

A Workshop Meeting of the Apalachicola City Commission was held on April 8, 2025 at 5:00 PM at the Commission Meeting Room located at 74 6th Street, Apalachicola, Florida.

Present: Mayor Brenda Ash, Commissioner Anita Grove, Commissioner Despina George, Commissioner Donna Duncan, Commissioner Adriane Elliott, City Manager Michael Brillhart, City Planner Bree Robinson, City Clerk Sheneidra Cummings, Attorney Hartman

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Ash followed by invocation and pledge of allegiance.

Agenda Adoption

A motion was made by Commissioner Elliott, seconded by Commissioner Grove. Motion carried, 5-0.

Public Comment

Here and none.

Presentation of Draft Vulnerability Assessment & Resiliency Analysis

Ms. Cindy Clark of Bay Media Services presented the 2025 Apalachicola Vulnerability Assessment Update, which was prepared with help from High Tide Intelligence. She explained that the updated assessment differed from the 2017 study by including storm surge data and all required storm scenarios outlined in Chapter 380 of Florida Statutes. The update also included an innovative flood risk data modeling effort that provides building-level economic impact results.

Ms. Clark detailed that the assessment process involved:

1. Acquiring data for critical assets in four classifications:
 - Infrastructure
 - Transportation
 - Natural, cultural, and historic resources
 - Community emergency facilities
1. Resolving data gaps, particularly creating geo-referenced utility maps for water, sewer, and stormwater systems. This was accomplished with significant assistance from city staff, especially Rhett Butler, resulting in updated GIS files now available to city crews.

2. Conducting risk assessment exposure models using NOAA data for various timeframes (2023, 2040, 2070, and 2100) and storm events (10-year, 50-year, 100-year, and 500-year).
3. Prioritizing critical assets by need and risk, then identifying focus areas for adaptation efforts.

The vulnerability assessment included additional elements beyond state requirements:

- Zoning parcel impact maps showing potential flood impacts by zoning designation
- Economic impact analysis showing potential aggregate economic loss, total buildings impacted, tax impact percentage, and households at risk for displacement

Ms. Clark presented maps showing inundation risks categorized as:

- Low (less than 25% inundation)
- Medium (25-50% inundation)
- High (50-75% inundation)
- Extreme (over 75% inundation)

She noted that the most significant affected assets included wastewater facilities, stormwater conveyances, drinking water facilities, roads, and historic resources.

Ms. Clark presented six focus areas identified for prioritization:

1. Riverfront area (low elevation commercial area)
2. Downtown commercial area (community center area)
3. Low elevation residential area along Bay Avenue
4. Relic Creek bed area (subject to nuisance flooding)
5. Higher elevation area containing most critical assets (hospital, schools, government offices)
6. Area containing wastewater treatment plant, drinking water facility, and airport

The Commission discussed and confirmed the prioritization ranking of these focus areas as:

1. Focus Area 5 (highest elevation with most critical assets)

2. Focus Area 6 (wastewater treatment plant and airport)
3. Focus Area 2 (downtown commercial area)
4. Focus Area 1 (riverfront area)
5. Focus Area 4 (Relic Creek bed area)
6. Focus Area 3 (Bay Avenue area)

City Manager Michael Brillhart commented that both areas 5 and 6 are extremely high priorities, noting that if a plant goes down, recovery would take significant time and money. Ms. Clark noted that Area 6 didn't rank first primarily because funding is already in progress for relocating those facilities.

Ms. Clark explained that the next step would be developing an Adaptation Action Plan with four main categories of strategies:

1. Protection (structural defensive measures)
2. Accommodation (design alterations like elevation)
3. Managed retreat (removal or relocation of development)
4. Avoidance (preventing development in high-risk areas)

Commissioner Elliott praised the work on mapping service lines as "monumental" and asked about the timeline for the adaptation plan. Ms. Clark indicated they would begin within a month, with the grant running until next June.

Commissioner Grove noted that having these completed documents positions the city for funding, mentioning that the city has already received awards and project funding for resilience efforts. He also mentioned that while a list of vulnerable properties exists, FEMA does not fund the purchase of vacant properties.

Ms. Clark indicated that formal approval of the focus area ranking would be needed at the May meeting, and that the final revised document must be submitted to the state by the end of May.

Mayor, Commissioner, and Staff Comments

There were no additional comments.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Elliott, seconded by Commissioner Grove, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned with plans to reconvene in 10 minutes.

Meeting adjourned.

Brenda Ash, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sheneidra Cummings, City Clerk