

1. Assume you take office in January 2020. What will you do in your first 100 days to address flooding?

Flooding and climate crisis are two sides of the same coin. Stacking sandbags and putting out buckets will not matter if we do not fix the roof that is caving in on us. There are many things we can do that address both simultaneously - and improve community prosperity.

Charleston is ground zero for the effects of the climate crisis in the U.S. If we do not lead by example and show other cities what a climate-responsible city looks like we cannot expect other cities do so what must be done to avert a disaster. Accordingly, shrinking our carbon footprint and implementing initiatives that remediate greenhouse gases is a vital part of any plan to fix flooding.

We need to repair broken drainage systems, and some of the most flooded areas will need large public works projects if they are to be saved from rising sea levels. However, the bulk of our efforts must be informed by and work in harmony with nature and address both sides of the flooding/climate crisis coin. Additionally, the solutions to these twin challenges are not likely to be silver bullets, rather they will be incremental and varied. Furthermore, wherever possible we must leverage resources we already have, saving funds for expensive projects.

Beyond the obvious need to halt development in flood prone areas and in wetlands immediately (which will require an outpouring of public support to persuade our city council to cooperate) I am eager to promote Climate Victory Rain Gardens, which can be started immediately. Victory Gardens were a way our foremothers and fathers defeated fascism – community gardens produced over half the produce grown in the US during the WWII. Rain gardens, as featured in the Dutch Dialogues, are gardens that increase the water retention capacity of an area. We can combine these two ideas in ways that promote food sovereignty (no responsible city can be overly reliant on food coming from long distances during climate disruption), improve access to healthy food, help sequester carbon (healthy soil is a powerful tool for taking carbon out of the atmosphere), bring neighbors together, and dramatically improve the water holding capacity of our city in a manner that supports water quality in our rivers and ocean. We can find inspiration from a bold initiative in the Seattle/Puget Sound Region to install 12,000 rain gardens led by Washington State University and Stewardship Partners.

Motivating our community to shift lawns to Climate Victory Rain Gardens is a first step to activating our citizenry to realize that this crisis – and the opportunity it presents to create a more vibrant, connected and just city – requires a level of involvement not experienced since WWII. This initiative preserves limited funds for expensive and large public works projects by leveraging resources we already have – land, sunshine, people who want a stronger and more resilient city – and can be done in a comparatively short amount of time.

Additionally, I would fast track getting the tidal flooding alert smartphone app developed by the city online and in wide use. This is a great use of technology to help mitigate the impact of rising sea levels. I see this application as an excellent platform for engaging citizens more generally as we rise to the challenge of flooding and climate crisis.

2. Charleston’s flood map, flood hazard and rainfall data are severely outdated or missing entirely. How will you ensure the latest science is incorporated into the city’s planning efforts?

We will use the tidal flooding alert smartphone app developed by the city (yet to be released to the public), as well as social media and MyCoast.org to engage residents to become citizen scientists. Researchers have successfully used data and images collected by citizens along with artificial intelligence to create accurate flood risk maps. We the People must step up and become co-leaders with our government officials – climate crisis and flooding are an “all hands on deck” existential threat. Activating our city to collect essential flood-related data is a perfect opportunity to shift our mindset from consumers of government services to co-creators of a more adaptive, responsible and vital community. An important benefit of this approach is that it uses resources we already have – smartphones and motivated people – rather than diminishing scarce financial resources that must be used for major flood mitigation public works projects.

3. Across the region, plans to address flooding vary differently and there is a lack of communication across municipal lines on this issue. As mayor, how will you address this problem and increase the City’s collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions and the

Council of Governments (COG)?

The vast majority of our leaders, locally and nationally, are grossly underestimating the gravity of the coming catastrophe if we do not take bold action to shrink our carbon footprint while also mitigating its symptom, flooding. Case in point, not a single other mayoral candidate mentions climate change as an important issue on their campaign website.

One aim of my campaign is to awaken my fellow citizens of Charleston and the Lowcountry to the need to treat this crisis like our foremothers and fathers treated the threat of fascism in WWII.

There was no room for bickering or infighting. We the People must demonstrate that we are not going to sit passively while our city vanishes under a rising tide. We will do this through direct local action – concrete steps that address climate change and flooding – and by electing civic leaders who are committed to averting disaster. Until we change the leadership of our local governing bodies there is unlikely to be the sort of bold collaborative action our circumstances demand. In the meantime, Fix Flooding First must lead – when the people lead the leaders will follow.

