



# Disaster Recovery and Redevelopment Plan

## *Final Report*

McIntosh County, Georgia  
Coastal Incentive Grant Program  
April 2019



*This report was prepared by Hagerty Consulting, Inc. on behalf of McIntosh County, Georgia.*



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# 1 Introduction

McIntosh County is located along the eastern coast of Georgia, halfway between Savannah, Georgia and Jacksonville, Florida. The county is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the east, Liberty and Long Counties to the north, Wayne County to the west, and Glynn County to the south. Founded in 1793, McIntosh County is named after Clan McIntosh and its Revolutionary War patriots, and currently boasts a population of approximately 14,100 people, including its county seat, Darien. McIntosh County spans 424.3 square miles, with an estimated population density of 33 people per square mile. The County is abundant with natural and cultural assets, most notably Sapelo Island, an island off the coast of McIntosh County. Sapelo Island is home to the Gullah-Geechee community and is also recognized for its historical and ecological resources.

To protect and restore these resources after a disaster with potentially devastating consequences, members of the public and private sector collaboratively developed the McIntosh County Disaster Recovery and Redevelopment Plan. The plan provides a scalable framework to guide and support decision-making in the highly complex and fast-paced environment that arises after a disaster, whether natural or human-caused. The plan is intended to empower McIntosh County and its residents to effectively recover from disasters to become more resilient to stresses and shocks in the future. The primary goals of the plan are as follows:

- ❖ Secure the future of the county by assessing existing plans, policies, and procedures to identify gaps between existing strengths, weaknesses, and future goals.
- ❖ Enhance the county's resilience by strategically identifying steps McIntosh County can take to restore its population, economy, buildings and infrastructure, health and social services, and natural and cultural resources to desired conditions as soon as possible after a disaster.<sup>1</sup>
- ❖ Clarify roles and responsibilities and provide tools and templates for McIntosh County to organize, manage, and facilitate countywide recovery and redevelopment activities.
- ❖ Enable coordination with local, state, federal government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector.

To support this effort, McIntosh County engaged two consulting firms: Ecological Planning Group, LLC (EPG) and Hagerty Consulting, Inc. (Hagerty). EPG was engaged first, and though they initiated work on the project, the firm was released from their contract before the full scope of work was completed. Several months later, Hagerty was engaged to complete the full scope of work in addition to the tasks completed by EPG. Hagerty started work on this project in late August of 2018 and concluded in March 2019. The planning process Hagerty used to develop the Disaster Recovery and Redevelopment Plan is described in the following section.

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<sup>1</sup> Resilience is about the long-term view of a community and is achieved by imagining success 50 to 100 years in the future and working towards it with regular rhythm. By clearly defining and systematically implementing resilient policies and practices, resilience becomes part of the fabric of community members' daily activities. Resilience-building requires a focus on sustainable growth, development (and redevelopment), and hazard mitigation in order to ensure that the community is poised to rebound faster and more efficiently with each subsequent disaster.



# 2 *Planning Process*

Over the course of several months, members and representatives of McIntosh County were invited to participate in a series of planning meetings to support the development and validation of planning concepts, tools, and contents. The meetings described under **Section 0** helped generate the key outcomes described in the next section, **Section 2.2**.

## 2.1 Community Planning Meetings

To gather and validate information with residents of McIntosh County, the planning support team organized a series of community planning meetings over the course of several months. The meetings included an all-day Kickoff Meeting, a series of Recovery Support Function Meetings, and two Final Planning Meetings.

### 2.1.1 *Kickoff Meeting*

On October 16, 2018, Hagerty organized and led a Kickoff Meeting at the Coastal Regional Commission offices that was attended by 31 representatives of McIntosh County. The purpose of this meeting was to ensure that stakeholders had a fundamental understanding of the planning concepts that would drive the development of the Disaster Recovery and Redevelopment Plan. The meeting lasted for six hours and topics for the day included: an overview of the planning effort, an introduction to the National Disaster Recovery Framework (the national guidance that informs recovery and redevelopment planning), testimony from other coastal counties that have completed planning, and a series of discussions assessing the county's existing strengths and weaknesses as they relate to disaster recovery and redevelopment. The day concluded with an activity intended to provide context and create an understanding of the Recovery Support Functions, a key organizational component of the Disaster Recovery and Redevelopment Plan.<sup>2</sup>

The information gathered from stakeholders during this meeting directly informed the development of the county's vision of success, priority issues, and recovery and redevelopment goals. These outcomes are captured in Section 4 of the Disaster Recovery and Redevelopment Plan.

