

CHAPTER 2: PLANNING PROCESS

PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW

The Eastern Shore's first Hazard Mitigation Plan was completed in 2006, a hallmark in Shore-wide planning for the protection of citizens, businesses, and visitors alike. The 2011 update built off that initial success, bringing in additional towns and new technology. Technological improvements between 2011 and 2016 spurred a complete rewrite of the plan.

The update to the 2021 plan began during the COVID-19 pandemic. Though traditional hazard planning is still an integral piece of the update process, the pandemic brought new challenges and a greater focus for developing plans to address pandemics. This focus can be seen by the inclusion of a new chapter in this plan, focused entirely on pandemics. The COVID-19 pandemic moved in-person meetings onto a virtual format, with the committee joining meetings via web link or through phone call. The Berkley Group, a consulting firm, worked with A-NPDC to manage meetings and to update the plan's contents.

2021 HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN PARTICIPATION

A-NPDC endeavored to engage all 19 towns, along with both counties, on the Eastern Shore. All but one community joined the planning process, with the towns of Accomac and Painter joining for the first time. A total of 18 jurisdictions participated in the planning process, plus Accomack and Northampton Counties.

Participating towns and counties were invited to join the plan's Steering Committee and to designate their own representatives. Additional stakeholders were identified and invited to join the Steering Committee as well. The 2020-21 plan update did not include a distinction between the Steering Committee and the Planning Council, as the 2016 plan did. All members of the Steering Committee were invited to participate in all meetings and to receive all agendas and other meeting materials.

More than 30 agencies and organizations were invited to join the Steering Committee, from local historical and cultural nonprofits, social services, and neighboring county governments across the state line in Maryland. All received the same agenda and packet materials and were invited to attend all meetings, but not all were regular participants. Some that were not regular participants were called upon by A-NPDC staff when their expertise was needed, whether for a particular meeting, or while drafting materials to take before the committees.

Monthly meetings were held via the online video conference tool, Zoom. Committee members received a link to the meeting and a phone number to dial in, if needed. These meetings, which were open to the public, were held on the third Tuesday of each month. Email blasts and website posts encouraged participation from the public; however, social distancing guidelines and the attempt to reduce the spread of COVID-19 led the Committee to hold all meetings virtually. The COVID-19 pandemic provided for limited public outreach opportunities, compared to the 2016 Plan. The kickoff meeting with the committee was held on December 1, 2020. Email invitations were distributed to the Steering Committee and meeting dates and log-in information was posted on the A-NPDC web site.

An iterative process was used, with A-NPDC staff assembling information and presenting the information to the combined committees at regular meetings. Additionally, A-NPDC staff met with each local government to discuss their individual chapters of the plan.

Planning Process

During the 2016 planning process, a chairperson, James Eichelberger, and vice chairperson, Peter Stith, had been elected by the committee. Due in part to the pandemic, the 2020-21 Steering Committee chose to move ahead with the planning process without electing a chair and vice-chair.

2021 HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN – PARTICIPATING JURISDICTIONS

<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2021</u>
A-NPDC	X	X	X	X
Accomack County	X	X	X	X
Chincoteague	X	X	X	X
Saxis	X	X	X	X
Hallwood	-	X	X	X
Bloxom	-	X	X	X
Parksley	-	X	X	X
Tangier	X	X	X	X
Accomac	-	-	-	X
Onley	-	X	X	X
Onancock	X	X	X	X
Melfa	-	-	X	X
Wachapreague	X	X	X	X
Keller	-	X	X	X
Painter	-	-	-	X
Belle Haven	-	-	-	-
Northampton County	X	X	X	X
Exmore	-	X	X	X
Nassawadox	-	-	X	X
Eastville	-	X	X	X
Cheriton	-	-	X	X
Cape Charles	X	X	X	X

