

ALEUTIANS EAST BOROUGH HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN (HMP)

February 2020

Newsletter 2

This newsletter discusses the preparation of the Aleutians East Borough Multi-Jurisdictional Mitigation Plan. It has been prepared to inform interested agencies, stakeholders, and the public about the project and to solicit comments.

MJHMP Development

The Aleutians East Borough was one of several communities selected by the State of Alaska, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM) for a Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Planning (MJHMP) development project. The plan identifies natural hazards that affect the community including earthquake, flood and erosion, ground failure, severe weather, and tundra/wildland fire. The MJHMP also identifies the people and facilities potentially at risk and potential actions to mitigate community hazards. The public participation and planning process is documented as part of the project.

What is Hazard Mitigation?

Across the United States, natural disasters have increasingly caused injury, death, property damage, and business and government service interruptions. The toll on individuals, families, and businesses can be very high. The time, money, and emotional effort required to respond to and recover from these disasters take public resources and attention away from other important programs and problems.

People and property throughout Alaska are at risk from a variety of hazards that have the potential for causing human injury, property damage, or environmental harm.

The purpose of hazard mitigation is to implement projects that reduce the risk severity of hazards on people and property. Mitigation programs may include short-term and long-term activities to reduce hazard impacts or exposure to hazards. Mitigation could include education, construction, or planning projects. Hazard mitigation activity examples include relocating buildings, developing or strengthening building codes, and educating residents and building owners.

Why Do We Need A Hazard Mitigation Plan?

A community is only eligible to receive grant money for mitigation programs by preparing and adopting a hazard mitigation plan. Communities must have an approved mitigation plan to receive grant funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for eligible mitigation projects.

The Planning Process

There are very specific federal requirements that must be met when preparing a MJHMP. These requirements are commonly referred to as the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, or DMA 2000 criteria.

The DMA 2000 requires the plan to document the following topics:

- ❑ Planning process
- ❑ Community Involvement and HMP review
- ❑ Hazard identification
- ❑ Risk assessment
- ❑ Mitigation Goals
- ❑ Mitigation programs, actions, and projects
- ❑ A resolution from the community adopting the plan

FEMA has prepared a Local Planning Review Guide (available at:

<http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?fromSearch=fromsearch&id=4859>). It explains how the MJHMP meets each of the DMA2000 requirements. FEMA has prepared and “Mitigation Planning Guidance” and “How to Guides” (available at: <http://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-planning-resources>). The AEB’s Hazard Mitigation Plan will follow those guidelines.

The planning process kicked-off in 2018 by establishing a local planning committee and holding a meeting. The planning committee examined the full spectrum of hazards listed in the State Hazard Mitigation Plan and identified five hazards the MJHMP would address.

After the first meeting, community planning staff began identifying critical facilities, compiling the hazard profiles, assessing capabilities, and conducting the risk assessment for the identified hazards.

A mitigation strategy was the next component of the plan to be developed. Understanding the community’s local capabilities and using information gathered from the public and the local planning committee and the expertise of the consultants and agency staff, a mitigation strategy was developed. The mitigation strategy is based on an evaluation of the hazards, and the assets at risk from those hazards. Mitigation goals and a list of potential actions/projects were developed as the foundation of the mitigation strategy.

Mitigation goals are defined as general guidelines that explain what a community wants to achieve in terms of hazard and loss prevention. Goals are positively stated future situations that are typically long-range, policy-oriented statements representing community-wide visions. Mitigation actions and projects are undertaken in order to achieve your stated objectives. The local planning committee identified projects and/or actions for each hazard that focus on six categories: prevention, property protection, public education and awareness, natural resource protection, emergency services, and structural projects. A representative sample of the mitigation actions identified as a priority by the planning team are listed below, and explained in more detail in the plan.

The selected projects and/or actions will potentially be implemented over the next five years as funding becomes available. A maintenance plan was also been developed for the hazard mitigation plan. It outlines how the community will monitor progress on achieving the projects and actions that will help meet the stated goals and objectives, as well as an outline for continued public involvement.

The draft plan is available for public review and comment. Comments should be made via email, fax, or phone to Jessica Evans (listed below) and be received no later than March 3, 2020. The plan will be provided to DHS&EM and FEMA for their preliminary approval and returned to the AEB.

Sample of the AEB's Mitigation Actions. Review the draft MJHMP for a complete list.

Obtain and install a Siren Warning system to alert for various emergencies or disasters	Work with FEMA and the USACE to determine where flooding could be mitigated using dredging or gabian baskets.	Inundation Mapping
Update Borough and community Emergency Operations Plan, as needed	Determine needs of equipment that may be needed during an event to assure its continued and safe operation.	Identify buildings and facilities that must be able to remain operable during and following an earthquake event.
Increase back up power generation: Purchase Generators to provide enough back up power to provide essential services and sustain community; Purchase portable generating units for needs for vulnerable populations (elders, medical); Purchase portable generating units for essential services; Explore alternative power sources such as wind and solar for emergency services; Work with Alaska Dept. of Transportation to purchase back-up generator for the airport	Develop and install a signage program for hazards posted at key facilities or locations.	Complete Dam stabilization and replacement
	Contract a structural engineering firm to assess the identified buildings and facilities to determine their structural integrity and devise a strategy to improve their earthquake resistance.	Provide public awareness and response education for residents within the potential flood impact zone of the reservoir dams

We encourage you to learn more about the Allakaket's Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep you informed and to allow you every opportunity to voice your opinion regarding this important project. If you have any questions, comments, or requests for more information, please contact:

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