



TALBOT COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION & RESILIENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING #2

September 22, 2021, 10:30 AM – 12:15 PM

The following members comprise the Talbot County Hazard Mitigation & Resilience Planning Committee (HMRPC):

Name	Organization/Department
Greg Allis	Talbot County Planning and Zoning
Michael Bibb	Town of St. Michaels
Erin Braband	Town of Trappe
Maria Brophy	Town of Oxford
Mark Cohoon	Talbot County Public Works
Donnie Cooper	Talbot County Public Schools
Parker Durham	Talbot County Department of Information Technology
Marty Eichelman	Town of Queen Anne
Tommy Haddaway	Talbot County Emergency Services
Bill Hildebrand	MEMA
Bill Keswick	Talbot County Public Schools
Kymberly Kudla	Town of St. Michaels
Brian LeCates	Talbot County Emergency Services
Chery Lewis	Town of Oxford
Scott Mergenthaler	Talbot County Sheriff's Office
Mike Mertaugh	Talbot County Public Works
Paul Moffett	Easton Utilities
Brian Moore	Facilities Maintenance
Roy Myers	Town of St. Michaels
Chase Phillips	Talbot County Planning and Zoning
Sara Ramotnik	Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
Don Richardson	Town of Easton
Rebecca Saduk	Easton Utilities
Miguel Salinas	Talbot County Planning and Zoning
Geneva Schaffle	Talbot County Emergency Services
Renee Sheehy	Delmarva Power
Martin Sokolich	Talbot County Planning and Zoning
Brennan Tarleton	Talbot County Planning and Zoning
Cassandra Vanhooser	Talbot County Economic Development and Tourism
Rich Williams	Talbot County Health Department



Agenda

- Hazard Mitigation Overview (FEMA requirements, municipal involvement, benefits of hazard mitigation planning)
- Project Timeline
- Plan Update Progress Report
 - Draft Natural Hazard Chapters
 - Outreach Activities (Municipal, Public, Social Media)
 - Mitigation Action Items Status Update
- **Mitigation Action Items Workshop**
- Next Steps

Hazard Mitigation Overview

- 2017 Talbot County Hazard Mitigation and Resilience Plan (HMRP) is in the plan update process. The 2017 Talbot County HMRP is available for review at www.talbotdes.org/plan_prepare.asp?res=des_hazard_mitigation
- FEMA Requirements:
 - FEMA requires hazard mitigation plans to be updated every five (5) years; the current plan expires on September 25, 2022.
 - Stakeholder/public engagement is vital throughout all stages of the plan development process to be approved by MEMA & FEMA.
 - For municipalities to be covered under the Talbot County HMRP, they must participate throughout the planning process and formally adopt the plan.
- Cost effective
 - On average, natural hazard mitigation provides the nation \$6 in benefit for every \$1 invested.
- Hazards Identified within the HMRP:
 - Coastal Hazards (tropical storms/hurricanes, nor'easters, shoreline erosion, sea level rise)
 - Flood (coastal/tidal, riverine)
 - High Wind, Winter Storm, Tornado, Thunderstorm, Drought, Extreme Heat
 - New Hazard: Emerging Infectious Diseases

Hazard Mitigation is any action taken to permanently reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and their property from the effects of hazards.



- In addition to the natural hazards, three (3) new threats have been added to the plan and include:
 - Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attack
 - Active Assailant
 - Cyber-Attack/Threat

Threats are human caused incidents that result from intentional acts. This could include chemical, biological, or cyber-attacks and other act of terrorism.

Project Timeline

- The initial project team meeting was held in May 2021, where stakeholders were identified and discussed.
 - The Stakeholder Group will meet three (3) times at a minimum, with small/targeted group meetings scheduled as needed.
 - e.g., municipal group(s) will meet separately to discuss topics specific to municipalities
- A Draft plan for local stakeholder review will be made available in February 2022
- The Plan Update is currently ahead of schedule – 8 out of the 9 natural hazards currently have a working draft that have been submitted to stakeholders for review and comment.

Plan Update Progress Report

Draft Natural Hazard Chapters

- Most of the natural hazards identified in the plan have received a draft update, including: coastal hazards, winter storm, tornado, high wind & thunderstorm, drought & extreme heat, and emerging infectious diseases. Chapter 5: Flood is currently in progress.
 - These chapters have received a thematic and visual update, as well as updates to data, tables, text, vulnerability assessments (where applicable), and mapping (where applicable).
 - The drafts have been sent to stakeholders for review and comment.
 - Stakeholders were provided with a feedback form with each draft natural hazard chapter. This form included newly recommended action items.
- The Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Method (Appendix A) was completed and provided to stakeholders. This appendix is also available on the project website (www.talbothazardplan.org).
- The Mitigation Action Items Status Report (Appendix B) was completed and provided to stakeholders.
- Hazard Impact Tables, located within each natural hazard profile, have been updated based on stakeholder review and input.



