

2: Planning Process

Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) was the lead agency responsible for updating the 2018 Vermont State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP), along with partners at the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR), the Agency of Transportation (VTrans), and Buildings and General Services (BGS), who were tasked with completing key planning projects. For more information on these projects and their planning processes, see: [State & Local Capabilities](#) and [Appendix to Section 3](#).

Since approval of the 2013 SHMP, Vermont has taken strides to improve coordination between State agencies, regional planning partners and the private sector. The 2018 SHMP update process significantly expanded stakeholder engagement with the intent of creating an action plan that can be implemented collaboratively with relevant stakeholders across Vermont.

Hazard Mitigation staff at VEM (Lauren Oates, State Hazard Mitigation Officer, and Stephanie Smith, Hazard Mitigation Planner) were responsible for managing the planning process to include: convening various groups and providing logistical support; providing subject-matter expertise in hazard mitigation, planning, and FEMA review; researching and writing the Plan document; and making day-to-day decisions on operations throughout the process.

VEM kicked off the 2018 SHMP update in the fall of 2016 with an internal review of the 2013 SHMP and the status of 2013 SHMP actions, coordinating with members of the State Hazard Mitigation Planning & Policy Committee (SHMPPC) and other key stakeholders who were previously involved in implementation for updates on Plan actions.

VEM contracted with Community Workshop in January 2017 to develop concept and materials for stakeholder engagement and communications, facilitate the engagement process and meetings, and provide subject matter expertise on engagement and communications.



Figure 4: 2018 Vermont State Hazard Mitigation Plan process timeline

State Hazard Mitigation Planning & Policy Committee

The State Hazard Mitigation Planning & Policy Committee (SHMPPC) is responsible for coordinating State policy and agency action around hazard mitigation. During the 2018 SHMP update, this committee was responsible for sending delegates to participate on various groups, staying apprised of the SHMP update process, and making recommendations to the Steering Committee on overall coordination with State government. The SHMPPC will be tasked with implementation of Plan actions that are the responsibility of State government. This committee met three times throughout the planning process - twice in the beginning to frame the process, and once towards the end to review Plan progress and discuss next steps.

Table 5: State Hazard Mitigation Planning & Policy Committee

Secretary Susanne Young	Agency of Administration
Secretary Julie Moore	Agency of Natural Resources
Secretary Michael Schirling	Agency of Commerce and Community Development
Secretary Joe Flynn	Agency of Transportation
Commissioner Chris Cole	Buildings and General Services
Secretary Anson Tebbetts	Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
Director Erica Bornemann	Vermont Emergency Management

State Hazard Mitigation Plan Steering Committee

Under the direction of the State Hazard Mitigation Planning and Policy Committee (SHMPPC), the Steering Committee was responsible for the high-level decision-making and overall guidance of the SHMP update process. Given the interdisciplinary and cross-sector nature of hazard mitigation work, the Steering Committee included a diverse range of cross-sector partners from across Vermont. The Steering Committee members were chosen with the following goals in mind: to ensure that hazard mitigation efforts beyond State government were incorporated into the Plan update; to better coordinate ongoing hazard mitigation work between State agencies and private sector partners; and to build buy-in, relationships and understanding needed to effectively implement the Plan.

The Steering Committee developed the Plan scope and process, assisted in the development of the stakeholder engagement and outreach plan, determined the Working Group topics and structure, identified and prioritized hazards for inclusion, approved and assisted in the development of mitigation actions, set the prioritization process for actions, reviewed and approved the Plan document, and as individuals, provided subject matter expertise throughout Plan development. Steering Committee members were appointed by the VEM Director based on recommendations from the SHMPPC.

Table 6: State Hazard Mitigation Plan Steering Committee

Ben Rose	Vermont Emergency Management
Bob Costantino	Vermont Agency of Human Services
Catherine Dimitruk	Northwest Regional Planning Commission <i>Appointed by VAPDA to represent Regional Planning Commissions</i>
Chris Cochran	Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development
Gaye Symington	High Meadows Fund
Greg Hanson	National Weather Service
Jen Hollar	Vermont Housing and Conservation Board
Jenna Koloski	Vermont Council on Rural Development
Joe Segale	Vermont Agency of Transportation
Karen Horn	Vermont League of Cities and Towns
Mike Kline	Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
Richard Kehne	Vermont Buildings and General Services
Rose Paul	The Nature Conservancy
Steve Libby	Vermont River Conservancy
Tara Kulkarni	Norwich University
Tim Schmalz	Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Working Groups & Focus Groups

The Steering Committee created four Working Groups, representing each of the major Plan goals: built environment, environment and natural systems, education and outreach, and plans and policies. The Steering Committee tasked the Working Groups with performing an in-depth analysis of state capabilities, mitigation challenges and needs; providing subject matter and technical expertise; developing mitigation strategies and actions for each mitigation goal; and making recommendations to the Steering Committee throughout Plan development. Working Group meetings were open, and VEM staff directly invited dozens of stakeholder organizations to send representatives and posted meetings publically. Membership was informal and flexible, primarily based on meeting attendance. In order to ensure continuity in the midst of many meetings and complex tasks, several Steering Committee members also participated in the Working Group meetings. Three rounds of Working Group meetings were held in 2017, involving 72 individual participants, representing 53 organizations. Participants represented a diverse range of sectors and roles, including agency staff members, private funders, nonprofit leaders, academic researchers, and interested local community members.

