

Long-Term Disaster Recovery And Resilience Strategy



This report provides an overview of the impact of Hurricane Ian and potential actions to reduce the impact of future Severe Coastal Storms on the community's growth and resilience.



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PROMULGATION STATEMENT

City of North Port

Strategy for Long-Term Disaster Recovery and Resilience

The primary role of the government is to provide for the welfare of its citizens. The welfare and safety of citizens are never more threatened than during disasters. The goal of emergency management is to ensure mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery actions exist so that public welfare and safety are preserved.

The Long-Term Disaster Recovery and Resilience Strategy Plan provides a comprehensive framework for disaster recovery. It addresses the roles and responsibilities of government organizations and provides a link to government and private organizations and resources that may be activated to address disasters in the City of North Port.

The Long-Term Disaster Recovery and Resilience Strategy Plan ensures consistency with current policy guidance and describes the interrelationship with other levels of government. The Plan will continue to evolve, responding to lessons learned from actual disaster and emergency experiences, ongoing planning efforts, training and exercise activities, and Federal guidance.

The City Commission adopted this Long-Term Disaster Recovery and Resilience Strategy Plan on April 9, 2024 via Resolution No. 2024-R-12.

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APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION

The transfer of management authority for actions during recovery is done through the execution of a written delegation of authority.

The Long-Term Disaster Recovery and Resilience Strategy Plan delegates the City Manager’s authority to specific individuals if he or she is unavailable.

Unless otherwise indicated, the delegation of authority of the City Manager is as follows:

1. City Manager
2. Deputy City Manager
3. Assistant City Manager

The chain of succession for electorate in a major emergency or disaster is as follows in accordance with the North Port City Charter Section 5.03.

1. Mayor
2. Vice-Mayor

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AUTHORITIES

Legal Authority

- A. Primary Enabling Legislation
 - 1. Florida Statutes, Chapter 252, which delineates responsibilities regarding emergency management.
- B. Applicable Laws, Ordinances, Rules and other Regulations
 - 1. Federal Statutes, Regulations and Directives
 - a. Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8, specifically local
 - b. Public Law 93-234, Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973
 - c. Public Law 106-390, Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000
 - d. Public Law 99-499, Community Right to Know Act of 1986
 - e. Public Law 96-510, Comprehensive Emergency Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980
 - f. Public Law 84-99, Flood Emergencies (1976)
 - g. Public Law 89-665, National Historic Preservation Act (1966)
 - h. National Flood Insurance Act of 1968
 - i. 44 CFR Parts 59-76, National Flood Insurance Program
 - j. 44 CFR Part 206, Federal Disaster Assistance
 - k. National Response Framework
 - 2. Constitution of the State of Florida
 - a. Article VIII S.2(b), Municipal Powers
 - 3. State of Florida Statutes
 - a. Chapter 23, Florida Mutual Aid Act (1998)
 - b. Chapter 119, Public Records
 - c. Chapter 166, Municipalities
 - d. Chapter 252, Emergency Management

References

- A. Federal References
 - 1. Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101, Federal Emergency Management Agency, November 2010.
 - 2. Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP), U.S. Department of Homeland Security. April 2013.
 - 3. National Incident Management System (NIMS), U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
 - 4. National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF), Federal Emergency Management Agency.
 - 5. National Response Framework (NRF), U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
 - 6. U.S. Coast Guard, Tampa, Area Contingency Plan for Oil and Hazardous Materials Substance Pollution Response.
 - 7. National Wildfire Coordinating Group, Incident Command System forms.

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B. State of Florida References

1. State of Florida Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and Administrative Rules, Chapter 9G-2.
2. Florida Enhanced State Hazard Mitigation Plan 2018.
3. Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council, Local Emergency Planning Committee Plans and Standard Operating Procedures.
4. State of Florida Hazard Mitigation Plan.
5. Florida Fire Chiefs Association's Statewide Emergency Response Plan.

C. Sarasota County References

1. Sarasota County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and accompanying Standard Operating Procedures.
2. Sarasota Unified Hazard Mitigation Plan, 2021.
3. Sarasota County Unified Local Mitigation Strategy 2021.

D. City of North Port References

1. City of North Port Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, 2019.
2. North Port City Charter.
3. Code of the City of North Port, Florida.
4. City of North Port Unified Land Development Code.
5. Human Resources Department, Personnel Manual
6. Fire Rescue, Standard Operations Guidelines.
7. North Port Police Department, Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).
8. Utility Department, Standard Operating Procedures.

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PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Purpose

The Long-Term Disaster Recovery and Resilience Strategy (The Strategy) is intended to improve the coordination of long-term recovery operations and enhance North Port's resilience. The Strategy provides guidance and planning considerations to help facilitate and support long-term recovery and resilience, decision-making, assist in establishing long-term recovery priorities, and define longer-term recovery roles and responsibilities among City agencies. The Strategy applies to human-caused incidents, natural disasters, large-scale emergencies, and extraordinary events requiring the deployment of resources. It reflects an understanding that the long-term recovery process can have significant monetary impact and may entail public and private expenditures.

The Strategy provides guidance to assist the City of North Port leaders and partners with:

- Defining pre- and post-disaster roles and responsibilities.
- Identifying key considerations by recovery phase; and
- Promoting coordination, planning and information sharing amongst all stakeholders.

Scope

The Strategy applies to all city departments within the City of North Port, as well as provides guidance to the City's private sector, volunteer organizations, and residents. Furthermore, it applies to response (where appropriate) and recovery operations during state and presidentially declared emergencies or major disasters. The Strategy will be applied after the initial response phase in a disaster has passed and immediate threats to life and property have been stabilized.

The Strategy supports and integrates state and federal plans that aid in recovery operations, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF) and the National Response Framework. The Plan adheres to the planning development guidance set forth in FEMA's Developing and Maintaining Emergency Operations Plans: Comprehensive Preparedness Guide 101 and Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning Guide for Local Governments.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

City of North Port Geographic, Demographic, and Socioeconomic Overview

The City of North Port is a growing city located in Sarasota County, an area recognized nationally for its beautiful beaches, outdoor recreational activities, cultural attractions, and vibrant arts scene. According to Visit Sarasota County, the county welcomed over 2.9 million visitors in 2019, who spent an estimated \$2.9 billion on lodging, dining, shopping, and other activities.

The City of North Port is an important part of the regional tourism industry, as it is close to several popular attractions and beaches, such as Siesta Key. It is home to Warm Mineral Springs, the North Port Aquatics Center, the Atlanta Braves Spring Training facilities, many beautiful parks, preserves, bike and hike trails, golf courses, and a performing arts center.

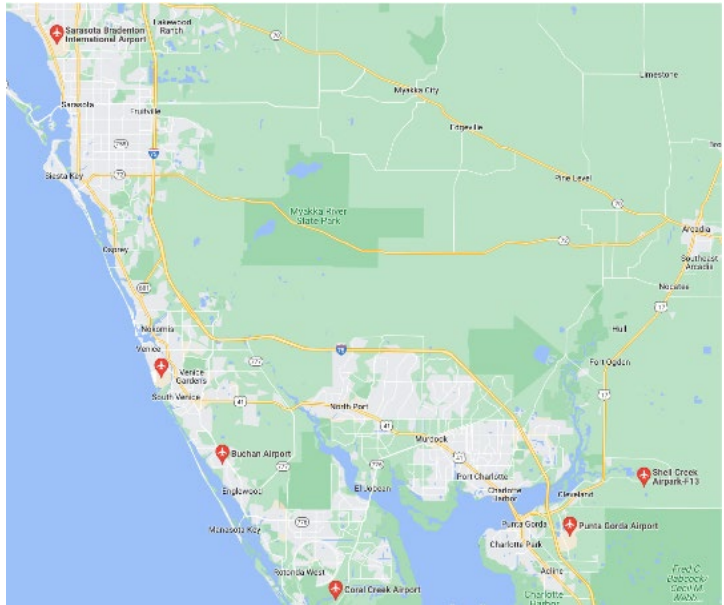
The City of North Port, easily accessed by I-75, has prime development sites, a variety of businesses and restaurants, quality public schools, multiple residential housing options, and dozens of opportunities for sports and recreation. These assets have attracted residents, businesses, and visitors to the area in ever-increasing numbers in recent years.

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Geographical Area

North Port is located on Florida's southwestern coast between Tampa and Fort Myers. It is currently the lead city of the North Port–Bradenton–Sarasota Metropolitan Statistical Area. The City was originally incorporated under the name North Port Charlotte through a special act of the Florida Legislature in 1959. By referendum in 1974, the City's residents approved dropping Charlotte from its name, giving the City of North Port a distinct and separate identity from neighboring Port Charlotte.

North Port is a municipality containing residential subdivisions and extensive networks of streets. According to the United States Census Bureau, the City has a total area of 104.1 square miles (269.8 km²), of which 99.58 square miles (257.9 km²) is land and 4.58 square miles (11.9 km²) (4.40%) is water.



Economy

North Port has seen steady growth in recent years. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the median household income in North Port was \$69,265 in 2021, which was higher than the state median of \$61,777. The City's unemployment rate is 2.3 % and lower than the national average, noted at 3.4% as of April 2023. North Port has experienced a significant increase in population in recent years. The City's population was estimated to be 71,582 in 2021, which is a 19% increase from the 2010 census. In 2022, North Port's population estimate was updated to 85,099. The City has also seen growth in new home construction, with many new housing developments being built to accommodate the influx of new residents.

The median value of owner-occupied housing units (2017-2021) in North Port is \$227,400. Approximately 80.1% of housing units in the City are owner-occupied, while the remaining 19.9% are renter-occupied.

The main industries in North Port include healthcare, education, retail and construction. There are also opportunities in professional and business services and the tourism industry. North Port's proximity to the Gulf of Mexico and its numerous beaches, parks and outdoor attractions makes it a popular destination for tourists and retirees.

City leaders have done well to keep up with development and continue to provide a full range of services to North Port's residents, businesses and visitors. Over the past ten years, the City has invested \$1 Billion to improve roadways, water and sewer infrastructure, and build new fire stations, schools, parks, and recreation facilities. The City, through the City of North Port Economic Development Division, works with the Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County (<https://www.edcsarasotacounty.com>) to provide timely resources and support for new as well as expanding businesses of all sizes.

Current development projects within the City include the construction of additional housing and apartment complexes, expansion of a local shopping center, improvements to existing parks and trails, and the building of nationally known retail stores, restaurants, medical centers and offices.

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North Port was recently recognized as the second-fastest growing city in the U.S. (according to a study by Quicken Loans). North Port was named a "prime candidate to land a major corporate employer," by The Boyd Co. in 2019. In 2021, a Verizon study ranked North Port number 8 on the list of Best Small Cities to Start a Small Business. North Port has been recognized as one of the fastest-growing U.S. cities with attainable, affordable housing in 2020.

Transportation

North Port has a highly developed transportation infrastructure to support its growth and economic resilience. The City is close to several major highways, including I-75, and US-41 that provide easy access to other major cities and destinations in the region.

One of the major roadways that serves North Port is the Tamiami Trail, also known as US-41. This major road stretches from Miami to Tampa and runs directly through North Port. In addition, I-75 runs through the City, providing easy access to other parts of Florida and neighboring states.

In recent years, North Port has made significant investments in transportation infrastructure to serve its growing population and economy better. For example, in 2019, the City coordinated efforts with FDOT's widening of Tamiami Trail (US-41) project by installing a multimodal path in addition to the new lanes developed by FDOT to make the road safer and more accessible for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists.

North Port has several airports within a short drive, including the Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport, located about 30 minutes away. The airport provides connections to several major cities in the region, including Tampa, Orlando and Miami, and offers a range of domestic and international flights. The City is also within a 90-minute drive of two other international airports: Tampa International Airport and Southwest Florida International Airport in Fort Myers. Three municipal airports are also near the City: Punta Gorda Airport in Charlotte County, Venice Municipal Airport, and Albert Whitted Airport in St. Petersburg.

It is important to note that North Port is close to Seaport Manatee, located about 45 minutes away in Palmetto. This deep-water port serves a variety of industries, including containerized cargo, bulk cargo, and petroleum products, making it a critical component of Florida's transportation infrastructure.

In terms of economic resilience, North Port's transportation infrastructure plays a critical role in supporting its economy. The City's access to major highways and transportation hubs makes it an attractive location for businesses looking to establish a presence in the region. Additionally, the City's investments in transportation infrastructure help to ensure that residents and businesses can continue to access goods and services even during times of economic uncertainty or disruption.

