

## ***II. PLANNING PROCESS DESCRIPTION***

## **II PLANNING PROCESS DESCRIPTION**

### **A. DIRECTION OF PROFESSIONAL PLANNER**

The former Charleston County Administrator, Mr. Mack Canterbury, a Professional Planner, provided direction and guidance regarding the planning process utilized in the production of this plan since its initial development until his retirement in 2008. The planning process used in the initial production of the plan continues to be utilized through the plan revision process. Mr. Carl Simmons, Building Inspection Services Department Director, now oversees the planning process.

### **B. PRE-PLANNING REQUEST FOR INPUT FROM INTERESTED PARTIES**

The questionnaire included as Attachment II-A to this section, or a slightly modified version for non-governmental entities, was distributed by mail to eighty (80) organizations or individuals with a request for their input at the beginning of the planning process. The recipients of the questionnaire via mail were considered to be knowledgeable regarding hazards experienced in the Charleston Region and the potential vulnerabilities of the Region to these hazards. Completing a questionnaire was considered to be one form of participation in the planning process. Alternate means of participation in the planning process include, but are not limited to, attendance at committee meetings, or having one or more representatives on a committee that develops or provides input into the plan, since multiple opportunities are provided for committee members to provide input into the plan, even if they are unable to attend committee meetings due to schedule conflicts. This questionnaire asked the respondents to assess the hazards indigenous to the Charleston Region, assess the nature of the problem these hazards create, rate/provide potential goals for the plan, rate/provide possible activities for the plan to address, and rate/provide criteria for prioritizing projects under the plan. The questionnaire also asked the respondents to provide copies of existing hazard-related mitigation plans, if available. A list of the mail recipients of the questionnaire is provided as Attachment II-B to this section.

Responses were received from forty-one (41) of the recipients of the mail questionnaire (51.3%). Two of these respondents did not complete the questionnaire but responded with a letter or specific information. Two of the responses were received too late to be included in the analyses of the questionnaire included in this plan. The highest response rate (%) was from the local jurisdictions (73.3%, n = 12), followed by Charleston County Departments Heads/Administrators (61.5%, n = 8), Charleston Regional Agencies (50%, however, only 2 questionnaires were initially mailed for this category; n = 1), State agencies (41.9%, n = 14), Federal agencies (33.3%, n = 3), and private sector organizations (30%, n = 2). For the purpose of the data analyses provided throughout this plan, the responding regional agency (the Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission) was grouped with the Charleston County Department Heads/Administrators. Responses received but not included in the data analysis were considered during deliberations at the planning committee meetings.

In addition to those questionnaires mailed to prospective respondents, questionnaires were discussed at "Project Impact" presentations to community professional organizations/ advisory groups (e.g. Master Plumber's Association, Earthquake Advisory Committee, Construction Specifications Institute, Charleston Chapter of the American Institute of Architects), and those interested in completing questionnaires were asked to do so and return the questionnaires as quickly as possible. Questionnaires were also hand delivered to several contractors/business owners with a request for their input. No responses were received in time from these requests for the data analysis

included in this plan. Responses received that were not included in the data analysis were considered during deliberations at the planning committee meetings.

A second questionnaire for local government and special purpose district governments was distributed during 2004 to applicable committee members for the purpose of obtaining additional information on other plans adopted by the local government entities, anticipated future development trends, critical facilities planned to be constructed in the future, and anticipated population trends in 20 years. The information obtained through this questionnaire have been included in the applicable tables and text of this plan for the 2005 update to the plan. Questionnaire responses were received from the local government entities in Charleston County that had adopted this plan in or prior to 2004, or alternate means of obtaining the needed information were utilized.

The questionnaire originally used for the development of this plan was also modified slightly to indicate the addition of more hazards either indicated by FEMA as needing to be addressed in the plan or hazard events identified through the plan update processes as hazards potentially affecting the Charleston County Region. This modified questionnaire was distributed during 2006 to the members of the committees that update the plan and other stakeholders in the community with potential interest or input into the planning process. The analyzed results of this questionnaire were used as a part of the 2007-2008 plan update. The results of this questionnaire reflected a few changes, particularly regarding additional hazards added to the plan (rip currents, avian flu, tsunami, drought) and in the prioritization factors for projects. These changes are discussed in more detail in the applicable sections of this plan.

