

Planning for Climate Change in Riverway County

*A custom role play simulation (RPS)
for communities in Georgetown County, South Carolina*

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GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

When you ask people what they love most about Riverway County, nearly everyone says something like, “it’s just home.” With 15 miles of shoreline and 5 rivers that converge in a bay on the county’s southeastern corner, locals agree that the natural landscapes, wildlife, and opportunities to connect with nature are second-to-none. While many of the area’s 60,000 residents have been drawn to the area in recent years, most have lived and worked in these 1,000-square-miles for generations, building a culture that is deeply connected to the land, the sea, and the legacies of its tumultuous past.

Riverway’s history is a story of living with water. The earliest indigenous populations were fishermen and while the fishing, shellfish, and shipping industries have waxed and waned in their significance over the years, they continue to be important to this day. During colonization, enslaved Africans painstakingly tore out 40,000 acres of old-growth cypress forests to clear the land for rice farming. They also built an elaborate system of canals with levees and dams to strategically flood the land. After the Civil War, as rice production became too expensive without slave labor, many of the fields returned to nature, but the land was permanently altered, making it prone to flooding for generations to come. With the industrial revolution came other industries with their unique demands on water resources, including timber, paper, and steel production. These again changed both the physical and social landscape of the county as the combination of economic opportunity and environmental degradation reached various members of society in distinct, and often inequitable, ways. Today, water-dependent industries remain critical to the economy as the county relies heavily on coastal tourism and the tax income from millage on high-value coastal properties purchased primarily by retirees from the Northeast and Midwest.

The relationship with the rivers and sea have been beneficial, but the hazards could never be ignored. Today, the uneasy connection with water continues, perhaps with water becoming more foe than friend. It seems to many, and the data supports their notions, that flooding is getting worse. After all, in each of the last four years the county has experienced major flooding from the types of storms that only had a ten percent chance of happening in any given year. The odds of a sequence of flooding like that used to be 1 in 1000. This recurrence of damaging events is alarming and the county government is experiencing increased pressure from all sides to pay attention to the problem and do something about it. The county is also aware that while the flood risks are visible, increased temperatures and greater frequency of heatwaves related to climate change are also of concern as they impact residents, workers, and tourists.

Unfortunately, there are no easy solutions, as the impacts of flooding are so diverse throughout the county. On Eastern Island, flooding is a regular nuisance, and while some have experienced major impacts, the largely white, affluent, retired community has generally found ways to manage and recover. For this are of the county, questions loom about long-term viability for staying in place, given rising sea levels.

The City of Maurens is a small historic port city built on the Eastern Bay at the confluence of the five rivers. The historic business district experiences acute flooding impacts, causing the main road to become impassable during many storms and small businesses enduring more damage than many owners can afford to repair. In the western neighborhoods of the City of Maurens, which are primarily minority and low-income, residents are struggling to rebuild and officials are declaring many homes to be dilapidated. The large, inland, rural stretches of the county in the western and northern stretches of the county flood terribly from the rivers. Houses in majority black, low-income areas are flooding repeatedly without enough time to recover between events, and transportation to jobs and school is difficult or impossible during and after major storms.

After the last storm, the County Manager ordered a review and update of the County's Comprehensive Plan. The charge was to revisit all items related to flooding and to determine how to incorporate scientific projections of changes in precipitation, heat, and sea level rise into the plans. In response, the county's Director of Sustainability contracted with the local university, Eastern Atlantic University (EAU) to produce the necessary projections. The county asked EAU to provide the county with projections of climate impacts in a "worse case" scenario. A summary of data and projections is included here.

With the data and projections in hand, the County has convened a small, representative group of stakeholders to prioritize the projects in the Comprehensive Plan that will reduce risks from flooding and help the community be more sustainable overall. If this group can agree on the top three priority projects, and the County leadership supports those recommendations, the County will be in a strong position to receive federal funds that depend on demonstrated community buy-in for high-priority projects.

TODAY'S MEETING

You are the group of stakeholders the County Manager has asked to come together to review seven possible projects and to select the top three that the county should prioritize for funding and next steps. The people at your table include:

- **Riverway County Director of Sustainability**
- **Mayor of Byways** (a rural town in northwestern Riverway County)
- **Superintendent of Schools**
- **Executive Director, City of Maurens Business Alliance**
- **Small Business Owner, Artist, Environmental Activist** (and Gullah Geechee)
- **Eastern Island beach property owner** (and former council member for small town on Eastern Island)

Together you represent a broad range of interests and experiences in Riverway County. As you work together, you should attempt to balance your need to advocate for the issues that matter to you and the people you represent with the need for group consensus in order to apply for federal funding.

