

Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan

3.0 Planning Process

44 CFR 201.6(b): “An open public involvement process is essential to the development of an effective plan”.

The Vanderburgh County Emergency Management Agency (EMA), contracted with AMEC Earth & Environmental (AMEC) to facilitate and develop the DMA Hazard Mitigation Plan. AMEC’s role was to:

- Establish a planning organization for Evansville and Vanderburgh County and all of the participants;
- Meet all of the DMA requirements as established by federal regulations, following FEMA’s planning guidance;
- Facilitate the entire planning process;
- Identify the data requirements that the participating counties, communities, and other FEMA “eligible applicants” could provide, and conduct the research and documentation necessary to augment that data;
- Develop and facilitate the Public Input process;
- Produce the Draft and Final Plan documents; and
- Guarantee acceptance of the final Plan by FEMA Region V.

Funding for the planning assistance contract was provided to the EMA by FEMA through the Indiana State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA). The required local match was provided as an “in-kind” or “soft” match, through the many hours spent on this effort by each of the planning team participants, as well as through the use of their facilities for meetings and actual cash disbursements for copying and public notices, where necessary.

AMEC established the process for this planning effort utilizing the DMA planning requirements and FEMA’s associated guidance. This guidance is structured around a 4-phase process. AMEC also integrated an older, more detailed 10-step planning process that was still required at the time this effort was initiated for other FEMA mitigation plans, such as for FEMA’s Community Rating System (CRS) and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) programs. Thus, AMEC formulated a single planning process that melds these two sets of planning requirements together and meets the requirements of six major programs: DMA, CRS, FMA, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), FEMA’s Pre- Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM), and new flood control projects authorized by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The graphics below show how the old 10-step process fits within the new 4-phase process.



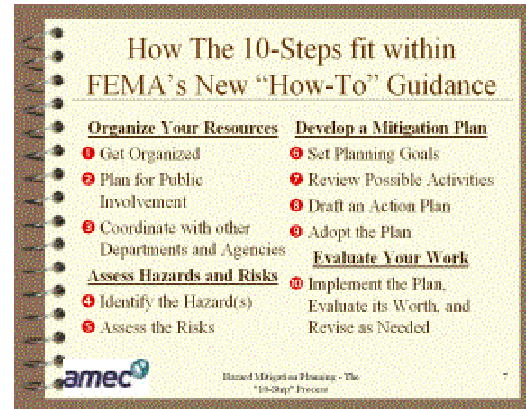


Figure 3. DMA and CRS Similar Planning Steps

The following table also serves as a means of cross-referencing the two sets of planning requirements.

Table 2. DMA and CRS Planning Cross Reference

Disaster Mitigation Act Planning Regulations (44 CFR 201.6)	CRS Planning Steps
Planning process	
201.6(c)(1)	1. Organize
201.6(b)(1)	2. Involve the public
201.6(b)(2) & (3)	3. Coordinate
Risk assessment	
201.6(c)(2)(i)	4. Assess the hazard
201.6(c)(2)(ii) & (iii)	5. Assess the problem
Mitigation strategy	
201.6(c)(3)(i)	6. Set goals
201.6(c)(3)(ii)	7. Review possible activities
201.6(c)(3)(iii)	8. Draft an action plan
Plan maintenance	
201.6(c)(5)	9. Adopt the plan
201.6(c)(4)	10. Implement, evaluate, revise

LOCAL GOVERNMENT / COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The DMA planning regulations and guidance stress that each local government seeking the required FEMA approval of their mitigation plan must:

- Participate in the process;
- Detail areas within the Planning Area where the risk differs from that facing the entire area;
- Identify specific projects to be eligible for funding; and
- Have the Governing Board formally adopt the plan.

For Evansville and Vanderburgh County, “participation” means the local government representatives will:

- Attend the Community Planning Team meetings;
- Provide available data that is requested by the Planning Team;
- Review and provide/coordinate comments on the Draft plans;
- Advertise, coordinate and participate in the Public Input process; and
- Coordinate the formal adoption of the plan by the City and County Councils.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Step 1: Organize

With the commitment to participate by Evansville and Vanderburgh County, AMEC next established a framework and organization for the development of the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. This Plan was developed by a planning team led by the Vanderburgh County Emergency Management Agency and was comprised of key City and County stakeholder representatives. This team is called the Community Planning Team, or CPT. The CPT met seven times over a seven-month period. Typical City and County representatives attending each meeting included the Building Commission; Area Planning Commission; Emergency Management Agency; Southwest Indiana Disaster Resistant Community Corporation (DRC); and the Police, Fire, and Engineering Departments. The list of CPT members from the City and County is included in Appendix A. Attendees and agendas for each of the CPT meetings are on file with the Vanderburgh County EMA. The CPT will stay in existence for the purpose of implementing and updating this plan. The seven CPT meeting dates and topics were as follows:

- January 8th – Kickoff Meeting;
- March 11th – Hazard Identification;
- April 8th – Risk Assessment and Goal Setting;
- May 12th – Review Possible Mitigation Activities;
- June 10th – Review Draft Plan;
- July 13th – PUBLIC MEETING; and
- August 12th – Review Public Input Comments; Draft / Final Plan.



Step 2: Involve the Public

In addition to the CPT, a public input committee was also formed. The Public Input Advisory Committee (PIAC) was comprised of representatives from the County Health Department, private power company, rural community, Red Cross, local engineers and developers, neighborhood associations, public library, the Historic Preservation Society, and the Chamber of Commerce. The PIAC met five times over a six-month period. News articles and press release information were posted on the Community website at <http://www.evansvillego.org/evansEMA/>. Public review of the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan took place through a formal Public Meeting. Stakeholder and public comments were reflected in the preparation of the Plan, including those sections addressing mitigation goals and action strategies. The six PAIC meeting dates and topics were as follows:

- March 11th – Kickoff Meeting and Hazard Identification;
- April 8th – Risk Assessment and Goal Setting;
- May 12th – Review Possible Mitigation Activities;
- June 10th – Review Draft Plan;
- July 13th – PUBLIC MEETING; and
- August 12th – Review Public Input Comments; Draft / Final Plan.

