

Draft
HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN
City of Urbana
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Draft Plan Submitted to:

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Revised Plan Submitted to:

**Urbana Plan Commission
Urbana City Council**

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Chapter I. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Goals

In the past, the City of Urbana has incurred losses from natural disasters. In an attempt to alleviate future losses, the City has decided to adopt standard mitigation measures. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) defines “mitigation” as:

sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and their property from hazards and their effects.

Standard mitigation measures help distinguish actions that have long-term impacts from those that are more closely associated with preparedness for, immediate response to, and short-term recovery from a specific event. Thus, mitigation does not mean controlling or stopping hazards. It means doing all that can be done to minimize the impact of hazards.

The mitigation measures outlined in this plan, aim to achieve the goal of protecting life and properties in the community from hazards. The mitigation strategies are designed at achieving the following objectives:

- Reduce risk, using actions that are cost-effective and feasible.
- Improve the community’s information base regarding its vulnerability.
- Ensure that mitigation activities are compatible with the community’s other development goals.
- Coordinate mitigation efforts of different agencies.

This plan is prepared on the following ten fundamental principles. They are based on the objectives of the National Mitigation Strategy developed by FEMA.

1. Mitigation measures insure long-term economic success for the community as a whole, rather than short-term benefit for special interests.
2. Mitigation measures for one natural hazard must be compatible with risk reduction measures for other natural hazards.
3. Mitigation measures must be evaluated to achieve the best mix for a given location.
4. Mitigation measures for natural hazards must be compatible with risk reduction measures for technological hazards and vice-versa.
5. All mitigation is local.
6. Emphasizing pro-active mitigation before emergency response can reduce disaster costs and the impacts of natural hazards; both pre-disaster (preventive) and post-disaster (corrective) mitigation is needed.
7. Hazard identification and risk assessment are the cornerstones of mitigation.
8. Building new federal-state-local partnerships and public-private partnerships is the most effective means of implementing measures to reduce the impacts of natural hazards.
9. Those who knowingly choose to assume greater risk must accept responsibility for that choice.

10. Mitigation measures for natural hazards must be compatible with the protection of natural and cultural resources.

This plan aims to achieve higher public safety by prioritizing mitigation projects and adopting measures that further protect citizens and businesses from the physical and economic effects of disasters.

1.2 Authority

Urbana was invited by FEMA in December 1998 to be the second Illinois community to join the program known as "Project Impact". It is one of 200 Project Impact communities throughout the country to have this designation. Project Impact is a national initiative that encourages communities to come together to assess their vulnerabilities to natural hazards and implement strategies to save lives and limit damage to buildings, utilities, and transportation systems before disasters occur. Urbana was chosen because of its vulnerability to floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, and ice storms. In addition, the City has exhibited strong public/private sector relationships and has developed public education programs. Urbana has already started taking actions to build a disaster resistant community.

Under the Project Impact memorandum of agreement signed in August 2000, representatives of local, state, and federal government, as well as business and community leaders, pledged to work together to make the city disaster resistant. The formulation of a hazard mitigation plan was part of the City's commitment in order to integrate its mitigation activities into a concerted effort.

A Draft of the Hazard Mitigation Plan was prepared by two graduate students in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in June 2002, under the supervision of the Department and of the City of Urbana. This Draft was presented to the City's Project Impact Steering Committee and Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee. It was submitted to FEMA and to the Illinois Emergency Management Agency for review and comment. Planning staff at the City of Urbana completed the requested revisions in 2003 and submitted it for review and approval by the Urbana Plan Commission and City Council in late 2004.

1.3 Planning Approach

This plan follows the standard 10-step process based on the guidance and requirements of FEMA. This process is summarized in *Figure 1.1*.

