

3. Planning Process

A successful planning process builds partnerships and brings together members representing government agencies, the public, and other stakeholders to reach consensus on how the community will prepare for and respond to hazards that are most likely to occur. Applying a comprehensive and transparent process adds validity to the Plan. Those involved gain a better understanding of the problem or issue and how solutions and actions were devised. The result is a revised set of common community values and widespread support for directing financial, technical, and human resources to an agreed-upon action. The planning process was an integral part of updating the Fulton County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). This section describes Fulton County's update process and how the HMP evolved since it was first approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

3.1. Update Process and Participation Summary

To facilitate the update of this and 13 other HMPs across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) utilized Emergency Management Performance Grant funding to contract with Michael Baker, Jr., Inc. (Baker), a Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, firm, to update 14 counties' HMPs and provide related services. Baker in turn subcontracted Delta Development Group, Inc. (Delta), a Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, firm, to lead the update of four of those HMPs, including the Fulton County HMP.

In accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) requirements, this plan documents the following topics:

- Planning process
- Hazard identification
- Risk assessment
- Mitigation strategy: goals, actions, and projects
- Formal adoption by the participating jurisdictions
- PEMA and FEMA approval

As part of the overall project, Baker was tasked by PEMA with developing a standardized planning process to guide HMP updates in Pennsylvania. This process is described in the *Standard Operating Guide* listed in Section 1.4.4 and was followed during the update of the Fulton County HMP. The review, analysis, and update of each of the hazard identification, risk assessment, and mitigation strategy sections are described in Sections 4.2, 4.1, and 6.1, respectively.

Public participation and Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee (Steering Committee) meetings served as the main forums for gathering information to update the current HMP. The Steering Committee and consultants were afforded access to the knowledge of relevant, and approved, plans, policies, and procedures for Fulton County. Opportunities for public participation included

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attending public meetings, completing written surveys, and reviewing and commenting on the existing plan and other documents. Through this process, the County was able to develop a comprehensive approach to reducing the effects of hazards to the County and its municipalities.

3.2. *The Hazard Mitigation Steering Committee*

The County's Steering Committee consists of:

- Dave Hoover, Fulton County Commissioner
- Bonnie Keefer, Fulton County Commissioner
- Craig Cutchall, Fulton County Commissioner
- Dan Swain, Fulton County Chief Clerk
- Mary K. Seville, Fulton County Planning Commission
- Pat Berkstresser, Fulton County Planning Commission
- Vincent Joyce, Fulton County EMA
- Seleen Shives, Fulton County Conservation District
- Karole Barton, Wells Township
- Carl Boyer, Mellott Company
- Deb Buterbaugh, American Red Cross
- Darius DeShong, Hustontown Vol. Fire Co.
- Roger DeShong, PennDOT
- Jack Fields, McConnellsburg Borough
- Jeremy Fletcher, Fulton County Planning Commission
- Nelson Gothie, Valley-Hi Borough
- Denise Grissinger, Ayr Township
- Dixie Henry, Dublin Township
- LuAnne Keebaugh, Licking Creek Township
- Joel Kissinger, PEMA Central Area
- Helen Layton, Brush Creek Township
- Donna Lynch, Bethel Township
- Pete Lynch, McConnellsburg Vol. Fire Co.
- Gene Mellott, Thompson Township
- Marcie Mellott, Todd Township
- Monica Mellott, Taylor Township
- Sgt. Troy Park, Pennsylvania State Police
- Jason Sharpe, JLG Industries
- Paula Shives, Belfast Township
- J.R. Sigel, Needmore Vol. Fire Co.

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- Donna Welsh, LEPC
- Carolyn Wills, Union Township

Mary K. Seville serves as chair of the committee.

The Steering Committee acknowledged that identifying hazards that specifically affect Fulton County and assessing their likelihood of occurrence, and the potential damage to the people, property, and environment of the County, was one of the most important steps in developing a comprehensive HMP. The Steering Committee chose to focus on an all-hazards approach as opposed to narrowing the focus to human-caused or natural disasters only.

3.3. *Meetings and Documentation*

The County Steering Committee held the following meetings during the update process of the County HMP:

Table 6: Public and Planning Meetings

Date	Description of Meeting
September 8, 2009	Kick-off meeting with Steering Committee members, including five-year plan review
October 20, 2009	Public meeting to review updated risk assessment
October 29, 2009	Steering Committee meeting was held to review the status of the HMP update
November 9, 2009	Mitigation Solutions Workshop to identify mitigation goals, objectives, and actions
December 10, 2009	Approve the draft HMP for formal review

Each meeting was followed by detailed meeting minutes that documented all discussion, decisions, and unmet needs identified during the meetings. These minutes were shared among the Steering Committee, contractors, and attendees of the meeting. Documentation from all meetings can be found in Appendix B. County residents were informed of public meetings through various sources, including newspapers and announcements.

