

# SECTION 6

## CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

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This section of the Plan discusses the capability of the City of Myrtle Beach to implement hazard mitigation activities. It consists of the following five subsections:

- 6.1 What is a Capability Assessment?
- 6.2 Conducting the Capability Assessment
- 6.3 Capability Assessment Findings
- 6.4 Conclusions on Local Capability

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### 6.1 WHAT IS A CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT?

The purpose of conducting a capability assessment is to determine the ability of a local jurisdiction to implement a comprehensive mitigation strategy and to identify potential opportunities for establishing or enhancing specific mitigation policies, programs, or projects<sup>1</sup>. As in any planning process, it is important to try to establish which goals, objectives, and/or actions are feasible, based on an understanding of the organizational capacity of those agencies or departments tasked with their implementation. A capability assessment helps to determine which mitigation actions are practical and likely to be implemented over time given a local government’s planning and regulatory framework, level of administrative and technical support, amount of fiscal resources, and current political climate.

A capability assessment has two primary components: 1) an inventory of a local jurisdiction’s relevant plans, ordinances, or programs already in place; and 2) an analysis of its capacity to carry them out. Careful examination of local capabilities will detect any existing gaps, shortfalls, or weaknesses with ongoing government activities that could hinder proposed mitigation activities and possibly exacerbate community hazard vulnerability. A capability assessment also highlights the positive mitigation measures already in place or being implemented at the local government level, which should continue to be supported and enhanced through future mitigation efforts.

The capability assessment completed for the City of Myrtle Beach serves as a critical planning step and an integral part of the foundation for designing an effective hazard mitigation strategy. Coupled with the *Risk Assessment*, the *Capability Assessment* helps identify and target meaningful mitigation actions for incorporation in the *Mitigation Strategy* portion of the Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Plan. It not only helps establish the goals and objectives for the City to pursue under this

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<sup>1</sup> While the Interim Final Rule for implementing the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 does not require a local capability assessment to be completed for local hazard mitigation plans, it is a critical step in developing a mitigation strategy that meets the needs of the City while taking into account their own unique abilities. The Rule does state that a community’s mitigation strategy should be “based on existing authorities, policies, programs and resources, and its ability to expand on and improve these existing tools” (44 CFR, Part 201.6(c)(3)).

Plan, but also ensures that those goals and objectives are realistically achievable under given local conditions.

## 6.2 CONDUCTING THE CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

In order to facilitate the inventory and analysis of local government capabilities for the City of Myrtle Beach, a detailed Capability Assessment Survey<sup>2</sup> was distributed to the City Departments. The survey questionnaire requested information on a variety of “capability indicators” such as existing local plans, policies, programs, or ordinances that contribute to and/or hinder the City’s ability to implement hazard mitigation actions. Other indicators included information related to the City’s fiscal, administrative, and technical capabilities, such as access to local budgetary and personnel resources for mitigation purposes. Survey respondents were also asked to comment on the current political climate with respect to hazard mitigation, an important consideration for any local planning or decision making process.

At a minimum, survey results provide an extensive inventory of existing local plans, ordinances, programs, and resources in place or under development, in addition to their overall effect on hazard loss reduction. In completing the survey, local officials were also required to conduct a self-assessment of the City’s specific capabilities. The survey instrument thereby not only helps accurately assess the degree of local capability, but also serves as a good source of introspection for City departments and agencies that want to improve their capabilities as identified gaps, weaknesses, or conflicts can be recast as opportunities for specific actions to be proposed as part of the hazard mitigation strategy.

The information provided in response to the survey questionnaire was incorporated into a database for further analysis. A general scoring methodology<sup>3</sup> was then applied to quantify the City’s overall capability. According to the scoring system, each capability indicator was assigned a point value based on its relevance to hazard mitigation. Additional points were added based on the City staff’s self-assessment of their own planning and regulatory capability, administrative and technical capability, fiscal capability, and political capability.

Using this scoring methodology, a total score and general capability rating of “High,” “Moderate,” or “Limited” could be determined according to the total number of points received. These classifications are designed to provide nothing more than a general assessment of local government capability. In combination with the narrative responses provided by local officials, the results of this capability assessment lend critical information for developing an effective and meaningful mitigation strategy.