### **C. PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Based upon input received from the questionnaires, a planning committee was established to draft this plan. The members of this committee are listed in Attachment II-C to this section. The original composition of the committee included representatives from the local jurisdictions within Charleston County, State agencies, Federal agencies, Charleston County Departments, and the private sector. If a member of the committee was unable to attend a meeting, applicable drafts and/or information which was distributed/discussed at the planning committee meeting was mailed or hand delivered to the member so as to obtain any comments from the committee member as an alternative form of participation in the planning process. In this manner, comments from other agencies were obtained through the members of the committee. Minutes and/or meeting notes, copies of meeting handouts, and attendance rosters for committee meetings are maintained in the Charleston County Building Services Department. Appendix H to this plan provides lists of committee members in attendance at Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Project Committee meetings, and members of the Project Impact (“Disaster Resistant Communities”) committees, who also provide input into the planning process.

The governing bodies of the local jurisdictions represented on the planning committee were provided with a list of the members of the committee and a Project Impact organizational chart in order for these governing bodies to recognize the committee and approve the proposed organization for Project Impact. The Project Impact committees also routinely provide input into the plan as they discuss projects they recommend performing to make the community more resistant to disasters. A list of the governing bodies that have officially recognized the planning committee is included in Attachment II-D of this section. Copies of the governing body actions are available at the local jurisdiction offices, Charleston County Building Services, and are included in this plan in

## Section VII.

The planning committee initially met three times to discuss the hazard assessment, problem, goals, and possible activities addressed within this plan. The last meeting of the committee prior to the local governments initially adopting the plan occurred after the public hearings in order for the committee to incorporate the public comments into the draft plan prior to its consideration by the governing councils. The committee also meets at least annually to update the plan. This annual update process includes County staff making routine updates that include, but are not limited to, changes to committee membership to reflect personnel changes (Part II), additional hazard events that have occurred during the year (Part III), changes to building vulnerability based on revised building counts or valuations obtained from the Assessor's Office (Part IV), and government entities providing updates to applicable sections of the plan (drainage projects status (Part VI), repetitive flood loss properties (Part IV), changes to critical facilities (Part IV), and so forth). Project Impact committee members also provide input throughout the year as to activities to include on action plans (Parts VI and VII) for the coming year as they discuss projects they would recommend for hazard mitigation during their routine meetings throughout the year. Each signatory to the plan also develops an action plan for each year and provides a status report on the proposed activities in the previous year's action plan on an annual basis and provides their recommended revisions to any sections of the plan, as applicable. The committee members are also provided sample action plans and status reports each year as a part of the update process for them to provide input into these portions of the plan (Part VII). Changes are made to the goals section of the plan (Part V) on an as needed basis as determined by the multiple committees involved in the plan update process. The Executive Summary (Part I) is updated to reflect any needed changes based on the revisions made to the plan for that year, as applicable. The update process is an evaluation of the plan for any revisions needed. The criteria used for this update/evaluation are whether all hazards have been included, whether the plan meets the needs of the signatory governments, and whether the updates are in accordance with FEMA planning guidelines. The Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Project committee meets as a group on at least an annual basis to review the updates made to the plan, to suggest any further updates, and to approve the updates made to the plan for that year. Details as to the changes made to the plan are provided to the committee members in advance of the committee meeting (*see Appendix K for summary reports of revisions made to the plan from 2003-2008*) and a version of the plan posted on the web site for their viewing with all revisions made for that year color coded for easy identification. The committee also approves an annual report of plan changes for the Governing Councils/Commissions during this meeting.

With the passage of the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, additional "local government entities" were required to adopt approved hazard mitigation plans in order to remain eligible for specific types of federal post-event financial assistance. In 2003, these additional government entities were invited to join the committee that developed and updates the *Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan*, and by 2008 all of the local government entities in Charleston County had joined this hazard mitigation plan (with the College of Charleston and the Charleston County School District joining after the 2004 edition of the plan was approved by FEMA for Disaster Mitigation Act compliance), and none of the other government entities that were signatories to the plan had dropped out of the plan (*all local government entities in Charleston County are signatories to and participants in this plan.*). In addition, the Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments (BCD COG) was asked by the South Carolina Emergency Management Agency to develop a hazard mitigation plan for Berkeley and Dorchester Counties during 2003. The *Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan* was included by reference in this plan for the government entities within Charleston County. Representatives from Charleston County local governments also participated in planning committee meetings for the BCD COG plan.

