

3.0 Mitigation Plan

Hazard mitigation planning is the coordination of actions taken to reduce injuries, deaths, property damage, economic losses, and degradation of natural resources due to natural or human-caused hazard events. Hazard mitigation actions have long-term and cumulative benefits over time.

An effective mitigation plan provides documentation of valuable local knowledge on the most efficient and effective ways to reduce losses from hazard events. The benefits of preparing a mitigation plan include:

- More direct access to a wide range of technical and financial resources for mitigation projects and initiatives. Not only will the jurisdiction have the benefit of a well-thought-out blueprint for executing projects efficiently, but also several federal and state emergency management programs require hazard mitigation plans as prerequisites to award funds.
- The mitigation planning process promotes the development of an informed citizenry who are knowledgeable about their vulnerability to hazards and the options for reducing their losses, thus creating an advocacy group that will support plan implementation.
- Integration of mitigation strategies with other community needs and goals. The mitigation planning process encourages the mitigation strategy to be developed in light of economic, social, and political realities.
- Improved ability to recover after a disaster. Having a hazard mitigation plan in place when a disaster strikes will greatly improve the response and recovery process and ensure that long-term mitigation issues are addressed.

The mitigation plan consists of developing problem statements for each hazard identified in the hazard assessment and then determining goals and objectives that will lead to action items to eliminate or reduce the potential losses identified in the hazard assessment. These action items are then evaluated and prioritized into an implementation strategy in which responsible agencies are identified and time frames for completing the actions are listed.

3.1 Problem Statements, Goals, Objectives and Action Items

To start the mitigation planning stage, the core committee met and developed a set of problem statements for each natural hazard identified in the hazard assessment. These problem statements were based on potential losses that could occur from these natural hazards.

After the problem statements were determined, the core committee established a list of goals to correspond to these problem statements. These goals are general guidelines that explain what the County wants to achieve.

From these goals, the core committee established objectives. These objectives are more specific and narrower in scope than the goals. They expand on the goals and provide more detail on ways to accomplish the goals.

Once the problem statements, goals, and objectives were established, the core committee began to identify potential mitigation actions. The action items are directly related to meeting the listed goals and objectives.

The following list details the problem statements, goals, objectives and action items identified for each natural hazard as determined by the core committee.

Tornado

Problem Statements:

- Tornadoes are unpredictable.
- Tornadoes happen suddenly.
- Warning system needs improvement.
- Lack of shelters – specifically for mobile home parks.
- Lack of trained personnel for damage assessments.

Goal 1: Improve the safety and survivability of residents of Henry County.

Objectives:

- Improve warning system and notification to reach all of population.
- Educate the public about disaster supply kits.
- Educate high risk population on tornado safety.
- Build shelters for mobile home parks over 25 units.
- Increase the number of weather spotters.

Action Items:

- Utilize an automated notification system to notify residents of tornado warnings.
- Review siren coverage and recommend new locations.
- Promote the weather spotter classes and increase the number of classes available.
- Distribute weather radios to vulnerable populations and interested residents.
- Build shelters for residents of mobile home parks and seasonal homes and encourage municipalities and townships to require shelters during development of these areas.
- Distribute information about disaster supply kits

Goal 2: Minimize losses.

Objective:

- Educate homeowners on tornado safety.

Action Items:

- Develop and/or distribute informational flyers on tornado safety. Have flyers specific for mobile homes, nursing homes and other vulnerable populations.

Goal 3: Improve damage assessments.

Objectives:

- Educate the public and government officials on what assessments need to be done and by whom.
- Train more government employees to do damage assessments.

Action Items:

- Initiate classes to train individuals to do damage assessments.

Winter Storms/Blizzards

Problem Statements:

- Wind and freezing rain can cause downed power lines.
- Heavy snow and ice hampers rescue efforts.
- Winter storms and blizzards can be unpredictable.
- Residents can be unprepared by having an insufficient supply of medicine, food and fuel.
- Key personnel may not have transportation available to travel through deep snow.

Goal 1: Improve the health and safety of the residents of Henry County.

Objectives:

- Ensure critical facilities have emergency plans.
- Educate the public about disaster supply kits.
- Educate the public on winter storm safety.
- Improve the Warning and notification system.
- Educate the public about the levels of snow emergencies.

