

VFPMP Stage Setting

Workshop Summary



September 26, 2024 | Stage Setting Workshop Summary



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VFPMP Presentation (Krista Jankowski, Arcadis)

- Introductions of VFPMP Development Team
- Anticipated Meeting Outcomes
- VFPMP Overview
- VFPMP Components & Timeline
- VFPMP Stakeholder Overview & Engagement Points
- VFPMP Final Products
- Questions & Answers

Stage Setting Workshop Overview

Virginia stakeholders were given introductory information on the VFPMP project by the Arcadis team. Initial information included an overview of the project, its components, timeline, and how the Arcadis team plans to engage stakeholders throughout the development of the VFPMP.

Stakeholders have been defined in two categories for this effort, “Core” and “Supporting” stakeholders. “Core” stakeholders were invited to attend this meeting in-person. “Supporting” stakeholders and members of the public were invited to listen into the presentation virtually via Teams. After the conclusion of the presentation, the virtual portion of the meeting ended.

The “Core” stakeholders in the room then participated in a small group activity where they were split into four groups. Each group consisted of various Virginia state agencies and organizations and the Arcadis team organized the individuals in the groups by level of responsibility in their organization (e.g., agency directors were assigned to one group, program managers were assigned to one group). Each group was asked to discuss flood resilience successes and challenges in response to recent flood events. Discussion points were recorded by notetakers.

Summarized below are the flood resilience success and challenges that were discussed in the small groups. Each group also came up with 1-3 goals in relation to addressing the challenges they discussed.

Breakout Group 1

SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS

- Successful initiatives in reforestation, such as the Hardwood Habitat Initiative, along with effective forest land retention and management, contribute significantly to enhancing ecological health and resilience.
- The Department of Forestry (DOF) supports green infrastructure (GI) projects and living shorelines, while the Voluntary Wetland Restoration Enhancement and Protection Program actively improves wetland ecosystems, further bolstering coastal resilience.
- The non-profit RISE has played a role in advancing resilience planning and redevelopment in the Norfolk watershed, with successful permitting for living and hardened shorelines supported by innovative shoreline management technologies, alongside Community Flood Preparedness Fund (CFPF) grants and FEMA compliance assistance that strengthen local efforts.

CHALLENGES

- There is a need for effective community outreach, with consistent engagement primarily from local government.
- There is a need for intentional concentration on critical infrastructure, particularly dams, with a lack of proactive management.
- There is a need for funding, many projects may not qualify for federal funding unless they meet specific criteria.
- There is a need for greater emphasis on the value of coastal forests in resilience planning.

REPORT OUT GOALS

- Effective community outreach is needed to address the difficulty in reaching parts of the broader public to participate in master plans and local resilience planning. Feedback consistently comes from the same group of folks, such as local government officials and NGOs. Establish a process/program for quick-need funding for localities/communities
- Address resource capacity issues for state agencies to be able to achieve flood resilience responsibilities
 - Identify needs by agency and coordinate through Resilience Team
 - Identify potential sources of funding and develop strategies to secure them to increase capacity and funding for resilience efforts.

GROUP 1 REPRESENTATIVES

Facilitator: Linda Warren

Note Taker: Dave Hirschman

Group Members:

First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Organization Name	Programs Being Represented
Michael	Perez	Deputy Chief Diversity Officer	Office of the Governor	Office of Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion
Becky	Gwynn	Deputy Director	Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources	habitat restoration/enhancement, land protection, infrastructure protection and rehabilitation
Alex	Samms	Chief Deputy, DEQ	Virginia Department of Environmental Quality	DEQ
Jamie	Green	Commissioner	Virginia Marine Resources Commission	Tidal Natural Resources
Shawn	Crumlish	Executive Director	Virginia Resources Authority	Community Flood Preparedness and Resilient Virginia Revolving Funds
Shawn	Talmadge	State Coordinator	Virginia Department of Emergency Management	TAC, FRAC, IRMT
Terry	Lasher	Assistant State Forester	Virginia Department of Forestry	Conservation, Forest Management, Emergency Response, Watersheds

Breakout Group 2

SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS

- VDOT has updated structure and bridge standards to address sea level rise, while the Community Flood Preparedness Fund and the Resilient VA Revolving Loan Program enhances local resilience efforts.
- Increased staffing and consultant support have assisted the development of tools that leverage various data sets to evaluate flooding and climate impacts on individual properties.
- Initiatives include creating public-facing toolkits for property owners, localities, and preservation planners, along with funding opportunities for projects after hurricanes in coordination with the Department of Historical Resources.
- More grant funding opportunities have provided further education, implementation, and resources for resilience planning.

