

SECTION 1: PLANNING PROCESS

1.1 Introduction

The LMS was formally adopted by the County, municipalities, and the LMS Steering Committee in 1999. Initial development of the LMS was funded, in part, by the Florida Department of Community Affairs/Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDCA/FDEM) with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds earmarked for the development of comprehensive hazard mitigation planning.

The LMS was established and continues to operate in accordance with prevailing federal, state, and local guidelines and requirements. In 2004, the plan and program were substantially modified to enhance operational effectiveness and to comply with new federal guidelines established in response to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of the LMS is to develop and execute an ongoing strategy for reducing the community's vulnerability to identified natural, technological, and human caused hazards. The strategy provides a rational, managed basis for considering and prioritizing hazard-specific mitigation options and for developing and executing sound, cost-effective mitigation projects. The LMS also provides a basis for justifying the solicitation and use of local, state, federal, and other funding to support hazard mitigation projects and initiatives.

1.3 Program Organization

This section addresses, in part, the following FEMA requirements:

Requirement: §201.6(c)(1) Documentation of how the plan was prepared must include the schedule or timeframe and activities that made up the plan's development as well as who was involved. **(Element A1)**

Requirement: §201.6(c)(4)(i) The plan must identify how, when, and by whom the plan will be monitored. The plan must identify how, when, and by whom the plan will be evaluated. The plan must identify how, when, and by whom the plan will be updated. The plan must include the title of the individual or name of the department/agency responsible for leading each of these efforts. **(Element A6)**

1.3.1 LMS Structure

The current structure meets federal guidelines and criteria established in response to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and Title 44 Code of Federal Regulations (See figure 1.1).

Local Mitigation Strategy Coordinator

The LMS Coordinator is a staff member within the DEM and serves as the coordinator for all mitigation projects, committees, and mitigation funding designated for the County. The LMS Coordinator facilitates committee and sub-committee meetings and represents the County on these committees. Specifically, the LMS Coordinator supervises revision and updates to the Local Mitigation Strategy every five (5) years. The LMS Coordinator will be responsible for including minor changes and additions to the LMS during interim periods. Those changes will be documented in the Record of Changes, which can be found on page 3. The LMS Coordinator monitors changes in federal, state, and local laws in the area of mitigation that may affect the County. The LMS Coordinator readies the LMS for approval to the FDEM, the LMS Steering Committee, the BCC, and local municipalities. The LMS Coordinator is responsible for the continued maintenance of the LMS as well as the storing and filing of all documents pertaining to mitigation issues. In addition, the LMS Coordinator is responsible for the coordination of the Project Prioritization List that scores and ranks projects in the County that are eligible for federal monies. This process is conducted through the LMS Evaluation Panel. Panelists are solicited by the LMS Coordinator on behalf of the LMS Steering Committee based on LMS member recommendations and are subject to approval by the LMS Steering Committee. The LMS Coordinator interfaces with appropriate governmental and non-governmental agencies and offices to ensure LMS goals, objectives, and priorities are consistent with and cross-referenced with those articulated in other existing plans, namely the County's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). In addition, the LMS Coordinator seeks opportunities at the regional, county, and municipal levels to:

- Update plans, policies, regulations, and other directives to include hazard mitigation priorities
- Encourage the adoption of mitigation priorities within capital and operational budgets and grant applications
- Share information on grant funding opportunities
- Offer guidance for carrying out mitigation actions
- Explore opportunities for collaborative mitigation projects and initiatives
- Facilitate and coordinate the application process and serve as a primary communications link with funding agencies

LMS Working Group

The LMS Working Group represents a broad cross-section of public sector and private sector organizations and individuals, including the general public, regional universities, neighboring emergency management departments, and state coordinators. The LMS Working Group serves as an umbrella organization for coordinating all mitigation programs and activities, supplies the

staffing for all committees of the LMS, and is the primary mechanism and forum for exchanging information and mobilizing the vast expertise and resources of the community. The LMS Working Group also provides suggested updates to various portions of the LMS to be analyzed and considered for inclusion by the LMS Revisions Committee into the next LMS. The LMS Working Group is the overarching group that all other committees are derived from, and provides guidance, suggestions, research, and input into all aspects of the LMS program. The LMS Working Group is currently led by the Chairperson, a Management Analyst for the City of West Palm Beach, and is coordinated by the LMS Coordinator for DEM.