Outreach – Municipal/Small Groups

- Municipalities have received a “municipal questionnaire” to determine the status of existing action items and gather ideas for new mitigation actions and projects.
 - The questionnaire also assesses municipal capabilities (planning & regulatory, admin & technical, financial, and education & outreach).
 - Small group meetings are being held with municipal representatives to further discuss ongoing and future goals and action items.
- Meetings have been held with the LEPC (July) and with public health officials to discuss Emerging Infectious Diseases.

2022 Talbot County Hazard Mitigation & Resilience Plan Update – Municipal Questionnaire

Please complete the following questions to the best of your knowledge for the Town of Easton. This information will be included within the 2022 Talbot County Hazard Mitigation & Resilience Plan Update. FEMA requires participation by all municipalities who plan to adopt the 2022 Plan Update. To that end, we request that a representative(s) from the Town of Easton complete this questionnaire.

Name: _____ Position: _____
Date: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

NEW & EXISTING MITIGATION PROJECTS

1. Do you have any new mitigation action items for your municipality for inclusion in the 2022 Plan Update? If so, please provide action item(s) and details, as available.

2. Does your municipality have any updates related to existing or ongoing mitigation and resilience projects?

Outreach – Public and Social Media

- The project website was launched at the beginning of summer; it has since received hundreds of unique visitors. The website is posted on Talbot County’s DES social media (e.g., Facebook) which drives traffic to the public survey.
- The **public survey** currently has 336 unique responses.
 - Municipal response breakdown: Easton (131), Oxford (45), Queen Anne (2), St. Michaels (33), Trappe (17), Unincorporated (81).
 - Preliminary results indicate the public is **most concerned** with Emerging Infectious Diseases, Coastal Hazards, and Flood.

Mitigation Action Items Update

- In June 2021 stakeholders were asked to provide their feedback on 24 action items/projects from the 2017 Plan.
 - 24 action items were evaluated, of these: eight (8) were identified as “completed,” nine (9) were identified as “delayed,” and five (5) were identified as “on schedule.”
 - Six of the 24 action items were ranked as “high priority” and four (4) of these were “completed.”
 - Those action items identified as “on schedule” or “delayed” are being assessed to determine if they will be refined and integrated into the Plan Update.
- Full results are available in *Appendix B: Mitigation Action Items Status Report*.



Mitigation Action Items Workshop

- Hazard-specific action items have been developed during this plan update cycle.
- Stakeholder feedback is necessary to ensure the action items best reflect Talbot County’s goals and objectives.
- The action items included in the workshop have been recommended based on conclusions drawn from the update of the hazard mitigation plan, stakeholder input, public comment, and from related planning documents.
- Stakeholders were asked to provide their thoughts and feedbacks on these recommended action items to ensure the items “made sense” for the county and its municipalities.
 - Action Items are modified based upon stakeholder feedback
 - Stakeholders will be provided **additional opportunities to provide feedback** on mitigation action items.

Stakeholder comments are included in the following table. Only action items that received feedback from stakeholders during the meeting are included.

Recommended Action Item	Stakeholder Comments
Coastal	
1.) Residents in low-lying communities should be educated regarding, and encouraged to utilize, an evacuation plan. During a coastal hazard event the primary route of evacuation may become submerged (e.g., MD-333 at the entrance to the Town of Oxford); therefore, residents and communities should be encouraged to plan and develop a secondary evacuation route.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Michaels – Route 33 has the same issues as MD-333. These are state roads, but the state won’t address the repetitive flooding issue despite repeated attempts by the impacted towns. • In Oxford and St. Michaels, boats are often the only way to evacuate once the entryways into town have become inundated. • “Secondary Route” wording may need to be adjusted, as there often is not a secondary route, except by boat. • PW – for years priority road lists have been sent to DoT, MD-33 and MD-333 have been on that list. • Businesses and visitors can be included in the language of these action items
2.) Green infrastructure can help protect coastal communities from impacts associated with coastal hazards, such as flooding from hurricane storm surge, sea-level rise, and shoreline erosion. Barrier island restoration is a type of green infrastructure that can protect shorelines from storm surge and erosion. Public outreach should be conducted to increase public support for ongoing barrier island projects at the municipal level as well as proposed barrier island projects in Talbot County’s Green Infrastructure Plan (<i>Cleaner, Greener Talbot</i>).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public outreach efforts including green infrastructure are supported and necessary, but correcting stormwater issues in towns such as St. Michaels will require more aggressive and multi-pronged approach. • The Town of Oxford has tide gates at multiple locations to prevent backflow, but they need upgrades. Additional green infrastructure would increase the effectiveness of these tide gates.



