



***2020-2025 Santee-Lynches Hazard Mitigation Plan
Sumter County Mitigation Strategy Progress Analysis***

Every five years Sumter County, in conjunction with the Santee-Lynches Council of Governments work together to produce a “Hazard Mitigation Plan.” The current plan is the 2020-2025 Hazard Mitigation Plan. This plan is used to look at ways to improve the protection of our buildings and critical infrastructure in case of a natural disaster. As a part of this plan, the County establishes goals to improve our natural disaster preparedness over the next five years.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recognizes floods as the most common, most costly natural disasters in America. As a member of the Community Rating System (CRS), Sumter County meets a higher standard of ensuring property is protected against flood damage. As part of participation in the CRS program, the County has adopted the Santee-Lynches Hazard Mitigation Plan to act as our Floodplain Management plan. Each year as part of participation in the CRS program, a yearly progress report must be submitted to County Council based upon the established goals within the mitigation plan. Enclosed is the County’s progress made upon these goals from July 2020, through June 2021.

As always, our purpose is to provide the citizens of Sumter with the highest level of customer service, accurate information, and ongoing review of our responses and processes to ensure the safety of our citizens.

The following is a report outlining the progress/status associated with identified goals and actions from the 2020-2025 Santee-Lynches Hazard Mitigation Plan for Sumter County.

**Sumter County Mitigation Strategy
2020-2021 Progress Analysis**

Goal #1 Ensure the protection of critical facilities in the county.

Actions

- 1) Facility Evaluation** – Prepare facility audits by evaluating all critical facilities exposure to damage from natural hazards and power losses from downed power lines. Include a review of insurance coverage and identify where more information can be found on the property protection measures recommended by the audit.

Status: *The County has a full-time Facilities Manager. The Facilities Manager tracks and audits buildings and properties under County ownership on a rotating schedule to audit facility exposure to natural hazards and power losses. Additionally, shelters are evaluated annually with the cooperation of the American Red Cross.*

- 2) Repair Facilities** – Make repairs found listed in the audits for the facility to remain operational in case a natural disaster occurs. Items to consider include replacing roofs, installing storm windows and hurricane shutters, improved electrical systems, and ensuring the structures meet the required building codes.

Status: *Many County facilities have been replaced in the last 5 years through the Pennies for Progress local option sales tax. The annual audit cycle is used to generate a projects list based on identified deficiencies at critical facilities. During the reporting period, the new County Administration building project was completed, as well as the new Animal Control building project. The new Animal Control building is located outside of the SFHA.*

- 3) Backup Power for Critical Facilities** – All critical facilities should have a proper backup power supply in order to make sure that if power lines are downed, they can remain functional. Therefore, it is essential that critical facilities should be equipped with backup generators.

Status: *Most County facilities have fixed generators for limited power supply. The County continues evaluating all critical facilities for upgrades in emergency power generation. The availability of funds limits implementation this action item. In 2020, a FEMA mitigation grant was awarded to purchase and install a generator at the new EMS Headquarters and Coroners' Office. This project is anticipated to be complete by the end of 2021.*

Goal #2 Increase public education and awareness of natural hazards.

Actions

- 1) Public Education and Awareness Information** – Prepare background information, articles and other explanations of hazard mitigation topics and provide them to County, municipal, and private offices for use in presentations, newsletter articles, websites, brochures, and other outreach projects.

Status: *Information from the American Red Cross, FEMA, and SC EMD is used for educational purposes. Compiling this information is the responsibility of the Emergency Management Agency and is part of an on-going process. This information is disseminated to the County and other municipalities and used for educational/outreach activities on an as-requested basis. This includes the Sumter County Fair, school programs, local church groups, community meetings, etc.*

Additionally Sumter County/Sherriff's Department use social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) as a platform to push out the most up to date information during pre-disaster preparation, during active operations, and post-disaster to keep the public informed about necessary information related to the particular event.

- 2) Public Education and Awareness** – Prepare and disseminate outreach projects based on any prepared material concerning hazard mitigation. These projects should be publicized by the utilization of newsletters, news releases, directed mailings, handouts, websites, radio, and television.

