

# Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan

## 1.0 Introduction

As part of the overall community planning effort for hazard mitigation, the City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County, Indiana, prepared a Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan pursuant to the requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (PL 106-390).

Hazard Mitigation is defined as any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to human life and property from hazards. Hazard Mitigation Planning is the process through which the natural hazards that threaten communities are identified, the likely impacts of those hazards are determined, mitigation goals are set, and appropriate strategies that would lessen the impacts are selected, prioritized, and implemented.

Hazard Mitigation Planning is a requirement for state and local governments in order to maintain eligibility for certain federal disaster assistance and hazard mitigation funding programs. Communities that are at risk from natural disasters cannot afford to jeopardize this funding.

### PURPOSE AND NEED

Each year, natural disasters in the United States take the lives of hundreds of people, injure thousands more, and leave as many as 50,000 people homeless. Nationwide, taxpayers pay billions of dollars each year to help communities, organizations, businesses and individuals recover from disaster. These monies only partially reflect the true cost of disasters, because additional expenses upon insurance companies and non-government organizations are unreimbursed by tax dollars.

Additionally, many natural disasters are predictable. Many more are repetitive, often with the same results. Many of the damages caused by these events can be alleviated or even eliminated.

FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, now a part of the Department of Homeland Security, has made reducing losses from natural disasters one of its primary goals. Hazard Mitigation Planning and the subsequent implementation of the projects, measures, and policies developed through those plans, is the primary mechanism in achieving these goals. Where success in reducing disaster damages has taken place, it has been the result of mitigation projects that were implemented as a result of mitigation planning.

This plan was developed pursuant to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA) and the regulations published in the *Federal Register* Volume 67, Number 38, Tuesday, February 26, 2002. Section 104 of DMA revises the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act by adding Section 322, which provides new and revitalized emphasis on hazard mitigation, including adding a new requirement for local mitigation plans. These new local mitigation planning regulations are implemented through 44 CFR Part 201.6.

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DMA requires local governments to have a FEMA-approved Hazard Mitigation Plan in place by November 1, 2004. The City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County, Indiana, Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan was prepared to meet the DMA requirements. Compliance with these requirements will maintain the Community's continued eligibility for certain Hazard Mitigation – or disaster loss reduction – programs from FEMA.

In addition, proactive mitigation planning at the local level can help reduce the cost of disaster response and recovery to property owners and government by protecting critical community facilities, reducing liability exposure, and minimizing overall community impacts and disruption.

## SCOPE

The City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan is a multi-jurisdictional plan that identifies goals, information, and measures for hazard mitigation and risk reduction to make communities less vulnerable and more disaster resistant and sustainable. Information in the plan can also be used to help guide and coordinate mitigation activities and local policy decisions for future land use decisions. This Plan covers the jurisdictions of the City of Evansville, Vanderburgh County and the incorporated area of Darmstadt.

This Plan follows DMA planning requirements and associated guidance for developing Local Hazard Mitigation Plans. This guidance sets forth a generalized 4-task process:

- 1) Organize Resources;
- 2) Assess Hazards and Risks;
- 3) Develop a Mitigation Plan; and
- 4) Evaluate Work.

This Plan also utilizes the process set forth in FEMA Region V's Crosswalk Reference Document for Review and Submission of Local Mitigation Plans.

This plan addresses natural hazards only. Although the City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County recognize that FEMA is both encouraging and promoting communities to integrate human-caused hazards into the mitigation planning process, the scope of this effort did not address these human-caused hazards for two reasons. First, DMA requires extensive public information and input, and this is in direct conflict with the security necessary in planning for Chemical, Biological, and Radiological hazards. The Planning Committee determined it was not in the Community's best interest to share specific information about the area's vulnerability to human-caused hazards. And secondly, organizationally, many of these planning activities for human-caused hazards are either underway or complete, and have been developed by a different set of organizations.

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