


SECTION 7 - ACTION ITEM EVALUATION AND PRIORITIZATION

This section includes information regarding the methodology and process followed by participating jurisdictions to evaluate and prioritize unique hazard mitigation actions for their particular communities.

The action item evaluation and prioritization was undertaken during a working session of the Core Planning Group on May 11, 2009 and by individual JATs. To initiate the discussion of evaluation and prioritization of potential mitigation actions, jurisdictional representatives who attended the working session were asked to complete a brief survey ranking six generic types of mitigation actions according to how they perceived each type of action would be preferred or appropriate to their community. Mitigation option surveys were completed at the working session or returned shortly after by 18 jurisdictions, representatives of which ranked the measures in the order that they were considered to be most preferred by the community, with a score of “1” being most preferred, and a score of “6” being the least preferred. The Mitigation Options Survey form is reproduced below:



**Atlantic County
Multi-Jurisdictional
Hazard Mitigation Planning Project**

Mitigation Options Survey

Municipality.....

Please score the following generic descriptions of mitigation measures in the order that you consider them to be most preferred by your community, with 1 = most preferred, through 6 = least preferred.

<p>1. Preventive measures Regulations, Building codes Zoning</p>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 40px;" type="text"/>
<p>2. Asset protection Structure elevation/retrofit Hurricane clips Fireproof treatments</p>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 40px;" type="text"/>
<p>3. Emergency services Redundant communications systems Hazard warning systems Response resources</p>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 40px;" type="text"/>
<p>4. Structural projects Floodwalls/levees Channel improvements Drainage Dams</p>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 40px;" type="text"/>
<p>5. Natural resource protection Set aside flood prone land for parks/open space Wetland/wildland restoration</p>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 40px;" type="text"/>
<p>6. Public information Newsletters Information at civic association meetings Public notices Local media</p>	<input style="width: 60px; height: 40px;" type="text"/>

The overall results of this survey indicated that the most favored type of action was likely to be those related to enhancement of emergency services, while the least favored types of actions were likely to be those related to natural resource protection:

Mitigation Activity	Rank
<i>Most preferred / appropriate:</i>	
Emergency Services (e.g. Communication systems, response resources)	1
Structural Projects (e.g. Floodwalls/Levees, drainage, dams)	2
Preventive Measures (e.g. Regulations, building codes, and zoning)	3
Asset Protection (e.g. Structure retrofits for flood, wind and fireproofing)	4
<i>Least preferred / appropriate:</i>	
Public Information (e.g. education and outreach)	5
Natural Resource Protection (e.g. Open space, wetlands preservation)	6

The working session continued with an evaluation and prioritization of action items, and development of an implementation strategy for selected measures. After reviewing the many types of possible action items suggested in Section 6 and the “Tip Sheet” compiled specifically for this stage of the planning process, and adding any new items that might be unique for their community, each participant was asked to select a manageable number of action items which they felt their jurisdiction could reasonably commit to achieving in the next five years (the first plan maintenance cycle), and to evaluate these actions using worksheets developed specifically for this task. Ultimately, the participating jurisdictions evaluated and identified at least two action items for the first plan maintenance cycle.

In order to evaluate and prioritize the mitigation actions, participants identified the *benefits* and *costs* of each action using a planning concept called “STAPLEE”. Their evaluation methodology is presented below in Table 7-1.

Now using the STAPLEE factors discussed above for each action, each jurisdiction rated the overall benefits and costs of each action they had selected, and assigned priorities. To determine overall “*benefits*” for a certain action, each jurisdiction considered qualitatively the individual social, technical, administrative, political, legal, economic, and environmental benefits for the action and then indicated whether the net benefits, overall, could be characterized as high, medium, or low. To determine overall “*costs*” for a certain action, each jurisdiction considered qualitatively individual social, technical, administrative, political, legal, economic, and environmental costs for that action and then indicated whether the net costs, overall, could be characterized as high, medium, or low. These overall ‘*benefits*’ and ‘*costs*’ were noted on the worksheet, and the jurisdictions prioritized each action based on its overall benefits and costs.

Since a qualitative approach was taken for the evaluation and prioritization of mitigation actions, jurisdictions were permitted to apply their own internal weightings to the costs and benefits of actions under each category, hence on the completed worksheets the overall priority of an action may not reflect a straightforward arithmetic comparison of its total “benefits” and total “costs”.

Table 7-1 STAPLEE Criteria	
S <u>S</u> ocial	Is the action unfair to one section of the community over others? If yes, it is a social cost associated with the action. If the implementation of the action helps achieve a social goal of the community, it is a social <i>benefit</i> associated with the action.
T <u>T</u> echnical	Is the action a good technical solution to the problem? If yes, it is a <i>benefit</i> associated with the action. The better the solution, the higher the <i>benefits</i> .
A <u>A</u> dministrative	Is the action difficult to implement because of the administrative problems associated? If yes, it is an administrative <i>cost</i> .
P <u>P</u> olitical	Is the action politically favored? If yes, it is a <i>benefit</i> . If the action is likely to be politically unacceptable, it is a <i>cost</i> associated with the action.
L <u>L</u> egal	Are there perceived legal problems in implementing the action? If yes, it is a <i>cost</i> associated with the action.
E <u>E</u> conomic	Does implementing the action make economic sense? Are the <i>costs</i> too prohibitive? If yes, it is a cost associated with the action.
E <u>E</u> nvironmental	Does the action have adverse environmental effects? If yes, it is a <i>cost</i> associated with the action.

All action items not selected for prioritization by a given community after considering the STAPLEE factors received a low priority. In the future, communities may still seek to pursue other actions which they evaluated but did not select for prioritization at this time, including but not limited to those discussed in Section 6 (and associated studies, funding, etc. for these actions).

In addition to hazard mitigation projects, each jurisdiction was required to evaluate a set of actions specifically aimed at continuing participation in and compliance with FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program (per FEMA’s new guidance released in July 2008). These actions include updating floodplain management ordinances to comply with the latest FEMA regulations and adopted flood maps, additional employment/training of staff to enforce the ordinances, and participation in FEMA’s Community Rating System (CRS).

Appendix D contains prioritization worksheets completed by each participant for their selected actions. Each participant identified at least two action items for implementation.

Appendix F contains prioritization and implementation strategy worksheets for those actions specifically related to continued and/or enhanced compliance with FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program.

All participating jurisdictions who will be adopting this plan will undertake the following high priority public outreach actions at a minimum as part of their plan maintenance obligation:

- Each participating jurisdiction will add a link on their jurisdiction’s web page to the overall mitigation planning website, if they have not already done so as part of the plan development process.
- 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.

Note to the reviewer: The next section in this plan, entitled “Implementation Strategy,” will expand upon the prioritization step by identifying the hazard addressed, if the action applies to new and/or existing assets, the primary agency responsible for action item completion, any existing local planning mechanisms through which the action item will be implemented, target date for completion, estimated cost, and funding source.

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