Prior to this meeting County leadership summarized the seven flooding-related projects from the Comprehensive Plan that need to be reviewed by this group. Your task is to decide which three should be prioritized to maximize sustainability. The County uses the following internationally-accepted definition of sustainability: "Meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." You should also discuss any changes or additions to the project that you deem necessary to adequately address the climate realities you will be facing in the county, given the projections provided by EAU.

To summarize, your task is to:

- 1) Review the projects on your own.
- 2) Review the climate projections on your own.
- 3) Discuss the projects and the climate projections with the other stakeholders.
- 4) As a group, choose by consensus the top three projects you want to recommend for funding and immediate action. If you can, note how you think the climate projections should influence or be accounted for in the top three projects.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PROJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

INFRASTRUCTURE	COASTAL PROPERTY	FISHING, AGRICULTURE, LAND USE, AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES	PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY
#1 Replace Stormwater and Sewer Pipes to Reduce Inland Flooding	#3 Coastal Restoration Study	#5 Dredging the Harbor in Maurens	#7 Public Health and Safety Study and Communications Campaign
#2 City of Maurens Improvements	#4 Managed Retreat Study	#6 Review of Conservation and Heritage Lands	

Infrastructure

Riverway County is responsible for most of the sewer, stormwater, drinking water, and water treatment infrastructure in the county. The county also owns and maintains fifty percent of the roads, and many of the utility corridors for gas lines, electricity, and communication services, like phone and internet. Nearly sixty percent of the sewer pipes are not up to standard. Most of the stormwater infrastructure is in need of repair.

Project #1, Replace Stormwater and Sewer Pipes to Reduce Inland Flooding: Upgrade or replace several miles of stormwater and sewer pipes in the rural communities in the western and northern areas of the County. This would improve drainage during storms and reduce sewer backup and would primarily benefit homes, churches, small businesses, and farms in the lowest-income parts of the county. This project would also create a partnership with the state to address flooding on both county and state roads, making it easier for people to get to and from schools and work.

Project #2, Maurens City Improvements: Upgrade or replace stormwater and sewer pipes in the City of Maurens and provide waterfront protection from tidal flooding, such as a wall or elevated structures. This project would primarily benefit the City's historic business district, which includes dozens of small businesses and a handful of municipal (both city and county)

buildings and properties. The project would eliminate or reduce flooding on the main road that connects the western half of the county with Eastern Island. Also, the high-income neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the business district would benefit from the improvements.

Coastal Property

The private property on Eastern Island constitutes the economic engine for the County. Without the millage (or tax) revenue from the homes, condos, inns, and restaurants on the coast, the County's budget would be decimated. Currently the real estate market on Eastern Island is going strong with home values and the volume of sales at an all-time high. Also, Riverway County prides itself on being the quaint, slower-paced sister to its northern coastal neighbor, Ivy's Beach, a well-known coastal party destination. Instead, Eastern Island offers a historic harbor and waterfront where family fisherman still make their livelihoods on the sea, and tourists and locals enjoy long stretches of public beaches with low-height development on the shore, fine dining, golfing, and tiny cottage rentals. There is no question that Riverway County would suffer as a whole if the private property or tourism economy on Eastern Island were compromised.

Project #3, Coastal Restoration Study: Commission a study to evaluate the economic risk of sea level rise on the county and the likely effectiveness of restorative projects on Eastern Island. These might include beach renourishment (importing sand to expand the beaches so they provide more of a buffer between the water and development) or elevating homes and businesses so they flood less often. The project would directly benefit the homeowners (mostly high-income) and businesses on Eastern Island and maintain tax and tourism dollars from this part of the county.

Project #4, Managed Retreat Study: Commission a study to evaluate the economic risk of sea level rise on the county and the impact of a long-term managed retreat policy on Eastern Island. Evaluate whether and how property owners could voluntarily move to other parts of the county through land swaps in order to keep them in the county. Also evaluate the impact of buy-outs that would give people the option to move anywhere, possibly outside of the county. The study would also influence county zoning policy by identifying properties that should not be rebuilt if they are damaged by storms.

Fishing, Agriculture, Land Use, and Other Natural Resources

People from Riverway County deeply value the area's innate beauty and rich natural resources. While fishing and agriculture played a more prominent role in the area's economic vitality in the past, these activities still contribute meaningfully to the community's way of life and

provide an important link to the county's rich cultural heritage. Some of the marine industries are still run by the same families that ran them a few generations ago. Locals and tourists alike go hunting in plantation-era conservation lands. The County is very committed to preserving and reinvigorating the natural environment. Many thousands of acres are still dedicated to growing peaches, peanuts, pine, and other crops.

