

OUTER BANKS REGIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE

HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING COMMITTEE – MEETING #3

October 22, 2024, 10am, Dare County EOC, 370 Airport Rd, Manteo

ATTENDANCE

There were 12 attendees in person and 15 online. The following individuals were in attendance:

James Wooten, Dare County – Emergency Management Planner
Drew Pearson, Dare County – EM Director
Shari Fiveash, Dare County stakeholder – Room in the Inn
Ed Snyder, Nags Head Planning
Meredith Guns, Kill Devil Hills – Planning Director
John Finelli, Dare County – HOA and Planning Board Member
Shane Hite, Nags Head – Deputy Fire Chief
Joe Heard, Duck – Director of the Department of Community Development
Barton Grover, Dare County Planning – Grants and Waterways Administrator
Skip Jones, Kill Devil Hills Stakeholder
Wes Haskett, Southern Shores Planning Director – Deputy Town Manager
Joe Costello, Nags Head – Deputy Planning Director
Rob Testerman, Kitty Hawk Planning
Sandy Cross, Duck Planning
Melissa Dickerson, Manteo Planning
Holly White, NCORR
Kelly Hoeltzel, SBP
Mark Bissell, Kitty Hawk Stakeholder
Kevin Zorc, Manteo EM
Kelly Wyatt, Nags Head Planning
Carl Baker, NCEM
John Mello, NCEM – Hazard Mitigation Planner
John Crew, NCEM
Chris Smith, NCEM Area 1 Coordinator
David Stroud, WSP
Abby Moore, WSP
Kimmy Hansen, WSP

AGENDA

- Project Overview & Where we are in the Planning Process
- Capability Assessment
 - New Capabilities
 - Substantial Damage Estimate Procedures
- Mitigation Strategy
 - Review Goals & Objectives
 - Mitigation Action Updates
- Discussion
- Next Steps

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Abby Moore with WSP began the presentation by explaining where we are in the planning process. Currently, the plan update is in Phase 3 of the four-phase planning process which involves development of the mitigation strategy, including setting goals, reviewing possible activities, and drafting an action plan. Abby reminded the committee that there will be one more committee meeting and one more public meeting where WSP will present the draft plan. Afterwards, the plan will be sent to the State for review.

CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

A capability assessment measures local resources and tools available to support or implement mitigation projects. It identifies gaps, conflicts, and opportunities in existing local plans, policies, and programs. Additionally, a capability assessment identifies mitigation measures already in place or underway.

Indicators of capability in this plan update include the following:

- Plans and Regulatory – plans, programs, ordinances
- Administrative & Technical – staff, training, expertise
- Fiscal Resources – bonds, fees, taxes, CIP, grants
- Education and Resources – engaged stakeholders, public outreach, warning & notification
- Mitigation Resources – grants, past mitigation projects performance
- Political Will – public and leadership support for mitigation, investments, regulation enforcement

Previous Capability Self-Assessment Results

Abby reviewed the previous capability self-assessment results which can be found in the table below and asked if these ratings should be changed. All comments or revisions regarding the capability self-assessment results can be emailed directly to Abby.

Jurisdiction	Plans, Ordinances, Codes and Programs	Administrative and Technical	Fiscal	Education and Outreach	Mitigation	Political	Overall
Currituck County	High	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High
Dare County	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Duck	High	Moderate	Moderate	High	Limited	Moderate	Moderate
Kill Devil Hills	High	High	Moderate	High	Limited	Moderate	Moderate
Kitty Hawk	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Limited	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Manteo	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Limited	Limited	Moderate	Moderate
Nags Head	High	High	High	High	High	High	High
Southern Shores	High	High	High	High	High	High	High

Changes Since the Last Plan Update

Abby reviewed the changes that have occurred and new resources that have been developed since the last plan update, including the following:

