

BUILDING RESILIENCE IN THE MIDDLE PENINSULA: COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES ON CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

May 2022



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Executive Summary

In 2021, The Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (The RAFT) started working in the Middle Peninsula to improve resilience to flooding and other coastal storm hazards while remaining economically and social viable. Community organizations and service providers representing diverse organizations and institutions serving the region were asked a series of questions to elicit information about their experience in the region and their perspectives on resilience. This report provides a summary of that information and is divided into six sections that highlight the challenges, needs, and opportunities as identified by service providers and community organizations related to building resilience in the Middle Peninsula.

The information presented here should not be interpreted as a comprehensive assessment of resilience in the region, but rather a compilation of on-the-ground perspectives from individuals representing nonprofits, community organizations, and agencies who work with Middle Peninsula residents on a daily basis. No attempt has been made to ground-truth or check the accuracy of these comments or perspectives, in order for them to serve as a window into the gaps and needs of the community from the perspectives of these service providers and on-the-ground organizational leaders. These perspectives, presented without filters, can help inform future resilience planning efforts led by various partners across the region in that they reveal interests and priorities of these on-the-ground organizations and the people they serve. Some of these perspectives may be seen as surprising or expected, contested or common ground. Some may reveal that initiatives already underway are not well-known or understood by community members, suggesting a need for additional communication and educational outreach. Others may point the way to new initiatives, partnerships, or opportunities that could be considered. While this is neither a definitive nor conclusive report, it offers these perspectives as one additional source of information to support discussion and decision-making with the goal of advancing community resilience.

Introduction

The following report seeks to summarize perspectives of on-the-ground organizational leaders representing diverse organizations and institutions regarding the challenges and opportunities they have experienced through their work while serving community members and citizens across the Middle Peninsula region. These perspectives were elicited through a combination of focus groups, interviews, and surveys conducted with community leaders from



Source: MPPDC

across the Middle Peninsula and led by the Institute for Engagement & Negotiation at the University of Virginia. Participants represented diverse organizations and community groups in the region and were asked a series of questions related to histories and strategies of resilience. There were four focus groups, 15 interviews, and 20 survey responses. A total of 65 individuals representing 60 community service organizations and institutions, listed in Appendix A, were consulted to produce this report. This document is meant to serve as a collective summary of interview, focus group, and survey content that is reflective of participants' experiences. It is not meant to serve as a comprehensive list of resources in the region. This work was conducted as part of The Resilience Adaptation Feasibility Tool (RAFT) process in the Middle Peninsula and was made possible with funding from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund. More information about The RAFT is available at: <https://raft.ien.virginia.edu>.

Challenges and Barriers to Resilience Identified by Community Organizations and Service Providers

Environmental Resilience

- Flooding and sea level rise affect the security of coastal communities. Flooded roads, in particular, inhibit transportation.
- Failed septic systems are often not reported and may affect drinking water supply.
- Inland communities lack resources during weather events. Additionally, there are few emergency volunteers in the Middle Peninsula.
- Many residents live in homes that are vulnerable to disaster including mobile homes or houses in flood prone areas. Additionally, many people live without homeowners' or renters' insurance and flood insurance.

Economic Resilience

- Funding for agencies limits the work that they can accomplish.
- Counties lack employment and recreational opportunities, meaning that many young people move out of the region.
- There is limited affordable housing.
- Rural areas lack broadband connection and internet literacy. This also makes it challenging for people to meaningfully access emergency information and resources.
- Public transportation is limited, making it difficult for people without cars to easily access critical resources and employment opportunities.
- Lack of waterfront access is challenging for watermen.

Social Resilience

- Youth services and childcare are limited.
- There are limited medical services, including mental health services.
- Communities lack convenient access to healthy foods and pharmacies.
- There is a largely invisible, underserved homeless population in the area.
- Many community members are not aware of the resources that are available to them.
- Groups struggle to meaningfully engage with Tribes and other minority populations.
- Not all public spaces are handicap accessible.
- Resources are not often accessible for people who speak English as a second language.
- Groups lack diversity of representation.



