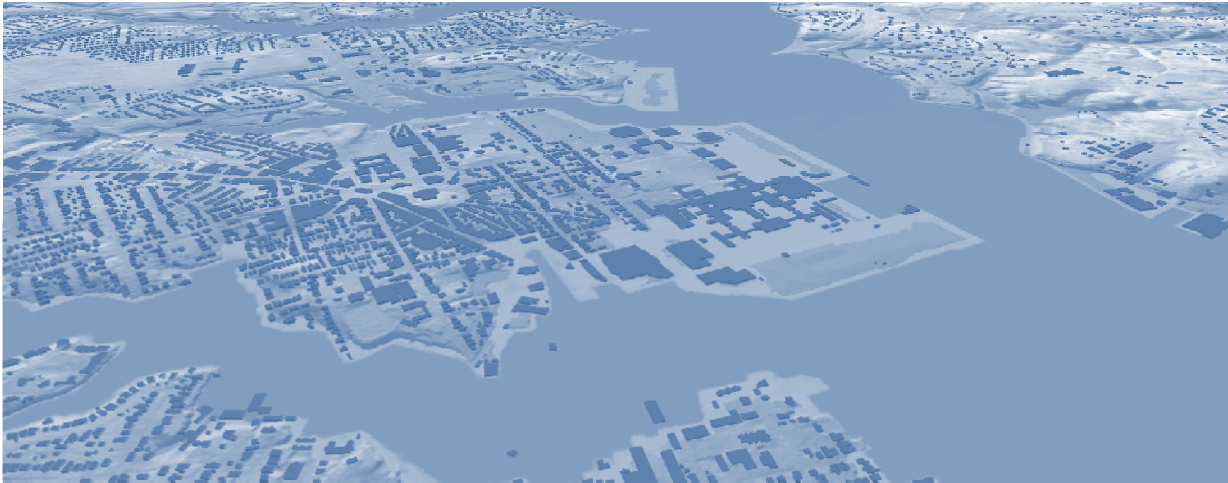


Exploring Community Preferences for the Policies of Tomorrow

FUTURE COAST

Anne Arundel



What Should Communities Do—or Not Do—about Coastal Flooding and Sea-Level Rise?

Facilitator Guide

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Cover image of Annapolis flood projections courtesy of Dewberry, Fairfax, VA.

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FACILITATOR GUIDE

How to Use the Facilitator Guide

The Facilitator Guide is just one section in a larger manual that describes how to implement a Deliberative Dialogue. Future Coast designed this Guide specifically for the Future Coast Citizens' Discussion.

Future Coast facilitators are highly experienced professionals, thus this Guide's focus is on the details of the forum's agenda and how to transition from each session. The last section of this Guide focuses on how to facilitate a deliberative dialogue. Please review this section to learn more about how a facilitator for a deliberative should conduct him-/herself.

The Facilitator Guide will help you gain a greater understanding of the deliberative dialogue process and your role as a facilitator. The Guide covers everything from how the Anne Arundel Citizens' Discussion began to effective facilitation. Please review each section carefully and be able to respond to possible questions the participants may have.

How It Works

Inviting Participants

Future Coast distributed surveys to 10,000 citizens of Anne Arundel County, Maryland to capture their opinions on policies to address coastal flooding and sea-level rise and to invite respondents to the deliberative dialogue. Future Coast marketed to the recipients twice through a mail canvas. Citizens who choose to participate in the deliberative dialogue will receive some compensation for their time.

Future Coast: Deliberation as an Exploration of Policy Options & What It Means to Deliberate

Citizens have been coming together to discuss community issues for thousands of years. The term "deliberation" — or as we call it here, "citizens' discussion" — simply refers to the process of thinking through an issue. In some cases, community

deliberative sessions are paired with opinion surveys. Future Coast uses a similar model, bringing together a representative sample of community members in one location to learn about a current pressing issue, question expert panelists, and discuss solutions in small groups of fellow citizens. In this model, a survey is conducted with a representative sample of the community before the event, and the event participants – a subset of the initial random sample – are polled a second time afterwards.

As opposed to other types of small-group deliberation, there is no requirement that everyone agree to a decision. The goal of the Citizens' Discussion is to promote consideration of important community issues and the expression of a wide range of residents' views. Local officials and media are briefed on the questions community members had about the issue, and how the discussions influenced their consideration of policy responses. The goal of the Citizens' Discussion is to recruit a representative sample of county residents, so that their policy preferences allow us to infer those of the larger adult population within Anne Arundel County, and communicate them through two publicly-released reports. These reports will be available on the project website, www.FutureCoast.info in Summer and Fall 2012.

Deliberative Materials

Facilitators need to read the issue book and participant guide thoroughly! Explore the framework of the issue book, gain an understanding of the issue, and become familiar with the policy options. Facilitators should be well-versed through the training and using the online se-level viewer, found on the website listed above.

