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**Guide Brief 14 -
Forming a Collaborative Planning Team
and Engaging the Community**

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Guide Brief 14 - Forming a Collaborative Planning Team and Engaging the Community

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1. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this Guide Brief is to provide information that communities may use to accomplish the first step of the Guide: forming a collaborative planning team and engaging the community. Identifying and engaging appropriate planning team partners and beginning community outreach and engagement early in the process will inform needs and priorities for community resilience.



The planning process is more effective when communities identify leaders with vested authority and include key stakeholders who will help develop the community resilience plan and shepherd it through local approval/adoption. This Guide Brief includes best practices, elements of FEMA's *Local Mitigation Planning Handbook* [FEMA 2013], as well as lessons learned from FEMA's Building Resilience with Diverse Communities Program [FEMA 2014]. It also offers resources to assist community leaders in forming their collaborative planning teams and engaging the community at large.

2. Forming the Collaborative Planning Team

2.1. Leadership: Identify a Community Resilience Official

Identification and recruitment of a collaborative planning team begins with a dedicated community official who can lead the process and provide continuity, elevate the importance of resilience, convene stakeholders, communicate effectively, and engage public support. Whether this person is a Chief Resilience Officer (CRO), emergency management professional, city planner, or other official, they will lead the development and work of the collaborative planning team.

2.2. Vision and Strategy: Recruit a Collaborative Planning Team

Stakeholders on the planning team will include those from the local government as well as those in private sector businesses, representatives of relevant state or federal government, regional entities, non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, and the general public (Table 1). Stakeholders within the local government might include representatives from building and permitting offices, public works, planning, health, education, and other key departments. An understanding of the local governmental structure and authorities can help to identify key participants for the collaborative planning team.

The planning team also needs mechanisms to coordinate resilience goals across departments within the local government. A coordinated approach may enhance the likelihood of support from senior officials for their staff's active participation in the team. When considering planning team members, communities should consider stakeholders who participated in prior planning processes or have unique capacities, such as an ability to assess a particular local risk, or those familiar with vulnerable communities or geographies.

A team that encompasses key decision-makers, community leaders, and stakeholders across the public, non-profit, and private domains is more likely to create a community resilience plan that reflects the interests and needs of all stakeholders and improve implementation. Members should ask, "What groups are not represented on the planning team but may be affected by or benefit from possible investments?" They should also consider how to fill gaps in expertise and community perspectives that will inform and support resilience efforts.

It is vital to include those who can help navigate potential barriers to community engagement. A well-selected team is a strategic asset that enables the resilience plan to proactively address implementation hurdles and the wide range of community interests. Sensitivity to the diversity of needs within the community is foundational to effective outreach, ensuring broad stakeholder engagement, building support for the plan and implementation.

2.3. Collaboration Process: Recruitment and Stakeholder Engagement

A vision statement and estimated time commitment are necessary when engaging stakeholders.

- A clear vision statement describes the purpose of community resilience planning and the role of the collaborative planning team. The vision is most effective when it is short, aspirational (e.g., improve long term resilience by mitigating risk, promoting the health and well-being of all stakeholders, and planning for recovery from disruptive events), and concrete (e.g., draft a community resilience plan that identifies priorities, aligns interests, and optimizes resources).
- Potential collaborative planning team members will wish to understand the expectations associated with planning team membership. Such expectations may include estimated time commitment, frequency of meetings (virtual and live), community outreach and engagement, length of service commitment, and written documents or analytic products that may be produced by the collaborative planning team.

Having these two pieces of information when soliciting members may increase the commitment rate and make for a more productive planning team.

Table 1. Examples of Stakeholders to Include on a Collaborative Planning Team

Leader
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Resilience Officer (CRO) • Emergency Management Professional • Municipal/City Planner • Chamber of Commerce Chair
Collaborative Planning Team Members
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic Development ▪ Buildings and Permits ▪ Public Works Department ▪ Planning Department ▪ Health Department ▪ Education Department ▪ Human Services ▪ Emergency Response Services ▪ Other Key Departments • County/State Government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Transportation • Private Sector Businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Largest employers ▪ Small business owners ▪ Utilities ▪ Developers • Local to Regional Entities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Non-Profit Organizations ▪ Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOADS) ▪ Faith-Based Organizations ▪ Neighborhood Representatives

FEMA's *Guidance for Stakeholder Engagement* [FEMA 2016] offers a number of suggestions for supporting the work of the collaborative planning team, including facilitated conference calls and webinars; in-person meetings and site visits; and written information via letters, listservs, and websites.

