

SECTION 9 - PLAN MAINTENANCE

It is required by FEMA (as per 44 CFR Part 201.6(c)(4)(i) that, “[The plan maintenance process shall include a section describing the] method and schedule of monitoring, evaluating, and updating the mitigation plan within a five-year cycle.” A formal plan maintenance process must take place to ensure that the Hazard Mitigation Plan remains an active and pertinent document. Regularly scheduled evaluations during the five-year cycle are important to assess the effectiveness of the program and to reflect changes that may affect mitigation priorities.

URS Corporation (URS), as the consulting company, was able to provide the Core Planning Group with guidance on potential means to satisfy the requirement for plan maintenance procedures. However, it was the members of the Steering Committee who were in the best position to define the process. URS submitted a Guidance Memorandum (Guidance Memorandum #3 ó Plan Maintenance Procedures to summarize FEMA requirements for plan monitoring, evaluation, and updates. The memorandum was distributed on February 15, 2008.

At a meeting of the Steering Committee on March 19, 2008, plan maintenance issues were discussed, feedback was obtained, and collective decisions were made regarding the plan maintenance strategy for this hazard mitigation plan. The information presented below represents these decisions, as provided to URS. These methods will ensure that regular review and updating of the Hazard Mitigation Plan will occur.

The Monmouth County Office of Emergency Management will take the lead role in the coordinating the overall plan maintenance effort, with ongoing support and feedback from the Steering Committee.

Monitoring the Plan

An important step in any mitigation planning process is to document the method by which the Core Planning Group will monitor the Hazard Mitigation Plan throughout the five-year period of record. To accomplish this objective, the Steering Committee has elected to prepare **Annual Work Progress Monitoring Reports**, compiling responses prepared by entities responsible for implementing mitigation actions (as identified in the Mitigation Strategy). Progress Monitoring Reports shall be prepared by each participating jurisdiction and submitted on an annual basis to MCOEM, beginning one year from the date of FEMA's approval of the Final plan. MCOEM will follow-up on the collection of these forms as needed. Work progress reports shall be the FEMA How-To #4 (FEMA 386-4), Worksheet #1, Progress Report. Each participating jurisdiction will be responsible for downloading the form from the FEMA web site (How-To #4 is currently posted at: <http://www.fema.gov/plan/mitplanning/howto4.shtm>). Using the FEMA Progress Reports will answer the following questions:

- the hazard mitigation action(s) that the agency is responsible for
- the supporting agencies/entities responsible for implementation;
- a delineation of the various stages of work along with timelines (milestones should be included);
- whether the resources needed for implementation, funding, staff time and technical assistance are available, or if other arrangements must be made to obtain them;
- the types of permits or approvals necessary to implement the action;
- details on the ways the actions will be accomplished within the organization;
- whether the duties will be assigned to agency staff or contracted out;
- the current status of the project; and
- any issues that may hinder implementation.

Evaluating the Plan

Post adoption, a mitigation plan should be evaluated on a regular basis in order to assess the effectiveness of the plan's implementation and to reflect changes that may affect the mitigation priorities.

To accomplish this objective, the Steering Committee will convene once per year for an **Annual Plan Evaluation Meeting**. Plan Evaluation Meetings will be conducted within three months after each annual batch of Progress Reports are due (see "Monitoring", above). At each Plan Evaluation Meeting, the Steering Committee will review Progress Reports, and use the following criteria to evaluate the plan:

- do the goals and objectives address current and expected conditions?
- has the nature and magnitude of risks changed?
- are the current resources appropriate for implementing the plan?
- are there any implementation problems (such as technical, political and/or legal), or coordination issues with the other agencies and/or Committee members?
- have the outcomes occurred as expected?
- have the agencies and other Committee partners participated as proposed?; and
- where shortcomings are identified, what can be done to bring things back on track?

They will also discuss progress with regard to plan integration, and any comments received on the plan from municipalities, the public, and/or other stakeholders.