## 6.3 CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

The findings of the capability assessment are summarized in this Plan to provide insight into the relevant capacity of the City of Myrtle Beach to implement hazard mitigation activities. All information is based upon the input provided by local government officials through the Capability Assessment Survey and during meetings of the Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee.

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<sup>2</sup> The Capability Assessment Survey instrument is available in Appendix B.

<sup>3</sup> The scoring methodology used to quantify and rank the City’s capability can be found in Appendix B.

### 6.3.1 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.

This assessment is designed to provide a general overview of the key planning and regulatory tools or programs in place or under development for the City of Myrtle Beach, 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.

**Table 6.1** provides a summary of the relevant local plans, ordinances, and programs already in place or under development for the City of Myrtle Beach. A checkmark (✓) indicates that the given item is currently in place and being implemented, or that it is currently being developed for future implementation. Each of these other local plans, ordinances, and programs should be considered available mechanisms for incorporating the requirements of the Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Plan.

**Table 6.1: Relevant Plans, Ordinances, and Programs**

PLANNING / REGULATORY TOOL	IN PLACE/UNDER DEVELOPMENT	DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE	EFFECT ON LOSS REDUCTION		
			Strongly Supports	Helps Facilitate	Hinders
Hazard Mitigation Plan	✓	Construction Services	✓		
Comprehensive Land Use Plan	✓	Planning / All			
Floodplain Management Plan	✓	Construction Services			
Open Space Management Plan	✓	Cultural and Leisure Services			
Stormwater Management Plan	✓	Public Works / Code Enforcement			
Flood Response Plan					
Emergency Operations Plan	✓	Police Department			
Continuity of Operations Plan					

PLANNING / REGULATORY TOOL	IN PLACE/UNDER DEVELOPMENT	DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE	EFFECT ON LOSS REDUCTION		
			Strongly Supports	Helps Facilitate	Hinders
Evacuation Plan	✓	Police Department			
Disaster Recovery Plan	✓	Emergency Management, Public Works, Construction Services,	✓		
Capital Improvements Plan	✓	Budget, Planning, Public Works	✓		
Economic Development Plan	✓	Myrtle Beach Economic Development Corp.			
Historic Preservation Plan	✓	Horry County			
Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance	✓	Construction Services	✓		
Zoning Ordinance	✓	Construction Services			
Subdivision Ordinance	✓	Planning	✓		
Unified Development Ordinance					
Post-disaster Red/Rec. Ordinance	✓	<i>Under Development</i>			
Building Code	✓	Construction Services			
Fire Code	✓	Fire Department / Construction Services			
National Flood Insurance Program	✓	Construction Services	✓		
NFIP Community Rating System	✓	Construction Services / Public Works	✓		

A more detailed discussion on the City's planning and regulatory capability follows, along with the incorporation of additional information based on the narrative comments provided by local officials in response to the survey questionnaire.

### 6.3.2 Emergency Management

Hazard mitigation is widely recognized as one of the four primary phases of emergency management. The three other phases include preparedness, response, and recovery. In reality each phase is interconnected with hazard mitigation, as **Figure 6.1** suggests. Opportunities to reduce potential losses

through mitigation practices are most often implemented before disaster strikes, such as elevation of flood prone structures or through the continuous enforcement of policies that prevent and regulate development that is vulnerable to hazards because of its location, design, or other characteristics. Mitigation opportunities will also be presented during immediate preparedness or response activities (such as installing storm shutters in advance of a hurricane) and certainly during the long-term recovery and redevelopment process following a hazard event.

**Figure 6.1: The Four Phases of Emergency Management**



Planning for each phase is a critical part of a comprehensive emergency management program and a key to the successful implementation of hazard mitigation actions. As a result, the Capability Assessment Survey asked several questions across a range of emergency management plans in order to assess Myrtle Beach's willingness to plan and their level of technical planning proficiency.

**Hazard Mitigation Plan:** A hazard mitigation plan represents a community's blueprint for how it intends to reduce the impact of natural and human-caused hazards on people and the built environment. The essential elements of a hazard mitigation plan include a risk assessment, capability assessment, and mitigation strategy.

- The City of Myrtle Beach adopted the first version of their local hazard mitigation plan in 1999 and updated the plan in 2004 and 2010.

