

Planning & Capacity Branch – Lee County Recovery Task Force

Meeting Minutes

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM | JUNE 12, 2023 | COLLABORATORY | 2031 JACKSON STREET, SUITE 100, FORT MYERS, FL 33901 | PUBLIC MEETING

Call to Order

At 2:02 PM on June 12, 2023, Sandy Stilwell-Youngquist, Branch Lead, convened the Planning & Capacity Branch meeting with the following members present:

- Sandy Stilwell-Youngquist, Branch Lead
- David Farmer
- Matthew Leger
- Lisa Swinto
- Eric Pfeifer
- Megan Strayhorn
- Alvin Henderson

Facilitators and Branch Support:

- Jon Romine, Collaboratory
- Ilani Fernandes, Hagerty Consulting
- Robbie Heere, Hagerty Consulting

Introductions

Jon Romine, Branch facilitator, provided a review of the work of the Recovery Task Force (RTF) and Branches. Mr. Romine reviewed the timeline for the RTF, emphasizing the move to Phase Two of the Recovery and Resilience Plan (the Plan).

He noted that the purpose of the meeting was to:

- Review workshop sessions and key outcomes;
- Review and validate potential Initiatives; and
- Discuss what Initiatives require a Technical Brief.

Recovery Task Force (RTF) Updates

Mr. Romine reviewed the work of the Recovery Task Force from the previous month and shared an update that included discussions around Neighborhood Master Plans, Community Engagement, and the submissions of projects through the Project Intake Form.

Neighborhood Master Plan

Mr. Romine provided an overview of the Neighborhood Master Plans and examples of the initial list of potential communities and the criteria.

Members suggested that the following areas be considered:

- Lehigh;
- Unincorporated areas (such as Bonita Beach);
- Tice;
- Fort Myers Shores;
- Cape Coral; and
- North Fort Myers.

They suggested reviewing the plans of Gateway as a case study to determine what worked best.

Members suggested defining the term “Low to Moderate Income” (LMI), according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), to make further decisions on what the map could look like. Mr. Henderson suggested that the Branch not limit itself to HUD funds. Ms. Wardein stated that a zoomed-out view of the County municipalities at a more granular level would help identify plans needed.

Members discussed looking into sustainability and ensuring that the projects that have been identified include projects such as drainage and elevation assessments. This also included a discussion on plans that are already in place and identifying lessons learned to mitigate future hazards. Additionally, identifying areas in flood zones that may have not been flooded during Hurricane Ian.

Members highlighted transportation pre- and post-disaster and added communication with the build-back of infrastructure.

Ms. Wardein requested a map of the communities selected and identified.

Mr. Pfeifer stated that it would be a disservice to not look at areas outside of the LMI populations.

Workshop Feedback

Mr. Romine provided an overview of the Recovery Task Force Workshops and Initiatives that were identified in the sessions. He summarized each session and thanked Branch members for attending and participating in the Workshops.

Resilience Overlay

Mr. Romine provided an overview of what a resilience overlay would look like, a concept specific to the Planning & Capacity Branch.

The members concurred that the data is extensive and would require Geographic Information Systems (GIS) expertise to look at plans at a community level. Additionally, there should be a commonality overlay where multiple partnerships are involved to identify potential problems and what resiliency could look like.

Members also discussed a governmental agency that was cross-jurisdictional that could provide a series of overlays that can be toggled on and off when developing decisions. This could further assist with asset mapping for the community. Members suggested that higher educational institutions or colleges could be utilized through this process. It was also noted that this request would be most beneficial through perpetual funding so updates could be ongoing.

Ms. Wardein stated that there are Offices of Resiliency within the region that help to identify the *how*, *why*, and *what*. Members also suggested a regional planning council that could synergize with the Health Planning Council to assemble data on preexisting partnerships and plans. The County government was identified as the suggested keeper of the information and suggested that the information lives on the Lee County Property Appraisers' website. They stated that this would require conversations early on with the County and other stakeholders.

Branch Technical Briefs

Mr. Romine explained the development of Technical Briefs, Action Plans, and Initiatives for the development of the Plan. He reminded the Branch Members that the Initiative intake form is open until July 1, 2023.

Ms. Wardein stated that it would be helpful to have an assessment and understanding of all the funding mechanisms that could support resiliency.

Members stated that there should be a look into coastal communities and how they have fared, and the lessons learned. This could be done by taking data from small communities to determine data post-storms and additionally, having a resiliency overlay that could be utilized by groups that are not familiar with the jurisdiction of Lee County.

Questions and Next Steps

The next Branch meeting is scheduled for July 10, 2023, from 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM.

Public Comment

Lindsey Funair from the Greater Pine Island asked that Lehigh Acres be considered in the Neighborhood Master Plans. She also asked the Branch to consider who is going to represent the communities. She stated that water utilities and nonprofit organizations should be considered. Additionally, volunteer housing is important when outside individuals come to assist and should be considered.

Marcia Ellis stated that Riskfactor.com has a GIS component to help users identify the risks associated with where they reside. She suggested that conversations be had around water quality and supply in terms of resiliency. She stated that per HUD, there is an obligation to the LMI communities and suggested QR codes be used to assess their personal risks during hurricane season.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Mr. Romine thanked the members for attending and then adjourned the meeting at 3:24 PM.