Following each Annual Plan Evaluation Meeting, the MCOEM will prepare meeting minutes summarizing the outcome of the evaluation meeting. MCOEM will distribute meeting minutes to all Steering Committee members via email, and will post meeting minutes on the web site.

Updating the Plan

As part of the process to maintain FEMA mitigation funding eligibility, a plan update must always be submitted to NJOEM/FEMA for their review. This must occur within five years of the plan's approval by FEMA (and during subsequent five-year cycles thereafter).

To accomplish this objective, the Steering Committee elected to have the MCOEM take the lead on Plan updates, with support from the Steering Committee members. MCOEM will conduct **Update Appraisals** with the Steering Committee. During the Update Appraisal, the Steering Committee will evaluate the current Plan, Annual Progress Reports, and Annual Plan Evaluation Meeting Minutes. MCOEM will conduct the Update Appraisals at 3.5 years from the date of FEMA's approval of the Final plan, and at the same point in time during subsequent five-year windows (i.e., from the date of FEMA's approval of the final plan, Update Appraisals will occur at Year 3.5, Year 8.5, Year 13.5, etc.). The Steering Committee has selected Year 3.5 as the point for the Update Appraisals to ensure that sufficient time (18 months) will be available to update the document within the five year cycle, should a major rewrite be necessary.

The plan update will not only involve a comprehensive review and evaluation of each section of the plan, but also a discussion of the results of evaluation and monitoring activities detailed in the Plan Maintenance section of the previously approved plan. Plan updates may validate the information in the previously approved plan, or may involve a major plan rewrite. A plan update cannot be an annex referring to the previously approved plan; it must stand on its own as a complete and current plan.

Other criteria that will be considered during the update include:

- if changing situations have modified goals/objectives/actions and/or hazards;
- if additional information is available to perform more accurate vulnerability assessments;
- if it is determined that participating jurisdictions wish to be added to and/or removed from the Plan; or
- if it is determined that the Plan no longer addresses current and expected future conditions.

At the time of the update, MCOEM shall consult with FEMA for the latest Guidance in place regarding plan updates to ensure that the latest criteria are addressed in the update process.

MCOEM will initiate the updates immediately upon completion of the Update Appraisal, with support from the Steering Committee. MCOEM shall be responsible for completing the updates 90 days prior to the end of the five-year cycle, and for submitting the updated plan to NJOEM and FEMA.

Plan updates will be posted on the County web site, and made available in hard copy at the MCOEM offices.

Public Participation in Plan Maintenance

As per 44 CFR Part 201.6 (c)(4)(iii) states, “[The plan maintenance process shall include a] discussion on how the community will continue public participation in the plan maintenance process.” To meet this requirement, the new Hazard Mitigation Plan should describe what opportunities the public will have during the plan’s periodic review to comment on the progress made to date and on any proposed plan revisions.

The following array of activities was selected by selected by the Steering Committee during the March 19, 2008 meeting:

- MCOEM will continue to maintain the mitigation planning website and document repositories.
- Each participating jurisdiction will add a link on their jurisdiction’s web page to the County mitigation planning website, if they have not already done so as part of the plan development process.
- MCOEM will lead efforts to prepare an annual fact sheet on the plan. This fact sheet will be submitted via email to Planning Group members for posting on community notice boards, at a minimum, and preferable supplemented with distribution at meetings as applicable. MCOEM will post the fact sheet on the county mitigation plan web site.
- Participating jurisdictions will conduct annual interviews and/or smaller meetings with civic groups, the public and other stakeholders. This will be accomplished through incorporating discussion of the mitigation plan into other regularly attended meetings.
- Participating jurisdictions will consider annual flyers, newsletters, newspaper advertisements, and Radio/TV announcements, and will implement some or all of the above at the discretion of the jurisdiction.

Participating jurisdictions are responsible for keeping track of any comments they receive on the plan, and bringing these forward to the Steering Committee to discuss during Annual Evaluation Meetings.