3. Engaging the Community

3.1. Benefits of Community Engagement

According to best practices identified by practitioners and researchers [Bergstrom et al. 2012; Herefordshire Council 2015; Community Places 2014], the benefits of community engagement—including engagement associated with project planning, infrastructure development, and resilience planning—are:

- Increased legitimacy and support
- Increased ownership and buy-in
- More effective implementation of projects and plans resulting from local knowledge and input
- Increased networks, communication, and trust among planners and community members
- Reduced long-term costs

The success of a community resilience plan is more likely if it is embraced by the residents and stakeholders, endorsed by policy officials, and actionable for those who must implement the plan. Through engagement and outreach, the resilience plan will evolve and take form, generate support among opinion leaders (who will both explain and advocate for the plan within their respective spheres of influence and communities), and will become known and understood by the general public.

Maximum benefits of community outreach and engagement efforts are achieved if begun early in the resilience planning process. Once engagement begins, new areas of community interest or issues may become apparent, requiring additional stakeholders and subject matter experts.

3.2. Participation Across the Community

The composition of the collaborative planning team will vary between communities, reflecting the diversity of interests, cultures, economies, and the environment. The team composition may also vary over time. Recruitment for the planning team ought to be strategic, with representatives from the appropriate public, non-profit, and private domains being engaged as interests are identified. However, to effectively run a collaborative planning team, membership should be kept to a size that is reasonable for regular meetings and making decisions. This will vary between communities.

Levels of participation and engagement will vary across the community. Resilience planning centers on the community resilience leader. An effective leader is needed to form a collaborative planning team and engage with the community. A core planning team is often an effective approach for getting started, identifying others for the broadened collaborative planning team, and distributing the work load among those with a dedicated role. The core planning team can develop a plan for engagement with other team members, and the community at large, for input and review during the planning process.

The core collaborative planning team initiates focused community engagement early in the process to identify and better define community needs and constraints. Through this engagement, additional stakeholders or representatives may be identified and recruited to join the broadened collaborative planning team as illustrated in Figure 1. In some cases, stakeholders may not join the collaborative planning team, but this effort will still have the impact of expanding the engaged community because

some stakeholders will only engage in limited aspects of the planning process (e.g., a survey). For example, some may participate by serving on task committees for the planning team, enhancing subject matter expertise on an as-needed basis. The process of continual outreach and engagement is essential to the development and longer-term success of the community resilience plan. Thus, over time, the portion of the community that is directly involved in, or made aware of, the maturing resilience plans increases. The aspiration is that, over time and through different avenues, stakeholders will have their interests considered during creation of the resilience plan.

