



SECTION 7. PLAN MAINTENANCE PROCEDURES

This section details the formal process that will ensure that the HMP remains an active and relevant document and that the Planning Partnership maintains their eligibility for applicable funding sources. The plan maintenance process includes a schedule for monitoring and evaluating the plan annually and producing an updated plan every five years. In addition, this section describes how public participation will be integrated throughout the plan maintenance and implementation process. It explains how the mitigation strategies outlined in this plan update will be incorporated into existing planning mechanisms and programs, such as comprehensive land use planning processes, capital improvement planning, and building code enforcement and implementation. The plan’s format allows sections to be reviewed and updated when new data become available, resulting in a plan that will remain current and relevant.

The plan maintenance matrix shown in Table 7-1 provides a synopsis of responsibilities for plan monitoring, evaluation, and update, which are discussed in further detail in the sections below.

Table 7-1. Plan Maintenance Matrix

Task	Approach	Timeline	Lead Responsibility	Support Responsibility
Monitoring	Preparation of status updates and action implementation tracking as part of submission for Annual Progress Report.	September or upon major update to Comprehensive Plan or major disaster	Jurisdictional points of contact identified in Section 8 (Planning Partnership) and Section 9 (Jurisdictional Annexes)	Jurisdictional implementation lead identified in Section 8 (Planning Partnership) and Section 9 (Jurisdictional Annexes)
Integration	In order for integration of mitigation principles to become an organic part of the ongoing county, municipal, and local authority activities, the county will incorporate the distribution of the Safe Growth Worksheet (see subsection 7.1.2 and Table 7-2 below) for annual review and update by all participating jurisdictions.	September each year with interim email reminders to address integration in county, municipal, and local authority activities.	Mercer County HMP Coordinator and jurisdictional points of contact identified in Section 8 (Planning Partnership) and Section 9 (Jurisdictional Annexes)	HMP Coordinator
Evaluation	Review the status of previous actions as submitted by the monitoring task lead and support to assess the effectiveness of the plan (BATool SM or manual); compile and finalize the Annual Progress Report	Finalized progress report completed by September of each year	Mercer County Steering Committee	Jurisdictional points of contacts identified in Section 9 (Jurisdictional Annexes)
Linkage	Non-participating jurisdictions requesting to ‘link’ into the plan need to complete procedures outlined in Appendix H	Notify the County HMP Coordinator by April and complete linkage package by September the same year	HMP Coordinator and non-participating jurisdiction	Steering Committee
Update	Reconvene the planning partners, at a minimum, every	Every 5 years or upon major update to	Mercer County HMP Coordinator	Jurisdictional points of contacts identified



Task	Approach	Timeline	Lead Responsibility	Support Responsibility
	5 years to guide a comprehensive update to review and revise the plan.	Comprehensive Plan or major disaster		in Section 9 (Jurisdictional Annexes)

7.1 MONITORING EVALUATING AND UPDATING THE PLAN

The procedures for monitoring, evaluating, and updating the plan are provided below.

The HMP Coordinator is assigned to manage the maintenance and update of the plan during its performance period. The HMP Coordinator will chair the Planning Partnership (Steering Committee and municipal points of contact) and be the primary point of contact for questions regarding the plan and its implementation as well as to coordinate incorporation of additional information into the plan.

The Planning Partnership shall fulfill the monitoring, evaluation and updating responsibilities identified in this section which is comprised of a representative from each participating jurisdiction. Each jurisdiction is expected to maintain a representative on the Planning Partnership throughout the plan performance period (five years from the date of plan adoption). As of the date of this plan, primary and secondary mitigation planning representatives (points-of-contact) are identified in each jurisdictional annex in Section 9 (Jurisdictional Annexes).

Regarding the composition of the committee, it is recognized that individual commitments change over time, and it shall be the responsibility of each jurisdiction and its representatives to inform the HMP Coordinator of any changes in representation. The HMP Coordinator will strive to keep the committee makeup as a uniform representation of planning partners and stakeholders within the planning area.

Currently, the Mercer County HMP Coordinator is designated as:

Robert G. Hartman, OEM Coordinator
 Mercer County Emergency Management and Public Safety
 350 Lawrence Station Road, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648
 609-281-7228

7.1.1 MONITORING

The Planning Partnership shall be responsible for monitoring progress on, and evaluating the effectiveness of, the plan, and documenting annual progress. Each year, beginning one year after plan development, Mercer County and local Planning Partnership representatives will collect and process information from the departments, agencies and organizations involved in implementing mitigation projects or activities identified in their jurisdictional annexes (Section 9) of this plan, by contacting persons responsible for initiating and/or overseeing the mitigation projects.