Plan Integration

As per 44 CFR Part 201.6(c)(4)(ii), “[The plan shall include a] process by which local governments incorporate the requirements of the mitigation plan into other planning mechanisms such as comprehensive or capital improvement plans, when appropriate.”

To meet this requirement, the new Hazard Mitigation Plan should indicate how mitigation recommendations will be integrated into job descriptions, or existing planning mechanisms such as comprehensive plans, capital improvement plans, zoning and building codes, site reviews, permitting and other planning tools, where such tools are appropriate. In other words, plan integration can be thought of as the process whereby each local government will incorporate the plan findings and projects into their governing systems.

URS Corporation (URS), as the consulting company, was able to provide guidance on potential means to satisfy the requirement for plan integration procedures. However, it was the members of the Steering Committee who were in the best position to define the process. URS submitted a Guidance Memorandum (Guidance Memorandum #3 – Plan Integration) to MCOEM on August 7, 2007, to summarize FEMA requirements for integrating the plan into other local planning mechanisms. It was also posted to the mitigation planning web site soon after for review by Core Planning Group members, the public, and other stakeholders.

The Steering Committee discussed plan integration at their meeting on March 19, 2008 and noted the following capabilities in relation to mitigation planning and opportunities to integrate the mitigation plan into daily activities. Progress with regard to Plan Integration will be on the agenda for each Annual Plan Evaluation Meetings.

Participating jurisdictions currently use comprehensive land use planning, capital improvements planning and building codes to guide and control development. After the Hazard Mitigation Plan is formally adopted, these existing mechanisms will have hazard mitigation strategies integrated into them, as follows:

- Within six months after adoption of the Hazard Mitigation Plan, Core Planning Group members for each participating jurisdiction will issue a letter to each of its community’s department heads to solicit their support and explore opportunities for integrating hazard mitigation planning objectives into their daily activities. Specifically, letters can include:
 - Many participating jurisdictions have Master Plans, General or Comprehensive Plans. In participating jurisdictions where Master Plans, General or Comprehensive Plans exist, Core Planning Group members will work with their respective planning departments to educate them on the Hazard Mitigation Plan and encourage that on the next updates of such plans, hazard mitigation for natural hazards is addressed.
 - Many participating jurisdictions have local building departments responsible for building code enforcement and review of site plans. Local jurisdictions enforce the state-adopted IBC (which is currently the International Building Code 2006 – New Jersey Edition). In these communities, Core Planning Group Members can coordinate with their respective building departments to ensure that they have adopted and are enforcing the minimum standards established in the current State-adopted IBC NJ edition.
 - Many participating jurisdictions participate in FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program and as such have local floodplain management ordinances. In these communities, Core Planning Group Members can coordinate with their respective Floodplain Administrator to determine if enforcement beyond FEMA minimum requirements would be prudent for the community.

- In participating jurisdictions with local zoning ordinances, Core Planning Group members can work with their zoning boards to educate them on the Hazard Mitigation Plan and encourage consideration of low occupancy, low-density zoning in hazard areas, when practicable.

The Core Planning Group facilitates its duties by using existing processes and resources while implementing the plan and fulfilling the mitigation goals. An important step in any mitigation implementation process is to take advantage of tools and procedures that are already in place. Because the mechanisms are in-place and familiar to local officials, tapping into existing resources will alleviate the workload and accelerate the implementation process, particularly if the implementation phase calls for expanding existing agency mandates or departmental funds, for instance, or creating new programs later on.

By completing the previously-distributed Capability Assessment Questionnaires, each participating jurisdiction should have a clear understanding of their unique local capabilities and resources.

