

Integrating Hazard Mitigation and Comprehensive Planning Workshop

April 25, 2016 — DVRPC Conference Center

190 North Independence Mall West

Philadelphia, PA 19106

An Overview of DVRPC's Process

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region III asked the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) to organize and lead a regional discussion on integrating hazard mitigation planning and comprehensive planning. The region represented at this discussion would encompass DVRPC's nine county region, which includes five southeastern Pennsylvania counties (Philadelphia, Montgomery, Bucks, Delaware, and Chester Counties) in FEMA Region III and four New Jersey counties (Camden, Gloucester, Burlington, and Mercer Counties) in FEMA Region II.

DVRPC initially envisioned a one-day conference in which DVRPC would engage national experts and local speakers to present on their experiences with integrating hazard mitigation planning and comprehensive planning, illustrate why integration is important, and provide advice on how local communities could work to integrate their hazard mitigation and comprehensive plans. To get a better understanding of the resources and research available on this topic, DVRPC conducted a literature review. DVRPC staff found that much had already been written, both by FEMA and by the American Planning Association, on the importance of integrating hazard mitigation and comprehensive planning, as well as the more technical aspects of how to integrate hazard mitigation planning and comprehensive planning.

Before setting the details of the workshop, DVRPC wanted to meet with the nine counties to get a better understanding of what hazard mitigation planning and comprehensive planning looked like in the DVRPC region. Between July 2015 and April 2016, DVRPC staff met with various county planning and emergency management representatives (see Appendix A for additional meeting details and Appendix B for a list of sample discussion questions). The majority of the meetings were in person, typically at the county's planning commission offices.

These meetings proved to be a crucial step in the success of the *Integrating Hazard Mitigation and Comprehensive Planning Workshop*. For some counties, these meetings were the first time that county planners had the opportunity to meet with their emergency management counterparts. Providing a venue and a reason for these face-to-face interactions to take place was a significant part of fostering greater integration of hazard mitigation and comprehensive planning ideas and practices. Additionally, these meetings highlighted the fact that many of the counties were already working to integrate their hazard mitigation and comprehensive plans. These organizations did not need to be sold on the value of integration or provided with a basic lesson on what integration entailed.

This realization led DVRPC to rethink the format of the conference. Instead of a conference with outside presentations, DVRPC wanted to give the counties a chance to learn from each other. DVRPC re-envisioned the day as workshop, with a series of facilitated discussions to draw out many of the insights staff discovered at the one-on-one meetings with the counties. The discussions would allow the counties to learn from their peers and collaboratively brainstorm ways to address common problems. DVRPC's one-on-one meetings also brought to light ways in which FEMA's hazard mitigation planning process impeded the counties' ability to plan for safer, more resilient communities; therefore, DVRPC

focused one of the facilitated discussions at the day-long workshop on how the hazard mitigation process might be improved.

To make the workshop sessions both valuable and constructive for the counties, DVRPC invited a limited number of participants, including the staff from the nine counties that DVRPC had previously met with, as well as additional county staff involved in producing the hazard mitigation plans and/or the comprehensive plans. DVRPC also invited representatives from the various organizations responsible for reviewing and approving the counties' hazard mitigation plans, specifically, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA), New Jersey Office of Emergency Management (NJ OEM), FEMA Region III, and FEMA Region II. Prior to the workshop, DVRPC staff had conversations with the state and federal agencies to explain the purpose of the workshop and underscore that their role at the workshop was that of observer. It was important to have these agencies in the room for a number of reasons, including:

- To provide county representatives with the opportunity to meet state and federal agency representatives in person;
- To provide county representatives with an opportunity to speak candidly to state and federal agencies about the hazard mitigation planning process; and
- To allow state and federal agencies to get a better understanding of the challenges that counties face in developing a hazard mitigation plan and implementing mitigation strategies.

