

AROOSTOOK COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN – 2021 Update

SECTION 6 PLAN MAINTENANCE PROCESS

Monitoring, Evaluating and Updating the Plan

Requirement §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.

Eighteen months prior to the Hazard Mitigation Plan update deadline, Aroostook County Emergency Management Agency will organize a Hazard Mitigation Planning **Team** meeting. Aroostook County EMA will invite the public, Town Managers, Selectmen, EMA directors and other interested parties to participate.

The Hazard Mitigation Planning **Team** will review existing hazards of concern and determine whether any new hazards were presented throughout the past four years. The status of current mitigation projects will be updated and new projects will be added as needed. Once all hazards, projects, maps and county information have been updated, the Aroostook County Hazard Mitigation Plan draft will be submitted to MEMA for review and recommendations before the final draft is forwarded to FEMA for conditional certification.

Monitoring the Plan

Progress on the plan will be monitored via monthly meetings with MEMA and/or local EMAs and following every federally declared disaster. The second quarter Local EMA meeting of each County fiscal year will include a project and risk assessment review. The mitigation plan and project application process will also be addressed at each federal disaster declaration kick-off meeting and will be reinforced via email announcements for workshops and grant application deadlines.

Evaluating the Plan

The plan is constantly being evaluated through various measures at county and local levels. Annually and after each disaster declaration, Aroostook County EMA will review the hazards in the risk assessment section of this plan. In addition, Aroostook County EMA will contact towns in regards to **forms**, briefings and submittals, workshops on project applications, and for the status on existing projects and the addition of new projects.

Updating the Plan

The plan will be updated every five years. The method for determining what changes might be necessary will be to review and assess information gathered from disaster declarations, unusual weather events and/or significant changes in science or legislation. As previously described, part of that schedule will be reviews on a monthly basis and after disasters, but in the fourth year of the plan, a more in depth review will take place, and the plan will be updated accordingly.

Additionally, Aroostook County EMA has maintained good relationships with assigned FEMA project officers and the agency is kept up-to-date on all interaction and project information for

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each town included in federal disaster declarations. Aroostook County EMA will continue to promote this relationship and sharing of information. Aroostook EMA has also made an effort to provide all towns with access to record-keeping templates for their road crews which aid in tracking recurring damage, and assists in project addition, grant preparation and mitigation. Every town is notified annually in regards to adding new projects or updating the status of existing projects via email, letters, newspaper articles and/or website announcements.

Incorporating Mitigation into other Planning Mechanisms	
Requirement §201.6(c)(4)(ii): (The plan shall include a plan maintenance process that includes) 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.	
Element	C6. Does the plan describe a process by which local governments will integrate the requirements of the mitigation plan into other planning mechanisms, such as comprehensive or capital improvement plans, when appropriate?

In order for any plan to be effective, it must be implemented and maintained. Section 5 provides the strategies that will make Aroostook County more resistant to disasters. Municipalities have already incorporated the strategies recommended by this plan into local planning mechanisms as discussed in the paragraphs below. By adopting this plan, each community, as well as the County of Aroostook, is agreeing to continue implementation of these strategies.

The cities of Caribou and Presque Isle are governed by the council form of government, as are the towns of Ashland, Fort Fairfield, Fort Kent, Houlton, Mars Hill, Van Buren and Washburn. All other towns in Aroostook County hold annual town meetings. Council meetings and annual town meetings are an integral part of public planning. These meetings allow all citizens equal opportunity to communicate their concerns and opinions on the state of the town and how to move forward with these concerns. The citizens in attendance at these meetings have a vested interest in the community and how and what is funded annually.

Available planning mechanisms at the municipal level, and the extent to which they have incorporated hazard mitigation, include:

- Local flood plain management ordinances: As documented in Section 5, 52 municipalities have joined the Flood Insurance Program and have adopted floodplain management ordinances aimed at managing development in flood-prone areas. In addition, 9 plantations (and all of the Unorganized Territory) are in the Flood Insurance Program by virtue of being under the regulatory jurisdiction of the State’s Land Use Planning Commission.
- Shoreland zoning ordinances: All of the cities and towns in Aroostook County are required to have a shoreland zoning ordinance, whether adopted by the municipality or imposed by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. The State’s Land Use Planning Commission has adopted shoreland protection controls for the 9 plantations in Aroostook County as well as the county’s portion of the Unorganized Territory. Shoreland zoning ordinances contain requirements for locating structures outside of

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known flood hazard areas and/or for complying with the requirements of municipal flood plain management ordinances.

