

Chapter 7

Mitigation Strategy

Eastern Shore Hazard Mitigation Plan
2025 Update

PLANNING PROCESS

This Chapter describes the planning process undertaken by the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission (A-N PDC) and participating jurisdictions in the 2025 update of *The Eastern Shore of Virginia 2021 Hazard Mitigation Plan*. Local participation in the Project Management Team, public engagement, and the steps and milestones completed will be discussed.

Consistent with FEMA Local Mitigation Planning Policy Guide the planning process employed in the development of this Plan considered who was involved and what data and information was used to update the plan. An effort was made to coordinate with other local and inter-jurisdictional projects, plans, and activities, and the Plan was developed based upon the best available science, incorporating active participation and buy-in from community leaders, stakeholders, and the public.

3.1 PLAN UPDATE TIMELINE

To support development of this Plan update, the A-NPDC sought funds from VDEM and FEMA to supplement their local funds dedicated to the update. Development of the Plan update appreciably began in January 2025 with initial coordination between A-N PDC staff and the consultant selected to develop the Plan update, and then the first meeting of the Project Management Team in person in Parksley, VA in March 2025.

Draft Plan Review

Once the draft of the updated Plan was produced, the Plan was made available on XX-XX, 2025, for public review online and in various locations throughout the region in hardcopy form. Once the Plan was approved in draft form by the PMT, the Plan was submitted to VDEM for initial review. Once VDEM comments were satisfied, the Plan was then officially transmitted to FEMA for review under the “Approvable Pending Adoption” (APA) process, which anticipates subsequent local adoption. Once FEMA comments were satisfied, FEMA issued its APA determination on MONTH DATE, 202X.

Adoption of the Plan

Following FEMA’s APA determination, each participating jurisdiction’s chief elected board adopted resolutions officially adopting the Plan. These meetings are noticed publicly consistent with state and local laws and provide residents of respective localities an additional and final opportunity to make comments on the Plan prior to local action to adopt the Plan. Adoption of the Plan by COUNTY/TOWN on MONTH ##, 202X established the official effective date for the Plan and essentially completed the process, with the adoption by all participating localities within 12 months of this date.

The update process concluded with the adoption of the Plan by COUNTY/TOWN on MONTH ##, 202X, establishing the Plan’s effective date, and on MONTH ##, 202X with adoption by the final participating jurisdiction. See the Appendix for motions of approval by each participating jurisdiction.



3.2 PARTICIPATING JURISDICTIONS

The process to update *The Eastern Shore of Virginia 2021 Hazard Mitigation Plan* included participation by representatives of participating jurisdictions – principally emergency management and planning staff, as well as chief administrative officials – A-N PDC staff, and representatives of the Virginia Department of Health and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management. These individuals were organized as part of the Project Management Team (PMT), which met throughout the course of the Plan update process, described further below under Section 3.3. The PMT was comprised of participants identified in the table on the following pages:

Table 3.1, Project Management Team (PMT) Members

Representative Name	Title	Jurisdiction/ Organization
Flournoy, Jeffrey	ESVA 9-1-1 Director	BOTH
Baker, Stewart	VA Dept. Emergency Management	STATE
Bruce, Chris	VA Dept. Emergency Management	BOTH
Christman, Terri	EMS Chief	Northampton
DeYoung, Gregory	EMS Chief	Northampton
Dickey, Sarah	Accomack County. Emergency Management	Accomack
Doughty, Sheriff David	Sheriff's Office	Northampton
Hodgson, Caroline	ESVA 9-1-1 Communications Center	BOTH
Kellam, Ryan	ES Regional HazMat Team	Accomack
Lawson, Dane	Virginia State Police	BOTH
Leonard, Ed	Northampton County. Emergency Management, Coordinator	Northampton
Northam, Edward (Tom)	NASA Wallops Flight Facility	Accomack
Rush, Bryan	Chincoteague EM	Accomack
Spencer, Edward	Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnell	Northampton
Sterling, Bruce	VA Dept. Emergency Management	STATE
Wessells, Todd	Sheriff's Office	Accomack
Doyle, Anne	Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission	BOTH
Chandler, Rita	Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission	BOTH
Cooke, John	VA Dept of Health - Eastern Region	BOTH
Dedicatoria, Tracey	ES Health District - Epidemiologist	BOTH
Taylor, Curtis	ANEC Coordinator, Environmental, Health & Safety	BOTH
Palmer, Dylan	FEMA Community Planner	BOTH
Michael Zehner, AICP, CFM	Director of Community Development & Planning	Berkley Group
Kate Jones, AICP	Deputy Director of Community Development	
Savannah Newbern, CFM	Senior Planner	
Linds Edwards	Planner II	
Anna Cherry, CFM	Planner II	