The Steering Committee partnered with Baker and Delta to aid in the development of the updated Plan. The contractors assisted the County in drafting planning documents, preparing meeting materials, and facilitating meetings. The Steering Committee reviewed any documentation produced by Baker and Delta, provided validation, and acted as an advocate for the Plan update.

3.4. *Public & Stakeholder Participation*

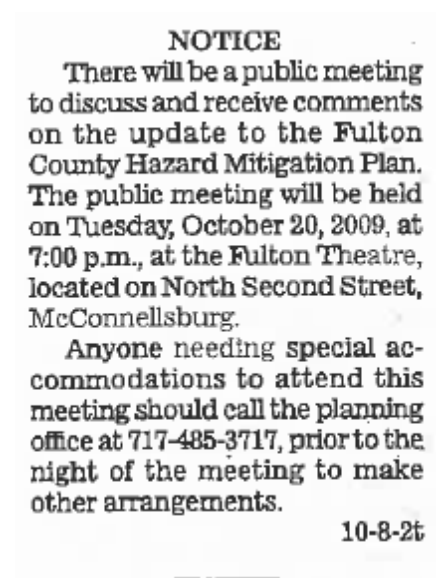
To maximize the effectiveness of the HMP, the Steering Committee sought continual public and stakeholder engagement. Public input was encouraged and collected through a variety of

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methods. A Risk Assessment Survey and a Capabilities Assessment Survey were sent out to each municipality in Fulton County. A total of 12 municipalities in Fulton County returned the Risk Assessment Survey and Capabilities Assessment Survey so that their findings could be reviewed and incorporated into the updated County HMP.

Local, state, and federal agencies, neighboring jurisdictions (e.g., Bedford, Huntingdon, and Franklin Counties), local businesses, community leaders, educators, and other relevant private and nonprofit groups that had a vested interest in the development of the updated Plan were given the opportunity to participate in the planning process by attending a planning or public meeting, or offering comment on the Web site posting the existing HMP. Ten municipalities' representatives attended at least one of these meetings. Through service on the Steering Committee itself or attendance at a Steering Committee meeting, the Fulton County Commissioners, the American Red Cross, PennDOT, private industry (e.g., JLG), the Pennsylvania State Police, and PEMA were provided the opportunity to guide the HMP's development.

Through public notices published in the local newspaper, the above groups and the general public were invited to review the Plan on the County's Web site and send comments to the Fulton County Planning Commission. In addition, public meetings were held during the planning process as listed in section 3.3 above. Each of these meetings was preceded by a public notice inviting the general public to review and comment on the Plan, as well as to attend the meeting itself. Copies of the actual public notices are found in Appendix B, immediately following the copy of materials used at the respective meetings, and a copy of the October 20, 2009, is shown below.



Section 3.5 includes a table showing overall municipal participation in the planning process.

3.5. *Multi-Jurisdictional Planning*

Fulton County took a multi-jurisdictional approach to preparing its HMP. The County was able to provide resources to which the municipalities may not have had access. However, the County was dependent on the municipal buy-in since the municipalities have the legal authority to enforce compliance of land use planning and development issues. The County, together with the Baker team, undertook an intensive effort to involve all 11 Townships and two Boroughs in the update process.

Each municipality was given the opportunity to participate in this process. Municipal officials and representatives were invited to attend Steering Committee meetings, sent a copy of the existing Plan for comment, and asked to review and prioritize the mitigation actions. The following municipalities participated in the update of this HMP:

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Table 7: Planning Participation Requirements

Municipality	Participated in 2005 Plan	Risk Assessment Survey Received	Capabilities Assessment Survey Received	Attended Meeting	Adopted 2010 Plan	2010 Plan Adoption Date
Fulton County	X	X	X	X		
Ayr Township	X	X	X	X		
Belfast Township	X	X	X			
Bethel Township	X	X	X	X		
Brush Creek Township	X	X	X	X		
Dublin Township	X	X	X			
Licking Creek Township	X	X	X	X		
McConnellsburg Borough	X	X	X	X		
Taylor Township	X	X	X	X		
Thompson Township	X	X	X			
Todd Township	X	X	X	X		
Union Township	X	X	X	X		
Valley-Hi Borough	X					
Wells Township	X	X	X	X		

3.6. Existing Planning Mechanisms

The planning process also allowed for the review and incorporation, if appropriate, of existing plans, studies, reports, and other information that aid in the mitigation of hazards across the County. Fulton County will use existing plans and/or programs to implement the decided-upon hazard mitigation actions. Based on the capability assessments of the participating municipalities, the County will continue to plan and implement programs to reduce the effects to people, places, and the environment from hazards. This updated Plan builds upon the momentum developed through previous related planning efforts and mitigation programs, and recommends implementing actions, where possible.