Project #5, Dredging the Harbor in the City of Maurens: Dredge the harbor in the City of Maurens to provide sufficient depth for large fishing ships and commercial tourist vessels. While the paper and steel mills are prominent employers and features along this historic waterfront, shrimp and fishing boats line the docks along with restaurants, condominiums, and small shops. The harbor depth is too low to attract larger ships for industry or high-end luxury tourism and fishing boats are avoiding entry of the harbor at low tide. This lack of navigation is impacting future industry, tourism, and long-time fishing families' incomes. The County and City are grappling with how to create a sustainable harbor area that maintains and improves economic development for industry and fishermen, yet also attracts eco-tourism, recreational boaters and yachtsmen, as well as new hotels to keep them in town and welcome them back.

Project #6, Review of Conservation and Heritage Lands: A comprehensive review of all conservation and heritage lands. The review would map the lands, note their unique qualities (including ecological, historical, and cultural), and identify challenging ownership or other precedent-related complications for preserving or disposing of the lands. The study would also identify lands that are not currently in conservation or considered officially to be heritage lands but could become so through appropriate channels. A significant portion of the County is deemed conservation or heritage lands, which include coastal beaches, an inland island populated by descendants of slave communities, former plantations along moss-draped oaks and centuries-old cypress swamps, and the National Historic Gullah Geechee Corridor. These cultural and ecological treasures and communities are threatened by new development and a lack of climate-consciousness. Concerns include potential gentrification of historically black communities, decreases in river and beach access, reductions in open lands, and threats to a way of life and community structure that has existed for centuries. There are economic considerations, as many conservation lands could otherwise be prime coastal real estate and there are still many large, undeveloped tracts of land that could be, but are not yet in a conservation trust. Also, many historically black landowners struggle with vague property titles due to heirs property deeded or purchased after the Civil War without sufficient inheritance or purchase records. Thus, over generations, there are multiple family claims to property and ownership can be difficult to prove. Sorting out some of the questions about the land would be a helpful, and in some cases necessary, first step to taking action on flooding.

Public Health and Safety

As people in the county have become more aware of climate change, their key concerns focus on impacts to health and safety. Increased flooding from storms creates safety issues for people who get trapped on one side or the other of a flooded roadway, bridge, or property. Flooded septic and sewer systems can result in unsanitary conditions. When power lines go down in storms people can be left without electricity or heat for days. More water in the hot weather means more mosquitos and other insects, and increased mold can cause respiratory illnesses. With shorter, warmer winters certain plant species that are native to the area are either dying out or migrating to cooler climates, which may lead to new or more powerful strains of allergens. Finally, as the number and frequency of heat waves increase, so do the days that people on limited budgets have to choose between air conditioning and other basic needs like food and transportation. Those who work or play outdoors also face greater heat stress. These issues are particularly concerning for children because, relative to other counties in the state, children in Riverway are at much greater risk for low-birthweight, teen pregnancy, and even early death.

Project #7, Public Health and Safety Study and Communications Campaign: To date no one has looked closely at the range of public health and safety issues climate change might exacerbate in the county. This project would involve a partnership with the local university and research hospital to study the risks, evaluate who is most vulnerable to these risks, and then make recommendations for policies and projects that could reduce these risks. This project would include a public outreach effort to share the results of the study with the communities and stakeholders. The study will likely find that vulnerable populations (the very young and very old, disabled, and poor and those working in construction, manufacturing, and agriculture outdoors) will be affected more dramatically by increased heat and greater flood risks than those with more resources to adapt to these risks, so any projects that might come from the study would likely seek to benefit these populations. For example, the County has already considered a range of energy conservation projects to use cheaper, renewable energy sources with incentives and funding for low-income communities, non-profits, and schools. If the County had the data from this proposed Public Health and Safety Study, they would be in a better position to know who will benefit most from the incentives. Another example they have considered is partnering with a local hospital to identify and reduce health stressors for certain populations, which again would be more effective with the results of the study in hand.

