

3.– Planning Process

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Introduction

A robust planning process is integral to the development of a resilience plan. The planning process involves identifying and convening a Planning Team, identifying and engaging stakeholders and the public, collecting data, and integrating plans, studies, and technical information.

Preparing the Resilience Plan

County staff and the consultant team designed a planning process to create the County’s first flood resilience plan that met the 12-month timeframe required by the CFPF grant award. The process follows the agreed upon work plan developed as part of the CFPF application, which outlined the major tasks to be completed. Through completion of these tasks, the consultant team developed the contents for the final resilience plan. The process’s major tasks are presented in Table 3-1.

Table 3-1: Resilience Planning Process

Resilience Planning Process
1. Form the Planning Team
2. Engage Stakeholders
3. Data Collection and Review
4. Capacity and Capability Needs Assessment
5. Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
6. Priority Area Identification
7. Prioritized Flood Risk-Reduction Actions

A necessary and important activity at the beginning of the process was to establish the Buchanan County Flood Resilience Planning Team (Planning Team) with broad representation from across the county to guide the process and plan contents. Planning Team members were chosen because of their knowledge of the County’s flood history and their contributions to the County’s capability to implement flood resilience projects. Together with the consultant team, the Planning Team maintained compliance with CFPF grant requirements, enabling eligibility for future CFPF funding for implementation projects.

Buchanan County Flood Resilience Planning Team

The Planning Team played an important role throughout the planning process. Members included a broad range of stakeholders vested in flood control, preparedness and resilience, including community leaders and emergency response, building, and floodplain management officials. Regional planners from the Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission (CPPDC), State representatives (e.g., Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and Virginia Department of Emergency Management), and officials from the Town of Grundy were engaged and invited to participate on the Planning Team. Planning Team members met regularly (approximately bi-monthly) and were responsible for providing input throughout the planning process such as understanding of existing and planned

projects, plans, and data, review of draft materials, and project prioritization. Planning Team members are presented in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2: Members of Planning Committee

Name	Title	City Service Area/Agency
Craig Horn	County Administrator	Buchanan County
Lee Moise	County Attorney, Floodplain Coordinator	Buchanan County
Marcus Stiltner	County Road Engineer	Buchanan County
Sonny Riggsby	County Mapping Technician	Buchanan County
Bob Anderson	Executive Director	Buchanan County Public Service Authority
Bart Chambers	County Building Official, Emergency Manager	Buchanan County
Kenneth Ratliff	Network Administrator	Buchanan County
Anthony Justus		

Involving the Public

Public participation was an important component of the planning process. Individual citizen and community-based input provides the entire Planning Team with a greater understanding of local concerns and increases the likelihood of successfully implementing mitigation actions by developing community “buy-in” from those directly affected by the decisions of public officials. As citizens become more involved in decisions that affect their safety and quality of life, they are more likely to gain a greater understanding of the flood hazards present in their community and take the steps necessary to reduce their impact. Public awareness is a key component of any community’s overall resilience strategy aimed at making a home, neighborhood, school, business, or entire city more prepared for flooding or other related problems.

Public involvement during the county’s development of the plan was sought using three methods: (1) Two public meetings were held during the planning process, as described above; (2) plan promotion through social media, traditional media (e.g., newspaper, radio, cable TV), and church mailers; and, (3) copies of the draft plan deliverables were made available and advertised for public review and comment online. The public was provided two opportunities to be involved in the development of the plan at two distinct periods during the planning process: (1) during the drafting stage of the Plan – two public meetings; and (2) upon completion of a final draft plan – draft plan review was posted for public review (prior to the plan’s submission for and adoption and approval). A link to an electronic version of the draft plan was posted and advertised via social media and the project website from January xx to February xx, 2023. The final plan was reviewed and approved by the County Board of Supervisors on February xx, 2023 during a public meeting. (The adoption resolution can be found in Appendix A).

The Planning Team promoted participation in the planning process through postings at several area churches, newspaper ads, and television news channel promotions. A member of the consultant team also participated in an interview with local news stations, discussing the Resilience Plan and the second public meeting.

