

5.0 CAPABILITY ASSESSMENT

§201.6(b)(3)	Review and incorporation, if appropriate, of existing plans, studies, reports, and technical information.
§201.6(c)(4)(ii)	[This plan 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.

This section discusses the capabilities present within jurisdictions in Adams County that can support the implementation of mitigation activities.

5.1 Update Process Summary

Adams County has many resources to implement hazard mitigation initiatives, including planning and regulatory tools, administrative assistance and technical expertise, fiscal resources, use of local, regional, state, and federal funding sources, and educational outreach methods. These resources facilitate community resiliency through actions taken before, during, and after a hazard event.

This section builds on information collected during the 2010 and 2015 planning processes. In 2010, the plan identified the most commonly-used resources available to Adams County to support hazard mitigation (with a focus on planning and regulatory tools). The county originally collected capability data via a survey, with three sections cataloging existing resources and three others soliciting qualitative assessment of community readiness.

For the 2015 update, the county utilized a revised capability assessment survey based on updated FEMA and PEMA guidance. That survey contained five sections, including planning and regulatory, administrative and technical, financial, education and outreach, and self-assessment. The discussion on the county’s implementation of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) was expanded in 2015.

This update again utilized a capability assessment survey. Structurally, the survey was similar to the tool administered in 2015. The survey contains five sections: (a) planning and regulatory, (b) administrative and technical, (c) financial, (d) political, and (e) self-assessment. The county reinstated the political capabilities section that had been removed in the 2015 version. The need for on-going education on hazard mitigation was apparent to committee members, and actions within the county’s updated plan speak to the need to continue them. The committee thus recognized that an important component of gauging the ability to implement mitigation projects is understanding the appetite for and potential barriers to implementation



(and the political capability section provides insight on those topics). Additionally, the survey included four sample mitigation projects (e.g., “XYZ community restricts public investments or capital improvements in known hazard areas”), and municipal representatives indicated whether they felt residents in their communities would support those types of actions via a Likert-style scale.

5.2 Capability Assessment Findings

This section summarizes the findings of the capability assessment administered by the Adams County Department of Emergency Services (ACDES) and the consultant. Table 5.2-1 summarizes the capabilities by jurisdiction.

Table 5.2-1

JURISDICTIONAL CAPABILITIES (SUMMARY)							
Municipality	Comprehensive Plan	NFIP	Building Codes	Zoning Ordinance	SALDOs	Capital Budget	Public Works Budget
Adams County	X	See-Muni.		X	X		
Abbottstown Borough	X	X		X	X	X ²	X ²
Arendtsville Borough	X	X			X		
Bendersville Borough	X	X		X	X		
Biglerville Borough	X	X		X	X		X ¹
Bonneauville Borough	X	X		X	X		
Carroll Valley Borough	X	X		X	X		
East Berlin Borough	X	X		X	X		
Fairfield Borough	X	X	X	X	X		
Gettysburg Borough	X	X	X	X	X		
Littlestown Borough	X	X		X	X		
McSherrystown Borough		X		X	X		
New Oxford Borough	X			X	X		
York Springs Borough		X		X	X		
Berwick Township		X	X	X	X		
Butler Township	X	X		X	X		
Conewago Township	X	X	X	X	X		
Cumberland Township	X	X	X	X	X		X ¹
Franklin Township	X	X	X	X	X		
Freedom Township	X	X		X	X		
Germany Township	X	X		X	X		
Hamiltonban Township		X		X	X		
Hamilton Township	X	X		X	X		
Highland Township		X		X	X		
Huntington Township		X		X	X		
Latimore Township		X		X	X		
Liberty Township		X		X	X		



JURISDICTIONAL CAPABILITIES (SUMMARY)							
Municipality	Comprehensive Plan	NFIP	Building Codes	Zoning Ordinance	SALDOs	Capital Budget	Public Works Budget
Menallen Township	X	X		X	X		
Mount Joy Township	X	X	X	X	X	X	X ¹
Mount Pleasant Township	X	X	X	X	X		
Oxford Township	X	X	X	X	X	X ²	X ¹
Reading Township	X	X		X	X		
Straban Township		X		X	X		
Tyrone Township		X		X	X		
Union Township	X	X		X	X		

¹ Yes, but it would be limited or would be comprised of in-kind services.

