

**Chittenden County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update  
Kick-off Meeting Minutes  
Date: June 22, 2021**

**Participants**

**Representing Chittenden County Communities**

- \*Amy Glover- Town Clerk Bolton
- \*Dan Albrecht- Senior Planner Chittenden County RPC
- Ron Hoague
- \*Steven Locke- Fire Chief/EMD City of Burlington
- Dennis Lutz
- Dean Pierce
- \*Matthew Boulanger- Planning and Zoning director for Town of Williston
- \*Christine Forde
- \*Michaela Foody- Public Safety Director, Town of Milton
- \*Sharon Murray- FAICP Front Porch Community Planning and Design CCRPC (Board rep)
- \*Jim Jutras- Water Quality Superintendent, Village of Essex Junction
- \*Ravi Venkataraman- AICP Town planner for the Town of Richmond
- \*Paul Conner- AICP Director of planning and zoning City of South Burlington
- \*Caroline Massa- State Hazard Mitigation Planner

**Representing IEM**

- Leroy Thompson, Project Manager
- Elizabeth Burnett- Junior Planner

Meeting started on time at 10:05 am eastern time and ended at 11:00 am eastern time.

**Introduction:**

Mr. Thompson introduced himself and stated that the meeting is being recorded. He provided an overview of the agenda and what will be covered in the presentation. Mr. Thompson will be working hand in hand with each of the jurisdictions throughout the planning process and the participants are encouraged to reach out to him as needed with questions or concerns and provide feedback. He then asked Ms. Burnett to conduct the roll call.

Ms. Burnett conducted a roll call going down the list of potential jurisdictions that have shown some interest in participating in the plan update process.

### **Hazard Overview**

Mr. Thompson proceeded to provide the FEMA definition and overview of hazard mitigation, mitigation planning and the mitigation related grants. He also provided an overview of the story of Noah and the Ark as being one of the greatest examples of hazard mitigation planning. In this case there was potential for a great flood (hazard), potential loss of life and property (risk), activities early warning and build shelter (mitigation actions), plan implementation and hazard avoided. This is the similar planning process that will be followed in updating the Plan.

### **Project Background/Objectives**

Mr. Thompson continued and discussed the project background as well as the project objectives. These discussions included why the city needs to update its current 2004 hazard mitigation plan (HMP) to a new 2021 hazard mitigation plan. He also discussed the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA2K) as being the primary reason to be moving forward in updating this plan, and the benefits of having an up-to-date plan. In order to be eligible for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) funds a community must have a FEMA approved hazard mitigation plan. A current FEMA approved HMP will allow the participating jurisdictions to be eligible for grants/funding to address some of the mitigation actions/projects that will result from our planning process.

This was followed with a discussion of the project objectives which included assuring that at the end of the planning process the participating jurisdictions will have a FEMA approvable plan. This includes identifying hazards of concerns, greatest opportunities to reduce risk and fulfill public input requirements. Mr. Thompson also stressed that it is the participating jurisdictions plan, IEM staff is working on and making sure it is your plan not IEM plan when it's completed. Mr. Thompson also stated we want to make sure the planning requirements are met and will be beneficial to the participating jurisdictions moving forward.

### **Plan Section**

Mr. Thompson proceeded and open a discussion on the planning process to include 5 planning phases/tasks. These phases/tasks include planning process, hazard identification and risk assessment, mitigation strategy, plan maintenance, final draft plan. He continued to review the steps and related activities that will be completed under each of the identified plan phases/tasks.

#### **Phases/Tasks 1- Planning Process**

Mr. Thompson discussed activities that will addressed under this phase to include building the team, document how the plan is being updated, determine an outreach strategy, identify the capabilities assessment to include plans, programs policies regulations that can impact each jurisdiction's ability to implement hazard mitigation program (what already exists). He also highlighted this part of the process will be data intensive and cross over the entire planning cycle.

- Establish a formal planning process
- Build the Team-Participation from a broad range of stakeholders
- Documentation of planning activities
- Meetings (group, virtual, one-to-one)
- Input from Planning Committee and Stakeholders
- Integration with other state planning efforts
- Create an Outreach Strategy

- Capabilities Assessment - Existing policies, studies, plans, programs, etc.)
- Data Reviews and Collection

Mr. Thompson stated a virtual engagement strategy will be sent out for review on how to get the public involved and other meeting schedules.

**Phases/Tasks 2- Hazards Identification and Risk Assessment-** Mr. Thompson provided that the activities include a discussion on identifying and profiling hazards and the completion of a detail risk assessment.

**Hazards Identification:** Mr. Thompson discussed the need to identify and profile each hazard that can impact each jurisdiction. He also reviewed the hazards identified in previous 2017 plan.

**Risk Assessment:** Mr. Thompson discussed the elements to be included in the risk assessment to include critical facilities and updating capabilities assessment, impacts of changes in development, impacts of climate change and estimated losses.

- Critical facilities-lifelines includes a review and assessment of each jurisdiction critical facilities and infrastructures and their vulnerable to identified hazards as well as vulnerable populations. This will also include a discussion of NFIP repetitive loss properties.
- Capabilities assessment will include a review of current regulations, that will support or hinder mitigation actions; Administration or government support; Education and outreach- is there a process to educate them or a way to disseminate information to them
- The final section of the risk assessment will include a summary of potential losses.

