

Outer Banks Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan

Meeting 1: Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee Project Kick-Off Meeting – Currituck

Time & Date: Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 3:00-4:00 p.m.

Location: Historic Currituck County Courthouse, Currituck

Introductions

David Stroud and Abby Moore, consultants from Wood, facilitated the meeting. David began by providing the meeting agenda and had everyone in attendance introduce themselves. David welcomed everyone to the meeting, gave a brief overview of the previous plan and discussed the change to a smaller planning region of just Dare and Currituck Counties. There were 10 attendees recorded on the sign-in sheet.

Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Requirement

David discussed the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 plan update requirement and the HMGP grant process. Communities are required to update their hazard mitigation plans every five years to remain eligible for federal disaster funding. HMGP funding is provided by the North Carolina Division of Emergency Management with a 75% federal/25% local cost share.

Trends in Disasters

Trends are resulting in increases costs for disaster response and recovery. As growth and development occur, exposure to hazard events increases, particularly as the desirable locations with waterfront or water access in the region are also areas with greater risk. Exposure to risk includes the people as well as the infrastructure and buildings. Because exposure has increased, when hazard events occur they cause more damage. There are also more hazards, with recognition of human-caused hazards, and trends toward more severe hazard events. There has been a continual increase in hazard expenses and an increase in the issuance of major disaster declarations. David reviewed a list of the costliest natural disasters by NOAA estimates. All of them occurred within the last 30 years, and 9 occurred within the last 20 years. These figures did not include Hurricanes Florence and Michael because it is still too early to estimate the full costs of these disasters. David also noted that these costs are general damage estimates, but that the actual cost of disasters to state and local governments, businesses, insurance companies, homeowners, and others is much higher.

Four reasons why addressing these trends is a priority were presented: 1) the cost of doing nothing is too high as the costs of response and recovery continue to grow; 2) many events are predictable and repetitive; 3) loss reduction activities can be undertaken, and they work, they're cost effective and environmentally sound, and there are funds available to help; and 4) there are legal and moral responsibilities to act.

Planning Requirements

David reviewed the Disaster Mitigation Act (DMA) of 2000 planning requirements, which include a four-phase planning process: organize resources, risk assessment, develop a mitigation plan, and adoption and implementation. The approach that will be led by the consultant team at Wood blends this four-phase process with the processes of the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program and the Community Rating System (CRS) Floodplain Management Planning. This completed Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) will meet the requirements of all three FEMA programs.

David discussed the main phases of this planning process, as follows:

Phase I: Organize Resources, will involve planning for public involvement and coordinating with other departments and agencies. Other stakeholders to involve include North Carolina Emergency Management, FEMA Region IV, NOAA, other adjoining communities, citizens, schools, businesses, and others.

Phase II: Risk Assessment entails hazard identification (what can happen here), vulnerability assessment (what will be affected or impacted), and capability assessment (how prepared we are).

David presented Wood's recommendations and the Dare County HMPC's additions for which hazards to include in the plan. It was noted that a portion of northern Currituck County falls within the IPZ of Surry Nuclear Plant in Virginia, therefore Radiological Incident was added to the list of hazards. Additionally, several sites and events vulnerable to a terrorism or mass casualty event were discussed. Representatives will be asked to compile a list of potentially vulnerable sites and estimate the maximum population that could be at risk.

Based on this discussion, the following hazards will be profiled: Flooding, Hurricane & Coastal Hazards (Sea Level Rise, Erosion, Rip Current, Nor'easter), Severe Winter Weather, Extreme Heat, Earthquake (Tsunami), Wildfire, Drought, Severe Thunderstorm, Hazardous Materials Incident, Radiological Incident, Terrorism, Cyber Threat, Transportation Infrastructure Failure. The vulnerability assessment will use NCEM IRISK data. Hazards will be prioritized using the Priority Risk Index. Each community will self-assess capability to determine ability to implement projects and where gaps exist.

Phase III: Develop Mitigation Plan involves setting planning goals, reviewing mitigation alternatives, and drafting an action plan. Typical strategies are to alter the hazard, avert the hazard, adapt to the hazard, or avoid the hazard. In addition to reviewing actions from the previous plan, the HMPC may need to develop new actions. David noted that in this process Wood will ensure that the Region meets the CRS requirements for considering mitigation alternatives to maximize CRS credit for the plan.

Scope of Work

The plan will meet the following criteria:

- The plan will include all required elements, as defined in the FEMA Local Mitigation Plan Review Guide.
- The plan will meet or exceed the final rule for local mitigation planning found in 44 CFR, Section 201.6, in order to be approved by FEMA.
- Natural hazards assessed in the plan will coordinate with the current FEMA-approved State Mitigation Plan.
- The plan will include natural and human-caused hazards and mitigation measures.
- The plan will incorporate any local climate adaptation data and findings.

Risk Management Tool

Abby discussed North Carolina Emergency Management's new tool for mitigation planning, which will be used in this effort. RMT integrates all available IRISK data to assist in the vulnerability assessment. Additionally, the RMT will generate and maintain a digital version of the plan, which may be useful in plan maintenance and future updates.

Project Schedule

The anticipated project schedule was presented. The process will aim for completion of a final draft document by August 2019 to send to NCEM for review. This timeline does not include final approval and adoption of the plan. The update must be approved and adopted by June 2020.

Working Groups

The region will be divided into a Dare County Working Group and a Currituck County Working Group for the entirety of the planning process due to facilitate ease of attendance at planning meetings.

Plan Website

Abby presented the website for the planning process, which will be a tool for HMPC coordination and public outreach. The website is www.OBX-HMP.com. The site contains upcoming meetings announcements, meeting agendas and minutes, the public survey, draft documents of the plan update, information on the identified hazards, and opportunities to provide feedback. All communities are encouraged to place a link to this website on their local community pages to encourage more public involvement.

Next Steps

Community representatives need to complete the capability assessment and return it to Abby at abigail.moore@woodplc.com by March 29th. Representatives should come to the next meeting with a status identified for all existing mitigation actions from the 2015 plan. It was noted that more substantial information

than “ongoing” must be provided for continuing actions; it should be clearly noted for each action whether it’s Completed, Deleted, or Carried Forward. Representatives should also be prepared to discuss revisions to the mitigation goals. The capability assessment and past actions are posted on the plan website.