² No, but my jurisdiction would consider it in future budgets.

5.2.1 Planning and Regulatory Capability

Comprehensive plans promote sound land use and regional cooperation among local governments to address planning issues. These plans serve as the official policy guide for influencing the location, type, and extent of future development by establishing the basic decision-making and review processes on zoning matters, subdivision and land development, land uses, public facilities, and housing needs over time.

Building codes regulate construction standards for new construction and substantially-renovated buildings. Standards can require resistant or resilient building design practices to address hazard impacts common to a given community. In 2003, Pennsylvania implemented Act 45 of 1999, the Uniform Construction Code (UCC), a comprehensive building code that establishes minimum regulations for most new construction, including additions and renovations to existing structures.

Through the administration of floodplain ordinances, municipalities can ensure that all new construction or substantial improvements to existing structures located in the floodplain are flood-proofed, dry-proofed, or built above anticipated flood elevations. Floodplain ordinances may also prohibit development in certain areas altogether. The NFIP establishes minimum ordinance requirements that must be met for that community to participate in the program. However, a community is permitted and encouraged to adopt standards that exceed NFIP requirements.

Subdivision and land development ordinances (SALDOs) regulate the development of housing, commercial, industrial, or other uses, including associated public infrastructure, as



officials subdivide land into buildable lots for sale or future development. Within these ordinances, guidelines on how land will be divided, the placement and size of roads, and the location of infrastructure can reduce exposure of development to hazard events.

Zoning ordinances allow for local communities to regulate the use of land to protect the interests and safety of the general public. Zoning ordinances can address unique conditions or concerns within a given community. They may be used to create buffers between structures and high-risk areas, limit the type or density of development, or require land development to consider specific hazard vulnerabilities.

5.2.2 Administrative and Technical Capability

“Administrative capability” is the adequacy of departmental and personnel resources for the implementation of mitigation-related activities. Technical capability relates to the adequacy of knowledge and technical expertise of local government employees or the ability to contract outside resources for this expertise to effectively execute mitigation activities. Common examples of skill sets and technical personnel needed for hazard mitigation include: planners with knowledge of land development/management practices, engineers or professionals trained in construction practices related to buildings and/or infrastructure (e.g., building inspectors), planners or engineers with an understanding of natural and/or human-caused hazards, emergency managers, floodplain managers, land surveyors, scientists familiar with hazards in the community, staff with the education or expertise to assess community vulnerability to hazards, personnel skilled in geographic information systems, resource development staff or grant writers, fiscal staff to handle complex grant application processes.

The most common specialists that support a technical capability in Adams County, per capability survey responses, were contracted engineers (12 respondents) and emergency managers (10 respondents) with an understanding of natural or human-caused hazards and general knowledge of the local area. Contracted planners (eight respondents) also provide technical expertise. Floodplain managers, in-house building inspectors, in-house planners, and contracted planners also appeared in survey responses.

5.2.3 Financial Capability

The decision and capacity to implement mitigation-related activities are often dependent on the presence of local financial resources. While some mitigation actions are less costly than others, funds must be available locally to implement policies and projects. Financial resources



are particularly important if communities wish to take advantage of state or federal mitigation grant funding opportunities that require municipalities to match contributions.

State programs that may provide financial assistance for mitigation activities include, but are not limited to:

- Community Conservation Partnerships Program,
- Community Revitalization Program,
- Floodplain Land Use Assistance Program,
- Growing Greener Program,
- Keystone Grant Program,
- Local Government Capital Projects Loan Program,
- Pennsylvania Heritage Areas Program,
- Pennsylvania Recreational Trails Program,
- Shared Municipal Services, and
- Technical Assistance Program.

Federal programs that may offer financial assistance for mitigation activities include, but are not limited to:

- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG),
- Disaster Housing Program,
- Emergency Conservation Program,
- Emergency Management Performance Grants (EMPG),
- Emergency Watershed Protection Program, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP),
- Flood Mitigation Assistance Program,
- Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program,
- Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program,
- Repetitive Flood Claims Program (RFC),
- Section 108 Loan Guarantee Programs,
- Severe Repetitive Loss (SRL) Program, and
- Weatherization Assistance Program.

Respondents indicated a general knowledge of potential funding programs via the capability assessment survey. None of the respondents indicated having a grants specialist on their payroll.