Additionally, the Steering Committee created Focus Groups with invited participants, in order to convene expert stakeholders around key topics. VEM coordinated three Focus Groups in the fall of 2017 to discuss the overarching Plan principles, and to explore whether the emerging draft actions were effectively supporting them. These Focus Groups addressed climate change, vulnerable populations, and economic development, and included underrepresented voices and groups in the planning process alongside subject matter experts. VEM coordinated a second set of Focus Groups in the spring of 2018, tasked with thoroughly reviewing, revising, and prioritizing the draft actions developed by the Working Groups. These Focus Groups consisted of subject matter experts and professionals deeply involved in hazard mitigation implementation. Together, they ensured that the actions adequately addressed each goal, and that they were reasonable and practical. The two rounds of Focus Groups meeting included 36 individual participants representing 31 organizations.

Stakeholder Engagement Process & Plan Development

This section aims to address the robust 2018 SHMP update engagement process by providing an overview of the many meetings that were held, including meeting goals, structure and deliverables.

February 1, 2017 SHMPPC Meeting — Process Vision & Stakeholder Mapping:

The SHMPPC initially met in February 2017 to develop a vision for the planning process and begin identifying stakeholders and planning for outreach and engagement. Due to a gubernatorial administration change in early 2017, this meeting was attended by representatives of each agency who had previously participated in the SHMPPC and in the development or implementation of the 2013 SHMP, to ensure consistency during the administrative transition.

The SHMPPC defined the following significant stakeholder groups and discussed appropriate involvement and messaging for each group: high-level public decision makers, State government workers, networks/associations and other statewide groups with constituents, regional planning groups and other entities that support municipalities, and public services and utilities. That initial stakeholder mapping exercise led to a stakeholder diagram (Figure 5), which was used to ensure robust representation on the Steering Committee and to identify potential participants and invitees for Working Group and Focus Group sessions.