**Disaster Recovery Plan:** A disaster recovery plan serves to guide the physical, social, environmental, and economic recovery and reconstruction process following a disaster. In many instances, hazard mitigation principles and practices are incorporated into local disaster recovery plans with the intent of capitalizing on opportunities to break the cycle of repetitive disaster losses. Disaster recovery plans can also lead to the preparation of disaster redevelopment policies and ordinances to be enacted following a hazard event.

- The City of Myrtle Beach Department of Public Works maintains a Hurricane Manual for response and recovery.

- The City's Tourism Committee has sponsored an Area Business Disaster Recovery Symposium for the past two years, in 2014 and 2015.
- The Tourism Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan addresses the need to continue development of a comprehensive recovery plan for man-made and natural disasters.

**Emergency Operations Plan:** An emergency operations plan outlines responsibilities and the means by which resources are deployed during and following an emergency or disaster.

- The Myrtle Beach Police Department, with assistance from Risk Management, maintains an Emergency Operations Plan to address the City's response to a variety of disasters and emergencies.

**SARA Title III Emergency Response Plan:** A SARA Title III Emergency Response Plan outlines the procedures to be followed in the event of a chemical emergency such as the accidental release of toxic substances. These plans are required by federal law under Title III of the Superfund Amendments and Re-authorization Act (SARA), also known as the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA).

- The Myrtle Beach Fire Department maintains a Hazardous Materials Response Plan.

**Continuity of Operation Plan:** A continuity of operations plan establishes a chain of command, line of succession and plans for backup or alternate emergency facilities in case of an extreme emergency or disaster event.

- The City has not developed a Continuity of Operation Plan; however, development of a plan is under discussion with the Planning, Risk Management, and Fire Departments.

### 6.3.3 General Planning

The implementation of hazard mitigation activities often involves agencies and individuals beyond the emergency management profession. Stakeholders may include local planners, public works officials, economic development specialists, and others. In many instances, concurrent local planning efforts will help to achieve or complement hazard mitigation goals, even though they are not designed as such. Therefore, the Capability Assessment Survey also asked questions regarding each of Myrtle Beach's general planning capabilities and the degree to which hazard mitigation is integrated into other on-going planning efforts.

**Comprehensive Land Use Plan:** A comprehensive land use plan establishes the overall vision for what a community wants to be and serves as a guide to future governmental decision making. Typically a comprehensive plan contains sections on demographic conditions, land use, transportation elements, and community facilities. Given the broad nature of the plan and its regulatory standing in many communities, the integration of hazard mitigation measures into the comprehensive plan can enhance the likelihood of achieving risk reduction goals, objectives, and actions.

- The City of Myrtle Beach adopted its first Comprehensive Plan on April 13, 1999 to serve as a guidebook for the City's development, improvement, and growth over a 20-year period. The plan was amended in 2000, 2006, and 2011.

- The Natural Resource Element of the Comprehensive Plan emphasizes avoiding environmental hazards and reducing the exposure of people and property to coastal hazards by keeping people and property out of coastal floodplains, high-erosion zones, and inlet hazard areas. Sea level rise, earthquakes, storms, climatic changes, tidal waves, tsunamis, winter storms, drought, and wildfires are also addressed in the element.

**Capital Improvements Plan:** A capital improvements plan guides the scheduling of spending on public improvements. A capital improvements plan can serve as an important mechanism for guiding future development away from identified hazard areas. Limiting public spending in hazardous areas is one of the most effective long-term mitigation actions available to local governments.

- The City maintains a Capital Improvements Plan. Projects in the 10 year Priority Investment Element of the Comprehensive Plan includes stormwater management strategies that will minimize property damage from flooding and various stormwater drainage projects.

**Historic Preservation Plan:** A historic preservation plan is intended to preserve historic structures or districts within a community. An often overlooked aspect of the historic preservation plan is the assessment of buildings and sites located in areas subject to natural hazards, and the identification of ways to reduce future damages. This may involve retrofitting or relocation techniques that account for the need to protect buildings that do not meet current building standards, or are within a historic district that cannot easily be relocated out of harm's way.