3.3 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

This 2025 update of The *Eastern Shore of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan* was coordinated by A-N PDC, along with the assistance of a contracted consultant, Berkley Group. Jurisdictions covered by the Plan includes the two (2) counties and fourteen (14) incorporated towns in the A-N PDC region, with the **TOWNS WITH SIGNED AGREEMENTS** represented by their respective counties (Accomack County and Northampton County, respectively). As noted, while development of the Plan update began in January 2025 with the initial coordination meeting between A-N PDC staff and the consultant, work on the Plan update began prior to this with A-N PDC evaluation of the 2021 Plan and funding applications to VDEM/FEMA and DCR; awarded **DATE** by VDEM under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (**Disaster 4512, Virginia COVID-19 Pandemic**)

As discussed, local participation in the Plan update process was coordinated through the establishment of a Project Management Team. To satisfy multi-jurisdictional participation requirements pursuant to FEMA regulations, PMT members were required to perform the following principal tasks as part of the Plan update:

- Participation in the Plan update process and attend PMT meetings;
- Distribution of the Public Survey (translated to Spanish, and Haitian Creole);
- Completion of the Local Capability Assessment Survey;
- Completion of the Checking In On The NFIP Worksheet;
- Identification of any unique local hazards apart from the identified regional hazards;
- Identification of completed mitigation projects, if applicable;
- Update and develop additional mitigation actions and strategies;
- Public outreach regarding the Plan update process; and
- Support local adoption of the Plan.

Four (4) meetings of the PMT meetings were held as part of the process to update the plan. While the first meeting was held in person, all subsequent meetings allowed for remote/virtual participation. PMT meetings were held as follows, with focused topics as noted (meeting notes for all Project Management Team meetings are included as Appendix):

- March 17, 2025, 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM - First PMT Meeting: Kick-Off; Discuss Project Scope and Timeline; Review, Evaluation, Assessment of Current Plan; Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment;
- May 29, 2025, 1:00PM-2:30PM - Second PMT Meeting: Project Status; Public Engagement and Survey; Calls for Information- Critical Infrastructure, Capability Assessments, NFIP/CRS Information
- September 23 2:00PM – 3:30PM - Third PMT Meeting: Review and Discuss Hazard Risk and Vulnerability; Mitigation Strategy Updates; Review Draft Plan Update
- November 13, 2025 - Fourth PMT Meeting: Review and Discuss Mitigation Strategies; Review Draft Plan Update; Final Approval of Draft Plan.



Figure 3.1 Project Planning Timeline

In addition to these meetings, throughout the Plan update process, locality PMT representatives, A-N PDC staff, and the consultant communicated individually and collectively regarding aspects of the Plan update and process. These communications and meetings involved discussions on locality-specific unique hazards, mitigation strategies, and capability assessment information. The Towns of Bloxom (Jeanette Eby, Town Clerk), and Wachapreague (Robert Williams, CRS/Floodplain Administrator/Council Member) held calls with BG staff to update Critical Facility and Capability Assessment information during June 2025. Mark Kirby, Mayor of the Town of Accomack was assisted to complete the Critical Facility and Capability Assessment update in July 2025.

As referenced above, while representatives of the towns of **TOWNS** did not directly participate in the Plan update process, A-N PDC staff coordinated with officials of each town and the towns were officially represented in the process and on the PMT by Accomack County and Northampton County officials.