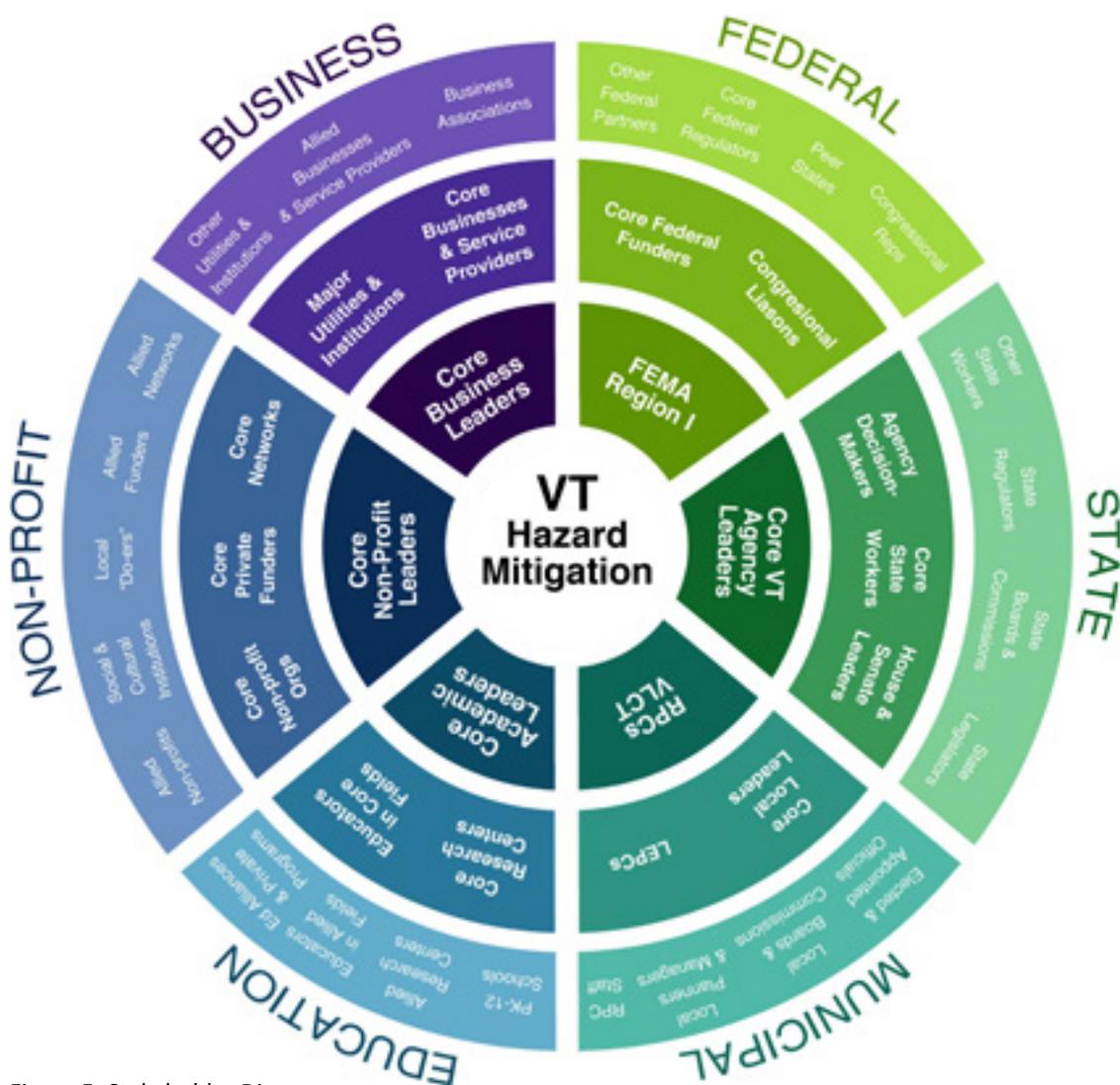


Figure 5: Stakeholder Diagram
Source: Community Workshop

March 16, 2017 SHMPPC Meeting — Engagement Plan & Committee Structure:

Prior to the March 2017 meeting, the VEM Director notified newly appointed SHMPPC members of their role on the SHMPPC. This meeting was a kick-off for new committee members, along with their staff members who had previously represented each agency. The meeting included an introduction to mitigation and hazard mitigation planning, a discussion of the draft outreach and engagement plan, the proposed committee structure (based on input from the previous SHMPPC meeting), and a discussion of the proposed Steering Committee composition.

The SHMPPC approved the creation of the Steering Committee and development of a more collaborative process, which would involve stakeholders beyond State agencies to increase ownership of the Plan and partnerships for implementation. The SHMPPC also discussed the effectiveness of the 2013 SHMP, with a review of the implementation process and priority actions from 2013. State agency staff members who had participated in the 2013 SHMP noted that while that process significantly improved the hazard analysis components of the 2010 SHMP, the development of the mitigation strategy was rushed, which led to less-than-ideal actions and a lack of momentum to carry them out. Accordingly, the SHMPPC instructed the Steering Committee to focus the stakeholder engagement process on developing a robust, implementable mitigation strategy (see: [Mitigation Strategy](#)).

After reviewing the 2013 process and priority actions, the SHMPPC agreed to remove preparedness actions from the 2018 SHMP in order to focus on Vermont’s long-term mitigation needs.

Given the process goals (listed below) and the interest in engaging diverse stakeholders, VEM and Community Workshop staff created an engagement framework (Figure 6) with several distinct avenues for cross-sector participation, led by the Steering Committee.