4. Residents on the Westside and Eastside are some of the most affected by flooding and waves of new infill development. How will you ensure all the interests of all residents are included in the city's planning for a growing city and a changing climate?

My approach to development and city planning is based in the design philosophy of permaculture which takes inspiration from the structure and dynamics of natural systems. This philosophy entails looking at whole systems and studying complex interactions. Nature must no longer be viewed as an obstacle or a force to be controlled or dominated – that is how we have gotten ourselves into this challenging situation. As recommended in the Dutch Dialogues, we must build with nature, respect the force of water and maximize natural storm protection.

Narrowly defined profits cannot continue to be the driving force behind growth. Rather, we must develop a framework that appreciates the critical role played by our ecosystem – wetlands, native flora and fauna, healthy soils – to the viability and livability of our city. This way of evaluating growth will center community prosperity, including preserving the unique character of our city and its rich but diminishing diversity, giving those most affected by decisions the loudest voice.

5. Planners and scientists believe it will cost more than \$2 billion to solve all the city's flooding problems. How will you prioritize spending on projects in the short and long term? Give one project example of what you will do in your tenure and where the money will come from.

First, I would not trust any promise to “solve” our flooding problems. Recent ice sheet melting in Greenland far exceeding scientific predictions demonstrates that climate science is not exact, not by a longshot. New Orleans' recent \$14.5 billion levee project is already failing. Accordingly, I favor investments that do more than just mitigate flooding. Preserving green infrastructure, for example, addresses flooding and maintains carbon sequestering natural habitat. That said, drainage must be improved as soon as possible. Due to its critical role MUSC must be reliably accessible, thus I would start there. I favor using funds from the ½ cent sales tax to complete drainage projects and would seek additional funding from state and federal sources.

6. Regulations and building practices in place now ignore the realities of a changing climate and encourage development in flood prone places. Unless we revise zoning and land use ordinances this city will continue in the pattern of building and flooding. What are your specific plans for updates to zoning and land use practices and how will you garner the political support to transform current practices?

Voting new leadership into a system designed to preserve the status quo (as is the case with nearly all institutions) will not bring about the degree of change needed in the time we have. Only a fully engaged and activated citizenry can save us. We are seeing signs of this in areas of our city most affected by flooding. Johns Islanders are especially fed up with a city that has completely ignored the recommendations of its own Century V Plan which included as its first two stated values: “1. Preserve the physical qualities and way of life in rural areas of the City.” And “2. Protect and improve our natural resources...” I intend to support this awakening among my fellow citizens to foment overwhelming and irresistible public support for changes to zoning and land use that include:

- a moratorium on building in flood prone areas
- holds developers responsible for damage done to ecosystem services (including diminishing water holding capacity)
- an end to single family zoning (we must increase density in a manner that supports vibrant city if we are to prevent suburban sprawl)
- policies that reflect the values and recommendations of the Century V Plan
- protects and promote green infrastructure, including Climate Victory Rain Gardens.

7. Buyouts for homes that flood severely and repeatedly are becoming a growing trend nationally to mitigate the impacts of worsening flooding. We saw this recently in the Bridgepointe subdivision of the Shadowmoss neighborhood. What are your thoughts on this mitigation strategy and do you plan to help people whose homes are repeatedly flooded relocate to higher ground?

We would be foolish to ignore the fact that our city has allowed development in areas that should never have been developed. Willingness to accept responsibility for mistakes and learn from them is the hallmark of maturity. As sea levels continue to rise we must be willing to face harsh facts and make wise decisions, and that includes retreating from flood prone areas. The costs of relocations must be distributed broadly among government entities, insurers and, where feasible and appropriate, from developers. Additionally, we must ensure compliance with FEMA requirements to preserve all potential sources of federal funding.

8. We all know there are limited dollars to address worsening flooding in Charleston, and some projects must take a backseat to others. Still, the current administration has endorsed Charleston County's plans to use money from the 2016 half cent sales tax to build the I-526 extension. Do you agree we should fund the I-526 extension, and, if so, how do you justify spending those hundreds of millions of dollars rather than immediately funding action on flooding?

I oppose the I-526 extension.