- Myrtle Beach does not currently have a historic preservation plan. However, development of a historic preservation plan is included as an objective in the Historic Resources Subelement of the 2011 Comprehensive Plan Update. Horry County has a Historic Preservation Plan which includes the City.
- Mitigation strategies such as applying for federal grant funds (i.e., PDM, FMA, HMGP) to protect identified at-risk historic structures in Myrtle Beach could be considered in any future historic planning efforts.

**Zoning Ordinance:** Zoning represents the primary means by which land use is controlled by local governments. As part of a community's police power, zoning is used to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of those in a given jurisdiction that maintains zoning authority. A zoning ordinance is the mechanism through which zoning is typically implemented. Since zoning regulations enable municipal governments to limit the type and density of development, a zoning ordinance can serve as a powerful tool when applied in identified hazard areas.

- Myrtle Beach adopted a new zoning ordinance in 2014, which is included as Appendix A of the City Code of Ordinances, to regulate new development and to guide local decisions for residential, commercial, and industrial growth within the City limits. Unwise development in hazardous areas is prohibited or discouraged through floodplain management regulations and a coastal protection overlay district.

**Subdivision Ordinance:** A subdivision ordinance is intended to regulate the development of housing, commercial, industrial, or other uses, including associated public infrastructure, as land is subdivided into buildable lots for sale or future development. Subdivision design that accounts for natural hazards can dramatically reduce the exposure of future development.



- The City's Subdivision Ordinance is included as Chapter 20 of the City Code of Ordinances. The Subdivision Ordinance accounts for natural hazards by prohibiting the platting of land subject to flooding for residential uses and requiring Base Flood Elevations for subdivisions of greater than 50 lots or 5 acres. The Subdivision Ordinance is scheduled for rewrite in 2015.

**Building Codes, Permitting and Inspections:** Building Codes regulate construction standards. In many communities, permits, and inspections are required for new construction. Decisions regarding the adoption of building codes (that account for hazard risk), the type of permitting process required both before and after a disaster, and the enforcement of inspection protocols all affect the level of hazard risk faced by a community.

- Myrtle Beach has adopted and enforces the 2012 version of the International Building Code.

The adoption and enforcement of building codes by local jurisdictions is routinely assessed through the Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) program, developed by the Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO).<sup>4</sup> In South Carolina, the ISO East Region assesses the building codes in effect in a particular community and how the community enforces its building codes, *with special emphasis on mitigation of losses from natural hazards*. The results of BCEGS assessments are routinely provided to ISO's member private insurance companies, which in turn may offer ratings credits for new buildings constructed in communities with strong BCEGS classifications. The concept is that communities with well-enforced, up-to-date codes should experience fewer disaster-related losses and, as a result, should have lower insurance rates.

In conducting the assessment, ISO collects information related to personnel qualification and continuing education as well as number of inspections performed per day. This type of information combined with local building codes is used to determine a grade for that jurisdiction. The grades range from 1 to 10, with a BCEGS grade of 1 representing exemplary commitment to building code enforcement and a grade of 10 indicating less than minimum recognized protection.

- Myrtle Beach has received a BCEGS rating of grade of 3 for its commercial lines and a rating of 3 for its residential lines.

### 6.3.4 Floodplain Management

Flooding represents the greatest natural hazard facing the nation. At the same time, the tools available to reduce the impacts associated with flooding are among the most developed when compared to other hazard-specific mitigation techniques. In addition to approaches that cut across hazards such as education, outreach, and the training of local officials, the *National Flood Insurance Program* (NFIP) contains specific regulatory measures that enable government officials to determine where and how growth occurs relative to flood hazards. Participation in the NFIP is voluntary for local governments; however, program participation is strongly encouraged by FEMA as a first step for implementing and sustaining an effective hazard mitigation program. It is therefore used as part of this assessment as a key indicator for measuring local capability.

In order for a county or municipality to participate in the NFIP, they must adopt a local flood damage prevention ordinance that requires jurisdictions to follow established minimum building standards in the

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<sup>4</sup> Participation in BCEGS is voluntary and may be declined by local governments if they do not wish to have their local building codes evaluated.



floodplain. These standards require that all new buildings and substantial improvements to existing buildings will be protected from damage by a 100-year flood event and that new development in the floodplain will not exacerbate existing flood problems or increase damage to other properties.

