

Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan
Technical Advisory Committee – Outreach Subcommittee

Subject	Outreach Subcommittee Meeting #5 Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Planning Framework	Date	June 23, 2021
Facilitator	Meryem Karad	Time	1:00 pm – 2:00 pm
Location	WebEx - https://governor.virginia.gov/i/nvkqx	Scribe	Emily Sokol

Invitees/Attendees			
#	Name	Organization/Role	Attended?
Outreach Subcommittee Members and Staff Advisors			
1.	Ashley Montgomery	Chair – Associate Designer, Hanbury	Y
2.	David K. Paylor	Vice Chair – Director, Department of Environmental Quality	Y
3.	Meryem Karad	Staff Advisor – Assistant Secretary of Natural Resources	Y
4.	John Bateman	Regional Planner, Northern Neck Planning District Commission	
5.	Jill Bieri	Director of Virginia Coast Reserve, The Nature Conservancy	Y
6.	Alec Brebner	Executive Director, Crater Planning District Commission	Y
7.	Dr. Jessica Whitehead	Executive Director, Institute for Coastal Adaptation and Resilience	Y
8.	Martha Heeter	Executive Director, Plan RVA	Y
9.	Traci Munyan	Program Administrative Manager, Department of Housing and Community Development	Y
10.	Lee Hutchinson	Resiliency Program Analyst, Department of Housing and Community Development	
11.	Corey Miles	Coastal Resources Program Manager, Northern Virginia Regional Commission	Y
12.	Kate Gibson	Deputy Director, George Washington Regional Commission	
13.	Denise Nelson	Environmental Engineer, George Washington Regional Commission	Y
14.	Kristin Owen	Floodplain & Dam Safety Manager, Henrico County	
15.	Kimberly Cain	Special Assistant Director, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	Y
16.	Leigh Mitchell	Natural Resource and Environmental Protection Coordination, Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe	
Scheduled Speakers			
17.	Ashley Samonisky	Vision Planning and Consulting	Y
18.	Deepa Srinivasan	Vision Planning and Consulting	Y
Designated Alternates			
19.	Sarah Stewart	Alternate for Martha Heeter	
20.	Carol Considine	Alternate for Jessica Whitehead	
Subcommittee Advisors			
21.	Emily Steinhilber	Environmental Defense Fund	Y
Other Participants			
22.	Ann Phillips	Rear Admiral, US Navy (Ret.) – Office of the Governor	Y
23.	Connor Winstead	VA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation	Y
24.	Matt Dalon	VA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation	Y
25.	Shurui Zhang		Y
26.	Colin Arnold		Y
27.	Lauren Landis		Y
28.	Garry Harris		Y
29.	Jefferson Flood		Y
30.	Jay Ford		Y
31.	Elizabeth Schell		Y

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#	Name	Organization/Role	Attended?
32.	Natalie Snider		Y
33.	Keith Cannady		Y
34.	Cirse Gonzalez		Y
35.	Eileen Woll		Y
36.	M. Moore		Y
Consultant Support			
37.	Emily Sokol	Vision Planning and Consulting	Y
38.	Brian Batten	Dewberry	Y

Agenda/Minutes		
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1.	Welcome/FOIA Preamble/Roll Call	<p>Meryem Karad welcomed all to the meeting and called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm. She then took roll for the Outreach Subcommittee members and reported that a quorum had been achieved. Meryem discussed guidelines for the virtual meeting and requested that public attendees ask questions in the chat box, which she would moderate throughout the meeting. If a disruption occurs or anyone has any connectivity issues, please contact Meryem Karad at meryem.karad@governor.virginia.gov or 804-786-0044.</p> <p>Meryem read the Section 1289 required language and asked for a motion to proceed with the meeting virtually. Denise Nelson motioned, and Ashley Montgomery seconded. Meryem conducted a voice vote via roll call, and the motion passed unanimously.</p>
2.	Administrative Updates	<p>Meryem turned the floor over to Ashley Montgomery, who thanked everyone for their attendance and shared the updated meeting agenda with the Subcommittee. The first presentation would be from Ashley Samonisky of VPC to discuss the critical elements of the outreach strategy going forward, as presented in the TAC meeting. The goal is to better determine how the Subcommittee can work more effectively with VPC and Dewberry to address time-sensitive elements to the best of its capacity. Meryem would then provide a brief review of the outreach survey produced for dissemination. This is a point to touch base and allow Subcommittee members to provide feedback on the survey. Another objective for the meeting was to walk through the produced social media posts so that the Subcommittee could provide feedback before public release. Lastly, Ashley Montgomery would review the impact assessment and how the Subcommittee's efforts could inform Dewberry's outreach efforts. One goal is for the Subcommittee to determine how they can dive deep into underserved and vulnerable communities and gain the information needed to understand how they will be impacted by adverse stressors.</p>