Source: MPPDC

Historically Excluded and Underserved Populations and Communities

Environmental Resilience

- Lower-income neighborhoods that have been historically underserved and lack the resources of more affluent neighborhoods do not have the resources to deal with the effects of flooding.

"[People] are not so much underserved as underfunded. We don't have enough funding to take care of housing, people who are mentally challenged, all of the populations who need help."

Economic Resilience

- Disadvantaged areas that are rural and further from large towns are underserved.
- Low-income people struggle to pay rent and may not apply for or qualify for benefits including disability and COVID funding.
- People without internet access or computer literacy cannot utilize online community resources and employment opportunities. This has been especially challenging during COVID-19.
- Watermen, especially those living without medical coverage or who are unable to afford rising property taxes and slip costs, are not being sufficiently served.
- Tribal members, especially the elderly, may not have access to the internet. They often are unable to find work, live with low incomes, and experience difficulty communicating with those outside of the Tribe because of cultural misunderstandings.
- People without transportation often struggle to access public transportation which provides connection to employment opportunities and other resources.

Social Resilience

- Youth and young adults lack resources and often leave the area and do not return.
- Rural African American communities have been historically underserved despite recent progress.
- Seniors often lack resources including transportation and are isolated especially due to COVID social distancing.
- Hispanic farmworkers, immigrants and other non-English speakers have trouble navigating community resources.
- People experiencing homelessness are invisible in the community and may struggle with mental illness.
- People with disabilities are not being sufficiently served in physical spaces.
- Those with mental illnesses often lack medical resources.
- Veterans lack medical support, especially for mental health.
- People who lack trust in government do not apply for benefits.

Resilience Strengths and Assets Identified by Community Organizations and Service Providers

Environmental Resilience

- The environment is a critical asset. The Middle Peninsula has many excellent parks, and its open space and agricultural lands bring in federal and state funding.
- Educational institutions including Virginia Institute of Marine Science develop critical research related to coastal resilience.

Economic Resilience

- The Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission (MPPDC) is engaged in long-term planning and mitigation work, particularly on regional economic issues.
- Emergency management resources and groups, such as County Emergency Management Teams (CERT), Red Cross, Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM), provide aid before and after disasters.

Social Resilience

- Collaboration and coordination between groups is a community asset. There are many partnerships between nonprofits and the government.
- Community members are a strength. There is a high level of community participation and neighbors help neighbors.
- Community members have pride of place and a sense of community.
- Resource Councils provide a forum for information sharing between community groups.
- Libraries provide educational and internet resources.
- The religious community is well connected, and groups work together to prepare for disaster response.
- The Tribal community is tight knit. Recent growth patterns have reconnected Tribes with previously lost historic and cultural practices, and they are consistently trying to make themselves known.
- Museums such as the Museum of Natural History and the Woodville Foundation highlight the region's untapped historical resources and local living history.
- Weekly newsletters connect community members to events and news.

"Our resilience strength is tied to the waters that surrounds us and generations of people serving and volunteering to make our community better."

"The people of King and Queen have always been resilient. They recovered from the disasters of the Great Depression and wars by leaning into each other and helping each other regardless of race or religion. Our rural communities survived by working together."

How Organizations Work Together to Address Resiliency

Environmental Resilience

- Environmental groups work with government agencies to build environmental resilience through shoreline restoration and other projects including education, outreach, and resources.

"Our greatest asset is the people of King and Queen who come together to assist each other in times of plenty and in times of need."

Economic Resilience

- Collaboration between governmental and non-governmental groups provide services (financial management classes, health and nutrition programs, free clinics, etc.)
- Groups share funding. Organizations including Giving Circle fund community programs. Other groups have cost-sharing programs for environmental resilience projects.