CHALLENGES

- Local communities need to increase their participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and seek greater inclusion in the decision-making process, emphasizing the importance of accessible communication strategies for public engagement. Capacity from the state is not available to help the communities be compliant.
- Enhanced political support is essential, as elected officials play a crucial role in securing funding and influencing decisions related to flood resilience.
- There is a pressing need for dedicated funding for flood resilience initiatives and improvements in stormwater drainage systems to effectively manage and mitigate flooding impacts.

REPORT OUT GOALS

- Targeted Communications
 - Challenge: Communication with stakeholders including general public, legislators, and state actors
 - Goal: Develop a specific Outreach and Engagement strategy to educate and foster widespread support for implementing solutions, especially among those with the power to support through funding (fostering political will).
- Long-term resilience solutions
 - Challenge: There is a lack of focus on long-term issues including relocation and retreat.
 - Goal: Develop a long-term strategy to address relocation issues (and other long-term issues).

GROUP 2 REPRESENTATIVES

Facilitator: Sidney Huffman

Note Taker: Keesler Morrison

Group Members:

First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Organization Name	Programs Being Represented
Peter	D'Alema	Director of Program Management	Virginia Resources Authority	Virginia Community Flood Preparedness Fund, Resilient Virginia Revolving Fund, Virginia Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund
Jolene	Smith	Director, Resource Information & Register	Department of Historic Resources	GIS and Data, Cultural Heritage and Climate Planning
Adrienne	Kotula	Virginia Director	Chesapeake Bay Commission	Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement
Sharon	Baxter	Dir, Division of Environmental Enhancement	Virginia Department of Environmental Quality	Pollution Prevention, CZM and Environmental Impact Review
Tom	Berry	Planning and Intelligence Division Director	Virginia Department of Emergency Management	State Hazard Mitigation Planning
Chris	Berg	Assistant Division Director, Environmental Division	Virginia Department of Transportation	VDOT Resilience Program

Breakout Group 3

SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS

- PDCs (Planning District Commissions) effectively serve as administrative arms of the Commonwealth, facilitating the implementation and distribution of funds during disaster events. This has been proven to be highly effective.
- The use of data to identify flood-prone and socially vulnerable areas enhances the development of resources during flood events, supported by the development of local resilience plans and institutional structures that ensure consistency in program implementation.
- Initiatives such as the Hampton Roads pilot flood sensor for roads and a 5-year planning cycle foster collaboration among various partners, creating valuable touchpoints for local and regional staff during the hazard mitigation planning process.

CHALLENGES

- State agencies face challenges due to policies that restrict cash-flowing projects upfront, impacting indirect costs, staff salaries, and overall project feasibility, while planning efforts often lack synchronization across various departments.
- The reliance on outdated data during state plan submissions has hindered effectiveness, compounded by the presence of "hidden" or "unwritten" rules that complicate the planning process and communication with the public.
- Localities struggle with different incentives compared to state agencies, leading to gaps in riverine and rainfall-driven data, highlighting the need for improved governance structures and enhanced attention to data-rich systems like the Smart Scale, which effectively prioritizes funding and projects.

REPORT OUTS

- Goal: Strong state leadership: decision makers need to be action-oriented, but also need to understand the downstream implications of their actions, including unintended consequences. Need to conduct front end analysis – and once that has been conducted, actions of change need to happen so the same barriers/mistakes/etc. don't continue to happen.
- There is a need to fill in data gaps and build trust of that new data through training. The data needs to be reliable and known levels of accuracy of the data need to be shared transparently.

GROUP 3 REPRESENTATIVES

Facilitator: Katya Wowk

Note taker: Madison Teeter

Group Members:

First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Organization Name	Programs Being Represented
William	Curtis	DHCD Assistant Director	Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development	State Housing Resilience Programs
Debbie	Messmer	Deputy Director Grant Management and Recovery	Virginia Department of Emergency Management	FMA, HMGP, BRIC
Lewie	Lawrence	MPPDC Executive Director	Middle Peninsula PDC	VAPDC
Jitender	Ramchandani	Statewide Transportation Planning Manager	Virginia Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment	Statewide Transportation Planning
Ryan	Green	Program Manager	Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program	Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program
Brandy	Buford	NFIP Coordinator	Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation	NFIP
Rachel	Slotter	Strategic Planning Branch Manager	Virginia Department of Emergency Management	VDEM Planning & Intelligence Division - State Hazard Mitigation Plan

Breakout Group 4

SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS

- VDOT Flood Resilience Master Plan and VDOT Data Viewer have been successful.