DVRPC worked closely with FEMA Region III Community Planning staff, as well as staff from Resilience Action Partners, FEMA's consultant for Community Engagement and Risk Communication (CERC), to plan and execute the workshop, held at DVRPC on April 25, 2016. A staff member from Resilience Action Partners served as the workshop facilitator, guiding the various discussion sessions and drawing out key findings or best practices that DVRPC had previously identified in its initial meetings with the counties. Prior to the workshop, DVRPC provided Resilience Action Partners with notes from its individual county meetings that Resilience Action Partners converted into a discussion guide for the workshop. Resilience Action Partners also developed an interactive "ice-breaker" activity and a handout on potential funding sources for mitigation action. DVRPC invited Stephen Marks, the Municipal Manager for the City of Hoboken, NJ to speak over lunch on Hoboken's experience during Superstorm Sandy and its subsequent efforts to integrate hazard mitigation and comprehensive planning.

On the day of the event, DVRPC, FEMA, and Resilience Action Partners assigned participants to specific seats to ensure a diverse mix of agencies and counties at each table. Depending on seating availability, each table also included at least one representative from FEMA, PEMA, NJ OEM, or Resilience Action Partners. Additional FEMA, Resilience Action Partners, and DVRPC staff members were available throughout the day to assist with the ice breaker activity and take notes. An agenda, attendance list, and detailed summary of the workshop are available on [DVRPC's website](http://www.dvrpc.org/Resiliency/HMP/pdf/2016-04-25_Workshop_Summary.pdf)¹. The [project website](http://www.dvrpc.org/Resiliency/HMP/)² also contains links to resources distributed and/or discussed at the workshop.

Following the workshop, DVRPC developed and distributed the resources noted above to workshop attendees. DVRPC also met with FEMA Region III to discuss potential next steps, outlining the scope of work for a project that seeks to support DVRPC's counties and municipalities. This proposed project would research the impacts of climate change on the nine-county region, and develop data and tools to allow the counties and municipalities to easily understand and use this information in their hazard mitigation planning and comprehensive planning.

¹ http://www.dvrpc.org/Resiliency/HMP/pdf/2016-04-25_Workshop_Summary.pdf

² <http://www.dvrpc.org/Resiliency/HMP/>

Appendix A: County Meetings

- Montgomery County
 - Date: July 22, 2015
 - Location: Montgomery County Planning Commission
 - In Attendance:
 - Brian O’Leary (*formerly* Section Chief, County Planning, MCPC)
 - Michael Stokes (Assistant Director, MCPC)
 - Todd Stieritz (Title, Office of Emergency Services)
 - Rob Graff (Manager, Office of Energy and Climate Change, DVRPC)
 - Chris Linn (Manager, Office of Environmental Planning, DVRPC)
 - Amy Verbofsky (Planner, Office of Environmental Planning, DVRPC)
- Bucks County
 - Date: October 1, 2015
 - Location: Bucks County Planning Commission
 - In Attendance:
 - Lynn Bush (Executive Director, BCPC)
 - Timothy Koehler, (Director, Planning Services, BCPC)
 - Robert Fink, (*Emergency Management Specialist*, Emergency Management Agency)
 - Rob Graff (Manager, Office of Energy and Climate Change, DVRPC)
 - Amy Verbofsky (Planner, Office of Environmental Planning, DVRPC)
- Mercer County
 - Date: Oct 30, 2015
 - Location: Mercer County Planning Department
 - In Attendance:
 - Leslie Floyd (Planning Director, MCPD)
 - Matt Lawson (Principal Planner-Transportation, MCPD)
 - Dean Raymond (County OEM Coordinator, Mercer County Office of Emergency Management)
 - Rob Graff (Manager, Office of Energy and Climate Change, DVRPC)
 - Amy Verbofsky (Planner, Office of Environmental Planning, DVRPC)
- Chuck Latini
 - Date: November 1, 2015
 - Location: Phone
 - In Attendance:
 - Chuck Latini (President of the American Planning Association New Jersey Chapter)
 - Rob Graff (Manager, Office of Energy and Climate Change, DVRPC)
 - Amy Verbofsky (Planner, Office of Environmental Planning, DVRPC)
- Delaware County
 - Date: November 6, 2015
 - Location: Delaware County Planning Department
 - In Attendance:
 - Karen Holm (Title, DCPD)
 - Ryan Judge (Title, DCPD)
 - Rob Graff (Manager, Office of Energy and Climate Change, DVRPC)
 - Amy Verbofsky (Planner, Office of Environmental Planning, DVRPC)