Status: *This is an ongoing process that is shared between Emergency Management, the Fire Department and law enforcement. Personnel regularly speak to schools, civic groups, senior groups, etc. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, information has been shared through traditional and social media platforms that is traditionally disseminated in-person.*

Each year the Planning Department Floodplain Coordinator mails notices to the owners of properties within the designated Special Flood Hazard Area (floodplain) and provides information related to then National Flood Insurance Program as well as information related to hazard mitigation. The Floodplain Coordinator also contacts local insurance companies and realtors on an annual basis to provide up to date contact information for floodplain management questions. Any citizen or agency may request a floodplain determination letter from the Floodplain Coordinator free of charge for their personal records.

Goal #3 **Ensure that the availability and operation of the county's infrastructure will not be significantly disrupted by a natural disaster.**

Actions

- 1) Inspection of Lines** – Utility lines and structures need to be inspected for their ability to withstand a natural hazard.

Status: *This is part of an ongoing process performed by the individual utility providers.*

- 2) Replace or Retrofit Outdated Structures** – Any structures that are deemed vulnerable should be replaced or retrofitted.

Status: *Sumter County has an extensive road network comprised of dirt, gravel, and asphalt streets. County Public Works, as part of annual budget programming identifies streets/roads that need to be upgraded with funding allocated based on the number of residents impacted by the improvement.*

- 3) Models and Database** – The county and municipalities should develop geographically accurate models and databases of their infrastructure systems.

Status: *Sumter County has utilized GIS capabilities to map county-owned infrastructure. This data is constantly updated as changes are made to existing infrastructure and as new infrastructure is added.*

Goal #4 Reduce the potential impact of natural disasters on new and existing development.

Actions

- 1) Update Plans, Codes, and Ordinances** – When comprehensive plans, land use plans, zoning, and subdivision ordinances are up for revision, they should include natural disaster mitigation provisions.

Status: *The 2040 Comprehensive Land Use Plan, adopted in December 2019, includes a Green Infrastructure Element that addresses wetlands development; streams, rivers, lakes, ponds, and drainage corridors, as well as surface and groundwater. The Plan encourages a conservation design approach to development that preserve environmentally sensitive areas and encourages the removal of development from sensitive areas such as mapped special flood hazard areas. These recommendations continue to be encouraged at the policy level.*

In September 2018, an updated Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance was adopted by Council that implements development requirements in the Special Flood Hazard Area based upon the South Carolina State Model Ordinance that goes a step above the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) minimum standards for development.

The current Zoning & Development Standards Ordinance was adopted in 1999, future revisions or rewrites to the Ordinance should include creation of development standards that are supported by Comprehensive Plan Policies related development in environmentally sensitive areas. To date, funding has not been identified for a complete

rewrite or comprehensive update to the Zoning & Development Standards Ordinance. In the interim, Planning Staff has compiled a list of areas of the Ordinance that should be updated and these are being addressed in an ad hoc manner moving forward.

Goal #5 Ensure that emergency shelters have adequate capacity and resources.

Actions

- 1) Shelter Audit** – Perform and audit of shelters to determine which of these structures are best-suited and equipped to serve at-risk populations. In addition, the audit should also determine what equipment is needed to meet these tasks.

Status: *The Emergency Management Agency works with the American Red Cross Annually to ensure that shelters meet minimum sheltering standards.*

- 2) Special Needs Population Survey** – Use demographic data to determine the location of at-risk populations and develop plans to provide transportation in order to evacuate them to shelters that can provide medical care and meet any special needs that they may have.

Status: *Although a survey has not been completed, it is considered during the annual audit of the shelter system. A special needs medical shelter has been sited at Prisma Health Tuomey that can be activated in the event of an emergency. SCDHEC controls the operations of the Special Medical Needs Shelter.*

- 3) Backup Power** – Make sure shelters have an adequate back up power supply by furnishing them with generators.

Status: *Portable generators are available to shelter facilities that do not have fixed generators. However, as grant funding become available Emergency Management in partnership with Sumter School District will work to place fixed generators at school facilities that serve as emergency shelters.*

- 4) Medical and Health Facilities** – Public and private medical and health care facilities will be retrofitted or relocated to withstand natural disasters.