Issue Book

The issue guide provides the structure for the deliberative session. It identifies the issue that participants will discuss and then frames possible strategies for addressing the issue. The participants receive the issue book prior to their arrival at the forum. This affords them with ample time to review and consider the issue, the policy options and the pros and cons of each. We cannot ensure, however, that they will have done so.

Participant Guide

The Participant Guide provides a framework for discussion. In the Participant Guide, facilitators and participants will find:

- agenda outline of the two deliberative sessions
- questions to ease participants into the issue topic
- a briefing on the science of sea-level rise
- scientific questions on which participants will deliberate
- policy options for the impacted land areas, advantages and disadvantages of each policy strategy
- general questions about long-term flood protection strategies
- questions about specific strategies for each type of area
- questions to explore areas of common ground
- concluding questions

The facilitator will lead the participants through each stage of the discussion. Facilitators will pose the questions provided and use bridging questions, as they deem appropriate, for a more in depth exploration of participants' opinions, thoughts, and positions on each of the policy options.

Coastal Flooding and Sea-Level Rise Data Viewer

The Future Coast viewer will provide you with projections of the potential impact of sea-level rise on inundation and coastal flooding at varying geographic scales. The projections of future sea level are based on best available scientific information, but have large uncertainties and are subject to change as the state of the science evolves. The presented map coverages of the flood and inundation scenarios reflect Maryland Climate Change Commission sea level projections analyzed against current topographic and building asset data using best practices. Reported probabilities of potential flooding and property damage are relative to today's condition and reflect exposure as determined from analysis of the Maryland Climate Change Commission scenarios against the base data. The values do not reflect the likelihood of changes in climate and or sea level.

Format of Forum

Deliberation Format

The day begins in plenary with a welcome and introduction from the event organizers. At that time, there will be a brief overview of what deliberation is and what the goals and objectives are for the event. There will also be a brief review of how to use the Coastal Flooding and Sea-Level Rise Data Viewer. It is the facilitators' responsibility to ensure that participants possess a clear understanding of the process and their roles.

Note: Please do not share with participants your stance on the issue sea-level rise, coastal flooding, or climate change. Facilitators must be impartial during the session.

Session I begins thereafter. Facilitators will introduce themselves, describe the purpose of Session I and the agenda, then have participant introductions, work with participants to establish any guidelines (ground rules) necessary for the group to feel safe and secure in order to have a constructive conversation, review deliberative materials and sea-level viewer, and move forward with conversation.

Session II will begin after lunch and will focus on the policy strategies that address the three types of landholdings in Anne Arundel County. Facilitators will guide the conversation, so that participants will be able to explore thoroughly the long-term strategies for projected coastal flooding of publicly owned natural areas; residential, low density areas; and commercial and residential, high density areas. Simply put these strategies we can categorize these strategies as *retreat*, *accommodation*, and *protection*.

Purpose of Session I

The purpose of Session I is to develop rapport between participants, gain greater awareness and understanding of the issue, what it possibly means for locals, and how it affects their lives. They will also learn about each other, how the issues impacts others, and be able to have a conversation about a topic they may not have opportunity discuss in such an analytical manner and with a diverse cross-section of community members.

As the conversation comes to close, have participants establish 3-5 questions about what they would like to know more on the topic of sea-level rise and coastal flooding to

present to the panel of experts. They will need to reach consensus regarding which questions to pose to the experts. If after deciding on the top 3-5 questions, there are more that group members would have liked to have asked, please write those down on a different-colored set of cards identified for that purpose. The research team will try to get answers for all questions, and make them available to participants either during or after the session.

After the first small group discussion session, participants will have an opportunity to use the Coastal Flooding and Sea-Level Rise Data Viewer. This online data viewer will allow participants to enter their home address, and other locales, and see the potential impacts of sea-level and coastal-flooding on their homes and communities. Please ask participants to start off by entering their home address as a way to easily locate the area that may be of most concern to them. In each computer room, there will be a list of other potential addresses that they can enter to locate some of the primary coastal areas that will be impacted in the county.

Questions about the viewer should be captured on cards that will be handed to the facilitation coordinators at noon, as participants begin lunch.

Facilitators received a report titled, "Community Adaptation to Sea-Level Rise and Inundation: Permanent Inundation and Coastal Flooding Hazard and Risk Analysis," which explains the science behind the development of the sea-level data viewer, and can also serve as a reference guide for both facilitators and participants.

NOTE: While in the computer labs, please encourage participants to access materials for the Citizens' Discussion, instead of for other purposes.

Purpose of Session II

During Session II the group will explore three types of landholdings that sea-level rise and coastal flooding will affect. Each of these three landholdings has possible policy strategies for how a community could respond to the rise of sea-level and coastal flooding. As facilitator, without reading verbatim what is in the Participant Guide, review

the policy strategies, how it would work, items to consider, and the advantages and disadvantages. Participants will most likely ask the facilitator and each other for clarification on the strategies; ask that they hold their questions (they will have paper and pens to write down notes) until completing the review of each of the strategies.

