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Introduction

Since the enactment of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA2K), every Florida county now has a FEMA-approved Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS). The hazard identification, risk analyses and vulnerability assessments provide estimates of potential property losses throughout the state. Building upon these assessments, each county identifies a prioritized list of hazard mitigation measures, with an accompanying action plan for their implementation. The LMS has thus become the foundation of Florida's pre- and post-disaster mitigation planning activities.

Every Local Mitigation Strategy is reviewed on a regular basis and must be updated, approved and adopted every five years. For this reason the State's efforts are now directed toward maintaining a high standard and improving the effectiveness of local plans. These local plans are at different stages in the update and renewal process, depending upon when their initial LMS was approved.

There are 67 counties, all of which have a multi-jurisdictional, multi-hazard Local Mitigation Strategies (LMS) in Florida. The Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM) Hazard Mitigation Planning Unit currently has three mitigation planning staff and three graduate student interns from Florida State University's Department of Urban and Regional Planning Masters program who review the plans thoroughly, working closely with the counties to assure that all regulations and recommended best practices are met in their LMS.

As of January 5, 2010, Pasco County's LMS has been re-approved; their new plan expires in August of 2014. Broward, Orange, and Palm Beach County LMS plans have been "approved pending adoption" by FEMA. Twelve plans have expired. Of these, FEMA is currently reviewing five, while three others are being revised by the counties. Three of the remaining plans are under review at the state, and one plan has expired without yet submitting an updated plan. The state has been working closely with that county's LMS chairperson, urging them to complete their update as soon as possible.

Of the non-expired plans, FEMA is currently reviewing three, the state has 24 under review, and five have been returned back to the counties for further revision. Twelve more plan updates are due to the state in 2010. Six updated plans will be submitted for state review in 2011, and one county will submit an update in 2012. Additionally, both Eckerd College and Florida Atlantic University have FEMA-approved LMS plans that expire in 2014.

For a list of LMS expiration dates, please see **Figure I1** in Section **3.0 Introduction**.

5.1 Local Mitigation Planning Support

Requirement §201.4(c)(4)(i): *[The section on the Coordination of Local Mitigation Planning must include a] description of the State process to support, through funding and technical assistance, the development of local mitigation plans.*

5.1.1 Funding Assistance

The State provides assistance through advice and counsel on federal or state programs or planning grants by alerting counties when money becomes available. The State also provides technical assistance to complete applications and in determining eligibility, project feasibility, and cost benefit ratios. Currently there are no known funding sources for the purpose of updating local LMS plans. Please see below for information on Florida's planning project with Florida State University's Department of Urban and Regional Planning graduate students.

Funding an Intern Initiative

A Local Mitigation Summer Internship Program was initiated for the summer of 2009 through the Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM) in collaboration with Florida State University's Department of Urban and Regional Planning (DURP). Although the program was a collaboration between DEM and DURP, all three universities with graduate programs in planning in the State of Florida were invited to participate (University of Florida, Florida Atlantic University and Florida State University).

All counties that had LMS plans that expired in 2010 were invited to justify their need for an intern through a survey. In order to be eligible to receive an intern, counties could not be using a contractor to update their plan. Each county also had to provide a workspace with a computer and have a dedicated staff member who would be willing to work with them, supervise them and participate in bi-weekly conference calls. After all of the surveys were received and reviewed, the interns selected the county they wanted to work in for the summer. Due to the fact all counties equally expressed a need for help, it was determined that having the interns select their summer destination would be the best way to settle the difference in number of communities against available interns. Many interns chose their summer destination based on the proximity to their hometown and their ability to stay with family. (The stipends given to the interns under this grant program were not enough to cover full room and board.)

Students were tasked to update the LMS plan during a 12-week period in accordance with FEMA guidelines. The program provided the selected graduate students with one week of intensive mitigation planning training. The goal for the interns was to complete all aspects of the update before the end of their 12 weeks. While the interns were in the field they also had to participate in bi-weekly conference calls with their Florida State University supervisors and DEM planning staff. Technical assistance was available to the interns on a daily basis from Florida State University and DEM's mitigation planning unit.