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3.	Dewberry Presentation - Ashley Samonisky	<p>Ashley M. turned the floor over to Ashley Samonisky. Ashley S. provided an update on the current and upcoming efforts being conducted in the outreach strategy (See Attached Slides). The hope is to release the public survey link by this Friday or upcoming Monday. Both of the surveys will close on July 16, 2021. Some of the information collected by the surveys will be used to guide PDC and locality meetings in late-July and August. There is a new project webpage that will provide project-specific information, a schedule of outreach meetings, and Dewberry products throughout the process. So far, Ashley S. has spoken with four out of eight PDCs about scheduling meetings. The team is expecting to hold a pre-meeting a week before the on-site design charrette. Target timeframe for the design charrettes: July 19-August 6. Most PDCs recognize Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays to be optimal for scheduling. Brian Batten provided an overview of the design of the Workshops/Charettes. The design for the meetings is still in the planning stage and is subject to further refinement. The team is envisioning a combination of a workshop and a charette. Four meetings have been scoped for this project across the master planning regions. He explained that they expect to have a group of meetings: a pre-workshop webinar to cover the outputs of the impact assessment for each of the geographies, an overview/introduction to the study, the data call, an overview of the project evaluation criteria, and setting up the agenda for the workshop/charettes; an in-person charrette event for CRMP project stakeholders to take place 1-2 weeks after; a public outreach meeting that potentially occurs the evening prior to or the same day as this event. Brian also provided an overview of the workshop initial agenda.</p> <p>Corey Miles (in chat): Can you post the link to the new website?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emily Sokol: Here is the link: https://www.naturalresources.virginia.gov/initiatives/coastal-resilience-master-plan-progress/ - Corey Miles: Thanks! <p>Q- Lauren Landis (in chat): Are these events one time in each city? And are they each held on a weekday, weekend, or both are offered? (I apologize if this has been answered), is the target audience for this community members, grass tops, locality officials?</p> <p>A- Brian: For the charette meetings, they are intended for project stakeholders. We are not including the general public in these meetings because it would be too large of a group for the design. There will be separate outreach meetings for the public. We are looking at potentially adding more, but there are four scoped.</p> <p>Q- Jill Bieri (in chat): Is there a workshop planned for Eastern Shore or is Eastern Shore expected to attend in Hampton Roads? Totally different needs, impact, etc.- hope Eastern Shore will be heard.</p> <p>A- Brian: Trying to work that out. If we think they are willing to travel or if we need to go to them, we will have to work with that.</p>

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		<p>Q- Lauren (in chat): Is there a point at which the general public is being targeted? So this is not a grassroots outreach exercise, am I understanding that correctly?</p> <p>A- Rear Admiral Ann Phillips: The charettes are for project owners and stakeholders, which will often include localities, PDCs, installations, etc. The outreach and engagement sessions will be scheduled for the public- this is the grassroots exercise. There is a data call for projects, there is a survey for outreach purposes. The intent is to work with the localities to work on project identification. We are asking for your help to bring community members, educate them about what we are trying to do, get them to fill out surveys and provide information, and get involved in these engagement opportunities. To Jill's comment, we know Eastern shore has an organized group that is focused on coastal resilience and putting together projects and efforts. We are working through how to best manage and plan these meetings and juggle different needs.</p> <p>Discussion Point- Ashley S.: There is one question that we need to discuss. More than one PDC has asked if elected officials should be invited to these meetings. They are worried about potentially tripping FOIA if more than two officials from one body attend, as well as that planners might not be as forthcoming if elected officials are in attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brian: I think that requires further discussion - Rear Admiral Phillips: I think the tripping of FOIA depends on if those three officials are part of another FOIA-able body whose business could be discussed within the scope of the design charrette. There could be some other conflict related to PDC or district board requirements. There was a lot of interest on the June 11th call including public officials. I am inclined to invite them to the outreach events at a specific time and location rather than opening up a design charrette, but it will depend on the PDC's perspective. - Brian: We envisioned having planning and engineering staff from project owners be the main audience for the charettes.
4.	VA CRMP Survey Review	<p>Meryem advised the Subcommittee that the survey was sent to all members and that they will have the opportunity to provide feedback. She provided a short review of the survey, walking through some of the questions and providing ideological background about how the questions were developed to gain the desired information from responders. The survey has thirty questions currently. There are no incentives for taking the survey, so the Subcommittee will likely need to address how to entice individuals to respond. Some of the groups that do on-the-ground work have advised that the survey needs to be shortened for dissemination to public audiences. Meryem urged all of the Subcommittee members to take a look at that survey and provide feedback as quickly as possible, as there is a short timeline before dissemination.</p> <p>Q- Emily Steinhilber (in chat): I know Ashley touched on this - but could you revisit the timeline - when is the goal to launch and complete responses? Did Ashley say it would be closed by July 16th?</p> <p>A- Ashley S.: The survey will be released Monday morning and will close on July 16th. We will then collate and organize the responses.</p>