LMS Steering Committee

The LMS Steering Committee consists of 15 members composed of seven (7) municipal representatives, two (2) county/local government representatives, one (1) state/federal government representative, one (1) university/college representative, one (1) healthcare industry representative, one (1) non-profit representative, and two (2) representatives from the private sector. The LMS Steering Committee serves as the LMS program board of directors. As such, it is the primary decision and policy body for LMS sponsored mitigation activity. Members of the committee are replaced as needed with coordination of the committee and the committee chairperson. Each January an updated list is sent to FDEM to be compliant with Florida Statute 27P-22.004. The LMS Steering Committee provides the needed attention to ensure mitigation projects are more cost-effective and focused on threat-specific mitigation priorities and strategies. The LMS Steering Committee also monitors the implementation of the LMS annually and makes recommendations to jurisdictions and other LMS members regarding how to implement LMS strategies within their jurisdictions. The LMS Steering Committee is led by the Chairperson, a Management Analyst for the City of West Palm Beach, and is coordinated by the LMS Coordinator for DEM.

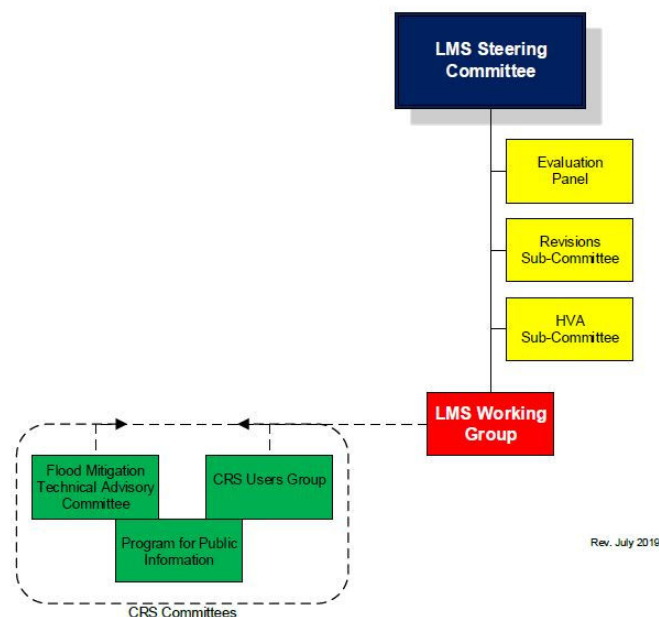


Figure 1.1: PBC LMS Structure

1.3.2 Standing Committees

- **LMS Evaluation Panel** - Designated to review, evaluate, score, and rank mitigation projects applying established local, state, and federal prioritization processes and criteria. The LMS Evaluation Panel is led by the Public Works Director for the City of Greenacres, and coordinated by the LMS Coordinator for DEM.
- **LMS Revisions Sub-Committee** - Designated to review/monitor, update/evaluate, and verify/revise that subsequent LMS plans meet all federal guidelines and criteria. In addition, the revisions committee meets quarterly either in-person or via teleconference to evaluate the effectiveness of the plan, as well as to monitor and update the plan during the five (5) year cycle. The revisions committee has a standing meeting once per quarter. If no issues or concerns with the plan are proposed or presented, the committee instead holds a virtual meeting. Eighteen to twenty-four months before the plan is due for revisions, in person meetings are held regardless of whether changes need to be made. Biweekly and monthly meetings of the committee are held at least 24 months before the plan expires to ensure all sections in the cross-walk are being met, to review the document, and present suggested changes, updates, and revisions to the LMS Steering Committee. The LMS Revisions Subcommittee is led by a Management Analyst for the City of West Palm Beach, and is coordinated by the LMS Coordinator for DEM.
- **LMS Hazard and Vulnerability Analysis (HVA) Sub-Committee** - Provides a detailed assessment of hazards that may affect PBC and provides mitigation recommendations. Reviews research studies, reports, and technical information regarding possible changes in hazards within PBC and makes recommendations for revision. This subcommittee meets as needed within the revision cycle to provide input to the LMS Revisions Subcommittee relating to hazards and vulnerabilities that may have changed since the last revision. The LMS HVA Subcommittee is led by a Battalion Chief for the City of West Palm Beach, and is coordinated by the LMS Coordinator for DEM.