Riverway County

River 3

River 2

River 1

Toy's Beach

Byways

River 4

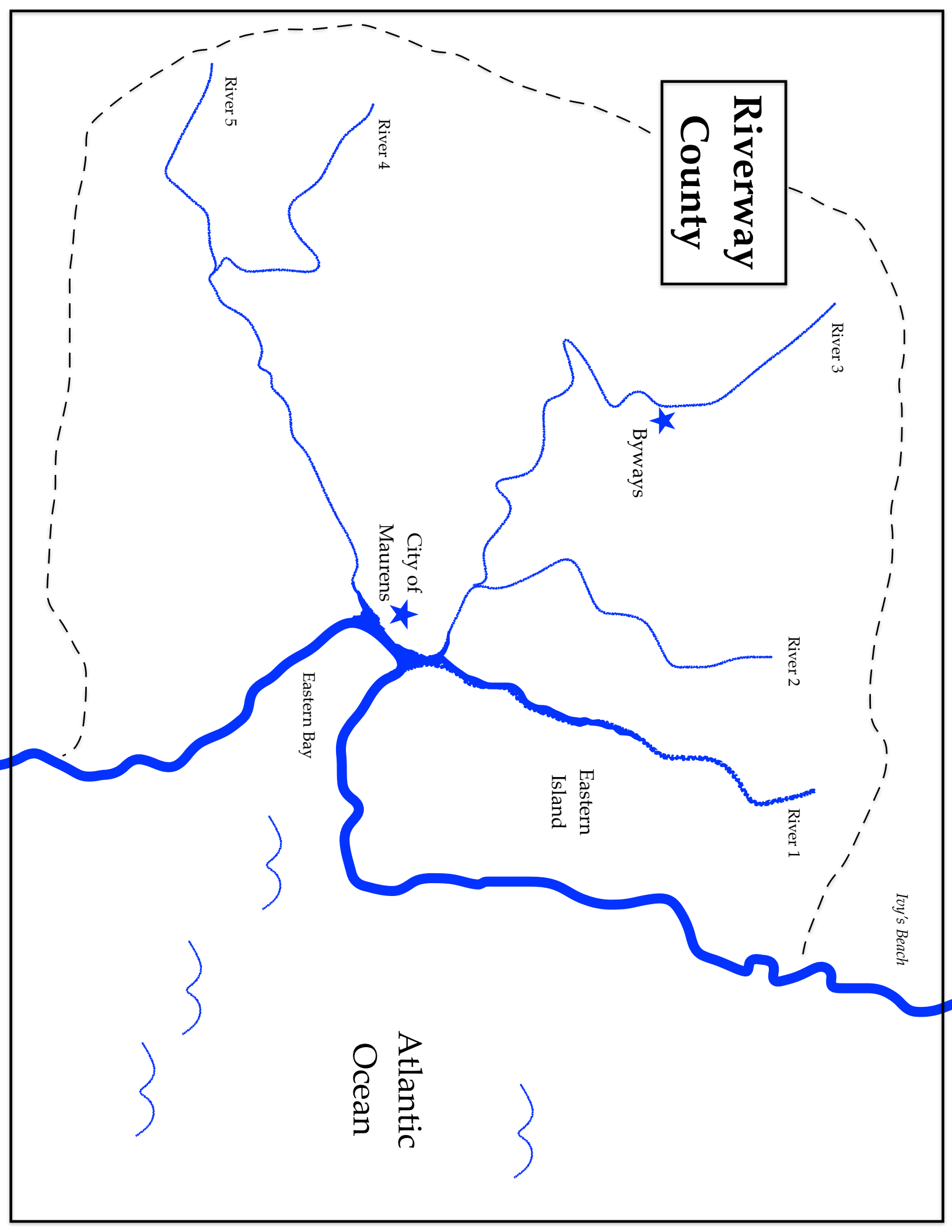
River 5

City of
Maurens

Eastern Bay

Eastern
Island

Atlantic
Ocean



CLIMATE IMPACT PROJECTIONS FROM EASTERN ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

PREPARED FOR RIVERWAY COUNTY

The blue column includes real data - measurements that were taken between 1976 and 2005 and then averaged over that period.

The projected numbers are in the orange columns. They assume that the earth will continue to warm because of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere from the burning of fossil fuels. These numbers assume humans will continue to use fossil fuels at the rate we are using them now, or even increase that usage (thus, the “worse case” scenario the County Director of Sustainability asked for). The numbers in this table represent the best science available on possible changes to temperature, precipitation, storm events, and sea level rise in Riverway County over the short term (out to 2039), the medium term (2040 to 2069) and the long term (2070 to the end of the century).

Take a look at the numbers and think about whether they have any bearing on the comprehensive plan projects you are considering, or in the way you would prioritize them.

