Lower Fraser Floodplains Dialogue for Regional Action

REPORTING BACK: COASTAL RIVER–TIDAL GATHERING – MARCH 12 2024

This report was prepared by the Lower Fraser Floodplains Coalition. Support for the March 12 gathering was provided by Erica Crawford at Heronbridge Consulting and a team of facilitators. Funding for the gathering was provided by Indigenous Services Canada – Critical Infrastructure Branch and Emergency Management Assistance Program, BC Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Resilience, and Real Estate Foundation of BC. Metro Vancouver provided the Annacis Research and Event Centre gathering space Report design by Hanna Araza, West Coast Environmental Law.

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Executive Summary

On March 12, 2024, 61 representatives from 14 local governments and three First Nations, from Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw to Semiahmoo First Nation to Màthexwi, gathered for the *Lower Fraser Floodplains Dialogue for Regional Action: Coastal River-Tidal Gathering*. Staff from the BC Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship (WLRS) also attended. A similar gathering on March 13, 2024 brought together the Mid and Up River subregions. Dialogue focussed on critical infrastructure, local essential services and the interconnectedness across neighbouring communities.

Councillor Joanne Charles of Semiahmoo First Nation opened the day with drumming and a song. Councillor Charles shared that First Nations communities in the region have a very long history of managing flood risks, and emphasized their deep connection to territory, and the importance of careful management and monitoring of human impacts on land and water.

Jerry Dobrovolny, Metro Vancouver Commissioner and Chief Administrative Officer spoke about Metro Vancouver's commitment to inclusion, collaboration, and reconciliation, the importance of a holistic and shared vision for the region, and planning and working together for resilience. ***Dylan Kruger, Delta Councillor and Chair of Metro Vancouver's Flood Resiliency Committee*** described the committee's goals to coordinate flood planning work, and the alignment with Metro 2050, which directs urban growth away from flood risk areas, and supports action to safeguard infrastructure and communities, nature-based flood management, and regional risk assessment. He emphasized the importance of collaboration with First Nations.

CONTEXT

Gillian Fuss, Emergency Planning Secretariat (EPS) Manager, and ***Laura Plante, Executive Director, Flood Resilience at BC-WLRS*** provided a brief overview of regional floodplains management efforts and alignment with provincial and federal initiatives. These include the National Adaptation Strategy, the new BC Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness and emergency management legislation, the BC Flood Strategy, and the recommendations of the final Pathways to Action report from the 2014-2023 Lower Mainland Flood Management Strategy process.

SHOWCASING A LOCAL INITIATIVE

Matt Osler, Senior Project Engineer, City of Surrey, and ***Councillor Charles, Semiahmoo First Nation***, shared experience from The Living Dike Project in Boundary Bay. This is a collaborative, nature-based flood management project, being carried out by City of Surrey, Semiahmoo First Nation and City of Delta, that grew out Surrey's Coastal Flood Adaptation Strategy and community dialogue to identify priorities and adaptation options. Funded primarily by Infrastructure Canada, Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund, the project has three pilots that investigate how to plant and add sediment to the existing (and ecologically valuable) salt marsh so that it can persist as sea level rises, and also continue to buffer coast and existing dikes from storm surge and increased flood risk. Councillor Charles spoke about the benefits of early consultation and collaboration on projects, and fostering connections. Initiatives from Natural Resources Canada and National Research Council are helping to provide

analysis that has relevance for broader issues about ecosystem health and community wellbeing, both of which are significant for Semiahmoo First Nation.

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Stephanie Chang, Professor, UBC School of Community and Regional Planning, expert on disaster mitigation/resilience, defined critical infrastructure (CI) as essential, interconnected systems with long service lives. Disruption to any of these systems leads to cascading impacts across the others. An example was in November 2021 when the Highway 1 corridor was blocked. Dr. Chang noted the need for CI risk assessments in our region, referencing work done in other major cities (e.g. San Francisco). She concluded by emphasizing the business case for CI resilience, with $1 of investment in CI protection resulting in $6 of benefits.