- VDOT research – flooding (research council)
- DEQ: currently collecting high and low flow data for flood and drought risk. DEQ has a drought monitoring task force. DEQ has a cooperative agreement with USGS that allows them to directly upload their stream gauge data to the USGS website. It's almost real-time data, there is only a 15min lag time. DEQ's stream gauge data is used internally and externally.
- DGS: state agency compliance for construction in the floodplain will help simplify some processes.
- DWR: jetties protect boat ramps to ensure access
- DCR: a success of Phase 1 of the Coastal Resilience Master Plan was having data readily available to customers (as raw data, a map explorer, etc.). A way to build on this success would be to provide information to users on how to use the data.
- Regular funding to 8 coastal PDCs (Planning District Commissions) for resilience planning and engagement/communications.

CHALLENGES

- Working across multiple jurisdictions/jurisdictional boundaries has been a challenge, whether that has been state, federal, regional, or otherwise. Coordination between state agencies has also been a challenge.
- Operational challenges include consistent funding for equipment maintenance upgrades. A lack of available resources and maintenance over the years had led to deteriorating infrastructure, due to a lack of funding. In need of sufficient funding for flash flood equipment downstream, preparedness and response capabilities for vulnerable areas are limited.
- Inconsistent data availability, including flood data and VFRIS Base Flood Elevation data.
- There are multiple unconnected GIS databases across the state at the state (inter-agency) and local levels.
- There is no catalog of existing data and tools, which often leads to duplicative efforts by state agencies.

REPORT OUTS GOALS

- Funding for resiliency
 - Identifying existing sources of funding, how they are being used and how they could be used
 - Define buckets of funding needs (e.g., data, maintenance & operations, projects)
 - Unified way of prioritizing funding, focusing on where the risk is
 - Data quality, synthesis, and coordination and finding ways to optimize funding around data resources
- Coordination
 - Maximize opportunities for coordination across agencies and levels of government from the respective lenses of different entities' priorities.
 - Educational component – integrate data and tools

GROUP 4 REPRESENTATIVES

Facilitator: Colleen McHugh

Note Taker(s): Muthu Narayanaswamy and Catherine Johnson

Group Members:

First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Organization Name	Programs Being Represented
Jacob	Compton	Dam Safety Project Manager	Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources	Capital programs and dam safety
Fred	Kirby	State Review Engineer	Department of General Services - Division of Engineering and Buildings	State Building Official and Capital Outlay
Emmett	Heltzel	State Location and Design Engineer	Virginia Department of Transportation	statewide highway engineering function to include highway drainage and riverine analysis and design
Will	Isenberg	Coastal Planner	Virginia Department of Environmental Quality	Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program
Mitchell	Smiley	Policy Manager	Virginia Municipal League	Local Government
Dave	Davis	Manager, Office of Wetlands & Stream Protection	Virginia Department of Environmental Quality	Surface Water Investigations program & Virginia Water Protection Permit program
Abiot	Gemechu	Hydraulics Engineer	Virginia Department of Transportation	Location and Design

Appendix

Workshop Slides

Workshop Handouts

Small Group Activity – Introductions Discussion

Goal 1 – Through VFPMP Overview Presentation

Provide a clear overview of the planned VFPMP development process and the role of stakeholders in that process

Outcome: Ensure you feel equipped to participate and contribute to the collective decision-making about recommendations for inclusion in the plan

Goal 2 – Through Small Group Discussions

Gain additional information about your recent and current experience with regard to flood resilience and flood mitigation work in your role

Outcome: Gain valuable insights from the directors and practitioners that work daily to keep Virginians safer in light of flooding hazards

Small Group Activity – Objectives

Small Group Discussions

Through facilitated discussion, we aim to

- Identify what is working for your agency with regard to flood resilience responsibilities
- Identify what is not working as well for your agency with regard to flood resilience responsibilities
- Understand the data, resources, and capacities that your agency has or needs to be more successful

We will be taking notes to capture all of your input and insights.

Small Group Activity – Flood Resilience Successes Discussion

What flood resilience efforts are you aware of in your agency/organization that were successful?

Questions to help guide the conversation:

- Was data used to inform the process? If so, what specific type of data was most useful? What was the source and how often do you use that data?
- What was the role of your agency/organization in the process? How did your capacity to work on the effort enhance the process? What was really important?
- What resources were critical to the effort's success (e.g. funding, previous planning efforts, staff expertise, etc.) Which of these resources was the most important?

Small Group Activity – Flood Resilience Challenges Discussion

What challenges are you facing when trying to plan or implement flood resilience efforts?

