



SECTION 3. PLANNING PROCESS

- 3.1 PROCESS AND PARTICIPATION SUMMARY
- 3.2 THE PLANNING TEAM
- 3.3 MEETINGS AND DOCUMENTATION
- 3.4 PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION
- 3.5 MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL PLANNING
- 3.6 FUTURE PLANNING EFFORTS

3.1 PROCESS AND PARTICIPATION SUMMARY

A successful planning process builds partnerships and brings together members representing government agencies, the public and other stakeholders to reach a consensus on how the community will prepare for and respond to the hazards that are most likely to occur. Applying a comprehensive and transparent process adds validity to the HMP. Those involved gain a better understanding of the problem or issue and how solutions and actions were developed. The result is a revised set of common community values and widespread support for directing financial, technical and human resources to an agreed upon action. The planning process was an integral part of creating and revising the HMP. This section describes the planning process used to revise the Northumberland County HMP. The Planning Team sent a capability assessment survey, a modified version of the survey used to create the original plan, to 36 municipalities and two independent sewer authorities (Sunbury Municipal Authority and Milton Regional Sewer Authority) located in the County. This modified survey still included a portion that measures participation in the National Flood Insurance Program. Of the 38 surveys sent, 12 entities responded by the advertised due date.

To create the original 2012 Northumberland County HMP, the County contracted with Delta Development Group, Inc., who in turn contracted Michael Baker, Jr., Inc. for specific data. During the revision process in 2017, the County assembled a planning team that carried out the functions previously outsourced by contract. The same team has been tasked with updating the 2017 plan to accurately modify it to meet the new needs of the community in 2022 and forward.

In accordance with the DMA 2000 requirements, this plan documents the following topics:

- Planning process
- Hazard identification
- Risk assessment
- Mitigation strategy: goals, actions and projects
- Formal adoption by participating jurisdictions
- Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) and FEMA approval

The standard planning process used in Pennsylvania to create and update HMP's is described in the Pennsylvania's All-Hazard Mitigation Planning Standard Operating Guide and was referenced or used during the review of the existing Northumberland County HMP.

Public participation and planning meetings served as the main forums for gathering information to update the HMP. The Planning Team afforded access to the information in relevant and approved plans, policies and procedures for Northumberland County. Opportunities for public participation included attending public meetings, completing written surveys, and reviewing and commenting on the existing plan and other documents. Meeting, surveys and teleconferences were used to gather input from County, municipal and other stakeholders to update all sections of the HMP. Through this

process, the County was able to establish a comprehensive approach to reducing the effects of hazards on the County and its municipalities.

3.2 THE PLANNING TEAM

The County's Planning Team consists of the following members:

- Eric Wendt, Northumberland County Department of Information Technology
- Keith Ayers, Northumberland County GIS
- Douglas Diehl, Borough of Milton
- Chuck Hopta, Northumberland County Engineer
- Stephen Jeffrey, Northumberland County Department of Public Safety
- Jason Zimmerman, Northumberland County Department of Public Safety
- Lori Smoogen, Northumberland County Department of Finance
- Justin Skavery, Northumberland County Planning Department
- Tiffany Kaseman, Northumberland County Assessment Bureau
- Maryrose McCarthy, Northumberland County Commissioners Office

Mr. Wendt and Mr. Ayers served as the County's primary points of contact for the mitigation planning process.

The Planning Team acknowledged that identifying hazards that specifically affect Northumberland County and assessing their likelihood of occurrence, and the potential damage to the people, property and environment of the County, was one of the most important steps in updating the HMP. The Planning Team chose to focus on all-hazards as listed in the Pennsylvania State Hazard Mitigation Plan, as opposed to narrowing its focus on only hazards with moderate to high frequency within the County.

3.3 MEETINGS AND DOCUMENTATION

The Planning Team held the following meetings during the update process of the County HMP.

Each meeting was followed by detailed meeting minutes that documented all discussion, decisions and unmet needs identified during the meetings; these minutes were shared among the Planning Team and can be found in Appendix A. County residents were informed of public meetings through various sources, including newspapers, press releases and announcements on the website. Comments received from the public were incorporated into the updated HMP.