Tamsin Lyle, Principal Engineer at Ebbwater Consulting, explained that risk assessment is a systematic evaluation of hazards and their consequences, based on our regional priorities. The Lower Fraser Floodplains Coalition (LFFC), working with EPS, is building a holistic model for risk assessment that adds sometimes-neglected considerations of community well-being, cultural stewardship, food sustainability, and long-term sustainability across generations.

DIALOGUES

Current Initiatives & Opportunities: Examples of collaboration and nature-based projects were shared. LFFC is creating a map, working with communities, staff, and knowledge holders, to appropriately share this information across communities.

Critical Infrastructure in Our Region: Guests identified critical infrastructure systems, and known vulnerabilities and interconnections. Several themes emerged around investigating and managing our connectedness, so that it becomes a strength instead of a source of vulnerability.

Working at the Right Scale: Guests reflected on how to work together. What's needed: (1) clear mandates from leadership; (2) having the right people at the table at the right time, e.g. need the critical infrastructure owners to talk about CI; (3) capacity funding for full First Nations participation; and (4) Engagement and concrete support from the Province, including funding and policy direction.

Semiahmoo First Nation Chief Harley Chappell gave a closing for the gathering. He emphasized the benefits of working together respectfully, and reminded everyone to think of the future generations who would be inheriting the results of the decisions made now.

NEXT STEPS

Based on the needs, priorities and opportunities discussed during the dialogues, LFFC has developed a work plan that includes: (1) Convening gatherings focused on leadership for relationship building and developing collective mandates that address priorities for communities; (2) Convening sessions with staff and infrastructure owners/operators and stakeholders to have more detailed dialogue about understanding risk and risk reduction opportunities, and the ways that communities are connected and interdependent; and (3) Supporting First Nations and local governments in developing fundable actions, including nature-based approaches, to reduce flood risk and build resilience.

Introduction

On March 12, 2024, representatives from 14 local government entities and three First Nations gathered for the Lower Fraser Floodplains Dialogue for Regional Action: Coastal River-Tidal Gathering. This gathering, held at the Annacis Event & Research Centre, aimed to bring together elected and hereditary representatives and staff from Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw to Semiahmoo First Nation to Màthexwi.[1] In total, 61 people were in attendance, including representatives from the BC Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship (WLRS). A similar gathering on March 13, 2024 brought together the Mid and Up River subregions. The focus of these gatherings was to initiate dialogue about critical infrastructure, local essential services and the interconnections across neighbouring communities. Objectives included enhancing understanding, fostering relationships among neighbours, and garnering feedback on the proposed subregional approach. This report summarizes the key discussions and insights shared during the event, preparing the foundation for informed decision-making and collaborative work moving forward.

WELCOMING & OPENING REMARKS

Councillor Joanne Charles of Semiahmoo First Nation opened the day with drumming and a song so that guests could come together in a good way. In her remarks, Councillor Charles reminded guests that before settlers arrived, First Nations communities faced flood risks, and carefully managed them. For example, they travelled seasonally around their territories and moved away from the water's edge when flood risk was greater. Councillor Charles noted the deep significance of territory to Semiahmoo and other First Nations, and the importance of careful management and monitoring of human impacts on land and water.

> **"Before settlers arrived, First Nations communities managed their activities so they were not exposed to floods…communities travelled seasonally around their territories and were away from the water's edge when flood risk was greater."**
>
> ***Councillor Joanne Charles, Semiahmoo First Nation***

Councillor Charles also shared a story about a very significant flood event in Semiahmoo history from many, many generations ago. This story helps explain how Semiahmoo and their First Nations relatives came to be living in communities in Boundary Bay and down the coast into what is now known as Washington. It also has lessons about decision-making and long-term community resilience. We are grateful to Councillor Charles for sharing this story and some of the wise teachings it carries, and respect its relevance for the ongoing work to build resilience in all of our communities across the region.

Dylan Kruger, Delta Councillor and Chair of Metro Vancouver's Flood Resiliency Committee

Jerry Dobrovolny, Commissioner and Chief Administrative Officer of Metro Vancouver began by acknowledging the First Nations that have used the Fraser River since time immemorial. Dobrovolny emphasized Metro Vancouver's commitment to inclusion, collaboration, and reconciliation, highlighting the importance of a holistic and shared vision for the area. He underscored Metro Vancouver's role as an essential service provider that sustains the region, and that working together is necessary for successful, resilient outcomes. Dobrovolny concluded with the reminder that flooding is a concern for us all, so planning together is very important.