- All communities completed Comprehensive/Land Use Plan updates
- Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance Updates; minimum elevation requirements
- RCCP Resilience Strategies: Currituck County, Dare County, Duck, Nags Head, Kitty Hawk
- Albemarle Regional Resilience Portfolio
- NC 12 Task Force & Report
- Joint Hazardous Material Commodity Flow Study
- Nags Head VCAPS Report

- Southern Shores now has a full-time building inspector

Abby asked the committee if there were any changes that were missing from the list. HMPC members shared that Nags Head completed a full rewrite of their Emergency Operations Plan in the last eight months. It was confirmed from the committee that all EOPs are updated on an annual basis. Sandy Cross noted that Duck now has a Community Planner and a second assistant inspector who is also the town's maintenance technician. Duck completed a neighborhood stormwater study through RCCP and a Flood Warning and Response Plan. Manteo and Dare County are designated as Community Disaster Resilience Zones (CDRZ) which means they may have advantages in some federal grant programs. Dare County completed 27 elevations post-Florence and is currently working on 31 elevations post-Dorian using HMGP funds; this includes some properties in incorporated areas, but the county applied for and manages the grants.

New FEMA Requirements

Abby briefly noted that there is a new FEMA requirement for substantial damage estimate procedures. The plan must include information on how participating communities use the NFIP to reduce risk after a disaster through substantial damage and substantial improvement (SD/SI) procedures.

Committee members noted that SD/SI forms are a process that often occurs after the damage assessments have been completed during permit applications. Abby said that this will be noted and that we will show that they are meeting the NFIP requirements for substantial damage. Sandy noted that crisis track software should be included as part of the SI/SD process. Chris Crew noted that to satisfy this requirement the state is pushing for communities to create a substantial damage plan, but currently they only need a narrative description of how and when they do substantial damage estimates. This includes looking at substantial improvements. The narrative needs to show what they do and who is responsible.

Capability vs. Mitigation

Abby emphasized the difference between capability and mitigation actions and gave examples of different scenarios found on slide 13. Mitigation actions should be applicable to the next five years and should be specific actions that help achieve the plans goals. It is important to focus on projects that reduce risk and vulnerability. Abby noted that the jurisdictions do not need to include actions that focus on established or ongoing practices if these practices would be completed anyway.

MITIGATION STRATEGY

A mitigation strategy is meant to reduce the impact of hazards on existing development and ensure future development occurs in a way that minimizes vulnerability.

Goals & Objectives

David reviewed the existing goals and objectives from the previous plan update and discussed potential revisions to implement with the committee for the current plan update.

Goal 1: Reduce the risk of loss of life and personal injury from hazards.

- Objective 1-1: Educate citizens to encourage individual responsibility to protect themselves and their families from hazards.
- Objective 1-2: Reduce the risk and impact of future hazards by mitigating risk of development in both known hazard areas and areas expected to face future hazard risk.

David suggested rewriting objective 1.2 to make it more concise. A committee member asked if the homes that are being demolished before collapse should be considered under this objective. David confirmed that this action is reducing risk and would fall within this goal. The objective can be revised to acknowledge current hazards as well as future hazards. The committee discussed how the park service has recently bought a few houses to tear them down. Chris Crew noted that it's not just the property owners

that need protection, but these homes are a public risk to the community. It may be helpful to identify individuals who would be willing to take down these homes on their properties before they fall. Drew noted that within objective 1.1 we should consider underserved communities and vulnerable populations who need additional support to protect themselves. It was agreed to include underserved populations in objective 1.1 and consider buildings that are at risk currently and in the future for objective 1.2.

Goal 2: Maintain critical facilities and infrastructure and protect them from damage.

- Objective 2-1: Retrofit or otherwise protect critical facilities and infrastructure.
- Objective 2-2: Increase redundancy of critical systems and services.

James indicated that water system vulnerability is a very important issue to consider, and private wastewater treatment presents a challenge that should be addressed within this goal. Joe Heard shared that it is also important to plan for resilience in terms of being able to quickly resume operations of critical facilities that fail during hazard events.

Goal 3: Ensure that hazard mitigation practices, construction techniques, policies, and ordinances are integrated for both new development and post-disaster development to enhance resiliency and enable speedy recovery.