Status: *The State of South Carolina DHEC regulates medical and health care facilities, and require each facility to have an emergency plan. When new facilities are proposed, Planning Department Staff work with project designers to ensure placement of these facilities outside of special flood hazard areas and/or other areas of known hazard.*

Goal #6 **Reduce the impact of wildfires on homes, buildings, critical facilities, and infrastructure.**

Actions

- 1) Evaluate Areas Susceptible to Wildfires** – Utilize GIS to identify structures (homes and other buildings) that are in areas susceptible to wildfire.

Status: *Fire services within Sumter County are provided through the Sumter Fire Department. The Department has “brush trucks” to aid in fighting wildfire. All County Fire Stations are equipped with brush trucks. These trucks are 4-wheel drive with off-road capability. Any time a brush truck is deployed, a fire truck accompanies the brush truck to provide extra water support. Brush trucks are most active from spring into the fall and during periods of drought.*

To date a formal GIS analysis has not been undertaken, however; a comprehensive building footprint layer now exists in the Sumter County GIS which can be used in conjunction with other available data sources related to tree coverage, farmland, and other environmental conditions (i.e. drought, etc.), in addition to call response logs from the Fire Department in order to complete an evaluation. Completion of this project is currently limited by availability of personnel to undertake the analysis.

Goal #7 **Reduce the impact of severe winds on houses, buildings, critical facilities, and infrastructure.**

Actions

- 1) Vegetation Management** – Inspect and manage vegetation that could damage critical facilities if felled by wind.

Status: *As part of an ongoing process, risks such as overhanging limbs, dead trees, etc. are dealt with on an as-needed basis. This includes hiring outside contractors to trim trees around overhead power lines within the County rights-of-way when necessary.*

Goal #8 **Reduce the impact of floods on homes, buildings, critical facilities, and infrastructure.**

Actions

- 1) Drainage Ditch Maintenance** – Implement a formal and regular drainage ditch and canal system maintenance program for stormwater management.

Status: *Drainage ditch maintenance is performed on an annual basis by outside contractors. On average 5 miles of ditches are cleaned yearly throughout the county.*

This work is documented once completed. Ditches are cleaned on a rotating basis and must meet certain criteria to be serviced.

2) Update Flood Maps – Encourage FEMA to update flood maps.

Status: *FEMA has transitioned floodplain mapping from a county-wide basis to using major watersheds for map updates. The City and County adopted new FIRM Panels for the Wateree Watershed on September 28, 2018. The next major watershed within both jurisdictions to be updated will be the Black Watershed. The Black Watershed encompasses a bulk of the population and development within the City and County. The Discovery Process began in spring of 2017. Preliminary maps for the Black Watershed were released January 17, 2020. Floodplain management staff have coordinated with local surveyors and engineers to thoroughly review the maps for anomalies. The 90-day appeals period is complete, and FEMA is currently reviewing comments received. It is anticipated that Letters of Final Determination and adoption of the new Black River Watershed Maps will be complete by summer of 2022. The review process was paused in 2020 for a period of time due to the COVID-19 pandemic.*

3) Back-flow prevention – Install back-flow prevention valves in sewer pipes.

Status: *This is part of an ongoing process conducted by the individual providers. All providers have aggressive programs in place to keep lines free from vegetation. Lines are inspected regularly and maintenance is ongoing to insure all lines are functioning at top capacity in order to minimize problems during a storm or flood event.*

4) Stormwater Management – Implement the mandatory stormwater utility/tax.

Status: *The stormwater utility and associated fee was implemented in 2010. The fee is evaluated and billed on an annual basis. Residential fees are a flat rate while commercial and industrial users pay based on amount of impervious area.*

5) Stormwater Management – Pilot mitigation projects for stormwater ponds and wetlands at public parks and a public golf course to determine better ways to manage and protect natural stormwater treatment and water quality management.

Status: *Sumter County continuously seeks to improve water management through the county. The County and City Stormwater Department's are currently carrying out a FEMA mitigation grant to address drainage issues in the Pinnacle Ct. subdivision. works with Carolina Clear through Clemson University to identify possible pilot projects. As funding becomes available new projects may be undertaken.*

- 6) **Data Limitations, Amended Strategies to Address Issues** – Fold information gleaned through the Comprehensive Plan Update, the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, and the County-wide Watershed Study into a comprehensive floodplain management plan.