Questions to help guide the conversation:

- What types of information or data did you not have access to that would have made decision-making more effective or efficient?
- How did/do limitations in agency capacities (e..g. data, resources, knowledge, staff) impact your ability to carry out flood resilience efforts?
- Were any of the resources you did have access to insufficient for carrying out tasks related to the flood resilience efforts? If so, how?

Small Group Activity – Group Report Outs

1. Assign a Group Reporter to share out during the Report Out section
2. As a group, consider the notes from the “Challenges” discussion and think about the questions:
 - a. If you could reframe some of your “Challenges” as goals for your agency to achieve, what would those goals be?
 - b. What would it look like for your agency to better support flood resilience across Virginia?
3. As a group, select 1 or 2 reframed “Challenges” to share out to the group and provide an explanation of what challenge led to identifying this goal and (as applicable) what data, resources, or capacities are needed to support achieving the goal in the near-term.
4. Keep comments brief (~2 minutes max) to ensure we can get through all groups and wrap up on time

Virginia Flood Protection Master Plan – 4.2 Stage Setting Meeting Handout – Definitions

Resources: In the context of flood resilience, resources refer to the tangible and intangible assets that state agencies can utilize to prepare for, respond to, and recover from flood events. These include financial assets, physical infrastructure, human resources, and technological tools.

Example Resources

Financial Resources:

Grants and Funding: Federal and state grants, emergency funds, and budget allocations specifically for flood resilience projects.

Insurance: Policies that cover flood damage to public infrastructure.

Budgets: Allocations from state budgets, federal grants, and other funding sources.

Revenue Collection: Taxes, fees, and other revenue-generating mechanisms.

Physical Resources:

Infrastructure: Levees, floodwalls, drainage systems, and water retention basins.

Equipment: Pumps, sandbags, emergency response vehicles, and monitoring devices.

Human Resources:

Personnel: Engineers, planners, emergency responders, and community outreach specialists.

Volunteers: Community members trained to assist in flood response and recovery efforts.

Technological Resources:

Data: Real time monitoring systems, LIDAR, historical flood data, etc.

Information Systems: Geographic Information Systems (GIS), flood modeling software, and early warning systems.

Communication Tools: Radios, mobile apps, and public alert systems.

Capacities: Capacities are the abilities and skills that state agencies possess or need to develop to effectively use their resources for flood resilience. This includes the knowledge, expertise, organizational structures, and processes that enable agencies to plan, implement, and manage flood resilience activities.

Example Capacity

Technical Capacity:

Expertise: Knowledge in hydrology, civil engineering, urban planning, and environmental science.

Training: Regular training programs for staff on the latest flood resilience techniques and technologies.

Certification: Emergency response, first aid, CFM, AICP, etc.

Organizational Capacity:

Coordination Mechanisms: Established protocols for inter-agency collaboration and communication during flood events.

Leadership: Strong leadership to guide flood resilience initiatives and make informed decisions.

Policy Implementation: Ability to design, implement, and enforce policies and regulations.

Operations: Efficient delivery of public services with sufficient staffing for tasks, etc.

Community Capacity:

Public Awareness: Programs to educate the public about flood risks and preparedness measures.

Engagement: Mechanisms for involving community members in planning and decision-making processes.

Adaptive Capacity:

Flexibility: Ability to adapt plans and strategies based on new information or changing conditions.

Innovation: Encouraging the development and implementation of new technologies and approaches to flood resilience.

Virginia Flood Protection Master Plan – 4.2 Stage Setting Meeting Handout – Questions

Each group will discuss their efforts and experiences related to:

- July 2022 Flooding
- Tropical Storm Debby
- Other recent events (participants can choose any other relevant flooding related events they have managed).

Flood Resilience Successes (10 min)

- What flood resilience-related efforts by your agency were particularly successful during these events?
- What factors do you think contributed most to the success of these efforts?
 - What specific data was most useful? What was the source and how often do you use that data?
 - How did agency capacities enhance the action (related to mitigation/ preparation/ response/ recovery)? What was really important?
 - Were there partnerships that were key to the success of the action?
 - Which resources were most critical and why? Are those resources commonly available to you or was this a special situation?

Flood Resilience Challenges (15 min)

- What were the main challenges encountered by your agency during these events?
- What factors do you think contributed most to the challenges you faced?
 - What data was lacking or problematic?
 - How did limitations in agency capacities affect the response?
 - Which resources were insufficient and why?

Prepare for Report Outs (5 min)

- How could you reframe the selected “Challenges” as goals for your agency/the State to achieve?
- What resources or capacities would you need to achieve those goals?
- What would it look like for your agency to better support flood resilience across Virginia?