

Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan

Technical Advisory Committee – Studies, Research, and Best Practices Subcommittee

Subject	Studies/Research/Best Practices Subcommittee Meeting #5 Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Planning Framework	Date	August 9, 2021
Facilitator	Dr. Robert Weiss	Time	11:00 am – 12:30 pm
Location	WebEx - https://governor.virginia.gov/i/dbr6r 1111 E Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219 Conference Room 1	Scribe	Emily Sokol

Invitees/Attendees			
#	Name	Organization/Role	Attended?
Studies, Research, and Best Practices Subcommittee Members and Staff Advisors			
1.	Dr. Robert Weiss – Chair	Director, Center for Coastal Studies at Virginia Tech	Y
2.	Dr. Karen McGlathery – Vice Chair	Director, Environmental Resilience Institute, University of Virginia	Y (V)
3.	Shurui Zhang – Staff Advisor	Commonwealth Coastal and Marine Policy Fellow	Y
4.	Elizabeth Andrews	Director, Virginia Coastal Policy Center at William & Mary Law School	
5.	Dr. Jessica Whitehead	Executive Director, Institute for Coastal Adaptation and Resilience (ICAR), Old Dominion University	Y
6.	Dr. Carl Hershner	Emeritus Professor of Marine Science, Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences at William & Mary	Y
7.	Whitney Katchmark	Principal Water Resources Engineer, Hampton Roads Planning District Commission	Y
8.	Dr. Mark Luckenbach	Associate Dean for Research and Advisory Services, Virginia Institute of Marine Science at William & Mary	Y (V)
9.	Catherine C. McGhee	Director of Research and Innovation, Virginia Transportation Research Council	Y
10.	Ashley Montgomery	Associate Designer, Hanbury	Y (V)
11.	Mary-Carson Stiff	Wetlands Watch Policy Director	Y (V)
12.	William “Skip” Stiles, Jr.	Executive Director, Wetlands Watch	Y
13.	Carlos Rivero	Chief Data Officer	
14.	Dr. Robert S. Young	Geology Professor, Program Director for the Study of Developed Shorelines, Western Carolina University	Y
Scheduled Speakers			
Designated Alternates			
15.	Jesse Reiblich	Designated for Elizabeth Andrews	Y (V)
Subcommittee Advisors			
16.	Emily Steinhilber	Coordinator, Commonwealth Center for Recurrent Flooding Resiliency at Old Dominion University	Y
17.	Shep Moon	Coastal Planner, Virginia Coastal Zone Management Programs	Y (V)
Other Participants			
18.	Ann Phillips	Rear Admiral, US Navy (Ret.) – Special Assistant to the Governor for Coastal Adaptation and Protection	Y
19.	Matt Dalon	VA Dept. of Conservation & Recreation	Y
20.	Doug Fritz		Y
21.	Sarah Henshaw		Y
22.	Chris Stone		Y
23.	Wendy Howard Cooper		Y (V)

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24.	Angela Davis		Y (V)
25.	Barrett Hardiman		Y (V)
26.	Grace Tucker	EDF	Y (V)
27.	Madison Teeter	Wetlands Watch	Y
28.	Matt Jones	Office of the Governor	Y
29.	Sam Jasinski	Wetlands Watch	Y
30.	Kristen Owen	Henrico County	Y
Consultant Support			
31.	Brian Batten	Dewberry	Y
32.	Dan Medina	Dewberry	Y (V)
33.	Alaurah Moss	Dewberry	Y (V)
34.	Emily Sokol	Vision Planning and Consulting	Y (V)