### 2.1.2 *Recovery Support Function Meetings*

On January 15, 2019, Hagerty facilitated a series of planning meetings, one for each Recovery Support Function:

- ❖ Community Planning
- ❖ Economic Redevelopment
- ❖ Health and Social Services
- ❖ Housing
- ❖ Infrastructure Systems
- ❖ Natural and Cultural Resources

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<sup>2</sup> The Recovery Support Functions comprise the coordinating structure for key functional areas of assistance in the National Disaster Recovery Framework. Their purpose is to support local governments by facilitating problem solving, improving access to resources and by fostering coordination among state and federal agencies, nongovernmental partners, and community stakeholders.



## ❖ Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster

The Recovery Support Function meetings focused on introducing and validating concepts related to post-disaster recovery operations, while the Final Planning Meetings focused on redevelopment concepts. 46 participants attended these meetings in total.

During the Recovery Support Function meetings, Hagerty introduced the roles and responsibilities of each Recovery Support Function and provided stakeholders an opportunity to practice using the decision-support making tools and references that are provided in the Recovery Support Function Annexes. The tools include pre-scripted communications, job aid checklists, and a coordination meeting agenda that are intended to foster internal coordination (between the Coordinating and Supporting Agencies of each Recovery Support Function). Feedback from stakeholders was captured in notes and reflected in changes to the portions of the plan that were discussed. In addition to a description of the Recovery Support Function missions and supporting tools, Hagerty introduced a proposed organizational structure for recovery operations and validated the Section 4 of the Disaster Recovery and Redevelopment Plan with the stakeholders.

### **2.1.3 Sapelo Island Community Engagement**

Sapelo Island is recognized as a prominent cultural asset of McIntosh County, but engaging members of the community was challenging due to its location on one of the county's barrier islands. Because this group was identified as a key stakeholder, Hagerty coordinated with the project sponsor to organize a meeting with members of this community to educate them about the planning process and provide an opportunity ask questions, identify their long-term needs and resilience goals, and validate some of the hazard analysis data prepared for the planning project (e.g., projected sea level rise). A series of factors contributed to imperfect timing of this event, so attendance was low, however those that attended were critical members of the community and well-versed in its challenges, expectations, and community values.

### **2.1.4 Final Planning Meetings**

Two Final Planning Meetings were conducted on February 27, 2019 at Darien City Hall. These meetings were attended by 20 participants in total. Each of the meetings focused on the topic of redevelopment, or how McIntosh County would rebuild its community after a disaster. Specifically, this included reviewing the findings of the Hazard and Resilience Assessment contained in the plan, and the resulting action items identified in the Recovery and Redevelopment Plan. Stakeholders reviewed these materials and provided feedback that was incorporated into the final version of the plan. To inform the development of action items to support redeveloping the community after a disaster, Hagerty presented a series of maps showing project sea level rise for the entire county, the City of Darien, and Sapelo Island. The meeting participants validated the information on the maps and identified areas of routine flooding, vulnerable neighborhoods, and other information, which was used to revise the action items contained in the Next Steps section of the plan.



## 2.2 Key Outcomes

To support the execution of the scope of work requested by McIntosh County, Hagerty met eight objectives, which represent key outcomes of the planning process. Those objectives are described below, to provide a comprehensive overview of the activities performed under this engagement.

### 2.2.1 Identification of Recovery Planning Team and Stakeholders

The core recovery planning team was identified in August of 2018 by the McIntosh County project management team. This group was subsequently invited to each of the planning meetings organized and held to support the development of the plan. The recovery planning team included a mix of public and private sector organizations, from county, state, and regional organizations that support McIntosh County residents or operations.

### 2.2.2 Definition of Scope and Planning Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

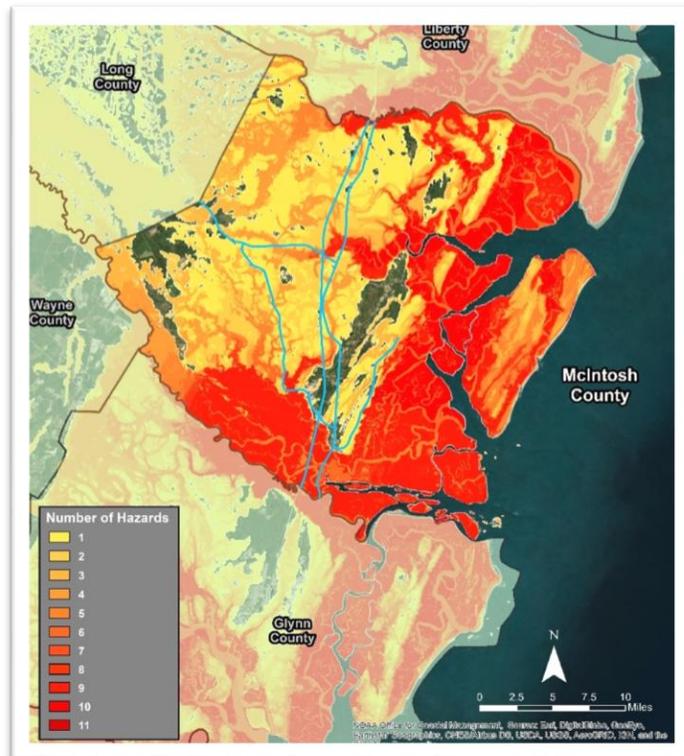
Hagerty Consulting provided a project management plan upon project initiation that described its proposed approach to community meetings, engagement, and defined the scope of planning activities. In all, this included four community meetings, one of which (to Sapelo Island) was not previously identified in the scope but determined to be necessary to engage one of the county's vulnerable populations in the planning effort to ensure their needs were reflected in the plan.

