

SECTION 10

PLAN MAINTENANCE

This section discusses how the MEMA District 7 Mitigation Strategy and Mitigation Action Plan will be implemented and how the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan will be evaluated and enhanced over time. This section also discusses how the public will continue to be involved in a sustained hazard mitigation planning process. It consists of the following four subsections:

- 10.1 Monitoring and Evaluating the Previous Plan
- 10.2 Implementation and Integration
- 10.3 Monitoring, Evaluation, and Enhancement
- 10.4 Continued Public Involvement

44 CFR Requirement

44 CFR Part 201.6(c)(4)(i):

The plan shall include a plan maintenance process that includes a section describing the method and schedule of monitoring, evaluating and updating the mitigation plan within a five-year cycle.

44 CFR Part 201.6(c)(4)(ii):

The plan maintenance process shall include a process by which local governments incorporate the requirements of the mitigation plan into other planning mechanisms such as comprehensive or capital improvement plans, when appropriate

10.1 MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE PREVIOUS PLAN

Since the previous hazard mitigation plan was adopted in 2013, each county has worked to ensure that mitigation was integrated into local activities and that the mitigation plan was appropriately implemented. The previous plan outlined a process for monitoring and evaluating the plan throughout the interim period between plan updates.

Each county was ultimately successful in implementing the monitoring and evaluation processes that were outlined in the previous plan as all nine counties held annual meetings to discuss the mitigation plan and the priorities that were outlined in it. Additionally, the plan outlined a process wherein the Task Force that developed the plan during the last update would meet at least twice a year to monitor the progress of implementing the strategies outlined in the plan. Although there were several meetings of this group, the Task Force did not meet as frequently as planned due to challenges in scheduling. Additionally, there was an intent to use reporting forms that could be filled out one month prior to each scheduled meeting date. This was only carried out infrequently and the annual report detailing the Task Force's evaluation of plan progress was also not always carried out. In general, the consensus from the current planning committee is that this may have been too ambitious and that a less ambitious meeting schedule might be more achievable.

As such, revisions were agreed upon to modify the plan monitoring and evaluation process. The RHMC will remain the entity charged with reviewing the plan, but these reviews will take place on an annual

basis rather than a bi-annual basis. These reviews will continue to be mainly focused on the status of mitigation actions/projects. Overall, the review team generally agreed that the plan was on course and that with the modification to the frequency of this RHMC (formerly Task Force) meetings, the monitoring and evaluating process itself would be sufficient to ensure implementation of the plan going forward. Each county will also meet annually with its municipalities in separate meetings to discuss mitigation planning and the emergency management process.

10.2 IMPLEMENTATION AND INTEGRATION

Each agency, department, or other partner participating under the MEMA District 7 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan is responsible for implementing specific mitigation actions as prescribed in the Mitigation Action Plan. Every proposed action listed in the Mitigation Action Plan is assigned to a specific “lead” agency or department in order to assign responsibility and accountability and increase the likelihood of subsequent implementation.

In addition to the assignment of a local lead department or agency, an implementation time period or a specific implementation date has been assigned in order to assess whether actions are being implemented in a timely fashion. The counties in the MEMA District 7 Region will seek outside funding sources to implement mitigation projects in both the pre-disaster and post-disaster environments. When applicable, potential funding sources have been identified for proposed actions listed in the Mitigation Action Plan.

The participating jurisdictions will integrate this Hazard Mitigation Plan into relevant city and county government decision-making processes or mechanisms, where feasible. This includes integrating the requirements of the Hazard Mitigation Plan into other local planning documents, processes, or mechanisms, such as comprehensive or capital improvement plans, when appropriate. The members of the MEMA District 7 Regional Hazard Mitigation Council (RHMC) will remain charged with ensuring that the goals and mitigation actions of new and updated local planning documents for their agencies or departments are consistent, or do not conflict with, the goals and actions of the Hazard Mitigation Plan, and will not contribute to increased hazard vulnerability in the MEMA District 7 Region.

Since the previous plan was adopted, each county and participating jurisdiction has worked to integrate the hazard mitigation plan into other planning mechanisms where applicable/feasible. Examples of how this integration has occurred have been documented in the Implementation Status discussion provided for each of the mitigation actions found in Section 9. Specific examples of how integration has occurred include:

- Integrating the mitigation plan into reviews and updates of floodplain management ordinances
- Integrating the mitigation plan into reviews and updates of county emergency operations plans
- Integrating the mitigation plan into review and updates of building codes
- Integrating the mitigation plan into the capital improvements plan through identification of mitigation actions that require local funding

Opportunities to further integrate the requirements of this Plan into other local planning mechanisms shall continue to be identified through future meetings of the RHMC, individual county meetings, and

the annual review process described herein. Although it is recognized that there are many possible benefits to integrating components of this Plan into other local planning mechanisms, the development and maintenance of this stand-alone Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan is deemed by the MEMA District 7 RHMC to be the most effective and appropriate method to implement local hazard mitigation actions at this time.

10.3 MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND ENHANCEMENT

Periodic revisions and updates of the Hazard Mitigation Plan are required to ensure that the goals of the Plan are kept current, taking into account potential changes in hazard vulnerability and mitigation priorities. In addition, revisions may be necessary to ensure that the Plan is in full compliance with applicable federal and state regulations. Periodic evaluation of the Plan will also ensure that specific mitigation actions are being reviewed and carried out according to the Mitigation Action Plan.