Students were compensated as a part of the grant and reimbursed for a portion of their housing cost if the need was justified. The program was a big success and will likely be continued if funding is again available. The Division considers this project a "best practice" example that could be shared with other states. A summary of this initiative is also available in Section **4.2.2 State Initiatives**.

5.1.2 Technical Assistance

I. Mitigation Planning Staff

In order to provide technical assistance to local planners, the State provides principal contacts for local government representatives, municipalities, and members of the private sector regarding hazard mitigation planning and programming. This helps to ensure effective understanding of local conditions and characteristics important to successful implementation of mitigation and redevelopment measures by communities. They work with counties from early in the review process and provide feedback on drafts sent in early, answering questions, conducting workshops, sending out a submittal process near deadline, providing examples of good plan portions, etc.

The responsibilities of the mitigation planning staff are to support mitigation strategy maintenance and improvement by local governments, to understand conditions relevant to mitigation and redevelopment planning for these communities, to represent the interests of the communities to the division in program development and implementation, and to provide technical assistance to the LMS Working Groups on updating and implementing the LMS.

The state also offered FEMA G-318 training to interested county governments upon their request. This training provided guidance and instruction on preparing and reviewing local plans in an effort to assure that Florida counties had the appropriate tools and resources to update their local plans in accordance with the July 2008 Local Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning Guidance.

Numerous trainings and workshops were carried out in 2008 and 2009 to assist local governments in the created of their Local Mitigation Strategies. Planning staff members visited 15 counties directly in 2008 and 11 counties in 2009 to provide guidance and support. Every county has received correspondence and communication from staff in an effort to provide as much guidance and information as is possible. The staff also participated in conferences and association meetings at which many county representatives were attending.

There were multiple HMGP Application Workshops carried out during the months of February, March, May, October, and November of 2009. These workshops provide eligible applicants with detailed information about the application process and assist in the completion of a draft project application. The workshops were regionally based and the locations were determined by the areas with the highest impacts.

II. Use of Planning Funds to Increase Risk & Vulnerability Data

Over the past several years, the Division has utilized approximately $3 million in HMGP 7% planning funds which allowed the State to update risk information. HMGP 7% planning

funds are funds that are allocated for use in developing local mitigation plans. These include the following projects:

- ***Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR)***

The state has begun an initiative to utilize LiDAR to remap the Florida coast and storm surge areas. This data will be used to create better flood maps for use by county governments and water management districts, as well as other interested agencies. It plays an important role in the creation of the regional evacuation plans. Having this data will allow the county governments to seamlessly interact with other agencies by utilizing a uniform data set.

House Bill 7121 states that funds have been allocated for use in updating regional evacuation studies and to perform computer-modeling analysis on the effects of storm surge events. Baseline specifications for Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) were developed by the Florida Division of Emergency Management (DEM) and other agencies in order to capture accurate and uniform digital elevation data. This provided a dataset that can be used by multiple stakeholders. The LiDAR data was collected and cataloged by DEM and made available for use in storm surge and coastal high hazard zone analyses to support regional evacuation studies updates.

- ***Mapping for Emergency Management, Parallel Hazard Information System (MEMPHIS)***

MEMPHIS is a web based hazard analysis system that was commissioned as part of the LMS plan development strategies in 2004. The MEMPHIS system allows emergency managers to easily access a variety of hazard related data and run hazard queries based on the area of their local jurisdictions. Data documentation and creation included within the system include hazard maps, local estimated loss amounts, and areas of hazard vulnerability.

MEMPHIS uses The Arbiter of Storms (TAOS) which identifies areas within each county with high potential for damage from high winds, storm surge and inland flooding along with estimates of damage. The information is made available to each county government and working group along with maps of the hazard areas that they can print out and use in revising their vulnerability and risk analysis as well as the data layers that can be used to carry out more refined studies for working groups with access to GIS capability.