After reviewing the policy strategies, pose the *General Questions about Long-Term Flood Protection Strategies for Different Types of Areas* and provide clarification of the strategies, if necessary. Future Coast provided questions for facilitators to use as conversation prompts and guideposts. These questions are available to use as the facilitator deems necessary, BUT, please keep in mind that the broad themes of *Values*, *Consequences*, *Tensions/Sources of Conflict*, and *Common Ground* are all topics that facilitator needs to be exploring with the participants.

After exploring the above themes, facilitators will then assist their group with developing 3-5 questions about the policy strategies to present to the expert panel. Again, as the conversation comes to a close, have participants establish some questions about what they would like to know more about on the topic of sea-level rise and coastal flooding and policy strategies. They will need to reach consensus on the questions they want to pose to the experts.

After presenting the group's questions to the moderators, facilitators need to close their deliberation session. Please explore with the participants their thoughts about the day and what they will be taking away from it. Future Coast provided some *Concluding Questions* to help prompt the conversation, please use them as you deem necessary.

Five Facilitator Deliverables

ONE: Facilitators should ensure that participants have an opportunity to learn about the issue of sea-level rise and coastal flooding and how it affects their lives. Facilitators should assist participants with exploring the policy strategies, note where there are themes, common ground, and tensions. This process will help the facilitator guide the conversation in order for the conversation to explore the topic thoroughly and incorporate everyone's position and opinions. Also, use this process to assist the participants to develop questions for the panel of experts. As the conversation comes to

close, have participants establish some questions about what they would like to know more about on the topic of sea-level rise and coastal flooding and questions or comments they would like policymakers to consider. This will be the only time, at the end of Session I and II, that participants will need to reach consensus.

TWO: Future Coast asks that facilitators attempt to compose a legible set of notes, as coordinators will be collecting them at the end of the day. Again, if you find it useful, utilize the conversation-mapping chart. Researchers will use the information for project reporting purposes.

THREE: A vital outcome for the deliberative is the questions that groups pose for experts. The information from the questions will help policymakers gauge where there is possible common ground, tension/conflict, where there are knowledge gaps, etc. and thus policymakers will have a better understanding about how they can engage the community in policymaking, where they can find support for initiatives, and what types of action the community will reject. This is valuable knowledge for policymakers.

FOUR & FIVE: The participants will take a pre- and post-survey. The survey will allow Future Coast and policymakers to know if the deliberative dialogue was a useful tool that helped citizens gain greater awareness and understanding of the issue of sea-level rise and coastal flooding.

[Format of Forum: April 28, 2012](#)

Tour: Prior to the dialogue, facilitators will receive a tour of the forum's venue. There are maps in the facilitator packets. Additionally, this is the time for facilitators to ask any lingering questions about their responsibilities and the structure of the forum.

Registration: During this time, facilitators may find their tables and familiarize themselves with the venue and review the materials.

Welcome and Introductions: Todd La Porte will lead off the day.

Data Viewer Instructions: Brian Batten will provide the instructions on how to use the data viewer.

Session I:

Build Rapport with Group:

1. Introduce yourself – do not provide group with any opinion you have on the topic or related topics to those for discussion today. Provide the group with a little professional/academic background you may have in facilitation. State that you are there to guide the conversation in an impartial/neutral manner. Should you have specific work in environmental advocacy, please frame/include this with impartiality in mind.
2. Ask the participants to introduce themselves and share what brought them here.
3. Quickly review the purpose of Session I and how it will work.
4. Future Coast provided some conversation guidelines, but groups may add ground rules, or a code of conduct that they want to institute for the group in order to have a respectful and constructive conversation.

Assist Participants with Developing Personal Connection to the Issue:

1. You may begin with one of the following prompting questions, or develop one or more that you believe will launch the conversation in a respectful and construction manner:
 - a) Within in your family, or friends, do you ever discuss this issue?
 - b) Has anyone had a personal experience that illustrates the problems associated with coastal flooding and/or sea level rise?
 - i. Does anyone remember Hurricane Isabel? I heard that its impact was greater because of the changes to the level of sea and the sinking of the land. What do you think is that accurate?
 - c) How does this issue affect you?

d) How do you think the issue affects other people in the county?

Participants Develop an Understanding of the Science of Sea-Level Rise, In Brief:

Briefly review this section with the group. Then ask the *Science Questions*. Remember these are questions to promote the conversation, please feel free to add others as appropriate.

1. What parts of the science are most relevant to thinking about what communities should – or should not – do about coastal flooding and sea-level rise?
2. When future projections of sea-level rise have some level of uncertainty, how should they be used in community decision-making?
3. Do you have questions for the expert panel members about the science?
 - a) Come to consensus on which questions to present

Participants Learn What it Means Locally, In Brief:

Briefly review this section with the group. Then present *Questions about What It Means Locally*, or other questions as the facilitator deems necessary.