3.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES

Public involvement, engagement, and public education are critical components of the Plan update. Public feedback informs the quality of the Plan and contributes to the success of hazard mitigation efforts. Done well, engaging the public in the Plan update both increases citizen awareness about potential natural hazards present in the region, and creates a foundation for future education and outreach programs that are proposed in the mitigation strategies contained within the Plan. Public engagement included the following methods (full results of public feedback are included in the Appendix):

Publication of Engagement in the Planning Process

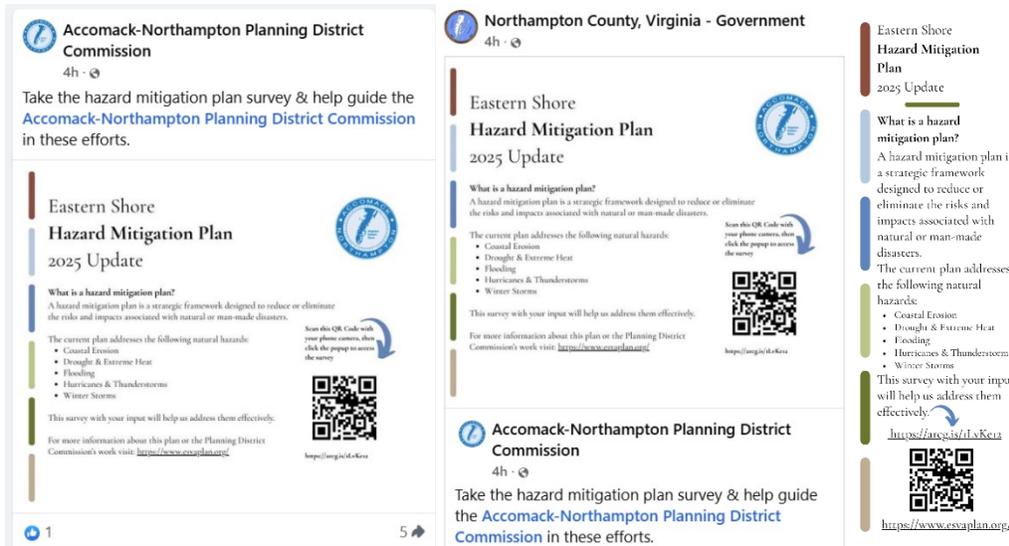
Consistent messaging was used throughout the planning process; press releases, emails, website updates, and social media posts were developed for use by the A-N PDC and localities. Additionally, the A-N PDC maintained updates on the project through their Facebook and county webpages.

Public Survey Translations

An initial step to support public involvement in the Plan update was the development of a public survey that was translated to Spanish and Haitian Creole for paper and online transmittance. After discussions with the PMT and with A-NPDC, it determined that non-English speaking communities such as these should be included in outreach efforts. The survey was distributed by the participating counties, PDC, and in the regional libraries that are located in some of the Towns. The Town of Chincoteague posted the prepared graphics on their website and Facebook along with distributing paper copies in the reception area of the office. The Town of Wachapreague posted the information on their website and on bulletin boards in the Town Hall and at the local Post Office. Accomack County posted flyers within their administrative building and



around the community including the Town of Accomac's Post Office, and a local restaurant that gets a lot of foot traffic. The local libraries received bookmark versions of the survey with QR codes and physical copies to assist patrons with completion.



Multiple Jurisdictions posted on their Facebook page (A-N PDC and Northampton County are shown above) and the third image is the bookmark that was sent to all the localities, and the libraries located in the region.

A public regionwide survey was conducted, beginning May 2025, and closing July 2025, receiving a total of 167 responses. Of those responses 10 responses were gathered by hard copy and entered into the survey results. Table 3.2 below identifies the respective localities of survey respondents:

Table 3.2, Survey Response Count and Percentages by Locality

Locality	Count	Percentage	Locality	Count	Percentage
Accomack County	86	43.43%	Town of Exmore	0	0.00%
Northampton County	21	10.61%	Town of Parksley	4	2.02%
Town of Accomac	2	1.01%	Town of Saxis	1	0.51%
Town of Bloxom	5	2.53%	Town of Cape Charles	5	2.53%
Town of Belle Haven	1	0.51%	Town of Keller	0	0.00%
Town of Chincoteague	62	31.31%	Town of Melfa	1	0.51%
Town of Hallwood	0	0.00%	Town of Wachapreague	0	0.00%
Town of Onley	0	0.00%	Town of Cheriton	2	1.01%
Town of Painter	0	0.00%	Town of Eastville	3	1.52%



Town of Tangier	1	0.51%	Town of Onancock	3	1.52%
Town of Nassawadox	1	0.51%	Total Responses	177	

The survey requested the locality to specify the County and/or the Town or census-designated place they live. Eight of the Accomack County respondents specified their census-designated place to include the following Assawoman, Atlantic, Captains Cove, and Greenbackville. One Northampton County respondent specified Machipongo.

