

**COUNTYWIDE ALL NATURAL HAZARD  
MITIGATION PLANNING PROCESS**

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### **3.1 Mission Statement**

At the beginning of the planning process, a mission statement was drafted to establish a clear goal for the Core Group. The Core Group reviewed and approved the following as its Mission Statement:

*“To develop a working document that fulfills the mandates of the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, and satisfies the requirements of FEMA and the Ohio EMA, as well as meets the needs of all of Adams County. Further, by researching and planning for future natural hazards and implementing appropriate mitigation techniques, all of Adams County can save lives and protect property, reduce the cost of disasters and provide for a rapid and efficient recovery by coordinating response efforts, and increasing the educational awareness of natural hazard events and their effects on the people, property, and resources of all Adams County.”*

### **3.2 Notification Process**

The incorporated jurisdictions of the County, as well as other agencies that work within the County, were notified of the mitigation planning process. The Adams County EMA Office created a master list of jurisdictions they felt necessary to participate in this planning effort. The comprehensive list was reviewed to ensure that all the appropriate agencies as well as jurisdictions would be invited to participate in this effort. A Core Group representing a wide array of political subdivisions, as well as agency and private businesses, was notified of the mitigation planning process.

Prior to commencing this planning process, in addition to contacting the Core Group, Adams County notified adjacent counties as well as the general public regarding this mitigation planning process. The Adams County EMA sent letters to adjacent counties with contact information for learning more about the planning effort. Adams County also issued a press release dated October 11, 2004 inviting concerned citizens in all jurisdictions of the County. The Adams County EMA Director was the contact source and his contact information was provided. See Appendix A for copies of these correspondences.

### **3.3 Groups**

The Core Group is the original planning unit for this project. All Core Group members are involved for the entire planning process. They are the decision makers and implementers. The purpose of the Core Group is to provide information to the various entities of Adams County that have a stake, either directly or indirectly, in the Mitigation Plan. They provide feedback, input, and review as the process of the Mitigation Plan development is completed, leading to a better quality and more inclusive scope of the Mitigation Plan that everyone can acknowledge and adopt, truly implementing a countywide plan.

Obtaining support from the whole community required a comprehensive approach to preparing the Mitigation Plan. Identifying those persons, community leaders and government agencies

with the knowledge and authority to help the community organize a plan was key to the planning effort. Establishing a group of leaders was necessary to give this task validity. The Core Group included individuals from multiple agencies, County departments and incorporated jurisdictions as previously listed in Section 1.2. Please see Appendix A for a complete list of participants.

### **3.4 Core Group Meetings**

There were three Core Group meetings held.

#### **3.4.1 Determination of Hazards - Meeting 1-Kick-Off Meeting 1**

The kick-off meeting presented the Core Group with the process to be followed in the creation of the Mitigation Plan. Overall goals of the plan for Adams County were discussed and the Core Group decided upon which hazards to focus. By the end of the first meeting, Core Group members had exchanged contact information, organized and scheduled several interviews to be conducted, established a priority list of hazards and discussed the general process and timeline of the project.

The list of prioritized hazards was established looking at the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) tables that illustrated which hazards in Adams County have produced the largest amount of damage based on human or monetary losses. The Core Group also used the collective knowledge they had coupled with the vast amount of local experience and history to determine which hazards to address in their Mitigation Plan. The hazards were prioritized as follows:

1. Flooding (100-year flood zone, non-flood zone, flash flooding)
2. Severe Storms ( Winter, Snow, Ice, Thunderstorms, High Winds, Hail, Lightning)
3. Droughts, Extreme Heat, Extreme Cold
4. Tornadoes
5. Landslides
6. Earthquakes

Please see Appendix D Meeting 1 minutes.

#### **3.4.2 Determination of Problem Statements and Overall Goals – Meeting 2**

The second meeting focused on the discussion of the problems within the county as it related to the hazards that were identified at the first meeting. Prior to the second meeting, each Core Group member received several documents to facilitate the discussion during the meeting. During this meeting, the Core Group developed problem statements for each community hazard that was identified at the first meeting. Please see Appendix C for the Meeting 2 minutes.

In order to determine the issues associated with the hazards in Adams County and to establish the problem statements associated with the hazards, the group first decided on an overall “state of the hazard” and how it has affected the community in the past. The Core Group reviewed the draft problem statements in the time period between the second and third meeting, to be revised or approved as noted at the third Core Group meeting.