Plan Development Meetings

The preparation of this plan entailed a series of meetings, stakeholder interviews, and workshops for facilitating discussion, gaining consensus, and completing data collection efforts with local government staff and community officials. More importantly, the meetings fostered continuous input and feedback from relevant participants throughout the planning process. The Planning Team and consultant team made considerable efforts to publicize the meetings to invite a broad range of stakeholders. The summaries below of the key meetings demonstrate the how stakeholders and the public contributed directly to plan development.

Orientation Meeting – January 12, 2022

The purpose of Steering Committee Kickoff Meeting was to review the scope of work, schedule, and resources with a small core team. It was a virtual meetings that served as the formal kickoff to the planning process. The meeting was facilitated by the consultant team. Following introductions, each phase of the planning process was reviewed and the team reviewed responsibilities of the Steering Committee. Input on potential Planning Team members was gathered, and flooding hotspots, including previous impacts, were viewed along with past and ongoing flood mitigation projects. It should be noted that engagement efforts (public and Planning Team) were halted from July to October 2022 after the county experienced a major flood event (a federally declared disaster) in July 2022, with an understanding that the community and county officials needed to prioritize response and recovery efforts associated with the flood event.

Planning Team Kickoff Meeting – May 17, 2022

The Planning Team Kickoff Meeting was held in Grundy, VA on May 17, 2022. During this meeting, introductions were completed, and a project overview was given, to include the plan purpose, goals, overview of tasks, and schedule. Progress to date, such as data collection, was described, outstanding data needs were conveyed, and a discussion was held to inform existing conditions, community capacity, capabilities, and needs.

Public Meeting – October 3, 2022

A public meeting was held at Hurley High School on October, 3, 2022. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an introduction to the resilience plan and describe why creating the plan is important. The overall planning process was described, including how other regional plans and initiatives would be integrated, data collection process, and plan review and adoption process. County flooding issues were also identified, and future engagement opportunities were emphasized.

Outside of the planning team staff, four participants from the public attended. The Planning Team revisited the public outreach approach in response to the limited attendance and planned additional announcement methods for future meetings.

Planning Team Risk Assessment and Priority Area Identification Meeting – October 4, 2022

On October 4, 2022, a Planning Team workshop was held in Grundy. The meeting reviewed progress to date, including results of the capability and capacity assessment. Risk assessment results were discussed, and a work session to review and refine the county's critical facilities was completed. Lastly, potential projects identified from the planning process to date were discussed.

Public Meeting – November 9, 2022

A meeting with the public was held on November 9, 2022, at Twin Valley High School in Pilgrim Knob, following a draft of the existing conditions and risk assessment. During this meeting, attendees were given an overview of the planning project, including scope, goals, and progress to date. Outcomes of the meeting included identification of high priority locations in which to focus project development.

Planning Team Priority Area Refinement and Project Meeting – November 10, 2022

On November 10, 2022 a Planning Team meeting was held in Grundy. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss risk reduction projects identified to date as well as potential prioritization metrics, such as project cost, funding opportunities, complexity, and capacity for risk reduction, among others. In addition, areas prioritized for risk reduction projects were discussed and refined.

Draft Plan Review Meeting (TBD)

This review is anticipated to be virtual, with posting and comment collection through the project website and social media.

Incorporation of Plans, Studies, and Technical Information

Several plans and studies were leveraged during development of the Flood Resilience Plan. Specific references to other plans and studies may be found throughout the plan, primarily in Section 5: Capability and Capacity Assessment and Section 6: Risk Assessment. Examples of plans and studies incorporated into this plan include:

- Local planning documents (e.g., floodplain management ordinances, land use plans);
- Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission Hazard Mitigation Plan;
- Capital Improvement Plan;
- Local, state, federal hazard technical information (e.g., US Army Corps data, FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps, US Fish and Wildlife); and,
- Regional plans (e.g., economic development, environmental).