1. Have you experienced flooding in any areas of the county?
2. Which areas of the county do you think are most at risk from coastal flooding and sea-level rise, if any?
3. How would you describe the risk?
4. Are there impacts to the county that people might readily associate with coastal flooding and sea-level rise?
5. When should communities begin to make decisions – if any – about what to do?
6. Do you have any questions for the expert panel members about the local impacts of coastal flooding and sea-level rise?
 - a) Come to consensus on which questions to present

Closing

When you reach the end of discussion of the last topic for Session I, we suggest that you ask if the participants believe that they now have a good foundation of understanding of coastal flooding and sea-level rise for their community and are prepared to move forward.

Close the session by thanking the participants for their time and dedication to the process.

Data Viewer Use:

After providing your group's questions to the moderators, you may escort the group to your assigned computer lab. There participants will access the online data viewer. Participants can group up on one computer if it makes it easier for them. Please assist any participant who may be uncertain of how the process works. Participants can also access the Future Coast website: www.futurecoast.info for more information.

Please ask that all participants at least enter their home address into the viewer to see their neighborhood impacts (if any). Other addresses will be available to see other regional effects.

Please collect any questions about the viewer on cards to be given to the facilitation coordinators at noon. Coastal scientist Brian Batten from Dewberry will be answering these during the first question and answer session.

Lunch & Expert Q & A:

After leaving the computer labs, participants will return to the cafeteria, get lunch, and sit back in their small groups. The expert panel question and answer session will begin once everyone returns. The facilitators made the decision that they will join their small groups for lunch.

Session II:

Participants will learn what communities can potentially do about sea-level rise and coastal flooding. (You may also use the conversation-mapping chart for this session as

well.) The next section re-iterates the materials found both in the Issue Book and the Participant Guide, Participants will have this material in their Guide.

Understanding Long-Term Strategies for Projected Coastal Flooding

- Move inland over time (retreat)
- Create more resilient communities (accommodation)
- Use natural and artificial barriers to protect against rising waters (protection)

Types of Landholdings:

- Publicly Owned Natural Areas
- Residential, Low Density
- Commercial and Residential, High Density

Public Owned Natural Areas (Participant Guide p.8)

Strategy #1: Buy adjacent lands to enable natural areas to move inland

How would it work?

Governments, private organizations or non-profits would buy property adjacent to existing public lands to enable habitats to move inland as waters rise. Private organizations or non-profits could donate the lands to the government for public use. The sale would be voluntary for the property owner.

Considerations

Governments and other organizations will need to prioritize which properties to target based on their future value in providing public access, wildlife habitat, and/or buffers to coastal flooding.

Advantages

Lands provide buffers against flooding, preserve wildlife and eco-systems, and ensure continued public access to coastal areas.

Disadvantages

Buying land is expensive. Government or other organizations will need to pay for maintenance, and may need to remove existing structures.

Strategy #2: Maintain beaches and health of wetlands against rising seas (Participant Guide p.8)

How would it work?

Sand would be replenished in eroded public beach areas. Wetland areas would be restored and potentially elevated with dredged sediment.

Considerations

Depending on the rate of erosion and/or sea-level rise, and the geography, beach and wetland restoration may not be suitable. Dredged sediments may harm the environment.

Advantages

Healthy beaches and wetlands decrease land loss. They provide habitat for wildlife and space for public parks. Wetlands filter pollutants before they reach the Chesapeake Bay. "Living shorelines" are the preferred form of protection in Maryland (*2008 Living Shoreline Protection Act*).

Disadvantages

Sand replenishment and wetland restoration can be costly and require long-term maintenance. Living shoreline projects may cause changes in local ecosystems, turning shallow-water habitats into marsh habitats.

Strategy #3: Build walls and other structural barriers along the shore to hold back coastal waters (Participant Guide p.9)

How would it work?

Barriers like rock and sea walls would be placed along shorelines to reduce erosion and flooding. Structures could also be sited offshore to reduce impacts of

higher sea levels. For example, wetlands could be protected with levee and pump systems, or tidal gates.

Considerations

Structural defenses are not preferred under Maryland law (*2008 Living Shoreline Protection Act*). Maryland's Department of the Environment controls permitting for hard shoreline defenses.

Advantages

Shoreline barriers are familiar forms of erosion- and flood-control, and use well-tested engineering methods.

Disadvantages

Barriers and other hard structures are expensive to build, require maintenance, cause erosion of adjacent shorelines, and damage ecosystems. The aesthetics of natural areas may be compromised. Structures may lessen public access to the water.

Built Communities (Participant Guide p.10)

Residential Low Density – Commercial and Residential High Density

Strategy #1: Retreat – or move – inland over time, restricting new building in areas likely to flood, and moving or abandoning existing structures

How would it work?