Status: *To date a Floodplain Management Plan has not been developed. Development of a Floodplain Management Plan continues to be a goal. Funding will be identified to pursue in order to assist in development of this plan as staffing limitations within the Floodplain Management program continue to limit in-house creation of the document.*

- 7) **Data Limitations** – Identify through GIS overlays areas coupled with building permit files where development has impacted floodplains and critical areas, and address future impacts through the comprehensive floodplain management plan.

Status: *Data from the October 2015 Flood will assist in identifying areas outside of the mapped Special Flood Hazard Area for inclusion in a future Floodplain Management Plan. New developments have been intentionally approved prohibiting the creation of residential lots in the Special Flood Hazard Area.*

- 8) **Data Limitations** – Track local flooding events through citizen participation and gathering information through coordination with Public Safety department and Public Works departments, coupled with data from federal sources (USGS, NOAA, etc.)

Status: *No formalized process has been established for tracking localized flooding events. Citizens may report localized flooding to City Public Services, the Stormwater Utility, and the non-emergency Police line. Additionally, the E-911 system has implemented a code in the tracking system that identifies whether or not the call was prompted by a weather-related event. However, no single clearing-house has been established to formally track these events.*

Progress on this activity will be furthered as part of a formal Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan with development of a formalized process for tracking events.

Goal #9 Ensure the protection and function of Communications.

Actions

- 1) **Inspection of Lines** – An inspection of communication lines in order to determine what needs to be replaced, and to ensure that they are clear from tree limbs and other obstructions.

Status: *This is part of an ongoing process conducted by the individual providers. All providers have aggressive programs in place to keep lines free from vegetation.*

- 2) **Creation of a Mobile Dispatch Unit** – Create a mobile dispatch unit to ensure that communications are not lost as a result of a natural disaster.

Status: *The Sumter County Sherriff's Department has a mobile command unit, however; there is no mobile E-911 Dispatch Unit. E-911 has a fixed back-up site at the City of Sumter Police Firing Range, additionally the existing E-911 system is a modular lap-top based system that can be relocated with dispatchers to anywhere so long as there is a connection to communication services. Additionally, the Sumter Emergency Management Department (EMD) has an available mobile operations vehicle.*

- 3) **Retrofit and Relocate Communication System** – Utility and communication systems supporting emergency services operations will be retrofitted or relocated to withstand the impacts of a natural disaster.

Status: *There is a back-up dispatch center in place. Additionally, the Sumter County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is equipped with wireless internet capabilities to allow critical personnel access to the internet in the event the EOC is activated.*

Goal #10 Facilitate the preparedness of Emergency Response

Actions

- 1) **Emergency Response Preparation Evaluation** – Conduct a review of emergency response plans and programs to identify where additional activities are needed to respond to natural hazards.

Status: *The Sumter County Emergency Operations Plan is updated annually by Sumter EMD. Each Public Safety agency reviews and updates their plans on a scheduled basis. Sumter EMD participates with the State EMD and other County and City agencies in training annually.*

- 2) **Emergency Response Preparation Equipment** – Purchase any necessary equipment that is critical for the response to natural disasters and to ensure that personnel have adequate and up-to date training on the use of specific equipment.

Status: *Each Public Safety Agency maintains their equipment and as funds are available, and beneficial, those agencies purchase equipment that will / can help responding to service calls during or due to natural hazards. Equipment purchased by Sumter EMD is used for EOC operations and is available to all public safety agencies for use if needed.*

Goal #11 Improve the continuity of operations capabilities for the Emergency Management Agency and the Emergency Operations.

Actions

- 1) **New EMO/EOC pre-development** – Choose the location and design of new Emergency Management Office and Emergency Operations Center.

Status: *A new EMO/EOC has not been pursued at this time due to a lack of funding. As county facilities are improved, the existing EMO/EOC has received minor upgrades to improve functionality within its existing space.*

The alternate EOC is located at the EMS substation in Dalzell.

- 2) **New EMO/EOC Development** – Locate funding for an updated & functional Emergency Management Office and a well-equipped Emergency Operations Center.

Status: *Absent siting a new location and pre-development activities necessary to pursue funding, this action item is un-actionable at this time.*