**Phases/Tasks 3- Mitigation strategy-** Mr. Thompson provided that the risk assessment forms the foundation to this task. He reviewed the various steps involved in developing mitigation strategy and the mitigation action plan. The Mitigation Strategy will include:

- Goals and objectives- see if the old goals and objectives are still relevant or what needs to be removed or added
- Review a comprehensive range of mitigation actions and projects
- How to mitigate the hazards and repetitive loss structures,
- Development of the mitigation action plan, what are we vulnerable to, what are the risks, prioritizing the projects, who is responsible, time frame for completion of those projects,
- Work with them on the top 2 actions to give them an idea of how this works and needs to be completed.

Mr. Thompson also discussed the need to develop a strategy to address repetitive loss properties stating that FEMA is concern when it comes to flooding

He discussed the mitigation action plan to include all of the actions or projects that are considered important to the community and put them in a prioritized order to include time frame for completion, who is responsible for action and funding source.

#### **Phases/Tasks 4- Plan Maintenance**

Mr. Thompson discussed the plan maintenance process to include monitoring, evaluate and update the plan. This section will include maintaining and updating the plan as well as tracking and reporting the status mitigation actions/projects.

#### **Phases/Tasks 5- Draft Plan and Review Process**

Mr. Thompson reviewed the process for developing the draft plan, approval by the planning committee and then to the State. If comments come back, we will handle them and then send it back up to the state. and then to FEMA and back again if is necessary. After final approval the community approves it

then you get the final approved paperwork from FEMA. Ms. Massa reminded the group that VEMA is one of a few States that have worked with FEMA and streamlined process and the State has the power to approve the plan with minor concurrence from FEMA.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

Mr. Thompson informed the participants that the Planning Coordination Team will include each jurisdiction Point of Contact and IEM's Point of Contact Leroy Thompson. He briefly discussed the roles and responsibilities- who will be doing what or be involved in what, and who they might want to invite to provide feedback, as well as including the public. As part of this discussion it was recommended that each jurisdiction consider forming an in-house jurisdictional team to advise the overall to assist in ensuring that the plan reflects the community and its needs.

### **Timeline/Schedule**

Mr. Thompson reviewed the project schedule and timeline noting that they are tentative and can change. He also reviewed noted the potential timeline for completion of each task and the submittal of final draft plan document for review and approval. The current plan expiration date is March 2022.

### **Next Steps**

Mr. Thompson stated that we will attempt to reuse as much data as possible from the 2017 plan and see what is still current and what needs to be updated. He additionally, he provided we will be doing a series of one on one discussions with each jurisdictional team members to assist in our data collect efforts. He also recommended that each jurisdiction create their own local team assist in collecting local based data that can be feedback up to the regional plan. He also stated we will be sending out several data collection forms within the next few weeks. These forms will include:

- review of list of hazards;
- a survey of critical facilities self-assessment form on community capabilities to implement hazard mitigation activities;
- a survey of critical facilities that are in the 2004 plan and requesting assistance in updating information.

Mr. Thompson reminded the group that Chittenden County MJHMP is a good plan we do not want to do any harm to the plan, just update what has happened since the last plan update.

Mr. Albrecht followed with an overview of the current plan and recommended that the jurisdictions formalize themselves with the current plan and their respective jurisdictional annexes. He provided the following a link ( <https://www.ccrpcvt.org/our-work/emergency-management/hazard-mitigation-plan/>) to the plan. He also walked the group through the Town of Bolton jurisdictional annex to illustrate the format of a jurisdiction annex and detailed how the action items dovetail with ongoing Town operations such as road work or stormwater work.

The floor was open for questions and comments. Mr. Thompson provided final comments thanked everyone for participating, provided contact information. The meeting was closed.

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Throughout the presentation the following questions were asked:

### **Questions/Statements:**

**Jim Jutras-** will we be emailing the schedule presented or the presentation to us with any follow up at the next steps?

Thompson- Yes, we will email a copy of meeting minutes, slide presentation and tentative schedule to each Team member and jurisdictional representative.

**Sharon Murray-** will we be following the format of the current plan (county plan with local annexes)?

Thompson- Yes, we will follow that format unless the jurisdictions agree to a different one. The format will include a base plan with all general information and separate jurisdictional annexes with more jurisdictional specific information.

**Paul Conner-** in terms of IEM's role is the team largely focused on the regional effort or more one on one with the local jurisdictions?

Thompson- We will focus on the one on one, to make sure each community is represented in the planning process and this will be reflected in the jurisdictional annexes.

**Conner-** will we have one on one jurisdiction meetings?

Thompson- We anticipate having one on one jurisdictional meeting depending on need and/or desire of each jurisdiction.

**Conner-** does the schedule state when it would happen if they want one?

Thompson- No, the schedule is tentative and open for adjustment. In the draft virtual engagement that we are developing we have included time for jurisdictional meetings and identify times as TBD based on need.

**Caroline Massa-** noted that we are just look at formatting, but also what has changed with the hazards, climate change, COVID and other changes that you have noticed over the last 5 years.