Action Items:

- Have educational programs and/or materials explaining winter storm safety, disaster supply kits and preparation and the importance of trimming trees. Distribute materials.
- Distribute weather radios to vulnerable populations and interested residents.
- Work with critical facilities to coordinate emergency plans with County Plan.

Goal 2: Reduce losses.

Objectives:

- Reduce the vulnerability to utility lines.
- Educate the public on winter storm safety.

Action Items:

- Develop educational materials explaining winter safety and distribute.
- Encourage utility companies to develop tree management programs to minimize the threat of falling branches breaking utility lines.
- Encourage utility companies to bury utility lines when possible.

Thunderstorms

Problem Statements:

- High winds and falling tree limbs can cause downed power lines.
- Downed trees and power lines hamper rescue efforts.
- Thunderstorms can be unpredictable.
- Residents can be unprepared by having an insufficient supply of medicine, food and fuel.

Goal 1: Improve the health and safety of the residents of Henry County.

Objectives:

- Ensure critical facilities have emergency plans.
- Educate the public on thunderstorm safety.
- Educate the public about disaster supply kits.
- Improve the warning and notification system to reach all of population.
- Educate the public about watches and warnings.

Action Items:

- Distribute weather radios to vulnerable populations and interested residents.
- Develop and/or distribute material on thunderstorm safety, including the need for disaster supply kits and the importance of trimming trees.

Goal 2: Reduce losses

Objectives:

- Reduce the vulnerability to utility lines.
- Educate the public on thunderstorm safety.

Action Items:

- Develop educational materials explaining thunderstorm safety and distribute.
- Encourage utility companies to develop tree management programs to minimize the threat of falling branches breaking utility lines.
- Encourage utility companies to bury utility lines when possible.

Floods

Problem Statements:

- Henry County has 18 repetitive loss structures as defined by FEMA.
- There are many seasonal mobile homes impacted by flood waters along the Maumee River.
- School Creek has flooded twice in the last four years impacting the residents in the Holgate Area.
- The breaking up of ice on the Maumee River can cause damage.

Goal 1: Minimize the Impact of flooding.

Objectives:

- Reduce the risk to vulnerable structures.
- Notify areas to be affected by flooding.
- Educate the public about flood safety.
- Educate the public about their responsibility for ditch maintenance.
- Review the county's ditch maintenance program.

Action Items:

- Utilize an automated notification system to contact residents about flood warnings.
- Develop and/or distribute materials on flood stage. Place markers to show past flood elevations.
- Implement the recommendation from the Henry County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Village of Holgate regarding the School Creek. Actions could consist of clearing logjams, creek reconstruction or the development of a wetlands retention area.
- Develop a voluntary program for the acquisition, relocation, or elevation of structures in the floodplain.

Goal 2: Improve the health and safety of the residents of Henry County.

Objectives:

- Educate the public about the flood stage levels.
- Education programs about boater safety during and after flood events.
- Educate the public about disaster supply kits.

Action Items:

- Develop and/or distribute materials on flood stage. Place markers to show past flood elevations.
- Develop and/or distribute materials on flood safety, including information about disaster supply kits.

3.2 State and Local Capability Assessments

After the core committee determined the problem statements, goals, objectives and mitigation action items, the core committee reviewed and analyzed the state and local programs, policies, regulations, funding, and practices currently in place that either facilitate, support or hinder mitigation in general. This inventory is called a capability assessment.

The state capability assessment and local capability assessment is located in Appendix C. The capability assessments include an inventory of the agency's mission, program and policies, and an analysis of its capacity to carry them out.

Agencies listed in the state capability assessment will play a significant role in the implementation of many of the mitigation action items by supplying technical, administrative, regulatory or financial assistance. These agencies include Ohio Emergency Management Agency, Ohio Department of Natural Resources – Division of Water, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, American Red Cross and others.

