

Portsmouth Historic Properties Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Plan
Local Advisory Committee Meeting #3
August 31, 2017
Minutes

The Local Advisory Committee (LAC) meeting began at 10:00am with the following in attendance:

LAC Members: Eric Spear, David Moore, Brian Goetz, Reagan Rudig, Adrienne Harrison, Rodney Rowland, and Jim Sanders. Project Team/City Staff: Sam Merrill, Julie LaBranche, Jenna Dunham, Peter Britz and Nick Cracknell

City Staff Peter Britz and Nick Cracknell opened the meeting with introductions of the Project Team and LAC members, and presented an overview of the meeting agenda.

Jenna Dunham presented the Department of the Interior methodology used for the historical values scoring and map for the 761 structures and assets in the 13.5' flood impact area that are greater than 50 years old.

Peter Britz and Nick Cracknell reviewed progress with interpreting assessing database information and inherent inconsistencies in the data. Many properties have different conditions on them that are valued differently such as mixed use, condominiums, non-profits, multiples buildings on the same parcel, and the value of land versus the value of buildings. They will continue to extract appropriate information as possible. LAC members were concerned about assigning values which might be perceived as ranking one property over another especially since valuation is not always uniform among different properties and types of ownership like non-profits. *Note – economic value was considered during the Cultural Values scoring from LAC Meeting #2. See summary of scoring in the box below.*

Summary of Cultural Values Scoring from previous LAC Meeting #2:

At LAC Meeting #3, Nick Cracknell presented the Cultural Value Areas scoring matrix which the LAC uses to rate the relative importance of each Cultural Value for each of the selection Areas: Public Use & Access, Aesthetic Value, Economic Value, Educational Value and Symbolic Value. Based on the combined scoring, the LAC and Project Team assigned relative scores for each Cultural Value Area. Refer to the final matrix results. In discussion of each Cultural Value Area, the LAC identified unique assets for each area:

Working Waterfront – salt piles, Thomas Leighton, deep water port

Downtown Waterfront – Bow and Ceres Streets historic waterfront

Prescott Park – historic working waterfront, views

Strawbery Banke and Langdon House – historical significance and gathering place

Civic Campus along South Mill Pond – library, school, water feature and fringing neighborhoods

Peirce Island – sweeping harbor and ocean views

South End Neighborhood – working waterfront, historic homes and colonial neighborhood fabric, sightseeing destination

Nick Cracknell presented his selection of potential 'Adaptation Strategy Areas' to focus on selecting candidate sites for adaptation actions:

North Mill Pond – mostly commercial, masonry construction

South Mill Pond – mixed municipal facilities, mostly newer construction

South End/Working Waterfront – wood frame residential structures and working waterfront

Downtown Working Waterfront – mostly commercial, masonry construction

Adaptation strategies can be applied to individual structures (e.g. case-by-case basis) or 'pooled approaches' where collective resources are applied to a single or series of strategies that benefit an area or neighborhood. Depth of flooding impacts will also play a role in selection adaptation strategies as low-level flooding is treated differently than greater flood depth impacts. *Note: Refer below to a summary of the cultural values scoring methods and results for information about the features identified in the proposed Adaptation Strategy Areas.*

Economic value was one of the cultural values considered in this scoring; this should be reflected in the final report.

The group discussed the inherent problems with freshwater flooding from extreme precipitation events. Any adaptation strategy would need to incorporate stormwater management in its design. Storage and detention of stormwater will be an important approach to controlling flood impacts when combined with sea-level rise or storm surge events.

Alex Gray presented information about possible adaptation actions centered around the options do nothing, fortify (modify the flow path of water), accommodate (modify the impact of water), and relocate. Actions to fortify include sea walls, revetments, earthen berms and tide/flood gates. Actions to accommodate are typically modifications to the flood prone levels/floors of a structure to allow flood water to pass under and through parts of the structure below the base flood elevation (e.g. crawl spaces and open construction basements). Julie LaBranche noted that it will be important to identify the physical constraints at each site that might preclude certain adaptation strategies in favor of others.

Julie LaBranche noted that it's important to acknowledge adaptation actions completed by the City to date such as rebuilding a higher wall on Mechanic Street and requiring all kitchens and utilities be removed from the lower levels of buildings on Bow Street.

Peter Britz wrapped up the meeting by reviewing "Next Steps" in compilation of the final overall value scores and selection of candidate adaptation actions.

The LAC and Project Team tentatively scheduled the LAC meeting #4 for September 28th or October 12th at the Strawberry Banke Tyco conference room. The meeting date will be confirmed shortly.

The meeting concluded at 12:00pm.