The following bullets provide ways that the hazard mitigation plan can be integrated into local planning mechanisms:

- **Departmental or organizational work plans, policy, and procedural changes.** Updating the work plans, policies, or procedures to include hazard mitigation concepts and activities can help integrate the plan into daily operations. These changes can include how major development projects and subdivision reviews are addressed in hazard-prone areas or ensure that hazard mitigation concerns are considered in the approval of major capital improvement projects.
- **Job descriptions.** Working with department or agency heads to revise job descriptions of government staff to include mitigation-related duties could further institutionalize hazard mitigation. This change would not necessarily result in great financial expenditures or programmatic changes. For example, adding hazard mitigation into job descriptions for a community planner, floodplain manager, emergency manager, building code official, or water resources engineer in the Public Works Department:
- **Capital and operational budgets.** Instead of solely relying on funding from hazard mitigation programs or other external sources of grant monies, jurisdictions might consider a line item for mitigation project funding in their capital or operational budgets. Having a line item in these budgets may not guarantee funding every year, but it is certainly easier to get the money allocated if it is already there. Examples include:
 - A revolving fund to finance a buyout program.
 - A low-interest loan program to fund retrofits.
- **Executive Orders, ordinances, and other directives.** The governing body or local executive often has the authority to issue directives to require departments and agencies to carry out certain hazard mitigation actions. Using one of these mechanisms, the governing body or executive can direct department heads to provide progress reports to the planning team on the hazard mitigation initiatives that the departments are responsible for carrying out.
- **Comprehensive planning.** Adding a hazard element to the comprehensive plan is one of the most effective mechanisms to institutionalize hazard mitigation for new construction. A primary benefit of combining these processes is that they both influence the location, type, and characteristics of physical growth, specifically buildings and infrastructure. While planning in

and of itself may not be regulatory, it uses regulatory mechanisms (zoning, development ordinances, etc.) for implementing goals and objectives. Additionally, in many parts of the country, the comprehensive planning process is an established activity that is already familiar to the public, and it usually generates a great deal of interest and public participation.

Examples of using existing resources to accomplish mitigation include:

- The Department of Public Works could adopt more rigorous procedures for inspecting and cleaning debris from streams and ditches. Instead of cleaning only after storms or complaints from citizens, the Department could require inspections of streams and ditches at least semi-annually.
- The Planning Department could add hazard vulnerability to subdivision and site plan review criteria and incorporate any necessary actions at the planning stage.
- A Community conservation society or other interested voluntary organization could perform inventories of historic sites in hazard areas that might require special treatment to protect them from specific hazards.
- State agencies can lend their time, expertise and funds to the implementation of hazard mitigation projects. Make sure the planning team's list of state contacts is very broad, as the resources of one state agency may be unknown to another.
- Colleges and universities can provide technical expertise to projects that may require Geographic Information System (GIS), engineering, planning or other technical assistance. They can also provide meeting space, laboratories and other logistical support.
- Jurisdictions can apply to participate in the Community Rating System (CRS). CRS is part of the NFIP and reduces flood insurance premiums to reflect what a community does above and beyond the NFIP's minimum standards for floodplain regulation. CRS rewards communities for what they are doing, as well as provide an incentive for new flood protection activities, such as; preserve open space in the floodplain; enforce higher standards for safer new development; maintain drainage systems; and inform people about flood hazards, flood insurance, and how to reduce flood damage.
- Stormwater Management Plans: As part of the municipal stormwater permitting program, all municipalities can adopt a stormwater management plan and implementing stormwater management ordinance. The plan and ordinance incorporate design and operating standards for stormwater volume, ground water recharge and water quality control as set forth in NJDEP regulations. Ideally a developer should meet the standards onsite; however, the municipality can allow offsite mitigation if it adopts a mitigation plan within the larger stormwater plan. Through this mitigation process, a municipality can direct a developer to correct or alleviate an existing flooding problem. The Stormwater Management Rule also sets up a regional stormwater management planning process where stormwater management can be addressed on a watershed level. Through this process, more stringent design standards could be adopted to further reduce stormwater and flooding. Once a regional stormwater management plan is adopted, each affected municipality must amend its municipal stormwater management plan to incorporate standards specific to that waterway. Municipal stormwater management plans become part of the municipal master plan and are revisited every six years.