Hazards and Vulnerabilities

The City is vulnerable to a wide range of hazards that threaten residents, businesses, government, and the environment, including those listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Hazards for the City of North Port

Hurricanes	Floods
Thunderstorms and Lightning	Tornadoes
Hazardous Materials	Domestic Terrorism
Extreme Heat	Wildfires

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Storm Trends

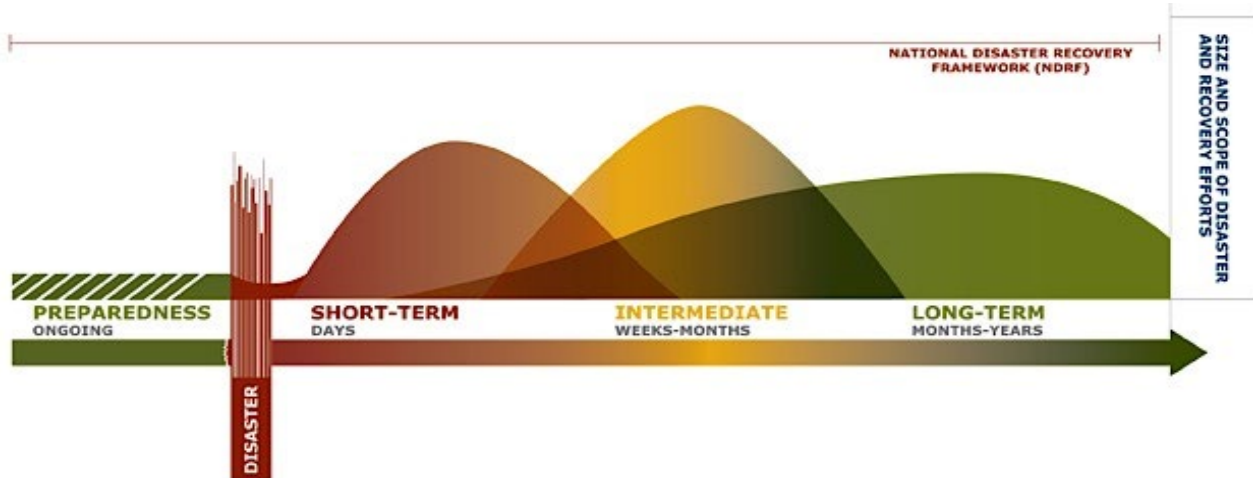
More hurricanes strike Florida than any other state. Between 1851 and 2022, 302 storms made landfall in the U.S.; 121 of those storms hit Florida. Although not every storm is equally destructive, the location of the Florida peninsula is in line for storms moving both northeasterly from the Gulf of Mexico as well as westerly from the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean. Florida’s annual hurricane season generally runs from June through November.

The City has been impacted, if not directly hit, by 72 severe storms in the last 150 years. Storms have ranged from tropical storms (44) with winds around 40-50 mph to hurricanes (28) which may exceed 160 mph winds. Prior to Hurricane Ian, the last hurricane to affect North Port was Hurricane Irma in 2017. On average, Sarasota County faces a hurricane every 8.8 years, with a major hurricane every 37.5 years. The average wind speed for hurricanes in Sarasota County is 103 mph. Major storms have impacted the region around North Port every 2.1 years, with the longest gap being 13 years from 1975 through 1987. Since 1851, the North Port area has been subject to approximately seven Category 4 or 5 hurricanes with winds greater than 130 mph.

According to the National Hurricane Center, storm surge for North Port with a Category 1 or 2 hurricane is less than 3 feet above ground. Category 3 hurricanes may exceed three feet, while Category 4 and 5 hurricanes can bring storm surges greater than six feet and reach over nine feet in select areas of the City. The busiest year for storm activity in the region was the 2003-2004 storm season, with a total of six major storms, including four hurricanes, all Category 3 or higher (Ivan, Charlie, Jeanne, and Francis), within a six-week period.

Recovery Timeline

Figure 1: Timeline for Recovery



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PHASES OF RECOVERY

All disasters are local, and recovery actions must be driven by the local government and the whole community. During disaster recovery operations, the local government will serve as the lead for planning and managing all aspects of the community's recovery. However, community partners play a key role in providing for unmet human needs by providing a broad range of recovery activities.

It is possible that a city and region may face multiple disasters that encompass cascading events. During the development of the Strategy for Long-Term Disaster Recovery and Resilience, it is critical to understand how the municipality will manage recovery operations independently if mutual aid resources are unavailable or delayed.

Disaster Recovery occurs over a fluid timeline of interdependent and concurrent activities. The transition from response to recovery will not follow a set timeline and will be dictated by the incident (see Figure 1 above). As response activities end, direction and control will be transferred from the emergency operations center (EOC) Manager to a Local Disaster Recovery Group.

- The pre-disaster preparedness phase is ongoing. Plans are created to address disaster response, recovery, and mitigation. Once those plans are developed, individuals responsible for plan implementation are trained. Exercises are developed to test plans and identify areas for improvement. Plans are then updated, trained, and exercised as part of an ongoing, continual preparedness cycle.
- The response phase occurs while an emergency is imminent, during the incident, and immediately following the initial incident impact. First responders work to ensure life safety and, to the extent possible, reduce the risk of damage to buildings and infrastructure. Emergency response activities may last hours or days.
- The transition phase focuses on completing response operations and putting the mechanisms in place to transition to a recovery organization. During this phase, the EOC directs damage assessment operations and coordinates the restoration of essential infrastructure and lifelines to make the affected area safe for re-entry. As the EOC deactivates, the Recovery Organization is activated and begins the recovery action planning process. Depending on the situation, this transition phase can last days or weeks.
- The short-term recovery phase is generally the first eight weeks post-disaster. The goal of the short-term recovery phase is to provide support to community residents and businesses to begin the initial stages of recovery. This initial stage may include clearing debris, identifying temporary housing options, providing information on governmental disaster relief (e.g., FEMA and Small Business Administration [SBA] programs), and providing information on insurance claim processing for homeowners.
- The intermediate recovery phase covers the weeks and months following the disaster. During this phase, life safety response activities have ceased, and most vital services may or may not have been restored. However, the community has not yet returned to "normal." The local Emergency Management agency will help transition the Recovery Organization into intermediate recovery. If the locality has received a Presidential Disaster Declaration, a federal/state Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) may be set up to aid the City in managing disaster recovery resources. If the City has not received a federal Individual Assistance (IA) declaration, setting up a local DRC could assist the community by having a one-stop-shop for disaster recovery resource information. This phase is

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focused on returning the community, its residences and infrastructure, and municipal services to a functional level.

- The long-term recovery phase begins as short-term recovery issues are resolved and may span years. Long-term recovery involves rebuilding homes and businesses and developing community-based plans to restore neighborhoods and rebuild damaged infrastructure. The primary objective of long-term recovery is to establish a new and improved “normal” for the community.

Table 2: Key Attributes of Incident Phases

Phase	Overall Goals	Outcomes
Pre-disaster (Preparedness)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete recovery plans and test plans through training and exercise. • Establish relationships among recovery partners, including government, nongovernmental (NGO) and private partners. • Outline potential recovery roles and responsibilities of community organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective plans are in place to facilitate recovery. • Increased coordination developed among community recovery partners for expediting recovery operations.
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect life safety. • Prevent and or reduce damage to the built environment. • Contain the incident. • Gather initial impact information. • Identify critical recovery priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of most, if not all, life-safety measures. • Containment of the threat/hazard. • Initial assessment of impacts. • Identification of immediate recovery objectives.
Transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete all life-safety operations. • Conduct damage assessments. • Reestablish lifelines and make repairs to critical infrastructure to allow for safe re-entry to the affected area. • Activate the Recovery Organization and begin the recovery action planning process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damage assessments are largely complete. • Lifelines are partially or fully reestablished (e.g., power, water, gas). • Critical infrastructure (e.g., roads and bridges) repaired/in the process of being repaired. • Key recovery staff positions activated.
Short-term Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support immediate recovery needs of survivors (e.g., reunification, food, shelter). • To the extent possible, repair and rebuild infrastructure, homes, businesses and other facilities. • Direct recovery activities under an operational Recovery Organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displaced residents are transitioned out of emergency shelters. • Property owners and businesses are in the process of repairing and rebuilding. • Critical infrastructure is repaired/in the process of being repaired. • Operations have been fully transitioned to Recovery Organization.

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<p>Long-term Recovery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfy the recovery needs of survivors. • Continue repairing and rebuilding damaged structures and infrastructure. • Develop a long-term Recovery Strategy to build back better. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents are back in their homes and businesses are reopened. • The community is healthy and more resilient.
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Planning Assumptions

- The damage assessment team’s composition and thoroughness in the field will be crucial to address recovery issues appropriately.
- Various recovery activities will occur concurrently at different rates, creating tension and a competitive demand for resources. This dynamic will be exacerbated when there are secondary hazards and or inadequate processes for prioritizing needs.
- Critical resources and services such as water, electrical power, natural gas, oil, sewer, communications, and transportation may be damaged, compromised, and in limited operation.
- Homeowners, rental property owners, and renters with and without insurance will likely require additional recovery assistance for repairing their homes or finding alternative housing.
- Past disasters have shown that the longer an impacted population is displaced or removed, the less likely they are to return to that community. The economic loss of prolonged population displacement, including lost tax revenue, compounds the problems incurred during the recovery process.
- People with disabilities and others with access and functional needs will require special considerations during recovery. According to FEMA, access and functional-needs populations include populations whose members may have additional needs before, during, and after an incident in functional areas, such as maintaining independence, communication, transportation, supervision, and medical care.
- Recovery progress and assistance activities will be of high interest to local and national media. Media management will be challenging.
- The influx of unaffiliated volunteers, unsolicited donations, and out-of-state contractors will need to be managed to ensure protection from potential fraud or scams on those impacted and made vulnerable by the disaster.
- Volunteers will be necessary for successful recovery operations. Affiliated volunteers will be available via ongoing coordination with members of the City of North Port organizations with expertise in recruiting, coordinating and managing unaffiliated volunteers.
- Small businesses are particularly vulnerable post-disaster; many may not be able to reopen.
- Low-income communities may suffer disproportionately due to a lack of available and affordable housing.
- Often, the residents’ and property owners’ vision are to rebuild the community to its pre-disaster form and condition as quickly as possible. The City of North Port will actively identify opportunities to build resiliency to future disasters and improve the quality of life for its residents throughout the recovery process.

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COLLABORATION AND PLAN INTEGRATION

Collaboration

During hurricane response and recovery efforts in the City of North Port, support is widespread from a variety of community partners, residential grassroots movements, businesses, and nongovernmental and faith-based organizations. The City of North Port will continue to collaborate with a range of local, regional, state and federal entities.

The list below represents organizations actively involved in disaster recovery operations within the City currently established as trusted, reliable partners in North Port's rebuilding efforts.

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) - FEMA is the federal government's lead agency in helping communities respond to and recover from disasters. www.fema.gov
- Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) - FDEM exists to ensure Florida is prepared to respond to and recover from emergencies and mitigate against their impacts. www.floridadisaster.org
- Florida's Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) - Through CERT, citizens can learn about disaster preparedness and receive training in basic disaster response skills such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. www.volunteerflorida.org
- Sarasota County Emergency Management - The mission of Sarasota County Emergency Management is to help local citizens prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. <https://www.scgov.net/government/emergency-services/emergency-management-4420>
- Sarasota County Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) - Local CERT volunteers can provide critical support in their communities by giving immediate assistance to victims before emergency first responders arrive on the scene. CERT volunteers also support the community year-round by participating in community preparedness outreach activities and distributing materials on disaster preparedness and education. <https://www.scgov.net/government/emergency-services/community-emergency-response-teams-cert>
- Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County - The Economic Development Corporation of Sarasota County is a team of engaged public and private leaders committed to being the catalyst for a sustainable, globally competitive, vibrant economy. www.edcsarasotacounty.com
- The Salvation Army Sarasota County - The ministry of the Salvation Army is motivated by its mission to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination. <https://sarasota.salvationarmyflorida.org/>
- United Way of South Sarasota County - The United Way is a community organization focused on supporting and funding local programs that help fight for the health, education and financial stability of our neighbors in Venice, Englewood, North Port, Laurel, Nokomis and Osprey. www.uwssc.org
- North Port Area Chamber of Commerce - The mission of the North Port Area Chamber of Commerce is to promote and encourage business prosperity and to enhance economic development through advocacy, engagement and cooperation. <http://www.NorthPortareachamber.com/>
- Awaken Church, North Port –Awaken Church's vision and mission is to awaken people to God's grace, captivate their hearts with His love, and lead them to passionately pursue Christ. Awaken

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Church endeavors to demonstrate God’s love in action by serving the local community in a variety of ways. <https://www.myawaken.church/>

- Goodwill Industries, Manasota - Goodwill Manasota strives to enhance the dignity and quality of life of individuals and families by helping people reach their full potential through education, skills training and the power of work. Through the sale of donated goods, Goodwill provides employment training, job placement, career services and other Mission Services that lead to self-sufficiency. <https://www.experiencegoodwill.org/communityresources>
- Saint Vincent DePaul-San Pedro - The St. Vincent de Paul Society offers tangible assistance to those in need on a person-to-person basis. They provide emergency assistance primarily for emergency shelter, rent, mortgage assistance, utilities, food, gas, car repairs and other essentials. <https://svdpvenicefl.org/assistance/>
- American Red Cross, Southwest Florida Chapter - The American Red Cross of Southwest Florida serves Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, Manatee, and Sarasota Counties in times of disaster and provides training and service opportunities for residents.