## D. PUBLIC INPUT

Public input into the plan when it was originally developed was obtained through the use of the questionnaire previously described and through public meetings specifically designed to obtain public input into the plan. Members of the general public also served on the planning committee. Three public hearings were held to discuss the plan. One hearing was held East of the Cooper River for the residents of the Awendaw, the Isle of Palms, McClellanville, Mount Pleasant, Sullivan's Island, Christ's Church and other unincorporated areas of Charleston County East of the Cooper River, including the service areas of the Mt. Pleasant Water Works. Residents of Berkeley County of the City of Charleston were also provided an opportunity to discuss the plan at this meeting. Another public hearing was held in the southern and central portions of the County for the residents of Folly Beach, Hollywood, James Island, Johns Island, Kiawah Island, Meggett, Ravenel, Rockville, Seabrook Island, and unincorporated areas of Charleston County, including residents of the St. Paul's Fire District, St. John's Fire District, and the James Island Public Service District. The Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission main office is also located in the area where this public hearing was held, and their entire service area was covered between all of the public hearings. A third public hearing was held in North Charleston for residents of the City of Charleston, City of North Charleston (which includes portions of Dorchester County), Town of Lincolnville, and unincorporated Charleston County, including areas serviced by the St. Andrews Public Service District, the North Charleston Public Service District and Sewer District, and the Cooper River Parks and Playground Commission and the St. Andrews Parks and Playground Commission. The Commissions of Public Works provide water and sewer utility services throughout the Charleston County area, so these public hearings also provided opportunities for those living within their service area to comment on the plan. These locations were selected since the Charleston County satellite service centers are located in these regions of the County and the residents of any areas of the County are within a maximum of a 20-30 minute drive to at least one of these locations. Ample free parking was also available in the locations selected for the public hearings. Public input into the plan is also obtained on a routine basis through the Project Impact Disaster Resistant Communities committees as they determine projects to recommend, as each of these meetings are open to the public and advertised through the local media. The notices for the public meetings exceed Freedom of Information Act requirements, since they are sent to six local newspapers, including the *Post and Courier*, which is the newspaper with the largest general circulation in the Region. These notices are also sent to four local television stations and to three radio station groups, which include most of the local radio stations. Additional opportunities for public input were also available since, beginning in 2003, the plan was posted on the Charleston County internet site and an e-mail address for anyone interested in commenting on the plan was provided. The government entities that have internet sites within Charleston County also linked to the County internet site where the plan was posted for their residents to have direct access to the plan and the ability to provide comments or suggested revisions to the plan. In addition, the Project Impact Disaster Resistant Communities committees, which are comprised of representatives from multiple private, non-profit and public sector organizations, reviewed the *Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan* and provided comments on the plan and proposed revisions to the plan. Additional public hearings on the plan are also conducted on a five-year cycle to obtain further public comments on the plan, including any revisions that have been made or are proposed for the plan. A public hearing was conducted in late 2003 for the latest five-year cycle. This public hearing is being held in a strategic location readily accessible to the residents of Charleston County and is being advertised through the local media to make the local citizens aware of the meeting. Another

public hearing was held in the Summer, 2008 to obtain input from the public on the changes made to the plan during the 5-year update process. Public input into the continues as the Project Impact committee and Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Project Committee meetings are public meetings advertised as indicated above through the local media outlets. The version of the plan posted on the Charleston County internet site is also updated as revisions to the plan are done annually, for those who do not attend committee meetings or public hearings to have an opportunity to comment on the latest edition of the plan. (An e-mail address for comments is provided on the internet site.)

#### **E. LOCAL JURISDICTION ADOPTION**

The plan was adopted by the local government entities listed in Attachment II-D by the respective Governing Councils or Commissions for these entities. The local government entities were able to modify the plan to fit their individual needs if desired. The plan was also re-adopted by the participating “local governments” in the Charleston Region in 2004 as a part of the five-year cycle process.

#### **F. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The plan is intended to serve as the guiding document for prioritization of hazard mitigation projects undertaken within the Charleston Region. Actual project selection for any projects undertaken as “Project Impact” initiatives are carried out in accordance with this plan by six committees that correspond to the activity classifications of this plan (e.g. preventive activities, property protection activities, natural and beneficial function-related activities, emergency service-related activities, structural projects, and public information activities). As the plan is utilized in this capacity, suggested revisions are considered and incorporated where appropriate into the plan on an as needed basis. The Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Project Committee maintains the plan and makes any necessary revisions as may be required to continue receiving Community Rating System credit for the plan. A review of the plan occurs at least annually. A progress report on the plan is submitted to the governing councils of the adopting jurisdictions at least annually. The local media are notified of the availability of the latest edition of the plan and progress reports on an annual basis. Every five years, public hearings on the plan, including its amendments, are conducted, and the local Governing Councils and Commissions are asked to re-adopt the plan as revised. The plan is also provided to applicable planning entities for potential use in updates to other plans, including but not limited to the *County of Charleston Comprehensive Plan*, *Emergency Operations Plan*, or other applicable plans. Similarly, applicable updates to other plans are considered for inclusion in the *Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan*, as appropriate. Table II-1 provides a list of other specific plans in use by the jurisdictions within Charleston County that are considered for updates to the *Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan*, and which include applicable provisions of the *Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan* by reference or through excerpts [*this table indicates whether and how information from the indicated plan is included in the Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan and whether and how information from the Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan is included in the indicated plan, when appropriate*] :