"Resilience — physical, social, and economic — is a key focus for us, as is climate action.."

Jerry Dobrovolny, Commissioner and Chief Administrative Officer of Metro Vancouver

Dylan Kruger, Delta Councillor and Chair of Metro Vancouver's Flood Resiliency Committee focused on flood planning work happening at Metro Vancouver. Following the November 2021 atmospheric river, they formed the Flood Resiliency Committee to coordinate regional planning efforts. In the regional growth strategy, Metro 50, new policies direct urban growth away from flood risk areas, updated emergency management plans safeguard infrastructure and communities, nature-based flood management solutions are being pursued, and a comprehensive regional climate risk and vulnerability assessment will take place. Kruger emphasized the importance of collaboration across First Nation and local government jurisdictions.

"Flood waters don't care about jurisdictional boundaries so we need to work together to tackle this threat."

Dylan Kruger, Delta Councillor and Chair of Metro Vancouver's Flood Resiliency Committee

1 *The local government equivalent is Squamish to White Rock to Mission.*

Context Setting

Gillian Fuss, Emergency Planning Secretariat (EPS) Manager, and ***Laura Plante, the Executive Director of Flood Resilience at WLRS*** provided a brief overview of the regional flood landscape. EPS and the Lower Fraser Floodplains Coalition (LFFC) have been convening First Nations and local governments in this region to discuss floodplain management and resilience since 2022. These efforts have been complemented by signals from both provincial and federal governments on the importance of climate change and emergency planning: the federal National Adaptation Strategy, the creation of a Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness in BC, and the release of the BC Flood Strategy. At a local level, there is inspiring on-the-ground work being undertaken by both municipalities and First Nations.

EMERGENCY PLANNING SECRETARIAT & HÍLEKW SQ'EQ'Ó

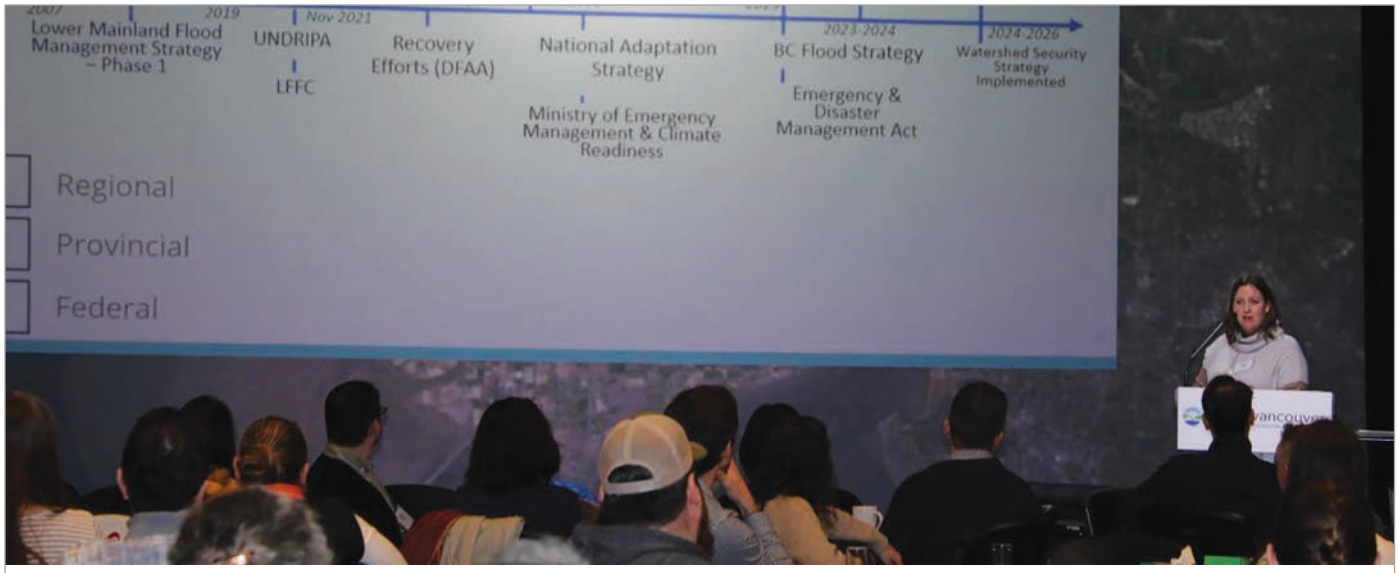
The creation of the EPS, and Hílekw Sq'eq'ó, the Disaster Resilience Regional Action Plan were, in part, a result of gaps in the work of the Lower Mainland Flood Management Strategy (LMFMS), 2014-2023. The LMFMS did not properly include First Nations and failed to propose solutions to outdated diking infrastructure that is too cost prohibitive to replace. To address such oversights, EPS was created to support First Nations in all aspects of emergency management and advocate for the full realization of the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. With Hílekw Sq'eq'o, EPS seeks to develop a Mainland Coast Salish emergency plan for all hazards and climate change. Priorities within Hílekw Sq'eq'ó include actions that align with the Sendai Framework, strengthen tactical capacity, and promote cultural competency.