The MEMPHIS System, which was commissioned and paid for by grant funding arranged by the Division of Emergency Management, serves as an example of funding and technical assistance the state has provided to assist local jurisdictions in completing approvable mitigation plans. To further assist the ongoing local planning initiative, the state of Florida has made arrangements for updates to be made to the MEMPHIS System to support the revision of LMS plans in the coming years. The project will include the following upgrades:

Phase 1

Completed in 2007, database was re-structured to provide map and tabular results for each of the 11 Florida regional planning districts. This restructuring included:

- Addition of interactive query and mapping on the MEMPHIS site at the regional planning council level of aggregation.

- Generation for each of the regional planning council's areas of the same PDF maps and reports that were produced at the county level under the original project.
- Presentation of storm surge hazards and impacts separately from other flood-related impacts.

Future updates to the MEMPHIS system are being considered and could include newly run hazard impact assessments with incorporated LiDAR, SLOSH and HAZUS outputs. In addition all of the current hazard information would be updated. DEM is also considering the addition of two other hazards, winter storms and drought.

➢ ***Florida International University Research***

Each year, Florida International University (FIU) receives grant funding to conduct hurricane research and provide information and demonstrations through mitigation outreach initiatives conducted throughout the state. Over the past years their research composed of projects that support hurricane loss devices and reduction techniques. After surviving the 2004 and 2005 hurricane seasons, from the results of many assessments, it is a proven fact that structures built to the Florida Building Code standards were sustained while those built to the standard building code suffered tremendous damage. FIU uses its Wall of Wind full-testing apparatus to conduct structural testing in producing measurable results that can be used in mitigation construction and product development.

➢ ***Residential Construction Mitigation Program***

During the month of July 2009, a notice of funding availability was advertised for the Residential Construction Mitigation Program (RCMP). Tallahassee Community College received $2.8 million to continue its administration of the Mobile Home Tie-Down program. This program is designed to support mobile home communities throughout the State of Florida by addressing structural challenges faced by manufactured home residents from hurricane-force winds. Last year along, a total of 1,989 mobile homes received tie-downs within twelve different communities in Florida.

In addition to the FIU research project and the tie-down program described above, a total of 25 projects were funded under the RCMP funding this year under various categories. One category in particular places emphasis on retrofitting residential structures. Projects completed using contractors that are BluePrint for Safety certified to ensure all enhancements and upgrades are in compliance with the Florida Building Code. Approximately $950,000 is allocated to provide assistance to low-to-moderate income home owners throughout the state of Florida by retrofitting and upgrading their homes. Recipients are encouraged to leverage this funding with State Housing Initiatives Partnership program (SHIP), Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) and/or Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to better utilize state and federal funding to strengthen and improve homes.

III. Other Assistance

➢ ***Local Mitigation Toolkit***

As mentioned before, the division has developed and provides a number of planning related tools to assist local governments in developing comprehensive mitigation programs. These tools include many means of assistance, including both funding and technical aspects. In addition to providing a consolidated list of funding, this local mitigation toolkit includes:

- **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Application Reference Material -** This handbook is used by the division during post-disaster situations. The material is adjusted specifically for the disaster being responded to. The resource assists local governments in assessing and applying for HMGP funding, with special recognition given to the circumstances of the most recent disaster.

- **Handbook for Floodplain Acquisition and Elevation Projects-** Most of this handbook is written to address floodplain acquisition, although a section on elevation is included. In addition, the primary focus is on residential properties. Like the Handbook for Hazard Mitigation Projects above, it is organized to follow the typical process from planning to closeout. http://www.floridadisaster.org/publications/FloodplainAcqElevProj.PDF

- **Hazard Analysis Toolbox** – This document provides local governments with multiple resources that can be used to generate hazard analysis. It provides a comprehensive list of websites and information ranging from federal and state data to specific hazard information and mapping resources. http://www.floridadisaster.org/Mitigation/Local/Documents/Hazard%20Toolbox.pdf

➢ ***Best Practices***

There are a number of guides and best practices manuals which have been developed in the past three years and are available as resources for local planners. These include:

- **Best Practices Guides:**
  - *Disaster Planning for Florida's Historic Resources*, May 2006. The guide includes steps to improve coordination between emergency management and historic preservation efforts within a community in order to reduce disaster-related damage and rebuild local economies (108 pages).
  - *Guiding the Way to Waterfront Revitalization: Best Management Practices*, June 2007, prepared by the Department of Community Affairs.
  - *Preparing a Boating Facility Siting Plan: Best Management Practices for Marina Siting*, March 2003. The guide identifies advantages and recommendations of preparing and adopting a marina siting plan, and a GIS model template (96 pages).
  - *Protecting Florida's Communities: Land Use Planning Strategies and Best Development Practices for Minimizing Vulnerability to Flooding and Coastal*

Storms, DRAFT, May 15, 2006. The guide provides information on planning policies and strategies that can be implemented before and after disaster events to further reduce community vulnerability to coastal storms and related flooding (208 pages).

- *Protecting Florida's Springs: Land Use Planning Strategies and Best Management Practices*, December 2002 (124 pages).
- *Wildfire Mitigation in Florida: Land Use Planning Strategies and Best Development Practices*, April 2004. The guide examines the role of planning in community wildfire mitigation efforts and includes planning strategies and information about the regulatory framework (147 pages).

- **Building Capacity for Small Cities**
  - GIS Guide
  - Best Practice - Strength Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats - Self-Assessment Techniques for Small Florida Cities and Counties
  - Strength Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats Analysis Guide - Small Cities Toolkit - Public Officials Survey
  - Strength Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats Analysis Guide Strengths and Weaknesses Template
  - Strength Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats Analysis Guide Opportunities and Threats Template

These guides and other best practices guides may be viewed in detail at: http://www.dca.state.fl.us/fdcp/dcp/publications/index.cfm

For other resources that are used by the state to assist local governments in capability assessment, program management, or project implementation, see Section **4.0 State Mitigation Strategy**.

5.2 Local Plan Integration

Requirement §201.4(c)(4)(ii): *[The section on the Coordination of Local Mitigation Planning must include a] description of the State process and timeframe by which the local plans will be reviewed, coordinated, and linked to the State Mitigation Plan. Requirement §201.4(d): Plan must be reviewed and revised to reflect changes in development, progress in statewide mitigation efforts, and changes in priorities…*

5.2.1 Local Plan Review and Approval Process

The Mitigation staff reviews the final Local Mitigation Strategies and subsequent revisions as they are submitted. These reviews document the degree to which the local plan is consistent with the State of Florida Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan and is in compliance with the minimum local mitigation planning requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. The following is the formal LMS review and approval process:

I. Formal Submittal Required

➢ ***Step One***

The LMS working group must submit a formal letter to the Florida Division of Emergency Management requesting a review of a plan. This official submittal should consist of:

a. Signed letter by LMS chairperson or coordinator
b. Electronic copy (MS Word version) of the crosswalk with the "**Location in Plan**" column completed
c. Electronic (CD) of the Plan document to be reviewed

The submitted plan document is considered a DRAFT until it is approved by FEMA. This submittal should be addressed to:

Miles E. Anderson
State Hazard Mitigation Officer
Florida Division of Emergency Management
2555 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399
Attn: Mitigation Planning Unit

➢ ***Step Two***

Updated LMS plans must be submitted to the Florida Division of Emergency Management no later than six months before the plan expiration date. Plans that are submitted

later than this timeframe will be reviewed in the order they were received after timely submissions have been attended to. FDEM will attempt to complete reviews within 30 days.

II. Plan Review Procedure

➢ ***Step One***

The assigned mitigation planner will provide a confirmation of receipt to the LMS chairperson as soon as it is received.

➢ ***Step Two***

Upon completion of the review (within 30 days, if possible), the state mitigation planner will inform the LMS chairperson that the plan is:

a. Ready to be sent to FEMA,
   OR
b. In need of revision. In this case, the revised plan must be corrected and resubmitted to the Florida Division of Emergency Management within 30 days of notification.