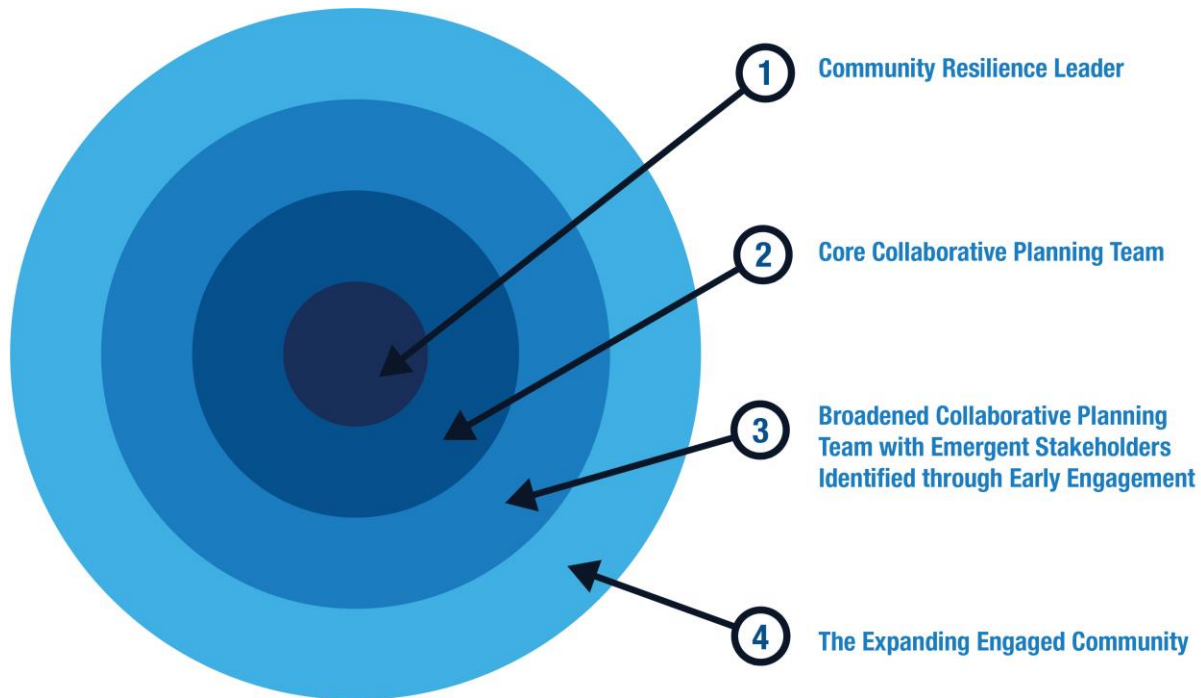


Figure 1. Levels of Participation and Engagement Across the Community

There are important distinctions in the engagement continuum. The collaborative planning team may consult with community stakeholders to keep them informed of the planning process. Some stakeholders may become more engaged by providing feedback on various aspects of the plan. Other stakeholders may partner with the collaborative planning team to help them develop their plan and solutions to community concerns [Jones et al. 2009]. To gain the most traction, resilience planning needs to consult and engage community members in various ways during the process. Figure 2 illustrates various levels of involvement by stakeholders and the community at large.

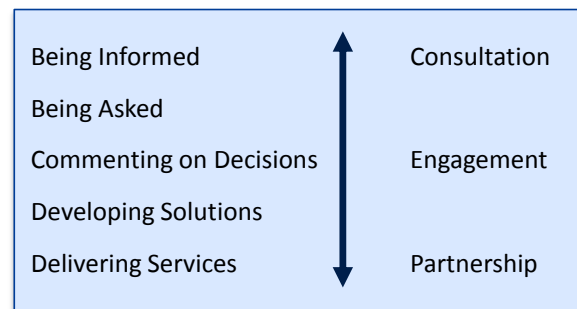


Figure 2. Stakeholder Engagement Continuum [Adapted and Redrawn from Sunderland City Council 2008 and Community Places 2014].

3.3. Engagement Perspectives and Methods

The planning team should consider the desired level of stakeholder participation as it develops its engagement strategies and outreach efforts. Table 2 summarizes planning team responsibilities with respect to engagement and stakeholders.

The structure and method the planning team uses for community engagement may take many forms, depending on the needs and stage of the planning process. There may be regularly scheduled listening events held at venues convenient for the target audience, presentations or demonstrations, panel discussions to raise awareness, or representation of the planning team at other community and civic events (e.g., health fairs and civic associations). The planning team may benefit from eliciting and recording public comments to consider as part of the planning process.

Outreach and engagement efforts should be timed and located for their intended audience, serving the strategic vision of the planning team. For example, the planning team may need to engage some stakeholders—such as key industry and business leaders—based on their availability; other neighborhood interests, due to geography, may require multiple, smaller, more focused outreach events. Some engagement may include messaging that communicates the mission and status of the community resilience plan through data and resource sharing sites (e.g., webpage with links), news media, and brochures placed in purposively targeted venues.

The methods used by the planning team to engage with community stakeholders may also take other forms, depending on the information the planning team needs. For example, information can be obtained through surveys, community forums, or educational outreach events. Slightly more involved forms of engagement include focus groups, idea-generating sessions, and detailed discussions to identify barriers and possible solutions. Other engagement approaches may ask stakeholders to gather data (e.g., crowdsourcing or historical information) and report findings, providing comment and feedback on evolving resilience approaches or policy options, or participating in the strategic planning, reporting, and development of recommendations intended to inform community leaders and policymakers.

Table 2. Planning Team Responsibilities with Respect to Engagement and Stakeholders

	Engagement	Stakeholder
Definition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned outreach guided by a strategic vision where an exchange of information takes place that deepens the knowledge and awareness of both those initiating the engagement and those participating in the engagement May also result in a change in behavior or perceptions that otherwise would not have occurred independent of that engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refers to individual stakeholders or persons representing groups, such as neighborhoods or vulnerable populations (e.g., medically fragile, elderly, low-to-moderate income households) May also refer to a specific domain, sector, or shared interest (e.g., businesses, electric power distribution, education)
Planning Team Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approach community outreach and engagement with the understanding that these methods are opportunities to listen and be educated about the needs of the community, as well as to raise awareness about resilience planning and to develop allies for a shared vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discern the interests of the community and which stakeholders may be best able to represent and articulate the needs of the community

