

SECTION 2

PLANNING PROCESS

44 CFR Requirement

44 CFR Part 201.6(c)(1): The plan shall include documentation of the planning process used to develop the plan, including how it was prepared, who was involved in the process and how the public was involved.

This section describes the planning process undertaken by the City of Myrtle Beach in the development of its 2010 Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Plan. It consists of the following six subsections:

- 2.1 Overview of Hazard Mitigation Planning
- 2.2 History of Hazard Mitigation Planning in the City of Myrtle Beach
- 2.3 Preparing the 2015 Plan
- 2.4 The Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (FMHMPC)
- 2.5 Hazard Mitigation Citizen’s Advisory Committee
- 2.6 Community Meetings and Workshops
- 2.7 Involving the Public
- 2.8 Involving the Stakeholders

2.1 OVERVIEW OF HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

Local hazard mitigation planning is the process of organizing community resources, identifying and assessing hazard risks, and determining how to best minimize or manage those risks. This process results in a hazard mitigation plan that identifies specific mitigation actions, each designed to achieve both short-term planning objectives and a long-term community vision.

To ensure the functionality of a hazard mitigation plan, responsibility is assigned for each proposed mitigation action to a specific individual, department or agency along with a schedule or target completion date for its implementation (see Section 8). Plan maintenance procedures are established for the routine monitoring of implementation progress, as well as the evaluation and enhancement of the mitigation plan itself. These plan maintenance procedures ensure that the plan remains a current, dynamic and effective planning document over time that becomes integrated into the routine local decision making process.

Communities that participate in hazard mitigation planning have the potential to accomplish many benefits, including:

- saving lives and property
- saving money
- speeding recovery following disasters
- reducing future vulnerability through wise development and post-disaster recovery and reconstruction
- expediting the receipt of pre-disaster and post-disaster grant funding
- demonstrating a firm commitment to improving community health and safety

Typically, mitigation planning is described as having the potential to produce long-term and recurring benefits by breaking the repetitive cycle of disaster loss. A core assumption of hazard mitigation is that the investments made before a hazard event will significantly reduce the demand for post-disaster assistance by lessening the need for emergency response, repair, recovery and reconstruction. Furthermore, mitigation practices will enable local residents, businesses and industries to re-establish themselves in the wake of a disaster, getting the community economy back on track sooner and with less interruption.

The benefits of mitigation planning go beyond solely reducing hazard vulnerability. Measures such as the acquisition or regulation of land in known hazard areas can help achieve multiple community goals, such as preserving open space, maintaining environmental health and enhancing recreational opportunities. Thus, it is vitally important that any local mitigation planning process be integrated with other concurrent local planning efforts, and any proposed mitigation strategies must take into account other existing community goals or initiatives that will help complement or hinder their future implementation.

2.2 HISTORY OF HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING IN MYRTLE BEACH

Myrtle Beach’s hazard mitigation planning efforts began as early as 1998 when the City created a committee to write a Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Plan. The committee was comprised of City staff, local and state officials, and members of the public. The planning process was part of the larger visioning process for the City’s Comprehensive Plan update. The committee held four working sessions and a public hearing. The process resulted in adoption of the first City of Myrtle Beach Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Plan, which was prepared as a guide to facilitate the implementation of floodplain management, as well as provide a guide for reconstruction and redevelopment of floodprone areas to reduce future damages. The guidelines used for the development of the plan were those recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the South Carolina Emergency Management Division (SCEMD) for natural hazard mitigation and flood mitigation plans. During preparation of the plan, the lead planner also coordinated with representatives from Horry County, the State, South Carolina Sea Grant, and ISO Commercial Risk Services, Inc. The final plan was adopted by Myrtle Beach in April 1999 as an element of the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

Following completion of the 1999 plan, FEMA published an Interim Final Rule¹ in the Federal Register that specified criteria for the approval of local hazard mitigation plans as required in Section 322 of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000). This rule required Myrtle Beach to prepare an amendment to the 1999 plan in order to remain eligible for specified FEMA mitigation grants including the HMGP, as well as the new Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program established through DMA 2000.

¹ FEMA’s Interim Final Rule for hazard mitigation planning was published February 26, 2002 at 44 CFR Part 201.

In 2004, the Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Plan was updated to meet the requirements of DMA 2000. The Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee reconvened for several meetings during the preparation of the revised plan and a draft of the Plan was presented to the public on September 23, 2004. The plan was submitted to SCEMD and then to FEMA for review and subsequent approval in accordance with state and federal regulations for hazard mitigation plans. The final Plan was adopted by the City Council on October 26, 2004.