2021 HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN – STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

<u>First</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Position</u>
Kerri	Atkinson	Painter	Town Clerk
Thomas	Beasley	Bloxom	Mayor
Mark	Bowden	Chincoteague	Building and Zoning Administrator
Jeb	Brady	Cape Charles	Code Official
Tom	Brockenbrough	Accomack County	Floodplain Administrator/GIS Coordinator
Connie	Campbell	Painter	Mayor
Laurie	Chamberlain	Onley	Town Administrator
Donna	Croushore	Saxis	Town Council Member
Jackie	Davis	Cheriton	Mayor
Sarah	Dickey*	Accomack County	Deputy Coordinator of Emergency Management
Denise	Drewer	Saxis	Mayor
Robert	Duer	Exmore	Town Manager
Taylor	Dukes	Wachapreague	Director of Utilities and Zoning
Jeanette	Eby*	Bloxom	Town Clerk
David	Eder	Eastville	Chief of Police
Kim	Fitzpatrick	Nassawadox	Town Council Member
Andrea	Fox	Nassawadox	Town Council Member
Keith	Greer	Parksley	Chief of Police
Chris	Gubernator*	Accomack County	Director of Environmental Programs
Teresa	Guy	Keller	Vice Mayor
Greg	Hardesty	Cheriton	Town Council Member
Sharon	Hart	Keller	Mayor
Arthur	Leonard	Chincoteague	Mayor
Lauren	Lewis	Parksley	Town Clerk
Susan	McGhee	Northampton County	Director of Planning
Billie J.	Miles*	Accomack County	Department of Public Works
Jackie	Poulson	Hallwood	Mayor
Charles	Pruitt	Accomack County	Director of Public Safety
Bryan	Rush	Chincoteague	Director of Emergency Services
Jayne	Salazar	Onley	Town Manager
Danny	Shrieves	Hallwood	Town Clerk
Danny	Siegert	Parksley	Zoning & Floodplain Administrator
Pat	Smith	Accomac	Mayor
John	Spivery	Onley	Chief of Police
Matt	Spuck	Onancock	Town Manager
Patsy	Stith	Nassawadox	Mayor
Jim	Sturgis	Eastville	Mayor
Laurie	Thomas	Tangier	Town Manager
Michael	Tolbert	Chincoteague	Town Manager
Charles	Wilbur	Melfa	Mayor
Robert	Williams	Wachapreague	Floodplain Admin./CRS Coordinator

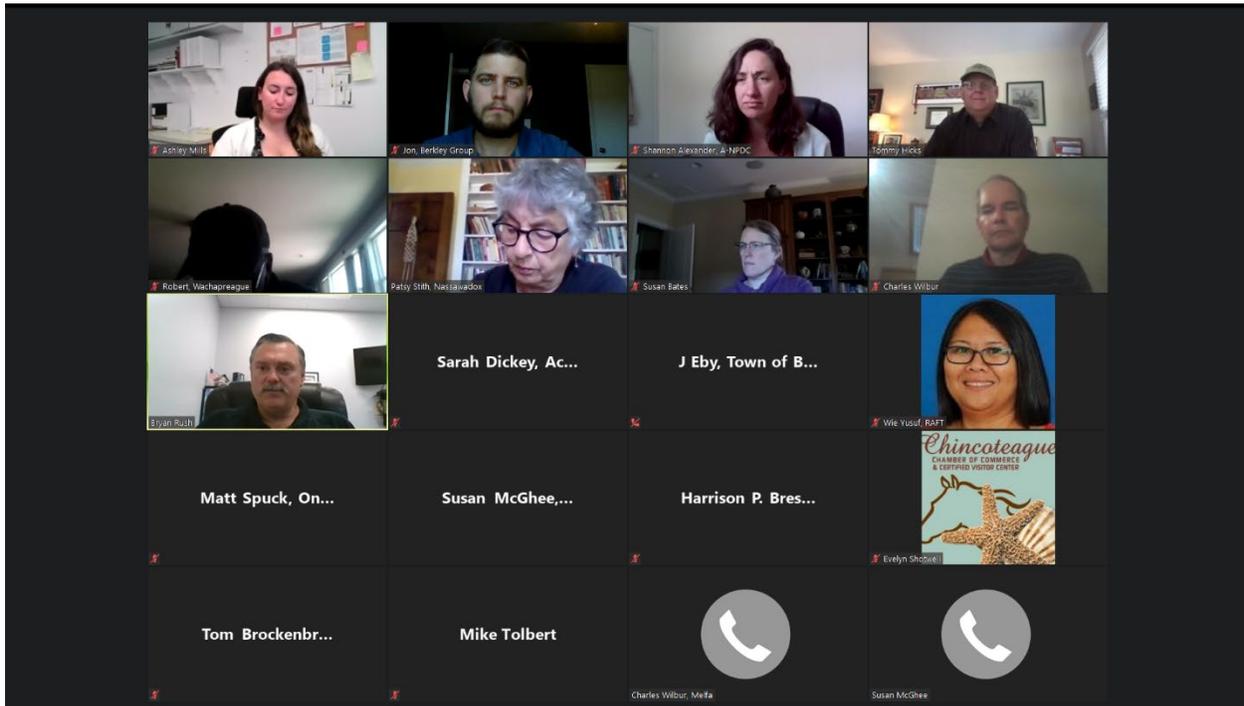
*Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee Alternate