MEETING DATE	PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING TYPE	DESCRIPTION
9/6/2017	NO - Planning Committee	Standard committee meeting to discuss plan and action items.
3/4/2018	NO - Planning Committee	Standard committee meeting to discuss plan and action items.
9/26/2018	NO - Planning Committee	Standard committee meeting to discuss plan and action items.
6/10/2019	NO - Planning Committee	Standard committee meeting to discuss plan and action items.
4/15/2020	NO - Planning Committee	Standard committee meeting to discuss plan and action items.
12/28/2020	NO - Planning Committee	Standard committee meeting to discuss plan and action items.
1/26/2021	NO - Planning Committee	Planning Committee Kick Off Meeting for 2022 Plan
2/17/2021	NO - Planning Committee	Planning Meeting to Discuss timeline and duties
3/17/2021	NO - Planning Committee	Planning Meeting to discuss action items and plan updates
5/10/2017	NO - Planning Committee	10th Meeting - Planning Status\Review
4/29/2021	YES - Public Kick Off Meeting	Public Meeting Held to Kick off the Planning Process with Public and Stakeholders
7/21/2021	NO - Planning Committee	Planning Meeting to Discuss Plan update status and deligation of sections to update
11/17/2021	NO - Planning Committee	Planning meeting to review and update plan sections and data
2/24/2022	YES - Public Review Meeting	This meeting was to review the HVA and the updates made to the plan before it was submitted to PEMA.

Table 3.3-1 Public and Planning Meetings

3.4 PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

To maximize the effectiveness of the HMP, the Planning Team sought continual public and stakeholder engagement. Public input was encouraged and collected through a variety of methods. A capability assessment survey, a modified version of the survey used to create the original plan, was sent to 36 municipalities and three independent sewer authorities (Sunbury Municipal Authority, Milton Regional Sewer Authority and Shamokin Coal Township Joint Sewer Authority) located in the County. Twenty-One of the municipalities and the two sewer authorities returned updated or new information within the surveys they completed; their input was reviewed and incorporated into the updated HMP.

Local, state and federal agencies, neighboring jurisdictions, local businesses, community leaders, educators, and other relevant private and nonprofit groups that had a vested interest in the development of the HMP were not only given the opportunity to participate in the original planning process, but also the update being conducted by the Planning Team. Appendix A includes copies of public notifications that were distributed. In addition to the local municipalities, school districts and the planning team, representatives were in attendance from the following stakeholder groups:

2021 Update Participants

- Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Union County GIS

Through public notices, the above groups and the general public were invited to review the HMP on the project website:

<http://publicsafety.norrcopa.net/index.php/ema/hazard-mitigation>

Anyone viewing the HMP, or information about the update process, was encouraged to send comments to the Northumberland County EMA. Public meetings were also advertised and held in Sunbury, the County seat, to afford the public a chance to meet team members and become further educated through handouts and agendas. Copies of the advertisements can be found in Appendix A, immediately following the copy of materials used at the respective meetings. Notices for all of the other scheduled Planning Team meetings were advertised on the website mentioned in this section; that site encouraged all stakeholders to attend.

Section 3.5 includes a table showing overall municipal participation in the planning process. As illustrated, the Planning Team felt that jurisdictional and stakeholder participation was critical to the process. The Planning Team met regularly to review the status of the HMP and strategies to involve the public. The Planning Team also individually contacted various municipalities to elicit feedback on various sections of the HMP.

3.5 MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL PLANNING

Northumberland County took a multi-jurisdictional approach to preparing its HMP, in that the HMP will apply to the County and to all participating municipalities. The County was able to provide resources (data, GIS, surveys, etc.) to which the municipalities may not have had access. However, the County was dependent on the municipal buy-in, since the municipalities have the legal authority to enforce compliance of land use planning and development issues. The County undertook an intensive effort to involve all 36 municipalities in the HMP update process. Each municipality was given the opportunity to participate: municipal officials and representatives were invited to attend meetings, they were asked to comment on the HMP posted on the website listed in section 3.4, and they were provided a capability assessment survey where they could create and prioritize mitigation actions. The Planning Team had an objective to make contact with all municipalities that had not returned the survey; team members contacted those municipalities via telephone in an effort to get a completed survey submitted. Aside from the initial letter inviting the municipalities to attend the kick-off meeting, a letter also accompanied the survey that gave the dates of upcoming meetings they could attend to gain information about the update process and possibly get help for completing the survey. A risk assessment review meeting and public draft review meeting were also advertised by the Planning Team to give all municipalities and stakeholders the chance to review vital data collected and to see the update version of the HMP that would be eligible for adoption.

The Planning Team's multi-jurisdictional approach also cast the net wider, attempting to involve neighboring counties when gathering input and data. The team specifically targeted the Planning, GIS and EMA employees of the seven neighboring counties that are in frequent contact with Northumberland County's similar departments. The Planning Team relied on the existing professional relationships between the counties to provide an easy channel for discussion; many of these departments are in contact daily via email. Although some team members were able to make an on-site visit to Columbia County for review and discussion of their plan, the only other county to make contact constructively was Union County.