Community evacuations from coastal areas sometimes occur as the immediate result of severe storm damage. Optimally moving communities inland take place over long periods of time to minimize social and economic disruptions. This strategy would site new development away from coastal flood hazards, and relocate or abandon structures that become repeatedly or permanently flooded.

An array of tools could be used:

- local government planning guidelines;
- changes in local zoning to restrict the development of structures in areas determined to be at risk of flooding;
- additional regulations on structures in floodplains;
- requirements to site buildings inland;
- prohibitions on hard shorelines barriers to maintain the area of public tidal lands as waters move inland;
- and tax benefits, compensation, or credits that homeowners would be able to sell, in return for accepting development restrictions.

Considerations

Planned moves inland require long periods of time to change community expectations and investment strategies regarding land use. Feasibility depends on the density of development, available adjacent land, and the challenges of moving existing structures.

Advantages

Moving inland reduces the exposure of the community to repeated damage from storms and flooding, and losses from permanent flooding (**inundation**). It allows natural coastal process to occur, and generally has fewer environmental impacts than shoreline protection.

Disadvantages

Changes in permitted land use will affect property values. Use of these types of tools is relatively new and may be difficult for governments to implement. Contaminated lands may need to be addressed before they are flooded.

Strategy #2. Maintain and restore natural areas such as wetlands as buffers against coastal flooding (Participant Guide, p. 11)

How would it work?

The restoration and maintenance of natural shorelines would provide a buffer against flooding and storms. Governments would allocate space for wetlands to move inland by moving barriers. The addition of sand and sediment helps natural areas withstand erosion and flooding. Tools to ensure space for restoration include low density zoning; government land purchases; requiring siting of buildings away from the shoreline; “living shorelines” that provide natural protection from plants and other materials; renourishment of beaches with sand; and buying development interests from owners.

Considerations

Planning for movement of natural areas before adjacent lands are developed is most effective and least costly. The more highly developed the area, the less feasible it will be to provide enough space for the restoration and inland movement of natural areas.

Advantages

Maintaining natural front-line protection provides buffers from flooding and storms, habitat for wildlife, and filtration of run-off water. “Living shorelines” are the preferred form of protection in the State of Maryland (2008 Living Shoreline Protection Act).

Disadvantages

Maintaining natural areas, and purchasing additional lands, can be costly. Federal permits may be needed if fill is required for beaches or wetlands. Living shorelines offer less certain protection against flooding than walls, bulkheads and other forms of structural protection.

Strategy #3: Design and retrofit buildings to be more flood resilient (Participant Guide p.12)

How would it work?

Sometimes called “floodable development,” new buildings and other structures are designed to withstand projected future levels of flooding. This is accomplished primarily through revised building codes and planning of community infrastructure projects. Tax incentives can be provided to retrofit buildings to higher standards. Buildings can be elevated above expected flood levels, tapping designs that reduce the effects of storm surge and placing habitable areas on upper levels. Floating structures are a novel – and extreme – example of this strategy

Considerations

Local governments requiring new buildings to be more flood-resilient can assist residents in obtaining reduced premiums through FEMA’s National Flooding Insurance Program. Requiring higher standards for new building design is easier than retrofitting older buildings, particularly ones with historical value. Building public infrastructure to accommodate future sea level rise – such as roads, bridges and coastal drainage systems – is less expensive than later rebuilding.

Advantages

These types of actions are low cost and “low regrets” regardless of eventual sea-level rise impacts, and lessen the risk of flood damage.

Disadvantages

Living in areas of periodic flooding may pose risks. Flood events can be dangerous, and storm waters can carry contaminants that pose public health threats. Elevated buildings can make access more difficult for people with limited mobility. This strategy is more difficult to implement with existing structures.

Strategy #4: Build walls and other structural barriers along the shore to hold back coastal waters (Participant Guide p.12)

How would it work?

Engineered structures – such as sea walls, bulkheads, and tidal gates – are placed along the shoreline or offshore to stabilize coastal lands, prevent erosion and protect against storm surge. They are used on both private and public property.

Considerations

Hard barriers are not preferred protection solutions under Maryland's Living Shoreline Act. Maryland's Department of the Environment controls their permitting. Protective barriers provide immediate short-term benefits. These may be outweighed by consideration of long-term maintenance costs, value of the structure being protected, and environmental and social costs. Hard defenses may be most suitable in areas with critical infrastructure and highly valuable development that cannot be easily moved or protected using other methods.

Advantages

Hard barriers have traditionally been used to withstand flooding. They can be implemented quickly to provide protection from flooding and erosion. Building protective structures takes less time than building up natural buffers or planned moves inland.

Disadvantages

Structures are designed to certain thresholds that may not withstand stresses under high sea levels and increased storm surges. Barriers prevent public access to the shore. They are expensive to build and require continued maintenance. Environmental impacts of shoreline barriers include erosion to adjacent areas, and loss of shoreline ecosystems. They also prevent wetlands from migrating inland as sea level rise.