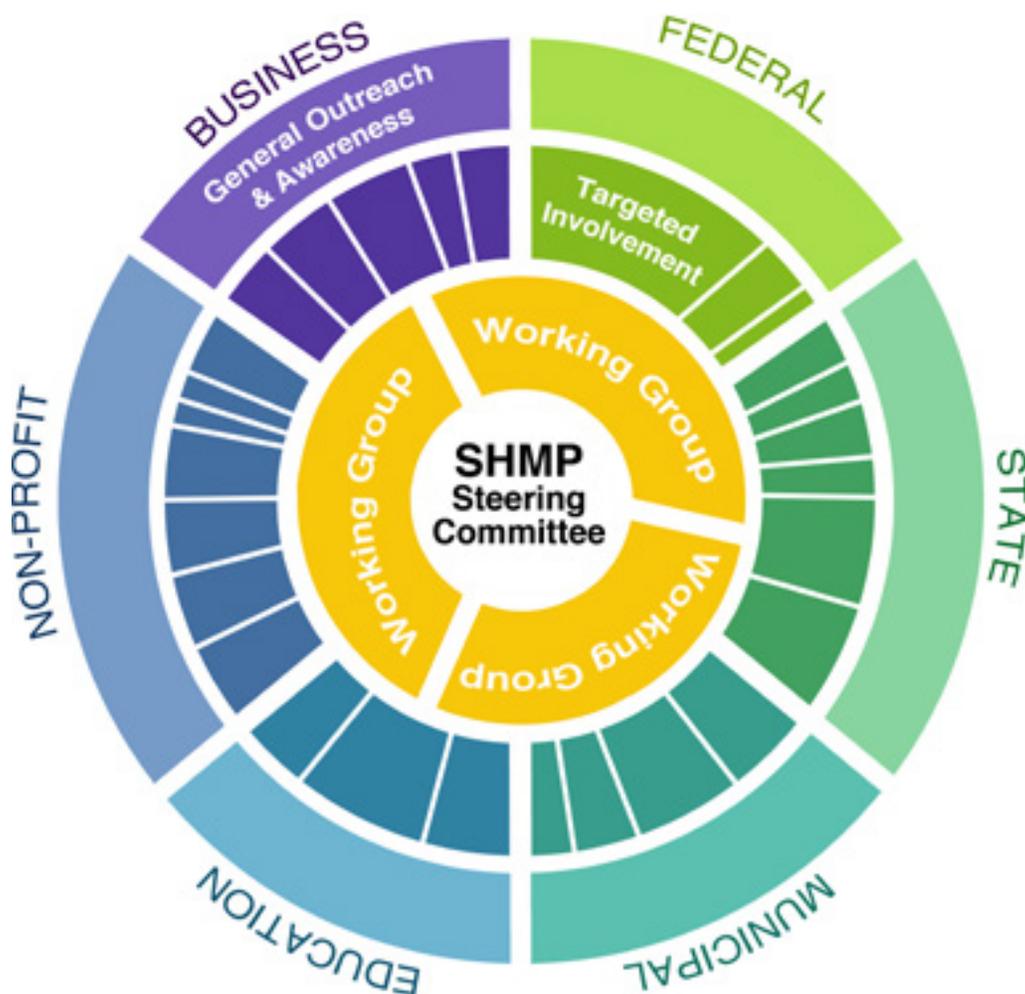


Figure 6: Engagement Framework Diagram
 Source: Community Workshop

The Steering Committee used input from the SHMPPC to develop the following goals for stakeholder engagement and a process vision to guide the Plan update.

Stakeholder Engagement Goals:

- Identify the full range of stakeholders who play a role in hazard mitigation – within and beyond State government and across sectors.
- Design a planning and decision-making processes that includes representation from – and builds relationships between – stakeholders in all sectors and groups.
- Design a planning process to educate stakeholders and Vermonters about hazard mitigation – its importance, strategies, and statewide impacts.
- Make the planning process and Plan documents transparent and accessible to a full range of stakeholders.

Vision for the Updated Plan:

- Focused and Clear: clear plan purpose, succinct plan document, simple action prioritization process.
- Ambitious, Actionable and Doable: big goals and outcomes, realistic and measurable targets, poised for coordinated implementation.
- Engaging and Educational: makes the case for hazard mitigation investment, explains hazard mitigation to a variety of end users, and is a document that people want to read.
- Inclusive and Collaborative: public-private and inter-agency planning process, building a culture of ownership, with a focus on equity and inclusion of those impacted by hazards.
- Creative, Flexible and Adaptable: accounts for uncertainty, while creating resources and strategies for a variety of outcomes.

May 9, 2017 Steering Committee — Launching Steering Committee & Initial Planning Elements:

The first Steering Committee meeting was held in May 2017 to review guidance from the SHMPPC and to refine and approve initial planning elements. The Steering Committee discussed the process and the stakeholder engagement plan developed by VEM and Community Workshop and approved the engagement framework (Figure 6). The Steering Committee discussed and finalized terms of reference for its own governance, for the Working Groups, and for VEM staff.

Branding and messaging was discussed and the idea of using “Vermont Stronger” was approved as a means to carry forward the Vermont Strong¹ identity of Irene recovery. The logo was developed by Community Workshop.



The Steering Committee reviewed the hazards identified in the 2013 SHMP, along with the criteria for the 2013 hazard assessment. The Steering Committee decided to remove man-made hazards from the Plan and agreed to remove hazards identified in the 2013 SHMP as having never been addressed.

The Steering Committee then developed the vision and mission for the Plan (below) and created goals for mitigation around the topics of the environment and natural systems, the built environment, education and outreach, and plans and policies. These goal areas became topics for the four Working Groups.

VISION: Vermont will be safe and resilient in the face of climate change and natural disasters.

MISSION: To protect life, property, natural resources and quality of life in Vermont by reducing our vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters.

The Steering Committee also adopted a set of guiding principles (below) to highlight overarching concepts that the Steering Committee wanted to see addressed throughout the Plan, across all goals, and considered during action development.

1 <http://www.vermontdisasterrecovery.com/donate/plates>

Guiding Principles for Mitigation Planning and Action:

- We will ensure that hazard mitigation work strengthens and protects Vermont’s economy and affordability.
- We will reduce the risks and impacts of hazards on vulnerable populations.
- We will ensure that hazard mitigation action accounts for – and helps us adapt to – climate change.
- We will work to build relationships and partnerships for action across sectors and disciplines.

