

# CITY OF KOTZEBUE HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN (HMP)

November 2014

Newsletter 2

*This newsletter discusses the update of the City of Kotzebue Hazard Mitigation Plan. It has been prepared to inform interested agencies, stakeholders, and the public about the project and to solicit comments. This newsletter and draft LHMP may be viewed at <http://www.cityofkotzebue.com/>. This newsletter and LHMP may also be viewed on the State of Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Website at: <http://www.ready.alaska.gov/plans/localhazmitplans>*

## HMP Development

The City of Kotzebue with technical assistance from the State of Alaska, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM), updated their Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). The plan identifies natural hazards that affect the community including earthquake, erosion, flood, ground failure, severe weather, and tundra/wildland fire. The LHMP 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 March 26, 2014 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, the City Council and participants 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, participants determined which critical facilities and estimated populations are vulnerable to the identified hazards in the area.

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, the City Council, and the expertise of City management and 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 participants identified mitigation actions for each hazard focusing 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 meeting participants 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 office for public review and comment. Comments should be made via email, fax, or phone to the City Manager, Derek Martin, and be received no later than October 31, 2014. The plan will be provided to DHS&EM and FEMA for their preliminary approval and returned to Eagle's City and Tribal Councils for City formal adoption and Tribal agreement to implement.

### 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 developed the plan include Team Leader, City Manager Derek Martin and City Planner, Grant Hildreth with their respective department directors and the City Council.

Sample of the City of Kotzebue's Mitigation Actions. Review the draft Mitigation Plan for a complete list.		
City/State DHS&EM: Identify and pursue funding opportunities to implement mitigation actions.	City/State DHS&EM: Develop, produce, and distribute information materials concerning mitigation, preparedness, and safety procedures for all identified natural hazards.	Hold an annual or biennial "hazard meeting" to provide information to residents about recognition and mitigation of all natural hazards that affect the Kotzebue area.
City/State: Disseminate FEMA pamphlets to educate and encourage homeowners concerning structural and non-structural retrofit benefits.	Acquire emergency warning sirens to communicate critical emergency warnings and alerts.	Promote ground failure (such as permafrost) sensitive construction practices in hazard impact areas.
Identify evacuation routes away from high hazard areas and develop outreach program to educate the public concerning warnings and evacuation procedures.	Integrate the Mitigation Plan hazard analysis findings for enhanced emergency planning.	Develop and implement tree clearing mitigation programs to keep trees from threatening lives, property, and public infrastructure from severe weather events.
City will strive to 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. to demonstrate multi-benefit considerations and facilitate using multiple funding source consideration.	Mitigate the effect of extreme weather by instituting programs that provide early warning and preparation.	Research and institute the National Weather Service program of "Storm Ready"
Prohibit new construction in identified hazard impact areas (avalanche, flood, erosion, etc.) and require construction to applicable building codes for other hazard impacts (earthquake, volcanic ash, weather, etc.).	Hold FireWise workshop to educate residents and contractors concerning fire resistant landscaping.	Identify, develop, implement, and enforce mitigation actions and protective measures for <b>fuel breaks and wildland fire fuels reduction zones</b> to assure sustainability.

*We encourage you to learn more about the City of Kotzebue'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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