In the first year of the performance period, this will be accomplished by utilizing an online performance progress reporting system, the BAToolSM which will enable local and county representatives direct access to mitigation initiatives to easily update the status of each project, document successes or obstacles to implementation, add or delete projects to maintain mitigation project implementation. It is anticipated that all participating partners will be prompted by the tool to update progress on a quarterly basis, providing an incentive for participants to refresh their mitigation strategies and to continue implementation of projects. It is expected that this reporting system will support the submittal of an increased number of project grant fund applications due to the functionality of the system which facilitates the sorting and prioritization of projects.



In addition to progress on the implementation of mitigation actions, including efforts to obtain outside funding; and obstacles or impediments to implementation of actions, the information that Planning Partnership representatives shall be expected to document, as needed and appropriate include:

- Any grant applications filed on behalf of any of the participating jurisdictions (which may be documented in the BAToolSM),
- Hazard events and losses occurring in their jurisdiction,
- Additional mitigation actions believed to be appropriate and feasible (which may be documented in the BAToolSM),
- Public and stakeholder input.
- Plan monitoring for years 2 through 4 of the plan performance periods will be similarly addressed via the BAToolSM or manually.

7.1.2 INTEGRATION PROCESS OF THE HMP INTO PLANNING MECHANISMS

Hazard mitigation is sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from natural hazards. Integrating hazard mitigation into a jurisdiction's existing plans, policies, codes, and programs leads to development patterns that do not increase risk from known hazards or leads to redevelopment that reduces risk from known hazards. The Mercer County Planning Partnership was tasked with identifying how hazard mitigation is integrated into existing planning mechanisms. Refer to the Capability Assessments in Section 9 (Jurisdictional Annexes) for how this is done for each participating jurisdiction. During this process, many jurisdictions recognized the importance and benefits of incorporating hazard mitigation into future local planning and regulatory processes.

The Planning Partnership representatives will incorporate mitigation planning as an integral component of daily government operations. Planning Partnership representatives will work with their government officials to integrate the newly adopted hazard mitigation goals and actions into the general operations of government and partner organizations. Further, the sample adoption resolution (Appendix A) includes a resolution item stating the intent of the jurisdiction governing body to incorporate mitigation planning as an integral component of government and partner operations. By doing so, the Planning Partnership anticipates that:

- Hazard mitigation planning will be formally recognized as an integral part of overall planning and emergency management efforts;
- The Hazard Mitigation Plan, Comprehensive Plans, Emergency Management Plans and other relevant planning mechanisms will become mutually supportive documents that work in concert to meet the goals and needs of residents.

During the HMP annual review process, each participating jurisdiction will be asked to document how they are utilizing and incorporating the Mercer County HMP into their day-to-day operations and planning and regulatory processes. Additionally, each jurisdiction will identify additional policies, programs, practices, and procedures that could be modified to accommodate hazard mitigation actions and include these findings and recommendations in the Annual HMP Progress Report. The following checklist was adapted from FEMA's Local Mitigation Handbook (2013), Appendix A, Worksheet 4.2. This checklist will help a jurisdiction analyze how hazard mitigation is integrated into plans, ordinances, regulations, ordinances, and policies. By completing the checklist, it will help jurisdictions identify areas that integrate hazard mitigation currently and where to make improvements and reduce vulnerability to future development. In this manner, the integration of mitigation into activities will evolve into an ongoing culture within the county and all jurisdictions.



Table 7-2. Safe Growth Checklist

Planning Mechanisms	Do you do this?		How is it being done or how will this be utilized in the future?
	Yes	No	
Operating, Local and Capital Improvement Program Budgets			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When constructing upcoming budgets, hazard mitigation actions will be funded as budget allows. Construction projects will be evaluated to see if they meet the hazard mitigation goals. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually, the jurisdiction will review mitigation actions when allocating funding. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do budgets limit expenditures on projects that would encourage development in areas vulnerable to natural hazards? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do infrastructure policies limit extension of existing facilities and services that would encourage development in areas vulnerable to natural hazards? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do budgets provide funding for hazard mitigation projects identified in the County HMP? 			
Human Resource Manual			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do any job descriptions specifically include identifying and/or implementing mitigation projects/actions or other efforts to reduce natural hazard risk? 			
Building and Zoning Ordinances			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to, zoning changes, or development permitting, the jurisdiction will review the hazard mitigation plan and other hazard analyses to ensure consistent and compatible land use. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the zoning ordinance discourage development or redevelopment within natural areas including wetlands, floodways, and floodplains? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does it contain natural overlay zones that set conditions? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the ordinance require developers to take additional actions to mitigate natural hazard risk? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do rezoning procedures recognize natural hazard areas as limits on zoning changes that allow greater intensity or density of use? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the ordinances prohibit development within, of filling of, wetlands, floodways, and floodplains? 			
Subdivision Regulations			



