Standard Operating Procedure

Title:	Typical Public Meeting Procedures for CHAMP and other Colorado Mapping Efforts
Date:	January 15, 2018

SUMMARY

Communities have been asked to partner with CWCB during CHAMP and other flood hazard mapping efforts. Public outreach is an important part of the process to include affected stakeholders. The intent of this memo is to identify some best practices for public meetings.

PROCEDURE

The approach may differ depending on the phase of the study that needs are identified; however, the following general approach should occur:

Timing

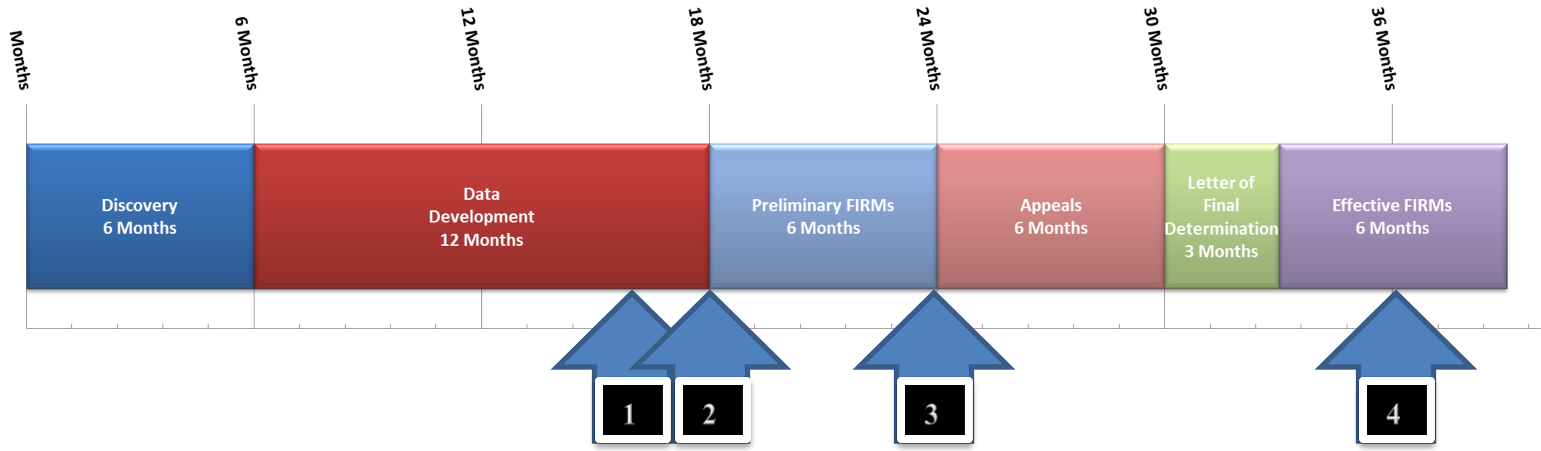
First consideration is the timing relative to the study status and the number of meetings to hold.

- It is the community/county's decision on timing depending on what level of review they would like to have occurred prior to sharing results (e.g., draft, during FEMA review, approved, etc.). We recommend that the meetings are not held too early so that stakeholders don't forget about it. Typical timeframes include:

  1. *After community review of draft models and/or floodplain mapping* – this timeframe allows stakeholders to get on board early in the process and know about the results. Messaging about draft data is needed because results can still change. It is difficult to explain to homeowners if results keep changing, especially if homeowners are later added to a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) but were not in the initial draft version.
  2. *After FEMA review* – this is likely the preferable timeframe if the study's timing permits. All reviews (e.g., internal, community, State, FEMA) should be completed by this time and any future changes should originate from the formal appeal period. However, there is still some time to make small revisions if they are needed before issuing the preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs).
  3. *After preliminary FIRM release* – this is the latest that initial stakeholder meetings are recommended as it is close to the appeal period, which will be the last chance to change the FIRMs other than through a Letter of Map Change (LOMC). Changes are not as easy to make and have to be submitted as a formal appeal/comment with technical data.
  4. *After appeals, Letter of Final Determination (LFD), and/or effective FIRM release* – a meeting during this timeframe would be an opportunity to show the final results and let community members know that no other changes will occur. This is a good time to discuss insurance and the process for LOMCs.

- The number of meetings depends on the community dynamics and on how engaged stakeholders want to be. There is a balance between getting enough information out, and creating meeting fatigue. Holding at least one of the meetings above is strongly recommended, but up to all four meetings could be held. These could be supplemented with other notifications such as website updates, mailings, newsletters, social media, etc.