5.2.4 Political Capabilities

One of the most difficult capabilities to evaluate involves the political will of a jurisdiction to enact meaningful policies and projects designed to mitigate hazard events. The adoption of hazard mitigation measures may be seen as an impediment to growth and economic development. In many cases, mitigation may not generate interest among local officials when compared with competing priorities. Therefore, the local political climate must be considered when designing mitigation strategies, as it could be the most difficult hurdle to overcome in accomplishing the adoption or implementation of specific actions.

5.2.5 Self-Assessment Results

The following table summarizes the results of the self-assessment survey as a percentage of the responses received.

Table 5.2.5-1

CAPABILITY SELF-ASSESSMENT			
<i>Capability</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Moderate</i>	<i>Limited</i>
Planning & Regulatory	0	1	0
Administrative & Technical	3	6	6
Fiscal	1	4	10
Political	1	8	6

The 2019 self-assessment also included four questions to gauge community receptiveness to several types of mitigation strategies. The following table details the results.



Table 5.2.5-2

SELF-ASSESSMENT: PROJECT CONSIDERATIONS					
<i>Sample Mitigation Strategy</i>	<i>Very Willing</i>	<i>Willing</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Unwilling</i>	<i>Very Much Unwilling</i>
XYZ community guides development away from known hazard areas.	2	8	3	2	0
XYZ community restricts public investments or capital improvements within hazard areas.	2	8	3	2	0
XYZ community enforces local development standards (e.g., building codes, floodplain management ordinances, etc.) that go beyond minimum state or federal requirements.	1	7	6	1	0
XYZ community offers financial incentives (e.g., through property tax credits) to individuals and businesses that employ resilient construction techniques (e.g., voluntarily elevate structures, employ landscape designs that establish buffers, install green infrastructure elements, etc.).	0	2	9	3	1

5.2.6 Plan Integration

Adams County’s consultant utilized several other local plans and assessments during the compilation of this plan. In FEMA’s guidance governing the completion of mitigation plans, this effort is “plan integration.” Plan integration ensures that hazard mitigation planning is woven into each jurisdiction’s planning and regulatory documents. Per FEMA, plan integration is the regular consideration and management of hazard risks in a community’s existing planning framework. The planning framework is the collection of plans, policies, codes, and programs that guide land use and development, how communities maintain and implement those, and the roles of a range of stakeholders to evaluate and update them. Effective integration of hazard mitigation occurs when the planning framework fosters development that does not increase risks from known hazards or leads to redevelopment that reduces risk from known hazards (FEMA, 2013).

In Pennsylvania, integrating hazard mitigation into planning tools is through the MPC in that protecting and promoting safety and health is the purpose of the code. Further, the purpose of the municipalities planning code (MPC) is “to minimize such problems as may presently exist or which may be foreseen,” which is the focus of hazard mitigation planning.

Plan integration is not only accomplished through the MPC and planning tools such as comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances, but through capital improvement planning, area plans such as highway corridors and downtown plans, functional plans like stormwater and open space plans, and public and stakeholder outreach and education.

Adams County has been successful in integrating hazard mitigation into its planning tools through goals, objectives, and actions, and will continue to do so as part of the 2020



update. The following table reflects actions completed since 2010 that demonstrate plan integration.