Agencies listed in the local capability assessment identify agencies in Henry County that could be involved in mitigation activities. These agencies would be responsible for the planning and implementing the mitigation activities. The primary county agency responsible for mitigation is the Henry County Emergency Management Agency. The Henry County Emergency Management Agency serves as a conduit for all state and federal programs and funding for mitigation activities as well as disaster response planning and execution. Other agencies include the Henry County Chapter of the American Red Cross, Henry County Soil and Water Conservation District, local governments and others.

3.3 Evaluate, Select and Prioritize Mitigation Actions

With the potential mitigation actions determined and the capability assessments complete, the core committee began the process of evaluating the mitigation actions. The evaluation process that was used was the process outlined in FEMA 386-3 “Developing the Mitigation Plan”.

This evaluation criteria included:

- Social – Is the action socially acceptable; is it compatible with present and future community values?
- Technical – Is the measure technically feasible?
- Administrative – Does the community have the capability to implement and maintain the action?
- Political – Is there public support both to implement and maintain the action?
- Legal – Does the community have the authority to implement the proposed action?
- Economic – Is the action cost-effective?
- Environmental – Does this action affect the environment?

These evaluation criteria aspects were compared to the mitigation actions to allow the core committee to weigh the pros and cons of each mitigation action. The process involved the core committee reviewing each criterion and determining whether or not each proposed mitigation action would be favorable. A (+) indicates that the proposed mitigation action would be favorable, and a (-) indicates that there are shortcomings of the proposed mitigation action. If the evaluation criteria was not applicable to the proposed mitigation action then (n/a) was used. The results of this evaluation are located in Appendix D. Based on these results, it was determined that all of the proposed actions are appropriate for Henry County. Therefore, the next step involves prioritizing the proposed mitigation actions.

To rank the proposed mitigation actions, the core committee used a numerical ranking for each proposed action for each natural disaster. Each core committee member reviewed each proposed mitigation action and ranked them based on which action would have the biggest impact on the greatest amount of people at the most economical cost. Once complete, the individual rankings were compiled and the overall numbers were used to

rank the proposed mitigation action. The results of the rankings are shown in Appendix D in the priority column of the evaluation.

3.4 Mitigation Implementation Strategy

Now that the proposed mitigation actions have been evaluated and prioritized, the core committee established the implementation strategy for the selected mitigation actions. As shown in Appendix E, the implementation strategy lists the beneficiaries, responsible parties, responsibilities of the parties, technical assistance resources, task summary, cost estimate, material list and time frame for each selected mitigation action.

3.5 Mitigation Plan Monitoring

Once the mitigation plan is adopted and in place, a committee will be established to monitor the plan. This will include ensuring that the plan is being implemented and that new information is being reviewed for inclusion into the plan. As such, it will be the responsibility of this committee to evaluate the plan on a yearly basis to determine if the plan is being implemented to meet the goals and objectives established by the plan and to determine if updates or revisions are required due to changes in risks. This evaluation will require communication with the responsible parties to discuss how the current mitigation actions are working and ideas of new mitigation actions. This committee will also ensure that the plan is revised at least every five years, as required. Depending on the updates needed, the plan may be revised more often.

Mitigation actions that are based on local zoning regulations will be send the local zoning authority for recommended inclusion into their current zoning codes. This will involve sending the recommendation to all of the townships and municipalities, since all of the townships in Henry County have zoning resolutions and most of the municipalities do as well. For any municipality that does not currently have zoning codes, they will still receive the recommendation to implement some type of ordinance to accomplish the same objective. Where appropriate, the Henry County Comprehensive Plan and Henry County Emergency Operations Plan will be revised as well to reference the Henry County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The committee will include the Director of the Henry County Emergency Management Agency, Director of the Henry County Planning Commission, county and local government representatives and other interested parties.

Throughout the monitoring process, the general public will be invited to participate. The Henry County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan will be available for review on the Henry County Planning Commission web site at www.henrycountyplanning.com and in print at other locations. The public will be invited to be part of any update processes and submit comments to the plan at any time.

3.6 Mitigation Plan Adoption

Throughout the development of this plan, letters were sent to the townships and municipalities updating them on the progress of the plan and asking for their input on the plan. The letters also indicated that they would need to take formal action on the plan to remain eligible for mitigation dollars. These communities were also given draft copies of the plan for review prior to adoption. Copies of adoption resolutions are located in Appendix G.