Evaluate the proposed policy strategies

The following are the focal questions for Session II. Please ask participants each of the following questions, order is not a concern, some maybe applicable to more than one strategy.

General Questions about Long-Term Flood Protection Strategies for Different Types of Areas

1. Should certain types of areas be higher priority for public funding and resources to protect them against coastal flooding and sea-level rise impacts?
2. What factors should be taken into consideration in deciding those priorities?
3. Are different strategies of protection more appropriate for certain types of areas within the county?

Questions about Specific Strategies for Each Type of Area (these are prompting or guidepost questions. Please use as you deem necessary, BUT do note that the broad themes of *Values*, *Consequences*, *Tensions/Conflict*, and *Common Ground* need to be explored with participants):

What Do We Value?

1. What things are important to people who support this strategy?
2. What is appealing about this strategy?
3. What makes this strategy a good idea – or a bad one?

What Would be the Consequences?

1. What would result from adopting this strategy?
2. What might be some of the costs?
3. What might be some benefits?

Where are There Tensions or Sources of Conflict?

1. What do you see as the tension between the strategies, if any?

2. How might there be conflicts that arise from this strategy?
3. What are the “gray areas” that make this issue harder to decide?

Where is There Common Ground?

1. Are there trade-offs that county residents would be willing to accept?
2. Are there trade-offs that county residents wouldn't be willing to accept?
3. What do you think your community would be willing to do – if anything – about coastal flooding and sea-level rise?

Do you have questions for the expert panel members about these potential strategies?

Assist the participants with coming to consensus about 3-5 questions to present to the expert panel. After providing the experts with your group's questions, close your dialogue.

Closing

Ending Session II will work in the same manner as Session I, but before closing there are a set of concluding questions that facilitators should have participants consider. Facilitators do not need to cover every question and may add ones that they feel are necessary. (FYI: while facilitators are closing out their sessions, moderators are sorting through the groups' questions and experts are preparing their responses). This is also a time when participants may return to the sea-level data viewer.

1. How has your thinking changed over the course of these discussions?
2. Has your understanding of other people's views on this issue changed?
3. Are there aspects of this issue that our group wasn't able to address?
4. Are there trade-offs that county residents might be willing to accept?
5. What would be a good consequence of this discussion today?
6. Are there ways we can make that happen?

Expert Q&A:

This second round of question and answer with the experts will follow the same format as the first one did. Again, if participants have questions that were not within the top 3-5, please capture them on the cards identified for that purpose located on your tables.

Post-Survey:

Before leaving the cafeteria, facilitators will receive the gift cards for participants to distribute after completion of the post-survey. Please escort your group to your assigned computer lab. The participants will take the post-survey online. Once they complete the survey, ask that they let you know. You will see a screen that says, "survey complete," at that time, please give the participant a gift card and have them sign the list to indicate that s/he received a card. The participants are now free to leave.

Facilitator Debrief:

After your group completes their post-surveys, facilitators may find dinner waiting for them in the faculty lounge. Once all facilitators are present, we will begin a short debrief session. Please, please let us know what worked, what didn't work, suggestions for improvement, and any other thoughts about the day.

FACILITATING A DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUE

Principals of Facilitating a Deliberative Dialogue

The facilitator's first responsibility is to remain impartial by not advocating any policy option and treating all participants fairly and equally. The facilitator does not contribute ideas or evaluate the worthiness of a participant's opinions or suggestions. Keep in mind, that it is not just your words that express impartiality, but also your actions and physical expressions.

NOTE: It may not be possible to have facilitators who do not know one or more deliberative participants, so facilitators need to take great care that the group views them as impartial.

As a facilitator, you are not the issue expert, but instead a conversational guide. You assist with moving the conversation forward, ensuring that the participants fully explore the issue of sea-level rise and coastal flooding and carefully weigh each policy option.

An Effective Facilitator Will

1. Establish a safe and secure environment for a challenging conversation, in which all participants and viewpoints are accepted

Participants can be passionate about certain policy options or platforms, but facilitators will ensure that this passion is directed constructively and does not detract from others being able to share their points of view.

2. Redirect participants when they wander off topic or stop moving toward decision-making
3. Appropriately monitor time provided for deliberating on each policy option
4. Maintain group's focus on the policy options and not outside influences

5. Maintain group decorum. Model respect, openness, and honesty. Establish ground rules and redirect participants as necessary.
6. Encourage participation by all and balance the conversation in order for that to happen

Responsibilities of the Facilitators, Scribes, Participants, & Observers

Creating a Positive Group Dynamic: Safety and Trust

The facilitator is responsible for establishing an environment in which the participants can engage in active and empathetic listening, especially when the participants may have strong emotions about the choice of policy.

Ground Rules. Promote an environment where attitudes, beliefs, prejudices, or fears can shift away from personal attacks and move toward an issue-based conversation.