➢ ***Step Three***

After review of the final draft, the Florida Division of Emergency Management will submit the document to FEMA no later than 90 days before the plan expiration date.

➢ ***Step Four***

If the plan is not approved by FEMA, the Florida Division of Emergency Management will notify the LMS chairperson that the plan must be revised. If the plan reaches FEMA's *"approval pending adoption"* phase, all participating jurisdictions must resolve to adopt the plan within one (1) year. At least one jurisdiction must adopt the plan in order for FEMA to approve the plan. A copy of all resolutions to adopt must be submitted to the Florida Division of Emergency Management for transmittal to FEMA.

5.2.2 Local Plan and the State Mitigation Plan Consistency

In February 2009, state mitigation staff reviewed all 67 currently approved plans' most recent updates, to assure that the Local Mitigation Strategies were consistent with the 2007 Update of the State Mitigation Plan. A summary of the findings is presented in the table below.

Table 5.1 Comparison of State and Local Goals Summary*

State Goal	State Goal Description	Plans with Similar Goal	Examples of Local Goals
1	Enhance and maintain state capability to implement a comprehensive statewide hazard loss reduction strategy.	N/A	This state goal exclusively addresses state issues and therefore local mitigation goals will not have similarities to it.
2	Support the development and enhancement of local capability to practice hazard mitigation.	76.19%	• Establish an ongoing Local Mitigation Strategy Program, which is in the interest of the public health, safety and welfare. • Strengthen and utilize land use guides, zoning codes, development controls, and incentives to protect vulnerable properties and vulnerable areas. • Enhance coordination and communication among local and regional organizations to implement the hazard mitigation goals and objectives. • Maintain current pre and post disaster redevelopment and mitigation policies and procedures designed to reduce or avert the community's future disaster potential. • The policies and regulations of local government will support effective hazard mitigation programming throughout the community.
3	Increase public and private sector's awareness and support for disaster loss education practices as a means of developing a culture of hazard mitigation in Florida.	66.67%	• Endorse and promote public and private preparedness and disaster planning to include hazard mitigation activities and planning. • Encourage public support and commitment to hazard mitigation, by communicating its benefits and justification in simple and understandable terms. • Improve coordination of disaster preparedness information through the broadcast and print media to increase public awareness and participation in preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation activities. • To raise the level of awareness for the LMS and the work that the LMS does for the benefit of the community.
4	Reduce Florida's hazard vulnerability through the application of scientific research and development.	17.46%	• Provide Education, Outreach, Research, and Development of mitigation initiatives and programs. • Optimize the effective use of all available resources. • Seek preventative measures that would reduce loss and the need for response and recovery measures.
5	Protect the state's cultural, economic and natural resources.	90.48%	• Protect economic activities including the reduction of natural and cultural resources' vulnerability. • Protect business activities to maintain economic strength. • Protect community resources, including but not limited to infrastructure, and environmental, recreational and historic resources. • Protect the citizens and the environment from hazardous materials.
6	Reduce the vulnerabilities of state-owned facilities and infrastructure to natural and manmade hazards.	73.02%	• Engage in hazard mitigation project planning designed to help protect historic structures, critical facilities and government buildings. • Reduce or eliminate hazards identified to at risk locations in the County and its municipalities. • Provide sufficient shelter space in public facilities by retrofitting those facilities. • Reduce the vulnerability of critical and public facilities from natural disasters.

