

Section 6: Mitigation Strategy

The *Mitigation Strategy* section provides the blueprint for the participating jurisdictions in the Unifour Region to follow to become less vulnerable to the negative effects of the natural hazards identified and addressed in this Plan. It is based on the general consensus of the Unifour Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (HMPC) and the findings and conclusions of the *Risk Assessment* and *Capability Assessment*. It consists of the following five subsections:

- 6.1 Overview
- 6.2 Mitigation Goals
- 6.3 Identification and Analysis of Mitigation Techniques
- 6.4 Selection of Mitigation Techniques for the Unifour Region
- 6.5 Plan Update Requirement

6.1 Overview

The intent of the *Mitigation Strategy* is to provide the Unifour Region with overall goals that will serve as guiding principles for future mitigation policy and project administration, along with an analysis of mitigation techniques deemed available to meet those goals and reduce the impact of identified hazards. It is designed to be comprehensive, strategic, and functional in nature:

- In being comprehensive, the development of the *Mitigation Strategy* included a thorough review of all natural hazards and identifies extensive mitigation measures intended to not only reduce the future impacts of high risk hazards, but also to help the Unifour Region achieve compatible economic, environmental, and social goals.
- In being strategic, the development of the *Mitigation Strategy* ensures that all policies and projects proposed for implementation are consistent with pre-identified, long-term planning goals.
- In being functional, each proposed mitigation action is linked to established priorities and assigned to specific departments or individuals responsible for their implementation with target completion deadlines. When necessary, funding sources are identified that can be used to assist in project implementation.

The first step in designing the *Mitigation Strategy* included the identification of mitigation goals. Mitigation goals represent broad statements that are achieved through the implementation of more specific mitigation actions. These actions include both hazard mitigation policies (such as the regulation of land in known hazard areas through a local ordinance), as well as hazard mitigation projects that seek to address specifically targeted hazard risks (such as the acquisition and relocation of a repetitive loss structure).

The second step involves the identification, consideration, and analysis of available mitigation measures to help achieve the identified mitigation goals. This is a long-term, continuous process sustained through the development and maintenance of this Plan. Alternative mitigation measures will continue to be considered as future mitigation opportunities are identified, as data and technology improve, as mitigation funding becomes available, and as the Plan is maintained over time.

The third and last step in designing the *Mitigation Strategy* is the selection and prioritization of specific mitigation actions for the Unifour Region (found in Section 7: *Mitigation Action Plans*). Each County and participating jurisdiction has its own *Mitigation Action Plan* (MAP) that reflects the needs and concerns of that jurisdiction. The MAP represents an unambiguous and functional plan for action and is considered to be the most essential outcome of the mitigation planning process. A significant amount of time and effort was applied to this step in the process.

The MAP includes a prioritized listing of proposed hazard mitigation actions (policies and projects) for the Unifour counties and incorporated municipalities to complete. Each action has accompanying information, such as those departments or individuals assigned responsibility for implementation, potential funding sources, and an estimated target date for completion. The MAP provides the departments or individuals responsible for implementing mitigation actions with a clear roadmap that also serves as an important tool for monitoring success or progress over time. The cohesive collection of actions listed in the MAP can also serve as an easily understood menu of mitigation policies and projects for those local decision makers who want to quickly review the recommendations and proposed actions of the Unifour Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

In preparing each *Mitigation Action Plan* for the Unifour Region, officials considered the overall hazard risk and capability to mitigate the effects of hazards as recorded through the risk and capability assessment process, in addition to meeting the adopted mitigation goals and unique needs of the planning area. Prioritization of the proposed mitigation actions was based on the factors outlined in subsection 6.1.1.

6.1.1 Mitigation Action Prioritization

The priority for each mitigation action was determined by the participating jurisdiction by identifying each action as high, moderate, or low priority. In order to make this decision, local government officials reviewed and considered the findings of the *Risk Assessment* and *Capability Assessment*. Other considerations included each individual mitigation action's effect on overall risk to life and property, its ease of implementation, its degree of political and community support, its general cost-effectiveness, and funding availability (if necessary).

6.2 Mitigation Goals

The primary goal of all local governments is to promote the public health, safety, and welfare of its citizens. In keeping with this standard, the Unifour counties and participating municipalities have developed seven goal statements for local hazard mitigation planning in the Unifour Region. In developing these goals, the previous four county hazard mitigation plans were reviewed to determine areas of consistency. The project consultant reviewed the wide range of strategies, goals, objectives, actions, and implementation plans from each of the four previous county plans and a determination was made to review and discuss previous goals but to move forward with a newly crafted set of goals to better reflect the current needs and concerns of the Unifour Region as a whole. These regional goals are presented in **Table 6.1**.