Table 3.5-1 reflects the efforts put forth by the Planning Team and the efforts extended by any of the 36 municipalities. This table represents all efforts by which the team made contact but also doubles as showing which municipalities returned viable data which meets requirements the applied to the HMP development and update. Although there were multiple ways for each municipality to participate in Hazard Mitigation Planning Process; from physical meetings, to phone calls, and even email transactions; the following municipalities\authorities were active in one (1) form of participation: Kulpmont Borough, McEwensville Borough, Mount Carmel Borough, Ralpho Township, Rockefeller Township, Sunbury City, Turbotville Borough, Washington Township, Watsontown Borough, and West Chillisquaque Township. The following municipalities\authorities were active in two (2) or more forms of participation: Milton Borough, Mount Carmel Township, Northumberland Borough, Shamokin City, Shamokin Coal Township Joint Sewer Authority.

Surveys Completed & Meeting Attendance

Label Meanings
 (X) Yes

2017 Participation

	Plan and Regulations Status	Capabilities Assessment	Hazard and Risk Evaluation	Mitigation Goals, Objectives, Actions	Planning Meeting September 06h, 2017	Planning Meeting March 14h, 2018	Planning Meeting September 26h, 2018	Planning Meeting June 10h, 2019	Planning Meeting April 15h, 2020	Planning Meeting December 28h, 2020	Planning Meeting January 28h, 2021	Planning Meeting February 17h, 2021	Public ICF Meeting March 17h, 2021	Planning Meeting April 29h, 2021	Planning Meeting July 21st, 2021	Public Meeting November 17th, 2021	Public Meeting February 24h, 2022	Telephone Meeting	Email Correspondence Participation	Plan Adopted	Adoption Year	
COAL Township																				X	2017	
DELAWARE Township																						
EAST CAMERON Township																					X	2017
EAST CHILLISQUAKE Township	X	X	X										X								X	2017
HERNDON Borough																					X	2017
JACKSON Township																					X	2012
JORDAN Township																					X	2012
KULPMONT Borough	X	X	X																		X	2017
LEWIS Township																					X	2012
LITTLE MAHANOEY Township																						
LOWER AUGUSTA Township																					X	2017
LOWER MAHANOEY Township																						
MARION HEIGHTS Borough																						
MCEWENSVILLE Borough	X	X	X																		X	2017
MILTON Borough	X	X	X										X								X	2012
MILTON REGIONAL SEWER AUTHORITY																						
MOUNT CARMEL Borough													X									
MOUNT CARMEL Township	X	X	X															X			X	2017
NORTHUMBERLAND Borough	X	X	X	X									X								X	2017
POINT Township																					X	2017
RALPHO Township													X								X	2017
RIVERSIDE Borough																					X	2017
ROCKEFELLER Township	X	X	X																		X	2017
RUSH Township																					X	2017
SHAMOKIN City	X	X	X	X									X					X			X	2017
Shamokin Coal Twp. Joint Sewer Authority	X	X	X	X													X	X				
SHAMOKIN Township																					X	2017
SNYDERTOWN Borough																						
SUNBURY City													X								X	2017
SUNBURY MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY																					X	2017
TURBOT Township																					X	2012
TURBOTVILLE Borough	X	X	X																		X	2012
UPPER AUGUSTA Township																					X	2017
UPPER MAHANOEY Township																						
WASHINGTON Township	X	X	X																			
WATSONTOWN Borough	X	X	X																		X	2017
WEST CAMERON Township																						
WEST CHILLISQUAKE Township	X	X	X																		X	2012
ZERBE Township																					X	2017
FEMA										X												
FEMA																						
Northumberland County DPS					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Northumberland County staff					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Union County GIS																						X
Shamokin School District													X									
Commissioners					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
American Red Cross																						
North Shore Railroad																						
Michael Foods																						
Weis Markets																						
Line Mountain School District																						
Shikellany School District																						
PennDOT																						
MERCK-Cherokee																						
Sunbury EMA																						
Sunbury Code Enforcement																						
Sunbury Council																						
Lycoming County Planning																						
Aqua-PA																						
News Media																						
Residents																						

Table 3.3-1: Weis Markets | Surveys Completed | Meeting Attendance | Plan Adoption

3.6 FUTURE PLANNING EFFORTS

Along with the Local Agencies and County Department, various Regional Agencies and Authorities were invited the planning process. Action #34 was created to help keep and open dialog with these Agencies as well as focus on reaching out to gather more participation from the ones that did not actively participate.