A key service provided by the NFIP is the mapping of identified flood hazard areas. Once completed, the Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) are used to assess flood hazard risk, regulate construction practices, and set flood insurance rates. FIRMs are an important source of information to educate residents, government officials, and the private sector about the likelihood of flooding in their community.

- The City of Myrtle Beach joined the NFIP in 1977. The current effective map date for the City's FIRMs is August 23, 1999.
- As of June 30, 2015, there were 9,921 NFIP policies in force in Myrtle Beach, providing over \$1.8 billion in flood insurance coverage.<sup>5</sup> To date, there have been approximately \$33.5 million paid in insurance claims on 1,219 reported losses (478 of these losses were closed without payment).

**Community Rating System:** An additional indicator of floodplain management capability is the active participation of local jurisdictions in the Community Rating System (CRS). The CRS is an incentive-based program that encourages counties and municipalities to undertake defined flood mitigation activities that go beyond the minimum requirements of the NFIP, adding extra local measures to provide protection from flooding. All of the 18 creditable CRS mitigation activities are assigned a range of point values. As points are accumulated and reach identified thresholds, communities can apply for an improved CRS class. Class ratings, which range from 10 to 1, are tied to flood insurance premium reductions as shown in **Table 6.2**. As class ratings improve (the lower the number the better), the percent reduction in flood insurance premiums for NFIP policyholders in that community increases.

**Table 6.2:**  
**CRS Premium Discounts, By Class**

CRS Class	Premium Reduction
1	45%
2	40%
3	35%
4	30%
5	25%
6	20%
7	15%
8	10%
9	5%
10	0

Source: FEMA

Community participation in the CRS is voluntary. Any community that is in full compliance with the rules and regulations of the NFIP may apply to FEMA for a CRS classification better than class 10. The CRS

<sup>5</sup> General NFIP policy data (participation and coverage) is current as of June 30, 2015 as provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

application process has been greatly simplified over the past several years, based on community comments intended to make the CRS more user friendly and extensive technical assistance available for communities who request it.

- The City of Myrtle Beach is currently a CRS Class 5 Community. This means that citizens living in the Special Flood Hazard Area receive a 25% discount on their Flood Insurance premiums.
- As part of their participation in the CRS, the City conducts annual outreach to the public through brochures that are mailed to residents living in or near the local flood hazard area. The brochure, entitled *A Guide to Regulatory Floodplains and Flood Protection*, includes information on the benefits of the floodplain, flood warning systems, required permits in the floodplain, and actions residents can take to reduce their risk of injury from floods. A copy of the most recent brochure is included in Appendix B.

**Floodplain Management Plan:** A floodplain management plan (or a flood mitigation plan) provides a framework for action regarding corrective and preventative measures to reduce flood-related impacts.

- The City of Myrtle Beach Floodplain Management and Hazard Mitigation Plan serves as both the hazard mitigation plan and the floodplain management plan for the City. Floodplain management is also achieved through the local zoning, subdivision, and flood damage prevention ordinances.

**Open Space Management Plan:** An open space management plan is designed to preserve, protect, and restore largely undeveloped lands in their natural state and to expand or connect areas in the public domain such as parks, greenways, and other outdoor recreation areas. In many instances open space management practices are consistent with the goals of reducing hazard losses, such as the preservation of wetlands or other flood-prone areas in their natural state in perpetuity.

- The City's Cultural and Leisure Services Department maintains a Parks and Recreation Plan. Since the creation of the plan in 2000, the Department has met most of the goals and continues to acquire park land and greenways while expanding facilities to meet the growing demands of the area.
- The Natural Resources Element of the Comprehensive Plan also contains a Parks and Recreation Subelement. The subelement stresses the magnitude of community and individual benefits. The environmental benefits that come from the increase in trees and other native vegetation helps reduce flooding and erosion.

**Stormwater Management Plan:** A stormwater management plan is designed to address flooding associated with stormwater runoff. The stormwater management plan is typically focused on design and construction measures that are intended to reduce the impact of more frequently occurring minor urban flooding.

- The Public Works Department, with assistance from Code Enforcement implements the City's Stormwater Management Plan.