Social Resilience

- Organizations build partnerships to address resiliency.
- Resource Councils and housing coalitions hold space for collaboration, coordination, and networking.
- Churches organize volunteer events for community improvement.
- Museums, libraries, and schools provide educational resources to promote citizen resilience.
- Conversations between community leaders promote community resilience. Many community leaders are involved in multiple groups.
- Interaction between community members disseminates information. People have a strong sense of community and neighbors support one another.

Overview of Resilience Opportunities Identified by Community Organizations and Service Providers

This list includes a high-level summary of opportunities. A more detailed list developed based on ideas shared during interviews and focus groups can be found in [Appendix C](#).

Environmental Resilience

- Improve resilience and disaster planning.
- Increase public awareness around future flooding projections and existing increases in flooding and help homeowners and others learn how they can help protect shorelines.
- Increase the number of counties with regular emergency planning/recovery meetings that include outside groups.
- Strengthen partnerships and collaborative planning to prepare for emergencies. This could include more informational plans like the Hazard Mitigation Plan, conversations around resilience projects, and ensuring government representation on resource councils.
- Provide greater support for sheltering operations during the summer and weather events, especially in counties that do not already have shelters or often face storms.
- Update resilience standards for permitting at the state and local level.
- Increase support for transitioning low-lying coastal land away from residential use. Rezone to discourage development in low-lying areas, decrease barriers to relocation and greater options for homeowners struggling with recurrent flooding, and increase awareness about the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority.
- Improve access to other insurance including homeowners, renters, and flood, especially in high-risk areas.
- Create an element of Fight the Flood aimed towards planning and longer-term resilience projects (a mechanism for local governments that is different from individual property owners) and improve dissemination of Fight the Flood program.
- Improve water quality by repairing or replacing failed septic systems and finding alternative sources of drinking water in areas with polluted groundwater wells.
- Increase political willpower to protect natural resources and regulate pollution.
- Increase efforts to protect private and public infrastructure before disasters (homes, roads, bridges, etc.).
- Support more production of food within the region. Collaborate with community members to start local gardens and involve children so they can grow to be ecologically conscious adults.
- Increase populations of fish/shellfish species especially declining indigenous fish populations.

Economic Resilience

- Find more funding to support service organizations and local governments including support for agricultural providers, emergency service providers, parks programs, coastal resilience projects, etc. Especially prioritize increased resources to poor and disconnected areas of the region.
- Provide more workforce development, leadership training programs, and connections to professional programs to keep youth in the area.
- Provide more economic opportunities in the region, especially waterfront opportunities. Increase the effort to hire internally and increase access to broadband to increase access to high-paying remote jobs.
- Improve access to the waterfront for watermen, including limiting waterfront development, repair for dilapidated docks and dredging in channels and creek.
- Fund more transportation planning to determine what to do with flood-prone roads that the state can abandon.

- Improve transportation to critical services like medical appointments, grocery stores. This could be accomplished with more funding for Bay Transit.
- Improve broadband access, especially in rural parts of the Middle Peninsula.
- Provide computer literacy trainings, especially in older populations and for watermen.
- Provide more support for affordable housing especially for watermen and homeless populations. Increase access to rent assistance and temporary housing. Collaborate across localities to address housing issues.
- Improve financial literacy for those without access to financial training.
- Work toward targeted grantmaking to support Middle Peninsula Hispanic population, to advance racial equity, and to improve capacity to anticipate future needs.