<https://www.redcross.org/local/florida/central-florida/about-us/locations/southwest-florida.html>

Through constant information exchange among these partners, the City of North Port will ensure a common vision and strategy. The City will continue to be challenged to merge and leverage the myriad of funding streams and while being the best stewards possible with homeland security, state and other related funding. North Port will work collaboratively with these partners to foster greater overall community resiliency before, during, and after disasters.

Plan Integration

This Plan aligns with the City of North Port Emergency Operations Plan and other agency-specific plans listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Planning Crosswalk

Recovery Element	Applicable Documents
Disaster Cost Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of North Port Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) Annex: Base Plan, Section VI. Financial Management • Disaster finance policies and protocols
Public Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of North Port CEMP Appendix G: Crisis Communication and Public Information
Disaster Declaration Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of North Port CEMP Annex: Base Plan, Section III Methods of Operation, Subsection C3 City Manager’s Responsibilities • Legal: City of North Port Ordinance No. 2019-23, Section 2; North Port City Charter Section 7.02
Economic Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic development plans • COOP Planning • Supply chain recovery plans

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<p>Health and Social Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarasota County CEMP Annex: Emergency Support Functions, ESF 6 Shelter and Mass Care • Sarasota County CEMP Annex: Emergency Support Functions, ESF 8 Health and Medical • Point of Distribution (POD) plan • Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) plans
<p>Housing Recovery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development ordinances; zoning regulations; comprehensive plan • Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) plans; recovery plans • Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD/Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG) plans • Affordable housing plans
<p>Infrastructure (including damage assessment and debris management)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of North Port CEMP Annex A Recovery • Sarasota County CEMP Annex I: Section IV Public Assistance and Infrastructure. • City of North Port CEMP Annex E: Utilities • Private utility provider recovery plans • City of North Port CEMP, Base Plan, Section IV Preparedness Activities, Subsection E: Continuity of Government (COG) plans • City of North Port CEMP Appendix H: Debris management plans • Sarasota County Local Mitigation Strategy • City of North Port Floodplain Management Plan
<p>Land-Use Planning and Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarasota County CEMP Annex I: Recovery, Hazard Mitigation • Hazard mitigation plan • City of North Port Unified Land Development Code • Florida Building Code

*TBD = To Be Developed

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CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The Strategy is grounded in best practices that support the successful implementation of recovery strategies, including plan alignment with FEMA’s Community Lifelines. The goals and objectives are to generally enhance the City’s preparedness by prioritizing limited funding streams and formulating innovative and resilient solutions to meet community goals and serve as a national model. Additionally, the Strategy analyzes the strengths, innovations, gaps, and areas for improvement in the City’s emergency plans, policies, and procedures to develop strategies for improvement in four critical areas:

1. Pre-event planning: ensuring that the City of North Port has the necessary plans and stakeholders in place to protect and prepare its citizens better.
2. Municipal operations: ensure the City of North Port employs leading and resilient processes and policies to address the community’s needs.
3. Recovery: ensuring the City of North Port is positioned for short, mid, and long-term recovery by engaging the “whole community” in identifying needs, developing recovery strategies, and clearly identifying roles and responsibilities; and
4. Mitigation: ensuring the City of North Port considers innovative and resilient strategies to lessen the impacts of disasters, adopting low or no-cost strategies whenever possible.

COMMUNITY LIFELINE AND RECOVERY SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has created the eight Community Lifelines below as focal points for driving local decision-making during response efforts. The number of lifelines could grow in the future as the concept evolves.



If any of the Community Lifelines are down because of an emergency or disaster, it is an indicator that lives are in jeopardy and/or life routines and supply chains are disrupted. Initially, Community Lifelines were created to ensure unity of effort during the response phase, but as the Community Lifelines concept is integrated into practice, emergency managers can apply this concept to both response and recovery efforts after a disaster.

A lifeline enables the continuous operation of critical government and business functions and is essential to human health and safety or economic security. Lifelines are the most fundamental services in the community that, when stabilized, enable all other aspects of society to function.

FEMA has developed this concept for an objectives-based response that prioritizes the rapid stabilization of Community Lifelines after a disaster. The integrated network of assets, services, and capabilities that provide lifeline services are used day-to-day to support the recurring needs of the community. When disrupted, decisive intervention (e.g., rapid re-establishment or employment of contingency response solutions) is required to stabilize the incident.

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FEMA's Community Lifelines construct is implemented to:

1. Rapidly determine scope.
2. Determine complexity; and
3. Identify interdependent impacts of the incident (including implications for recovery operations).

The Community Lifelines concept provides an operational prioritization and response tool for emergency agencies. This methodology helps inform unified recovery outcomes by providing the following:

- Characterizing the incident,
- Identifying the root causes (priority issue areas),
- Distinguishing the highest priorities; and
- Identifying complex issues from incident information.

Some of the lifelines affected during the City of North Port Hurricane Ian's response and recovery efforts were:

- **Safety and Security** - This lifeline encompasses actions taken to protect people and property during and after a disaster. The impact of Hurricane Ian included structural damage, extensive debris, downed power lines, and compromised infrastructure requiring repair and reconstruction. Widespread flooding and communication challenges compromised the efforts of law enforcement, firefighters, and emergency medical responders as they tended to the safety and security needs of residents.
- **Food, Hydration and Shelter** - The damage from Hurricane Ian and the subsequent loss of power resulted in limited access to safe and nutritious food and water distribution. The damage to food storage facilities and retail access to food, transportation disruptions, and limited availability of fresh food disrupted the food supply chain and interrupted the availability of clean and potable water for drinking, sanitation, and hygiene purposes. Flooding, road damage and power outages also disrupted the distribution and preservation of food.

The sheltering aspect of this lifeline focuses on providing safe and adequate shelter for individuals displaced by a disaster. Hurricane Ian caused significant destruction to homes, buildings, and infrastructure, rendering many people homeless or without secure shelter. Evacuation orders were issued, necessitating emergency shelters to accommodate those displaced. Sheltering resources were made available for residents, but their locations were uncertain, and there was a lack of additional special needs shelters and provisions for those with limited transportation capability.

- **Health and Medical** - With three acute care hospitals within ten miles of North Port, essential healthcare services were minimally impacted. However, hurricane damage to infrastructure left residents with limited access to medical care for a short time. Hurricane Ian resulted in increased demand for medical assistance, injuries and the displacement of healthcare personnel.
- **Energy (Power and Fuel)** - The provision of electricity and fuel for essential services and operations was impacted due to widespread power outages, downed power lines, damaged transformers, and compromised electrical infrastructure. Disruptions in fuel supply chains impacted the availability of gasoline, diesel, and other fuels required for transportation and power generation, leading to power outages and gas shortages.
- **Communications** - Hurricane Ian damaged communication infrastructure, including cell towers, telephone lines, and internet connectivity. This disruption hindered communication between

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impacted areas, emergency responders and individuals seeking assistance. In addition, communications with the County EOC were limited and impacted disaster recovery coordination.

- Transportation - Transportation systems, including roadways, were damaged and limited the movement of goods, services and people. Hurricane Ian damaged roads, bridges, local cargo ports, airports, and railways, making transportation difficult or impossible for several weeks.
- Water Systems - While access to potable water was limited for a brief period of time, North Port Public Utilities repaired and maintained systems quickly to ensure the availability of water and sewer services to residents and businesses. The City's water and sewer infrastructure is highly resilient, but there is a need to upgrade systems to handle water disposal.

ACTIVATION AND RECOVERY

Activation and Notification

The Emergency Manager, in consultation with the City Manager, makes the determination to activate the Strategy. The Emergency Manager will notify City staff of the Strategy activation status during a major incident. Activation should happen early in the response to ensure sufficient time to spin up recovery operations. Considerations for activating recovery operations include. Considerations for activating recovery operations include:

- Size, scope, and complexity of incident impacts, including loss of life and damage to property.
- Anticipated duration for repairs of critical infrastructure, residential, or major commercial areas; and
- Accessibility of the impacted area and anticipated timeline for re-entry.

Once the Strategy is activated, the Local Disaster Recovery Group (LDRG) reports to the EOC to monitor situational awareness and support transition activities. The LDRG, in consultation with EOC staff, determines the committees to be activated. The LDRG is responsible for notifying each committee lead's organization of activation. Each committee's lead organization is responsible for notifying support organizations via phone, email, and other available means. The committee lead's organization convenes relevant support organizations and initiates the recovery action planning process.

Transition from Response to Recovery

The following activities will take place in the days-to-weeks following the incident and may overlap with response operations.

- Complete all life-safety operations initiated during the response phase.
- Activate the Strategy and imbed the LDRG in the EOC (e.g., positioned within the Policy Group or Planning Section).
- Continue to track incident-related costs and document decision-making from the EOC.
- Continue to coordinate with critical infrastructure operators for a timely restoration of critical lifelines.
- Conduct damage assessments of property, systems, and infrastructure.
 - Manage teams tasked with neighborhood and site assessments of public and private property, critical infrastructure, and cultural and or historic sites.
 - Develop disaster summary outlines to estimate damages and Public Assistance thresholds.

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- Liaise with county, state and federal officials to initiate the Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) process and eligibility for federal assistance.
- Aggregate, document, and confirm information gathered in the EOC:
 - Damage assessment and impact data
 - Geographic information system (GIS) maps
 - Contact names and numbers of EOC staff.
- Initiate debris management operations.
 - Activate debris management plan and or standby debris management contract.
 - Determine long-term debris removal needs.
- Plan for re-entry to the impacted area.
 - Identify which areas are safe to return to.
 - Establish detours, roadblocks, etc.
 - Staff and manage checkpoints.
- Initiate a comprehensive and streamlined public information and outreach campaign to residents and businesses focused on community recovery.
 - Establish an incident-specific webpage to serve as a central repository of information.
 - Develop public outreach and messaging related to available recovery assistance (e.g., donations, volunteer services, etc.) and push out through all available channels.
 - Evaluate the need to establish a local information or resource center.
- Activate the Recovery Organization, begin the recovery action planning process, and identify short-term recovery objectives and priorities.

DIRECTION, CONTROL, AND COORDINATION

This Recovery Plan is the official source for the City of North Port pertaining to all emergencies and disasters whenever coordinated disaster recovery is required.

The City Manager is the lead for recovery and reconstruction within the City of North Port and is responsible for the overall direction and control of the effort. The decision to activate recovery committees or subcommittees is determined by the City Manager with input from the LDRG. The typical membership of the LDRG would include the Emergency Manager, City Grant Manager, Utilities, Public Works, Economic Development, Fire, Police, and Planning and Zoning, Finance, Parks and Recreation and City Public Information Officer (PIO).

Direction, control, coordination, and management of recovery operations will be conducted from the recovery office if established. Otherwise, recovery operations will be managed remotely through the home offices of activated organizations.

The LDRG and activated committees will coordinate directly with community organizations, VOAD, and other stakeholders as needed. Nongovernmental recovery partners will operate under the direction of their organizational management.

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INFORMATION COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND DISSEMINATION

Incident Information

Updated information will need to be collected, analyzed, and disseminated repeatedly throughout recovery as often as necessary.

Recovery information will build on the information gathered and disseminated during the response phase. The information noted below is likely known by those coordinating the response phase and will be helpful during the transition and short-term recovery phases.