### 2.2.3 Assessment of Risks, Impacts, and Consequences of Disaster Events

Hagerty Consulting completed an analysis of hazards that are likely to impact McIntosh County based on historical and anticipated trends. This analysis included a statement of potential impacts based on each threat based on state-level research and hazards identified in the county's hazard mitigation plan. This information is recorded in the Situation Overview in the Disaster Recovery and Redevelopment Plan. Hagerty developed several maps to support this analysis, such as the one shown in Error! Reference source not found..

These maps were intended to illustrate potential hazard impacts and convey where the county's vulnerable populations reside to inform the development of recommendations that will reduce harm to those areas and populations, to improve McIntosh County's ability to withstand and advance in spite of disaster-related impacts.

**Figure 1: Composite Flood Hazard Map**



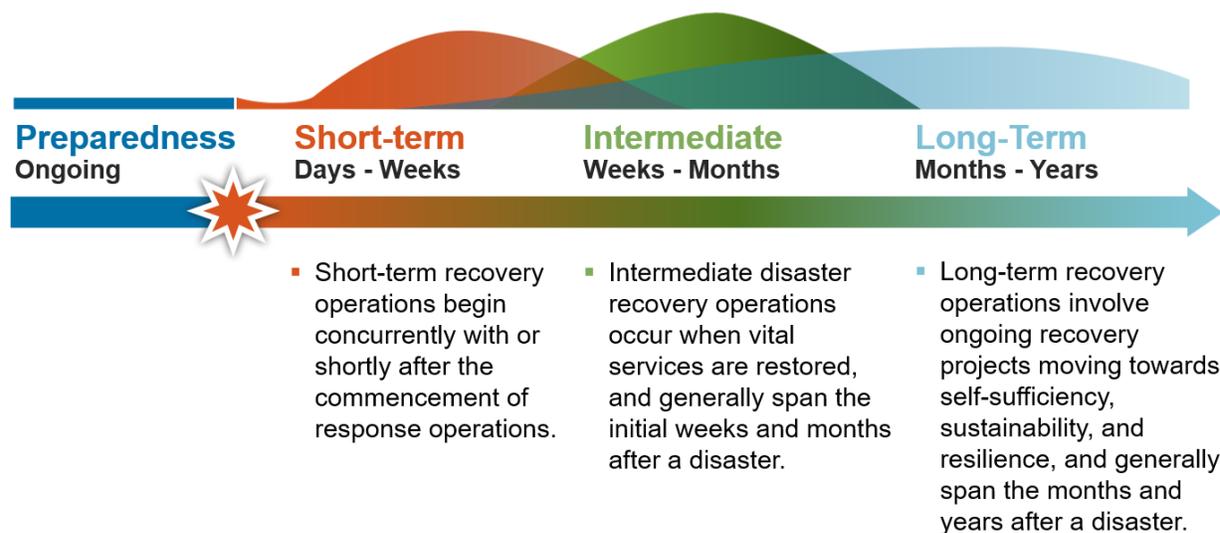
#### 2.2.4 Capacity Assessment and Identification of Capability Targets

In addition to the assessment of the county’s risks, impacts, and consequences of disaster events or conditions, Hagerty completed an in-depth review of the county’s current capacity to withstand and recover from an incident (see Resilience Assessment in the Disaster Recovery and Redevelopment Plan). The Resilience Assessment evaluated the county’s capacity in six areas: human, social, political, natural, physical, and financial to determine a holistic picture of the county’s strengths and areas for improvement (i.e., capability targets). Additional recommendations based on these outcomes were identified and provided in the Next Steps section of the Disaster Recovery and Redevelopment Plan. These items were organized by priority level and sorted by pre- or post-disaster timelines.

