

**THE DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON RECURRENT FLOODING AND SEA LEVEL RISE
June 20, 2014**

1. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

2. Old Dominion University

Dr. Larry Atkinson, Old Dominion University, gave a presentation to the Committee on the science of sea level rise and ODU's research efforts related to sea level rise and flooding. Dr. Atkinson briefly described some of the more recent papers that have been published on sea level rise and the implications of their findings for Hampton Roads. Dr. Atkinson next discussed ODU's Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Initiative, including its focus on interdisciplinary research and focus on helping Hampton Roads and Virginia address the impacts of sea level rise. Dr. Atkinson also discussed some other efforts ODU has undertaken, including changing its master plan to account for flooding and sea level rise, sponsoring a conference with the European Union, working with Virginia Sea Grant and the HRPDC to support the Hampton Roads Adaptation Forum, and hiring faculty. In 2014 ODU announced the Mitigation and Adaptation Research Institute, which will further advance ODU's research into climate change and sea level rise. ODU is also hosting congressional forum with Senator Kaine and several members of Congress from Hampton Roads and is working on a pilot project to coordinate federal agencies on responding to sea level rise. ODU's plans for the future include hiring new faculty, providing information on sea level rise and flooding for classroom use, conducting research that is relevant to the region, and facilitating coordination and providing leadership when appropriate.

3. Virginia Institute of Marine Science

Ms. Molly Mitchell, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, gave a presentation to the Committee on efforts by VIMS related to sea level rise and flooding. In January 2013 the Center for Coastal Resources Management delivered the Recurrent Flooding Study for Tidewater Virginia to the General Assembly. This study identified the major causes of flooding in Coastal Virginia, including precipitation, tides, and coastal storms, assessed the region's vulnerability to flooding, and identified some options for mitigating current and future flooding. The study found that recurrent flooding is a significant issue in Tidewater that is predicted to become worse, that the risks are not evenly distributed throughout Tidewater, and that needed data is often lacking or not good enough to effectively analyze the problem and identify solutions. As a result, the study made several recommendations:

- 1) The state should initiate the identification, collection, and analysis of needed data.
- 2) The state should take a lead role in addressing recurrent flooding in Virginia.
- 3) The state should request an expert review of local government legal authority to address current and future flooding.

Since delivering the study CCRM has continued to research sea level rise and flooding to develop useful information for local governments and the state. One area of focus has been on developing a flexible scenario-based planning process that is based on adaptive management. Other current activities at CCRM and VIMS include:

- 1) Analyzing social, economic, and physical vulnerability to sea level rise.
- 2) Helping communities use sea level rise planning to get Community Rating System credit.
- 3) Analyzing tidal and sea level trends.

4. HRPDC

Mr. Ben McFarlane, HRPDC, briefed the Committee on the HRPDC's efforts related to sea level rise and flooding. The HRPDC has received funding since 2008 from the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program to assess the impacts of sea level rise on the region and identify potential adaptation strategies. These efforts have resulted in the publication of four reports, which have documented the HRPDC staff's outreach, education, coordination, and analysis efforts. HRPDC has also partnered with other agencies and organizations, such as the U.S. Geological Survey and Old Dominion University, on various efforts to develop and provide information for use by local government staff. The HRPDC has also conducted several vulnerability and mapping analyses to determine the region's exposure to sea level rise. Currently, the HRPDC is working with the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency and the U.S. Geological Survey to acquire high-resolution LIDAR data for eastern Hampton Roads. HRPDC staff is also working on two VCZMP grant projects related to sea level rise, both of which should be complete by the end of 2014. The HRPDC staff is coordinating with several regional partners and NOAA's Coastal Services Center to provide climate adaptation training to local government staff and other stakeholders, which will take place at the end of July. HRPDC staff is also working with the City of Norfolk and the Dutch Embassy to organize a Dutch Dialogues workshop in Hampton Roads. Stakeholder interviews are expected to begin in August or September; these will be followed up by a workshop later in the fall.

Virginia Beach and Hampton expressed interest in participating in the Dutch Dialogues workshop, but expressed concerns with staff time requirements.

Mr. Jim Redick, Norfolk, reported that a draft of the Secure Commonwealth Panel's Recurrent Flooding Sub-Panel final report should be finished within the next couple of weeks, and that a final draft should be out in July.

5. Committee Structure Discussion

Mr. McFarlane led the Committee in a discussion of committee guidelines and structure. Since the Committee is an official advisory committee to the HRPDC, HRPDC staff suggested that the group officially adopt by-laws or guidelines that would define its decision-making processes and structure. Currently, the committee is composed of voting and alternate members from each locality. Key questions to decide include:

- 1) Who should chair the committee?

- 2) Should there be additional (voting or non-voting) official members of the committee?
- 3) How many committee members or localities should be needed for a quorum?
- 4) How should the committee vote on items?
- 5) What should the committee's schedule be?

As part of this discussion Mr. McFarlane went over the guidelines for the HRPDC's Regional Environmental Committee and the Directors of Utilities Committee. The Committee agreed that HRPDC staff should chair the committee. Instead of additional members, the Committee suggested inviting state and federal agencies and other entities to attend, including;

- 1) Dominion
- 2) VDOT
- 3) HRSD
- 4) Chamber of Commerce
- 5) Navy
- 6) Builders
- 7) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- 8) Norfolk Southern

The Committee suggested that a quorum consist of one half of the localities that have appointed members. Voting on most matters should be by consensus; however, budget matters should be decided unanimously. Meetings should be held quarterly.

6. Committee Focus Discussion

Mr. McFarlane led the Committee in a discussion of what areas to focus on. Ideas included:

- 1) Wetlands mitigation and sea level rise/upland migration
- 2) Mitigation and adaptation strategies
- 3) Official resiliency policies
- 4) Working with the HRTPO
- 5) Hazard mitigation plan update
- 6) Infrastructure
- 7) USACE regulations
- 8) Financial impacts of sea level rise

Ms. Whitney Katchmark, HRPDC, mentioned that HRPDC has received a draft charter for the ODU pilot project. HRPDC staff will send the charter out to the Committee for comment.

7. Committee Comments

Mr. McFarlane stated that a congressional forum hosted by Senator Kaine will be held at ODU on June 30.

Mr. Ron Williams, Norfolk, announced that Norfolk will be asking the HRPDC to send a letter to the governor requesting that he support the legislature's Joint Subcommittee on Recurrent Flooding.

8. Other Matters

The next meeting of the Special Committee on Recurrent Flooding and Sea Level Rise will be scheduled for September 2014 at the HRPDC office in Chesapeake, Virginia. The specific date is to be determined. Materials will be sent in advance for review.