



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

BACKGROUND

The Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition (TCRFC or Coalition) is sponsoring the development of a multi-jurisdictional **Hazard Mitigation Plan Update** that will address all natural and man-caused hazards that could potentially affect communities that previously were not included in the 2004 Hazard Mitigation Plan, “*Creating a Disaster Resistant Lower Colorado River Basin.*” Further, the TCRFC is conducting an update of the 2004 Hazard Mitigation Plan to revise mitigation actions and risk assessments for communities in the TCRFC who wish to participate. The update will be an opportunity to evaluate successful mitigation actions and to explore other means of avoiding future disaster loss.

The goal of the plan is to minimize or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from known hazards by identifying and implementing cost-effective mitigation actions. *Mitigation* is defined by FEMA as *sustained actions taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from hazards and their effects*. The purpose of the Coalitions’ mitigation plan is twofold: to protect people and structures, and to minimize the costs of disaster response and recovery.

The updated Hazard Mitigation Plan will result in the incorporation of newly added jurisdictions to the TCRFC. The plan will be integrated into the existing Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Lower Colorado River Basin, utilizing a basin-wide approach. The plan will be prepared as an update to the existing 2004 Hazard Mitigation Plan and will reflect conditions that have changed since the completion of that plan. When complete, the updated plan will comply with all requirements promulgated by the Texas Division of Emergency Management (DEM) and all applicable provisions of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, Section 104 of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) (P.L. 106-390), and the Bunning-Bereuter-Blumenauer Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-264), which amended the National Flood Insurance Act (NFIA) of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4001, et al). It will also comply with FEMA’s February 26, 2002 Interim Final Rule (“the Rule”) at 44 CFR Part 201 which specifies the criteria for approval of mitigation plans required in Section 322 of the DMA 2000. The updated plan will also be developed in accordance with FEMA’s Community Rating System (CRS) Floodplain Management Plan standards and policies.



A FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan is required for eligibility for grant funds through FEMA's pre-disaster grant programs such as: Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA), Repetitive Flood Claims (RFC), and the Severe Repetitive Loss (SRL) program; and for post-disaster grant programs such as: Public Assistance (PA) and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding. Funds from these federal grant programs may be awarded to local governments and non-profit organizations to implement mitigation projects identified as part of a FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan. This plan update will be prepared early in the planning process to cover communities in the TCRFC that previously were not included in the 2004 Hazard Mitigation Plan as well as new communities, and it will subsequently be integrated into the final multi-jurisdictional plan for the TCRFC upon project completion.

PROCESS OF PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The Coalition has secured the services of a project team headed by H2O Partners, Inc. to assist in the preparation of the plan update. H2O Partners has professional expertise in disaster and mitigation planning, public assistance programs and disaster recovery. The hazard mitigation planning process will involve multiple steps:

1. Capability Assessment

As part of this effort, the H2O team will conduct a Capability Assessment by examining and evaluating the programmatic, technical, administrative and fiscal capabilities of the Coalition and participating jurisdictions to mitigate the effects of natural hazards. This assessment includes the identification and review of relevant plans, policies and programs already in place such as land use plans, flood control programs, natural resource studies, zoning ordinances, building codes, subdivision regulations, post-disaster public assistance grants, and capital improvements plans.

The Capability Assessment's purpose is to detect any existing gaps, shortfalls or conflicts within existing or ongoing activities that could contribute to hazard vulnerability. The assessment will also highlight the positive measures in place that should continue to be supported and enhanced, if possible, through future mitigation efforts. The results of the Capability Assessment will provide a foundation for determining specific mitigation strategies.

2. Hazard Identification and Analysis

During this step, the project team will identify and compile relevant data on all potential hazards that threaten the Coalition. Information that will be collected includes historical data on past hazard events in the Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition area and how these events impacted residents, property, and the overall community since 2004.



Based upon historical occurrences and best available data from agencies such as FEMA and the National Weather Service, the project team will identify and describe hazards that threaten the Coalition. Detailed hazard profiles will include information on the frequency, magnitude, location and impact for each hazard in addition to estimating the probabilities for future hazard events. A “priority risk index” will be created in order to assist with ranking the natural hazards for mitigation purposes.

3. Vulnerability Assessment

The Vulnerability Assessment will involve the collection and integration of best available data, including an inventory of assets that may be affected by hazards such as people, housing units, businesses, public buildings, critical facilities, infrastructure and utility lifelines. The project team will collect this information from national and state databases and will incorporate local level data where possible.

Once this data is compiled, the team will assess potential impacts from each hazard. The resulting information will provide the Coalition with information that outlines the full range of hazards facing it and potential social impacts, damages and economic losses. Another key component of the risk assessment will be to assess the potential future impact of hazards based upon the current and projected development trends and plans for the Coalition.

4. Mitigation Strategy Development

Based on the findings of the **Capability Assessment** and **Vulnerability/Risk Assessment**, the project team will work with the Coalition toward drafting an overall revised **Mitigation Strategy** for the Coalition and participating jurisdictions. This step will be initiated during an interactive planning workshop by facilitating discussion on possible mitigation activities and by gaining consensus from a wide range of participants on the identification of general planning goals and target objectives for the hazard mitigation plan. Based upon these identified goals and objectives, the project team will review a comprehensive range of appropriate mitigation measures for the Coalition and other participating partners to consider in reducing the effects of identified high-risk hazards. Such measures include preventive actions, property protection techniques, natural resource protection strategies, structural projects, emergency services and public information and awareness activities. The committee will also seek to identify any potential multi-objective projects such as integrating hazard mitigation into long-term community goals such as business and economic development. Once established, specific mitigation actions will be prioritized and incorporated into a detailed Mitigation Action Plan as part of the overall revised mitigation strategy for updating and revising previous mitigation actions. The project team will prepare a method and schedule for



implementing, evaluating and updating the hazard mitigation plan. The project team will solicit feedback from the Coalition to develop a plan maintenance process that ensures that the plan remains relevant and functional.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public Participation is critical to the success of the mitigation planning process. The general public will be invited to attend the hazard mitigation planning process from beginning to end using the TCRFC site, flyers, brochures, and newspaper to disseminate invitations to attend public meetings. These meetings will be used to solicit input, participation and feedback from all interested attendees. These public meetings can help further define the hazards and actions to be taken to reduce the impact of hazards.

The Coalition will seek to ensure that the general public, businesses and other stakeholders remain aware of the planning process and are given an opportunity to participate and comment. This includes making components of the draft plan available for public review and comment in advance of any formal consideration or approval.

PLAN REVIEW, ADOPTION AND APPROVAL

In accordance with federal planning requirements, the Texas Colorado River Floodplain Coalition and other participating jurisdictions must review, approve and adopt the updated hazard mitigation plan. The completed plan update will be submitted for formal approval by H2O Partners to the Texas Division of Emergency Management and FEMA.