There are conversation guidelines in the participant guide, please use these for your group, and add any other that your group may need. These guidelines will provide the participants with an understanding of how we expect for them to interact respectfully. Ground rules may seem childish, but even adults need to feel safe to engage in a group setting. Ground rules let participants know what type of behavior is appropriate and have the sense they can express themselves without someone attacking them.

Creating a Positive Group Dynamic: Develop a Sense of Empowerment and Ownership

Ease into the conversation. You have a limited amount of time to accomplish a multitude of tasks, but do not rush the process. You need time to develop a sense of group, a means of working together effective, and most importantly participants need to trust you the facilitator. This will take time.

Future Coast provides some “getting to know you” questions to help you establish a rapport with and between the participants. Incorporate humor! Begin with those

questions and then when the group seems ready move into the conversation about sea-level rise and coastal flooding.

Expectations. Explain the deliberative process and its goal and objectives. Then, discuss with the participants what their expectations and goals for the group are.

Empowerment & Ownership. Encourage the participants to direct their comments to the group as a whole and not to the facilitator. Encourage participants to address questions and comments to each other.

Some questions/comments to encourage such dialogue include:

- What do you think about that idea?
- What questions do you have regarding that suggestion/comment?
- What more do you need to know about that comment?
- I'm noticing that you are not asking questions or commenting...

Managing Challenging Situations. Not everyone will contribute as much as others. Some people process externally (thinking aloud), while some process internally (thinking silently). It is the facilitator's responsibility to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to talk. To achieve this balance, the facilitator will need to limit the talking of some while drawing out the quieter participants.

Techniques:

Talkative and Quiet Participants.

Rounds (round-robins) provides everyone with the opportunity to speak. This process is just moving from one person to the next as the conversation works its way around the circle.

Quiet Participants.

Provide Time to process and analyze. Permit participants to have a few minutes to think about the issue and the outcome of implementing the various policy options.

Call on People when they seem to be wanting to say something but need some encouragement to speak. Let the group know in advance that you will use this technique to encourage participation so they do not feel like you are singling people out or that you are playing favorites.

Talkative Participants.

Make an Observation about the dynamic. For example, “John, I want to hear what you have to say about this, and the rest of the group as well. Do you mind if I ask to hear from people who have not shared as much?”

Observe Group Power Dynamics. Occasionally a group will have a few people who dominate the conversation. Sometimes talking over others and holding forth. This shuts others out and down. Use the beforementioned techniques to address the situation; if those do not work, do not be afraid to be more forceful.

Refer to ground rules you set.

Say, “I would really like to hear from Bob now. He has been wanting to say something for a while.”

Say, “To be fair to everyone, I need to ensure that everyone has a chance to speak. Jane, if you could hold your thought for a moment, I’ll come back to you after Bob shares.”

You may need to suggest a short break and talk to the individual or persons who are attempting to dominate the conversation. Just let the individual know that their thoughts are important to you and the group. Then explain how to be fair and to achieve the goals of the deliberative that the group needs to hear from everyone. Ask the individual if s/he can help you achieve that goal.

Groups in Conflict. It is not unusual for groups members to view their differing perspectives and ideas to be in conflict. This is not necessarily

a bad thing and does not need to be avoided. If managed properly, conflict and anger can provide real learning and clarifying opportunities.

Let us be clear on what is healthy conflict and anger and what is NOT. A heated discussion that focuses its energy on the topic at hand is good. A heated discussion that focuses its attention on derision of others, other viewpoints, and etc. is NOT acceptable.

Know Your Capabilities. Not everyone can or wants to manage heated emotions. If this makes you uncomfortable, then interrupt the conversation and bring it back to a calmer place.

Remember the Ground Rules. If you observe that the participants are not adhering to the ground rules then redirect the conversation.

Redirecting the Conversation. Start with a gentle, “If I may interrupt. I believe we are no longer moving toward our goal of determining which policy option(s) are the most suitable for addressing sea-level rise and coastal flooding. Also, I want remind you all of the ground rules that you created and stated that you would abide by.”

Take a five minute break to cool off. When you reconvene remind the group of the ground rules and the goals of the group and the deliberative.

If you think it will help move the conversation forward AND you feel comfortable doing so, explore the dynamics of the conversation in a controlled manner so that the emotions can dissipate.

How to frame and ask questions

The Four Basic Types of Questions

Closed-ended (Yes/No) Question	Has only one response and do not further the conversation in any way. These questions may include presuming, probing, or leading questions.
Open-ended Question	Has more than one response. Create space for more conversation. They solicit more information. They can help to develop trust as they are less threatening.
Points of Clarification/Feedback Question	Facilitators use this type of question to gain greater understanding what the speaker said. Also used to bring closure to a topic.
Cross-examination Question	Used to imply meaning to a speaker's statement. Does not, generally, solicit more information, instead often shut down the conversation.