- Overall scope and degree of damage.
- Affected population demographics.
- Damage to and repair status of the following:
 - Roads and bridges
 - Water control facilities
 - Airfields
 - Government buildings
 - Hospitals
 - Residential property
 - Businesses
- Requests and or need for state and federal assistance.
- Shelter populations, displaced populations, and or temporary housing populations.
- Needed mass care and social services for impacted communities.
- Status of structures without power; damaged natural gas, sewer, and or water lines; and restoration timelines.

Throughout the short-term and long-term recovery phases, active committees will be responsible for providing relevant data, information, and status updates to the LDRG.

Once recovery is initiated, incident information will be compiled into a Recovery Action Plan by the EOC. During long-term recovery, committees will be responsible for providing updates on the implementation progress of the Strategy. Implementation progress will be documented, tracked, and managed by the EOC.

Public Information

The Public Information Officer/Group will take the lead role in the coordination and dissemination of recovery information to the public. The Public Information Officer/Group will maintain an updated list of recovery information and resources for the affected population to be housed on the North Port website.

The Public Information Officer/Group will provide timely updates on topics of concern to the community, such as the following:

- Abandoned homes and properties
- Building codes

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- Business assistance
- Contractor fraud
- Curfew
- Debris removal
- Emergency sanitation issues
- Housing assistance
- Individual assistance and how to access disaster relief program assistance
- Insurance issues
- Locations for food, water, and medical attention
- Mail delivery
- Permits and inspections
- Post-disaster relocation/evacuation
- Pets (sheltering, homeless and lost)
- Redevelopment policies
- Re-entry policies
- Traffic and roadway issues

Public education and outreach will be conducted using a variety of accessible formats to ensure that the entire affected population is reached. To the extent possible, information will be accessible to people with disabilities and others with access and functional needs, as well as those with limited English proficiency, and will be shared in a clear, consistent and culturally sensitive manner.

COMMUNICATIONS

Internal Communications

The Local Disaster Recovery Group (LDRG) is responsible for ensuring there are processes and procedures in place to facilitate interoperable communications among local recovery stakeholders, including:

- Establishing and managing official communication channels and processes for sharing information across recovery committees and subcommittees.
- Establishing policies for the management of sensitive issues and information.
- Developing and implementing a formal process for requesting and tracking resources.
- Setting policies for communicating with elected officials.

Internal communication methods will include the following:

- Starlink Internet Service
- AT&T FirstNet Cellular Priority Service for Public Safety
- Verizon Frontline

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- 800mhz Truncated Radios

External Communications

The LDRG is responsible for ensuring there are processes and procedures in place to facilitate interoperable communications with outside agencies, including:

- Establishing processes for communicating with state and federal recovery agencies.

External communication methods will include the following:

- Everbridge Notification Systems
- Local Radio (WKDW 97.5) Remote Broadcasting Agreement
- Other local and social media contacts
- Email and City Website updates

ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE AND LOGISTICS

Mutual Aid

Requests for assistance may be made from other governmental entities in accordance with existing or emergency negotiated mutual aid agreements and understandings. Such assistance may take the form of equipment, supplies, personnel, or other available capabilities. Duly authorized officials enter into all agreements and understandings. Copies of existing agreements are on file with the City Clerk and with the City EOC.

Procurement and Cost Documentation

Individual Departments will maintain detailed records tracking personnel hours, supplies, materials, equipment, and other disaster-related costs to ensure eligibility for obtaining federal disaster declarations and receiving reimbursements and payments for staff and projects during recovery. Qualifying for and obtaining assistance from the federal government relates directly to the approach and details of cost tracking. Departments are responsible for submitting financial reports to the Grants Division.

Departments may consider employing their own internal process for recording and documenting expenditures and should maintain all recovery-related records for a minimum of 5 years after the last action on the disaster application; the State of Florida General Records Schedule for State and Local Government Agencies may require an even longer record retention. This process for recording and documenting expenditures by departments must be consistent with other disaster recovery policies and procedures.

PLAN MAINTENANCE

This Strategy is designed to be a living document and should be updated and reviewed regularly after completing the identified recovery objectives. The City Emergency Manager is responsible for developing and maintaining the Strategy. The City Emergency Manager or their designee will ensure the Plan is reviewed and updated. The Strategy should be updated with minor changes based on lessons learned following a real-world incident or the completion of an objective or implementation step. At a minimum, the City Manager will coordinate the Plan update and coordinate with the City Commission to reapprove the Strategy every three years. All updates or changes to the Strategy will be documented within the Record of Changes.

PLAN DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY

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The City of North Port enlisted the assistance of the Olson Group, Ltd. (OGL) in developing the Strategy soon after recovery efforts were underway following the Hurricane Ian disaster event. Using the City's recent hurricane response and short-term recovery efforts as a backdrop or "case study" for strategy development, the City endeavored to analyze this recent, local, real-world event by incorporating lessons learned and community input, thus creating a framework that is highly relevant to the City of North Port and its surrounding areas. The Strategy addresses long-term disaster recovery elements and includes considerations for improving current processes and building future capabilities to promote resilience throughout the City.

THREE-PHASED APPROACH

The OGL Team implemented the following three-phased approach to achieve North Port's goal of improving the City's long-term recovery and resilience capabilities:

- Phase 1: Discovery
- Phase 2: Plan Development
- Phase 3: Plan Initiation

Phase 1: Discovery – Assessment, Community Outreach and Gap Analysis

The Discovery phase reviewed the City's response and recovery activities, capabilities and needs assessment, existing plans, policies, and procedures, along with a gap analysis and whole-community engagement through surveys, interviews, and community forums to frame what long-term recovery and resilience look like for the City of North Port and its citizens. The detailed elements of this phase include:

- Conducted the Project Kickoff Meeting.
- Reviewed the City's ongoing recovery activities.
- Data call for response and recovery documentation (Situational Reports, Memos, Meeting Minutes, Existing Plans, Executive Orders, Briefings, Emergency Ordinances, Major Events and Decisions, etc.)
- Developed and distributed four surveys to stakeholders and the community.
 - Internal Executive Survey
 - Internal Front-Line Survey (digital)
 - Internal Front-Line Survey (paper)
 - External Community Stakeholder Survey
- Facilitated two Public Input Meetings (one in-person and one virtual).
- Identified the viability of and gaps in existing plans, policies and procedures.

Phase 2: Plan Development – Subject Matter Expert (SME) Analysis

Phase 2 included the development of the Strategy and addressed long-term recovery goals, objectives, and implementation steps. The following represents the detailed elements of this phase.

- Development of the Long-Term Disaster Recovery and Resilience Plan to include:
 - The Hurricane Ian event overview and timeline
 - A City of North Port Profile consisting of the following elements:

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- Geography
- Economy
- Transportation
- Tourism and Population
- Community Partners
- and Tropical Storm Profile
- Long-Term Recovery Strategy Phases, Considerations, Funding, and Working Groups
- The OGL Team organized all the significant findings from Phase 1 into the following five categories:
 - EOC and Resource Management
 - Emergency Communications
 - Operational Structure and Recovery Coordination
 - Community Resilience and Economic Sustainability
 - Disaster Training and Safety

Phase 3: Plan – Strategy Initiation Prioritization and Implementation

The Plan Initiation Phase consists of conducting a workshop to present the identified goals, objectives, and implementation steps for long-term recovery and resilience, along with the strategic Plan for long-term disaster recovery and resilience. During the workshop, stakeholders achieved consensus and discussed assignments and timelines for the identified objectives. Following the workshop, the Planning Team finalized the City's Strategy for Long-Term Disaster Recovery and Resilience.

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ANNEX A: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

As part of the development of the Strategy, input gathered from City officials and community members through surveys, targeted departmental interviews, and community engagement meetings was used to make observations regarding strengths, innovations, gaps, and areas for improvement in current City emergency response and recovery planning activities. Several common long-term recovery themes were identified throughout this process. The common themes serve as the basis for creating recommendations for the Strategy and are grouped into five critical areas (1. Operational Structure and Recovery Coordination, 2. EOC and Resource Management, 3. Emergency Communications, 4. Community Resilience and Economic Sustainability, and 5. Disaster Training and Safety) detailed below.

A. Operational Structure and Recovery Coordination

The widespread flooding during this event uncovered a need for improvements in infrastructure (roads and bridges), floodplain management and flood mitigation efforts (maintenance and replacement of water control facilities). Improving building codes and standards, drainage systems, flood mitigation infrastructure, and stormwater management will make the City more resilient during and after intense storms. The City noted they are also planning to employ a full-time floodplain manager to assist with these efforts.

The City's successful management of bulk debris collection exceeded expectations. However, it is advisable for the City to review and enhance mutual aid agreements, establish permanent staging areas across the City for organic and mixed debris sorting and disposal. The City should work with the Public Information Officer (PIO) as there is a need to enhance communication to residents regarding collection guidelines and information to address residential waste removal post-disaster.

Another issue relating to recovery coordination included the location of a disaster recovery and assistance center not accessible to all residents of the City. City staff mentioned that FEMA often determines the locations in communities without consulting with local officials. City officials may attempt to work with FEMA to preplan for a more centralized disaster recovery center location or consider establishing multiple locations, so all citizens have access.

There were also communication and coordination issues between City and County officials throughout the event, arising from a lack of understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the City of North Port versus Sarasota County. Changes in County Emergency Management leadership and EM structure have been made without being shared with the City.

Additionally, community members and City staff expressed frustrations relating to volunteer management and coordination, so it may be beneficial to engage volunteers in the planning process and improve volunteer coordination well ahead of the hurricane season.

Key Findings

Major strengths

- The City of North Port has embraced an organized response and recovery approach by establishing NIMS and ICS protocols within the City of North Port Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, 2023, with the intention of implementing them throughout the government structures of the City. This includes an ICS structure that identifies outlying positions associated with specific Essential Support Functions (ESFs).

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- Departmental roles and responsibilities in an emergency are clearly described within the City of North Port Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, 2023.
- The City of North Port has set specific NIMS and ICS training requirements for managers and supervisors.

Areas of vulnerability or potential improvement:

1. Many City staff indicated there were serious communication and coordination issues between the City and Sarasota County.
 - Recommendation:
 - The City should make improving communication and coordination with Sarasota County a high priority.
 - Implementation Steps
 - Establish or revisit emergency communication plans shared between the City and County EOCs to improve emergency communications.
 - Establish or revisit channels between the City and County EOCs to improve assessment, reporting and resource allocation.
 - Make additional efforts to engage with Sarasota County EM staff to discuss challenges and find solutions to issues that have arisen in the past well before disasters take place.
 - Challenges
 - Changes in the Emergency Management staff in the County and lack of information-sharing have been obstacles to achieve effective communication and coordination in the past. Again, intentional, concerted efforts must be made to build relationships to ensure effective, united recovery efforts are made.
 - Available funding can be found through the following:
 - Existing North Port resources and personnel
 - Completion of this recommendation should be considered by Summer 2024.
2. Although the City already has a disaster plan in place, efforts can be made to update and enhance City Emergency Management plans, policies, and procedures to effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from future disasters based on lessons learned. Lack of mass care and shelter coordination and limited local resources for unmet human needs (shelter facilities, disaster recovery centers, transitional housing, and disaster mental health capabilities) were some of the notable gaps uncovered in emergency planning through the interview process.
 - Recommendation
 - The City of North Port should make it a high priority to enhance disaster planning as it relates to sheltering, mass care and human needs. North Port Social Services is not fully integrated into shelter and mass care/human services planning. There is a need for improved emergency shelter, transitional housing and other human services coordination as part of a more integrated disaster Recovery Strategy.