3.4. Inclusion of Vulnerable Populations

Identifying vulnerable populations and planning to support their recovery needs, or working to improve day-to-day underlying conditions resulting in vulnerability, can improve community resilience, lessen the impact of a catastrophic event, and improve community recovery times. Neighborhoods and populations that are most vulnerable to hazard impacts have the least access to resources for recovery and, therefore,

the most to gain from community resilience. Vulnerability may stem from geographic location, limited resources, truncated social, family, or financial networks, medical fragility, or literacy. Vulnerable populations often experience a disproportionate fraction of damage and losses, have limited resources, and can be one of the most significant challenges for community recovery. Understanding how vulnerability is manifest and where vulnerable populations and communities are located is essential to establishing community-level resilience and effective outreach and engagement.

It may be helpful for the planning team to start with a series of tabletop team exercises to identify the types and locations of vulnerable populations and neighborhoods. Mapping these vulnerabilities may identify areas prone to several types of vulnerabilities. In general, vulnerability mapping can be a useful tool enabling the planning team to identify stakeholders that should be considered for inclusion on the team or working groups. Pratt Institute's Community Data Portal (<http://prattcenter.net/neighborhood-data-portal>) provides an example of an interactive map with multiple data sets.

In determining effective community outreach and engagement strategies, the planning team should think about ways to ensure inclusiveness and overcome the following potential barriers [Community Spaces 2014]:

- Capacity and ability of stakeholders to participate
- Hard to reach groups, such as young people, older people, minority groups, or socially excluded groups
- Levels and quality of community infrastructure
- Contested or divided communities
- Rural isolation
- Gaps in or availability of information on resilience
- Literacy levels

3.5. Engagement Resources

The collaborative planning team has a number of options available for engaging diverse groups of stakeholders. Examples of available resources are listed in Table 3. Community Engagement Resource Documents. Note that the methods in some of these resources have been developed for a specific community. Communities can adapt the guiding principles to fit their local cultures, issues, and historical context. The planning team can also leverage lessons learned from previous resilience planning efforts. For instance, the City of New Orleans [2015] in their Round 2 application to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) National Disaster Resilience Competition (NDRC) included a description of their teams' method and previous results. Identifying and engaging members and stakeholders who participated in previous planning work allowed New Orleans to build on those efforts by bringing that knowledge to the resilience planning table. This approach can increase engagement, better leverage resources, and reduce planning fatigue or replication.

3.6. Community Engagement Examples

Fort Collins/Larimer County. As part of the Department of Homeland Security's Regional Resiliency Assessment Program, Fort Collins collaborated with Larimer County to implement the full six-step process in the Guide [Max 2016]. The project conducted a general resilience assessment for the city and made recommendations to address infrastructure vulnerabilities that could lead to cascading consequences for social and economic activity in the city. One of the main goals of the Fort Collins work was to develop a tool that models the dependencies between buildings and infrastructure systems in the

community. This tool helps the City and County prioritize interdependencies and direct resources towards their greatest needs and to engage stakeholder groups about their priorities and concerns.

The collaborative planning team engaged over 40 stakeholder groups in the community to identify their dependencies on other institutions, buildings, and infrastructure systems, and understand the hazards that most concerned the stakeholder groups. Instead of attempting to meet with all stakeholder groups at the same time, the Fort Collins collaborative planning team held many smaller, more focused meetings with individual stakeholder groups. Idaho National Laboratory provided technical support to the team by developing dependency maps based on available data which could be used as a basis for conversations with stakeholders to refine the understanding of the dependencies. This allowed the collaborative

planning team to engage with the appropriate stakeholders in the community when it needed answers to specific questions or feedback on relevant topics. Additionally, this approach helped keep stakeholders engaged by avoiding meetings where stakeholders feel they are not providing value to the team [Max 2016].

Hampton Roads. The Hampton Roads Sea Level Rise Preparedness and Resilience Intergovernmental Planning Pilot Project was a two-year community planning effort to build resilience to sea level rise in coastal Virginia [Steinhilber 2016]. The Pilot Project had a Citizen Engagement Working Group tasked with ensuring a community approach to building resilience.

The Citizen Group made several recommendations for embedding and institutionalizing engagement in community resilience efforts. Key recommendations included: (1) use the best practices—including good facilitation processes and methods for information dissemination and feedback—to engage all stakeholders in deliberation and decision making from the start; and (2) create benchmark metrics for assessing the performance and effectiveness of the engagement program and its impact on resilience [Steinhilber et al 2016].