Survey results were shared with members of the PMT in a Public Survey Response Report and discussed at the Project Management Team meeting held September 2025. In conjunction with comments provided through stakeholder interviews, PMT members were encouraged to consider the relevance of survey responses as they finalized their mitigation action updates and revisions, and to provide any other contacts to stakeholder groups that could provide additional perspectives that were not as strongly voiced in the interviews and survey responses.

Collaboration with Other Entities, Agencies, and Plans

A variety of local, regional, state, and federal agencies were consulted and/or engaged in the process of developing the update to the Plan. Outside agencies contributed to data needs, received updates on Plan development, and/or performed important guidance, analysis, and review functions during the Plan’s development.

The following agencies and entities were involved, or were contacted, during the Plan update process. Identified staff of federal and state agencies were either actively engaged in the Plan update or were consulted with respect to the Plan update process or specific Plan content; it is especially important to note the value of the involvement and guidance by FEMA and VDEM in the planning process. Regarding the identified abutting planning district commissions and localities, these entities were provided with regular updates via social media posts and email updates, and a direct email was sent to the respective executive directors or chief administrative officers on **DATE** making them aware of the draft of the Plan and asking for any comment or questions that they may have. Finally, general information contacts of the following identified regional higher education institutions and hospitals also received email updates sent by A-N PDC throughout the course of the process to update the Plan.

- Federal Emergency Management Agency - Dylan Palmer, Community Planner
- Virginia Department of Emergency Management - Stuart Baker, Chris Bruce, Bruce Sterling
- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation - Angela Davis, NFIP State Coordinator, Division of Dam Safety & Floodplain Management;

In addition to the agencies listed above, the creation of this Plan involved data and other planning resources provided by the following agencies:



- VA Dept of Health - Eastern Region
- Eastern Shore Health District – Epidemiologist
- ANEC Coordinator, Environmental, Health & Safety
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Virginia Institute of Marine Studies - University of William and Mary

3.5 COORDINATION WITH OTHER PLANS AND PROGRAMS

Coordination with other community planning efforts is paramount to the success of a hazard mitigation plan. This Plan incorporates elements of local long-range and regulatory planning documents, including comprehensive plans, zoning ordinances, subdivision ordinances, and emergency operations plans. These local regulatory documents should in turn reference or incorporate elements of the *A-NPDC Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan*, creating a fully integrated effort to reduce hazard impacts and maintain resiliency as a core local and regional planning element. The development of this Plan used information included in the following community plans, studies, reports, and initiatives:

- Municipal Comprehensive Plans from A-N PDC region localities
- Codified Ordinances (Zoning and Subdivision) from A-N PDC region localities
- Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code
- Commonwealth of Virginia Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Emergency Operations Plans from A-N PDC region localities
- Flood Insurance Studies and Flood Insurance Rate Maps
- A-N PDC region Tax Assessor and Land Use data

Some of the participating localities in the Plan are also participating in the Community Rating System (CRS) program which enhances community resilience and offers flood insurance discounts for residents. The Plan identifies long-term strategies to reduce multiple disaster risks, while the CRS rewards communities for proactive floodplain management activities to reduce risks associated with flooding impacts. By aligning the goals, data, and mitigation actions outlined in this plan with the CRS requirements such as Activity 510 (Floodplain Management Planning) and Activity 430 (Higher Regulatory Standards) and other activities were points are available the community can earn additional CRS credit. These credits improve the class rating, and demonstrate a comprehensive, integrated approach to reducing risk and increasing public safety while offering a lower flood insurance policy premiums.

The following localities are currently in the CRS program:



Locality	CRS Entry Date	Current Effective Date	CRS Class	SFHA Discount
Accomack County	October 1, 1992	October 1, 2023	5	25%
Town of Chincoteague	October 1, 2000	October 1, 2003	8	10%
Town of Cape Charles	May 1, 2010	May 1, 2019	8	10%
Town of Wachapreague	October 1, 1996	May 1, 2017	8	10%

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