INDICATOR	HISTORICAL		PROJECTED		
	(1976-2005)		Short term (2010-2039)	Medium term (2040-2069)	Long term (2070-2099)
Temperature (degrees Fahrenheit)					
Average annual minimum	54.1		55.9	58.1	60.9
Average winter minimum	37.8		39.3	41.2	43.6
Average summer minimum	70.5		72.5	74.9	77.8
Average annual maximum	75.9		77.6	80.0	82.8
Average winter maximum	60.3		61.8	63.7	66.0
Average summer maximum	90.0		91.8	94.4	97.7
Temperature Extreme (days per year)					
colder than 28 °F (daily minimum)	19.6		14.7	10.1	5.6
hotter than 100 °F (daily maximum)	2.1		4.1	11.6	32.2
Precipitation (inches)					
Average annual precipitation	51.5		53.3	53.8	53.9
Average winter precipitation	10.8		11.0	11.5	11.6
Average summer precipitation	17.1		17.5	17.6	16.7
Storms (events per year)					
1" in 24 hours	10.4		11.3	11.6	12.1
2" in 48 hours	6.5		7.4	8.1	8.7
Storms (events per decade)					
4" in 48 hours	6.8		8.9	9.5	11.4
Sea Level Rise (feet)					
amount of increase over what the sea level was in the year 2000			between 1.9 and 2.13	between 3.58 and 4.3	between 8.66 and 10.6

Riverway County Director of Sustainability

You have worked for the County as a planner for over a decade. When you started you were fresh out of graduate school and you surprised everyone by coming home to Riverway. Your family has been here for generations, since your ancestors came here as slaves. The town where you grew up is in the rural part of the county and while your family did not have a lot of money, you had a happy childhood and you were raised by strong parents who encouraged you to excel in school and go on to college. Everyone assumed that you would go on to “bigger and better things” when you left the County, but you focused your studies on sustainable development and when the time came to find a job you couldn’t think of a better place to wrestle with the hard questions of sustainability than right back in your own hometown.

You were hired first as a junior planner when no one here used the term “sustainable development.” But with some effort you have helped people appreciate how important it is to encourage the kind of development that provides good jobs and improves the economy for everyone, in an equitable way, while also preserving and protecting your incredible natural resources. Over time most of your colleagues have come around to your way of thinking and just a couple of years ago the County Council created your position, Director of Sustainability, and promoted you to it. In that role you have worked very closely with the County Manager. It was your idea to ask Eastern Atlantic to produce downscaled climate projections for the county and to convene this stakeholder group. The County Manager asked you to sit in as the county’s representative. You were glad to do it, as you and your staff will likely oversee the grant writing and project management for any of the work that comes out of this effort.

You are in a strange position in this group, however. You and your staff reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and re-envisioned or created from scratch the seven projects everyone is considering today. Obviously you think they are all important or they wouldn’t be in the list. But you know exactly which three you would do first if it were entirely up to you: #6, #2, and #3. You don’t want to influence this group too much because you understand and appreciate that group consensus is very important. Still, of all the people at the table, you know the most about these potential projects and you have the best understanding of the county’s needs and resources.

You think Project #6 is critical because if you don’t work aggressively now to protect what little remaining resources you have, the lure of economic development in places that should not be developed will be too strong to resist (as it has been before). As you look at the climate projections for precipitation and heat you are even more convinced that overdevelopment puts the county at risk, particularly anywhere near the coast. Also, your family home and most of the people in that neighborhood still live on heirs properties without deeds so you know how

precarious the situation feels. This Comprehensive Plan is being reviewed for the first time in two decades and you don't think it will happen again for a long time so you don't want to miss this window of opportunity to right some of the wrongs of the past. Someone has to stand up for these actions someday and it might as well be you right now. Who better than someone with both the personal experience growing up here and professional expertise as a planner and sustainability expert?

You also think #2 and #3 are urgent and necessary to protect the County's economic future. The City used to generate most of the revenue but that distinction has long-since shifted to Eastern Island. Still, the City is the second-largest contributor to the County's resources and it has so much potential to revive if it could simply weather the storms better. If these two projects could get underway, all of the others projects could build on their successes.

Eastern Island beach property owner

It was a dream come true when you and your spouse moved to Eastern Island when you retired. You had been coming to the southern Atlantic coast for vacation for a long time and had talked about making it your home someday. You kept a close eye on the available properties during your last year of work and, miraculously, the perfect house came up right as you were closing up shop. Your home here is large enough to house kids and grandkids for visits, it's right on the beach, and it is relatively new construction so you don't have to worry much about maintenance. The taxes (or millage, as they call it here) are so high that you will be drained of your life savings by the time you pass, but you have decided it is worth it to have the home and the life you always wished for.