Planning Mechanisms	Do you do this?		How is it being done or how will this be utilized in the future?
	Yes	No	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the subdivision regulations restrict the subdivision of land within or adjacent to natural hazard areas? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the subdivision regulations restrict the subdivision of land within or adjacent to natural hazard areas? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the regulations provide for conservation subdivisions or cluster subdivisions in order to conserve environmental resources? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the regulations allow density transfers where hazard areas exist? 			
Comprehensive Plan			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the goals and policies of the plan related to those of the County HMP? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the future land use map clearly identify natural hazard areas? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the land use policies discourage development or redevelopment with natural hazard areas? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the plan provide adequate space for expected future growth in areas located outside natural hazard areas? 			
Land Use			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the future land use map clearly identify natural hazard areas? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the land use policies discourage development or redevelopment with natural hazard areas? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the plan provide adequate space for expected future growth in areas located outside natural hazard areas? 			
Transportation Plan			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the transportation plan limit access to hazard areas? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is transportation policy used to guide growth to safe locations? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are transportation systems designed to function under disaster conditions (e.g. evacuation)? 			
Environmental Management			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are environmental systems that protect development from hazards identified and mapped? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do environmental policies maintain and restore protective ecosystems? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do environmental policies provide incentives to development that is located outside protective ecosystems? 			
Grant Applications			



Planning Mechanisms	Do you do this?		How is it being done or how will this be utilized in the future?
	Yes	No	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data and maps will be used as supporting documentation in grant applications. 			
Ordinances			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When updating ordinances, hazard mitigation will be a priority 			
Economic Development			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local economic development group will take into account information regarding identified hazard areas when assisting new businesses in finding a location. 			
Public Education and Outreach			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the jurisdiction have any public outreach mechanisms / programs in place to inform citizens on natural hazards, risk, and ways to protect themselves during such events? 			

7.1.3 EVALUATING

The evaluation of the mitigation plan is an assessment of whether the planning process and actions have been effective, if the HMP goals are being achieved, and whether changes are needed. The HMP will be evaluated on an annual basis to determine the effectiveness of the programs, and to reflect changes that could affect mitigation priorities or available funding.

The status of the HMP will be discussed and documented at an annual plan review meeting of the Planning Partnership, to be held either in person or via teleconference approximately one year from the date of local adoption of this update, and successively thereafter. At least two weeks before the annual plan review meeting, the Mercer County HMP Coordinator will advise Planning Partnership members of the meeting date, agenda and expectations of the members.

The Mercer County HMP Coordinator will be responsible for calling and coordinating the annual plan review meeting and soliciting input regarding progress toward meeting plan goals and objectives. These evaluations will assess whether:

- Goals and objectives address current and expected conditions.
- The nature or magnitude of the risks has changed.
- Current resources are appropriate for implementing the HMP and if different or additional resources are now available.
- Actions were cost effective.
- Schedules and budgets are feasible.
- Implementation problems, such as technical, political, legal or coordination issues with other agencies are presents.
- Outcomes have occurred as expected.
- Changes in county or community resources impacted plan implementation (e.g., funding, personnel, and equipment)



- New agencies/departments/staff should be included, including other local governments as defined under 44 CFR 201.6.

Specifically, the Planning Partnership will review the mitigation goals, objectives, and activities using performance-based indicators, including:

- New agencies/departments
- Project completion
- Under/over spending
- Achievement of the goals and objectives
- Resource allocation
- Timeframes
- Budgets
- Lead/support agency commitment
- Resources
- Feasibility

Finally, the Planning Partnership will evaluate how other programs and policies have conflicted or augmented planned or implemented measures, and shall identify policies, programs, practices, and procedures that could be modified to accommodate hazard mitigation actions (“Implementation of Mitigation Plan through Existing Programs” subsection later in this section discusses this process). Other programs and policies can include those that address:

- Economic development
- Environmental preservation
- Historic preservation
- Redevelopment
- Health and/or safety
- Recreation
- Land use/zoning
- Public education and outreach
- Transportation

The Planning Partnership should refer to the evaluation forms, Worksheets #2 and #4 in the FEMA 386-4 guidance document, to assist in the evaluation process (see Appendix G – Plan Review Tools). Further, the Planning Partnership should refer to any process and plan review deliverables developed by the county or participating jurisdictions as a part of the plan review processes established for prior or existing local HMPs within the county.

