Florence County

Hazard Mitigation Plan

Section Two

PLANNING PROCESS

Introduction

The FCHMPC includes representatives from local government agencies, business interests, community organizations, and institutions. The FCHMPC staff solicited the involvement in the mitigation planning by each local jurisdiction in the planning area. In this solicitation, the jurisdictions were encouraged to identify agencies and organizations that should represent the jurisdiction. This solicitation, sent out by the planning staff, stated the many benefits to local governments from participation in the mitigation planning. State and federal agencies, agencies that have the authority to regulate development, as well as regional agencies with facilities or responsibilities in Florence County were also encouraged to be involved in the planning, and were contacted through telecommunications and invited to participate. Those organizations not directly associated with state, regional or local governments, such as neighborhood associations, businesses and industries, and volunteer agencies were solicited to join the planning process. With a positive response to these solicitations, each local jurisdiction and its agencies, any state, federal and regional agencies, and/or any interested community groups, are considered to be participants in the committee planning process and requested to engage in the meetings and planning activities necessary to develop, maintain and implement the plan. The FCHMPC encourages participation in the development of the plan by all interested local jurisdictions, agencies, organizations and individuals, listed as Appendix A named “Florence County Stakeholders”. The planning approach is intended to represent a partnership between the public and private sector of the community, working together to create a disaster resistant community. The proposed mitigation initiatives developed by the committee and listed at the end of this section, when implemented, are intended to make the entire county safer from the impacts of future disasters, for the benefit of every individual, neighborhood, business and institution.

The committee represents all of the local municipalities and key organizations participating in the planning process, and is the group that makes the official decisions regarding the planning process. The committee serves as the official liaison of the planning project to the community, and coordinates all planning activities. Most importantly for this document, however, is the committee’s role to approve proposed mitigation initiatives for incorporation into the county’s hazard mitigation plan, for determining the priorities for implementation of those initiatives, and for removing or terminating initiatives that are no longer desirable for implementation. Due to the lack of participation by the jurisdictions of Scranton and Timmonsville, the committee took as much consideration as possible throughout the planning process.

The planning staff, working closely with the respective committee, coordinates the actual technical analyses and planning activities that are fundamental to development of this plan. These activities include preparing and presenting to the FCHMPC the hazard
identification and vulnerability assessment processes, as well as assisting the committee in receiving and coordinating the mitigation initiatives that are proposed by the committee participants for incorporation into this plan. The coordinating process undertaken constitutes a “peer review” of the proposed mitigation initiatives submitted for incorporation into the plan. Through the peer review, each proposed initiative is to be reviewed for its consistency with the goals and objectives established for the planning process and its relationship to identified hazards and defined vulnerabilities to those hazards. The review process strives to assure the assumptions used by the organization to develop the proposal are reasonable, that the proposal would not conflict with or duplicate other proposed initiatives, that proposals are feasible and consistent with known requirements.

As soon as the committee approves a proposed mitigation initiative in this manner, it is considered to be officially a part of the Florence County Hazard Mitigation Plan, and expected to be implemented by the sponsoring organization as soon as the resources and/or opportunity to do so becomes available.

**Planning and Regulatory Capability**

Planning and regulatory capability is based on the implementation of plans, ordinances and programs that demonstrate a local jurisdiction’s commitment to guiding and managing growth, development and redevelopment in a responsible manner, while maintaining the general welfare of the community. It includes emergency response and mitigation planning, comprehensive land use planning and transportation planning, in addition to the enforcement of zoning or subdivision ordinances and building codes that regulate how land is developed and structures are built, as well as protecting environmental, historic and cultural resources in the community. Although some conflicts can arise, these planning initiatives generally present significant opportunities to integrate hazard mitigation principles and practices into the local decision making process. The assessment is designed to provide a general overview of the key planning and regulatory tools or programs in place or under development for Florence County, along with their potential effect on loss reduction. This information will help identify opportunities to address existing gaps, weaknesses or conflicts with other initiatives in addition to integrating the implementation of this plan with existing planning mechanisms where appropriate.

The attached table, Table 2-1, provides a summary of the relevant local plans, ordinances and programs already in place or under development for Florence County. Each of these local plans, ordinances and programs should be considered available mechanisms for incorporating the requirements of the Florence County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.

**Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment**

The committee identifies the hazards that threaten all or portions of the community. Where possible, specific geographic areas, subject to the impacts of the identified hazards, are delineated. The purpose of this analysis is to define those locations, facilities or systems within the county that may be vulnerable to the impacts of those hazards and warrant further assessment. The hazard identification analysis will be accomplished through the following general methodology:
PLANNING PROCESS

- Identifying all significant hazards that threaten the county.
- Defining or estimating the geographic and/or operational scope of the areas and/or community functions within the county that could be impacted by the hazard,
- Determining or estimating the probability or frequency of occurrence of the hazard event,
- Defining, estimating or predicting the general consequences of the event to human health and safety, to property, to valuable environmental resources and the economic vitality of the community.
- Deriving a measure of risk to reflect the relative significance of hazard being addressed to the jurisdiction being evaluated.

The measure of relative risk may then be used by the committee to guide and prioritize the subsequent mitigation planning process. The hazard identification process is intended to encompass both developed areas as well as those likely to be developed in the future. Hazard identification information and other findings from this analysis will be made available for use by the public and other interested organizations and agencies.

A variety of information resources regarding hazard identification and risk assessment have been available. The planners have attempted to incorporate consideration of hazard specific maps, including flood plain delineation maps, whenever applicable, and have attempted to avail themselves of GIS-based analyses of hazard areas and the locations of critical facilities, infrastructure components and other properties located within the defined hazard areas. The detailed analysis of hazards in the region was prepared in accordance with a methodology originally developed by the University of South Carolina. That methodology depends heavily on data analysis using Geographic Information System (GIS) technology.

**Developing Hazard Mitigation Initiatives**

This process enables the county planning committee to highlight the most significant vulnerabilities, again to assist in prioritizing subsequent efforts to formulate and characterize specific hazard mitigation initiatives to eliminate or minimize those vulnerabilities. Once the highest priorities are defined, the county planning committee can identify specific mitigation initiatives for the plan that would eliminate or minimize those vulnerabilities.

Each proposed mitigation initiative is “prioritized” for implementation in a consistent manner by each participating organization using a common set of objective criteria. Each mitigation initiative proposed for incorporation into the plan is formulated and submitted to the committee for consideration.

**Developing the Local Mitigation Plan**

On receipt of a pending initiative, using the “peer review” process incorporated into the operating procedures, the FCHMPC first evaluates the merits of the proposal and the validity of the judgments and assumptions that went into its characterization, as well as considers its potential for conflict with other jurisdiction’s programs or interests. The committee also assures that the proposal is consistent with the goals and objectives.
PLANNING PROCESS

established for the planning period and confirms that it would not duplicate or harm a proposal submitted by another jurisdiction or agency.

During routine updates of the Florence County Hazard Mitigation Plan, each mitigation initiative included in the plan is evaluated to determine if it is still valid or should be removed from the plan, or whether its implementation should be a priority or deferred until a later time. This approach is considered to define the “priority for implementation” of a specific mitigation initiative, in the judgment of the planning group, intentionally to allow for the adjustment of implementation schedules to respond to changes in the community or environmental conditions expected in the near future.

Approval of the Current Edition of the Plan

On a periodic basis, the Florence County Hazard Mitigation Plan is to be submitted to the governing body of each of the participating jurisdictions for review, modification if needed, and approval or adoption. Following adoption or approval of the plan by each jurisdiction’s governing body, the respective agencies and organizations will continue to implement the plan, to expand its scope, continue its analyses, and take other such continuing action to maintain the planning process. This includes action by the committee with assistance from the planning staff to routinely incorporate proposed mitigation initiatives into the plan, without the necessity to also continuously solicit the formal approval of the plan by the jurisdictions’ governing bodies.

Approximately every five (5) years, a draft plan document such as this will be printed and submitted to the governing bodies for review and formal adoption or approval. The committee will assist the planning staff in preparing the draft plan.

This document is a draft plan that, pending finalization, will be submitted for approval. It is important to emphasize that this document represents a “snapshot” of the planning process and is prepared as a current document for use by the planning group, the community, and state and federal authorities. Upon receiving the “approval pending adoption” status from FEMA, Florence County and all participating jurisdictions will officially adopt the plan in a public meeting.