Planning Process

2021 HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN – OTHER PARTICIPANTS

<u>First</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Jurisdiction</u>	<u>Position</u>
Shannon	Alexander	A-NPDC	Director of Planning
Ashley	Mills	A-NPDC	Regional Planner
Thomas	Hicks	The Berkley Group	Planning Director
Jonathan	McCoy	The Berkley Group	Planner
Aaron	Berryhill	The Berkley Group	Planner
Harrison	Bresee	VDEM	All Hazards Planner
Bruce	Sterling	VDEM	Region V Coordinator

Figure 1: Steering Committee Members Participating in a Virtual Meeting



PUBLIC PLANNING PROCESS AND OUTREACH EFFORTS

A combination of strategies was used to generate interest and participation both in the plan and issues addressed in the plan. The 30+ organizations and agencies represented in the stakeholder's group were selected both for their expertise and the individuals and interests they represent, so that our reach would be broad and deep.

The following section documents the efforts made to generate interest, opinion, and comments about the Eastern Shore Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and Hazard Mitigation Plan.

THE PUBLIC

The public were invited to attend all meetings of the Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee, which were publicly posted and held via Zoom and by dial-in. The A-NPDC used the A-NPDC website and Facebook page and sent email blasts to encourage public attendance. Following the FEMA review and prior to HMP adoption the A-NPDC used the same process to advertise to the public. Several attempts at public participation were made; however, there was a lack of public attendance at the Steering Committee meetings. The A-NPDC had some members of the public reach out regarding information about the plan, concerns of hazards in their community, and grant program information.

BUSINESS

The Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce, the Northampton County Chamber of Commerce, and the Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce were invited to appoint a representative to the Planning Committee. Evelyn Shotwell of the Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce participated in some virtual meetings throughout the planning process, including hazard identification and prioritization.

ACADEMIA

Wie Yusuf, Professor in the Strome College of Business at Old Dominion University and Program Lead of the ODU/Virginia Sea Grant Climate Adaptation and Resilience Program, attended the April meeting. Professor Yusuf delivered a presentation on the Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (RAFT). This tool was developed to help Virginia's coastal localities improve resilience to flooding and other coastal storm hazards while remaining economically and socially viable (RAFT Mission & Goals, n.d.).

Scott Hall, Workforce and Business Solutions Officer, attended several meetings on behalf of Eastern Shore Community College.

Schools in both counties were invited to participate, although no participants joined the meetings.

GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

At the state level, Amy Howard, Hazard Mitigation Coordinator for Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), provided guidance throughout the process and participated in some meetings. Harrison Bresee, All Hazards Planner with VDEM, attended several meetings and worked closely with A-NPDC and Berkley Group staff in the update to the plan.

The Virginia Departments of Historic Resources, Forestry, and Conservation and Recreation were invited to participate in meetings. The Department of Social Services in both counties, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District (ESSWCD) were unable to attend meetings but were sent all meeting packets.

Planning Process

In addition to the Hazard Mitigation committees, the A-NPDC briefed the Eastern Shore Disaster Preparedness Coalition (ESDPC). This regional body is made up of federal, state, regional, and local government officials with any type of role in preparing for, or responding to, disasters, so there is some overlap between the two groups. The coalition also includes representatives of businesses, physical and mental health services, communication providers, education, and private environmental providers. As a result of Covid-19 the A-NPDC staff did not participate in the coalition during the HMP plan development.

