



Northwest
Regional Planning
Commission



Fairfax Mitigation Plan Kickoff Meeting

Meeting Minutes

October 4, 2024 at 10:30 a.m.

Public Meeting held at the Fairfax Town Office,
12 Buck Hollow Road, Fairfax, VT and virtually via Zoom

Participants: Sarah Hadd, Fairfax Town Manager
Steve Bessette, Fairfax Selectboard
Michah Genzlinger, Fairfax Fire Chief
Sheri Rainville, Fairfax Historical Society
Tim Burns, Fairfax Selectboard, VFD
Brent Sheets, Fairfax Public Works Director
Shaun Coleman, Northwest Regional Planning Commission

The meeting began at 10:30 a.m. Shaun provided a power point presentation on hazard identification and risk assessment process, FEMA requirements, community outreach efforts, timeline, and a review of local hazards and state-wide hazards. There was a lot of work performed previously on the hazard history and risk assessment under different public safety planning efforts including the last mitigation plan update.

The goal of the meeting was to review the risks different hazards pose to the community and to rate them in terms of impacts and consequences of occurrence. Several members were unable to attend today's meeting due to other conflicts. Sarah and Shaun stressed the importance of engaging as much of the community as possible.

Shaun reviewed the hazards were profiled under the last mitigation plan update. The hazards that were ranked as the greatest risk to the community included severe thunderstorms (high winds, hail, lightning), severe winter storm (ice storm), and flooding.

There was a review of the hazards identified in the state hazard mitigation plan and the risk ranking process used by the state. The process the town used previously and what the state uses is very similar. After some discussion, the group agreed to use the state risk estimation process and include the hazards the state identified that are relevant to the community.

The group then work shopped the ranking criteria for each hazard which included the probability and impacts to infrastructure, life safety, the environment and the economic costs. Each category has a range of scores for ranking from low to high (i.e. 1 = negligible and 4 = high impact).

There was agreement on removing some hazard that were listed in the previous plan (water/sewer service loss, power loss, telecommunications failure). These were considered domino effects of the primary hazards identified and would be discussed in the hazard profile. They also deemed the power and telecom loss as beyond their scope because the companies are privately owned. The town could encourage the companies to take mitigation actions such as tree trimming to remove some the risk of such losses during wind and snow storms.

The group decided they wanted to add CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear) to account for hazardous materials as a hazard in the plan due to the amount and kinds of traffic that flow through the VT104, VT104A, VT128 and I89.

The group discussed invasive species and impacts to farm, maple producers, forest products and recreation. There was consensus on earthquakes, wildfire and hail as being extremely rare. The group discussed infectious disease outbreak noting the response is primarily from state and federal agencies, however, the town would have to implement certain mitigation measures to protect staff and the community.

The hazards with highest score were flooding, fluvial erosion and wind. Snow was ranked fourth. Shaun noted that the scoring can be changed at any time until the draft is ready for public comment and then it may be changed based on public comments. The survey will also be referenced to make sure the survey results are reflected in the assessment.

There was further discussion on the mitigation plan outreach efforts. Sara offered to provide surveys to people who come to town office for coffee social every Thursday to discuss town items with staff. Steve will post surveys at Mountain View Apartments community room. Shaun posted a survey at NOTCH and the school.

The next meeting was set for November 1st at the Town Office at 10:30 a.m.

The meeting ended approximately 11:30 a.m.

Action Items:

NRPC will send out meeting minutes and schedule the next meeting.

NRPC will schedule the next meeting which will be the Capabilities and Capacity meeting.

Fairfax committee members will continue to implement Communication/Outreach Plan including those entities discussed at this meeting.

Fairfax committee members will track grant match.