

Long-Term Disaster Recovery And Resilience Strategy



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Purpose of the Plan

- ▶ Provide 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.
- ▶ Intended to improve the coordination of long-term recovery operations and enhance North Port's resilience.
- ▶ Provide guidance and planning considerations to help facilitate and support:
 - ▶ long-term recovery and resilience,
 - ▶ decision-making,
 - ▶ assist in establishing long-term recovery priorities,
 - ▶ define longer-term recovery roles and responsibilities among City agencies.

Purpose of the Plan

- ▶ Address the roles and responsibilities and provide an opportunity for North Port officials, private organizations and resources to discuss recovery strategies.
- ▶ Planning 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.

Methodology

- ▶ Extensive outreach to North Port personnel active in disaster response and recovery operations.
 - ❖ Questionnaires (Online and Paper)
 - ❖ Interviews
 - ❖ Document review and follow-up
- ▶ Community Engagement
 - ❖ Community focused Questionnaires (Online and Paper)
 - ❖ In-person Recovery Workshop
 - ❖ Online Recovery Workshop
- ▶ Draft Strategy Review and Revision

Operational Structure and Recovery Coordination

► Major Strengths

- The City has embraced an organized response and recovery approach by establishing NIMS and ICS protocols within the 2019 CEMP 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).
- Departmental roles and responsibilities in an emergency are clearly described within the 2019 CEMP.
- The City of North Port has set specific NIMS and ICS training requirements for managers and supervisors.

Operational Structure and Recovery Coordination

Key Findings

- ▶ The City should make improving communication and coordination with Sarasota County a high priority.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ It is important that the City takes steps to improve infrastructure, floodplain management, and flood mitigation and make it a high priority for future storms.

EOC and Resource Management

▶ Major Strengths

- The existing 2019 CEMP for the City of North Port appoints the Emergency Manager through the City Manager and is separate from the Fire Department.
- Training and Exercises are coordinated through Emergency Management and involve City Commissioners as well as departmental stakeholders.
- The City of North Port has established NIMS and ICS protocols within the 2019 CEMP, identifying clear roles and responsibilities of City personnel within the EOC.

EOC and Resource Management

Recommendations

- ▶ 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 Department or Law Enforcement, that will allow Emergency Management personnel to operate independently from other City departments or stakeholders during an emergency.
- ▶ The City can work to enhance and improve resource management procedures for emergency preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery operations.
- ▶ 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.

Emergency Communications

▶ Major Strengths

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

EOC and Resource Management

Recommendations

- ▶ The City would benefit by further developing and formalizing a Communications Group in preparation for emergencies.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ 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.

Community Resilience and Economic Sustainability

▶ Major Strengths

- Though not explicitly found in the existing 2019 CEMP 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.

Community Resilience and Economic Sustainability

Recommendations

- ▶ The City of North Port should make it a high priority to establish a formal LDRG to enhance community recovery, resilience and economic sustainability.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ 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.

Community Resilience and Economic Sustainability

Recommendations Continued

- ▶ 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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Community Resilience and Economic Sustainability

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 is 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.

Disaster Training and Safety

▶ Major Strengths

- The 2019 CEMP 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 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.

Disaster Training and Safety

Recommendations

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