**Table II-1: Hazard-Related, Land Use and/or Development Plans in the Charleston Region**

Jurisdiction	Name of Plan(s)	Information from this plan in the Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (CRHMP)	Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (CRHMP) included in this plan
Town of Awendaw	<i>Town of Awendaw Comprehensive Plan</i>	Not applicable	Applicable excerpts from CRHMP included in this plan
City of Charleston	<i>Charleston Century V City Plan</i>	Not applicable	Preservation of open space is a mutual goal of both plans – no need for cross-referencing
Charleston County (Unincorporated)	<i>Charleston County Comprehensive Plan; Charleston County Emergency Operations Plan Charleston Region Toxics Risk Assessment Charleston County Watershed Master Plan</i>	Applicable excerpts included in CRHMP	Applicable excerpts from CRHMP included in these plans
Charleston Co. PRC	<i>CCPRC Mission Statement CCPRC Comprehensive Development Plan CCPRC Hurricane Plan</i>	Not applicable	Entire CRHMP included by reference
Charleston CPW	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Cooper River Parks	<i>North Charleston Comprehensive Development Plan; North Charleston Emergency Operations Plan</i>	Not applicable	Include reference to CRHMP in other plans.
City of Folly Beach	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Town of Hollywood	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Town of Lincolnville	<i>Town of Lincolnville Comprehensive Plan</i>	Not applicable	Applicable excerpts from CRHMP included in plan.
City of Isle of Palms	<i>Updated Comprehensive Plan for the City of Isle of Palms</i>	Not applicable	Entire CRHMP included by reference; CRHMP is referenced on the City's web site ( <a href="http://www.iop.net">www.iop.net</a> ) with a link to the plan.
James Island PSD	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

Jurisdiction	Name of Plan(s)	Information from this plan in the Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (CRHMP)	Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (CRHMP) included in this plan
Town of Kiawah Isl.	<i>Town of Kiawah Island Emergency Preparedness Plan; Comprehensive Plan; Municipal Code, Article 12, Land Use and Zoning</i>	Not applicable	Entire CRHMP included in some plans by reference; applicable excerpts from the CRHMP included in others.
Town of McClellanville	<i>Comprehensive Plan for the Town of McClellanville</i>	Not applicable	Entire CRHMP included by reference, and applicable excerpts from the CRHMP in this plan
Town of Meggett	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Town of Mt. Pleasant	Community Rating System; 2003 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, NPDES Phase II	Applicable excerpts included in CRHMP	Entire CRHMP included by reference
Mt. Pleasant Water	<i>Mt. Pleasant Waterworks Emergency Plan</i>	Not applicable	Entire CRHMP included by reference
City of N. Charleston	<i>North Charleston Comprehensive Development Plan; North Charleston Emergency Operations Plan</i>	Not applicable	References to CRHMP included in other plans.
N. Charleston District	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
N. Charleston Sewer District	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Town of Ravenel	<i>Town of Ravenel Comprehensive Plan, 1999</i>	Not applicable	Entire CRHMP included by reference
Town of Rockville	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
St. Andrews Parks	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
St. Andrews PSD	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
St. John's Fire Dist.	<i>St. John's Fire District Strategic Plan</i>	Goals & Objectives and Risk Assessment information included in CRHMP	Entire CRHMP included by reference, and applicable excerpts from the CRHMP in this plan
St. Paul's Fire Dist.	<i>St. Paul's Fire District Emergency Operations Plan</i>	Not applicable	Entire CRHMP included by reference

Jurisdiction	Name of Plan(s)	Information from this plan in the Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (CRHMP)	Charleston Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (CRHMP) included in this plan
Town of Seabrook Isl.	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Town of Sullivan's Isl.	<i>Town of Sullivan's Island Comprehensive Plan 1998, revised June 19, 2000</i>	Not applicable	Entire CRHMP included by reference