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- Implementation Steps
 - Establish a position within the EOC to support mass care and unmet human needs during disaster response and recovery operations.
 - Include North Port Social Services in sheltering and mass care planning. Provide training for social services staff on disaster management, individual assistance, donation management, and sheltering/disaster housing.
 - Engage volunteers in the planning process to improve coordination. Provide training on donation management and distribution.
 - Work to establish partnerships and memorandum of understandings to assist with sheltering and disaster mental health and other human services needs following disasters and emergencies impacting the City.
 - Promote plans that foster greater coordination with NGOs, volunteers and call centers.
 - Coordinate with FEMA to preplan and ensure locations for disaster recovery centers and that points of distribution are strategically placed within the City in multiple areas so that all residents have access to assistance resources.
 - Coordinate with potential agencies or businesses to determine whether they can host a DRC or POD at their location.
 - Challenges
 - Funding and lack of available existing facilities within the City may prove to be challenges for improving sheltering and mass care efforts. The City can make efforts to engage the local business community and other community partners as they also pursue grant funding opportunities.
 - Available funding can be found through the following:
 - Existing North Port resources and personnel
 - Completion of this recommendation should be considered prior to the Storm Season of 2024.
3. The establishment of mutual aid agreements is critical for response and recovery operations. The impacts of Hurricane Ian on the City were widespread and significantly affected neighboring cities and communities. Stakeholders indicated that in some cases, challenges arose regarding agreements (i.e., the need for inspectors) as neighboring areas were overwhelmed with their own response and recovery efforts.
- Recommendation
 - It is imperative that the City takes a closer look at current mutual aid agreements to ensure that they receive needed support and assistance in the event of a catastrophic, widespread disaster.
 - Implementation Steps
 - Review current cooperative/mutual aid agreements, ensuring information is still relevant, applicable and up to date.
 - Identify other potential partners and establish new agreements needed for specific functions (i.e., permitting and debris management).

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- Florida Department of Transportation Grants
 - NOAA Office of Coast Management Grants
 - Southwest Florida Water Management District
 - FEMA Hazard Mitigation Program Grants (including BRIC)
 - Community Development Block Grants (Mitigation/Disaster Response)
- Completion of this recommendation should be considered prior to the Storm Season of 2025, to commence on June 1, 2025.

B. EOC and Resource Management

The City's EOC is currently located within City Hall. During Hurricane Ian, the City building lost power, and with no emergency power generator in place, this impacted critical EOC operations for nearly three days. There is a need for a dedicated, fully hardened EOC separate from City Hall that is equipped with the necessary infrastructure (backup power systems, generators, building reinforcements, etc.) to ensure continuity of services during and after hurricanes and other disasters.

During Hurricane Ian, City staff also indicated issues related to resource management, coordination, and allocation within City departments and Sarasota County. EOC staff lost track of when and where resources were coming and what to do when they arrived. Despite repeated requests, the City still does not have access to WebEOC, and this further caused significant logistics and communications issues.

Finally, it was determined that changes to the current EOC staff organizational structure may be needed to ensure more effective communication and coordination during response and recovery operations.

Key Findings:

Major Strengths

- The existing City of North Port Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, 2023 for the City of North Port appoints the Emergency Manager through the City Manager and is separate from the Fire Rescue Department.
- Training and Exercises are coordinated through Emergency Management and departmental stakeholders.
- The City of North Port has established NIMS and ICS protocols within City of North Port Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, 2023, identifying clear roles and responsibilities of City personnel within the EOC.

Areas of vulnerability or potential improvement

1. It was discovered that the City of North Port did not have an independent Emergency Operations Center (EOC) facility and that Emergency Management operated within City Hall during Hurricane Ian.
 - Recommendation:
 - The City of North Port should make it a high priority to establish an EOC within the City limits, separate from City Hall, the Fire Rescue Department or North Port Police Department, which will allow Emergency Management personnel to operate independently from other City departments or stakeholders during an emergency.

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- Implementation Steps
 - Locate, design and build a separate site to house EOC operations within City limits.
 - Ensure the new EOC's infrastructure is sufficient to support EOC operations and equipment such as generators, media accommodation, communication capabilities, Call Center, Joint Information Center, personnel housing, and storm resilience.
 - Develop Emergency Management as a separate division under the authority of the City Manager's Office.
 - Challenges
 - Separating the Emergency Management team may be challenging in its current structure under the Fire Rescue Department. Isolating Emergency Management as a separate entity will be imperative to the successful creation of an EOC able to function independently and facilitate command and control under the City Manager.
 - Available funding for the development of an EOC can be found through the following:
 - FEMA Emergency Operations Center Grant Program
 - Florida Emergency Management Performance Grant
 - Economic Development Grants
 - Completion of this recommendation should be considered prior to the Storm Season of 2025.
2. The City found gaps in plans, policies, and procedures relating to resource management during Hurricane Ian's response and recovery efforts.
- Recommendation:
 - The City can work to enhance and improve resource management procedures for emergency preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery operations.
 - Implementation Steps
 - Develop a single-point resource ordering and tracking system run through the EOC to ensure awareness of deployed resources and resources being received.
 - Continue to make concerted efforts to obtain access to WebEOC to improve resource coordination with the County and other entities.
 - Develop more robust plans, policies, and procedures relating to volunteer resources and donations management.
 - Further develop current resource management tools/lists to inventory available City assets and gather existing deployable equipment and resource data from City departments.
 - Improve inventory tools to include resource type, quality, purpose, and storage locations.
 - Ensure City resources are maintained on a regular basis. Identify and replace old or broken City resources as needed.
 - A preventive maintenance schedule should be in place for all technology, including UPS systems, to ensure efficient utilization during emergencies. This should be managed by the IT office to ensure monitoring.

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- Challenges
 - There may be continued obstacles in obtaining access to WebEOC. However, the City should be persistent in making requests, as the use of WebEOC is crucial in achieving successful logistics and resource coordination during emergencies. It may be necessary to obtain assistance from the Florida Division of Emergency Management to ensure access to WebEOC is granted.
 - Available funding for resource management needs can be found through the following:
 - FEMA Emergency Operations Center Grant Program
 - Florida Emergency Management Performance Grant
 - Economic Development Grants
 - Completion of this recommendation should be made by Summer 2024.
3. The City's current EOC staff and organizational structure created challenges in response and recovery coordination, as many departments were running their own emergency operations.
- Recommendation:
 - The City should highly prioritize centralizing EOC operations and further define or add additional roles, responsibilities, and staff positions to effectively meet needs during emergency events.
 - Implementation Steps
 - Consider adopting a unified command structure for the EOC, with the Emergency Manager functioning separately from the Fire Rescue Department and North Port Police Department under the City Manager's Office.
 - Add a deputy EM, Disaster Recovery Coordinator, or other staff role as a secondary position to the Emergency Manager to support long-term recovery efforts.
 - Ensure departments have a liaison in the EOC.
 - Employ a separate EM volunteer, CERT representative, or team of volunteers who are focused on City EM.
 - Create a position in the EOC for a Technology Coordinator. This position would coordinate all technology logistics to include internet, cellular, phone and network services. Requests for GIS and related data would also be coordinated through the Technology Coordinator.
 - All data that is created for the event, including logs, records, GIS metadata and map sets, should be warehoused and shared with the Technology Coordinator for utilization and distribution, as appropriate.
 - Challenges
 - There may be resistance from departments or other staff to make changes to the current structure as they may already have established procedures in place. Budgetary concerns may also be an issue when considering adding additional staff. Emergency Management, the Fire Rescue Department and Law need to work together to identify potential limitations in the current structure and find ways to make changes to current EOC operations so the City can more effectively respond and recover from future disasters.

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- Available funding for EOC staffing needs can be found through the following:
 - Existing North Port resources and personnel
 - Florida Emergency Management Performance Grant
- Completion of this recommendation should be made by Summer 2024.

C. Emergency Communications

Issues with emergency communications arose not only due to power and cell tower outages but also because of challenges with alerts, notifications, information sharing and messaging of critical information (i.e., evacuation routes, shelters, disaster recovery centers) from City officials to residents. The nine tower sites throughout the County are connected by a microwave ring, but high winds at the Toledo Blade and North Port towers misaligned the microwave dishes, causing intermittent system connectivity to those two sites (the fiber backup connection was also damaged and sustained outages at the same time).

North Port Police Department serves as the 911 center backup for Sarasota County. The City also set up an emergency call center staffed with volunteers from various departments and supported by those who regularly fielded calls daily through North Port's public information center. Due to the power outages, communications were down for about 12 hours, limiting the ability to share information, collect data, or receive assistance requests from residents. Fortunately, the City was able to route calls for services and information to the County during that time. There was a heavy reliance on social media within the initial 24-to-48-hour period post-disaster.

The City may work to improve current communication systems and practices to ensure residents have access to timely and accurate information during hurricanes and invest in advanced technology for early warning, monitoring, and emergency response. Improvements to critical infrastructure (i.e., cell towers, power grids) can also help to ensure the continuity of communications.

Key Findings

Major Strengths

- The City of North Port has recently partnered with the local radio (WKDW 97.5) to allow for emergency broadcast interruptions by City officials.
- The 2019 CEMP, revised in 2023, emphasizes the usage of common language and terminology to avoid confusion when multiple agencies are cooperating.
- The Fire Rescue Department, North Port Police Department and some public works and utility vehicles operate with 800mhz truncated radios to help improve communications during an incident.
- North Port Police Department has acquired two satellite phones in the event of catastrophic communications failure. Sarasota County's EOC also has satellite phones available for use.

Areas of Vulnerability or Potential Improvement

1. The City can make improvements in developing emergency communication functions and organization within the ICS structure. Since effective communication is crucial during emergencies, this should be made a high priority in emergency planning efforts.
 - Recommendation:
 - The City would benefit by further developing and formalizing a Communications Group in preparation for emergencies.

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- Implementation Steps
 - Pre-identify disaster roles for individuals (i.e., Community Outreach Coordinator, call center staff) and provide training ahead of emergencies to ensure staff is clear on roles and responsibilities.
 - Create a more structured Joint Information Center (JIC). The JIC Manager can coordinate activities to support the Public Information Officer (PIO) functions, as well as Rumor Control, Call Center, Social Media Outreach, Alerts, and other Public Information Activities.
 - The Communications Group should take part in Emergency Management drills and schedule training and exercises to test communication protocols and technology.
 - The City would benefit from formal emergency-related training for all potential and current call center personnel. The creation or update of a referral/information handbook can help staff provide consistent guidance for staff assisting callers.
 - Efforts should be made to create or further develop a PIO manual and field manual to coordinate emergency public information sharing among the City Manager's Office, the Fire Rescue Department and the Police Department.
 - Challenges
 - It can be difficult to allocate time for regular drills and training exercises require allocating time, staff, and resources.
 - Effective coordination among various components of the JIC, including Rumor Control, Call Center, Social Media Outreach, and Alerts, can be complex and may require clear protocols and communication channels.
 - Manuals need to be kept up to date to remain effective, needs to a continuous process.
 - Available funding for the development of the communications team can be found through the following:
 - FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Grant
 - Florida Emergency Management Performance Grant
 - Economic Development Grants
 - North Port Resources and Personnel
 - Completion of this recommendation should be considered prior to the Storm Season of 2024.
2. With the loss of cellular, radio, and power, emergency communications were seriously hindered during Hurricane Ian. The City should make improvements to its current capabilities to maintain communications with key stakeholders, decision-makers, and the public and meet the need to share situational awareness and make informed decisions.
- Recommendation:
 - The City should make efforts to enhance disaster stabilization and recovery operations by taking advantage of improved technology to provide situational awareness and important communications with the public, City staff and other governmental and nongovernmental partners.
 - Implementation Steps

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- Work with the IT Group to secure software to allow for the creation of a GIS dashboard and real-time sharing of information via alternative communications channels such as the North RePort as well as social media.
 - Continue to make efforts to obtain access to WebEOC.
 - Continue to explore dual-band cellular internet and other internet access/cellular service options to maintain communications, share situational awareness and make informed decisions.
 - The City should continue to review emerging data to ensure cellular and telephone communications, information flow, and network stability and backup. This effort needs to be coordinated through IT so that there is continuity.
 - Challenges
 - Obtaining access to WebEOC may prove to be a challenge, so it may be necessary to obtain assistance from the Florida Division of Emergency Management to ensure access is granted. While cost may be an issue in improving technology, the City is currently exploring opportunities to obtain funding to acquire updated communications resources.
 - Available funding for communication needs can be found through the following:
 - Florida Emergency Management Performance Grant
 - FEMA Disaster Recovery Funds
 - Completion of this recommendation should be made by Storm Season 2024
3. Feedback received from residents indicated that improvements should be made in communicating emergency information to the public, as some mentioned they did not receive clear information regarding sheltering, evacuations, road closures, storm conditions, and disaster recovery centers. The City has done an excellent job in public information sharing during emergencies through the implementation of a City Call Center, partnering with a local radio station, and employing social media.
- Recommendation:
 - The City's Communications Group ensures that all North Port residents are informed of important emergency-related messaging and information by building upon and improving current methods and practices targeted towards the City's populations.
 - Implementation Steps
 - Improve public information campaigns regarding shelter locations, capabilities, and resources. Campaigns should include facility storm ratings, what evacuees can expect at a shelter, and what to bring with them.
 - Ensure exact locations and addresses of DRCs and PODs are clearly communicated to citizens using various communication methods (text, email, City website, local news media, etc.)
 - Develop informational materials and messaging for the public regarding stages of permitting, waivers, expedited processes, emergency versus non-emergency repairs and instructions for how to apply for permits.
 - Establish a dedicated team to monitor and address rumors on social media to ensure accurate, swift communications and prevent the spread of misinformation.