Social Resilience

- Increase number of counties with effective Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), shelter equipment, and emergency operations plans.
- Support the development of services, especially in King & Queen County including a pharmacy, and grocery store, food pantry, and community center.
- Improve medical coverage and access to medical care especially for waterman, many of whom are uninsured.
- Provide more long-term/sustained support for the homeless populations and those in poverty. This includes more financial support for long-term shelters, increasing the visibility of homeless populations, and acquisition of one or more properties for DSS to house homeless residents.
- Improve youth services and childcare especially in counties where there are no YMCAs. Lessen the opportunity gap for youths by providing more youth leadership opportunities. Address barriers to in-home childcare centers and to accessing subsidies. Provide more support to grandparents raising grandchildren.
- Improve the dissemination of information related to services and grants available, potentially with a resource bulletin that goes to the Department of Social Services (DSS) and then to families.
- Provide more translation services and fund additional ESL teachers.
- Create a shared database to help identify vulnerable populations.
- Create more recreational and entertainment opportunities to help incentivize people to stay in the region.
- Provide more support for those with physical and intellectual disabilities, especially youth and the elderly.
- Improve mental health services especially for youth. Create procedures for extra mental health and substance abuse support to be available during times of crisis and track long-term outcomes of mental health interventions.
- Increase involvement of underserved and minority populations in nonprofits and local government.
- Grow relationships with local Tribes by creating frameworks for transparent cross-locality and Tribal collaboration that acknowledge limited capacity, focus on shared priorities, and reward impact rather than tokenizing Tribal governments. This could involve the start a farmers' market or an Indigenous food festival.
- Provide more education around local history, including stories of Black residents, women, working-class fishermen, and others left out of traditional narratives.
- Increase social and physical connections between isolated parts of localities.
- Strengthen existing faith-based community networks.
- Increase volunteers and participation in community events and programs including Red Cross events, local disaster response, Master Naturalist programs, and citizen science.

Ideas for Measuring Increased Resilience Identified by Community Organizations and Service Providers

Environmental Resilience

- Environmental measures (number of failing septic systems and improvements, air and water quality, rate of forest loss, number of shoreline restoration projects, etc.)
- Governmental measures (number of localities enrolled in FEMA Community Rating System, number of projects from Coastal Resiliency Master Plan completed, number of exercises run by County governments, local government investment in mitigation strategies, etc.)

Economic Resilience

- Economic indicators (percentage of population employed, growth of tax base, poverty levels, amount of grants and other funding for resilience, number of businesses started that are related to resilience, number of jobs, etc.)
- Transportation improvements
- Number of homes with broadband access

Social Resilience

- Measure the utilization of assistance programs (SNAP, food banks, housing assistance, Social Services Cases, graduates from rehabilitation programs).
- Measure health and safety metrics including access to healthcare, health outcomes, smoke alarm installation, number of counties with CERT teams, number of disaster response volunteers, etc.
- Number of community events
- Diversity of representation on boards and in focus groups
- Educational measures (enrollment in early childcare, head-start, and preschool programs, high school and community college graduation rates, museum visitor counts, public awareness of the issues through some sort of survey, etc.)
- Success for Tribes (internalized land control, development of a Rappahannock food forest, improving regional knowledge of the Tribe, etc.)



Source: MPPDC

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participating Organizations and Individuals

