

Chapter 7

Plan Maintenance

7.1 The Planning Cycle

This chapter presents a continuous cycle for monitoring, evaluating and updating the plan; the process for incorporating mitigation strategies into other, ongoing planning activities; and methods for continuing public involvement. Continual plan maintenance ensures an active and relevant hazard mitigation planning process.

7.2 Procedures

The Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee oversees plan maintenance during the five-year framework of the Action Program (Chapter 6). The EMA staff serves as the Committee's facilitator, responsible for holding regularly-scheduled meetings, assigning specific tasks necessary to monitor and update the plan, reporting progress to Committee members, and serving as the Committee's liaison with those assigned implementation responsibilities in the Action Program. The facilitator also serves as the Committee's liaison with participating municipalities and the County Commission. The committee is open for new members throughout the year. Anyone interested in joining the committee may contact the EMA coordinator or a member of their governing body for consideration. New committee members are approved by the Emergency Management Council.

The Committee convenes annually to perform the following duties:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of previously implemented mitigation actions;
- Explain why any actions are not completed or behind schedule;
- Address changing land use patterns and new developments; and
- Identify any changes in risk assessment and/or risk vulnerability.

The facilitator will schedule the annual meeting at a time and location convenient to all Committee members. All annual meetings will be advertised in the local newspaper and be open to the public.

In the event modifications to the plan are warranted as a result of the annual review or other conditions, the Committee will oversee and approve all revisions to the plan. Conditions which might warrant revisions to this plan would include, but not be limited to, special opportunities for funding and/or response to a natural disaster. Before any revisions are submitted to the jurisdictions for adoption, a notice will be placed in the local newspaper, allowing an opportunity for the public to review the proposed amendments at the EMA offices, submit written comments, and present comments at a public meeting. The Committee will then submit all revisions for adoption by jurisdictions affected by the changes. Those jurisdictions will hold a public hearing before adoption of the amendments. A copy of the plan revisions will be submitted to all holders of the original plan in a timely manner.

At the end of the five-year cycle of the Action Program, the Committee will oversee a major update to the plan that follows the federal planning criteria in effect at the time of the update. The updated plan will again be submitted to the AEMA and FEMA for approval.

7.3 Implementation Through Existing Programs

This Plan is adopted as a part of the Jefferson County Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, which is administered through the Emergency Management Agency office. The Jefferson County Comprehensive Land Use Plan will be amended to incorporate this plan. There are no other plans at this time in which this plan can be incorporated. If any of the jurisdictions develop plans that pertain to items that may have an affect on natural hazard planning, this plan would need to be incorporated into their plan.

7.4 Continuing Public Involvement

A critical part of maintaining an effective and relevant natural hazards mitigation plan is ongoing public review and comment. Consequently, the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee is dedicated to direct involvement of its citizens in providing feedback and comments on the plan throughout the five-year implementation cycle.

To this end, a hard copy of the plan will be available for viewing at all appropriate agencies throughout the County; including, at a minimum, the Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency Office, the office of the County Commission, the offices of the Mayors, and the main public library. After adoption, a public information notice in the local newspaper will inform the public that the plan may be viewed at these offices.

In addition, the Jefferson County Emergency Management Agency website (<http://www.impactalabama.com/>) will contain a link to an on-line copy of the plan. An e-mail address and phone number for receiving comments will be listed.

Public meetings will be held when significant modifications to the plan are required or when otherwise deemed necessary by the Hazard Mitigation Committee. The public will be able to express their concerns, ideas and opinions at the meetings. At a minimum, public hearings will be held during the drafting stage of the five-year plan update and to present the final plan to the public before adoption.

7.5 Ongoing Planning Needs

This Jefferson County, Alabama, Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan establishes a new planning program for the County and its participating municipalities. However, planning does not end with the adoption of this initial plan. This planning program is a continuous process of profiling new hazard events; assessing vulnerabilities as new information arises and conditions change; monitoring changing assets and affected populations; and keeping current on evolving mitigation measures.

Moreover, the hazard profiles, vulnerability assessments, population characteristics, and inventories of critical facilities of this current plan were based on “best available data.” “Best available data” is data that is readily available within the brief plan development time period. This plan recognizes the limitations of such an approach to risk assessment and strategic planning. Improvements to the “best available data” can be made to better assess the risks and target mitigation strategies that best respond to the hazard issues within the County.

It is the intent of the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee to establish an ongoing planning program, one that will strengthen the risk assessment process as better and more complete information is developed and revise the mitigation strategies as more effective measures might evolve. To this end, the planning committee will continue to look to the AEMA for technical assistance and funding opportunities.