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1.	Welcome and Quorum Affirmation	<p>Dr. Robert Weiss provided a welcome to the meeting and called the meeting to order at 11:10 am. Dr. Weiss called roll to establish a quorum, and a quorum was present.</p> <p>It is requested that the attendees ask questions through the chat box, and Shurui Zhang will moderate the chat. If there are connectivity issues, please contact Shurui Zhang at 217-979-8438. Staff will be muted throughout the presentations and may ask questions or place comments in the chat box. Subcommittee members attending virtually will be unmuted, as necessary when the discussion period is opened.</p> <p>Dr. Weiss asked the Subcommittee if anyone had any additions or comments to the meeting minutes from the July Subcommittee meeting. No comments or additions were proposed, so Dr. Weiss approved the July Subcommittee meeting minutes.</p> <p>Dr. Weiss explained that the intent of the current meeting was to discuss the meaning of the Relocation Handbook, as well as discuss recommendations proposed by the Nature-Based Infrastructure and Socioeconomic Working Groups. By discussing and voting on the proposed recommendations, as well as changes to be made to the Relocation Handbook, in this meeting, the Subcommittee could act in good faith so that no content would be added after the meeting without approval from the Subcommittee. Dr. Weiss opened the floor to Rear Admiral Ann Phillips to provide comments to the Subcommittee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rear Admiral Phillips: Thank you for your attendance. I am looking forward to hearing your feedback on the Relocation Handbook. Secretary Strickler is currently reviewing it but has not yet provided comments. Going into the September 2nd TAC meeting, we are looking for recommendations from all of the Subcommittees. I know this is on your agenda and look forward to your feedback. There is legislation pending that would allow virtual meetings without an in-person quorum purely for the presentation of information. This should help ease some of the more recent difficulties we have been facing;

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		however, it still prohibits the Subcommittees from taking any actions or holding votes without an in-person quorum present.
2.	Relocation Handbook Discussion	<p>Dr. Weiss: The Relocation Handbook is a novel concept, especially for promoting equity. Fair market value for at-risk properties does need to be addressed, as the worth of the property in the at-risk area may not be as valuable as the property that individuals might be moving to that is not at-risk. What would be the impact of this equity-wise? My opinion of relocation and this document is that the document should change over the course of the endeavor. It is a meaningful document- we need to understand the legal and policy contexts of the issue, such as what has been done elsewhere and how it is different in other states/contexts. We need to learn from others' mistakes with regard to relocation. It would be helpful to write this document so that it can be helpful for a variety of audiences: individual families, localities, and the State. All of these audiences need to be provided with the best information and data to make informed decisions. You all have received the Relocation Handbook. It was created by four students who helped to conduct research. Are there any comments, recommendations, or discussions that the Subcommittee would like to address?</p> <p>Discussion Point- Skip Stiles: Where is this document going when it is completed? Will the Handbook be issued by the State government?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rear Admiral Phillips: We do not know if the Handbook will be included as an appendix of the plan or released as a secondary or supporting document. - Mr. Stiles: Is the Subcommittee the last edit on this? If we are, I have grave concerns about the current state of the document and its intent. - Rear Admiral Phillips: When I reviewed the Handbook, I did not make comments on the content, as I want to hear all of your comments first. This is still an early draft. - Mr. Stiles: What is the time horizon on this? If I were to receive this document about relocation as a resident, should I be concerned now or in 30 years? How grave is the problem? There needs to be greater context and clarity. The action statement for the document is very vague. The specificity of the document needs to be much better if you expect the reader to care. - Dr. Weiss: We can definitely make those edits. I am hesitant to use this as a handbook, it is more likely to be used as a measurement of hazards. We are not at all tied to the language of this draft. <p>Dr. Robert Young: I am not sure that this document is a relocation handbook. I appreciate the work that the students have completed in such a short period of time, so these criticisms are not a reflection of their work. These are case studies from which we can learn. We can address some of the concerns by framing this document more as a series of case studies. This document is not practically advising people about the process of relocation and how it will work for them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Weiss: These case studies should help for the design of best practices. - Dr. Young: There are many places in which we will need to conduct buyouts where there are not good case studies currently existing. Even in the NJ Blue Acres program, none of those properties were on the barrier islands. It would help to have a gap analysis that identifies where we cannot provide a good case study analysis. My main point is that it is a case study document to learn from, whereas a handbook would provide more practical guidance.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Weiss: In general, a gap analysis would be needed for the entire landscape of the CRMP. <p>Discussion Point- Dr. Jessica Whitehead: I think Dr. Young and Dr. Weiss are exactly right. From my experience, in developing a handbook for something that will lay out policies of the Commonwealth, it will require more public input and policy analysis to comprehensively lay out an anticipatory program, rather than a reactionary one. We have used similarly-styled charettes like those being conducted for the CRMP, and we had one individual step up and say “I want you to understand, you are talking about coming into my home and telling me what to do with my home. You need to understand how important that is.” It was the most powerful thing anyone had to say. We could produce a document that outlines lessons learned from other programs. I think one recommendation that should be made by the Subcommittee is that the Commonwealth should have a serious conversation about how the CRMP will interact with VDEM, as well as what will be done with Commonwealth funds for recovery and CRMP programs. This current document should be reframed as a conversation-starter for the Commonwealth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Young: Jessica, you are right. One of the issues that we have not dealt with and that might be beyond our scope is that all of our examples of buyouts and managed retreat are happening in working class communities. It makes the context very emotional. We do not have many examples in which public infrastructure and commercial buildings are relocated because we spend all of our money trying to protect them from flooding. But then we go into vulnerable, low-income communities and force them out. How do we tailor this document to introduce municipalities and the State to the idea of relocation, instead of only focusing relocation on single-family homes? The discussion of buyouts always falls on underrepresented communities and residences. We are passing by opportunities to implement managed retreat in areas that will protect public funds in the long run. I hope we can address this in the document. We need to have larger goals at some point when implementing managed retreat. Municipalities need to understand that their boundaries in some ways need to be flexible, as we will not be able to maintain in some areas. - Dr. Whitehead: We need to lay out these issues, such as the legal duties of local governments to maintain roads and whether a local government can abandon a road if someone is still living on it. How are we rebuilding in other areas? What do you do about ports when conducting relocation? We can ask those questions, but we will not have answers to them in the next 2 years. - Dr. Young: This document should focus on the big issues that need to be addressed before you can even think about relocation. The context needs to be more robust. A big barrier to this relocation task is that there is no condemnation authority in VA. You cannot compel someone to take a buyout. There is a lot of context that needs to be amplified to take note of legislative/policy solutions that must be made to make this transition - Dr. Weiss: Threats and weaknesses of the current situation need to be added to this document, potentially in an introduction. We also need to develop a brief executive summary for the document.