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5.	Impact Analysis and Next Steps	<p>Ashley M.: At the next meeting, we will focus on understanding the outputs of Dewberry's impact assessment in a way that will help us identify underserved populations. The primary input needed from this committee - do hotspots recognized by the assessment appropriately represent those populations? Then, we can work to identify populations that are missing. We need to work to engage NGOs and activists on the ground. How we can use the impact analysis to identify populations that need their voice captured? Please provide feedback on the survey. Ashley S. can we resend that outreach toolkit to the Subcommittee?</p> <p>Discussion Point- Jay Ford: So, we have a 30-question online survey that will run for less than one month over the July 4th holiday, and that will define our community outreach priorities going forward?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ashley M.: No, I don't think it will fully define our outreach efforts. It will allow us to see who is participating. That is where we will need to engage our on the ground groups and create a redefined survey. This survey is meant to capture the immediate pulse. - Emily Steinhilber (in chat): Would it be useful for the team to reopen the survey during the public meetings for people who are unable to attend in person but may find out late about the survey? Or is that too late to be useful? - Rear Admiral Phillips (in chat): This is the beginning of a long-term process. Just the beginning, not the end. . . . The start. . . . - Lauren (in chat): And we've been saying by the time y'all figure that out, NGOs are done with their summer outreach.
6.	Public Comment Period	<p>Meryem then opened the floor to the public for any comments about the plan, outreach materials, or the outreach process, as there were multiple individuals signed up for public comment.</p> <p>Lauren: We can continue the conversation. Other people are in agreement with me. We understand what you are trying to do; however, you are taking too long. By the time you are done getting all of your questions answered, we will be done with summer outreach. Also, the survey is not designed to be completed by the public.</p> <p>Jay: I appreciate the work you are doing, but what I am seeing is an online survey being distributed that is designed for people with an understanding of resilience. We are not capturing vulnerable communities with this survey. We will likely be left with NGOs having to fill in the massive gaps in identifying these vulnerabilities. But given the timeline, this is just not a realistic goal. It is unclear where NGO vulnerable community outreach will have a meaningful impact on the final product. We will have design charrettes running simultaneously to a pulse of the people. It is logistically impossible that you will incorporate this information into a draft plan with a completion goal for Labor Day. The math is not adding up. Even if we do get robust participation from NGOs, it feels like gathering information for the sake of gathering information, rather than actually influencing the plan. This information is headed for an appendix. The PDCs do not have difficulty getting their perspective heard. Engagement should have happened a long time ago. I don't think the current proposal reflects a strategy of meaningful engagement. This is worrisome.</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lauren: It is a dangerous position for NGOs to put ourselves into. True community organizing takes months. Doing this project will do us no favors, as NGOs are not going to want to operate this way in the communities and risk their current relationships. - Ashley S.: Thank you for these comments and feedback. We definitely understand that this needs to be at the top of our agenda in our next discussion. - Meryem: The Outreach Subcommittee has come up with a list of contacts with which we want to do outreach. We have categorized them into five identified regions. There are questions as to how we are defining the underserved community. - Ashley M.: I completely understand where you are coming from. These efforts do take time, investment, and a coalesced network that should have started prior to this point. However, we can only work based on the timeline that was given to VPC and Dewberry. We have to think about the best, earnest way we can do this going forward, since we cannot control the timeline. We need to find out what works and give respect to the NGOs and PDCs and the work that they are doing, so we can work in a holistic manner. <p>Discussion Point- Dr. Jessica Whitehead: What you both are saying is extremely important. The language of the plan is high level and difficult, and there is not a Spanish version, making it inherently more inaccessible. Based on my experience with North Carolina's efforts, we learned the hard way that if you hold meetings in a public building, you will only get the perspectives of those who are comfortable going into a government building. We had to make decisions about how much effort we would put into things we could not perform as well, such as community outreach. We had to evaluate based on our resources and timeline. What do we need to do once this draft is completed to create a path forward for engagement? What is the plan for next year and who will you be reaching out to? Unfortunately, North Carolina has not received the budget to do that, but we recognized it as a high priority going forward. It is not just about the plan; it is how it is implemented. There should be next outreach steps built into the plan. Maybe that is a method by which we can help address this problem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lauren: I do not mean to be negative. We are desperate to help, but we do not know what to do. - Deepa Srinivasan: Jessica, that is currently where we are right now in our intention. We are only able to carry out finite outreach efforts, as a result of the timeline. Given that we do not have the information needed conduct effective and appropriate outreach prior to the drafting of the master plan, there will be an outline on how we can move forward and identify these communities, as well as how they will be accessed. We are having these discussions. Right now, we are focusing on the charettes, understanding that this is a tight timeline. <p>Discussion Point- Garry Harris: The survey itself is way too complex with technical language. When doing community outreach, you have seconds for that interface, not tens of minutes. The survey needs to be more concise, simple, and well-structured. We developed a project called Rally for Resilience and won FEMA's Community Outreach and Engagement Award in 2017. It was a collaborative of meteorologists, specialists, and scientists coming together to educate the community and explain the science behind severe weather. It is not quickly done, but if you are looking to get together large group of</p>

