

SECTION 8: PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

BACKGROUND

Section 201.6.a(4) of Chapter 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations (44CFR) states: “Multi-jurisdictional plans (e.g. watershed plans) may be accepted, as appropriate, as long as each jurisdiction has participated in the process and has officially adopted the plan.” The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and New York State Emergency Management Office (NYSEMO) both encourage multi-jurisdictional planning. Therefore, in the preparation of the Fulton County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), a Planning Partnership was formed to pursue grant funding for the plan and to meet requirements of the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA) for as many eligible local governments in Fulton County as possible.

The DMA defines a local government as follows: “Any county, municipality, city, town, township, public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments (regardless of whether the council of governments is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law), regional or interstate government entity, or agency or instrumentality of a local government; any Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, or Alaska Native village or organization; and any rural community, unincorporated town or village, or other public entity.”

THE PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

INITIAL SOLICITATION AND LETTERS OF INTENT

Fulton County solicited the participation of local governments in the County at the commencement of this project. Local governments interested signed a “Letter of Intent” and/or a resolution committing their participation and resources to the development of the Fulton County Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan. Fulton County and all municipal jurisdictions with the exception of the Town of Bleecker are participating in the Plan (Table 8-1).

Table 8-1. Participating Jurisdictions in Fulton County

Town of Caroga	Town of Perth
Village of Dolgeville	Town of Stratford
Town of Ephratah	Village of Broadalbin
Town of Johnstown	Village of Mayfield
Town of Mayfield	Village of Northville
Town of Northampton	City of Gloversville
Town of Oppenheim	City of Johnstown

PLANNING PARTNER EXPECTATIONS

The Planning Committee agreed to the following list of expectations:

- Establish Plan development goals;
- Establish a timeline for completion of the Plan;
- Ensure that the Plan meets the requirements of DMA 2000 and FEMA and SEMO guidance;
- Solicit and encourage the participation of regional agencies, a range of stakeholders, and citizens in the Plan development process;
- Assist in gathering information for inclusion in the Plan, including the use of previously developed reports and data;
- Organize and oversee the public involvement process;
- Develop, revise, adopt, and maintain Volume I of the Plan in its entirety and the local jurisdictional annex in Volume II.

JURISDICTION ANNEX TEMPLATES

Jurisdictional annex templates were created to help the Planning Committee prepare their jurisdiction-specific annexes and ensure all criteria of Section 201.6 of 44CFR would be met, based on the partners' capabilities and mode of operation. The template and detailed instructions were designed to lead each partner through a series of steps that would generate the DMA-required elements that are specific for each partner. The designated point-of-contact for each participating jurisdiction, as well as the County, was asked to complete the template using the detailed instructions, guidance from the consultant and technical assistance provided at the jurisdictional annex workshop (discussed below). The templates and their instructions can be found in Appendix F.

WORKSHOP

A jurisdictional annex workshop was held on June 7, 2010 for the Mitigation Planning Committee. Attendance at this workshop was highly recommended for plan participants. At the workshop, an overview was provided for each section in the annex. The workshop was designed to be instructional, but also allow for open discussion and questions. In addition, personalized technical assistance was available and provided to each jurisdiction, if needed. Topics discussed during this session included:

- DMA 2000 overview
- Jurisdictional Annex Templates Tools
- Jurisdictional Annex Template
 - Overview
 - Risk ranking
 - Cost/benefit review

The Planning Committee was led through an exercise to rank risk for the County as a whole. This was a collaborative effort by all workshop attendees. Concurrently, each committee member was asked to rank each risk specifically for its jurisdiction, based on probability of occurrence and estimates of potential dollar losses to structures vulnerable to the hazard. Maps illustrating hazard areas and tables estimating

exposure and losses were provided to each jurisdiction as a tool, in addition to the risk assessment, to complete this exercise.

Separate, follow-up meeting and/or telecon Annex Workshops were held for the jurisdictions that did not attend the formal workshop meeting.

BENEFIT/COST REVIEW

Each jurisdiction’s annex includes an action plan of prioritized initiatives to mitigate natural hazards. Section 201.6.c.3iii of 44CFR requires the prioritization of the action plan to emphasize the extent to which benefits are maximized according to a cost/benefit review of the proposed projects and their associated costs. As part of jurisdiction annex template completion, the Planning Committee was asked to weigh the estimated benefits of a project versus the estimated costs to establish a parameter to be used in the prioritization of a project. This benefit/cost review was qualitative; that is, it did not include the level of detail required by FEMA for project grant eligibility under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) grant program. This qualitative approach was used because projects may not be implemented for up to 10 years, and the associated costs and benefits could change dramatically in that time. Each project was assessed by assigning subjective ratings (high, medium, and low) to its costs and benefits, as follows:

Table 8-2. Benefit/Cost Review

Costs	
High	Existing funding levels are not adequate to cover the costs of the proposed project, and implementation would require an increase in revenue through an alternative source (e.g., bonds, grants, and fee increases).
Medium	The project could be implemented with existing funding but would require a re-apportionment of the budget or a budget amendment, or the cost of the project would have to be spread over multiple years.
Low	The project could be funded under the existing budget. The project is part of or can be part of an existing, ongoing program.
Benefits	
High	Project will have an immediate impact on the reduction of risk exposure to life and property.
Medium	Project will have a long-term impact on the reduction of risk exposure to life and property or will provide an immediate reduction in the risk exposure to property.
Low	Long-term benefits of the project are difficult to quantify in the short term.

Using this approach, projects with positive benefit versus cost ratios (such as high over high, high over medium, medium over low, etc.) are considered cost-beneficial and are prioritized accordingly. For many of the initiatives identified in the action plans, participating jurisdictions may seek financial assistance under FEMA’s HMGP or PDM programs. Both of these programs require detailed benefit/cost analysis as part of the application process. These analyses will be performed when funding applications are prepared, using the FEMA model process. The Planning Committee is committed to implementing mitigation strategies with benefits that exceed costs. For projects not seeking financial assistance from grant programs that require this sort of analysis, the Planning Committee reserves the right to define “benefits” according to parameters that meet its needs and the goals and objectives of this plan.

COMPLETION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

All participating cities, towns and villages in the County completed the planning and annex-preparation process. Completed jurisdictional annexes are presented in Section 9.

Any non-participating municipality or local government within the Fulton County planning area can “dock” to this plan in the future by following the linkage procedures defined in Appendix H. The existence of the Linkage Procedure does not imply that all willing local governments are not participating.