LOWER FRASER FLOODPLAINS COALITION

The Lower Fraser Floodplains Coalition (LFFC) works with EPS to convene actors in the Lower Fraser to discuss and strategize on flood resilience.

The LFFC's work is grounded in 5 principles: 1) understand disaster risk and adapt to climate change; 2) advance reconciliation; 3) salmon and their freshwater and coastal ecosystems are thriving; 4) sustainable economies and resilient communities; and 5) everyone is part of the solution.

In June 2023, the LFFC hosted a second regional forum, bringing together all subregions of the Lower Fraser. At that time, we heard that critical infrastructure could be a good starting place for a regional strategy, as most people can agree that critical infrastructure services are essential during an emergency to protect lives and livelihoods. Guests at the regional forum also identified that it would be useful to have more in-depth discussions at a subregional level, so this gathering on March 12, 2024, brought together guests from two subregions (or hubs) of the Lower Fraser: Coastal and River Tidal.



Gillian Fuss, Emergency Planning Secretariat (EPS) Manager, providing a brief overview of the regional flood landscape

LFFC Members: Emergency Planning Secretariat (First Nations-led); UBC Coastal Adaptation Lab, School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture; West Coast Environmental Law; Ebbwater Consulting; Sto:lo Tribal Council; Watershed Watch Salmon Society; Resilient Waters Project; and Kerr Wood Leidal.

BC FLOOD STRATEGY

The BC Flood Strategy was co-developed with First Nations across the province through a "sharing-the-pen" process. With a vision of becoming leaders in innovative flood risk management, the strategy emphasizes the importance of an all-of-society approach, integrated, place-based planning, and bridging the gaps between various strategies at the regional level. Priority actions, in alignment with the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, include understanding flood risk, enhancing flood governance across multiple levels of authority, improving preparedness, response, and recovery efforts, and investing in flood resilience with a desire for stable, multi-year funding. The next phase of the strategy is implementation planning, in collaboration with rights- and stakeholders across the province, to outline a pathway forward for the next 10 years. The BC Flood Strategy was released on March 21, 2024.

Councillor Joanne Charles, Semiahmoo First Nation, presenting on the Living Dike Project

Subregional Initiative Showcase

A LIVING DIKE – NATURE-BASED COLLABORATION

The Living Dike Project, discussed by ***Matt Osler, Senior Project Engineer from the City of Surrey*** and ***Councillor Charles from Semiahmoo First Nation***, is a collaborative effort between the City of Surrey, Semiahmoo First Nation, and the City of Delta. Community support for this initiative grew out of the city of Surrey Coastal Flood Adaptation Strategy, which included community engagement to identify key priorities and then exploring and refining adaptation options, which were developed into a comprehensive plan. This plan is now being implemented over the period from 2019 to 2027.

The Living Dike Project is one of the implementation projects. It is funded primarily by Infrastructure Canada through the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF), and involves two pilot projects in Boundary Bay. These pilots investigate how the existing salt marsh habitat can be maintained and increased in a way that allows it to persist as sea level rises, so that its ecosystem will continue to be healthy and the marsh will continue to buffer the coast and the existing dikes from storm surge and increased flood risk. The approach involves gently increasing elevations in the marsh with thin layers of sediment and supporting marsh plant growth with plantings. It's intended that the two pilot projects will provide learning and feedback to support future expansion of the initiative in Boundary Bay. Over time, these projects will blend more seamlessly into their surroundings. More information is available on the City of Surrey website at www.surrey.ca/MudBay.