June 15, 2017 Working Groups — Capability Assessment & Goal Setting:

The first round of Working Group gatherings consisted of three consecutive meetings, one in each of the initial three goal areas: environment and natural systems, the built environment, and plans and policies. VEM staff sent a packet of background materials out prior to the meetings. Each meeting began with a brief presentation on mitigation and mitigation planning.

These first Working Group meetings involved developing an inventory of existing state capabilities, identifying capability needs and gaps, revising mitigation goals, and developing objectives under each goal. The groups completed the capability assessment in two rounds, with participants first adding existing capabilities to posters within the following areas: data, technology and tools; funding and incentives; policies and regulations; technical assistance and education; and action projects and models. Participants then assessed what currently exists in Vermont, what’s working well, and what needs to be changed or improved upon. Subsequent Working Groups built on the capabilities list developed by the previous groups.

In the second part of the capability assessment, each Working Group then defined capabilities that are needed within each of the same areas in order to meet the goal for their group. VEM staff circulated the full list of capabilities identified in these meetings to the stakeholder email list in order to solicit any additional input on missing capabilities, gaps and needs. Additionally, VEM solicited significant one-on-one stakeholder input from key subject matter experts, which was incorporated into the final capabilities list. For the full list, see: [State & Local Capabilities](#).

Photo Credit: Stephanie Smith, VEM



Each Working Group was also given a draft goal from the Steering Committee, asked to provide input on it and then define objectives in smaller breakout groups.

Following the meeting, VEM staff updated the draft goals and objectives and sent a survey to Working Group participants asking for any final input, whether they supported the revised goal and objectives, and whether any information was missing or in need of revision. Based on recommendations from the Working Groups, VEM staff proposed to the Steering Committee the creation of a fourth goal and Working Group around education and outreach. The survey also asked for input on that additional goal, which the Steering Committee refined at their July meeting. Survey respondents overwhelmingly supported the modified goals and objectives, and VEM staff incorporated their minor suggestions and language changes.

July 12, 2017 Steering Committee — Hazard Assessment & Prioritization:

In July, the Steering Committee reviewed the updated goal language and objectives developed at the June Working Group meetings. Based on recommendations from the Working Groups, the Steering Committee approved the creation of one new goal and Working Group on the topic of education and outreach, resulting in the following final goals:

Protect, restore and enhance Vermont’s natural resources to promote healthy, resilient ecosystems.

Enhance the resilience of our built environment – our communities, infrastructure, buildings, and cultural assets.

Develop and implement plans and policies that create resilient natural systems, built environments, and communities.

Create a common understanding of – and coordinated approach to – mitigation planning and action.

Continuing to make progress on the risk assessment, the Steering Committee also reviewed a modified hazard list and potential hazard re-organization based on comments from the previous meeting. Prior to this meeting, VEM staff pulled historic data on hazard occurrences and FEMA Public Assistance data by hazard for consideration during hazard assessment development. The Steering Committee reviewed and modified the hazard ranking criteria from the 2013 SHMP. For the final criteria and hazard assessment, see: [Hazard Assessment](#).

August 22, 2017 Working Groups — Goal & Strategy Development, 2013 Action Review:

In preparation for this meeting, VEM staff reviewed all actions from the 2013 SHMP, including actions that were added to the 2013 list from the 2013 Vermont Roadmap to Resilience² (see: [Plan Maintenance & Implementation](#)) and action ideas resulting from the June Working Group meetings. VEM removed any actions that were considered complete or that focused on preparedness, reorganized the remaining actions by the 2018 SHMP objectives, and individually labeled actions with their corresponding goals and objectives (Figure 7).

2 <https://resilientvt.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/vermonts-roadmap-to-resilience-web.pdf>

Action: SHMP 2013 Priority	Entity/Entities:	Action: SHMP 2013	Entity/Entities:
Develop a rapid response joint field task force of river engineers, scientists, and restoration specialists to deploy along with transportation engineers and RPC staff in the immediate aftermath of a flood disaster to provide regulatory, technical and administrative assistance for in-stream reconstruction projects to ensure they are incorporating mitigation measures and increasing flood resilience.	Agency of Natural Resources	Develop new management guidelines for riparian areas on state-owned lands, and incorporate appropriate flood resiliency considerations into the guidelines. Use these guidelines in the development and implementation of long-range management plans for agency lands, and develop a riparian buffer management policy for agency lands.	Buildings & General Services; Agency of Natural Resources
Environment & Natural Resources - Objective 1		Environment & Natural Resources - Objective 1	

Figure 7: Action cards reviewed and categorized during the August Working Group meetings

The Working Group meeting began with a welcome and updates, followed by two rounds of breakout sessions to review and discuss revised goals and objectives, as modified by the Steering Committee. Participants chose to attend either the built environment or natural systems session in the first round, followed by either the plans and policies or education and outreach session. Within each session, participants reviewed the corresponding goal and objectives, then broke out into smaller groups by objective to review and sort existing actions into the categories below, as well as to develop new actions to fill any identified gaps.