- Chester County
 - Date: February 9, 2016
 - Location: Chester County Emergency Management Division
 - In Attendance:
 - Jeff Emmons (Hazardous Materials Coordinator and HazMat Team Chief, Emergency Management)
 - Sean O’Neill (Senior Planner, CCPC)
 - Rob Graff (Manager, Office of Energy and Climate Change, DVRPC)
 - Amy Verbofsky (Planner, Office of Environmental Planning, DVRPC)
- Philadelphia County
 - Date: February 23, 2016
 - Location: Philadelphia City Planning Commission
 - In Attendance:
 - John Haak (Director of Planning, Policy & Analysis, PCPC)
 - Eleanor Sharpe (Director of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, PCPC)
 - Laura Duff (Hazard Mitigation Planning Coordinator, OEM)
 - Rob Graff (Manager, Office of Energy and Climate Change, DVRPC)
 - Amy Verbofsky (Planner, Office of Environmental Planning, DVRPC)
- Stuart Wallace, LLC (on behalf of Gloucester and Camden Counties)
 - Date: March 25, 2016
 - Location: Phone
 - In Attendance:
 - Stuart Wallace (Principal, Stuart Wallace, LLC)
 - Rob Graff (Manager, Office of Energy and Climate Change, DVRPC)
 - Amy Verbofsky (Planner, Office of Environmental Planning, DVRPC)
- Camden County
 - Date: March 29, 2016
 - Location: Camden County Division of Planning
 - In Attendance:
 - Andrew Levecchia (Planning Director, Camden County Division of Planning)
 - Samuel Spino (Emergency Management Coordinator, Camden County Office of Emergency Management)
 - Rob Graff (Manager, Office of Energy and Climate Change, DVRPC)
 - Amy Verbofsky (Planner, Office of Environmental Planning, DVRPC)
- Burlington County
 - Date: April 7, 2016
 - Location: Phone
 - In Attendance:
 - Edward Fox (Regional Planning Coordinator, Burlington County Bridge Commission)
 - Amy Verbofsky (Planner, Office of Environmental Planning, DVRPC)

Appendix B: Sample Discussion Questions

1. Can you walk us through the HM planning process?
 - a. How involved are the various departments and/or municipalities? (depending on where the county is in the HMP process)
 - b. How much of a change is this HMP from the previous version?
2. The HMP includes references to planning tools like floodplain management, zoning, and subdivision regulations.
 - a. Why did you choose to reference those capabilities?
 - b. Is there general support for these tools as ways to mitigate hazards?
 - c. Have you seen any progress on those objectives?
3. From the comp plan side, has there been any discussion around incorporating some hazard mitigation elements into the comp plan or capital budget?
 - a. E.g. Areas that frequently flood identified for acquisition in open space plan; Zoning regulations to guide development away from areas with known hazards
4. If there has been integration:
 - a. What motivated you to integrate these two documents?
 - b. What was the process for integrating these two documents?
5. How do you work with the municipalities to move these objectives forward?
6. Who do you work with from the municipalities? Emergency management, public works, township manager, planning, etc?
7. What are the barriers to integrating these two documents?
8. What are the barriers to implementing overlapping recommendations?
9. How do you and the various departments/municipalities view the HMP process? Has it helped to make your county safer?