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- Update the City EOC Website frequently to provide storm preparedness, shelter and post-storm information.
 - Ensure communications reach City populations with technology or language barriers by using alternate communications in multiple languages for those without internet access (i.e., signboards, flyers, inserts in City mailings, etc.)
 - Continue to partner with local radio station WKDW (97.5 FM) and other media outlets to broadcast emergency messages and alerts. Efforts should be made to secure formal written agreements with any media partnerships.
- Continue using email, newsletters and text alerts through Everbridge for storm communications and messaging.
- Challenges
 - Developing and executing can be resource intensive. Budget limitations may affect the scope and reach of effective public information campaigns.
 - It may be challenging to ensure that residents actively engage with and respond to public information campaigns.
 - Some residents may have limited access to communication channels like the internet or local news media to receive warning and shelter information.
 - It can be challenging to monitor and respond to all relevant conversations effectively.
 - It is difficult to encourage residents to opt in to receiving email, newsletters, and text alerts.
- Available funding for public information sharing needs can be found through the following:
 - Existing North Port resources and personnel
- Completion of this recommendation should be made by Fall 2024

D. Community Resilience and Economic Sustainability

Many citizens indicated they were not as prepared for the intensity and impact of Hurricane Ian and needed more guidance in preparing and recovering, including how to navigate through FEMA and other assistance programs and understanding permitting processes for repairs post-storm (i.e., waivers, definition of emergency repairs, expedited permits). City officials reported that they can improve efforts to manage citizens' post-storm expectations by educating the public about City-service recovery and repair times and processes. They are also working to simplify permitting requirements and improve the online permit application platform.

Developing community resilience training programs and educational campaigns related to disaster assistance programs can assist residents and businesses in preparing for and recovering from future disaster events. Establishing and strengthening community and volunteer networks, such as Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) and the American Radio Relay League (ARRL), can further promote self-sufficiency, mutual assistance, and resilience-building activities. The City may also explore opportunities for businesses to partner with the City to build long-term recovery and resilience.

City of North Port Long-Term Disaster Recovery and Resilience Strategy

Key Findings

Major Strengths

- Though not explicitly found in the existing City of North Port Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, 2023 for the City of North Port, it is noted that the City's Grant Manager took the initiative to organize and assemble key stakeholders to form a Recovery Coordination task force for City government financial repair and coordinate recovery. Meetings were held regularly with two separate groups of stakeholders to address recovery issues, funding and coordination of efforts post-storm.
- One group is comprised of the Grant's Coordinator, insurance team, EM, Finance, Procurement, Utilities, Public Works, Facilities, and other department representatives and staff with active recovery roles within the City. The second group includes FEMA and FDEM (with some City team members attending both group meetings).
- Through the Annual Hurricane Expo, the Building and Planning Department provides storm preparedness information to residents and business owners.

Areas of Vulnerability or Potential Improvement

1. The City of North Port did not have a formal Long-Term Disaster Recovery Group established. Without central coordination of recovery activities taking place, the City's Grants Manager set up a recovery working group.
 - Recommendation:
 - The City of North Port should make it a high priority to establish a formal LDRG to enhance community recovery, resilience and economic sustainability.
 - Implementation Steps
 - Further develop and formalize a LDRG that meets regularly with key City staff to collaborate and identify ways to support long-term recovery goals with finances and other resources.
 - Ensure that community partners, businesses, volunteer groups, and trusted NGOs currently serving in short-term recovery efforts are also involved in meetings for short and long-term recovery and resilience.
 - Meet regularly with local business partners to collaborate and identify ways they can support and plan specifically for long-term economic sustainability goals.
 - Continue to identify long-term recovery and resilience grant funding opportunities at the federal and state levels, noting application deadlines and information.
 - Enlist the assistance of state liaisons or other partners as needed to ensure success in the application processes.
 - Continue to identify other nongovernmental creative funding opportunities to support community long-term recovery, resilience and economic sustainability.
 - Challenges
 - The City of North Port should be commended for its proactive approach to developing its own LDRG and is already active in pursuing grant funding opportunities. While encouraging community participation may be challenging, the City can continue to build upon its strengths within its current working group and work together to promote a whole community approach to long-term disaster recovery, resilience and economic sustainability.

City of North Port Long-Term Disaster Recovery and Resilience Strategy

- Available funding related to long-term disaster recovery, community resilience and economic sustainability can be found through the following:
 - Florida Emergency Management Performance Grant
 - Economic Development Grants
 - FDEM funding and grant programs
 - Resilient Florida Program
 - Community Development Block Grants
 - Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
 - FDEM State Floodplain Management Program
 - Completion of this recommendation should be considered prior to the Storm Season of 2024.
2. Citizens of North Port expressed a need for guidance in preparing for hurricanes and other disasters. Although there are many community groups willing to help support response and recovery efforts, there were coordination issues with volunteers serving in the City.
- Recommendations:
 - The City can work to enhance Community Resilience and Economic Sustainability by improving efforts to educate residents about disasters in North Port and more effectively engage the community in serving. There is an opportunity for businesses to partner with the City to build long-term recovery and resilience.
 - Providing regular opportunities for engagement through planning meetings well ahead of the storm season can assist in fostering better working relationships with those partners committed to building a more resilient community.
 - Implementation Steps
 - Develop and strengthen community partnerships and engagement opportunities by including community partners, businesses, volunteer groups, CERT teams and trusted NGOs currently serving in short-term recovery efforts in community emergency planning.
 - Meet regularly with neighboring communities and surrounding counties to strengthen those partnerships and discuss long-term recovery and resilience goals.
 - Establish new relationships with local and national organizations not currently serving the City during and after emergencies and enlist their resources for longer-term recovery efforts.
 - Create a Community Resources handbook to maintain a contact list with phone numbers for all community partners, local NGOs, CERT teams and other volunteer support organizations.
 - Identify neighborhoods with at-risk or vulnerable populations and designate teams or volunteers to follow up with those communities after an event.
 - Work with CERT teams to develop more localized Neighborhood Watch programs to support response and recovery efforts, utilizing volunteers in specific neighborhoods as appropriate.
 - Ensure coordination of various partners through regular planning meetings and delegate tasks early to avoid duplication of efforts. Solicit advice from neighboring cities that are doing this well (i.e., Team Punta Gorda).
 - Coordinate with public and private partner organizations to develop appropriate messaging and establish efficient collection, sorting, and distribution processes regarding donations management during recovery and resilience activities.

City of North Port Long-Term Disaster Recovery and Resilience Strategy

- Continue to strengthen public/private sector relationships through regular meetings with key existing partners and identify new ones to participate.
 - Continue to provide more opportunities for citizens and businesses to receive education and training regarding disaster preparedness, hazard mitigation, business continuity planning, and other topics related to community and economic sustainability and resilience.
 - Enhance citizen preparedness and resiliency capabilities by expanding and sustaining the North Port Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and outreach activities.
 - Utilize the City's CERT to share information, promote program opportunities, enhance networking, and respond to regional citizen volunteer program needs.
 - Promote the involvement of CERT teams in local emergency operations plans and in filling capability gaps in emergency preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.
 - Consider utilizing a CERT representative, volunteer, or team of volunteers who are focused on City Emergency Management operations.
- Challenges
 - Some existing agreements may be complex and require legal and administrative expertise to review.
 - Ensuring that agreements are legally sound and administratively supported may require specialized expertise, such as legal counsel or contract management.
 - Negotiating and drafting new agreements, especially those involving specific functions like permitting and debris management, can be complex and take considerable time from initiation until final execution.
 - Available funding for Community Resilience and Economic Sustainability can be found through the following:
 - Local Businesses
 - United Way and other NGOs
 - Small Business Association (SBA) Loans
 - Completion of this recommendation should be made by Summer 2024.
3. There is concern that the City of North Port can enhance the permitting and land-use management. City staff have advised that finding qualified inspectors has been a huge challenge. Plans examiners and zoning staff are also in short supply. Post-disaster permitting operations.

Recommendations

- Cross-train existing staff to perform multiple roles within permitting and land-use management. This can provide flexibility during staff shortages and increase overall efficiency.
- Actively recruit and train qualified inspectors, plans examiners, and zoning staff.
- Establish apprenticeship or internship programs to groom individuals interested in these roles.
- Invest in technology and software to streamline permitting and zoning processes.
- Expand online permitting and application submission to make it easier for residents and developers to interact with city services, reducing the workload on staff.
- Explore regional partnerships with nearby municipalities to share resources and staff during emergencies or periods of high demand.

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- Challenges
 - Encouraging responsible land-use planning and zoning to reduce vulnerability to flooding can face opposition from developers or property owners who may be financially impacted by stricter regulations.
 - Recruiting and training new personnel takes time, and there may be immediate needs that cannot be met by newly hired or trained staff.
 - Cross-training existing staff requires time and resources, and it may temporarily reduce productivity while undergoing training.
 - Staff and stakeholders may resist changes to established processes.
 - Completion of this recommendation should be made by Summer 2024.
 - Available funding related to long-term disaster recovery, community resilience and economic sustainability can be found through the following:
 - Economic Development Grants
 - Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
4. The recent storms have identified areas of high hazard that were not previously identified. There is a need to revise land use planning strategies. It is crucial for those in flood-prone areas to comprehend the risks and take steps to mitigate them. This includes recognizing that all areas within a floodplain are at some risk and that risk can be mitigated but may never be completely eliminated in some cases. According to the National Flood Insurance Program, there are approximately 275 buildings in the Special Flood Hazard Areas of the City.
- Recommendations:
 - The City should continue efforts to revise master plans and land use regulations to minimize structures and curtail future development in the high hazard areas.
 - The City has been actively participating in the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System (CRS) since October 1992. North Port holds a class 5 rating from the NFIP CRS Program.
 - This rating is based on land-use and flood control management practices of the City. Participation provides residents in Special Flood Hazard Areas a 25% discount on flood insurance policies.
 - The City of North Port should continue to work with the State Floodplain Management Program to review structures in high hazard areas and develop strategies to reduce development in those areas.

Challenges

- Designing and maintaining effective flood control structures to withstand flood events can require complex engineering and may include navigating complex regulations and policies to ensure compliance.
- Securing funding for flood control projects and ongoing maintenance can be difficult.
- Acquisition of existing structures in high hazard areas may impact municipal revenue.

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- Adjusting to the increased frequency and severity of flood events due to climate change, which may render existing floodplain management strategies insufficient and require ongoing review and modification.
- Completion of this recommendation should be made by Spring 2024.
- Available funding related to long-term disaster recovery. Community resilience and economic sustainability can be found through the following:
 - Economic Development Grants
 - Resilient Florida Program
 - Community Development Block Grants
 - FDEM State Floodplain Management Program

E. Disaster Training and Safety

Community members reported a need for additional education, information, and training on a variety of disaster-related preparedness and safety issues, such as knowing how and when to evacuate, how to prepare their homes for storms, or what to expect and bring to a shelter. Community education and awareness campaigns can be further developed to teach residents about the importance of hurricane preparedness, emergency supply kits, evacuation plans, and insurance coverage.

Current outreach opportunities identified by City staff include the annual Hurricane Expo, National Night Out, Fire Rescue Open House, meetings with Homeowner Associations and North Port Welcome events for new residents. While much of the City's personnel are already engaged in preparedness outreach, these efforts can be enhanced to reach more North Port residents.

Departmental staff would also benefit from additional internal Emergency Management training via workshops, online classes, and exercises to include education regarding command operation and the role of the EOC. The City should coordinate with Sarasota County Emergency Management to secure training on current plans, policies, EM structure, and procedures to improve coordination and fully prepare for future disaster response and recovery efforts.

Key Findings

Major Strengths

- The 2019 CEMP, revised in 2023, outlines emergency training requirements for North Port City staff. It also provides guidelines for public awareness and education activities for the community.
- The training section of the 2019 CEMP, revised in 2023, provides detailed information about training-related roles and responsibilities, levels of training, types of training by emergency management function and phases, required basic levels of NIMS and ICS training, and exercises.