<p>CONTINUE Existing programs or actions that should be continued</p>	<p>LAUNCH Previous recommendations or commitments that should be launched</p>	<p>EXPLORE Previous recommendations or new ideas that should be explored and considered</p>	<p>DISCARD Previous recommendations, actions or ideas that are no longer relevant or should not be considered</p>
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Following the breakout sessions, the groups came back together to assess their support for each goal and corresponding objectives and begin prioritizing objectives. Using keypad polling (an audience response system), participants ranked objectives under each goal and voted on action prioritization criteria for the Steering Committee’s consideration.

September 14, 2017 Steering Committee — Hazard Assessment & Action Development Plan:

In September, the Steering Committee reviewed a reorganized list of proposed hazard impacts based on discussions during previous meetings, finalized the updated criteria for the hazard assessment, and began assessing the individual hazards.

The Committee also reviewed updated goals and objectives and incorporated input from the Working Groups. The Steering Committee had a specific conversation on the inclusion of people and communities in the goal language, which resulted in the word “community” being added to several goals. Additionally, the Committee recognized that people are part of the natural ecosystem and that the built environment goal is focused around protecting people and their inhabited structures.

The Steering Committee discussed the methodology for gathering additional input on the development of draft actions, deciding on the following tactics: Focus Groups around Plan principles, expert reviews of the proposed actions, and a meeting-in-a-box or poster kit that enabled groups or organizations to offer input remotely. Lastly, the Steering Committee discussed the 2013 action prioritization process and decided to modify the process to simply rank the impact and feasibility of each action.

November 7, 2017 Steering Committee — Final Hazard Assessment & Action Prioritization Process:

In November, the Steering Committee assessed the process to-date, what seemed to be working, and opportunities for improvement moving forward. The Committee finalized the hazard assessment scoring (see: [Hazard Assessment](#)) and the process and criteria for prioritizing actions (see: [Mitigation Strategy](#)).

The Steering Committee also requested that Focus Groups, including specific subject-matter experts for each of the guiding principles, be convened to review the draft Plan actions.

November 2017 Focus Groups — Guiding Principles:

Participants at the Focus Group meetings reviewed the draft action list to see how well their respective principles were addressed and to provide recommendations for revising or adding actions. VEM staff later incorporated recommended changes into the draft action list.

The Vulnerable Populations Focus Group discussed who in Vermont is most vulnerable, to which hazards they are most vulnerable, the impact of hazards on these populations, the underlying challenges they face, and potential solutions to reduce vulnerability. Participants included stakeholders from the Department of Health, University of Vermont, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, Agency of Human Services, American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, and Hurricane Flats Farm.



Photo Credit: Stephanie Smith, VEM

The Climate Change Focus Group discussed climate challenges in Vermont, how the changing climate will impact priorities in the future, existing data gaps, what Vermont should be doing to address and adapt to these expected changes, what is already being done, and what statewide action is needed. Much of the discussion focused on short-term needs versus long-term solutions to those hazards that unfold slowly (i.e. the “creeping hazards” that will result from a warming climate). Participants included stakeholders from the Agency of Natural Resources, Norwich University, Vermont Geological Survey, U.S. Geological Survey, The Nature Conservancy, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Vermont River Conservancy, University of Vermont, Vermont Realtors, and Vermont Emergency Management.

The Economy Focus Group discussed natural hazard impacts on the economy, how hazard mitigation impacts the economy, expected future changes, how to use mitigation work to advance the economy, what is already happening in Vermont, and the most important mitigation steps the State should pursue to minimize economic disruption. While acknowledging the challenge of including economy-specific mitigation actions, this Focus Group felt strongly that all actions which improve resilience within Vermont are in support of the Vermont economy. Participants included stakeholders from Vermont Council on Rural Development, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, USDA Rural Development, Vermont Small Business Development Center, Agency of Transportation, Green Mountain Power, and Vermont Emergency Management.

December 13, 2017 Working Groups — “Big Idea” Action Development:

Prior to the December Working Group meeting, VEM staff compiled all previous input on action development. Several major themes or complex strategies (“big ideas”) emerged, which the Working Groups explored during the meeting.

The meeting began with an update on the action development process to-date, a review of the “big idea” concepts and an opportunity to identify any missing big ideas. Participants then selected which ideas they wanted to further develop based on individual interests and preferences, and broke out accordingly into three rounds of small group working sessions. Breakout groups defined what would be required to implement the actions by identifying critical stakeholders, how the action could be accomplished, and the first step. Following the breakout sessions, all of the big idea actions were posted for review and each participant had a chance to review all of the actions and vote for the three they thought were the most important to address.