Objectives:

Move the conversation deeper and further. Opening space for more speakers to engage in the dialogue.

Engage participants in a process (reflection) that encourages them to not only think about why they believe something, but why they believe it.

Evaluate participant's assumptions about a topic.

Avoiding Bias.

Techniques:

Be aware of your personal biases. Consider how you will manage them while facilitating.

Be respectful and fair. Be careful about usage of phrases such as "that's a good idea," as others may consider your comment as biased instead respond

with “thank you for sharing. What does the group think about his/her suggestion?”

Though you will receive a set of questions to pose to group to help them deliberate on each policy option, you may need to ask “bridging”(see explanation below) questions to help move the conversation forward. It is imperative that as the facilitator that you avoid asking questions that may reveal any personal biases.

Active & Empathetic Listening

Active and empathetic listening is fundamental for good facilitation. Active and empathetic listening consists of listening for the assumptions and emotions behind the speakers words. The facilitator should listen without judgment.

Techniques:

Take notes. Taking notes will help your mind focused on the discussion. It is not unusual for the facilitator’s mind to wander, but by taking notes your attention will return to the conversation.

Paraphrase. Paraphrasing (more below) is essential for gaining clarity, for yourself and the group, about what a speaker is saying.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is essential in helping the group to fully comprehend the message the speaker is conveying. Paraphrasing entails saying in your own words (NOT repeating back) what the speaker said and asking if you captured what s/he meant.

Objectives:

1. Comprehension
2. Opening and deepening the conversation for further exploration of a topic

3. To slow the pace of the dialogue – brings others up to speed, provides an opportunity to incorporate more speakers
4. Tempering or cleaning up (neutralizing) inflammatory statements, but ensuring that the opinion/perspective is maintained

CAUTION: The facilitator does not need to paraphrase everything that everyone says. Paraphrasing should be used sparingly. It is not acceptable practice in some cultures, thus let your group know that you will be using the technique to enhance and guide the conversation. Gauge their comfort with the technique.

How & When to Ask Prompting Questions

Not everyone will be responsive to the questions posed in the participant guide, thus facilitators need to know how and when to ask questions that will prompt consideration of the original question and its intent and engage participants in conversation. Some ways to prompt engagement is to ask the question in a more personal sense. One can accomplish this through exploration of how the issue impacted the participants personally. Ask what concerns participants have about the issue. Future Coast provided a sampling of these questions at the beginning of the participant guide.

Example Questions:

How has the issue of coastal flooding and sea-level rise impacted you personally? Or why is it an important topic for you?

What concerns do you have about the issue of coastal flooding and sea-level rise?

Facilitators will be able to ask questions that they formulate on their own in order to encourage participant engagement with the issue and participate effectively in the dialogue.

Time Management

As the facilitator, it is recommended that you personally monitor the time, so that you can judge how to guide the conversation. Additionally, consider assigning the role of timekeeper to the scribe or an observer. There are many topics and questions to cover in a very, very short time frame. It is essential that the facilitator ensure that participants cover each policy strategy thoroughly, thus one must be prudent about time.

Effective Scribing

For the purpose of the FutureCoast deliberative, facilitators will be scribing their own small group discussions. The facilitator should capture participant comments accurately, tensions between policy strategies, and any consequences, trade-offs, or concerns that participants establish are present for specific policies.

Technique:

First, inform participants that you will be recording their comments 1.) for the purpose of guiding the conversation and 2.) to capture the above information.

Additionally, let them know that you will be asking questions for the purpose of clarification.

Create a chart that has each of the above topics in columns.

Closing Deliberations on Policy Choices and Transitioning between Deliberative Sessions

Ending a deliberative session in purposeful way is essential. As experienced facilitators, you have an experienced sense of when the topic has been thoroughly explored, so that process need not be covered here. When you reach the end of discussion of the last topic for Session I, we suggest that you ask if the participants believe that they now have a good foundation of understanding of coastal flooding and sea-level rise for their community and are prepared to move forward. If there are still lingering questions, then

ask that the participants write them down and that you will give them to the expert panel for response.

Close the session by thanking them participants for their time and dedication to the process.

PREPARATION FOR FACILITATORS

As a convener of a public forum, it is recommended that you provide some training for facilitators. A facilitator training will help facilitators understand their role better and gain greater familiarity with components of a deliberative dialogue. A facilitator training might include the following:

- Deliberative Materials
- Responsibilities of the Facilitators, Scribes, Participants, & Observers
 - Facilitator Guide
- Creating a Positive Group Dynamic
 - Safety & Trust
 - Develop a Sense of Empowerment & Ownership
- How to frame and ask questions
 - Avoiding Bias
 - How & When to Ask Bridging Questions
- Active & Empathetic Listening
 - Practice Exercises
- Mirroring, Paraphrasing, & Reframing
 - Practice Exercises
- Mock Deliberative