- Local comprehensive plans: Many of the municipalities have adopted a comprehensive plan. Comprehensive plans are policy documents that address a wide range of issues affecting the future of the community, and those relating to public safety and environmental protection would be consistent with the strategies contained in this plan. In general, local comprehensive plans do not include recommendations on specific projects, although they may contain recommendations that roads and their associated infrastructure be upgraded as funds become available.
- Capital improvement plans: Some of the larger municipalities have capital improvement plans; most of the smaller ones do not, but they do have local budgeting processes which are used to examine potential expenditures in detail and establish overall spending priorities).
- Road maintenance planning efforts: These may include priorities for local improvements, but not necessarily engineering studies or cost benefit analyses.
- Emergency management and mitigation planning.
- Fire prevention planning and coordination, including participation in mutual aid agreements and multi-town wildfire training exercises, and
- Grant writing: Most of the County's municipalities have been active in applying for grants to address municipal priorities.

Note: See Strategy section of this plan, page 5-3, for a town-by-town summary of existing authorities, policies, programs and resources available to accomplish hazard mitigation.

After adoption of the Hazard Mitigation Plan, the Aroostook County EMA will assist the municipal officers in implementing their selected mitigation measures through all available options. Aroostook County EMA will also continue to assist municipalities with the completion of FEMA Pre-Disaster and Hazard Mitigation Grant packages by working one-on-one with town representatives, hosting grant workshops, facilitating contact with state agencies and disseminating notification of grant opportunities.

Aroostook EMA has requested that the individual or committee within each municipality that is responsible for the implementation and completion of each mitigation measure notify Aroostook County EMA whenever assistance is needed or whenever a measure is completed. Existing programs such as local comprehensive planning efforts, municipal road maintenance planning efforts, and emergency management programs will be utilized to their greatest extent to complete the community's mitigation measures.

The table of projects contained in Section 5 of this plan demonstrate, through the identification of new projects and completed projects, specific municipalities that have been active in road maintenance planning efforts and capital improvements. As shown in Section 5, a number of municipalities have completed some of their projects and/or identified new projects. However, a greater number of projects have been deferred because of a lack of funding.

As documented in Section 5, Aroostook County EMA's community assistance activities include EMA meetings that have kept local officials informed of hazard mitigation issues and have

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periodically included presentations by experts and officials on various mitigation topics such as river ice training.

Aroostook County EMA also includes information about hazard mitigation on its website including public education materials about the importance of flood insurance.

Continued Public Participation	
Requirement §201.6(c)(4)(iii): (The plan shall include a plan maintenance process that includes) a discussion on how the community will continue public participation in the plan maintenance process.	
Element	A5. Is there discussion on how the community(ies) will continue public participation in the plan maintenance process?
	A6. Is there a description of the method and schedule for keeping the plan current (monitoring, evaluating and updating the mitigation plan within a 5-year cycle)?

Aroostook County is committed to involving the public directly in the continued reshaping and updating of the Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Hazard **Mitigation** Planning Team is responsible for reviewing and updating the plan. Although the members of the Planning Team represent the public to some extent, all meetings will continue to be open to the public for opportunities to comment on and provide meaningful input on the Plan. **Notices of upcoming Hazard Mitigation Planning Team meetings will be posted on the Aroostook EMA website and Facebook page.**

Copies of the Plan will be issued to the municipal Emergency Management Directors and kept on hand at all participating municipal offices in the County. The County EMA Office will post the plan on its web site. The Plan will include the address and phone number of the Aroostook County EMA Office that is responsible for keeping track of public comments on the Plan.

The Aroostook County EMA Office will also provide a public comment period at each meeting of the Hazard Mitigation **Planning** Team. The purpose of the public comment period is to provide a public forum for input. The County EMA Office will be responsible for providing public notice for each meeting of the Hazard **Mitigation** Planning Team, for hosting the meeting, and for including information about the public comment period.

Aroostook County EMA will also continue to provide advisories on its website when public safety may be impacted by hazards such as flooding or other potentially severe storms. See discussion on page 6-1 for monitoring, evaluating and updating the plan.

The address and phone number of the Aroostook County EMA office is:

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