

VILLAGE OF CHITINA HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN (HMP)

August 2015

Newsletter 2

This newsletter discusses the preparation of the Village of Chitina 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 Village of Chitina was one of 21 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 a Local Planning Review Guide) and (available at: <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?fromSearch=fromsearch&id=4859>). It explains how the HMP 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 City’s Hazard Mitigation Plan will follow those guidelines.

The planning process kicked-off on January 21, 2015 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 HMP would address.

After the first meeting, Village staff and AECOM 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, AECOM helped to determine which critical facilities and estimated populations are vulnerable to the identified hazards in Chitina.

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 May 13, 2015, 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 Tribal office for public review and comment. Comments should be made via email, fax, or phone to Elizabeth Appleby (listed below) and be received no later than September 4, 2015. The plan will be provided to DHS&EM and FEMA for their preliminary approval and returned to Chitina's Tribal 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 Chitina EPA/IGAP Coordinator Fred Dahl, Jonathan Doty with Chitina Electric, and AECOM. Other community members who played a role in plan development include Tribal Administrator Toni Goodlataw, Martin Finnesand with Chitina Electric Company, and Dan Boone, Jr. with the Fire Department.

Sample of the Village of Chitina's Mitigation Actions. Review the draft HMP for a complete list.		
Continue the Hazard Mitigation Planning Team's forward progress to implement, monitor, review, and evaluate hazard and mitigation actions.	Develop prioritized list of mitigation actions for threatened critical facilities and other buildings or infrastructure.	Develop vegetation projects to restore ground loss from high water flow, ground failure, or other hazard impact damages and to provide slope stability in avalanche or landslide areas.
Identify and pursue funding opportunities to implement mitigation actions.	Integrate the Mitigation Plan findings for enhanced emergency planning and training for first responders.	Promote FireWise building, siting, design, and construction processes and materials.
Disseminate FEMA pamphlets to educate and encourage homeowners concerning structural and non-structural retrofit benefits.	Work with Alaska Department of Transportation to reduce potential for flood, erosion, and landslides along the Edgerton Highway and McCarthy Highway.	Develop and implement tree clearing mitigation programs to keep trees from threatening lives, property, and public infrastructure from severe weather events.
Acquire emergency warning sirens to communicate critical emergency warnings and alerts.	Promote permafrost sensitive construction practices in permafrost areas.	Identify, develop, implement, and enforce mitigation actions such as fuel breaks and reduction zones for potential wildland fire hazard areas.

We encourage you to learn more about the Village of Chitina's 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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