### 6.3.5 Fire Safety and Prevention

The City of Myrtle Beach Fire Department (MBFD) provides emergency response and recovery duties for the city's residents and visitors. The following is a summary of some of the recent accomplishments of this department:

- **2003 Fire Act Grant:** In 2003, the MBFD received a \$24,300 Fire Act Grant, which they used to purchase physical fitness equipment for the fire stations.
- **2004 Fire Act Grant:** In 2004, a \$75,872 Fire Act Grant was used to purchase a public education/command trailer. It should be noted that this trailer is capable of being used as a hurricane preparedness simulator, as well as a training simulator for home fire safety evacuation.
- **2008 Safer Grant:** In 2008, a \$1,581,375 Safer Grant allowed the MBFD to hire 15 firefighters.

### 6.3.6 Administrative and Technical Capability

The ability of a local government to develop and implement mitigation projects, policies, and programs is directly tied to its ability to direct staff time and resources for that purpose. Administrative capability can be evaluated by determining how mitigation-related activities are assigned to local departments and if there are adequate personnel resources to complete these activities. The degree of intergovernmental coordination among departments will also affect administrative capability for the implementation and success of proposed mitigation activities.

Technical capability can generally be evaluated by assessing the level of knowledge and technical expertise of local government employees, such as personnel skilled in using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to analyze and assess community hazard vulnerability. The Capability Assessment Survey was used to capture information on administrative and technical capability through the identification of available staff and personnel resources.

**Table 6.3** provides a summary of the Capability Assessment Survey results for Myrtle Beach with regard to relevant staff and personnel resources. A checkmark (✓) indicates that the given local staff member(s) is maintained through the City's local government resources.

**Table 6.3: Relevant Staff / Personnel Resources**

STAFF / PERSONNEL RESOURCES	IN PLACE	DEPARTMENT	COMMENTS
Planners with knowledge of land development and land management practices	✓	Planning	
Engineers or professionals trained in construction practices related to buildings and/or infrastructure	✓	Construction Services / Public Works	
Planners or engineers with an understanding of natural and/or human-caused hazards	✓	Planning, Construction Services, Public Works, Fire Department, Risk Management	

STAFF / PERSONNEL RESOURCES	IN PLACE	DEPARTMENT	COMMENTS
Emergency manager	✓	Police Department	Fire Department and Risk Manager assist Chief
Floodplain manager	✓	Construction Services	The City has a total of 6 CFMs on staff
Land surveyors	✓	Public Works	No licensed surveyors but Public Works has several staff members who are capable surveyors.
Scientist familiar with the hazards of the community	✓	Public Works	Soil scientist
Staff with education or expertise to assess the community's vulnerability to hazards	✓	Planning, Fire Department, Public Works, Police Department, Construction Services, Risk Manager, Cultural and Leisure Services	
Personnel skilled in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and/or FEMA's HAZUS program	✓	Planning, Construction Services, Public Works, Finance	
Resource development staff or grant writers	✓	All Departments	

### 6.3.7 Fiscal Capability

The ability of a local government to take action is often closely associated with the amount of money available to implement policies and projects. This may take the form of outside grant funding awards or locally-based revenue and financing. The costs associated with mitigation policy and project implementation vary widely. In some cases, policies are tied primarily to staff time or administrative costs associated with the creation and monitoring of a given program. In other cases, direct expenses are linked to an actual project such as the acquisition of flood-prone homes, which can require a substantial commitment from local, state, and federal funding sources.

The Capability Assessment Survey was used to capture information on the City's fiscal capability through the identification of locally available financial resources.

**Table 6.4** provides a summary of the results for the City of Myrtle Beach with regard to relevant fiscal resources. A checkmark (✓) indicates that the given fiscal resource is locally available for hazard mitigation purposes (including match funds for state and federal mitigation grant funds).

**Table 6.4: Relevant Fiscal Resources**

FISCAL RESOURCES	AVAILABLE	DEPARTMENT	COMMENTS
Capital Improvement Programming	✓	Budget, Public Works	1 EMD grant project is currently under construction for flood relief
Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)	✓	Planning	Community Development Administrator