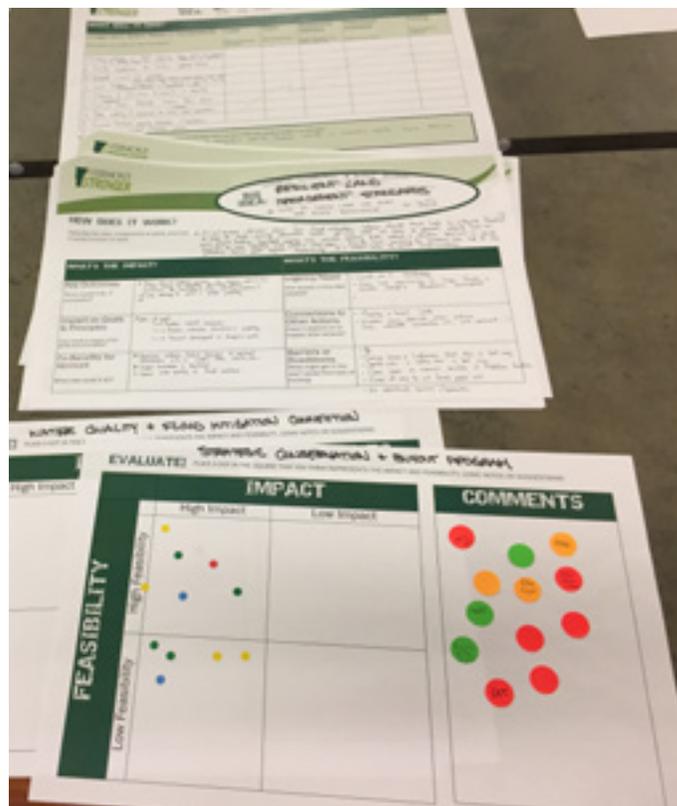


Photo Credit: Rebecca Stone, Community Workshop

January 2018 — Expert Review of Actions:

Following the December Working Group meeting, VEM staff again updated the action list and sent it out to expert stakeholder reviewers in January for final revisions, prior to the second round of Focus Group meetings.

February 2018 Focus Groups — Goal Areas:

The second round of Focus Group meetings was split by goal area. Each Focus Group made final updates to the actions, prioritized them by defining their level of impact and feasibility, and identified top priorities. For the final list of actions, priorities, and prioritization criteria, see: [Mitigation Strategy](#).

The Environment and Natural Resources Focus Group included stakeholders from the Agency of Natural Resources, Vermont River Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, Vermont Dam Safety, and Forest Parks and Recreation.

The Built Environment Focus Group included stakeholders from the Agency of Transportation, Division for Historic Preservation, State Geological Survey, Agency of Commerce and Community Development, Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity, and Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission.

The Planning and Policy Focus Group included stakeholders from the Agency Commerce and Community Development, Mad River Valley Planning District, Conservation Law Foundation, Agency of Natural Resources, and Vermont Emergency Management.

The Education and Outreach Focus Group included stakeholders from the Vermont Council on Rural Development, Department of Health, University of Vermont, Community Resilience Organizations, Agency of Human Services, and Vermont Emergency Management.

March 26, 2018 Steering Committee — Finalize Actions & Top Priorities:

Following the final round of Focus Group meetings, the Steering Committee met in March to make final updates to the action list and to discuss next steps, including the FEMA approval process. The Steering Committee reviewed the action list, analyzed the prioritization scores from the Focus Groups, and discussed and confirmed top Plan priorities. Similar to the Focus Groups, each Steering Committee member individually listed their top three priorities, which resulted in the following Steering Committee top priorities:

- Develop a cross-sector buyout program.
- Inventory and protect critical headwater storage areas.
- Collaborate across flood resilience, water quality and habitat connectivity programs and funding.
- Audit State programs to assess and improve their support of mitigation goals.
- Coordinate State programs to promote development, sharing and maintenance of hazard related data and mapping.

For more information on the action prioritization process and criteria, see: [Mitigation Strategy](#).

April 2, 2018 SHMPPC Meeting — Process & Top Priority Action Review:

Once the Steering Committee and Working Groups completed the action development, VEM staff convened the SHMPPC for a review of the complete, year-long planning process. They provided the SHMPPC with an update on the remaining process and timeline, and asked them to review the 24 priority actions, as proposed by the Steering Committee. Based on conversation at this meeting, VEM staff made updates to the action list and sent it back to the Steering Committee for their final review.

March - June 2018 Plan Development and Review:

In the spring of 2018, VEM mitigation staff compiled the information and input received over the course of the planning process for the risk assessment and hazard profiles, capability assessment, and mitigation strategy to develop the first draft of the Plan. VEM sent out sections of the individual hazard profiles, the capability list, and the capability section to expert stakeholders for review and incorporated their edits. Following this expert review, VEM staff sent the first draft of the Plan to the Steering Committee to review, and then submitted the draft 2018 SHMP to FEMA in June 2018.