- Objective 3-1: Adopt protective development standards and establish post-disaster redevelopment policies.
- Objective 3-2: Preserve and protect natural and beneficial floodplain functions and key natural resources.
- Objective 3-3: Explore, develop, and implement new pre-disaster opportunities that build community resilience.

David suggested removing the “pre” and “post” development language from this goal.

Goal 4: Improve inter-jurisdictional cooperation and coordination, especially regarding the reduction of hazard impacts.

- Objective 4-1: Coordinate development standards across jurisdictions.
- Objective 4-2: Encourage and enable inter-jurisdictional communication.

Drew noted that goal 4 should also reflect coordination and leveraging resources of the state and other partners, such as Albemarle COG.

Mitigation Action Requirements

David informed the committee that FEMA requires at least one mitigation action for each identified hazard in the plan update. All mitigation actions will need to be organized into the categories found below. David noted that to maximize CRS credit they should include flood-related actions in each of the six mitigation categories.

1. Prevention (land development plans & zoning, freeboard requirements)
2. Property Protection (acquisition, elevation, floodproofing, backup generators)
3. Structural Projects (floodwalls, stormwater improvements, harden critical infrastructure)
4. Emergency Services (warning systems, response capacity & capability improvements)
5. Natural Resource Protection (dune or wetland restoration, vegetative management, open space preservation)
6. Public Education (mailings, websites, social media campaigns, interactive map tools, hazard disclosure requirements, targeted outreach and engagement)

David noted that it is important to think long-term while reviewing the action plans. It is okay to add actions that may not be completed in the next 5 years. This may help avoid the need for amendments to the plan in the future.

Current Action Plans

David reviewed the current action plans in terms of what mitigation categories they cover and what hazards they address. The tables found on slides 19 and 20 include the status updates that have already been sent to Abby. Drought, earthquake, extreme heat, and severe winter storm have the least amount of action plans to address these hazards.

PRI Summary Results

David briefly reviewed the PRI summary results with the committee. Flood, hurricane and coastal hazards, and excessive heat were the only hazard profiles to be rated a “High Risk” for the Outer Banks Region. David reminded the committee that it is important to consider adding more mitigation actions for the high priority hazards. Committee members discussed changing the duration of flooding to more than a week, as the water levels take time to lower. David noted that FEMA and the State will only evaluate the natural hazard profiles.

High Risk (≥ 3.0)	Flood Hurricane & Coastal Hazards Excessive Heat
Moderate Risk (2.0 – 2.9)	Tornadoes & Thunderstorms Severe Winter Storm Terrorism Transportation Infrastructure Failure Wildfire Drought Cyber Attack Hazardous Materials Incident
Low Risk (< 2.0)	Earthquake Radiological Emergency

New Mitigation Action Ideas

David discussed potential new mitigation action ideas that could be added into the plan update. He reminded the committee that these are only ideas to help them think of new actions and have not been added to the plan update. The action ideas can be found on slides 23-27. The HMPC also suggested raising roads, factoring sea level rise and future flood risk into infrastructure projects. Abby also indicated that the Elizabethan Gardens is interested in supporting public outreach projects and pursuing a living shoreline project.

David encouraged the committee to look for plan integration opportunities by incorporating actions from comprehensive plans, capital improvement plans, and RCCP Resilience Strategy Project Portfolios.

Survey Results

David reviewed results of the public survey which received a total of 475 responses. Abby will send a copy of the survey responses, which can be sorted by jurisdiction to help give specific feedback to the different communities regarding proposed mitigation action ideas.

NEXT STEPS

David discussed the key milestones and upcoming meetings that will be facilitated by WSP. The HMPC was asked to review all mitigation actions and send updates to Abby by the end of November. WSP will provide a draft plan for the committee to review at the next meeting which will be tentatively scheduled in December. Following the committee’s review of the plan WSP will send the plan to the State for review. The existing plan is set to expire in June of 2025.