

CARRI-Charleston/Tri-County Team Focuses on Five Areas of Resilience

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During the August meeting of the CARRI-Charleston/Tri-County South Carolina Advisory Group, a wide-ranging list of possible resilience focus areas compiled by the Advisory Group were narrowed down to five priority focus areas that will help the CARRI-Charleston/Tri-County team create a roadmap to resilience for the Charleston/Tri-County area. The identification of these specific resilience focus areas marks the transition from the Community Self-Assessment Phase to the Analysis Phase of the Charleston/Tri-County Community Resilience Process.

The five resilience focus areas for the Charleston Tri-County area are:

- *Transportation and Mobility.* This area is critical to improving overall resilience in the Tri-County region and should focus on measures to address regional transportation congestion and system vulnerabilities relative to disaster response and recovery (specifically for hurricane, earthquake and pandemic scenarios).
 - Consider how the concentration of jobs in Charleston County may hinder workforce and business recovery if major routes are compromised.
 - Consider reliance on major high-volume arteries such as I-26, I-526, US 17 and Alt. US 17, as well as other critical connectors like Highways 52, 78, 61 and 176.
 - Identify and consider critical connector roads that link outlying population centers to high-density areas.
 - Assess adequacy of designated evacuation routes.
 - Identify particularly vulnerable bridges and overpasses.
 - Identify post-event alternative transportation options for response and recovery efforts including use of the port and navigable waters (such as the Cooper River) to ensure mobility of people, goods and services during response and recovery.
 - Consider potential transportation effects from scenarios/disasters other than hurricanes (ex. chemical spills).
- *Recovery Development Plan and Interdependencies.* There should be a clear distinction between response (immediate, near term actions following an event), recovery (short- to mid-term actions that brought back community functionality), and re-development (mid- to longer-term actions that could be more strategic in nature).
 - Roadmap should focus on measures for short to mid-term recovery and be considered a first step toward a regional Recovery Development Plan.
 - Roadmap should incorporate measures to enhance resilience of specific aspects of regional business and economy.
 - Roadmap should include a plan for pre-disaster assessment of long-term redevelopment opportunities that may be created by a disaster.
- *Region-wide Communication and Information Sharing.* The Advisory Group felt that the issues regarding the “hard” communication networks should be worked on by the area’s technical experts with some representatives from the “soft” networks. Further, the Advisory Group felt that the communication issues associated with the “soft networks” are directly related to the issue of roles of schools, faith-based organizations, etc. Therefore, those two areas will be combined but will work in parallel with “hard” communication focus area.
 - Roadmap should focus on measures to achieve interoperability of “hard” communication networks across the municipalities in the Tri-County area.
 - Roadmap should include mechanisms for feeding information from governmental communication systems into mass media outlets and “soft” communication networks.

- *Role of Faith-based Organizations, Schools, and Neighborhoods.* The Advisory Group pointed out that communication, information sharing, education and training were some of the most important roles of these groups. The gap for most communities is in failing to deliberately plan for the roles of these organizations; typically where there has been deliberate planning regarding these groups, the planning has only addressed “response.” An important aspect of this focus area is to foster deliberate planning for these organizations in the full recovery of the community.
 - Roadmap should focus on identification of opportunities and mechanisms to incorporate significant and clearly defined roles for faith-based organizations, neighborhoods, civic and other non-governmental organizations into response and recovery plans.
 - Roadmap should outline a plan for how to extend, strengthen and explicitly utilize communication networks of faith-based organizations, neighborhood organizations, schools, businesses and civic organizations to facilitate information flow and maintain energy and interest in post-event recovery.
- *Structures and Infrastructure.* This area should have an integrated focus on the resilience of the “built” environment including emergency shelters. In addition, it should not be trying to redo emergency shelter planning, but should instead review existing shelters for adequacy based on multiple-hazard scenarios.
 - Roadmap should focus on structural resilience (i.e., resilience of the built environment).
 - Roadmap should evaluate the availability, accessibility and resilience of emergency shelters.

The Advisory Group recommended initiating the roadmap process in two phases. Phase 1 will center on the following resilience focus areas: transportation and mobility, region-wide communication and information sharing of both “hard” and “soft” networks. They recommended that the “hard” and “soft” communication networks be worked separately, but in parallel. Once the first set of roadmaps is complete, the Advisory Group will assist with implementation decisions, while simultaneously carrying out a similar process to develop roadmaps for the remaining areas. The Phase 2 effort will begin in calendar year 2009.