Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan

Technical Advisory Committee – Project Evaluation Subcommittee

Subject	Project Evaluation Subcommittee Meeting #3 Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Planning Framework	Date	April 20, 2021
Facilitator	Dr. Carl Hershner	Time	10:00am – 11:00am
Location	WebEx - https://governor.virginia.gov/i/2thdj	Scribe	Ashley Samonisky

#	Name	Organization/Role	Attended?
Invitees/Attendees			
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Project Evaluation Subcommittee Members and Staff Advisors			
1.	Dr. Carl Hershner – Chair	Virginia Institute of Marine Science at William & Mary	Y
2.	Kristin Owen – Vice Chair	Henrico County	Y
3.	Joshua Saks - Staff	Deputy Secretary of Natural Resources	Y
4.	Shannon Alexander	Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission	Y
5.	Kevin DuBois	Navy Region Mid Atlantic Chesapeake Bay Program	N
6.	Whitney Katchmark	Hampton Roads Planning District Commission	Y
7.	Keith Lockwood, Chief	United States Army Corps of Engineers, Norfolk District	Y
8.	Catherine C. McGhee	Virginia Transportation Research Council	N
9.	Dr. Karen McGlathery	Environmental Resilience Institute at the University of Virginia	N
10.	Randy Owen	Virginia Marine Resources Commission	Y
11.	Ben Nettleton	Virginia Marine Resources Commission	Y
12.	Mary Carson Stiff	Wetlands Watch	Y
13.	William "Skip" Stiles, Jr.	Wetlands Watch	N
14.	Erin Sutton	Virginia Department of Emergency Management	N
15.	Dr. Robert S. Young	Western Carolina University	Y
16.	Kimberly Cain	Diversity Equity and Inclusion's office	N
Scheduled Speakers			
17.	Brian Batten	Dewberry	Y
18.	Johanna Greenspan-Johnston	Dewberry	Y
19.	Dale Morris	The Water Institute	Y
20.	Jordan Fischbach	The Water Institute	Y
Designated Alternates			
Subcommittee Advisors			
21.	Shurui Zhang	Commonwealth Coastal and Marine Policy Fellow	Y
Other Participants			
22.	Ann Phillips	Rear Admiral, US Navy (Ret.) – Office of the Governor	Y
23.	Connor Winstead	DCR	Y
24.	Matt Dalon	DCR	Y
25.	Benjamin McFarland		Y
26.	Harris Hull		Y
27.	Jason Powell		Y
28.	Grace Tucker		Y
29.	Natalie Snider		Y
30.	Madison Teeter		Y
31.	Keith Cannady		Y
Consultant Support			
32.	Ashley Samonisky	Vision Planning and Consulting	Y

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	Agenda/Minutes	
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1.	Introduction	Dr. Hershner called the meeting to order and read the Section 1289 required language. He asked public attendees to ask questions through the chat box and advised Josh Saks will moderate the chat. If you have difficulty accessing the meeting or a disruption occurs, please contact Josh Saks at 804-690-5673. Josh took roll and advised that a quorum was present. Dr. Hershner asked for a motion to proceed with the meeting virtually. Moved, and seconded. Approved unanimously.

2.	Dewberry Presentation	Dr. Hershner invited Rear Admiral Ann Phillips to introduce the Dewberry Team. Ann explained the goals of this meeting and introduced Brian Batten of Dewberry to begin the presentation.
		
		 Brian explained the process for the prioritization framework for the projects. Brian asked the Subcommittee members to participate in an exercise in gleaning perspectives regarding the Framework's principles and a Q&A session facilitated by a virtual whiteboard. He asked all panelists to join the whiteboard through the following link. Login not required. https://miro.com/app/board/o9J_IIlr0-8=/
		
		 Brian invited Subcommittee members to try out the whiteboards and asked if they thought this was a beneficial medium. Dr. Hershner advised this is acceptable to continue with the whiteboard. Brian invited Dale Morris to give an introduction on the prioritization framework. This is built from experience of Dewberry and Gulf Institute over the years, but also the Framework's Guiding Principles. He explained the need to transition qualitative information into quantitative data in order to provide an effective prioritization model. Variables include funding, temporal and spatial concerns, local concerns, etc. He emphasized the need for guidance from this Subcommittee going forward.
		