Implementation of Approved Mitigation Initiatives

Once incorporated into the Florence County Hazard Mitigation Plan, the agency or organization proposing the initiative becomes responsible for its implementation. This may mean developing a budget for the effort, or making application to state and federal agencies for financial support for implementation. The current status of implementation of mitigation initiatives incorporated into the plan is discussed in the next section.

In this plan implementation process, the committee continues to monitor the implementation status of initiatives, to assign priorities for implementation and to take other such actions to support and coordinate implementation of initiative by the involved organizations. In reality, it is the implementation of proposed initiatives, along with other actions by the organizations participating in the planning to maintain, refine and expand the technical analyses used in the planning, that constitutes the process to implement the mitigation plan.
Resolving Conflicts

In the event that a mitigation initiative proposed by a participating agency or organization is determined by the committee to be in conflict with one or more other initiatives in the plan or being submitted by others, the committee will take action to resolve the conflict. This will be done in the following manner:

- The participants proposing the conflicting mitigation initiatives will be notified of the findings of the committee and requested to make any such modifications to the proposals needed to resolve the conflicts,

- Should the participants be initially unwilling or unable to make such modifications to their proposed mitigation initiatives, the committee will schedule and hold a detailed discussion of the matter and involve both participants and any other interested parties,

- In the event that such detailed discussions do not result in voluntary action on the part of the participants making the proposals, the committee will formulate a recommendation to resolve the conflict. In making this recommendation, in its discretion, the committee may give preference to the proposal already incorporated into the strategy, to that first submitted to the committee for review, and/or to the proposal achieving the highest priority score.

Approval of Supplements to the Plan

When indicated, the committee may elect to approve issuance of a supplement to the currently approved mitigation plan. This supplement may contain one or more proposed mitigation initiatives that have been fully processed by the committee in accord with this procedure. Upon its issuance, the supplement and the mitigation initiatives contained therein are considered to be an integral part of the Florence County Hazard Mitigation Plan pending the approval of the supplement by the governing body of the jurisdiction or organization that proposed the initiatives.

Assessment of Recent Disaster Events

Within 60 days following a significant disaster or emergency event impacting the county or any of its municipalities, the committee will conduct an analysis of the event to capture any “lessons learned” for the purpose of continuing development of the mitigation plan. The committee, with the support of the planning staff, will classify the event based on the hazard category and assess the magnitude of the event and the community’s reaction to it. The direct and indirect damage, response and recovery costs will also be gathered or estimated. Any mitigation techniques in place in the impacted areas would be assessed for their apparent effectiveness in decreasing damages. The type and extent of the damages that were experienced would also be evaluated to determine the types of mitigation initiatives that should be incorporated into the plan to avoid similar losses during future hazard events of the same type. Based on this assessment, the committee would recommend to one or more of the participating agencies or organizations that they propose appropriate mitigation initiatives for incorporation into the next edition of the plan. In its discretion, the agency or organization could then propose such an initiative and transmit it to the committee for processing in accord with this procedure.
Florence County Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee

Kristy Burch, Florence County Emergency Management, Senior Coordinator
Shawn Brashear, Florence County Building and Planning, Director
Crys Hoge, Florence County GIS Department, Manager
Robbie Ervin, Florence County GIS Department, GIS Analyst
Mike Puckett, McLeod Regional Medical Center, EM Manager
Chief Michael King, Coward Police Department
Mayor Dianne Thomas, Town of Coward
Chief Donald Tarbell, Francis Marion University Public Safety
Capt. George Mack, Florence Police Department
Johnathan Atkinson, Florence County Planning, Floodplain Manager
Curt Whaley, Florence County Building and Planning, Inspector
Doug Nunnaly, Florence School District One, Safety Manager
Chief Howard Worrell, West Florence Fire Department
Jeff DeLung, City of Florence Fire Department, EM Manager
Jerry Dudley, City of Florence, Planning Director
Neal Vincent, Florence School District Two, Superintendent
Ryan Guerry, SCEMD, Hazard Mitigation Specialist
Chief John DeLung, Windy Hill Fire Department
Chief Ron Douglas, Johnsonville Police Department
Stephany Snowden, City of Lake City, Administrator
Mayor Michael Welch, Town of Olanta
Mayor Gene Gainey, Town of Pamplico
Mayor Terry Knotts, Town of Scranton
Mayor Darrick Jackson, Town of Timmonsville
## Table 2-1  Plans, Ordinances and Programs

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