



Explainer: Dutch Dialogues Charleston

Beginning on January 16 and continuing through the summer of 2019, the Dutch Dialogues® Charleston project will bring together national and international flooding experts, city officials, nonprofit partners and area residents to develop and design solutions for several major flooding challenges facing the city of Charleston.

The proposed areas of focus include:

Lockwood Corridor/Medical District -- This Corridor, which includes the Medical District, is a critical provider of essential services for City, County and other nearby residents. Currently, access is impaired by recurrent tidal and storm-related flooding.

Vardell's and New Market Creek Area -- Significant growth in the Vardell's and New Market Creek Area requires planning for land use and water in a more comprehensive way. Given the low elevation, stormwater challenges, street flooding, unmet housing needs, and broader neighborhood development patterns, an Area Plan is needed to address the issues in a comprehensive way.

Johns Island -- Given Johns Island's projected growth, developing a set of best water management practices to mitigate current and predicted flood risk is essential. This is a challenging, multijurisdictional area with many infrastructure and growth-related challenges that demand a regional perspective.

Church Creek -- Church Creek is heavily urbanized, underutilized, and constrained and serves primarily as a drainage conduit and cause of flooding, not as a natural feature that also helps to effectively drain stormwater. The Dutch Dialogues team will delve deeper into the settlement patterns and geography, land use and water storage, and discharge needs and upland opportunities before determining how best to propose interventions to lower flood risk and enhance post-event resiliency while ensuring the vitality and viability of the area.

Review and assessment in each of these areas will be informed by the ongoing US Army Corps of Engineers study, the city's Vulnerability and Risk Assessment, the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Plan, and the larger city stormwater strategy.

The Dutch Dialogues process will take place in four parts:

Scoping/Kick Off: The Team scoping visit will occur January 16-17, 2019 to gather data, meet with existing and new stakeholders and participants and further coordinate the project. Participants will share existing plans, programs and actions and identify others who might contribute to the larger analysis. This visit should deepen the understanding of ongoing efforts across city departments and the private sector and integrate those collaborators in the Dutch Dialogues process.

Data Collection and Analysis: The Team will conduct, with the City, a two-day conference to better understand and assess existing and near-term flood projects, review progress of data collection, assemble project teams and finalize project area boundaries and design goals. This is an opportunity to further connect various other ongoing efforts and related studies into a more comprehensive, collective approach for Charleston resilience.

Dutch Dialogues Design Workshop: The Team will run a four-or-five-day design workshop, followed by a public presentation to share knowledge from the process. The workshop will produce conceptual designs for workable, scale-able and integrated flood mitigation solutions for each of the project study areas.

Design Recommendations Summary Report: The Team will summarize the outputs of the workshop into a comprehensive report and accompanying presentation that allows the City to plan and explain next steps towards a more resilient Charleston while building momentum for a comprehensive regional Water Plan.

Dutch Dialogues have successfully added new approaches to mitigate flood risks and order investments in New Orleans, Norfolk, Hampton, Bridgeport and is presently embedded into the Resilient Houston post-Harvey project.

Dutch Dialogues Charleston will be directed and coordinated by Waggoner & Ball, LLC, The Water Institute of the Gulf and the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Washington, DC, alongside key Charleston-region partners from January through late-summer 2019.

Dutch Dialogues will actively engage community, business, civic and political leaders to increase collaboration across disciplines and initiate a coordinated approach to flood risk mitigation in Charleston, grounded in science and driven by design, with projects that can be engineered to achieve multiple benefits.