It didn't take long for you to get involved in the community after you arrived. You like being a force for good and you are hoping to live here at least 20 years, so you don't want to just sit back while all the decisions are made by others. You joined a local beach association and signed up for the policy committee. You and your colleagues on the committee are all white, older, and "aways" or "com yahs" (as the locals like to call people who have moved to the area from somewhere else). Your committee has been working many hours a week for the last several years advocating for help from the county for coastal restoration projects like elevating houses and other structures that flood regularly, repairing seawalls, and now your current project - the big kahuna - a huge beach restoration project. You have been one of the more vocal advocates for this project so no one will be surprised to hear that your number one priority in the county's list of seven projects is #3.

This meeting is a huge opportunity for you to advocate for the importance of this project. The county has a history of ignoring Eastern Island because there are so many needs in the rest of the county. You get it. All the wealth is on the island and all the poverty is on the mainland. But is it really fair for you and your neighbors to contribute 90% of the revenue and get 10% of the services? You think the county needs to invest a lot more strategically in the preservation and development of the only part of the county that brings in any revenue. For that reason, you think Project #3 is clearly the most urgent. You also think Project #5 is a good idea because it would bring an additional source of income to the county and make the City of Maurens more self-sustaining so they wouldn't need to rely so much on revenue from Eastern Island.

You have mixed feelings about Project #4. You are not convinced that humans are causing the climate to change, but you have seen enough of the science showing that seas are rising to know waterfront properties are going to have problems whether it's because of humans or just part of a natural cycle. You are not worried about it personally because your house is already far enough back from the water that even the worst projections don't bring the water to your

house in the next 50 years. But not everyone is in that situation. And should the people whose houses are threatened just be left to chance? You are a conservative person by nature so you don't think waiting for the crisis to hit is a good idea. Of course, the devil is in the details here and you don't want anyone's property value to be affected, but it's just not smart to ignore reality and pretend it will go away or solve itself. You would rather have the information and then figure out what to do.

Mayor of Byways, a rural town in northwestern Riverway County

You almost can't believe you have been invited to participate in this discussion. You have become so accustomed to being ignored by the County that it feels shocking to be asked for your opinion. So you are here in good faith and you intend to do your best on behalf of your town, but it's with good reason that you approach this table with some skepticism.

Your focus is on revitalizing your town. You were born and raised there and you have never left, but it feels like the town has left you. You are only fifty years old but you remember when Byways was a small, thriving town with middle-class black neighborhoods, a small theater, a grocery store, and a busy town square. Almost everyone had decent jobs and most were at the textile mill. When the mill started to struggle, the town went with it, and things have never been the same. That, combined with terrible political leadership for decades, has put Byways in a fix, and you're sick of it. You're tired of people having an impoverished mindset. You want to inspire people and bring some spark and energy back to the town. The best thing you could do to convince people things can turn around for Byways is to fix the flooding issues.

You have no problem believing in climate change. You see how much worse it is now than it used to be. Storms come more often and unpredictably. They're even coming from a different direction these days. And it's especially hard on an aging population when the storms come back-to-back. They don't have any time to recover before they get hit again. The town coffers hardly have any money anyway and you're spending it all just making repairs after each storm. You are all just sitting there biting your nails worrying about when the next Katrina is coming for you.

You think Project #1 is well-named. It should be the #1 priority! If you could get federal money to upgrade the drainage and sewer systems it would make a world of difference. It's already a huge problem when the rivers overtop during storms and basically flood the whole area, but when you read the climate projections from EAU you got even more worried. You want to fight for Project #1 and you want it to include money for people to upgrade their septic systems, too. A lot of the septic systems are already failing and if the water table rises with sea level rise or if there is more groundwater, Byways is going to be in trouble. You can't revitalize if you can't at least keep your floods out and your septic systems functioning. Also, you think it would be important as part of this project to include a study that identifies the areas in the county that flood the most. You are convinced that Byways has some of the worst spots but you can't point to any documentation that says so. If you could get it down on paper you could apply for your own grants and help directly, rather than having to rely on the County for everything.

After project #1 you are most interested in projects #6 and #7. Project #6 matters to Byways because there are a lot of folks in Byways who could use help sorting out their land ownership. It's a real touchy issue because it could create a lot of family strife over who is the most rightful owner, but you think it's got to happen sooner or later so folks can be eligible for all kinds of government assistance, including storm recovery that is only available to people with proper records. And Project #7 is really important. It's important for everyone else in the County to see what you already know - that bad weather isn't just an inconvenience. It's dangerous for folks without resources. When it floods in Byways it's like living on an island with no electricity. Your kids can't get to school and you can't get to work. People need to be educated on this.

