

SECTION 8: COMMUNICATION PLAN

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide information on how Manatee County staff will collect and disseminate long-term recovery information after a disaster. Clear communication of recovery and redevelopment information is imperative to the successful recovery of Manatee County residents and business owners that, in turn, is imperative to a successful recovery for Manatee County government.

This section also provides information about how the public will be involved during the redevelopment process through community redevelopment and revitalization meetings and the role of regional and state coordination agencies during disaster recovery.

Information Collection and Dissemination

Internal Communication

Recovery and redevelopment-related communication to Manatee County staff following a major disaster will be coordinated through the **Redevelopment Task Force** with the County Administrator or the Public Safety Director serving as the spokespersons for the Task Force, depending on the issue.

Recovery operations begin in the Emergency Operations Center and then transition to long-term recovery and redevelopment operations over time. This transition will be overseen by the County Administrator and the structure of the long-term recovery operation will be established by the Redevelopment Task Force. Communication between the members of the long-term recovery operation may have to take place via remote methods or email.

External Communication

The proximity of Manatee County to the Tampa Bay region presents a unique challenge in disseminating recovery and redevelopment information to the public in the days, months and years following a major disaster. Television is a major source of news and information for many citizens following a disaster; however, the major television news media in the region is based in Tampa and St. Petersburg with one station in Sarasota. This makes it difficult for Manatee County residents to obtain specific information about their community from the television news media since much of the coverage is focused outside Manatee County.

In response to this challenge, Manatee County staff members have determined that the primary source of information dissemination during the long-term recovery and redevelopment period is to be through the County's Web site. The public will also be able to continue to obtain recovery and redevelopment information through traditional media outlets as listed in **Table 8.1**; however, the County Web site is to be considered the primary source for accurate and timely information. In an effort to communicate with all of Manatee County's residents alternative methods of dissemination will be researched. The methods will need to be done on a case by case basis.

Manatee County is currently constructing an alternative site for the Manatee Government Access – TV (MGA-TV). With the construction and soon to be operational MGA-TV broadcast facility at the EOC, local television information will not be an issue, as long as cable stations agree to make the channel available to ALL viewers during a calamity, not just those who buy their full packages. In addition, Cox and Clear Channel radio have made a commitment to broadcast from the EOC during the early days of a disaster – many older residents still get much of their information from the radio and may not be internet savvy. Finally, with the Information Outreach staff is able to generate a high volume of press releases, we also plan on depending on the print media as the local community are faithful readers of local print media.

Table 8.1: Traditional Media Outlets for Manatee County Citizens

Media Type	Name of Media Provider
Television	MGA (Manatee Government Access Television)
	METV (Manatee Educational Television)
	WWSB ABC 7 (Sarasota Bradenton)
	Brighthouse Bay News 9 (Tampa)
	WTVT Fox 13 (Tampa)
	WFTS ABC (Tampa)
	WTSP CBS 10 (Tampa)
	WFLA NBC 8 (Tampa)
Radio	Local Emergency Management Station
Newspaper	Sarasota Herald Tribune
	Bradenton Herald

The County also has an existing **Citizens Action Center** whose purpose is to provide a central point of contact for citizens to request service, seek information/referrals, and direct complaints, compliments and suggestions regarding government service. The goal of the Citizens Action Center is to process 100 percent of the complaints received from citizens within 10 working days, and it accomplishes this goal through direct contact with Manatee County Departments. Because it is a familiar resource for citizens, the County will continue to utilize the Citizens Action Center to field questions, comments, complaints and requests from the public following a disaster. The Citizens Action Center can also be used by citizens that have limited or no access to the Internet. The County realizes that staffing for this service may need to be increased following a disaster to handle the increased volume of calls. This probably should be considered a “telephone bank” in the early days of an emergency so residents can be assured of what is happening by hearing an official, human voice. As the calamity recedes, the staff can return to the normal level.