		 Brian invited the Subcommittee to review the guiding principles of the CRMP and provide what they feel the most important metrics for each principle would be. Dale reminded participants that the principles are in no particular order and a hierarchy should not be inferred. Some members populated the whiteboard and some preferred a discussion-based process. Johanna will capture Subcommittee members thoughts throughout the discussion process.
		
		 Dr. Hershner advised the Master Plan Framework document provided five Guiding Principles, and that for clarity, the Subcommittee should stick to those same five. There may be sub-principles, but they should be kept organized consistently with the parent documents. This will help synchronize work downstream as well.
		
		 • Discussion Point - Whitney does not feel second bullet is quantifiable. This is more a subjective question.
		     o Brian - The challenge with this question is it could be open to a lot of interpretation. While we want things to be data driven, some will have to be participatory exercises and gather the scoring from PDCs and communities.
		     o Dr. Hershner – This will require consistent definitions for reviewers to be able to remain objective.
		     o Brian – The process will further define the categories and then provide a weighted score for each category to give a composite score across all criteria.

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		- Dr. Hershner – It is clear that many of these subject areas which include cost-benefit analysis and social inequity are absent initial definitions for those terms. It will be difficult to resolve those issues absent an executive decision that "this is what we will look for in the evaluation process." This initial effort should be as simplistic as possible. - Dale – This "best-effective practices" consideration is to acknowledge the role of climate science and the use of best available science for this effort. The language may be tricky, but we need to set something down as an initial guide. If we have sufficient data for a quantifiable decision, then that is the way we should go. This initial effort may be qualitative; however, we need to set up the quantitative process going forward. • Discussion Point - Rob – I am concerned with the use of word "risk" in multiple principles, as opposed to vulnerability or exposure. Do we really have an expectation that all of these projects will clearly define risk, which is a harder ask than vulnerability or exposure? Do we really mean risk in all of these principles or should we say vulnerability and then aspire to risk? Also, could one of the guiding principles allow for projects that purely project natural resources/systems. Built infrastructure should not be the only aspiration. • Discussion Point - Whitney – We were looking for metrics to compare projects to the principles. Are we still looking for metrics or are we looking for narratives? - Brian - We are looking for metrics. These are just items we pulled from the CRMP as principles to create the metrics to support the prioritization. This will lead to metrics and ranking categories. - Dr. Hershner – Adhering to the original five principles and keeping to the available information even if not the most sophisticated will allow project evaluation across a consistent basis. - Brian – The challenges for the basic five principles is that they are too simple and do not lend themselves to ranking projects very well. We wanted to expand the considerations presented here and need to limit subjectivity in the evaluation process. - Dale – I posted our summary description of the five principles. You can see where they were tailored or expanded to allow for scoring metrics. - Mary Carson – This feels confused by the difference between principles and priorities. Principles are the framing of the priorities or how you handle problems or make decisions. This is confusing because you made the principles actionable, which makes them read as priorities. The alignment of this should be to reduce confusion and shifting the language to a discussion of prioritization techniques. - Dr. Hershner – We are here to ensure these principles are implemented and obvious in the decisions that are made. The risk is

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		that you lose social inequity or natural resources when you make principles actionable. There is a tendency to include those words in a document, but in the end, they fall to the wayside during implementation. Lets make sure we keep something from each of the five principles and not downplay anything. ○ Jordan – Another challenge is the difference between outcome-based principles and process-based principles. Many of these are specifically process based. Use of best science, etc. How do we measure progress in process-based and outcome-based for these projects? Brian provided an introduction to the Key questions Dewberry is looking to have answered (Attached Slides) by the Subcommittee. Responses can be submitted in writing after the call. Dewberry feels is important to discuss and gather feedback rather than proceeding unilaterally without the Subcommittee's input. Key questions include: • Should projects be ranked statewide or regionally? • Should critical/essential facilities receive increased priority? • Should funding have an a priori split among project types or solutions? To view all questions, please see attached slides.
3.	Path Forward/Next Steps	• Discussion Point - Ann – Gray versus green infrastructure. Colonel Kinsman brings this up at every TAC meeting as a challenge to be worked through. Costs are different, strategies are different. But there is a need for both. Dr. Hershner asked for a copy of all the key questions so the Subcommittee can react to each and provide feedback for consideration in writing. • Brian – We will determine a timeline to get the question out to the subcommittee. ○ Dr. Hershner – Please share the Power Point as quickly as possible so we can begin brainstorming our responses. Also, as a guiding principle for the team, there is no need to solve the problem in the first pass. We are aware of these issues. We do not even have a sense of the kinds of projects that may be presented, so we cannot decide in advance any a priori considerations. This will be more iterative and responsive. ○ Brian – we are basing off past experience just trying to identify needs up front where possible, while articulating needs, processes, and approaches that can be integrated in the future. Matt Dalon provided an update on the project schedule. Tomorrow is the TAC meeting to discuss Dewberry's work plan in more detail. The draft framework is to be submitted in early May, and the final framework is due in early June. Reactions to the Framework and opportunities for feedback will come at that time. • Dr. Hershner – Unless you want negative comments, remind the TAC and Contracting Officer that this needs to be a work in progress. ○ Brian – Agreed.