Suggested Public Meeting Times During the FIRM Process



Meeting Notification

The manner for meeting notification needs to be considered and depends on the targeted audience. A combination of multiple approaches is typically required to get a good audience. Meeting notification is typically conducted by communities so that local stakeholders continue to coordinate with their local liaisons. Meeting notification methods include, but are not limited to:

- *Community website(s)* – the notice should include a map of the area being remapped. Some communities have added draft floodplains via an interactive map to their website for viewing, and sometimes even enabled stakeholders to submit comments via the website. After effective release, the data will be shown on FEMA's National Flood Hazard layer, so it can be taken off of the community site.
- *Mailings* – notification mailings can go to everyone in the community in combination with a utility bill or something similar. However, to obtain the correct audience and control costs, we recommend sending notifications only to property owners whose parcels reside within a buffer of the remapped floodplain. This will limit meeting attendees to people that could potentially see an impact.
- *Door-to-door contact, door hangers, and/or letters* – this method is typically only feasible in smaller communities, but does provide personal contact.
- *Media/social media release* – this method reaches a wide audience and can also be used for general study information. It is not meant to provide all information, but should refer people to a project or community website where they can view the study results.
- *Email distribution* – if email addresses are known for stakeholders, information can be sent by email. It is beneficial to provide the capability to sign up for emails about the project somewhere such as the community website. The email list can also be updated with new emails from meeting attendees.

Meeting size and space

- The meeting size should be kept small so that individual conversations are possible. This usually means having a couple of meetings in key locations depending on the size of the restudied area.
- The meeting location should be central and able to accommodate the number of expected people. Typical venues include libraries, community centers, churches, government buildings, fire houses, etc.

Meeting materials/format

The following materials are recommended to include:

- *Format* – most meetings begin with a brief presentation to overview the study purpose and process, set meeting expectations, and answer frequently asked questions. A presentation allows everyone to have a foundational understanding at the beginning. The presentation is typically followed by an open-house format where attendees can view maps with proposed flooding and talk with community and project staff that are present.
- *Staff attendees* – staffing should be discussed and may change depending on the timing of the meeting relative to the study and review process. For example, a meeting after appeals should probably include insurance specialists instead of technical experts. The number of attendees will depend on the number of expected stakeholders to facilitate the breakout discussions.
- *Presentation* – CWCB has a template presentation that has been successfully used at other venues and it includes messaging for public attendees. Typically it is asked that a community representative start the meeting, after which it can be turned over to CWCB and/or their consultant. The presentation can be modified as necessary depending on the audience and meeting timeframe. CWCB has previously offered support and conducted portions of the presentation.
- *Sign in sheet* – if email addresses are recorded, additional correspondence can be sent out after the meeting.
- *Large-size printed maps* – these are beneficial to have laid out at various stations or tables in the room so that location-specific breakout discussions can be held. Flood risk review maps have been used. However, sometimes another format is better for stakeholder conversations (e.g., areas where FIRM maps cut across a flooding source in a populated area). These paper maps can also be marked up with comments.
- *Informational handouts* – CWCB has prepared two handouts typically used at public meetings including an overview of CHAMP and general NFIP questions. Communities are encouraged to bring other handouts, especially if there are some already developed. The two CWCB handouts are available for download on the project website at:
  - http://www.coloradohazardmapping.com/File/d1b2495c-04b4-4d24-8476-17223d1b462e
  - http://www.coloradohazardmapping.com/File/7da1f313-9396-4763-a980-d6707fe86e61
- *Website* – It is helpful to remind the audience of websites with additional information, such as a community site and the project website (www.coloradohazardmapping.com).
- *Computers* – typically it helps facilitate breakout discussions to have a couple of people with laptops that contain the new mapping data and models. Many attendees want to see contours, zoom in on houses, and see actual model results.
- *Comment sheets* – these ought to include homeowner contact information and document the content of their comment for consideration by the mapping partner.

Meeting follow up

Depending on the timing of the presentation some additional follow up may be necessary. These could include:

- Responding to homeowner comments
- Giving updates on future changes to the maps or project schedule
- Staying informed on insurance/Community Rating System (CRS) changes

- Alerting stakeholders to regulatory milestones
- Providing additional resources or fact sheets

Other considerations

- Talk with CWCB and FEMA if you have additional needs, ideas, or considerations. They may have additional resources available if needed.
- Talk with other communities/agencies that have conducted similar meetings and find out what worked and what did not.
- Newspaper notices and council/commission meetings are also encouraged so that those other than homeowners are informed of the project.