Areas of Vulnerability or Potential Improvement

1. Since many residents expressed a need for more training regarding disaster safety and emergency preparedness, the City can work to expand current public education efforts throughout the North Port area.
 - Recommendation:

City of North Port Long-Term Disaster Recovery and Resilience Strategy

- The City can benefit by further developing community disaster training programs for North Port residents to support community resilience and enhance local short and long-term recovery.
 - o Implementation Steps
 - Further develop and expand public information workshops and campaigns regarding personal emergency preparedness. Workshops should include home preparation, generator safety, emergency supplies, and food and water storage.
 - Increase whole-community engagement and outreach activities through the City website, social media accounts, public events, workshops, newsletter and other local outreach opportunities.
 - Continue to develop, provide, and procure educational materials to City residents to assist with public resilience and preparedness outreach and increase efforts of citizens to become self-sufficient for a minimum of 72 hours (3 days) of personal preparedness.
 - Create classes on topics related to post-disaster activities specific to the City of North Port (i.e., debris management, FEMA reimbursements and Individual Assistance Programs, permitting, insurance processes, etc.) to increase awareness and manage public expectations.
 - Provide support and promote CERT training, exercises, and volunteer events.
 - Aid, information, and marketing for CERT conferences, trainings, and workshops.
 - o Challenges
 - Budget limitations may affect the frequency and scale of workshops.
 - Ensuring sufficient attendance and engagement in workshops can be challenging.
 - Developing, producing, and distributing educational materials can be costly and require coordination to ensure materials reach a wide audience.
 - o Available funding for community training can be found through the following:
 - Local Businesses
 - NGOs and Community Partners
 - Local CERT Teams
 - United Way of South Sarasota
 - o Completion of this recommendation should be considered prior to the Storm Season of 2024.
- 2. Based upon some of the internal and external coordination and communication issues uncovered by the Hurricane Ian response, it is apparent that there is a need to highly prioritize additional disaster and emergency management training activities for City staff and to seek educational opportunities with Sarasota County. Specific training for roles and responsibilities to support emergency management functions is also warranted.
 - o Recommendation:
 - The City should update and further develop a more robust education plan for City staff to increase departmental understanding of Incident Command Structure Emergency Operations, roles and responsibilities and other emergency management-related concepts. Additionally, requests for joint training opportunities should be made to Sarasota County

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Emergency Management to increase and improve emergency collaboration and coordination during future disasters and for long-term recovery and resilience.

- o Implementation Steps
 - Increase Incident Command System (ICS) training opportunities for City departments.
 - Schedule and host other training courses for City departments.
 - Require staff to take additional online independent-study FEMA courses.
 - Provide role-specific training for staff (i.e., shelter, intake, and individual assistance training for North Port Social Services staff; call center training for staff volunteers).
 - Continue to conduct City-wide hurricane/disaster exercises to evaluate City capabilities and improve public/volunteer organization interoperability. Ensure the involvement of all City departments and County EOC.
 - Conduct long-term recovery and resilience training and exercise opportunities to evaluate the capabilities and interoperability of City departments, community volunteers, not-for-profit organizations, and other resilience and recovery-based stakeholders.
 - Conduct tabletop exercises to familiarize EOC personnel with plans and procedures regarding their specific roles.
 - Schedule and coordinate training events to address new resilience-oriented training identified and recommended by City and local partners.
 - Coordinate additional joint training and exercises with Sarasota County Emergency Management.

- o Challenges
 - It may be challenging for City departments to understand the importance of investing in emergency-related training for their employees.
 - It may be necessary to require training of employees as part of the onboarding or annual performance review process for City staff.
 - City Emergency Management staff can continue to promote the importance of training with departmental leadership through regular meetings and communications.
 - Budget limitations may affect the frequency and scale of workshops.
 - Ensuring sufficient attendance and engagement in workshops can be challenging.

- o Available funding for City Emergency related training and educational needs can be found through the following:
 - Sarasota County Emergency Management
 - Free classes are offered around the state via SERT TRAC through the Florida Division of Emergency Management
 - Shared funding via department sponsorships

- o Completion of this recommendation should be made by Fall 2024

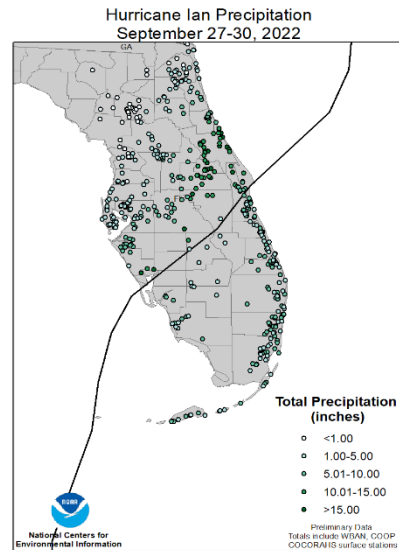
City of North Port Long-Term Disaster Recovery and Resilience Strategy

ANNEX B: DETAILED EVENT OVERVIEW

EVENT OVERVIEW

North Port is located inland but is still susceptible to coastal flooding and storm surge if a hurricane were to make landfall nearby. Depending on the storm's path and the topography of the area, neighborhoods close to bodies of water like the Myakka River or the Myakkahatchee Creek could be at risk of flooding. It could have significant effects on the City and its residents, with the potential for extensive damage to buildings and infrastructure. It is important to note that the specific effects on North Port, Florida, would depend on various factors such as the storm's track, size, and proximity to the City.

Hurricane Ian made landfall in the early afternoon of September 28, 2022, just west of nearby Fort Myers, Florida, at Cayo Costa, one of the largest barrier islands along the Gulf of Mexico. Ian was a strong Category 4 hurricane with sustained winds of approximately 150 miles per hour. The Florida Medical Examiners Commission reports that approximately 149 Floridians died as a result of Hurricane Ian, including ten in Sarasota County. The storm caused approximately \$50-\$65 billion in damage in the area. Hurricane Ian total damages are estimated at \$112.9 billion. Hurricane Ian is identified as the third-most expensive weather disaster in world history.



Hurricane Ian produced a catastrophic storm surge along the southwest coast of Florida, impacting the barrier islands near Fort Myers, as well as rivers and bays such as the Gasparilla Sound-Charlotte Harbor, Myakka River, and the Peace River. Peak storm surge levels in the Myakka River exceeded 12.7 feet, with major flood levels set at 10.7 feet. Impacts were felt in Myakka City, Hidden River and the City of North Port. North Port is home to approximately 80 miles of canals and waterways, including Myakkahatchee Creek, which is part of Big Slough. The City remained within Ian's inner eyewall for approximately 7 hours, with sustained surface winds around 90 mph and gusts exceeding 115 mph. The amount of rainfall in the City ranged from 15 inches up to 21.45 inches. Coupled with unprecedented winds, this caused widespread damage to homes, businesses, and public facilities throughout the City.

In the event of a forecasted hurricane, local authorities may issue evacuation orders to ensure the safety of residents. Evacuation orders could result in temporary displacement and the need to seek shelter in designated evacuation centers or with friends and family outside the impacted area. Issuing evacuation orders will also require significant communications support to maintain the ability to keep the community informed and to provide direction to residents and visitors.

North Port conducted over 800 evacuations. Shelters had to be relocated due to flooding, and many residents were not able to return to their homes for days because of the flood waters. Over 25 different departments, agencies, and organizations from within the City, the state, and outside of the state provided support.

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Hurricanes can disrupt transportation and logistics networks, affecting the flow of goods and materials. This disruption can impact local businesses and trade operations, leading to delays or shortages in supplies and increased costs.

Strong winds can damage power lines and infrastructure, leading to widespread power outages. Residents may experience extended periods without electricity, impacting daily life and potentially causing food spoilage and communication challenges.

The aftermath of a hurricane can have significant economic repercussions. Businesses may suffer damage or temporary closures, leading to job losses and decreased economic activity. The cost of recovery and rebuilding efforts can also strain local resources and finances. The City has done well to leverage local resources and federal funding. The City recently received \$33,923,439 in grant funding from FEMA’s Public Assistance program to assist in recovery and rebuilding efforts, easing the financial burden off local taxpayers.

The City of North Port has shown tremendous resilience after weathering an unexpected Category 5 hurricane. Unlike the businesses and residents of nearby cities in Lee County struggling to recover nearly a year after Hurricane Ian initially made landfall, the City of North Port did not experience the same economic, infrastructure, or residential impacts. Despite the gross flooding and severe damage, the City has worked to expand, become stronger and grow as a community since the aftermath of Hurricane Ian. The City's slogan, "Community of Unity," adopted during the Hurricane Ian recovery period, represents the ongoing collaborative efforts taking place among many to improve the overall quality of life in North Port.

It is crucial for residents of North Port to stay informed about hurricane preparedness, follow evacuation orders if issued, and have emergency plans in place to ensure their safety in the event of a severe storm. Local and county Emergency Management agencies must maintain the ability to effectively provide specific guidance and instructions based on the unique circumstances of each hurricane event.

EVENT TIMELINE

Date	Time	Event
Sept. 23, 2022	1400 hrs.	1 st City of North Port Emergency Management Meeting for Tropical Depression 9 (Hurricane Ian), continued daily through Sept. 28, 2022
	1518 hrs.	Gov. DeSantis Declared a State of Emergency for Sarasota County as well as Multiple Other Counties in the Florida Peninsula
Sept. 24, 2022	Unspecified	Pres. Biden Declares a Federal State of Emergency for Sarasota County as well as Multiple Other Counties in the Florida Peninsula
		North Port City Attorney Review of Emergency Declaration Authority
	1438 hrs.	Gov. DeSantis Declared Florida State of Emergency
Sept. 25, 2022	Unspecified	City of North Port Debris Removal/Monitoring Contract Review by City Attorney

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Date	Time	Event
	2315 hrs.	North Port City Attorney Review of Collective Bargaining Agreements Under Emergency Declaration
		NOAA Tropical Storm Watch Issued
		NOAA Storm Surge Watch Issued
Sept. 26, 2022	Unspecified	North Port City Attorney Review of Emergency Order Procedures
		City of North Port Declares a State of Emergency (Extended Every 7 Days Through Dec. 10, 2022)
		City of North Port PD Establishes DOC (DEPT OPS CENTER)
	1805 hrs.	NOAA Tropical Storm Warning Issued
		NOAA Storm Surge Warning Issued
		NOAA Hurricane Watch Issued
Sept. 27, 2022	1500 hrs.	City of North Port Opens Shelter at LaMarque Elementary
	1715 hrs.	NOAA Tornado Watch Issued
	1830 hrs.	NOAA Shelter in Place – Unsafe Conditions Outside
	2000 hrs.	City of North Port EOC Activation
Sept 28, 2022	0508 hrs.	NOAA Hurricane Warning Issued
	1040 hrs.	NOAA Lee County Alert – Not Safe Outside
	1500 hrs.	Dept. Ops. Status Reports for Hurricane Ian
	1505 hrs.	NOAA Extreme Wind Warning
	1508 hrs.	NOAA Official Landing Hurricane Ian – Cayo Costa
Sept. 29, 2022	Unspecified	Pres. Biden Declares the State of Florida a Federal Disaster Area
		City of North Port Opens a Shelter at Woodlands Middle School
		Red Cross and Salvation Army Coordinate Mass Feedings at San Pedro and the Mullen Center, respectively

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Date	Time	Event
		LaMarque Emergency Shelter Evacuations Begin
	1725 hrs.	1 st of 3 City of North Port Hurricane Ian EOC Briefings (10/1/2022, 10/2/2022)
	2000 hrs.	City of North Port Enacts Curfew from 2000 – 0600 hrs. Nightly
Sept. 30, 2022	0800 hrs.	Florida Department of Health Press Release: I-75 Closed from North Port to Port Charlotte
Oct. 1, 2022	Unspecified	City of North Port New Fiscal Year Begins
		City of North Port Hurricane Ian Call Center Established
	0800 hrs.	1 st City of North Port Operational Briefing continued daily through Oct. 11, 2022
		San Pedro Point of Distribution Ready to Open
1800 hrs.	1 st City of North Port Hurricane Ian Planning Meeting continued daily through Oct. 7, 2022	
Oct. 2, 2022	0800 hrs.	City of North Port Hurricane Ian Call Center Open
	1000 hrs.	City of North Port Command and General Staff Meeting
		Report of Big Slough Water Receding (Peaked at 34 ft and is now 32 ft)
	1000 hrs.	FPL (Florida Power and Light) Reports 19,000 Homes Restored with Power
		City of North Port Utilities Report City Water Fully Operational
1300 hrs.	Governor DeSantis' visit to North Port EOC	
Oct. 3, 2022	0830 hrs.	1 st City of North Port Departmental Meeting continued twice weekly through Oct. 18, 2022
		City of North Port Boil Water Notice Issued
	1000 hrs.	City of North Port Directors Briefing
		City of North Port Debris Removal Began

