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Historic Charleston Foundation, City of Charleston Kick Off Dutch Dialogues Charleston

Charleston, S.C.--Today, representatives from Historic Charleston Foundation, the City of Charleston and the visiting Dutch Dialogues Team announced the kick off of Dutch Dialogues® Charleston, a community-driven project that 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.

During this scoping visit, Dutch Dialogues experts from Waggoner & Ball, LLC and The Water Institute of the Gulf will work with lead-sponsor HCF and area partners to gather data, meet with new and existing stakeholders, and further coordinate the project.

Participants will share existing plans, programs and actions, and identify others that might contribute to the larger analysis. This visit will deepen the understanding of ongoing efforts across city departments, the private and nonprofit sectors and integrate those efforts in the Dutch Dialogues process.

In addition to HCF, participants include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Medical University of South Carolina, the Clemson Design Center, the Urban Land Institute, the Charleston Resilience Network, the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium, the College of Charleston, and City of Charleston officials and staff.

While here, Dutch Dialogues representatives also will visit the four proposed focus areas:

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 on the eastside of the peninsula 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.

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.

This visit is the first in a four-part process that will continue through the summer of 2019.

Subsequent parts of the project will include a two-day data collection and analysis conference, a weeklong public design workshop, and the creation of a comprehensive report of design recommendations for workable, scalable and integrated flood mitigation solutions for each of the project study areas.

Historic Charleston Foundation President & CEO Winslow Hastie said, “The Foundation has a proven record of convening various stakeholders to address major challenges facing the city, and we look forward to leading this vital city initiative to address what we feel is an imminent threat to the preservation of Charleston. The Dutch Dialogues process will connect citizens, governments, businesses and nonprofits with a unique team of national and international experts to find real solutions to some of the toughest flooding problems facing our city. This is precisely the kind of multi-disciplinary, cross-sector collaboration that has proven so effective in the Netherlands, and that we believe will be equally successful here in Charleston.”

Dale Morris, Director of Strategic Partnerships for the Water Institute of the Gulf and a core Dutch Dialogue Team member, said, “Over the past few years, facing the existential threat of rising seas and ever more extreme weather, Charleston is emerging as a leader on flooding and resilience in the United States. The need is pressing and yet the opportunities to effectively adapt are immense. We’re proud to be collaborating with the Charleston community to find scalable, sustainable solutions to the formidable challenges here, which will also be relevant up-and-down the eastern seaboard.”

Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg said, “We are looking forward to working with the Dutch team to address some of our city’s most critical flooding challenges. The input from this fine group of internationally recognized experts will ensure that we are designing and implementing flooding solutions not just for today, but for the decades ahead.”

For more information about Dutch Dialogues Charleston, please see the attached Explainer.

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