding notification systems, respondents identified low enrollment as the greatest challenge. 6 of 11 survey respondents indicated less than 10% of their localities population is enrolled in their emergency notification system.

Ms. Gordon will continue compiling the results of the two surveys and conduct follow-up conversations with interested localities. The final report will identify opportunities for improvement and will be available in early 2018.

9. Update on Federal and State Efforts Related to Sea Level Rise and Recurrent Flooding

Ms. Susan Connor, USACE, updated the Committee on the status of the Norfolk Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study. The Tentatively Selected Plan includes an extension of the City's downtown floodwall, as well as other hardened and natural and nature-based features. The comment period ends December 29, 2017, and the agency will reach a decision milestone in March. The plan will be submitted to Congress for authorization in 2019. Mr. Smith added that the full report is available online.

10. Updates on PDC and Local Efforts Related to Sea Level Rise and Recurrent Flooding

Mr. Russ Lotspeich, USGS, updated the Committee on the status of the benchmarking project. Initial survey results will be available in March 2018.

Ms. Davenport updated the Committee on the Virginia Beach Comprehensive Sea Level Rise and Recurrent Flooding Study. The City is looking to incorporate future rainfall into a design standard. The draft results will be available in early 2018.

Mr. Martin shared with the Committee that 5 severe repetitive loss properties have been acquired by the city with a \$1.2 million grant from FEMA.

Mr. Lewis stated that the USACE is continuing work with the City of Hampton on the Newmarket Creek study. A feasibility study is anticipated to be complete by fall 2018.

Mr. Jones stated that the City of Portsmouth will be hiring a consultant to be on-call for all resilience work. Mr. Swets also shared that the City of Portsmouth is working with VIMS to create a flooding inundation model. The City's draft resilience measures for their comprehensive plan will be voted upon Monday, December 11th at the joint meeting of the City Council and Planning Commission.

Mr. Peterson stated that the City of Hampton staff will be reporting on the progress of Dutch Dialogues to the City Council on Wednesday, December 13th.

Rear Admiral Anne Phillips, USN (Retired), stated the Blue Moon Fund has authorized two committees to continue a shared watershed study focused on the southern branch of the Elizabeth River, which includes the cities of Chesapeake and Portsmouth. The project should be completed by August 2018 and will include a handbook.

11. Other Matters

The next meeting of the Coastal Resiliency Committee will be held in March 2018.