Superintendent of Schools

There's no better place to get to know the real Riverways County than in the schools. As Superintendent you know students and staff from every walk of life in Riverway. There is just one district in the county and you have fought hard to keep it that way. All for one, and one for all is your motto. You think having a single school district that employs thousands of people from all over the county, and that serves students of every background is one of Riverways greatest strengths.

As Superintendent for over two decades you have taken a leadership role in the community that goes well beyond just educating children. You have come to appreciate that kids who can't get to school, or who aren't eating properly, or don't have the right emotional and psychological support simply can't learn as well as they might. This approach has led to the school system having an outsized public service role in Riverways County. On any given day the schools provide meals, social/emotional counseling, and transportation services. But during floods and other storm events, you end up running an emergency management operation more than a school system. You have vehicles that can traverse flooded areas, communication devices with their own power and satellite technologies, and many of your schools become emergency shelters. During these events you are on the ground, driving or slogging by foot around flooded areas making sure buses are not stranded, parents and children are together and safe, and that people who need shelter but can't get to it on their own are getting help. There isn't a road in this county that you don't know. With the climate changing, the demands on your staff, your budget, and on you personally are daunting. Something has to be done and you are glad the county is finally talking about it.

You think Project #7 is of utmost importance. Nothing makes people pay attention to a big, hairy problem like its impact on their own health and safety and the health and safety of their children. You have found yourself in more than one conversation with members of your extended family, all of whom are white like you, talking about climate change as if it's something far off or only worrisome for people who own a beach house. But you and nearly all of the low-income families in your schools know things have already changed because they are experiencing the health and safety effects now. Asthma and other respiratory illnesses have been on the rise. You know kids who have lived through big storms, sometimes in shelters and sometimes at friends' or relatives' houses who are traumatized from the storm itself and the upset it has caused in their lives from losing property or living in a home that is inadequately repaired and unsafe. You would like to see the results of a study that identifies the most and least vulnerable populations in the county, relative to climate change, and then shares that information and leverages it for funding for people and organizations that need it (including the schools).

You would also like to prioritize #1 because inland flooding is a particular pain in your neck and everyone else's from a transportation perspective. You know exactly which roads flood because you have to reroute your buses or risk putting the kids in danger. You have been trying to get the County and the state to fix them for as long as you can remember. You also recognize that most of the County's budget comes from Eastern Island, so you think #3 is important to keep the county solvent. You live in the City of Maurens, right near the downtown business district, so you have a personal stake in Project #2, but you are not likely to bring that up here. For the same personal reasons you think Project #5 shouldn't even be on the list. You don't want to see more large marine and tourist businesses coming into Maurens. You like how it has become a simple, quaint strip with limited activity, but again, you will probably not express your views on that here.

Small Business Owner, Artist, Environmental Activist

When you were asked to participate in this group, the County Manager said one of the reasons they hoped you would participate was your ability to relate to so many different points of view. Well, you couldn't argue with that. You were born and raised in a large Gullah Geechee community on Pine Island. You loved being raised in the community, spending most of the time you weren't in school in nature, and learning many of the Gullah traditions. You grew up on the water, fishing with your family as a way of life and livelihood and taking a boat back and forth to the mainland for school and other activities. You feel deeply tied to nature in general and to the water in particular, partly because of your heritage but also because of your education. In college you studied marine science and entertained, briefly, the hope of pursuing a PhD and teaching in a university.

Happily, life took you in a different direction. After college you became active in the campaign for a state rep whose platform included land conservation and strong regulations on commercial and other activities that degrade water and air quality. You loved the work on the campaign but you were being paid a pittance so you started designing and weaving baskets using natural fibers from coastal sea marshes to sell for extra money. You had learned the craft from your grandmother and her friends but never expected it to be more than a hobby. As it turned out, by the time the campaign ended you had built a decent business selling your art and you had the itch to do even more - larger, more artistic pieces, and painting. That was almost two decades ago and today you are a prominent artist gallery owner in historic downtown Maurens. Also, you are married to a white, wealthy midwesterner whom you met as a customer in your shop ten years ago. You live together with your stepdaughter in a small, lovely cottage on the beach in Eastern Island. While you have a very different background than most of your neighbors, you have made many friends with kindred spirits through your continued environmental activism. Over the years, you have organized or participated in various calls to action, bringing together your Eastern Island neighbors and your Gullah friends and family to advocate for local conservation and other environmental protection measures.