The Citizen Group analyzed successful community engagement efforts in Hampton Roads to identify best practices. They recognized that creating a successful civic engagement partnership depends on steps and conditions that must be specifically developed rather than left to chance. These steps include:

- Clearly define goals and expectations that include the priorities of the local government and stakeholders.
- Implement an open process to all, especially those affected by the hazard (e.g., impacts of sea level rise).
- Provide meaningful engagement and consideration to all views and opinions, and those who express them.

To ensure the engagement effort proceeded in an effective manner, appropriate metrics monitor factors such as:

- Levels of participation and inclusion

Fort Collins Collaborative Planning Team Members [O’Keefe 2016].

- City of Fort Collins Utilities - water, wastewater, electricity
- City of Fort Collins Office of Sustainability
- Fort Collins OEM
- Larimer County OEM

Example Fort Collins Stakeholder Groups

- Volunteer agencies (Red Cross, Salvation Army, homeless shelters)
- Government agencies (City and County)
- Education (Poudre School District, Colorado State University)
- Media (local papers/television)
- Family/Kinship/Religious/Cultural (assorted individuals)
- Healthcare (UC Health, Banner Health, Touchstone)
- Power (City)
- Communications (Century Link, Verizon, AT&T, FRII, CSU Fiber, PRPA)
- Water/Wastewater (City)

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- Perceived levels of respect and trustworthiness in the process
- Perceived levels of success in meeting the challenge of the hazard
- Awareness and understanding of the issues and implications of sea level rise among the general population
- Awareness and knowledge of information and resources available for mitigating, adapting, and recovering when an event occurs or conditions (e.g., sea level rise) worsen

After two years, the Hampton Roads Pilot Project was concluded. The process brought hundreds of stakeholders together, built lasting and ongoing relationships, and produced many workable recommendations for the region that can be accomplished by a variety of partnerships. The key deliverables include a planning process and integrated regional recommendations, both which can serve as a template for other regions [Steinhilber et al 2016].

Engaging the Community**Table 3. Community Engagement Resource Documents**

Agency/Organization	Title	Key Principles for Community Engagement
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)	Innovative and Inclusive Citizen Engagement [HUD 2014]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include broad ranges of attendees by varying meeting times and selecting locations accessible to as many attendees as possible • Facilitate attendance at community events and meetings • Listen to stakeholders and change course as needed
PolicyLink	The Community Engagement Guide for Sustainable Communities [Bergstrom et al. 2012]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honor the wisdom, voice, and experience of residents • Treat participants with integrity and respect • Be transparent about motives and power dynamics • Share decision making and initiative leadership • Engage in continuous reflection and willingness to change course
United Way Bay Area	10 Principles of Authentic Community Engagement [Knowledgeworks Foundation 2003]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve all sectors of the community • Ask for community input on important questions • Acknowledge views and contributions from stakeholders • Offer community members opportunities to gather at convenient and comfortable locations at a variety of convenient times • Utilize partnerships and expertise • Employ clear, open, and consistent communication (i.e., transparency)
American Planning Association (APA)	Public Engagement in Recovery Planning [APA 2014]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design public engagement with implementation in mind • Use tactics that invite a broad range of stakeholders to participate • Establish shared interests/common goals amongst stakeholders • Provide regular implementation status updates
Community & Regional Resilience Institute (CARRI)	Success Stories: The Importance of Effective Community Engagements [CARRI 2013]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with local community to develop a shared vision of community's future • Maintain an open and transparent process • Identify vulnerabilities and goals

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Table 4. Example Community Engagement Resource Documents (continued)

Agency/Organization	Title	Key Principles for Community Engagement
Herefordshire Council	Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note 12: Best Practice Community Engagement Techniques [Herefordshire Council 2015]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design the engagement process so that it will make a difference • Encourage and enable everyone affected to be involved • Plan the engagement process so that it is timely and appropriate • Work with relevant partner organizations • Provide jargon-free information that is appropriate and understandable • Make it easy for people to take part • Make it easy for people to take part effectively • Ensure that the engagement process has the right resources and support to be effective • Inform participants about the impact of their contribution • Reflect on past experiences to improve future engagement activities
Hampton Roads Sea Level Rise Preparedness and Resilience Intergovernmental Pilot Project.	<i>Phase 2 Report: Recommendations, Accomplishments and Lessons Learned.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define clear community goals and expectations • Develop community goals that reflect the priorities of stakeholders and are within the authorities of the local government • Include all stakeholders who may be affected by the impacts of the local hazard (e.g., sea level rise) • Help participants in the process to have respect for and trust in each other • Foster confidence in the collaborative process and that its outcome

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