1. Lauren Ginder, Abingdon Elementary School
2. Stephen Moore, American Red Cross
3. Barry Smith, American Red Cross
4. Leslie Jingluski, Avalon Center
5. Crystal Booker, Bacon Street Youth and Family Services
6. Hunter LeClair, Bay Aging
7. Jackie Davis, Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board
8. Katherine Newman, Bay Transit
9. Jeb Byers, Christchurch School
10. Dr. G.R. Quarels, Essex County NAACP
11. Dana Smook, Essex County Public Library
12. Glenn Sturm, Essex County Resource Council
13. Rev. Cornelius Holmes, First Baptist Church Tappahannock
14. Pastor Fred, FIX Ministries
15. Brent Hunsinger, Friends of the Rappahannock
16. Jane Wenner, Gloucester County CERT
17. Gloria Williams, Gloucester County Department of Community Engagement & Public Information
18. Robert Kelly, Gloucester History Museum
19. Bob Tschirhart, Gloucester Housing Partnership
20. Kristie Askew, Gloucester United Emergency Shelter Team (GUEST)
21. Chad Lewis, The Haven Shelter & Services
22. Letecia Loadholt, King William County Department of Social Services
23. Donna Sprouse, King & Queen County Department of Planning
24. Brittany Lawson, King & Queen County Department of Social Services
25. Carol Carter, King & Queen County Public Schools
26. Brittany Lawson, King & Queen County Resource Council
27. Kirk Havens, King & Queen County Wetlands Board
28. Linda P. Barnes, King & Queen Courthouse Tavern Museum
29. Dave Harlan, Machicomoco State Park
30. Tiffany Gordon, Mathews County Department of Social Services
31. Willie Love, Mathews County Government
32. Beth Johnson, Mathews Women's Giving Circle
33. Dawn Shank, Mattaponi & Pamunkey Rivers Association
34. Karen Duhring, Middle Peninsula Master Naturalists
35. Carrie Dos Santos, Middlesex County Public Library
36. Rebecca Morgan, Middlesex Department of Social Services (DSS)
37. Angela Dodson, Middle Peninsula Community Services Board
38. Rev. Leonard Edloe, New Hope Fellowship
39. Lorraine Justice, Rappahannock Community College
40. Jay Grebe Yeatts, Rappahannock Tribe
41. Lincoln Boykin, River Counties Community Foundation
42. Margaret Nost, River Counties Community Foundation
43. John A. Black, III, Rotary Club of Mathews
44. Marsha Germek, Samaritan Group
45. Rev. Barbara Brehon, Southside Rappahannock Baptist Association
46. Rev. Kathy Hughes, Tappahannock Presbyterian Church, Essex Churches Together
47. Sam Markwith, Tidewater Soil and Water Conservation District
48. Larry S. Chowning, Town of Urbanna Council
49. Krista Gustafson, Virginia Cooperative Extension
50. Christina Ruszczuk-Murray, Virginia Cooperative Extension
51. Aaron Wendt, Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation
52. Harrison Bresee, Virginia Department of Emergency Management
53. Debbie Messmer, Virginia Department of Emergency Management
54. Warren Coburn, Virginia Department of Forestry
55. Ken Sterner, Virginia Department of Forestry
56. Lisa Laurier, Virginia Department of Health
57. David Fridley, Virginia Department of Health
58. Deborah Briggs, Virginia Department of Health
59. Amyrose Foll, Virginia Free Farm
60. Susan Walton, Virginia Master Naturalist
61. Karen Joyner, Virginia Peninsula Food Bank
62. Dan Knott, Virginia Watermans Association
63. Walt Sampson, Wales Center Rosenwald School
64. Nancy Rogan, WHRO Public Media
65. Buzz Lambert, YMCA of the Virginia Peninsulas
66. Khalilah Harrison, YMCA of the Virginia Peninsulas
67. Curt Smith, Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission

Appendix B: List of Interview and Focus Group Questions

The following questions were asked of focus group and interview participants.

Our approach to resilience: A resilient community is one that is able to anticipate, adapt, endure, and thrive in the face of change, uncertainty, and adversity.

1. Given this framework for resilience, how does your organization support resilience in the Middle Peninsula? What populations do you serve?
2. What resilience strengths and assets have you observed in the communities in which you work?
3. Given your organization's work in the Middle Peninsula, what people, neighborhoods, and/or populations are identified by your organization as historically excluded and underserved?
4. How does your organization serve these populations? What underserved people are not being served by your organization or other groups?
5. What strengths, needs, and opportunities in your resilience have been exposed – and for whom? These could range from planning and leadership to infrastructure and health, food, shelter, and wellness. They could be exposed by COVID and/or climate threats, such as storms, flooding, groundwater intrusion into septic tanks, saltwater intrusion into wells, or an extreme heat event that might impact access to critical services?
6. How do you learn about community strengths, needs and opportunities?
7. How does your organization work with others to address resilience more comprehensively?
8. What other opportunities has your organization identified for increasing the resilience of people you serve? What ideas have you all identified as ways to support increasing resilience?
9. How might we know this effort to increase resilience is successful, in terms of specific changes that might be visible or measurable? Are there ways of measuring success that would be helpful? In one year? In five years? In 10 years?
10. What would your organization need for you to be able to continue to stay engaged in ongoing discussions and networking? Would you be interested in your current role/work in participating in the community workshop (Jan 28th), local Implementation Teams, and the regional Social Equity Workgroup (to be formed in Spring 2022) that will advise on resilience capacity building mini-grants?
11. Do you have suggestions for others in the Middle Peninsula region or your community who should be included in an interview/focus group, RAFT implementation team, or the regional Social Equity Workgroup?

