

CITY OF HOLY CROSS HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN (HMP)

June 2013

Newsletter 2

This newsletter discusses the preparation of the City of Holy Cross Hazard Mitigation Plan. It has been prepared to inform interested agencies, stakeholders, and the public about the project and to solicit comments. This newsletter can also be viewed on the State of Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Website at <http://www.ready.alaska.gov/plans/localhazmitplans.htm>.

HMP Development

The City of Holy Cross was one of 15 communities selected by the State of Alaska, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM) for a Hazard Mitigation Planning (HMP) development project. The plan identifies natural hazards that affect the community including earthquake, erosion, flood, ground failure, severe weather, and tundra/wildland fire. The HMP 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 HMP. These requirements are commonly referred to as the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, or DMA2000 criteria. Information about the criteria may be found on the Internet at: <http://www.fema.gov/mitigation-planning-laws-regulations-guidance>.

The DMA2000 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 Planning Guidance which are available at:

<http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?fromSearch=fromsearch&id=4859>, and "How to Guides" that explain in detail how each of the DMA2000 requirements are met. These guides are available at <http://www.fema.gov/hazard-mitigation-planning-resources>. The Holy Cross Hazard Mitigation Plan will follow those guidelines.

The planning process kicked-off in May 2012 by establishing a local planning committee and holding a public meeting. The planning committee examined the full spectrum of hazards listed in the State Hazard Mitigation Plan and identified six hazards the HMP would address.

After the first public meeting, City staff and URS began identifying critical facilities, compiling the hazard profiles, assessing capabilities, and conducting the risk assessment for the identified hazards. Critical facilities are facilities that are critical to the recovery of a community in the event of a disaster. After collection of this information, URS helped to determine which critical facilities and estimated populations are vulnerable to the identified hazards in Holy Cross.

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. On June 6, 2013, 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 in the City and Tribal offices for public review and comment. Comments should be made via email, fax, or phone to Scott Simmons (listed below) and be received no later than June 21, 2013. The plan will be provided to DHS&EM and FEMA for their preliminary approval and returned to Holy Cross' City Council for formal adoption.

The Planning Committee

The plan was developed with the assistance from the community's planning committee consisting of a cross section from the community. Planning Team members who helped with developing the plan include Team Leader, Connie Walker, with assistance from Mayor Rebecca Turner, City Clerk Jacqueline Turner, Evan Newman, Laverne Turner, Christy Turner, Victor Laveira, Rosalie Wolfe and URS Corporation.

Sample of the City of Holy Cross' Mitigation Actions. Review the draft HMP for a complete list.		
Identify and pursue funding opportunities to implement mitigation actions.	Develop, produce, and distribute information materials concerning mitigation, preparedness, and safety procedures for all identified natural hazards.	Develop new barge landing and staging area due to increased Yukon River sedimentation preventing access to the existing barge landing area.
Disseminate FEMA pamphlets to educate and encourage homeowners concerning preparedness, and mitigation actions such as structural and non-structural retrofit benefits.	Update public emergency notification procedures and develop an outreach program for potential hazard impacts or events.	Evaluate infrastructure erosion damages caused by rain and snowmelt run-off. Example damages occur along road system, structure foundation damages, and culverts.
The City will strive to aggressively manage their existing plans to ensure they incorporate mitigation planning provisions into all community planning processes such as comprehensive, capital improvement, and land use plans, etc.	Develop and incorporate mitigation provisions and recommendations into all community plans and community development processes to maintain protect critical infrastructure, residences, and population from natural hazard impacts.	Create detention storage basins, ponds, reservoirs etc. to allow water to temporarily accumulate to reduce pressure on culverts and low water crossings allowing water to ultimately return to its watercourse at a reduced flow rate.
Develop prioritized list of mitigation actions for threatened critical facilities and other buildings or infrastructure.	Install culvert "end"-walls to prevent embankment erosion at its entrance or outlet. (end- or wing-walls).	Acquire finding to resurface roads with high quality gravel (Village to St. Michael Slough – 3 miles and the road to Ghost Creek) to replace the soft soils to prevent recurring road damage.
Encourage utility companies to evaluate and harden vulnerable infrastructure elements for sustainability.	Create drainage ditches to divert water from run-off to prevent or reduce damage to roadbeds.	Hold FireWise workshop to educate residents and contractors concerning fire resistant landscaping.

We encourage you to learn more about the City of Holy Cross' 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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