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		<p>Discussion Point- Ashley Montgomery: I wanted to make a comment about reframing the narrative regarding the intent of the document. Based on the document's current stage, it needs to be more digestible if one of the audiences is to be individuals and families. To create something that will advise residents and communities, we need to determine what information is needed from individual communities and what particular information will be needed prior to thinking about relocation strategies. How do we involve the people who are being impacted by this conversation? Their input will be necessary for any planning director to know how to move forward.</p> <p>Discussion Point- Dr. Carl Hershner: In terms of recommendations, I believe there is a sense from the Subcommittee that the commitment to creating this document needs to extend beyond November. There will be an analysis of the legal situation in Virginia surrounding relocation. One recommendation would be to have an analysis of this managed retreat strategy, looking specifically at public infrastructure. Producing the legal and financial analysis that would build the case for abandoning existing public infrastructure is a key element of how the State will move forward.</p> <p>Discussion Point- Dr. Whitehead: When these recommendations are made, we need to reemphasize where people will go when they are relocated. We need to think about what this looks like in the future. Some communities in the near future will be able to work within their jurisdictional frameworks, as they will maintain some high grounds, but others will have to work outside of their jurisdictions. Most people do not want to move to a completely different city. Therefore, one recommendation is to focus on what we will need to do for receiving communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Weiss: We need to look into the socioeconomic structure of where they are moving to as well. Relocating can be a very difficult process for individual families. - Dr. Karen McGlathery: When we think about these issues regarding where people will be relocated to, we should think about it from both the short-term and long-term perspectives. The impacts or consequences of the short-term solutions, moving to higher ground within the jurisdictions, is different from those related to long-term solutions. - Dr. Young: I am curious as to how the resilience projects are protecting coastal populations and which coastal populations they are protecting. In the past, so many of our projects have been guided by federal mandates that require cost-benefit analyses. You have to be aware of what the larger goals are Statewide regarding what projects are promoted. We have to try to mesh together what we as a State decide to protect and what we decide to buyout. They have to be in the same conservation, or you will gentrify the coast. - Dr. Weiss: This is the first time that we are preparing this type of document. We should not be afraid of making mistakes. You can only learn so much about engineering design from success, you learn much more from making mistakes. Often times, we try to be too perfect the first time. I know we are talking about people's families and their homes. I would like to propose a motion to change the title and intent of the handbook to "Relocation Strategy Development" and use the case studies to this end, as well as add a section on existing gaps and various timeline solutions. - Dr. McGlathery: In order to make the document digestible, I suggest putting the case studies at the end. We should add a chapter that highlights key