In 2010, the City of Myrtle Beach contracted PBS&J to update the current mitigation plan previously developed by the City staff. The contractor redesigned the format of the plan and honed in on the Community Rating System components of the plan.

A more thorough description and review of the City's earlier hazard mitigation planning and related efforts is provided in Section 6: *Capability Assessment*.

2.3 PREPARING THE 2015 PLAN

Hazard mitigation plans are required to be updated every five years to remain eligible for Federal mitigation and public assistance funding. In preparation of the 2015 Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Plan update, the City of Myrtle Beach hired Atkins as an outside consultant to provide professional mitigation planning services. To meet requirements of the Community Rating System, the City ensured that the planning process was facilitated under the direction of a professional planner. Nathan Slaughter and Ryan Wiedenman both from Atkins served as planners for this project and are member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP).

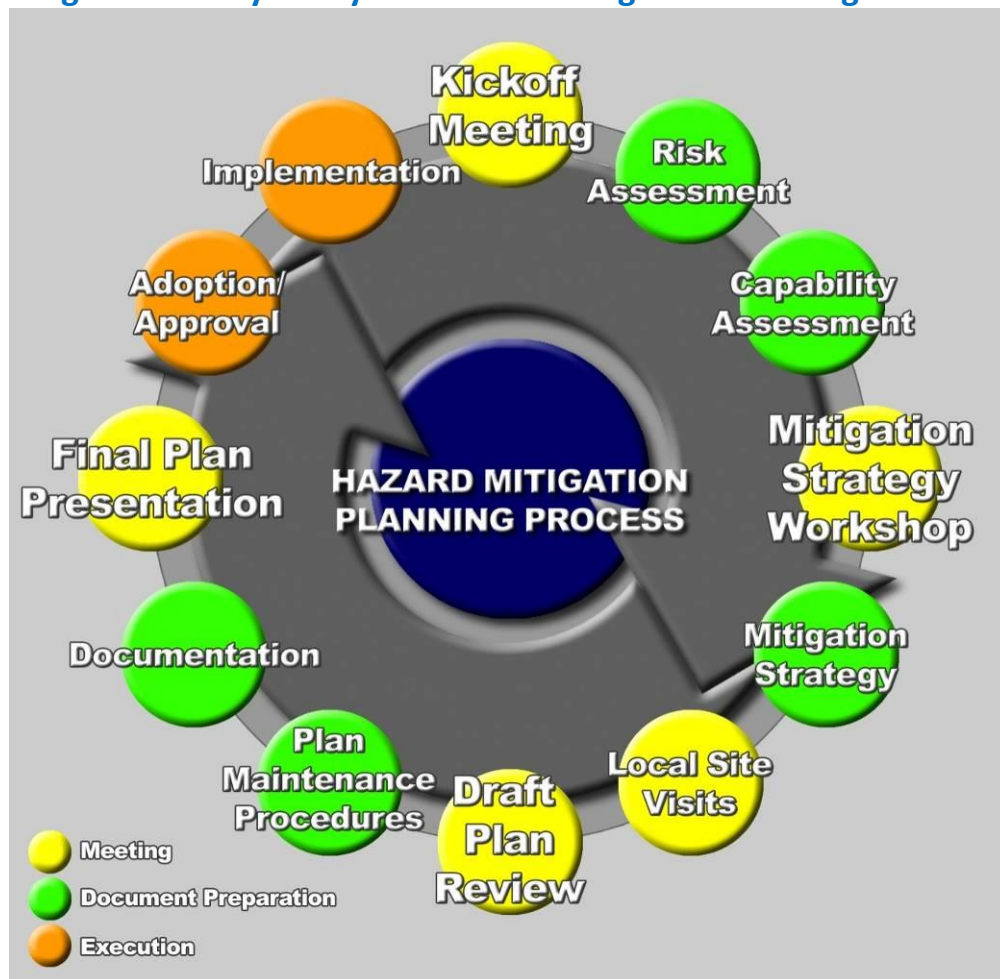
Per the contractual scope of work², the consultant team followed the mitigation planning process recommended by FEMA (Publication Series 386) and recommendations provided by SCEMD mitigation planning staff. The Local Mitigation Plan Review Tool, found in Appendix C, provides a detailed summary of FEMA's current minimum standards of acceptability for compliance with DMA 2000 and notes the location where each requirement or element is met within this Plan. These standards are based upon FEMA's Interim Final Rule as published in the Federal Register on February 26, 2002 in Part 201 of the Code of Federal Regulations. The planning team used FEMA's Local Mitigation Planning Handbook (last revised in March 2013) for reference as they updated the plan.