In addition to developing the problem statements, the Core Group determined overall mitigation goals with respect to each hazard. Goals were defined as general guidelines that explain

mitigation activities that a community wants to implement in the future. The goals were then used to prioritize mitigation activities for each community. These goals are included in the

Problem Statements Document attached in Appendix E. Please see Appendix D Meeting 2 minutes.

### **3.4.3 Determination of Alternatives and Evaluation Criteria – Meeting 3**

At the commencement of the third meeting, the problem statements and goals developed at the second meeting were approved as drafted or revised by the Core Group. The third meeting focused the Core Group's discussion on developing possible mitigation alternatives and solutions to problems with respect to each hazard. The draft problem statements were used as a reference guide in discussing these possible solutions. The Core Group received several guidance documents at this meeting to facilitate discussion. Alternatives were discussed among the Core Group members and noted for the Mitigation Plan when all were in agreement. These alternatives were then placed into a rating matrix with specific evaluation criteria to be discussed in following sections of this report.

In addition to the selected evaluation criteria, the Core Group discussed and evaluated the potential costs and benefits of each of the mitigation alternatives at this meeting. By evaluating "No Action" as an alternative, the Core Group was encouraged to analyze the feasibility that each alternative could be implemented. A detailed benefit/cost analysis was not conducted due to the impracticality of this analysis since mitigation projects were not yet evaluated. When funds are available, the county (or state) will do a cost-benefit review prior to the request for funds.

Please see Appendix D for Meeting 3 Minutes.

### **3.4.4 Public Meeting**

Public input is necessary in order to gauge the opinion of the community and build support for the Mitigation Plan. No public meetings have been held to date but according to the recommendation from the State of Ohio EMA, a public meeting will be conducted after receiving contingent approval for the plan from FEMA. This meeting will give the public an opportunity to comment on the plan and will address comments and questions concerning the Plan.

## **3.5 Matrix Development**

Once the mitigation alternatives were created for each hazard, the Core Group established evaluation criteria to rank each of the alternatives. The criteria included: economically justifiable; technically feasible; socially equitable; environmentally sound; and publicly acceptable.

To determine how the County evaluated each of the developed mitigation alternatives as a whole, the mitigation alternatives that the Core Group selected for each hazard were transposed into a matrix. This matrix was sent to each Core Group member, along with directions for completing the matrix. Each Core Group member was asked to rate each mitigation alternative against the selected evaluation criteria in the order of importance for their specific community. This rating was used to tabulate the overall County rating to evaluate the importance of each alternative on a countywide basis.

Utilizing a matrix allowed the community to systematically review all alternatives and to identify which mitigation method(s) were appropriate based on the specified criteria. The combined results of all the Core Group members were tabulated to determine the County's average overall mitigation activities. Each activity was given an averaged rating number based on all the Core Group scores, which would help Adams County focus their mitigation strategies on the highest rating activities.

The matrix results will be discussed in more detail in a later section of this report.

### **3.6 Public Review and Involvement**

Since public participation is crucial for implementation of the draft mitigation plan, four draft professionally bound copies will be mailed to the Adams County EMA Director for posting at several key locations around the County for public comment. Suggested locations for posting the draft plan are local libraries, the County Commissioners Office, the local EMA office and other publicly accessible facilities.

The formal public notification process is as defined in the Federal Code occurred prior to approval and/or adoption of the plan. A press release informing residents of status of the mitigation process, the locations the plan will be posted for review, as well as the public meeting date, will be published in the local media. The public will be notified of their opportunity to review and comment on the draft plan during a 30 day review period. Comments will be forwarded to the EMA Director for inclusion in the final plan. Please see Appendix A for a copy of the draft plan press release.

The draft mitigation plan was submitted concurrently to OEMA and FEMA for review and approval.

### **3.7 Finalization**

Upon incorporation of all comments into the Draft Mitigation Plan, the Final Mitigation Plan will be prepared and submitted to Adams County in hard copy and digital form. Each incorporated jurisdiction, as well as any township choosing to adopt this Mitigation Plan as a separate entity from the County, will also receive a digital copy of the plan.

Each community that participates in this planning effort will be responsible for administering the various aspects of the Mitigation Plan including how the plan will be implemented within their particular community.

Implementation of the Mitigation Plan is crucial. The Core Group must strategize effectively to put the Mitigation Plan into action. Adams County must follow up to translate the goals and objectives, developed during the planning process, into action steps. It is recommended that a monitoring program be included in the Mitigation Plan.