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		<p>grassroots stakeholders in an engaging way and do the survey while they are there, we could replicate something like that. It is effective, but it is not quick in planning.</p> <p>Meryem: We do not currently have a Spanish version of the survey, but that is noted. We will be identifying languages in which the survey will be developed for constituencies across the coastal region.</p> <p>Discussion Point- Jay: I really appreciate your comments about putting strong language in the plan regarding a road map for continuing this process. This process is currently occurring under executive order, and we are approaching the end of an administration. This is not a guaranteed-to-continue process. While it is good to create robust outreach plans for the future, we need to do as much as we can right now. Opinions on this work and prioritizations can change with changing administrations, so critical that everyone knows that a promise for the future is just a promise. Who knows what this will look like in a year? I do not like the concept of delaying when it comes to the most vulnerable communities. When a draft of the plan is written, there needs to be robust verbiage for a detailed outreach plan, recognizing the shortcomings of the released plan. That way, we will not erode trust in communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emily Steinhilber (in chat): Seconding Jay's comments here. Thanks. <p>Ashley M: I think there needs to be a recommendation for a person or office that continues this work going forward and to whom communities can have a connection to this plan. This Subcommittee could think through different strategies and create a proposal to address this issue in the draft of the plan. In doing so, the efforts of the plan might not be misaligned with new administration in office.</p>
7.	Next Meeting	<p>All Subcommittee members and advisors will be included on the email thread in scheduling the next Subcommittee meeting. This is an important conversation to have and we want to ensure that you have time to provide feedback on this process. You will receive an email from us that will let you know what our plan is moving forward for in-person meetings. A quorum is required in-person, but public participation will be available virtually. We will try to connect in two weeks to continue this discussion. Please look at the survey and provide feedback, and Dewberry will share the outreach meeting schedule as it develops. The mid-July meeting will address some of these issues.</p>
8.	Wrap-Up and Adjourn	<p>Denise motioned to adjourn the meeting, and Ashley M. seconded the motion. Ashley M. conducted a voice vote, and the motion passed unanimously. Ashley M. adjourned the meeting at 2:23 pm.</p>

Action Items			
#	Action Item	Owner (Organization)	Due Date
1.	Provide feedback on the VA CRMP Survey	All Subcommittee Members	6/25/21
2.	Schedule next Outreach Subcommittee meeting	Chairs and Staff	TBD

If you have any questions, please contact Emily Sokol, Vision Planning and Consulting, at esokol@vision-pc.net.