Councillor Charles also provided insight on the extensive planning and design process that has led to the pilot projects. She spoke about the deeper history of this part of Semiahmoo territory, and how the Fraser River once drained into Boundary Bay before shifting to its present course. She highlighted the use of bags of oyster shells as one of the edge treatments protecting new plantings in the pilot projects, and explained that this echoes the earlier practices of shell middens in coastal areas and the role this played in protecting the shoreline. She also highlighted the benefits of early consultation and collaboration on projects, with opportunities to make connections to gather and share data from a variety of organizations, such as Natural Resources Canada and the National Research Council, that have relevance for broader issues about ecosystem health and community wellbeing that are significant for the Nation.

Tamsin Lyle, Principal Engineer at Ebbwater Consulting, presenting on risks and risk assessment

Critical Infrastructure

Stephanie Chang, a respected UBC Professor in the field of disaster mitigation/resilience and emergencies, and ***Tamsin Lyle, Principal Engineer from Ebbwater Consulting***, specializing in flood management, presented on Critical Infrastructure and risk to frame the next round of dialogue at the gathering. Stephanie Chang offered a method for identifying critical infrastructure (CI) in the region, focusing on important characteristics rather than standardized definitions. These characteristics include: infrastructure that provides essential services, has an extensive network across the geographic region, is interconnected to other systems, and often has a long-service life.

Next, Dr. Chang explained why critical infrastructure is vitally important to protect by highlighting the vulnerabilities and cascading impacts when CI is damaged. For example, during Hurricane Sandy flooding resulted in citywide power outages, thus impacting water and health care systems as New York residents lost access to clean water and operational hospitals. In the Lower Fraser, critical infrastructure whose failure can lead to cascading impacts is at risk of flooding, particularly the Highway 1 corridor. Dr. Chang shared examples of risk assessments for CI prepared for large metropolitan areas like San Francisco that have a high degree of interconnectedness, complexity and geographical challenges like the Lower Fraser. This type of work has not been done in our region, but it could be. Dr. Chang concluded her presentation by emphasizing the business case for protecting CI. In the

U.S.A., cost benefit analysis has shown that every $1 of investment towards CI protection resulted in $6 of benefits, showing significant returns on investment.

Tamsin Lyle, Principal Engineer at Ebbwater Consulting, provided additional information on risks and risk assessment. Tamsin provided 3 key messages:

- Defining risk involves assessing hazard, exposure, and vulnerability. Vulnerability refers to the likelihood of individuals being threatened by the hazard and level of exposure. Vulnerability can change over time and can be mitigated.
- Risk assessment is a systematic evaluation of hazards and their consequences, accounting for what we, as a region, determine to be priorities. The Lower Fraser Floodplains Coalition (LFFC) is building the foundation for a holistic model for risk assessment that incorporates a range of risk receptors, by engaging in region-specific discussions to identify and address community concerns.
    - This approach moves beyond the model more typically used to consider a range of place-based factors such as community well-being, cultural stewardship, food sustainability, and long-term sustainability across generations.
- In 2023, Ebbwater Consulting produced a draft map to showcase the critical infrastructure (using a simplified definition), that is exposed to Fraser River flooding. This map can be used as a base for further work related to risk assessment and CI prioritization.

Supporting a place-based flood risk assessment: *Diagram draft prepared for EPS, October 2023. Ebbwater Consulting Inc.*

Dialogue 1: Current Initiatives, Opportunities & Next Steps

Guests at the Coasta River-Tidal gathering shared a number of great examples of collaborative and nature-based work that is already underway and helping to build resilience in the region. LFFC (the organizing team for this gathering) has carefully collected that information and will be working in future to develop an accessible map, but first will work with communities, staff and knowledge holders to make sure that information is shared appropriately and with proper permissions.

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES IN ACTION: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Guests spoke about their experiences and knowledge about flood risk management to illustrate some of the problems that currently exist in the Coastal and River Tidal subregions.