#### 2.2.5 Definition of Post-Disaster Operations Activities

The Concept of Operations contains a list of the leadership positions and operations necessary to support post-disaster recovery operations. This was developed using national guidance and guidelines, in addition to the statewide guidance issued for post-disaster planning in the State of Georgia. The Concept of Operations is organized into three phases, per the National Disaster Recovery Framework: Short-Term, Intermediate, and Long-Term (see **Figure 2**).

**Figure 2: Recovery and Redevelopment Timeline**



#### 2.2.6 Establishment of Post-Disaster Decision- and Policy-Making Processes

The Concept of Operations contains an explanation of the actions and process for post-disaster decision-making. By creating a reporting structure, defining key roles and responsibilities, and identifying key leadership positions, Hagerty has developed a flexible and scalable framework that can be established in any post-disaster setting to enhance collaboration and organize roles and responsibilities. These roles and responsibilities include positions and roles and responsibilities that support decision-making and policy setting by providing a comprehensive organizational approach that includes community stakeholders (Recovery Support Function Coordinating and Supporting Agencies) and county leadership (Board of Commissioners, Local Disaster Recovery Manager, etc.).



## 2.2.7 Identification of Redevelopment Processes and Considerations

Several components of the Disaster Recovery and Redevelopment Plan are intended to inform post-disaster action items. The Concept of Operations provides a general framework for organizing stakeholders after a disaster and provides a high-level overview of the types of activities to that occur at each phase of recovery.

There is a job aid checklist for the Local Disaster Recovery Manager, who is responsible for overseeing the entire process of recovery and redevelopment. This checklist builds on the activities described in the Concept of Operations and provides more granular instruction to the person responsible for ensuring that recovery progresses in a way that reflects the value of McIntosh County residents.

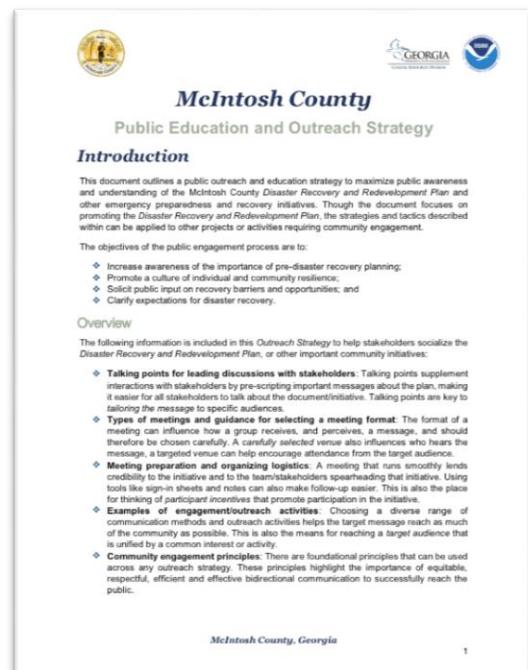
There is the Next Steps section of the plan, which defines pre- and post-disaster action items, organized by priority level and timeline (immediate, short-term, long-term) that is inclusive of redevelopment action items and considerations.

Finally, there is a sample ordinance that can be adopted post-disaster to facilitate redevelopment in a way that supports the county's overarching vision of success, defined in Section 4 of the plan.

## 2.2.8 Creation of Public Education and Outreach Strategy

Hagerty created a Community Outreach and Education Strategy that includes guidance for organizing community meetings, considerations for engaging the *Whole Community*, leveraging social media and existing community events to message and engage members of the community about the Disaster Recovery and Redevelopment Plan. This document was provided to the county along with the final version of the plan and was reviewed by members of the planning team to ensure that it reflected their feedback, which was gathered during the final planning meetings.

**Figure 3: Public Education and Outreach Strategy**



# 3 Next Steps

To support the implementation and use of this plan, Hagerty recommends the following next steps to McIntosh County, to ensure that the resulting planning documents are used to the fullest extent possible.

- ❖ Formally adopt the planning documents and issue a press release using the template provided.
- ❖ Review the action items contained in the Next Step section of the plan and assign responsibility for those actions. Create a standing meeting to report on progress.
- ❖ Identify a spokesperson for the Disaster Recovery and Redevelopment Plan.
  - Assign that individual responsibility for using the Community Education and Outreach Plan to educate residents of McIntosh County about the plan and its contents.
- ❖ Test and validate the concepts contained in the plan by facilitating or attending a recovery-related exercise.
- ❖ Support the formalization of a Voluntary Organization Active in Disaster (VOAD) group in McIntosh County.
- ❖ Identify “blue skies” missions for each of the Recovery Support Functions and establish regular meetings to engage stakeholders and remind them of the concepts contained in the plan.

**Figure 4: Final Deliverables, Base Plan and Annexes**