After studying the seven proposed projects, you think they all have value except the dredging project (#5). You think the environmental impact of the dredging project, both the disturbance to the plant and animal life on the seafloor and the dumping of the dredged material, is too great. You also think the benefits of large-boat commercial fishing go disproportionately to the non-local enterprises that own them and you would rather see the County find ways to incentivize and encourage local fishing businesses with smaller boats and lower environmental impacts overall. Otherwise, you hope all of the projects are undertaken at some point. If forced to provide your view on the priorities, you think #6 should be first, followed by #7 and #2. Project #6 includes activities you have advocated for in the past and you are happy to see your

ideas finally being taken up in a serious way (you suspect your friend, the Riverway County Director of Sustainability had something to do with writing and designing these projects). Project #7 is long past-due and #2 would benefit your own gallery, of course.

But what you really want to advocate for is a project that isn't on the list at all. In your view none of these projects help the community have the conversation you *really* need to have - which is about interconnectivity: how the past becomes the present and the present the future, and how all members of the Riverways community rely on one another. Now is the time, while planning for a sustainable future, to step back and wrestle directly with the past and your interdependence.

You want to suggest Project #8: *Cultural Exploration and Social Cohesion*. You suggest starting with storytelling. Artists and historians would get together to portray in multiple forms of media the story of the relationship between culture and industry as it has played out in the county. The question they would tackle is: "What type of living do different industries enable or destroy?" What kind of culture did rice farming with slave labor create? What does it do to a people to tear out 40,000 acres of indigenous trees? How does that act of transformation of the land also transform people and culture? And in what ways does the legacy of that culture persist today? What about growing pine, peaches, and peanuts? What about fishing and shrimping? And paper and steel? In what ways do the choices our predecessors made for their economy affect us now?

The storytelling would help your community reflect and learn from your past. Then, as a community (perhaps through a series of dozens or even hundreds of small group conversations), you would envision the kind of culture you want to create and sustain going forward. You would ask yourselves, "What industries support that vision? How can we encourage those industries?" You think this important, foundational work to listen and learn from your past will bring focus and direction to any sustainability projects that might come later.

Executive Director, City of Maurens Business Alliance

You run a dynamic, influential alliance of businesses in the City of Maurens. As a successful real estate agent you are a small business owner yourself and you have been part of the alliance for many years, but you only recently took on this role as Executive Director. You do get a salary for your work as ED, but your real estate business was doing fine and you have a small inheritance so this job is more a labor of love than anything else. You simply feel passionate about Maurens and supporting small businesses and you are eager to do some things as ED that make a real difference to the city and your member businesses.

You are passionate about Maurens because you grew up just outside of the city on a historic plantation. You and your family have taken great pride in this small corner of the world for generations. In fact, nothing bugs you more than when people say, “Maurens has so much potential!” They just don’t get it. Maurens is already an absolute gem. The problem is that people have a vision of what Maurens used to be and the current place is so different. Yes, the city used to have a lot more industry but those industries were dirty and corporate and most of the benefits went to people who didn’t live here. Today the city is smaller in population, but it has so much to offer, from the historic harborwalk to museums to fine dining, art galleries, and boutique shops and services. You think Maurens is underappreciated and one of your goals as ED is to entice both locals and tourists to see Maurens as the great food, culture, and shopping destination it already is.

In order to make that happen, though, something has got to be done about the flooding. When storms flood the downtown business district it is a disaster. Incredibly, the small businesses in the area rebound quickly, but at great expense in time and money. They know they can’t keep that up forever. Also, the threat of flooding is keeping the downtown from attracting new businesses. If the city could just manage to reduce or eliminate that risk it could grow in really amazing ways.

Obviously you think Projects #2 and #5 are critical, as well. The county is missing out on so much tax revenue it could be making from new and more profitable businesses if the flooding were controlled. Also, commercial fishing and marine businesses are a huge part of the history and, you believe, future of this place. If boats can’t get in and out of the harbor, those businesses can’t exist and neither can the restaurants that rely on fresh local catches. Of course, any dredging project needs to be done wisely and with consideration for recreational activities that currently dominate the harbor, such as kayaking, paddle-boarding, and parasailing. Those businesses need to be supported too and you believe it’s possible to find a balance between them and the commercial fishing and shrimping operations. But right now it

feels like the whole burden of dealing with storm impacts is on the individual business' shoulders. It's high time the county got involved and did something big to address these issues.

You don't feel strongly about any of the other projects except #4. You do NOT want to see the county undertake a managed retreat project. As a real estate agent who represents coastal owners and buyers the last thing you need is a study on the books saying that the properties are in peril and might be forcibly removed at some point. You think it would be crazy to jeopardize the county's primary source of income - high-value properties - right now in anticipation of something that may or may not happen and in any case won't be a problem for several decades.