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Date	Time	Event
		City of North Port Public Works Reports All Traffic Lights, except for Price Blvd., are Working
	1800 hrs.	Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) Mobile Field Hospital Established at Benderson Property (Sumter and 41)
Oct. 5, 2022	1300 hrs.	National Guard Demobilized from Morgan Center
Oct. 6, 2022	Unspecified	City of North Port Disaster Recovery Center Opened at Shannon Staub Library
	0800 hrs.	City of North Port FD DOC closed
	1800 hrs.	North Port Public Works DOC Closed
Oct. 7, 2022	1800 hrs.	City of North Port Boil Water Notice Lifted
		City of North Port PD Demobilized
Oct. 11, 2022	1900 hrs.	DMAT Demobilizing
Oct. 12, 2022	0900 hrs.	Sarasota Memorial Hospital North Port Re-Opens
	0800 hrs.	Ambulance Strike Teams Demobilized
Oct. 13, 2022	Unspecified	McCaughey Crossing Repaired and Opened
	1300 hrs.	City of North Port Executive Summary Meeting
Oct. 17, 2022	0700 hrs.	City of North Port Schools Re-Open

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ANNEX C: RECOVERY FUNDING

FUNDING RESOURCES

- **Safeguarding Tomorrow Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Program**

Agency contact: Laura Dhuwe, State Hazard Mitigation Officer, FDEM Chief of Mitigation
Email: Laura.Dhuwe@em.myflorida.com

Website: <https://www.floridadisaster.org/dem/mitigation/safeguarding-tomorrow-through-ongoing-risk-mitigation-storm-revolving-loan-fund/>

Description: This program is used by states to establish revolving loan funds to provide hazard mitigation assistance to local governments. The Safeguarding Florida RLF's program's purpose is to reduce risks from "disasters, and natural hazards and other environmental harm" and make federal funds available for local projects.

Application Details: Loan recipients must have an approved hazard mitigation plan and submit a proposal to the State to apply. To submit a proposal for funding, communities can access the Florida Project Proposal Form at www.surveymonkey.com/r/r/fproposals.

- **Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program**

Agency contact: Florida Department of Emergency Management

Phone: (850-815-4532) Email: non-disasterprograms@em.florida.com

Website: <https://www.floridadisaster.org/dem/mitigation/builing-resilient-infrastructure-and-communities-bric-grant-program/>

Description: Rather than providing funds for immediate or short-term disaster recovery needs, the BRIC grant program invests in local long-term mitigation and community resilience projects aimed at reducing risks from future disasters, moving communities toward a more proactive approach to long-term recovery.

Application Details: Individuals and communities cannot apply for assistance directly. HUD funds are awarded to state and local governments, which become grantees. Those who receive grant money may include state agencies, non-profit organizations, economic development agencies, citizens and businesses.

- **Community Development Block Grants for Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)**

Agency contact: Florida Housing Finance Corporation or Sarasota County

Phone: 850-488-4197 Email: CDBG-DR@DEO.MyFlorida.com

Website <https://www.floridahousing.org/programs/developers-multifamily-programs/competitive/community-development-block-grant-disaster-recovery-programs>

Description: CDBG-Mitigation funding helps communities harden infrastructure and critical facilities to prevent losses from future disasters.

Application Details: Individuals and communities cannot apply for assistance directly. HUD funds are awarded to state and local governments, which become grantees. Those who receive grant money may include state agencies, non-profit organizations, economic development agencies, citizens and businesses.

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- Resilient Florida Grant Funding

Agency contact: Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Website: <https://floridadep.gov/ResilientFlorida>

Description: Eligible applicants may receive funding assistance to perform vulnerability assessments, plans for potential hazards, and adaptation and mitigation projects related to flood and sea level rise.

Application Details: Contact ResilientFloridaGrants@FloridaDEP.gov for information about the next grant period and how to apply.

DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

- Individual Assistance

The Individual Assistance Program connects individuals, households and businesses to assistance programs and recovery resources after a disaster. Assistance may include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans, and other programs. Those impacted by a disaster or emergency can apply for help through the toll-free tele-registration hotline, available through the Federal Emergency Management Agency at 1-800-621-FEMA (3362) (TTY: 1-800-462-7585) or online at DisasterAssistance.gov.

- Small Business Administration (SBA) Loan Program

Small businesses and residents may apply for low-interest disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Applications can be made online at <https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/ela/s/> or by calling SBA's customer service center at 1-800-659-2955. Disaster Loan Outreach Centers (DLOC) or Business Recovery Centers may be set up locally in impacted areas after an emergency to assist businesses and residents in person with the disaster loan application process.

- Sarasota County Disaster Assistance/ Vendor Services Program

The Sarasota County Disaster Assistance/Vendor Services Program invites businesses to partner with the County's Disaster Assistance Program by providing a variety of products and services to the community during and after natural disasters. These services may include debris removal, food and catering, housing and shelter assistance, fuel and generators, etc. Businesses may apply online to participate in the program. More information can be found via the Sarasota County website at the link below: <https://www.scgov.net/government/financial-management/procurement/disaster-assistance-program>.

- Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA)

Disaster Unemployment Assistance, also referred to as Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance, is a federally funded benefit program that provides temporary financial assistance for individuals who become unemployed because of a disaster. In Florida, individuals can apply through the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity either online at <https://floridajobs.org/Reemployment-Assistance-Service-Center/reemployment-assistance/claimants/disaster-unemployment-assistance> or by calling Florida's DUA customer service center at 1-800-385-3520.

- Disaster Legal Services

To assist Florida residents with disaster-related legal issues, a toll-free legal aid hotline is available 24/7 at 1-866-550-2929. This service allows callers to request the assistance of a lawyer and is a partnership between the Florida Bar, the Florida Bar Young Lawyers Division, the American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

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- Tax Considerations

In the aftermath of a disaster, there are special tax law provisions that can help businesses and taxpayers recover financially. In some cases, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will allocate additional time to residents to file returns and pay taxes. Individuals and businesses (in federally declared disasters) are eligible to claim casualty losses on their tax returns for the previous year. To be eligible, they must file an amended return for the current year. Other tax relief programs may also be offered. Citizens can visit the IRS website at www.irs.gov or the Florida Department of Revenue at www.floridarevenue.com for more details.

- Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program (CCP)

The CCP provides additional funding to assist disaster-impacted individuals and communities to support community-based outreach, counseling, and other mental health services to disaster survivors. There are two types of grant programs through the program: the Immediate Services Program provides funding for up to 60 days post-disaster declaration, and the Regular Services Program, which provides funding for up to nine months after a declaration. To apply for a grant, visit <https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac/ccp>.

- Disaster Behavioral Health

The Florida Department of Health (FDH) and the Florida Division of Emergency Management have partnered with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to promote the SAMHSA Distress Helpline. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories. Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor. For more disaster behavioral health resources, visit the FDH website at <https://www.floridahealth.gov/%5C/programs-and-services/emergency-preparedness-and-response/healthcare-system-preparedness/disaster-behavioral-health/index.html> or FDEM at <https://www.floridadisaster.org/dem/recovery/Disaster-Mental-Health-Resources/>.

Disaster Behavioral Health responders work with communities and other responders to assist with the mitigation of emotional, psychological, and physical effects of a disaster, natural or man-made. Individuals who want to support disaster behavioral health efforts can receive Psychological First Aid training through a free online, interactive course offered by The National Child Traumatic Stress Network: www.nctsn.org.

- Public Assistance

FEMA's Public Assistance Program provides supplemental grants to state, tribal, territorial, and local governments and certain types of private non-profits so that communities can quickly respond to and recover from major disasters or emergencies. For more information: www.floridapa.org.

- Hazard Mitigation Assistance

FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant programs provide funding for eligible mitigation activities that reduce disaster losses and protect life and property from future disaster damage. Programs include the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM), and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA). For more information, call Florida's mitigation hotline at 1-(850) 815-4524.

- Disaster Recovery Centers

A Federal/State Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) is a physical location within the community where representatives from local, state, and federal agencies can locate staff to provide the community information on programs in one central location. In the absence of a federal disaster declaration, localities may open a local disaster recovery center in partnership with NGOs, such as the Red Cross or Salvation Army, to help connect individuals and businesses with local resources and programs. Individuals may use FEMA's Disaster

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Recovery Center locator to find a nearby center at <https://egateway.fema.gov/ESF6/DRCLocator> or call 2-1-1 or the North Port Family Service Center at (941) 429-3700 for local community assistance information.

- **National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)**

The NFIP program aims to reduce the impact of flooding on private and public structures. It does so by providing affordable insurance to property owners, renters and businesses and by encouraging property owners, renters, and businesses to adopt and enforce floodplain management regulations. These efforts help mitigate the effects of flooding on new and improved structures.

For more information, visit NFIP at www.floodsmart.gov or call 1-800-621-FEMA, TDD# 1-800-427-5593.

OTHER LONG-TERM RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE RESOURCES

- **(UF)/Institute of Food and Agricultural Services (IFAS)-Sea Grant and Coastal Hazards Preparedness Program**

Agency and contact: Armando Ubeda, Sarasota County Florida Sea Grant-UF/ IFAS Extension Agent

Websites: Florida Sea Grant: <https://www.flseagrant.org/our-communities/>

Phone: 941-861-9900 Email: aubeda@ufl.edu

- **NOAA Sea Grant Resilient Communities and Economies**

Website: <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Our-Work/RCE>

Description: The Florida Sea Grant is a part of a federal/state/local partnership that supports research and education to conserve coastal resources for residents and visitors. Additionally, Sea Grant educates communities and individuals on hazard mitigation and long-term recovery strategies. Communities can seek Sea Grant expertise to support their specific community resilience and economic sustainability initiatives and receive help with conducting vulnerability assessments and resilience planning.

- **National Coastal Resilience Fund- NOAA Office of Coastal Management**

Agency: NOAA Office of Coastal Management and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Website: <https://www.coast.noaa.gov/funding/>

Description: This grant program funds projects that restore and strengthen natural landscapes that absorb the impacts of storms and floods to protect coastal communities.

- **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)**

Agency and Contact: Victoria Peters, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District TAP Coordinator, Phone: (239) 872-5904

Website: <https://www.fdot.gov/planning/systems/tap/default.shtm>

Description: The TAP provides funding for projects that promote non-motorized transportation, including bike paths, pedestrian walkways, and other infrastructure improvements. These types of projects can enhance the resilience of communities by providing alternative modes of transportation and reducing reliance on automobiles.

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- **Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Grant Program**

Agency and Contact: Department of Homeland Security/FEMA

Website: <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/emergency-operations-center/fy-23-nofo#a>

Description: This grant is intended to help improve emergency management and preparedness capabilities by supporting flexible, sustainable, secure, strategically located, and fully interoperable EOCs with a focus on addressing identified deficiencies and needs. It assists with equipping, upgrading, or constructing EOC projects to provide fully capable facilities to support command, control, and coordination of multi-agency responses to major disasters or emergencies.

- **Cooperative Funding Initiative**

Agency and Contact: Southwest Florida Water Management District

Website: <https://www.sfwmd.gov/doing-business-with-us/coop-funding>

Description: The South Florida Water Management District is a regional agency committed to ensuring that local perspectives are incorporated into our activities. The objective of the Cooperative Funding Program is to assist local governments, public and private water providers, and other entities with construction and/or implementation of alternative water supply (AWS) and water conservation (WC) projects that support or complement the District's mission. Supporting local water projects is an important part of protecting and managing regional water resources.

For the latest information or technical assistance, you may contact Stacey Payseno (spayseno@sfwmd.gov or 561-682-2577); Jim Harmon (jharmon@sfwmd.gov or 561-682-6777); Robert Wanvestraut (rowanves@sfwmd.gov or 561-682-6615); or Rosines Colon Ortega (rcolon@sfwmd.gov or 561-682-6715).