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		<p>take-home messages as well as knowledge/information gaps to get straight to the information that will be most beneficial to the lay reader at the beginning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Weiss: I am also thinking that we should have an executive summary in plain language that will allow these takeaways to be highlighted - Mr. Stiles: Who will be doing all of this work? - Dr. Weiss: I will be organizing this work. - Dr. Young: Greater context that is specific to Virginia would be helpful. <p>Discussion Point- Ms. Katchmark: It sounds like this document is a set of resources for people to consider, which will be helpful. However, I am confused as to how you are describing the intent in the title.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Weiss: I do not want to call it the relocation handbook and mislead readers. I want to contextualize it. - Dr. Hershner: You could follow the CRMP layout and name it the “Relocation Strategy Framework.” - Dr. Weiss: How about the “Relocation Information and Resources Handbook?” - Dr. Luckenbach: Many people have questioned who the main audience is. I think the audience is those who are producing a relocation handbook. - Dr. Weiss: I think that there are multiple different audiences- the localities, the State, the communities, etc. So, we cannot limit it to one audience. How do we feel about the title “Relocation Information and Resources Handbook?” I will take your silence as a lack of concern regarding this title. - Dr. Whitehead: So, to summarize the motion: we are using the existing document as a starter, adding additional sections on public property, receiving communities, and threats, adding timelines, adding an executive summary, adding Virginia contacts, and moving the case studies to the appendix? - Dr. Weiss: We will not include anything in the motion regarding where specifically different parts of the document will be located, as that will likely continue to change. - Dr. Young: There needs to be a couple of paragraphs that describe the argument as to why someone would want to relocate and why they should continue to read the document. - Dr. Whitehead: We do need to be careful about laying out the issues as they are and trying not to make explicit recommendations, as there are many issues that do not have supportive guidance or scholarship. There are limits, so we need to be careful about articulating the state of where we are. - Dr. Weiss: This is what we currently have and, it may not be perfect. We need to be able to acknowledge that the end state is constantly changing, and the context is constantly evolving. - Madison Teeter: The alternative is, how bad it will be if we do not start moving and making decisions now? That is important to mention in the executive summary. The kind of analysis you are talking about- we would have to do original research. We need to acknowledge what the limits are. <p>The motion was moved and seconded. Dr. Weiss conducted a roll call to make the amendment. The motion passed unanimously.</p>