The City's Floodplain Manager reconvened the Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee along with the consultant. It was determined that the entire plan would be updated based on the various changes in the last 5 years and the new FEMA Local Mitigation Planning Handbook. This was discussed at the first meeting of the FMHMPC on March 2, 2015 that is further described later in this section.

The process used to prepare this Plan included twelve (12) major steps that were completed over the course of approximately nine months beginning in March 2010. Each of these planning steps (illustrated in **Figure 2.1**) resulted in critical work products and outcomes that collectively make up the Plan. Specific plan sections are further described in Section 1: *Introduction*.

² A copy of the negotiated contractual scope of work between Myrtle Beach and Atkins is available through the City of Myrtle Beach upon request.

Figure 2.1: City of Myrtle Beach's Mitigation Planning Process



2.4 THE FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT AND HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING COMMITTEE

In order to guide the development of this Plan, the City of Myrtle Beach reconvened its Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (FMHMPC) that was created during past planning efforts, including the latest plan approval in December 2010. The FMHMPC represents a community-based planning team made up of representatives from various City departments and other key stakeholders identified to serve as critical partners in the planning process. In November 2009, the City Council passed a resolution that officially recognized the Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee. For this plan update, the FMHMPC was reconvened to guide the process of the plan update.

Beginning in March 2010, the City of Myrtle Beach engaged FMHMPC members in regular discussions as well as local meetings and planning workshops to discuss and complete tasks associated with preparing the Plan. The FMHMPC coordinated on all aspects of plan preparation and provided valuable input to the process. In addition to regular meetings, committee members routinely communicated and were kept informed through email correspondence and phone calls.

Specifically, the tasks assigned to the FMHMPC members included:

- participate in FMHMPC meetings and correspondence
- provide best available data as required for the risk assessment portion of the Plan
- assist in updating the local Capability Assessment Survey and provide copies of any mitigation or hazard-related documents for review and incorporation into the Plan
- support the update of the Mitigation Strategy, including the review and update of community goal statements
- provide an implementation status update for the existing mitigation actions
- help design and propose appropriate new mitigation actions for their department/agency for incorporation into the Mitigation Action Plan
- review and provide timely comments on all study findings, data requests, and draft plan deliverables
- support the adoption of the 2015 Myrtle Beach Hazard Mitigation Plan

Table 2.1 lists the members of the FMHMPC who were responsible for participating in the development of the Plan. Committee members are listed in alphabetical order by last name.

Table 2.1: Members of the Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee

NAME	DEPARTMENT / AGENCY
Bruce Arnel	Myrtle Beach Fire Marshal
Bruce Boulineau	Construction Services Director
Emily Hardee	Construction Services, Floodplain Coordinator
Allison Hardin	Planning
John Kennedy	Myrtle Beach Police Department
Mark Kruea	City Manager's Office, Public Information Officer
Tanita Marshall	SC Department of Health and Environmental Control-OCRM
Steve Moore	Public Works
Diane Moskow-McKenzie	Planning
Alvin Payne	Myrtle Beach Fire Chief
Val Rosser	Risk Management
Don Shanks	Citizen Representative/Planning Commission
Jackie Vereen	Community Appearance Board
Jenny Thompson	Citizen Representative/American Red Cross
Margaret Walton	Atkins, Project Manager
Ryan Wiedenman	Atkins, Risk Assessment Specialist
Janet Wood	Public Works

Additional participation and input from other identified stakeholders and the general public was sought by the City during the planning process through phone calls and the distribution of e-mails, advertisements and public notices aimed at informing people on the status of the Hazard Mitigation Plan (public and stakeholder involvement is further discussed later in this section). The City also posted information on its website (www.cityofmyrtlebeach.com) related to the plan development process.

2.5 HAZARD MITIGATION CITIZEN’S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

With assistance from the City’s planning, construction services, and floodplain staff, the Hazard Mitigation Citizen’s Advisory Committee was recruited and convened to serve as advisory stakeholders on the mitigation plan. The Advisory Committee represents diverse community interests including business/industry, academia, social services, neighborhood and community groups, and the non-profit sector.

The Hazard Mitigation Citizen’s Advisory Committee engaged in two meetings on March 19, 2015 and August 5, 2015 to review the tasks, discuss the overall process, and provide input and comments on the work completed by the FMHMPC and consultant. Citizens provided feedback following these meetings through phone calls and email correspondence.