NON-PROFIT INTERESTS

Non-profit organizations were invited to participate in the update to the 2020-21 plan. These organizations include:

- Barrier Islands Center,
- Chincoteague Museum,
- Eastern Shore Amateur Radio Club.
- Eastern Shore Area Agency on Aging,
- Eastern Shore Center for Independent Living,
- Eastern Shore Coalition Against Domestic Violence,
- Eastern Shore Community Services Board,
- Eastern Shore Historical Society,
- Food Bank of Southeast Virginia, Eastern Shore,
- NAACP,
- Riverside Shore Memorial Hospital,
- Saxis Island Museum,
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC),
- Watermen’s Museum, and
- Wetlands Watch

TNC provided support in several ways. In addition to participating in several meetings, TNC provided technical support to A-NPDC staff and the committees in the area of storm surge modeling and sea level rise, through its [Coastal Resilience](#) tool.

Seventeen hypothetical storms were modeled in building the Coastal Resilience tool, along with Nor’Ida, a nor’easter that formed from the remnants of Hurricane Ida in 2009. The model was calibrated using measured water depths from that storm. The depth grids, paths, and data from these hypothetical storms (before sea level rise factors were applied) were shared with A-NPDC staff for use in the storm surge analysis.

NEIGHBORING JURISDICTIONS

Somerset County, Maryland and Worcester County, Maryland are the only two Maryland Counties that border Accomack County. Both were added to the Steering Committee so that they would receive all development material and could participate in any discussions. Neither chose to participate in the plan development phase, however.

CONTINUED PLAN MAINTENANCE

Since the development of the 2016 plan, the participating towns and both counties have used the plan to develop other local plans. Accordingly, each town will keep a copy of their respective Chapter in their town hall and each county a copy of the entire plan in their respective planning offices for convenient reference. With these copies, there will also be a comment area provided for written comments and the contact information for A-NPDC staff in order to provide comment by email or phone.

In addition, the plan will be referenced in the event of funding availability and/or a disaster event. Mitigation actions will be revisited at least annually in an effort to track completions and add newly discovered potential mitigation actions.

All the mitigation actions for each jurisdiction were compiled into a master spreadsheet. This allows mitigation actions to be easily compared and tracked. The format also allows for easy updating and reference within the 5-year cycle.

The entire plan will remain indefinitely available on the A-NPDC [website](#) and in the A-NPDC office located in the Town of Accomac for stakeholder reference and use and for public comment.

PLAN EVALUATION

In addition to the Emergency Management Coordinator (EMC) evaluating the Plan annually according to Local Capability Readiness Assessment (LCAR) criteria, the A-NPDC staff will work together with the EMC to address the following concerns to evaluate if:

- The Plan offers mitigation actions that protect property, promote public awareness, aid emergency services, suggest preventative land use, structural controls, and protect natural mitigation features.
- Goals and objectives address current and expected conditions.
- The magnitude or nature of the risks have changed.
- Current resources are appropriate for implementing the Plan.
- Additional or different resources are now available.
- Implemented actions were cost effective.
- There were any implementation challenges.
- Changes in county/town resources impacted Plan implementation.
- Changes in programming or government structure have created a need to change the Plan.
- New agencies/departments/staff/organizations should be included.

DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES

The Committee and A-NPDC staff drew on many written resources throughout all phases of plan development, referenced in Appendix A. Among the resources are local historical books and articles, U.S. Army Corps of Engineer Flood Reports of storms that struck the Eastern Shore, FEMA's 2011 Coastal Construction Manual, NOAA and USGS data, historical information, and technical information available through various government websites such as the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge on Assateague Island and VDEM, and local town and county plans. Staff also listened to local accounts of various hazard events.

Historic severe weather events data were extracted from the NOAA's National Climatic Data Center Severe Weather Events database and compiled as the basis for weather-related hazard information. Data from January 2000 through May 2021 are reflected in the Plan.

The Berkley Group used FEMA's multi-hazard Hazus® model to estimate flood losses for the one percent annual chance flood and hurricane wind losses. Complete documentation of the Hazus® modeling process can be found in Appendix C.

The Nature Conservancy's Coastal Resilience tool allows users to view storm surge under various sea level rise scenarios. The storm modeling that underlies that tool was used to model storm surge for the coastal flood risk assessment.