Table 5.2.6-1

INTEGRATION OF MITIGATION PLAN INTO THE LOCAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK	
<i>Planning Framework</i>	<i>Examples of Plan Integration</i>
Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinances, and Municipal Codes	<p>GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS LISTED IN THE 2020 PLAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal: Promote disaster resilience in future development through code enforcement. • Objective: Educate citizens annually on compliance with applicable local codes and ordinances. • Objective: Update municipal floodplain ordinances within six months of official updates to FIRMs. <p>EXAMPLES FROM PREVIOUS VERSIONS OF THE PLAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Encourage and facilitate the development or revision of comprehensive plans and zoning/land use ordinances to limit development in high-hazard areas. • Action: Distribute and promote the inclusion of vulnerability analysis information as part of periodic plan review and revisions at the township/borough level. • Action: Evaluate ordinances to standardize hydrant connections and provide sprinkler systems for new development. • Adams County multi-municipal planning efforts have focused on the development of joint municipal comprehensive plans that establish growth areas in low-hazard areas. <p>REPRESENTATIVE LOCAL PLANS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonneauville Borough & Mt. Pleasant Township Comprehensive Plan • Carroll Valley Borough Comprehensive Plan • Central Adams Joint Comprehensive Plan • (The) Eastern Adams County Joint Comprehensive Plan and Route 194 Corridor Study • Germany Township, Littlestown Borough & Union Township Comprehensive Plan • Hanover Region Economic Development Plan • Northwest Adams County Joint Comprehensive Plan
Building Codes	<p>GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS LISTED IN THE 2020 PLAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal: Promote disaster resilience in future development through code enforcement. • Objective: Educate citizens annually on compliance with applicable local codes and ordinances. <p>EXAMPLES FROM PREVIOUS VERSIONS OF THE PLAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Encourage and facilitate the adoption of building codes that protect new construction and substantial renovations from the effects of identified hazards. • Action: Evaluate the adequacy of township/borough building codes. • Action: Encourage adoption of the International Building Code in all townships/boroughs.



INTEGRATION OF MITIGATION PLAN INTO THE LOCAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK	
<i>Planning Framework</i>	<i>Examples of Plan Integration</i>
Functional Plans	<p>GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS LISTED IN THE 2020 PLAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal: Realize hazard mitigation opportunities through stormwater management and source water protection initiatives. • Objective: Identify an emergency management coordinator (EMC) to represent all 34 municipalities in Adams County. • Objective: Ensure that 100% of the designated EMCs have achieved a minimum baseline of training. <p>EXAMPLES FROM PREVIOUS VERSIONS OF THE PLAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adams County's stormwater management plan was prepared to meet PADEP Act 167 requirements and includes a model stormwater ordinance. Each municipality amends or adopts stormwater management ordinances consistent with the plan. <p>REPRESENTATIVE LOCAL PLANS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adams County Emergency Operations Plan • Adams County Municipal Solid Waste Management Plan Update • Adams County Pennsylvania Water Supply and Wellhead Protection Plan • Adams County Stormwater Management Plan: Act 167 County-Wide Stormwater Management Plan
Project Review	<p>GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS LISTED IN THE 2020 PLAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: Identify mitigation projects such as acquisition and relocation, elevation, mitigation reconstruction, etc. in repetitively flood-prone areas, and work with homeowners to implement those projects. • Action: Consider the formation of a committee that works with community-specific groups in the prioritization of their historical resources. Involve the SHPO in the process to vet strategies and to help set the criteria. <p>EXAMPLES FROM PREVIOUS VERSIONS OF THE PLAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action: Integrate evaluation of snow-removal and emergency access logistics with new development planning.



INTEGRATION OF MITIGATION PLAN INTO THE LOCAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK	
<i>Planning Framework</i>	<i>Examples of Plan Integration</i>
Public and Stakeholder Engagement	<p>GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTIONS LISTED IN THE 2020 PLAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Educate citizens annually about the hazard risks they face and personal/household mitigation strategies. • Objective: Educate stakeholders (e.g., local officials and citizens) annually about the importance of stormwater management and source water protection and their links to hazard mitigation and risk reduction. <p>EXAMPLES FROM PREVIOUS VERSIONS OF THE PLAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Provide public education to increase awareness of hazards and opportunities for mitigation. • Action: Adams County DES conducts outreach on hazard mitigation and actions to take during an emergency. • Partnerships: Adams County municipalities have formed many multi-municipal partnerships that result in creating efficiency and effectiveness in addressing hazard mitigation. Examples of partnerships include the following. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishing a county council of governments ○ Partnering for emergency management services ○ Joint municipal firefighting services ○ Joint comprehensive planning ○ Multi-municipal purchasing ○ Regional police service ○ Multi-municipal road maintenance • Public outreach via newsletters: Several municipalities create newsletters to provide information and reminders on responsible stormwater management, maintaining groundwater, creating an emergency preparedness kit, and keeping areas around fire hydrants free of plantings and snow in the winter. <p>REPRESENTATIVE LOCAL PLANS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adams County Emergency Operations Plan

While Adams County has been successful in progress toward plan integration, local officials can always do more. In Pennsylvania’s communities (and around the country), a lack of resources to accomplish the initiatives outlined in plan integration efforts remains a barrier. Several municipalities noted a lack of financial resources as an impediment to implementing hazard mitigation projects in their jurisdictions (as evidenced by the self-assessment and the lack of existing funds in public works or capital improvement budgets to support mitigation). This finding appeared in earlier versions of the mitigation plan as well.