Table 2.2: Members of the Hazard Mitigation Citizen’s Advisory Committee

NAME	DEPARTMENT / AGENCY
Gretchen Abney	Citizen Representative
Emily Hardee	Construction Services, Floodplain Coordinator
Allison Hardin	Planning
Susan Libes	Coastal Carolina University, Environmental Qualifications Lab
Lisa Swanger	Coastal Carolina University, Environmental Qualifications Lab
Jenny Thompson	Citizen Representative

2.5 COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

The preparation of this Plan required a series of meetings and workshops for facilitating discussion, gaining consensus and initiating data collection efforts with local government staff, community officials and other identified stakeholders. More importantly, the meetings and workshops prompted continuous input and feedback from relevant participants throughout the drafting stages of the Plan. The meeting materials including the agendas, sign-in sheets, and minutes are located in Appendix D.

The Kick-off Meeting in March began with an overview of mitigation. A presentation was given that outlined the project tasks, schedule, and mitigation planning process. The next FPHMPC meeting in August had two significant parts. The initial portion reviewed the hazard identification, risk assessment, and vulnerability analysis. The second portion focused on the current capabilities of City and the review of the existing mitigation strategy to include the goals and actions.³ In many cases, routine discussions and additional meetings were held by local staff to accomplish planning tasks specific to their department or agency, such as the approval of specific mitigation actions for their department of agency to undertake and include in the Mitigation Action Plan.

³ Copies of the agendas, sign-in sheets, and minutes for all meetings and workshops can be found in Appendix B.

2.6 INVOLVING THE PUBLIC

44 CFR Requirement

44 CFR Part 201.6(b)(1): The planning process shall include an opportunity for the public to comment on the plan during the drafting stage and prior to plan approval.

An important component of the mitigation planning process involved public participation. Individual citizen and community-based input provides the entire planning team with a greater understanding of local concerns and increases the likelihood of successfully implementing mitigation actions by developing community “buy-in” from those directly affected by the decisions of public officials. As citizens become more involved in decisions that affect their safety, they are more likely to gain a greater appreciation of the hazards present in their community and take the steps necessary to reduce their impact. Public awareness is a key component of any community’s overall mitigation strategy aimed at making a home, neighborhood, school, business or entire city safer from the potential effects of hazards.

Public involvement in the development of the City of Myrtle Beach’s 2015 Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Plan was sought throughout the planning process with the use of the public participation survey that was made available at various locations throughout the City and on the City’s Web site. Public meetings were also held at two distinct periods during the planning process: (1) to explain the planning process and project tasks; (2) during the drafting stage of the plan to review the risk assessment and develop the mitigation strategy; and (3) upon completion of a final draft Plan but prior to official plan approval and adoption. Public input was sought using three methods: (1) open public meetings; (2) survey instruments; and (3) making copies of draft Plan deliverables available for public review.

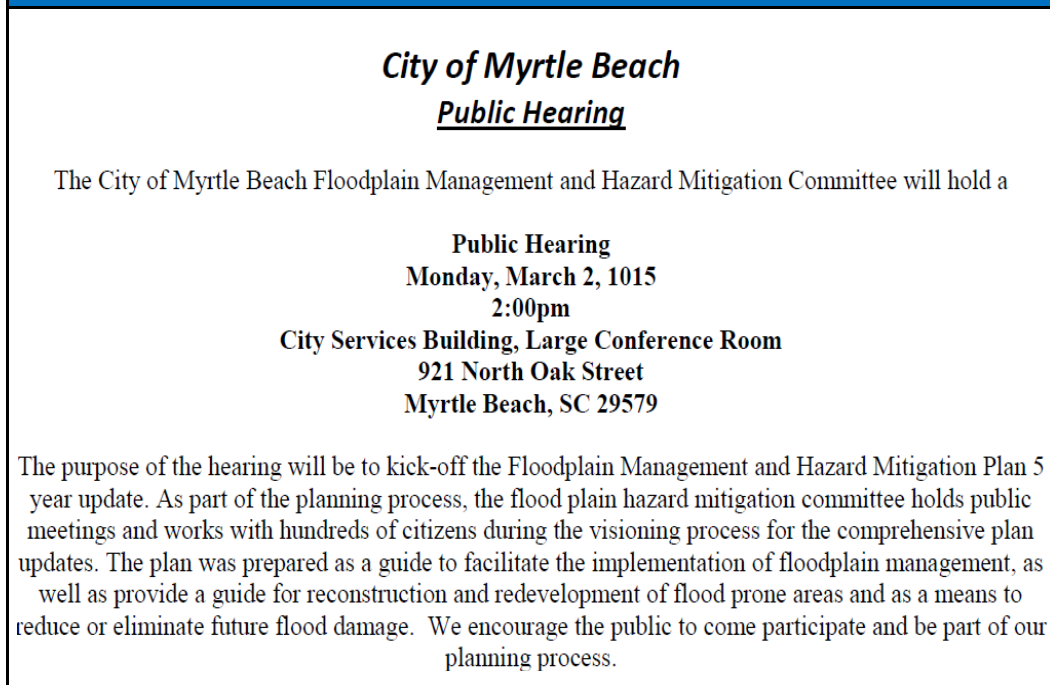
The two rounds of open public meetings that were held during the development of this Plan are described below.