FISCAL RESOURCES	AVAILABLE	DEPARTMENT	COMMENTS
Special Purpose Taxes (or taxing districts)	✓	Administration, Budget	SRF Citywide – beach issues
Gas / Electric Utility Fees			
Water / Sewer Fees	✓	Public Works	
Stormwater Utility Fees	✓	Public Works	Fund supports system maintenance. Capital funds are used for projects.
Development Impact Fees	✓	Finance	Water/Sewer services
General Obligation, Revenue and/or Special Tax Bonds	✓	Budget	
Partnering arrangements or intergovernmental agreements	✓		
Other	✓		Underground Utility Fund (Santee Cooper), Street Tree Inventory (USDA, SC Forestry Commission), SAFER Grant

### 6.3.8 Political Capability

One of the most difficult capabilities to evaluate involves the political will of a jurisdiction to enact meaningful policies and projects designed to reduce the impact of future hazard events. Hazard mitigation may not be a local priority or may conflict with or be seen as an impediment to other goals of the community, such as growth and economic development. Therefore the local political climate must be considered in designing mitigation strategies as it could be the most difficult hurdle to overcome in accomplishing their adoption and implementation.

The Capability Assessment Survey was used to capture information on the City’s political capability. Survey respondents were asked to identify some general examples of local political capability, such as guiding development away from identified hazard areas, restricting public investments or capital improvements within hazard areas, or enforcing local development standards that go beyond minimum state or federal requirements (e.g., building codes, floodplain management, etc.).

- Survey responses indicate that there is a strong local commitment to mitigate the effects of natural hazards in the City of Myrtle Beach. These findings are further confirmed through the City’s past mitigation activities as described in the next section under *Previously Implemented Mitigation Measures*.

### 6.3.9 Local Self-Assessment

In addition to the inventory and analysis of specific local capabilities, the Capability Assessment Survey required City of Myrtle Beach staff to conduct a self-assessment of their perceived capability to implement hazard mitigation activities. As part of this process, city officials were encouraged to consider the barriers to implementing proposed mitigation strategies in addition to the mechanisms that could enhance or further such strategies. In response to the survey questionnaire, city officials classified each of the aforementioned capabilities as either “limited,” “moderate,” or “high.”

Table 6.5 summarizes the results of the self-assessment process for the City of Myrtle Beach.

**Table 6.5: Self-Assessment of Capability**

Planning and Regulatory Capability	High
Administrative and Technical Capability	High
Fiscal Capability	Moderate
Political Capability	High
Overall Capability	High

## 6.4 CONCLUSIONS ON LOCAL CAPABILITY

In order to form meaningful conclusions on the assessment of local capability, a quantitative scoring methodology was designed and applied to results of the Capability Assessment Survey. The methodology used to develop the capability score for the City can be found in Appendix B. The rating attempts to assess the overall level of capability for the City of Myrtle Beach to implement hazard mitigation actions.

### 6.4.1 Capability Score

According to the capability assessment, the capability score for the City of Myrtle Beach is **71**, which represents **90%** of the total number of points achievable through the Atkins capability scoring methodology. This indicates an overall “**High**” level of local capability.

The capability score is based solely on the information provided by local officials in response to the Capability Assessment Survey. The survey instrument was designed to measure local capability based on those indicators determined to be most relevant for mitigation purposes and referenced in FEMA’s “How-to” series planning guidance.

### 6.4.2 Linking the Capability Assessment with the Risk Assessment and the Mitigation Strategy

The conclusions of the risk assessment and capability assessment serve as the foundation for the development of a meaningful hazard mitigation strategy. During the process of identifying specific mitigation actions to pursue, City staff considered not only the City’s level of hazard risk but also the existing capability to minimize or eliminate that risk.

**Figure 6.2** shows a *Risk vs. Capability Matrix* that is used to illustrate the City’s overall hazard risk in comparison to overall capability.<sup>6</sup> Based on the assessments completed for the City of Myrtle Beach, hazard risk was determined to be HIGH while the overall capability is also HIGH. This means that while the City of Myrtle Beach does face some significant potential hazards, it also has significant capacity to implement mitigation measures to eliminate, reduce, or manage those hazards.

<sup>6</sup> Overall hazard risk was determined using the results of the risk assessment combined with information on the following factors: total population, population growth rate, land area, historical disaster declarations, unique hazard risks, NFIP participation and the value of existing Pre-FIRM structures.

Figure 6.2: Risk vs. Capability Matrix

		HAZARD RISK		
		Limited	Moderate	High
OVERALL CAPABILITY	High			✓
	Moderate			
	Limited			