Additionally, stakeholders in this update recognized that agencies and organizations throughout the county could accomplish additional plan integration by taking a more strategic approach to hazard mitigation. For example, the historical and cultural subcommittee recognized the value in identifying stand-alone “structural” (or otherwise tangible) mitigation projects to protect individual cultural assets. However, the community-level discussions and



resultant prioritization processes that identify which cultural assets *are most important to protect* are missing (or could be strengthened). While community development planning efforts include goals that are consistent with those espoused by hazard mitigation proponents, stakeholders have yet to realize the full potential benefit of how stormwater management or transportation infrastructure improvements (as examples) can support mitigation. As such, education and outreach efforts appear to rise in importance as the county continues its plan integration. The participation of the Adams County Office of Planning and Development in this update (as well as in municipal planning efforts) is a positive first step toward this outreach.

Table 5.2.6-2 outlines the local plans, studies, and assessments that supported this update.

Table 5.2.6-2

REFERENCED DOCUMENTS		
<i>Document Type</i>	<i>Document Citation</i>	<i>How Incorporated into Plan</i>
Plan	Abbottstown Borough, East Berlin Borough, Hamilton Township, New Oxford Borough, Oxford Township & Reading Township. (2012). <i>The eastern Adams County joint comprehensive plan and Route 194 corridor study.</i>	Used to identify development areas for both plan integration and to outline overlapping risk areas with growth areas; also used to outline transportation infrastructure project consistency with mitigation objectives.
Plan	Adams County Conservation District & Adams County Office of Planning and Development. (2011). <i>Adams County stormwater management plan: Act 167 countywide stormwater management plan.</i> County Government: Gettysburg, PA.	Evaluated for consistency with mitigation objectives (i.e., plan integration) and to identify potential flood mitigation projects.
Plan	Adams County Department of Emergency Services. (2019). <i>Adams County emergency operations plan.</i> County Government: Gettysburg, PA.	Used as general guidance on existing plan integration for hazard mitigation. *NOTE: Reviewed municipal EOPs, as available, for the same purpose.
Plan	Adams County Office of Planning and Development. (2001). <i>Adams County Pennsylvania water supply and wellhead protection plan.</i> County Government: Gettysburg, PA.	Evaluated for consistency with mitigation objectives (i.e., plan integration).
Plan	Adams County Office of Planning and Development. (2019). <i>Adams County municipal solid waste management plan update.</i> County Government: Gettysburg, PA.	Evaluated for consistency with mitigation objectives (i.e., plan integration).
Plan	Arendtsville Borough, Bendersville Borough, Biglerville Borough, Butler Township, Franklin Township & Menallen Township. (2010). <i>Northwest Adams County joint comprehensive plan.</i>	Used to identify development areas for both plan integration and to outline overlapping risk areas with growth areas.
Plan	Bonneauville Borough & Mt. Pleasant Township. (2003). <i>Comprehensive plan.</i>	Used to identify development areas for both plan integration and to outline overlapping risk areas with growth areas.
Plan	Carroll Valley Borough. (2012). <i>Comprehensive plan.</i>	Used to identify development areas for both plan integration and to outline overlapping risk areas with growth areas.



REFERENCED DOCUMENTS		
<i>Document Type</i>	<i>Document Citation</i>	<i>How Incorporated into Plan</i>
Plan	Conewago Township, Hanover Borough, McSherrystown Borough & Penn Township. (2013). <i>Hanover region economic development plan.</i>	Used to identify development areas for both plan integration and to outline overlapping risk areas with growth areas.
Plan	Cumberland Township, Gettysburg Borough & Straban Township. (2018). <i>Central Adams joint comprehensive plan.</i>	Used to identify development areas for both plan integration and to outline overlapping risk areas with growth areas.
Plan	Germany Township, Littlestown Borough & Union Township. (n.d.). <i>Comprehensive plan.</i>	Used to identify development areas for both plan integration and to outline overlapping risk areas with growth areas.