The Mercer County HMP Coordinator shall be responsible for preparing an Annual HMP Progress Report for each year of the performance period, based on the information provided by the local Planning Partnership members, information presented at the annual Planning Partnership meeting, and other information as appropriate and relevant. These annual reports will provide data for the five-year update of this HMP and will assist in pinpointing any implementation challenges. By monitoring the implementation of the HMP on an annual basis, the Planning Partnership will be able to assess which projects are completed, which are no longer feasible, and what projects should require additional funding.

The Annual HMP Progress Report shall be posted on the Mercer County HMP website to keep the public apprised of the plan’s implementation. Additionally, the website provides details on the HMP update planning



process. For communities who might choose to join the NFIP CRS program, this report will also be provided to each CRS participating community in order to meet annual CRS recertification requirements. To meet this recertification timeline, the Planning Partnership will strive to complete the review process and prepare an Annual HMP Progress Report by September 30 of each year. (<https://www.mercercounty.org/departments/emergency-management-public-safety/mercercounty-hazard-mitigation-plan>)

The HMP will also be evaluated and revised following any major disasters, to determine if the recommended actions remain relevant and appropriate. The risk assessment will also be revisited to see if any changes are necessary based on the pattern of disaster damages or if data listed in the Section 4.3 (Hazard Profiles) of this plan has been collected to facilitate the risk assessment. This is an opportunity to increase the jurisdictions disaster resistance and build a better and stronger community.

7.1.4 UPDATING

44 CFR 201.6.d.3 requires that local hazard mitigation plans be reviewed, revised as appropriate, and resubmitted for approval in order to remain eligible for benefits awarded under DMA 2000. It is the intent of the Mercer County HMP Planning Partnership to update this plan on a five-year cycle from the date of initial plan adoption.

To facilitate the update process, the Mercer County HMP Coordinator, with support of the Planning Partnership, shall use the second annual Planning Partnership meeting to develop and commence the implementation of a detailed plan update program. The Mercer County HMP Coordinator shall invite representatives from NJ OEM to this meeting to provide guidance on plan update procedures. This program shall, at a minimum, establish who shall be responsible for managing and completing the plan update effort, what needs to be included in the updated plan, and a detailed timeline with milestones to assure that the update is completed according to regulatory requirements.

At this meeting, the Planning Partnership shall determine what resources will be needed to complete the update. The Mercer County HMP Coordinator shall be responsible for assuring that needed resources are secured.

Following each five-year update of the mitigation plan, the updated plan will be distributed for public comment. After all comments are addressed, the HMP will be revised and distributed to all planning group members and the New Jersey State Hazard Mitigation Officer.

7.1.5 GRANT MONITORING AND COORDINATION

Mercer County recognizes the importance of having an annual coordination period that helps each planning partner become aware of upcoming mitigation grant opportunities identifies multi-jurisdiction projects to pursue. Grant monitoring will be the responsibility of each planning partner as part of their annual progress reporting. The Mercer County HMP Coordinator will keep the planning partners apprised of Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant openings and assist in developing letters of intent for grant opportunities when practicable.

Mercer County intends to be a resource in the support of project grant writing and development. The degree of this support will depend on the level of assistance requested by the partnership during open windows for grant applications. As part of grant monitoring and coordination, Mercer County intends to provide the following:

- Notification to planning partners about impending grant opportunities.
- A current list of eligible, jurisdiction-specific projects for funding pursuit consideration.
- Notification about mitigation priorities for the fiscal year to assist the planning partners in the selection of appropriate projects.



Grant monitoring and coordination will be integrated into the annual progress report or as needed based on the availability of non-HMA or post-disaster funding opportunities.

7.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF MITIGATION PLAN THROUGH EXISTING PROGRAMS

Effective mitigation is achieved when hazard awareness and risk management approaches and strategies become an integral part of public activities and decision-making. Within the county there are many existing plans and programs that support hazard risk management, and thus it is critical that this hazard mitigation plan integrate and coordinate with, and complement, those existing plans and programs.

