

## **New Bern Resiliency Public Meeting 3 Q&A**

- 1. Who comprised the team that developed the draft plan (with qualifications please)?**

Moffatt & Nichol (M&N) took the lead on this project. Moffatt & Nichol is a nationwide engineering firm which specializes in coastal environments and is familiar with eastern North Carolina through many years of work in this area. fM&N also partnered with a group from UNC Asheville, NEMAC-FernLeaf, who have been very hands-on with helping to develop the vulnerability assessment using a software called Excel Adapt. The Craig Group, lead by Lisa Craig, also assisted with this project. This group focuses specifically on hazard mitigation as it relates to historic preservation and has worked nationwide on similar projects. The local planning team involved consists of a dozen members that represent all of the City departments.
- 2. Recognizing that this is a high-level project, how actionable will this final plan be for the average homeowner, renter, and business person?**

The actions being developed have a two-page worksheet format where they will be described using actionable information including: who the lead agency or department responsible is; who the point of contact is; how much it will cost; what funding sources are available; if the cost is to the individual, city, county or other agency; where can citizens go to find more information; etc. For example: how to retrofit your home (elevating, floodproofing). These worksheets will answer all of these questions and define all activities, as well as explain how they will be implemented. The planning process also includes prioritizing projects and deciding which ones will be short-term and long-term, and take into account internal goals for the City of New Bern. This will all be built into the implementation section in the plan.
- 3. What has been your rate of implementation on past projects?**

With hazard mitigation planning projects in general, one of the biggest challenges has been implementation because of funding hindrances. We are closely monitoring a new FEMA grant program called BRIC (Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities). Last year, \$500 million was made available for resiliency projects. This year they've allocated \$1 billion, because FEMA and state agencies have seen that successful resiliency projects need funding. We are aligning our implementation actions with appropriate funding sources such as this one. State divisions are also making funding more available for resiliency projects. Our hope is that as more funding becomes available, we see more success in capability to implement these projects.
- 4. I am encouraged that the execution of some of these elements will be simple (speaking to what homeowners, business owners, and the local government can do).**

Some of these projects will be more traditional and technical engineering projects, and some will be nature-based and more creative. Although some will be technical, there will be something for everyone to be able to use as we move forward.

**5. As far as implementation, are those elements going to be addressed via steps (ex. are you going to publish an order to implementation- what to first, second, third, so on)?**

One method we are using is called the STAPLEE method- an acronym that stands for Social, Technical, Administrative, Political, Legal, Economic, and Environmental. We will be conducting a workshop with City officials to score the actions that we come up with to prioritize projects. We will assign a score to each of the STAPLEE categories, and then look at the overall score for all seven. Then, we can rank the categories overall as well as rank the action items within each category, and look at what other factors (additional studies need to be done for each, and funding needed for each) and use this as a way to rank the order of projects.

**6. What is the term of your contract with the City from beginning to projected end?**

The projected end is coming up soon. Regardless of what is on paper though, we are not going to finish this project and leave. We are going to stay involved as long as we need to as the plan is finalized and we go through the draft stages. Around August or September is the projected end, but we are not in a hurry to leave and end our involvement. Additionally, this was originally supposed to be a 12-month planning process, but with COVID-19, we have had to adjust as we move forward and some steps (public meetings, etc.) took longer because of COVID-19 restrictions.

**7. My concern is there will be a plan as the deliverable, but it will not be simple enough to implement.**

The City does have a plan moving forward, but the plan is not the end of it, rather it is the beginning of a forward-moving project. The City has already looked into and applied for grants for funding for implementation of these projects. Follow-up answer from the City of New Bern: The City has already been awarded a \$300,000, three-year grant from the State of North Carolina and hired a consulting firm to assist with implementation of projects from the resiliency plan. As projects come out of the plan, we already have funding to start implementation. Implementation has always been the goal from the beginning.

**8. A major emphasis in all BRIC funding (40% of the \$1 billion) supports equity. How does this plan take advantage of these new funds?**

FEMA recently announced which projects were chosen for BRIC funding. We are looking closely at those projects, how to make the City of New Bern resiliency projects competitive, and how to make the wording of our proposals align closer with FEMA's priorities so New Bern gets chosen in the future. FEMA is still defining equity in terms of criteria, benefits and costs analysis, and eligibility, so we are learning how to implement our project ideas so support their criteria for equity.

Closing comments at the end of the Q&A session:

Public participation over the past 10-12 months has been outstanding, especially given the circumstances with COVID-19. Thank you everyone for your participation and input.