In particular, it was shared that a lack of coordination (planning and resources) and information sharing across authorities and sometimes also within federal and provincial governments limit risk reduction options. Some examples:

- Municipalities along the same waterway systems take different approaches, instead of more holistic watershed approaches that could provide benefits in reducing flood risk and in protecting stream flows in summer;

- In some cases railway operators, MOTI and other critical infrastructure owners are challenging to work with. Their approaches to climate change adaptation and managing risk aren't always clear, creating uncertainty, but their approaches to upgrades and maintenance have important consequences for communities;
- Unclear responsibilities for different activities (e.g. dredging) or in response to risk assessments lead to delays and inaction;
- The number of different risks facing small First Nations governments and local governments can make it very difficult to assemble the knowledge and resources needed to take action on their own, especially to look at options that might be seen as innovative.

Working together, whether directly or in sharing information and good practices can (or could) yield positive results:

- Semiahmoo First Nation is leading a new tool implementation for EOCs (and mobile option for communities without EOCs) that can be used by other First Nations communities;
- First Nations that have good working relationships with local governments can benefit from information sharing and in some cases increased capacity;
- The Province could take a bigger role in helping to coordinate authorities at the sub-regional and regional scales;
- The Living Dike work in Boundary Bay has benefitted from engagement with technical experts from Natural Resources Canada, the National Research Council, and academic institutions.

Nature-based approaches to managing flood risk are attractive and interesting, but require more additional real-world examples and pilot projects to show how they can work in this region as a real alternative to more conventional approaches. From a First Nations perspective, nature-based approaches could play a role in protecting and revitalizing First Nations food systems.

Flood risk reduction measures often require funding that is well beyond the standard operating budgets of First Nations communities and local governments, but the reliability and predictability of capital funding from provincial and federal governments is a perpetual question. Guests expressed specific concerns about the future of the federal Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund and the impacts of upcoming federal and provincial elections.

Dialogue 2: Exploring Critical Infrastructure in the Coastal River-Tidal Subregions

Guests identified a number of critical infrastructure systems, as well as the need to address vulnerabilities to those systems, and also noted that there are important ways that those systems are interconnected with each other. This interconnectivity needs further investigation to understand how to reduce risks for the region. November 2021 provided some important lessons about how flooding affects critical infrastructure systems.

The dialogue about critical infrastructure and essential services highlighted that there are different scales to consider in looking at flood risk and preparedness: regional, local, neighbourhood and household. Overall, there was a shared understanding about how connected we are as a region, both within the coastal/river tidal areas, and more broadly across the Lower Fraser. Several themes emerged around investigating and managing our connectedness, so that it becomes a strength instead of a source of vulnerability:

1. Regional and sub-regional coordination and collaboration is a high priority and needs to be fostered. For example:

- More relationship building and dialogue is needed, particularly between municipalities and First Nations;
- Emergency response planning needs sub-regional and regional coordination;

- Critical infrastructure owners need to be part of the dialogue (e.g. BC Hydro, Fortis);
- Communications planning and protocols for emergency response need to be in place; and
- Coordination and collaboration can draw attention to the need for more funding and how it can be put to good use.

2. The region/sub-region needs a better, and shared understanding of the risks faced from flood events.

- Information/data (including information about critical infrastructure) needs to be shareable and shared across jurisdictions;
- Need a comprehensive regional risk assessment that includes critical infrastructure;
- More dialogues and table-top exercises would be helpful; and
- Need an understanding of necessary short-term measures (address risks of specific dike/dam failures) and longer-term options, such as diking alternatives and community planning.

3. Emergency response planning needs specific attention:

- Need sub-regional emergency response and communications protocols (coordinating across municipalities and First Nations);
- Consider how to deploy emergency staff if an emergency occurs at a time when employees are in another jurisdiction,
- Warning systems need improvement; and
- Need better community preparedness and 'emergency literacy' down to the household level to increase overall resilience;
- More training for staff and community members; opportunities for training through schools and social organizations; and
- More attention to mobility and access. Some locations are vulnerable to having access/evacuation routes cut off.