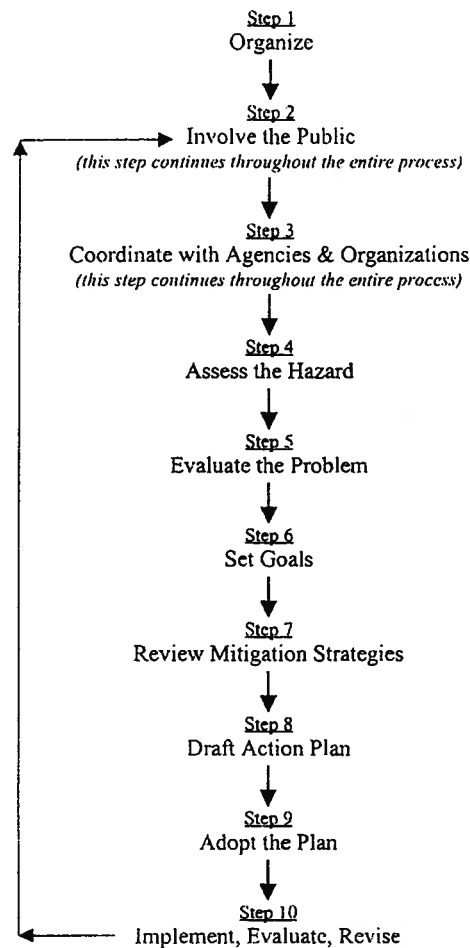


Figure 1.1 Mitigation Planning Process

Organizing for the plan involved designating responsibilities and determining the timeline and the funding for the plan. The City planning staff and Project Impact coordinator developed a sub-contract with the University of Illinois Department of Urban and Regional Planning to conduct a student project that would develop a mitigation plan for the City. Two Master's students, supervised by a faculty member from the UIUC Planning Department, were assigned to this project. They reported their work to the Project Impact Steering Committee on a monthly basis. The City requested that the Plan be prepared as a stand-alone element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. This involved presentation and review by the City's Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

Public involvement was a continuous part of the planning process. At every major stage of the process, public input was received in the form of expert opinion from members of the Project Impact Steering Committee. This committee was formed as a part of the City's designation by FEMA as a "Project Impact Community". The Project Impact Steering Committee was composed of representatives of the community, including residents, business owners, city

officials (fire department, community development), City utility providers, and organizations related to emergency management at the county and national level (*Figure 1.2*). The Committee was deactivated in 2003, following completion of Project Impact related projects in Urbana. Reactivation as a broader-based group with greater representation by the City of Champaign is anticipated in the future.

Hazard assessment was done with the help of information from the City, Emergency Services and Disaster Agency (ESDA), United States Geological Survey (USGS), and other sources. Documentation of past disasters, damages, and current mitigation activities was also collected from these agencies. Information on the nature of hazards and vulnerability was collected mainly from existing FEMA literature and Internet sources.

These same sources were also used to determine the range of mitigation strategies suitable for Urbana. Costs, benefits, and feasibility were then identified for each strategy with the help of the Project Impact Coordinator (Chapter IV, *Figures 4.1-4.4*). Priorities for each of these strategies were developed during two Project Impact Steering Committee discussion sessions.

Action items for implementation were formed from the general recommendations of the mitigation strategies. Each action item identifies the appropriate agencies and suggested time frames. Following review by the Project Impact and Comprehensive Plan Steering Committees, the Draft Hazard Mitigation Plan will be presented at a public hearing of the Urbana Plan Commission. It will then be presented for adoption by the City Council of the City of Urbana as an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Adoption of the Hazard Mitigation Plan will help to fulfill the goals set forth in the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000.

1.4 Disaster Mitigation Act, 2000

On October 30, 2000, President Bill Clinton signed into law the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 that amended the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief Act of 1988. Among other things, the new legislation reinforces the importance of pre-disaster infrastructure mitigation planning to reduce disaster losses nationwide, and is aimed primarily at controlling and streamlining the administration of federal disaster relief and programs to promote mitigation activities.

FEMA published an interim final rule (*Appendix A*) in the Federal Register on February 26, 2002, implementing the hazard mitigation planning sections of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. These provisions provide new federal requirements for mitigation planning and offer a significant opportunity to reduce disaster losses through mitigation planning at both the State and local level. The rule addresses State mitigation planning, identifies new local mitigation planning requirements, authorizes Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds for planning activities, and increases the amount of HMGP funds available to States that develop a comprehensive, enhanced mitigation plan. The City of Urbana has greater opportunities for receiving funding by having a hazard mitigation plan that meets the requirements in the interim final rule.

Figure 1.2 Urbana Project Impact Steering Committee

Affiliation	
Barbara Payne	Co-Chair, American Red Cross
Don Schlorff	Co-Chair, Busey Bank
Craig Grant	Coordinator, City of Urbana
Libby Tyler	Coordinator, City of Urbana
Debbie Albin	Illinois Power
Van Anderson	University of Illinois
Bob Bone	State Farm Insurance
Elawrence Davis	Housing Authority, Champaign County
Otta Dossett	Urbana School District 116
Tom Exton	Illinois-American Water Company
Rosemary Foster	Housing Authority
Bill Gray	Urbana Public Works
Charles Heflin	Edge-Scott Fire Department
Vicki Jarboe	Mid-America Earthquake Center
Ted Jeurissen	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Kate Johnston	American Red Cross
Bill Keller	Champaign County ESDA
Rick Levine	SuperValu
Robert Mann	Carle Foundation Hospital
Sandra Menke	Mid-America Earthquake Center
Rex Mundt	Urbana Fire Department
John Nichols	Mid-America Earthquake Center
Dennis Ohnstad	Riley Homes
Joe Perry	Flex-N-Gate
Joe Potts	Urbana Park District
Scott Rose	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
William Volk	C-U Mass Transit
Randall White	Lowe's