Manatee County has also developed a **Post-Hurricane Assistance Manual** that contains information for the public on what to do and who to contact for different services and needs following a hurricane. This manual is maintained by the Manatee County Building Department and was last updated in April 2007. Manatee County will either update this manual to include information on long-term recovery or develop a separate **Long-Term Recovery Resource Guide** to serve as a compliment to this existing manual. This manual is currently available for residents review and preparedness at www.mymanatee.org, click Building Department, click **Post-Hurricane Assistance Manual** from the left navigation bar.

Communication to the Business Community

Recovery and redevelopment information for the business community of Manatee County will be coordinated by Manatee County Information Outreach, through the Manatee Economic Development Council and the Manatee County Chamber of Commerce. This will begin initially in the County Emergency Operation Center with the efforts of Emergency Support Function 18.

Public Participation in Redevelopment Decisions

Following a disaster, Manatee County staff will initiate a series of meetings in areas impacted by the disaster. **Figure 8.1** provides a graphical representation of when these meetings will be conducted. As soon as possible following a disaster, County staff will conduct **Community Listening Meetings** so that the County can collect information, concerns, data, etc. from those citizens that live in the impacted areas and to identify common recovery and redevelopment themes and issues. County staff and (when possible) County Commissioners will be present at these meetings.

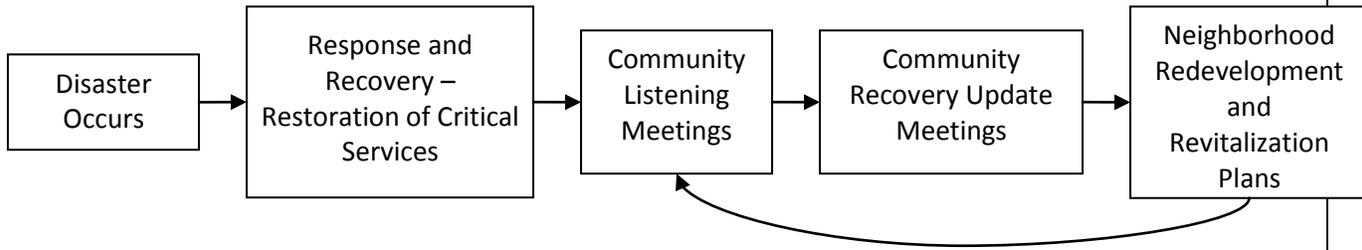
Once the Community Listening Meetings have taken place, Manatee County will use the information gathered through these meetings to refine the County's Recovery and Redevelopment Strategies. As part of this effort, the County will continue to keep the public updated on the status of recovery and redevelopment efforts with neighborhood **Community Recovery Update Meetings**. These meetings are intended to inform the public of the status of the County's progress in recovery and redevelopment projects.

The next phase of community redevelopment will be conducted in the impacted areas with the creation of **Neighborhood Redevelopment and Revitalization Plans**. The Manatee County Planning Department has developed a neighborhood planning toolkits that will be distributed to neighborhoods to help facilitate this process. (Appendix D: Recovery Toolkit)

The County will also develop an electronic newsletter that will be posted to the Web site and be sent to citizens interested in recovery and redevelopment in the County. Manatee County will advertise the availability of the newsletter and citizens can register to receive the newsletter on the County's Web site. The publication will be unique for each disaster and branded as appropriate so it will be easily identified by the public.

Figure 8.1: Progression of Neighborhood Redevelopment Planning Process Following a Disaster

MANATEE COUNTY POST-DISASTER REDEVELOPMENT PLAN



Regional, State and Federal Coordination

The primary point of contact for regional, State and Federal staff will be the County Administrator; however, before a disaster occurs, it will be the duty of the County Administration, specifically, Manatee County Information Outreach, with possible use of the Planning Policy and Coordination work group to identify those County Departments that will interact with Regional, State and Federal employees following a disaster. The purpose of this identification is to ensure that each Regional, State or Federal agency that interacts with Manatee County Government following a disaster will have a pre-identified point of contact to assist them with their needs. It is expected that the Regional, State and Federal representatives will use these staff members as resources to provide them with information about the situation in the County.