4. Some known or suspected areas of vulnerability were also identified:

- Water and wastewater systems (e.g. lift stations that need reliable back-up power, contamination issues with overflows need to be investigated, water reservoirs);
- Flood protection infrastructure (dikes, pumping stations, stormwater drainage, dams), need to address weaknesses and also look at diking and piping alternatives (short term flood mitigation measures and long term community planning);
- Electrical power (substations, towers);
- River crossings - need redundancy, so that if one fails there are alternatives;
- Roads and railways, need to understand critical transportation needs and ways to meet them;
- Healthcare - including access to hospitals and other aspects of healthcare, like pharmacies, and community health supports;
- Archaeological sites, on the coastal foreshore and inland; and
- Food distribution (noted as a slightly less immediate concern, but one that could quickly become more acute in the days following an event).


TABLE 3

Dialogue 3: Working at the Right Scale

In the first and second rounds of dialogue guests identified how greater collaboration could and does help reduce flood risks and enhance resilience, and also explored some of the ways that communities are currently exposed to risk because the risks to critical infrastructure and essential services are not understood or managed in a coordinated way. In this final round they were asked to reflect on *how* to work together and build connectedness in flood risk governance.

These are some of the observations that were shared:

- For coordination and collaboration across jurisdictions to be effective, there should be a mandate from leadership/decision makers with related direction and funding to staff. This likely means some level of direct participation by leadership/decisionmakers to build that mandate and a sense of shared responsibility;
- Developing shared responsibilities and mutual understanding could be a pathway that leads to more consensus around priorities;
- It's important to have the right people at the table at the right time. If the issue is critical infrastructure, we need to have BC Hydro, MOTI, telecommunications, railways, pipeline owners, etc. at the table;
- There were questions about other agencies and organizations, and possible roles in different aspects of sub-regional and regional discussions and planning: DFO, emergency preparedness and response staff, asset managers; representatives from agriculture, developers, Fraser Basin Council, housing advocates, etc.;
- Funding needs to be allocated for First Nations to restore capacity so that coordination and collaboration is viable from their perspective.

There were some specific points made about the respective roles of provincial and federal governments:

