



# Atlantic County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning Project *PLAN FACTS*

July 2008



*Atsion Fire, Hammonton, August 2007*



*Tornado, Somers Point, July, 2001*

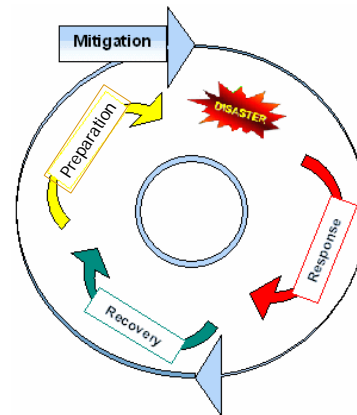


*Northeast Storm, Hamilton Township, April 2007*

## **WHAT IS HAZARD MITIGATION?**

Natural hazards have the potential to cause property damage, loss of life, economic hardship, and threats to public health and safety.

Hazard mitigation measures are the things you do today to be more protected in the future. They are measures taken before a disaster happens to reduce the impact that future disasters will have on people and property in the community. Mitigation reduces the risk of loss and creates a more disaster-resistant and sustainable community. Hazard mitigation measures are essential to breaking the typical disaster cycle of damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage.



## **PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PLAN**

Hazard mitigation plans are developed BEFORE a disaster strikes. The plans identify community policies, actions, and tools for long-term implementation to reduce risk and potential for future losses. Adopted, implemented and maintained on an ongoing basis, these plans will gradually, but steadily, lessen the impacts associated with hazard events in Atlantic County.

As of November 1, 2004 communities without a FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan are not eligible for FEMA project grant monies under programs such as the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMA) and Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program (PDM).

## **PARTICIPATION**

Jurisdictions located within Atlantic County who wish to be recognized by FEMA as being compliant with DMA 2000 must either: (a) participate with the County in the multi-jurisdictional plan development process and formally adopt the final plan, or (b) prepare their own hazard mitigation plan. All jurisdictions in Atlantic County are being invited to participate in the multi-jurisdictional planning process.

To be recognized in FEMA's eyes as a 'participating jurisdiction' in the overall county-wide plan, jurisdictions must: participate actively in the planning process; develop unique jurisdictional mitigation actions; and formally adopt the final plan. Active participation involves attending meetings, providing feedback, and reaching out to the public and other key stakeholders in the community.

While the primary advantage of having a mitigation plan in place is the jurisdiction's eligibility to apply for FEMA hazard mitigation project grant monies, participation has other advantages as well:

- Because Atlantic County has hired a consulting team to conduct the analyses and author the plan, participation involves relatively little effort on the part of jurisdictions.
- Because Atlantic County has received Federal grant monies to develop the plan, participation involves no cost to local jurisdictions - only allocation of staff time to participate in the process.
- Multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plans are practical for addressing issues that do not recognize political boundaries.
- Over time, implementation of the plan will reduce economic damages resulting from future natural disasters.

## **STRUCTURE**

Elected and appointed government officials, business leaders, volunteers of non-profit organizations, citizens, and other stakeholders who choose to participate will become part of our overall Atlantic County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee. To keep meeting sizes to workable numbers, the Planning Committee will be broken up into a Core Planning Group (CPG) and Jurisdictional Assessment Teams (JATs).

The CPG will include representatives of Atlantic County and any of the county's jurisdictions who elect to participate in the process. The CPG will manage the overall plan formulation activities and contribute to the decision making process. Representatives on the CPG will coordinate the plan efforts by organizing

outreach by means of a team concept through the JATs.

The JATs will include representatives from the individual participating jurisdictions. They will be responsible for local community involvement in the multi-jurisdictional mitigation plan.

Regardless of team, all participating jurisdictions must:

- Coordinate and facilitate local efforts.
- Attend meetings.
- Provide information and feedback.
- Involve the public and community stakeholders in the planning process.
- Assess mitigation alternatives.
- Select a course of action to be followed for their communities.
- Plan implementation, monitoring and updates.

## **PROCESS**

- Research a full range of natural hazards.
- Identify subset of significant hazards; these will be the focus of the plan.
- Identify location and extent of hazard areas.
- Identify assets located within hazard areas.
- Characterize existing and potential future assets at risk.
- Assess vulnerabilities to the identified hazards.
- Evaluate and prioritize goals, objectives, and hazard mitigation actions.
- Implement the Plan and monitor its progress.

## **SCHEDULE**

The mitigation plan development process will occur over approximately one year, beginning in August 2008. A Draft Plan is targeted for completion in June of 2009.

## **OUR WEBSITE**

A Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Planning Page is currently under development on the County's web site. We encourage you to check back for additional information and updates at: [www.aclink.org](http://www.aclink.org).

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Thank you for your interest! For questions or other feedback, please contact:

Ed Conover

Atlantic County Office of Emergency Preparedness

5033 English Creek Avenue

Egg Harbor Township, NJ 08234

Phone: (609) 407 6742

E-Mail: [Conover\\_edward@aclink.org](mailto:Conover_edward@aclink.org)