March 2, 2010

First Open Public Meeting

The first open public meeting was held concurrently with the first FMHMPC meeting on the afternoon of March 2, 2010. The meeting was advertised through a public hearing notice, a posting on the City’s Web site, email list, and on the City’s cable access channel.

Figure 2.3 shows the public hearing notice that was disseminated.

Figure 2.3: Notice of First Open Public Meeting

Second Open Public Meeting

The second open public meetings took place during the Risk Assessment and Mitigation Strategy Meeting on August 5, 2015. There were no public comments received at either of those meetings. However, the Hazard Mitigation Citizen’s Advisory Committee provided significant input during their meetings and through correspondence to include mitigation action supporting information.

2.6.1 Public Participation Survey

Since the open public meetings only drew a few citizens to attendance, the City of Myrtle Beach utilized the Public Participation Survey to encourage citizens to provide input to the mitigation planning process. The Public Participation Survey was designed to capture data and information from residents of Myrtle Beach that might not be able to attend public meetings or participate through other means in the mitigation planning process.

Copies of the Public Participation Survey were distributed by various City departments and made available for residents to complete at local public offices. An electronic version of the survey was posted on the City’s Web site. Numerous survey responses were received, which provided valuable input for the FMHMPC to consider in the development of the plan update. A copy of the survey and a detailed summary of the survey results are provided in Appendix B.


Figure 2.4 shows the posting of the Public Participation Survey on the City’s website.

Figure 2.4: Public Participation Survey Posting on City's Website

Figure 2.4: Public Participation Survey Posting on City's Website

VACATION?

Planning a trip to Myrtle Beach? Visit the [Myrtle Beach Area Chamber of Commerce](#) for information about hotels, attractions, restaurants, events, nightlife and more.



2015 Palmetto Regional FIRST Robotics Alliance Event

Events | Meetings



Summer Job Fair...
Find a perfect summer job at the Recreation Division Job Fair, 4:00 to 5:30 p.m., Friday, March 6, at Pepper Geddings Recreation Center. We're looking for help in youth programs, youth sports, lifeguarding and fitness. Call Ryan at 918-1476 for information.

Welcome to Myrtle Beach!

Here's what's happening...

- **Hazard and disaster survey...** The city is updating its five-year Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Plan. As part of the process, the public is invited to take a [short survey about hazards and disasters](#). We want to hear from you!
- **The robots were here...** Congratulations to Carolina Forest High School's robotics team, the Robo-Katz, on winning the Palmetto Regional FIRST Robotics Tournament on Saturday at the Myrtle Beach Convention Center! The Robo-Katz are going to the national championships in St. Louis in April. In all, 66 teams from eight states and Canada competed in the two-day tournament. In addition to Carolina Forest, three other Horry County high school teams were in the top 24 for Saturday's playoffs. Conway High School's Robo Tigers were in the top eight and selected the Academy of Technology and Academics and the Academy for Arts, Science and Technology for their alliance. For this year's challenge, students received a computer and a kit of parts in

Photos of the Week...
The key presentation ceremony for the Myrtle Beach Sports Center, a new indoor tournament

2.7 INVOLVING THE STAKEHOLDERS

44 CFR Requirement

44 CFR Part 201.6(b)(2): The planning process shall include an opportunity for neighboring communities, local and regional agencies involved in hazard mitigation activities, and agencies that have the authority to regulate development, as well as businesses, academia and other non-profit interests to be involved in the planning process.

In addition to the FMHMPC meetings, the City of Myrtle Beach encouraged more open and widespread participation in the mitigation planning process through the design and posting of public notices and newspaper advertisements that promoted the open public meetings (described earlier in this Section). The City also went above and beyond in its local outreach efforts through the design and distribution of the Public Participation Survey as well as the creation of the Hazard Mitigation Citizen's Advisory Committee. These media advertisements and survey instruments provided opportunities for local officials, residents, businesses, academia and other private interests in Myrtle Beach to be involved and offer input throughout the local mitigation planning process.