Appendix C: Detailed Opportunity List

Improve resilience and disaster planning

- Increase the number of counties with regular emergency planning/recovery meetings that include outside groups
- Greater support for sheltering operations during the summer and weather events
 - Especially in Mathews County, which does not have shelters because it is often underwater during major hurricanes
- Support inland counties after hurricanes
- Increase number of counties with effective Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT), shelter equipment, and emergency operations plans
- Community Preparedness and Fire Safety Education
- Coordination with jurisdiction Emergency Services for Mass Care response and recovery
- Create an element of Fight the Flood aimed towards planning and longer-term resilience projects (a mechanism for local governments that is different from individual property owners)
 - Improve dissemination of Fight the Flood program
- Update resilience standards for permitting at the state and local level
- More transportation planning to determine what to do with flood-prone roads that the state can abandon
- Improve access to information and the dissemination of information
- Improve broadband access
 - Especially in the Northwestern part of Middlesex County
- Improve access to the technology necessary to access the internet
 - Especially for watermen and elderly populations
- Improve trainings for populations who are not familiar with the internet (computer literacy support programs)
- Improve the dissemination of information related to services and grants available
 - Potentially support a resource bulletin that goes to the Department of Social Services (DSS) and then to families?
- Share more success stories
- Group resource access points in the same places
- Provide more translation services
 - Translate school newsletters
 - Funding for additional ESL teachers
- Improve cell phone reception regionally
- More information about the area (a shared understanding of needs)
 - Shared database to help identify vulnerable populations

Improve transportation

- Especially to medical appointments and to less formal sites, such as grocery stores, pharmacies, retail services and social events
- More funding for Bay Transit to expand its services

More support for affordable housing

- Especially for watermen and homeless populations
- Provide safe and stable temporary housing for people in between living situations
- Increase access to rent assistance or other aid to pay for housing and to keep people in existing living conditions
- Collaborate across localities to address housing issues

Greater funding to support service organizations and local governments

- For agricultural producers struggling with extreme weather events
- To repair and fix up dilapidated homes
- For long-term and large-scale projects
- To help organizations measure their impact
- To increase the starting salaries in government to incentivize people to stay local
- For Red Cross
- For park programs
- To update the Hazard Mitigation Plan annually
- For more mitigation efforts
- For coastal resilience projects (especially for those who cannot afford living shorelines)
- For the local Rosenwald School
- For the renovations of the Wales Center (currently inoperable due to water damage and drainage issues) that would make it available for community meetings, trainings and as an outpost for social and environmental programs
- Prioritize increased resources to poor and disconnected areas such as Lanesville

Improve youth services and childcare

- Especially in Essex, King & Queen, and Kind William counties where there is no YMCA
- Lessen the opportunity gap for youths by providing more youth leadership opportunities
- Address barriers to in-home childcare centers and to accessing subsidies
- Provide more support to grandparents raising grandchildren

Provide more workforce development, leadership training programs, and connections to professional programs

- Especially for youth to keep them in the area (E.g., youth leadership training)
- Improve access to the internet and GED/Community College resources in temporary housing and addiction treatment facilities

Provide more economic opportunities in the region, especially waterfront opportunities

- Increase the effort to hire internally, especially for leadership positions
- Increase access to broadband to increase access to high-paying remote jobs

Improve access to the waterfront for watermen, and improved benefits and income security

- Increase public dock access and repair dilapidated docks
- Limit the amount of development that is allowed on the waterfront and provide a true working waterfront
- Increase dredging in channels and creeks to improve access (and determine what to do with dredged materials)
 - Increase support for the dredging of the New York Spit Channel and how to use dredged materials to build barrier islands off the coast of Mathews