The “Capability Assessment” (Section 5) provides a summary and description of the existing plans, programs and regulatory mechanisms at all levels of government (federal, state, county and local) that support hazard mitigation within the county. Within each jurisdictional annex in Section 9 (Jurisdictional Annexes), the County and each participating jurisdiction identified how they have integrated hazard risk management into their existing planning, regulatory and operational/administrative framework (Section 9.X.3 Jurisdictional Capability Assessment and Integration in each annex) and included actions to promote this integration where opportunities have been identified.

It is the intention of Planning Partnership representatives to incorporate mitigation planning as an integral component of daily government operations. Planning Partnership representatives will work with local government officials to integrate the newly adopted hazard mitigation goals and actions into the general operations of government and partner organizations. Further, the sample adoption resolution (Appendix A) includes a resolution item stating the intent of the local governing body to incorporate mitigation planning as an integral component of government and partner operations. By doing so, the Planning Partnership anticipates that:

1. Hazard mitigation planning will be formally recognized as an integral part of overall emergency management efforts;
2. The Hazard Mitigation Plan, Comprehensive Plans, Emergency Management Plans and other relevant planning mechanisms will become mutually supportive documents that work in concert to meet the goals and needs of county residents.

Other planning processes and programs to be coordinated with the recommendations of the hazard mitigation plan include the following:

- Emergency response plans
- Training and exercise of emergency response plans
- Debris management plans
- Recovery plans
- Capital improvement programs
- Municipal codes
- Community design guidelines
- Water-efficient landscape design guidelines
- Stormwater management programs
- Water system vulnerability assessments
- Community Wildfire Protection Plans
- Comprehensive Flood Hazard Management Plans
- Resiliency plans



- Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery action plans
- Public information/education plans

Some action items do not need to be implemented through regulation. Instead, these items can be implemented through the creation of new educational programs, continued interagency coordination, or improved public participation.

During the annual plan evaluation process, the Planning Partnership representatives will identify additional policies, programs, practices, and procedures that could be modified to accommodate hazard mitigation actions and include these findings and recommendations in the Annual HMP Progress Report.

7.3 CONTINUED PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Mercer County and participating jurisdictions are committed to the continued involvement of the public in the hazard mitigation process. This HMP update will continue to be posted on-line (<https://www.mercercounty.org/departments/emergency-management-public-safety/mercercounty-hazard-mitigation-plan>). In addition, public outreach and dissemination of the HMP will include:

- Links to the plan on jurisdiction websites of each jurisdiction with capability.
- Continued utilization of existing social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter) to inform the public of natural hazard events, such as floods and severe storms. Educate the public via the jurisdictional websites on how these applications can be used in an emergency situation.
- Development of annual articles or workshops on flood hazards to educate the public and keep them aware of the dangers of flooding.
- A new interactive website that features the plan, a complete hazard profile, stakeholder surveys, citizen surveys, public commentary and mitigation project submission

Planning Partnership representatives and the Mercer County HMP Coordinator will be responsible for receiving, tracking, and filing public comments regarding this HMP. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the plan via the hazard mitigation website at any time. The HMP Coordinator will maintain this website, posting new information and maintaining an active link to collect public comments. The HMP Coordinator also intends to post the annual plan review report on the website and StoryMap.

The public can also provide input at the annual review meeting for the HMP and during the next five-year plan update. The Mercer County HMP Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the plan evaluation portion of the meeting, soliciting feedback, collecting, and reviewing the comments, and ensuring their incorporation in the five-year plan update as appropriate. Additional meetings might also be held as deemed necessary by the planning group. The purpose of these meeting would be to provide the public an opportunity to express concerns, opinions, and ideas about the mitigation plan.

The Planning Partnership representatives shall be responsible to assure that:

- Public comment and input on the plan, and hazard mitigation in general, are recorded and addressed, as appropriate.
- Copies of the latest approved plan (or draft in the case that the five-year update effort is underway) are available for review, along with instructions to facilitate public input and comment on the plan.
- Appropriate links to the Mercer County HMP website are included on jurisdiction websites.
- Public notices are made as appropriate to inform the public of the availability of the plan, particularly during plan update cycles.



The Mercer County HMP Coordinator shall be responsible to assure that:

- Public and stakeholder comment and input on the plan, and hazard mitigation in general, are recorded and addressed, as appropriate.
- The Mercer County HMP website and StoryMap is maintained and updated as appropriate, including the posting of the annual plan review reports.
- Copies of the latest approved plan are available for review at appropriate county facilities along with instructions to facilitate public input and comment on the plan.

Public notices, including media releases, are made as appropriate to inform the public of the availability of the plan, particularly during plan update cycles.

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