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Recommended Action Item	Stakeholder Comments
Flood	
1.) Continue to participate in Community Rating System activities with the goals of (a.) maintaining the county’s current CRS rating, class 7, and (b.) working towards raising the county’s CRS rating.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> County and municipal governments can work together to perform CRS activities.
2.) Conduct stream corridor assessments to determine the status of bridges, culverts, pipes, failing channelization, debris blockages, and other issues that may increase the severity of flood events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Zoning Dept. will ask about the status of any ongoing stream corridor assessments.
3.) Promote the Citizen Alert System (Everbridge) via social media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talbot DES – this is attainable, and it is promoted a lot. Preliminary public survey results indicate a lack of awareness of this emergency notification resource. Include “via media, including social media.”
4.) Ensure that all public communications, outreach efforts, signage, etc. is multi-language or provides means to translate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a very popular idea. The County has been working with the Chesapeake Multi-Cultural Resource Center a lot during the pandemic. Promoting this resource center to other groups and businesses would be helpful.
Winter Storm	
1.) Develop or update the County’s Cold Weather Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At present, this plan is “informal” and there is a desire to formalize the plan. It is believed that the County currently has one, but it needs to be further investigated. It will need updated.
2.) Promote winter weather survival tips to citizens throughout the fall and winter seasons on the County’s website and social media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DES is currently doing this, but updates and additional promotion are needed.
Tornado	
1.) Conduct public outreach activities to increase awareness of tornado risk. Activities may include educating the public via media outlets, conducting tornado drills in schools and public buildings, and distributing tornado safety materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools currently conduct annual safety drills.
High Wind & Thunderstorm	
1.) Protect Power Lines and Infrastructure by continuing regular maintenance and upkeep of utilities. Examples of strategies include tree pruning around lines, inspection of utility and power line poles to determine their structural integrity and burying power lines to provide uninterrupted power after severe winds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be beneficial to work with the local utility companies as they keep their own list of priority infrastructure. Knowing how utilities prioritize infrastructure can help the county and municipality prioritize their own.
2.) Retrofit public buildings and critical facilities to reduce future wind damage. Examples include improving roof coverings (e.g., no pebbles,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The public may need further education on the benefits of retrofitting and protecting vital infrastructure from



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removal of ballast roof systems), anchoring of roof-mounted HVAC systems, and protecting traffic lights and other traffic controls from high winds.	the damages associated with high winds and thunderstorms. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additionally, increased public education relating to the “potential for power loss” would be greatly beneficial.
2.) Update, implement, and maintain the current draft of Talbot County’s Debris Management Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current draft needs some attention; the plan is updated but it is not quite reflective of Talbot County.
Drought & Extreme Heat	
1.) Encourage community greening activities and collect data on community greening activities such as rain gardens and bioretention areas. Guidance from the “Cleaner, Greener Talbot” Plan will be helpful in site selection. Populate countywide community greening inventory using the data gathered following assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Green Infrastructure Plan (Cleaner, Greener Talbot) has a form to help start this inventory process (included as an appendix).
Other Comments	
1. Stakeholders suggested that it would be very helpful if the county developed a digital library including all plans and notices. This would be very helpful to the municipalities and members of the community.	

NEXT STEPS

- Meeting #2 Notes - distributed to all stakeholders and uploaded to project website.
- Small-group meetings will continue, including municipalities and other community organizations.
- The THIRA Appendix will be developed following the drafting of all natural hazard chapters.
 - Three threats have been identified for this plan update: Complex Coordinated Terrorist Attack, Active Assailant, and Cyber-Attack/Threat
 - Developing the THIRA will require input from stakeholders via small-group meetings. Be on the lookout for an invitation.
- Action Items Priority Ranking Exercise
 - Ranking action items will require additional stakeholder feedback.
- Development of mitigation projects, including high priority projects (based on the priority ranking exercise)
- Results from the public survey will be integrated into the plan update
- Complete working draft of plan update
- **Meeting #3: November/December 2022**

Plan Update Website: www.talbothazardplan.org
 Public Survey: www.surveymonkey.com/r/K6ZZ9HS

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