Step 3: Coordinate with other Departments and Agencies

Early on in the planning process, the CPT determined that data collection, mitigation and action strategy development, and plan approval would be greatly enhanced by inviting other state and federal agencies to participate in the planning process. Based on their involvement in hazard mitigation planning, representatives from the following key agencies were offered inclusion as members of the CPT:

- Indiana State Emergency Management Agency;
- FEMA Region V;
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville District;
- Natural Resource Conservation Service, State Conservationist;
- National Weather Service;
- National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) State Coordinator; and
- Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water.

In addition, technical data, reports, and studies were obtained from these agencies either through web-based resources or directly from the agencies.

Relationship to Other Community Planning Efforts and Hazard Mitigation Activities

Coordination with other community planning efforts is also paramount to the success of this Plan. Hazard mitigation planning involves identifying existing community policies, tools and actions that will reduce a community's risk and vulnerability from natural hazards. Evansville and Vanderburgh County utilize a variety of comprehensive planning mechanisms; such as land use and master plans, emergency response and mitigation plans, and municipal ordinances and building codes; to guide and control community development. Integrating existing planning efforts and mitigation policies and action strategies into this Hazard Mitigation Plan establishes a credible and consistent plan that ties into and supports other community programs. This Plan, therefore, links the specific natural hazards that present a



risk in the community with the existing mitigation elements found in the various County plans. The development of this Plan utilized information included in the following Community plans, studies, reports, and initiatives:

- 2004-2025 Comprehensive Plan of Evansville and Vanderburgh County;
- City of Evansville – Vanderburgh County, Community Comprehensive Hazard Analysis;
- Stormwater Master Plan, City of Evansville, Board of Public Works, July 1997;
- Evansville Levee Authority, Levee Report, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville District, 1985; and
- City of Evansville – Vanderburgh County, Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, November 2003.

Step 4: Assess the Hazard

The CPT conducted a Hazard Identification study to determine what hazards threaten the planning area. Research focused on previous occurrences of natural hazards, those that might occur in the future, and the likelihood of their occurrence or recurrence. The hazards identified and investigated in the Evansville-Vanderburgh County area include:

- Drought / Wildfires;
- Earthquake / Liquefaction and Ground Motion Amplification;
- Extreme Temperatures;
- Flood / Dam and Levee Failure
- Infestations;
- Manmade Hazards;
- Mine Subsidence;
- Thunderstorms / High Winds;
- Tornadoes; and
- Winter Storms.

Step 5: Assess the Problem

Once the hazard identification step was complete, the CPT conducted both vulnerability and capability assessments to describe the impact that each identified hazard would have upon the Evansville-Vanderburgh County community and to determine the current ability of Evansville-Vanderburgh County to mitigate the hazards through existing policies, regulations, programs, and procedures. The analyses identified areas where improvements could or should be made.

Step 6: Set Planning Goals

Planning goals were established to incorporate improvement areas identified in Step 5 into the Mitigation Plan. The CPT set goals, formulated as public policy statements, that:

- Represent basic desires of the community;
- Encompass all aspects of the community, public and private;
- Are nonspecific, in that they refer to the quality (not the quantity) of the outcome;
- Are future-oriented, in that they are achievable in the future; and
- Are time-independent, in that they are not scheduled events.



Additionally, goals from other community programs and priorities were identified and discussed. This Multi-Objective Management (MOM) assisted the CPT in striving for efficiency by combining projects/needs from various community programs and plans that are similar in nature or location. Combining projects/needs through MOM effectively results in access to multiple sources of funding to solve problems that can be “packaged” and broadens the supporting constituency base by striving towards outcomes desired by multiple stakeholder groups.

Step 7: Review Possible Mitigation Activities

Following the goal setting meeting, the CPT undertook a brainstorming session to generate a set of viable alternatives that would support the selected goals. The CPT focused on the following categories of mitigation measures:

- Prevention;
- Property Protection;
- Structural Projects;
- Natural Resource Protection;
- Emergency Services; and
- Public Information.

A facilitated discussion examined and analyzed potential alternatives. Similar to the goal-setting activity, the CPT included all previously recommended mitigation actions from existing Evansville-Vanderburgh County mitigation plans in its review. After old and new mitigation actions had been identified, the CPT members used a FEMA recommended decision-making process to prioritize mitigation measures.

Step 8: Draft an Action Plan

The prioritized mitigation measures were further developed into an action plan that identifies the following for each measure:

- Source (developed by the CPT or originating from an existing plan);
- Mitigation category (prevention, property protection, etc.);
- Responsible office;
- Priority (high, medium, or low);
- Cost estimate;
- Benefit to the community;
- Potential funding sources; and
- Schedule for completion.

Step 9: Adopt the Plan

The Evansville City and Vanderburgh County Councils will adopt the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan by passing a resolution.



Step 10: Implement the Plan, Evaluate its Worth, Revise as Needed

Step 10 is critical to the overall success of Hazard Mitigation Planning. Upon adoption, the Mitigation Plan faces the truest test of its worth, implementation. Many worthwhile and high priority mitigation actions have been recommended. The CPT must decide which action to undertake based upon priority and available funding.

In addition, the Mitigation Plan requires maintenance. There will be an ongoing effort to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the plan, and to update the plan as progress, roadblocks, or changing circumstances are recognized.