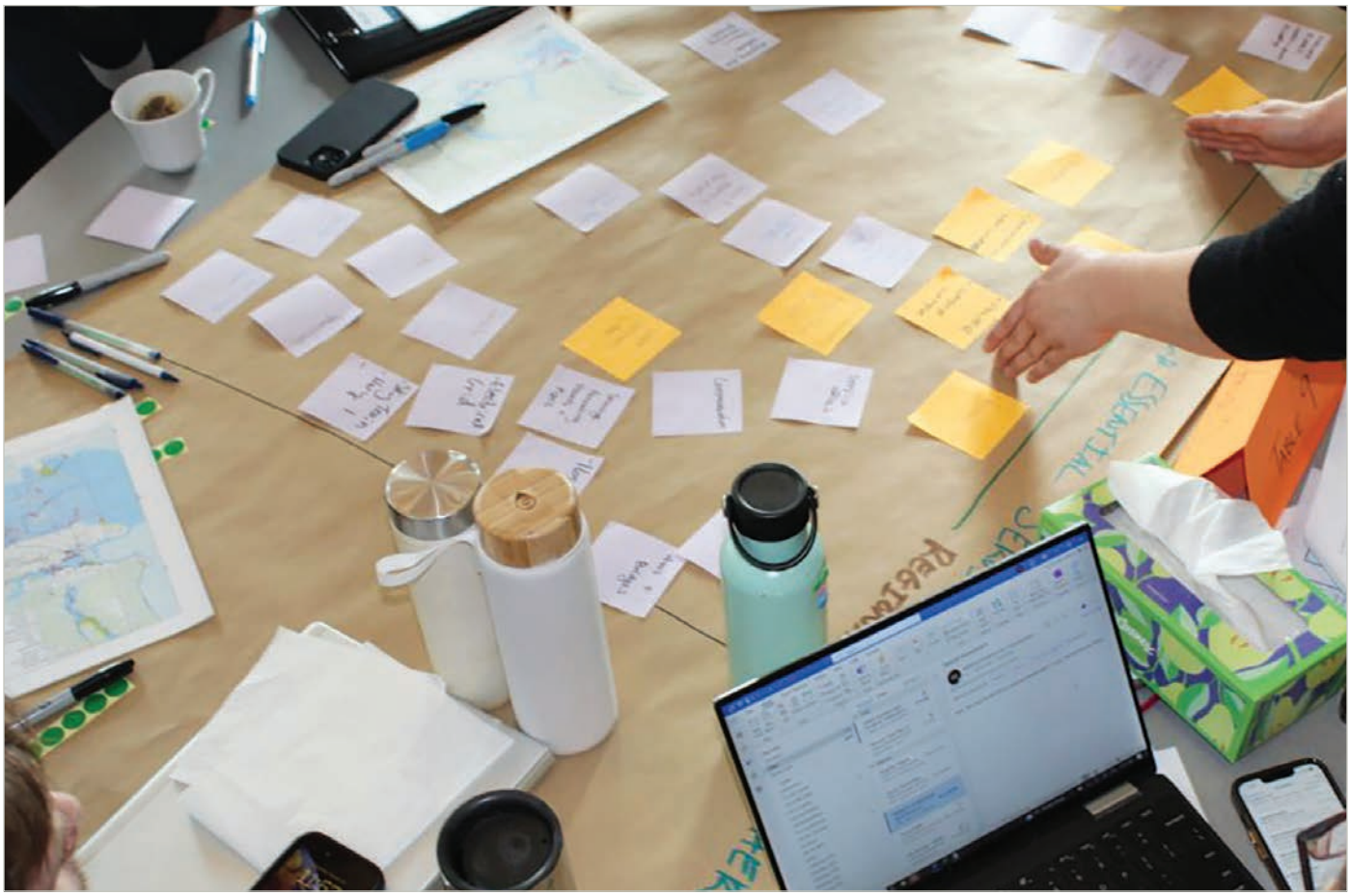
- The Province needs to show up and lend support to sub-regional and regional coordination, and to proceed with concrete steps and actions to implement the BC Flood Strategy (who's responsible for implementation? How will it be funded?);
- The Province also needs to improve its internal coordination of flood-related matters, including funding and permitting. As well, the Flood Strategy and the EDMA risk assessments need to be coordinated, and there should logically be regional collaboration on risk assessment;
- Funding could be aligned with the five principles, and different funding models could be explored.

ALLOCATING ACTIVITIES TO THE RIGHT SCALE

- Questions about 'right-sizing' the work that needs to be done. How much scenario planning could possibly be done at smaller scales?
- Could existing risk assessment information be usefully aggregated?
- Communication and relationships can be maintained more easily at a smaller, sub-regional scale. Neighbouring communities talking has led to better, more focussed conversations;
- Some stakeholders and groups will fit better into sub-regional conversations.
- Regional dialogue and process is still necessary, to avoid redundancies and to bring together upriver and downriver considerations;
- Having a regional process can also streamline and give weight to conversations with the Province and the federal government. Consider an appropriate geographic scale for an integrated flood management plan in the region.

CLOSING OF THE MARCH 12, 2024 GATHERING

Semiahmoo First Nation Chief Harley Chappell gave a closing for the gathering. He emphasized the benefits of working together respectfully, and reminded everyone to think of the future generations who would be inheriting the results of the decisions made now.



Next Steps

Based on the results of the dialogue at the March 12 gathering, these are steps that LFFC will support to advance shared understanding of flood risk and to assist First Nations and local governments to develop fundable actions and projects in accordance with their own priorities and objectives.

In particular, LFFC will work to support continued opportunities for First Nations and local governments to engage at the sub-regional level (for both leadership and staff), securing provincial and federal participation, as appropriate, including:

- Convening gatherings focused on leadership for relationship building and developing collective mandates that address priorities for communities;
- Convening sessions with First Nations, local governments, infrastructure owners/operators and other stakeholders to have more detailed dialogue about understanding risk and risk reduction opportunities, and the ways that communities are connected and interdependent;
- Supporting First Nations and local governments in developing fundable actions, including nature-based approaches, to reduce flood risk and build resilience.

The Lower Fraser Floodplains Coalition is a group of BC-based organizations and experts with the shared goal of helping BC's upcoming flood recovery and management efforts achieve the best possible outcomes.