These regional goals were developed by the HMPC at the third planning committee meeting. Each goal, purposefully broad in nature, serves to establish the parameters that were used to review and update existing mitigation actions and to aid in formulating new ones. The consistent implementation of mitigation actions over time will ensure that these mitigation goals are achieved.

Table 6.1: Regional Mitigation Goals

Goal #1	Evaluate and revise as needed local plans, policies, procedures, regulations, and ordinances to support effective mitigation.
Goal #2	Maintain and/or upgrade existing infrastructure to minimize system failures due to natural hazards.
Goal #3	Implement a public outreach campaign to heighten awareness of natural hazard risks where we live, work, and play.
Goal #4	Support coordination of greenway plans and linkages to parks and open space networks to mitigate flooding at the regional level.
Goal #5	Pursue mitigation of repetitive flood loss properties.
Goal #6	Investigate, seek funding for, and implement structural mitigation projects that will reduce the damaging effects of natural hazards.
Goal #7	Investigate, seek funding for, and implement other unspecified special projects and planning efforts that will reduce the damaging effects of natural hazards.

6.3 Identification and Analysis of Mitigation Techniques

In formulating the *Mitigation Strategy* for the Unifour Region, a wide range of activities were considered in order to help achieve the established mitigation goals, in addition to addressing any specific hazard concerns. These activities were discussed during the HMPC meetings. In general, all activities considered by the planning committee can be classified under one of the following four broad categories of mitigation techniques: local plans and regulations, structure and infrastructure projects, natural systems protection, and education and awareness programs. These are described in detail below.

6.3.1 Local Plans and Regulations

Mitigation actions that fall under this category include government authorities, policies, or codes that influence the way land and buildings are developed and built. Examples of these types of actions include:

- Comprehensive plans
- Land use ordinances
- Subdivision regulations
- Development review
- NFIP Community Rating System
- Capital improvement programs
- Open space preservation
- Stormwater management regulations and master plans

6.3.2 Structure and Infrastructure Projects

Mitigation actions that fall under this category involve modifying existing structures and infrastructure to protect them from a hazard or remove them from a hazard area. This could apply to public or private structures as well as critical facilities and infrastructure. This type of action also involves projects to construct manmade structures to reduce the impact of hazards. Many of these types of actions are projects eligible for funding through the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) program. Examples of these types of actions include:

- Acquisitions and elevations of structures in flood-prone areas
- Utility undergrounding
- Structural retrofits
- Floodwalls and retaining walls
- Detention and retention structures
- Culverts
- Safe rooms

6.3.3 Natural Systems Protection

Mitigation actions that fall under this category minimize damage and losses and also preserve or restore the functions of natural systems. Examples of these types of actions include:

- Sediment and erosion control
- Stream corridor restoration
- Forest management
- Conservation easements
- Wetland restoration and preservation

6.3.4 Education and Awareness Programs

Mitigation actions that fall under this category inform and educate citizens, elected officials, and property owners about hazards and potential ways to mitigate them. These actions may also include participation in national programs, such as StormReady or Firewise communities. Although this type of mitigation reduces risk less directly than structural projects or regulation, it is an important foundation. A greater understanding and awareness of hazards and risk among local officials, stakeholders, and the public is more likely to lead to direct actions. Examples of these types of actions include:

- Radio or television spots
- Websites with maps and information
- Real estate disclosure
- Presentations to school groups or neighborhood organizations
- Mailings to residents in hazard-prone areas
- StormReady
- Firewise

6.3.5 Other Types of Actions

Participating jurisdictions may wish to include other types of actions in their *Mitigation Action Plans* that do not fit into one of the categories listed above. In some cases, these may not be viewed as pure examples of mitigation, but they may be related in ways that make sense to the local government adopting the actions. Examples of these types of actions include:

- Warning systems
- Communications enhancements
- Emergency response training and exercises
- Evacuation management
- Sandbagging for flood protection
- Installing temporary shutters for immediate wind protection
- Other forms of emergency services

6.4 Selection of Mitigation Techniques for the Unifour Region

To determine the most appropriate mitigation techniques for the jurisdictions in the Unifour Region, the HMPC thoroughly reviewed and considered the findings of the *Risk Assessment* and *Capability Assessment* to determine the best activities for their respective communities.

Other considerations included the effect of each mitigation action on overall risk to life and property, its ease of implementation, its degree of political and community support, its general cost-effectiveness, and funding availability (if necessary).

6.5 Plan Update Requirement

In keeping with FEMA requirements for plan updates, the mitigation actions identified in the previous Unifour Region county plans were evaluated to determine their current implementation status. Updates on the implementation status of each existing mitigation action are provided as part of the *Mitigation Action Plans* found in Section 7.

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