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3.	Recommendations from Working Groups	<p>Nature-Based Infrastructure Working Group</p> <p>Dr. Weiss: A suggestion from this working group was the idea that living shorelines are good infrastructure programs that should be promoted moving forward.</p> <p>Dr. Hershner: There are multiple ecosystem services provided by natural features in the coastal zone. That is the argument for why they become important in supporting the urban ecosystem. It is critical to promote them moving forward. The recommendation is not a matter of preserving these natural resources only where they currently exist, but also identifying where they will need to exist in the future due to wetland migration. It is important to create a nature-based infrastructure strategy moving forward.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Weiss: The goal of this recommendation is to provide convincing arguments based on quantitative and qualitative data that these nature-based infrastructure projects are important to the overall coastal resilience strategy. - Dr. Hershner: We need a recommendation from this Subcommittee to develop a strategy for the Commonwealth that extends beyond this process. - Dr. Young: Having a strategy to advocate for that would be groundbreaking - Dr. Hershner: It is necessary to inform the project evaluation process. <p>Dr. Weiss proposed the motion to create a recommendation to the TAC to ensure that nature-based solutions are prioritized and that a strategy to develop those initiatives is developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. McGlathery: We need to quantify the benefits that extend beyond coastal flooding. We do have research that we can speak to try to put numbers on those benefits - Dr. Luckenbach: I agree with Carl and add that prioritizing areas by protecting wetlands and making sure that there are places for them to migrate is important. I do not know if that is something that the consultants will be addressing moving forward. - Dr. Hershner: That is not a part of their current work. - Dr. Luckenbach: We need to prioritize this process, in conducting land purchases that will allow for marsh migration. - Dr. McGlathery: There is a real data gap that is inhibiting those decisions. We need to make a recommendation for better planning metrics for migration, as well as prioritizing areas where migration is likely to happen - Ms. Katchmark: The desire to have that strategy is important. Does that process include local staff that work on land development decisions (zoning/permitting)? They should be included in the creation of a strategy and prioritized sites for natural infrastructure. - Dr. Weiss: Yes, that is included in this recommendation, which is to create a long-term strategy that identifies structures where these natural solutions will come to live, develop a priority list of natural infrastructure, and prioritize areas where marsh migration is likely to happen. <p>The motion was moved and seconded. Dr. Weiss conducted the vote to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.</p>

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		<p>Socioeconomic Working Group</p> <p>Dr. McGlathery: Previously, we had made recommendations regarding the quantitative metrics that the Dewberry group was using in its analysis, so that those metrics would be as complete and up to date as possible. We have thought about qualitative metrics as well. Ashley Montgomery and I worked with students to come up with qualitative metrics for Phase 2 of the CRMP. They are questions that can be answered yes/no, as well as others that are open-ended. These would be included in the community engagement process, but especially during in-person community engagement. There is an extensive list.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Montgomery: The intent is to get the lived experiences of those we are reaching out to so that, when discussing relocation, we have context as to how they feel and their thoughts. We do know there is a gap between high level macro data and people's lived experiences. - Dr. McGlathery: If we are thinking about this as a recommendation, Phase 2 should make a commitment to incorporating qualitative data into socioeconomic analysis, and these types of questions could be used. <p>Dr. McGlathery led the motion to make a commitment to include qualitative information that is spatially explicit and includes the lived experiences of communities who are experiencing climate stress to enhance climate resilience. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion passed unanimously.</p> <p>Dr. Weiss: Thank you for your participation and patience. I have one more motion to propose- a recommendation to look at the CRMP, identify gaps, and do an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. This analysis should take place as soon as possible, perhaps in January.</p> <p>The motion was moved and seconded. The motion passed unanimously.</p>
4.	Public Comment Period	<p>Dr. Weiss opened the floor for public comments.</p> <p>Wendy Howard Cooper: There should also be a discussion in the front matter of the importance of equity in any plan or discussion regarding relocation. Some critical points have been made about this during this call. Acknowledgement of historic inequities in this process at the federal, state, and local levels should be part of the front matter. Need to engage those faith-based organizations, social organizations, etc. that know their communities and can make that connection, to ensure that we are doing an equitable job moving forward.</p>
5.	Wrap-Up and Adjourn	<p>Dr. Weiss asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was moved and seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and Dr. Weiss adjourned the meeting at 12:38 pm.</p>

Action Items			
#	Action Item	Owner (Organization)	Due Date
1.			

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