The MEMA District 7 RHMC shall meet every year to evaluate the progress attained and to revise, where needed, the activities set forth in the Plan. The findings and recommendations of the RHMC shall be shared with interested municipal and county Council members. The RHMC will also meet following any disaster events warranting a reexamination of the mitigation actions being implemented or proposed for future implementation. This will ensure that the Plan is continuously updated to reflect changing conditions and needs within the region. MEMA will be responsible for reconvening the RHMC for these reviews.¹

FIVE YEAR PLAN REVIEW

The Plan will be thoroughly reviewed by the RHMC every five years to determine whether there have been any significant changes in the region that may, in turn, necessitate changes in the types of mitigation actions proposed. New development in identified hazard areas, an increased exposure to hazards, an increase or decrease in capability to address hazards, and changes to federal or state legislation are examples of factors that may affect the necessary content of the Plan.

The plan review provides MEMA District 7 county officials with an opportunity to evaluate those actions that have been successful and to explore the possibility of documenting potential losses avoided due to the implementation of specific mitigation measures. The plan review also provides the opportunity to address mitigation actions that may not have been successfully implemented as assigned. MEMA will be responsible for reconvening the RHMC and helping conduct the five-year review.

During the five-year plan review process, the following questions will be considered as criteria for assessing the effectiveness and appropriateness of the Plan:

- Do the goals address current and expected conditions?
- Has the nature or magnitude of risks changed?
- Are the current resources appropriate for implementing the Plan?

¹ A sample Mitigation Action Progress Form and Plan Update Evaluation Worksheet (from FEMA's *Local Mitigation Planning Handbook*) are included in Appendix B. These documents can be used to guide the evaluation of mitigation actions and future plan updates.

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- Are there implementation problems, such as technical, political, legal or coordination issues with other agencies?
- Have the outcomes occurred as expected?
- Did county departments participate in the plan implementation process as assigned?

Following the five-year review, any revisions deemed necessary will be summarized and implemented according to the reporting procedures and plan amendment process outlined herein. Upon completion of the review and update/amendment process, the MEMA District 7 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan will be submitted to the State Hazard Mitigation Officer at MEMA for final review and approval in coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Because the plan update process can take several months to complete, and because Federal funding may be needed to update the plan, it is recommended that the five-year review process begin at the beginning of the third year after the plan was last approved. This will allow the participants in the MEMA District 7 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan to organize in order to seek Federal funding if necessary and complete required plan update documentation before the plan expires at the end of the fifth year.

DISASTER DECLARATION

Following a disaster declaration, the MEMA District 7 Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan will be revised as necessary to reflect lessons learned, or to address specific issues and circumstances arising from the event. It will be the responsibility of MEMA to reconvene the RHMC and ensure the appropriate stakeholders are invited to participate in the plan revision and update process following declared disaster events.

REPORTING PROCEDURES

The results of the five-year review will be summarized by the RHMC in the plan update and will include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Plan and any required or recommended changes or amendments. The results will also include an evaluation of implementation progress for each of the proposed mitigation actions, identifying reasons for delays or obstacles to their completion along with recommendations as to whether and how to continue to pursue the action.

PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS

In general, the RHMC agreed that any minor amendments suggested by a county or participating municipality would be automatically accepted into the plan as long as the amendment only impacted that jurisdiction. However, if the amendment proposed a large-scale change to the structure of the plan or impacted other jurisdictions, the following amendment process would need to be followed.

Upon the initiation of the amendment process, the MEMA District 7 counties will forward information on the proposed change(s) to all interested parties including, but not limited to, all directly affected county departments, residents, and businesses. Information will also be forwarded to MEMA. This information will be disseminated in order to seek input on the proposed amendment(s) for no less than a 45-day review and comment period.

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At the end of the 45-day review and comment period, the proposed amendment(s) and all comments will be forwarded to the RHMC for final consideration. The RHMC will review the proposed amendment along with the comments received from other parties, and if acceptable, the committee will submit a recommendation for the approval and adoption of changes to the Plan.

In determining whether to recommend approval or denial of a Plan amendment request, the following factors will be considered by the RHMC:

- There are errors, inaccuracies, or omissions made in the identification of issues or needs in the Plan.
- New issues or needs have been identified which are not adequately addressed in the Plan.
- There has been a change in information, data, or assumptions from those on which the Plan is based.

Upon receiving the recommendation from the RHMC, and prior to adoption of the Plan Amendment, the participating jurisdictions will hold a public hearing, if deemed necessary. The governing bodies of each participating jurisdiction will review the recommendation from the RHMC (including the factors listed above) and any oral or written comments received at the public hearing. Following that review, the governing bodies will take one of the following actions:

- Adopt the proposed amendments as presented
- Adopt the proposed amendments with modifications
- Refer the amendments request back to the RHMC for further revision
- Defer the amendment request back to the RHMC for further consideration and/or additional hearings

10.4 CONTINUED PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

44 CFR Requirement
44 CFR Part 201.6(c)(4)(iii): The plan maintenance process shall include a discussion on how the community will continue public participation in the plan maintenance process

Public participation is an integral component to the mitigation planning process and will continue to be essential as this Plan evolves over time. As described above, significant changes or amendments to the Plan shall require a public hearing prior to any adoption procedures.

Other efforts to involve the public in the maintenance, evaluation, and revision process will be made as necessary. These efforts may include:

- Advertising meetings of the RHMC in local newspapers, public bulletin boards and/or county office buildings
- Designating willing and voluntary citizens and private sector representatives as official members of the RHMC

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- Utilizing local media to update the public on any maintenance and/or periodic review activities taking place
- Utilizing the MEMA District 7 county websites to advertise any maintenance and/or periodic review activities taking place
- Keeping copies of the Plan in public libraries

Overall, the RHMC and participating counties will continue to provide outreach concerning mitigation through TV and other media as well as through outreach events such as local fairs or public events. In this way, the public will have continual interaction with the mitigation process and the efforts taken by local officials to implement mitigation.