Participants & General Outreach

Throughout the Plan development process, 107 individuals participated in meetings to assist in the development of the Plan, representing 70 distinct organizations (not including the meeting-in-a-box and poster outreach). VEM staff continually provided updates on the planning process and opportunities for involvement on the VEM website³ and through the VEM newsletter, the RPC list-serve, the Resilient Vermont email list, the Flood Ready list-serve, and in one-on-one emails to key stakeholders, organizations or expert reviewers. VEM maintained a full list of all participants who were involved or expressed interest at any point and sent out regular updates to that list. Events and news were also shared periodically on Facebook.

Table 7: 2018 State Hazard Mitigation Plan Participants

American Association of Retired Persons Vermont	Two Rivers-Ottauquechee Regional Commission
Addison County Regional Planning Commission	United States Geological Survey
Army-Corps of Engineers	University of Vermont
Bethel Selectboard	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission	USDA Rural Development
Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity	Vermont Agency of Administration
Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission	Vermont Agency of Agriculture
Community Resilience Organizations	Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development
Community Workshop	Vermont Agency of Human Services
Community-Resilience.org	Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
Composting Association of Vermont	Vermont Agency of Transportation
Conservation Law Foundation	Vermont Arts Council
Craftsbury Conservation Commission	Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems
Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District	Vermont Buildings & General Services
Front Porch Community Planning & Design	Vermont Council on Rural Development
Green Mountain Power	Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation
High Meadows Fund	Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation - Dam Safety
Hurricane Flats Farm	Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation - Geological Survey
Irasburg Planning Commission	Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation
Lake Champlain Basin Program	Vermont Department of Health
Lamoille County Planning Commission	Vermont Division of Historic Preservation
Mad River Valley Planning District	Vermont Emergency Management
Memphremagog Watershed Association	Vermont Housing & Conservation Board
Milone and MacBroom	Vermont Land Trust
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	Vermont League of Cities & Towns
National Weather Service	Vermont Natural Resources Council
Northwest Regional Planning Commission	Vermont Realtors
Norwich University	Vermont River Conservancy
Saint Michael's College	Vermont Rural Water Association
Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission	Vermont Ski Area Association
The Nature Conservancy	Vermont Small Business Development Center
Town of Irasburg	Vermont Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
Town of Northfield	Watersheds United Vermont
Town of Waterbury	White River Partnership

Thank you to the above organizations (Table 7) for participating in this planning process.

In addition to the outreach and stakeholder involvement opportunities listed above, regular updates were given on the planning process at Vermont Silver Jackets' quarterly meetings, as well as at VEM Chiefs' meetings and VEM full-staff meetings.

Implementation Kick-Off July 2018

In July 2018, the Norwich University Center for Global Resilience & Security (CGRS) and Vermont Emergency Management hosted the SHMP Implementation Kick-Off Meeting in conjunction with the Resilient Vermont Network. The meeting reconvened stakeholders who had participated in the previous year's planning efforts, as well as new participants interested in addressing the actions developed in the 2018 SHMP.

This meeting began with an overview of the Draft 2018 State Hazard Mitigation Plan and an opportunity for input. This opportunity for input on the 2018 SHMP was the first of two public hearings on the Draft Plan. Since the majority of those in attendance had already been involved with the development of the Plan, there were no additional comments during this meeting.

The main focus of the meeting was to kick-off implementation of seven of the highest priority actions in the 2018 SHMP, through two rounds of break-out working groups:

- Development of a statewide buyout program
- Evaluation and updates to the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) rule
- Development of an Academic Resilience Collaborative (ARC)
- Vulnerable populations data gathering and analysis
- Development of public education and outreach materials around hazard mitigation
- State policy audit to assess support for mitigation across State programs
- Update the Resilient Vermont Roadmap and connect to the 2018 SHMP actions

Following the meeting, these working groups will continue to meet, based on need, to collaboratively achieve Plan actions. As working groups wrap up, additional actions that require a significant amount of collaboration will begin to meet with support from VEM mitigation staff.

August 2018 Public Hearing and Comments on the Draft Plan

The Draft 2018 SHMP was posted on the Vermont Emergency Management website (vem.vermont.gov/plans/SHMP) on August 1, 2018 for review. Several minor comments were received from Lamoille County Planning Commission, Windham Regional Commission, Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and the City of Montpelier. All comments received were reviewed and incorporated into the Draft Plan, where applicable.

The second public hearing on the Draft SHMP was noticed on July 18, 2018 including the Draft [Executive Summary](#) section and a note that the full Draft SHMP would be up on the VEM website in the coming weeks. This public hearing was held in Waterbury on August 20, 2018. Planners from the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission and Rutland Regional Planning Commission attended the hearing and provided feedback. During the meeting, attendees discussed how best to incorporate comments, and the Plan was updated to reflect this conversation.