** Out of 63 counties with available goals*

5.3 Prioritizing Local Assistance

Requirement §201.4(c)(4)(iii): *[The section on the Coordination of Local Mitigation Planning must include] criteria for prioritizing communities and local jurisdictions that would receive planning and project grants under available funding programs, which should include consideration for communities with the highest risks, repetitive loss properties, and most intense development pressures. Further, that for non-planning grants, a principal criterion for prioritizing grants shall be the extent to which benefits are maximized according to a cost benefit review of proposed projects and their associated costs. Requirement §201.4(d): Plan must be reviewed and revised to reflect changes in development, progress in statewide mitigation efforts, and changes in priorities…*

5.3.1 Project Prioritization

I. Prioritization for Hazard Mitigation Grants Post-disaster

The State delegates the local Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) project prioritization process to local governments through Rule 9G-22. The Department's Rule Chapter 9G-22, Florida Administrative Code (FAC), (See **Appendix I**), requires that Local Mitigation Strategy Working Groups "set an order of priority for local mitigation projects," that is, to prioritize and rank locally submitted projects for HMGP funding. The local prioritization process will vary from community to community, but at a minimum the criteria must consider each project's cost-effectiveness, technical feasibility, and environmental soundness. Attachment B provides excerpts from two Local Mitigation Strategies as an exemplary cross-section of the local prioritization process used by Florida communities. Also, in every LMS plan is a required description of their local prioritization process.

II. Florida Residential Construction Mitigation Program Grants

The RCMP is a state funded program in which funding is appropriated by the Legislature each year. Once the Division receives the actual amount allocated to the program, staff advertises the Notice of Funds Availability (NOFA) in the Florida Administrative Weekly and the floridadisaster.org website for 30 days. During this period, RCMP staff selects a minimum of three individuals to be apart of the review committee to score each application.

III. Prioritization for Non-disaster Program Grants (non-planning)

Although projects submitted for funding under the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program (PDM) and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program are not required to be prioritized by Chapter 9G-22, these projects must be consistent with the LMS and documented as such.

Additionally, these projects are identified by local jurisdictions in accordance with their flood management plans. Applications are submitted to the State through the e-Grants system. The applications are then reviewed by the State for eligibility and completeness. Their cost-effectiveness is evaluated by their benefit-cost analysis; environmental and historic preservation reviews are conducted; and a technical/ engineering review is conducted to analyze feasibility as well as application of any mitigation planning requirements.

5.3.2 Additional Considerations

I. Repetitive Loss Properties

Mitigation projects submitted under the Repetitive Flood Claim (RFC) and the Severe Repetitive Loss (SRL) programs are prioritized by the State according to their capacity to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to insured properties. The State then submits the projects to FEMA through the e-Grants system for approval.

In the Severe Repetitive Loss Program, the State reaches out to property owners through its SRL Outreach Program, notifying them about the program and pertinent upcoming workshops. Property owners as well as local government staff become aware of the incentives to mitigate severe repetitive loss properties listed in the Federal Insurance Administration's list. At this point, SRL mitigation projects are coordinated between the property owner and the local government. Once an SRL project is submitted to the State by the local community, State Mitigation staff evaluates the project to be sure that the applicant and project are eligible according to 44 CFR 79.6 (a-d.) Once these criteria have been met, and if a competitive number of proposals are submitted, the State will rate projects according to the following points:

- The most future losses avoided (project's benefit-cost analysis ratio)
- Projects which have historically high claims payments
- Projects which have historically high numbers of claims

The State's primary goal in awarding these grants is to mitigate losses from floods, minimizing impacts to the National Flood Insurance Fund (NFIF.)

II. Communities with the Highest Risk

Communities with the highest risk in Florida are those most-prone to repetitive flooding and wind hazards. The State addresses this higher risk in two ways:

1. An aggressive outreach program and dedicated staff assistance for the non-disaster flood mitigation grants, (see Section **7.0 Severe Repetitive Loss Program Outreach Strategy**) and
2. By requiring that a certain percentage of post-disaster funding is to be spent mitigating older structures against future wind damage.

III. Communities with the Most Intense Development Pressures

The communities within the state that have the most intense development pressures are generally those communities with the highest population and largest rates of growth. Given their higher level of development, they also tend to have more resources than smaller, more rural areas. With these resources they are often more capable of completing and submitting numerous planning and project grant applications. Although there is no formal process to give these areas more consideration, their ability to submit more applications generally results in a higher probability that they will obtain more funding.