

Section 1 - Introduction

Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves

Figure 1.1 – Nation Saves through Mitigation Programs

As stated by FEMA, see Figure 1.1 to the right, the nation saves \$4 for every \$1 spent on mitigation programs. And, \$6 for every \$1 spent through mitigation grants funded.

An effective natural hazard mitigation plan and program would save the County and is essential in reducing the risk of loss of life and property from future disasters.

Every community is exposed to some level of risk from hazards and hazards cannot be eliminated, but it is possible to determine what hazards will affect the county communities, where they are most severe, and identify mitigation projects or initiatives that can be taken to reduce the severity of the hazard.

As previously noted, mitigation is any action taken to permanently reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and their property from the effects of hazards. Examples of mitigation projects for Franklin County might include:

- ✓ Wind retrofit critical facilities that provide essential services;
- ✓ Retrofit existing structures to meet new building codes and standards;
- ✓ Land Use planning techniques that limit infrastructure in high hazard areas; and
- ✓ The acquisition of structures that are in a high hazard area (i.e. a severe repetitive loss property).



Image Source: https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1528727738945-e9805d8703ed4a1b02c5e2861b7ac65a/MitigationSaves_FEMA_180611_508.pdf

Ideally, a community can minimize the effects of future hazards through a mix of code enforcement, planning, and responsible development.

The County's critical facilities are those facilities necessary for a community's response and recovery from a hazard event. Categories of the critical facilities would include: emergency response, hospitals, medical centers, emergency shelters, schools, fire stations, sheriff's office, emergency operations center, waste water and water treatment plants, radio communications towers, road department, correctional institutions, utilities, storage of critical records, financial institutions, and major government buildings, etc. should not be placed in high hazard areas because the function these facilities provide are too valuable to be placed in jeopardy, especially during times of disaster, and are essential to the well-being of the community served by these systems.

The community infrastructure such as bridges, roads, drainage structures, sewer lines, electric lines, telephone lines that are built in high hazard areas are subject to frequent damage and extremely costly repair. And, if a local government belongs to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and allows development in the floodplain without proper elevation and construction techniques, the federal government can withdraw the community's access to federal flood insurance for both public and private structures. Furthermore, a local government is responsible for as much as 12.5% of their local public cost of a federally declared disaster and 100% of any damage from smaller events that are not declared disasters. These costs can put a significant strain on the local government budget.

The goal of having an established Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) as an ongoing process will make hazard mitigation part of the daily functioning life in Franklin County. It serves as a bridge between local governments' programs, plans, and policies including but not limited to the comprehensive growth management plan, comprehensive emergency management plan, land development regulations, building codes and ordinances for effective floodplain management.

Over the last 30+ years, FEMA and the United States Congress have witnessed substantial increases in disaster response and recovery costs; as a result, they have provided funds to communities, counties, and states to reduce impacts from natural hazards through hazard mitigation. This marked a fundamental shift in policy; rather than placing primary emphasis on response and recovery, FEMA's focus broadened to incorporate mitigation as the foundation of emergency management.

The Franklin County LMS Working Group prepares the community, the businesses and institutions in becoming more resistant to the impacts of future disasters by evaluating the exposure of the community to all types of future natural hazards in order to identify ways to make the county more resistant to their impacts. This document reports the results of that planning process for the current planning period.

The Franklin County LMS is intended by the Working Group to serve many purposes. These include the following:

- ✓ Structured planning concepts in a methodical process to identify vulnerabilities to future disasters and to propose the mitigation projects necessary to avoid or minimize exposure. Each step in the planning process builds upon the previous process so that there is a higher level of assurance that the mitigation projects proposed by the participants have a valid basis for both their justification and priority for implementation. It is then an important element for the LMS plan is to document that process and to present its results to the community.
- ✓ Continual search for new ways to make the community as a whole more aware of the natural hazards that threaten the public health and safety, the economic vitality of businesses, and the operational capability of important institutions.



Photo: WCTV.TV

- ✓ Providing details on specific vulnerabilities of the neighborhoods of Franklin County and many of the facilities that are important to the community's daily life. This information will be very helpful to individuals that wish to understand how the community could become safer from the impacts of future disasters.
- ✓ Furnish the required information needed by the managers and leaders of local government, business and industry, community associations, and other key institutions and organizations to take actions to address

vulnerabilities to future disasters. In addition, it provides proposals for specific mitigation projects or initiatives and programs that are needed to eliminate or minimize those vulnerabilities.

These mitigation projects have been justified on the basis of their economic benefits using a uniform technical analysis, as well as prioritization for implementation utilizing a selected criteria approach. This path is intended to provide a decision tool for the management of participating organizations and agencies regarding why the proposed mitigation should be implemented, which should be implemented first, and the economic and public welfare benefits of doing so.

A key purpose of the planning process utilized by the Franklin County WG is to ensure that proposals for mitigation projects are reviewed and coordinated among the participating jurisdictions within the county. These projects can be adopted and implemented for the jurisdiction's own purposes and on its own schedule. In this way, the format of the plan and the operational concept of the planning process ensure that proposed mitigation projects are coordinated and prioritized effectively among jurisdictions, while nonetheless allowing each jurisdiction to adopt only the proposed projects that it actually has the authority or responsibility to implement when resources are available.

The planning process used by the LMS Working Group meets the analysis and documentation needs of the planning process. The plan utilizes technical analysis and the formulation of proposed mitigation projects for incorporation into this plan.

The following sections of the Franklin County LMS present the detailed information to support these objectives. In addition, it documents the structural and non-structural mitigation projects proposed by the participating jurisdictions to address the identified exposure. The plan will also address the goals and objectives of the Working Group for the next planning period, during which this plan will continue to be expanded and refined.