Improve medical coverage and access to medical care

- Especially for waterman, many of whom are uninsured
- Make health insurance more affordable in local government

Improve access to other insurance

- Homeowners, renters, and flood, especially in high-risk areas

Provide more long-term/sustained support for the homeless populations and those in poverty

- More financial support for long-term shelters, not just emergency shelters
- Make the homeless populations more visible
- Acquire one or more properties for DSS to house homeless residents

Improve water quality

- Funding for replacing and/or repairing failed septic systems (King & Queen and King William only have septic systems)
- Find alternative sources of drinking water in areas with polluted groundwater wells

Create more recreational and entertainment opportunities to help incentivize people to stay

Strengthen partnerships and collaborative planning to prepare for emergencies

- More information plans like the Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Facilitate more conversations around long-term and large resilience projects
- Ensure government representation on Resource Councils
- Provide a venue for nonprofit and government leaders to collaborate and get to know one another

Provide more support for those with disabilities

- Especially youth with disabilities
- Especially elderly populations with intellectual disabilities
- There is a gap between where needs are and where services reach
- Institute a housing assistance program to pay for rent or a hotel for those who do not have income due to waiting disability claims
- Improve handicap accessibility in community gardens
- Improve handicap access to Master Naturalist programming

Improve mental health services

- Especially for youth (greater support for the Middle Peninsula Northern Neck Counseling Center partnership with local elementary and middle schools)
- Create procedures for extra mental health and substance abuse support to be available in times of crisis
- Better tracking of long-term outcomes of mental health interventions

Increase involvement of underserved and minority populations in nonprofits and local government

- Especially African American communities
- Greater support for planning to do thorough community outreach
- More support for history museum to connect with Black churches
- Increase diverse representation on boards and councils

Grow relationships with local Tribes

- Create frameworks for transparent cross-locality and Tribal collaboration that acknowledge limited capacity, focus on shared priorities, and reward impact rather than tokenizing Tribal governments
- Start a farmers' market with the Upper Mattaponi to provide food to King William County
- Start an Indigenous food festival

Improve financial literacy for those without access to financial training

Increase political willpower to get things done

- To protect natural resources and regulate pollution

Provide more education around local history, including stories of Black residents, women, working-class fishermen, and others left out of traditional narratives

Increase social and physical connections between isolated parts of localities

Increased support for transitioning coastal land away from residential use

- Rezone to discourage development in low-lying areas
- Decrease barriers to relocation and greater options for homeowners struggling with recurrent flooding
 - Prioritize residents whose sole residence is in the Middle Peninsula
- Increase awareness about the Middle Peninsula Chesapeake Bay Public Access Authority

Increase public awareness around future flooding projections and existing increases in flooding and help homeowners and others learn how they can help protect shorelines

Targeted grantmaking

- To support Middle Peninsula Hispanic population
- To advance racial equity
- Improve capacity to anticipate future needs

Strengthen existing faith-based community networks

Support more production of food within the region

- Collaborate with community members to start local gardens and involve children so they can grow to be ecologically conscious adults

Increase volunteers and participation in community events and programs

- Find more volunteers/participation for the Red Cross (blood drives, funding, CPR classes, etc.).
- Increase the number of local disaster response and shelter volunteers
 - More background checks for volunteers so they can appropriately serve in emergency shelters
- Increase community involvement in the Master Naturalist programming
- Citizen science projects (water quality monitoring, bird counts, etc.)
- Greater involvement from elderly populations to learn from their knowledge
- More youth involvement

Increase efforts to protect private and public infrastructure before disasters (E.g., homes, roads, bridges)

Increase harvests and populations of fish/shellfish species

- More support for declining indigenous fish populations (such as the Herring), possible through a fish hatchery

Support the development of services, especially in King & Queen County

- Start a pharmacy and grocery store
- Fund a food pantry and community center