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		o Ann – We are aware of the concerns. The purpose of the effort is an evolutionary process. o Dr. Hershner – All of which requires that we start simple. o Brian - We will share the slides after this call. As we work through the process of defining the metrics, we will identify points to share the information and to gather more feedback. • Q – Dr. Hershner – How do we best handle this process under FOIA restrictions? o Ann – As Dewberry puts together the questions for the Subcommittees, they will be forwarded to the Chairs who will then distribute them to members in a BCC manner to solicit a response process. The question of whether to hold a meeting or just gather the information and then issue a response will be discussed, but Subcommittee members need to brainstorm on these questions and respond to the Chair. o Dr. Hershner - Please review the slides and send responses directly to me. I will compile the responses for Dewberry. We will schedule a follow up meeting for two weeks from today. • Q - Johanna – Many users have already used the whiteboard. Should we capture these or will they just duplicate these concerns in their written responses. o Dr. Hershner – Please send those whiteboard responses to me for compilation.
4.	Public Comment Period	Dr. Hershner asked if any public attendees had comments. Josh advised there are no registered public speakers and there are no comments from the chat box.
5.	Wrap-Up and Adjourn	Dr. Hershner asked if there was anything else Dewberry needed from this Subcommittee. Brian stated no additional issues. • Discussion Point - Kristen – Regarding Whitney's question on funding. We should reiterate what the goal of the project ranking process is. It is not all about funding. Each funding source has its own process for ranking projects. Make sure we always come back to ranking projects as they relate to the plan, not to the funding criteria. o Dr. Hershner - As we move forward, we need to be mindful of other extant prioritization systems. VRA has the Grants Manual with its own scoring mechanism. They touch on many of the same topics we have just discussed. Also available is the PREP Tool from the RAFT Team. They have a draft question set that are available for review. The self-assessment tool has 8 classes of issues with yes/no questions for an evaluation of community's current resilience status. These may be relevant for project evaluation as well. It would be useful to review this list to help identify metrics, so we can see the types of metrics localities are already gathering. In the near term , our mission is two-fold, 1) we have been asked to provide feedback to RAFT Team on the PREP Tool, and 2) we have been invited to provide commentary on Dewberry Team's prioritization process.

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		Please provide any feedback on these two topics to ensure comments are collated and meet the FOIA requirements.
		o Keith – On the PREP Tool self-assessment, I noticed yes/no is not the appropriate response to some of these questions. Follow up questions need to be separate or reconfigured to be a yes/no question.
		o Dr. Hershner – The role of the PREP Tool is just as a voluntary self-assessment tool for localities. Many of the questions align with or overlap the same considerations for the State. There should be a higher degree of consistency between what Dewberry develops and what PREP asks the localities to do.
		Dr. Hershner declared the meeting adjourned at 11:20am.

#	Action Item	Owner (Organization)	Due Date
		Action Items	
1.	Review the slides and key questions from Dewberry, and send thoughts or responses directly to Dr. Hershner.	All	TBD
2.	Compile the responses from the Subcommittee and send to Dewberry.	Dr. Hershner	TBD
3.	Schedule a follow up meeting for two weeks from today.	Chair/Vice Chair	TBD
4.	Capture whiteboard responses and send to Dr. Hershner for compilation.	Johanna Greenspan-Johnston - Dewberry	TBD

If you have any questions, please contact Ashley Samonisky, Vision Planning and Consulting, at asamonisky@vision-pc.net.