1.3.3 Community Rating System (CRS) Cooperating Committees

- **Flood Mitigation Technical Advisory Committee** - Comprised of flood mitigation engineers and experts from public and private sector organizations, is charged with assessing County-wide flood risks and vulnerabilities without regard to jurisdictional boundaries, and recommending flood mitigation priorities, strategies, plans, and projects for LMS consideration and action that optimally benefit to the greater community. CRS Committees are led and coordinated by the CRS Coordinator for DEM.
- **Program for Public Information** - Comprised of representatives from the county's active CRS communities, local business leaders, and members of the public, this group collaborates on a full range of Outreach Projects Strategy (OPS) initiatives and promote CRS participation. This CRS Committee is led and coordinated by the CRS Coordinator for DEM.

- CRS Users Group – Comprised of representatives of the county’s CRS Communities, this group meets quarterly to discuss issues of the day regarding CRS updates, collaborates on best practices for achieving higher levels within various CRS activities, and shares information regarding CRS-related training.

While there is no regulation that requires the CRS committees to meet or coordinate, PBC has a very involved CRS user group that passes information and best practices and meets quarterly. Out of the 39 municipalities in PBC, 32 are involved in the CRS user group. A chart in Appendix J shows the number of Repetitive Loss Properties, the number of insured homes in each municipality, and their CRS rating. [Table 3.3](#) also shows number of repetitive loss properties, total loss claims, CRS ratings, and insurance discounts for PBC and each jurisdiction.

1.4 Participation Requirements

Since the LMS is written using input from all stakeholders, it is important to make sure that the entire PBC community is represented. Each group has different participation requirements; however, all groups are strongly encouraged to participate in the process.

Jurisdictions

Municipal and County participation is critical to the success of the LMS. In order to retain LMS voting rights, qualify for federal mitigation assistance consideration, and otherwise remain a member in good standing, the County and all municipal jurisdictions are expected to conform to the following standards:

- Participation of the representative or alternate in the four (4) annual LMS Working Group meetings; or
- Participation of the representative or officially designated alternate(s) in a majority of the LMS Steering Committee meetings, and
- Participation in a majority of subcommittee meetings; or
- Participation in special virtual meetings of the LMS Steering Committee or subcommittees; and
- Have an officially executed resolution adopting the revised LMS plan on file with the County. In order for a jurisdiction to be eligible for Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMAP), and Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) funding programs, they must have an officially adopted resolution and a fully executed interlocal agreement.

More than two (2) absences of the LMS Working Group meeting will be cause for disqualification from the LMS, subject to appeal and review by the LMS Chair. All rights and privileges will be terminated during a period of disqualification and formal reapplication. All jurisdictions will be notified of meetings via email at least one (1) week in advance, and will be updated with meeting summaries thereafter.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and other Governmental Entities

In order to qualify for LMS grant sponsorship, NGOs and other governmental entities must:

- Have a duly executed letter of commitment to the LMS on file with the County; and
- In the judgment of the LMS Steering Committee, actively participate in, and otherwise support LMS activities.

The Public and Private Sector

The LMS membership believes broad community support, including ongoing public and private sector involvement, is very important to the success of the program. While participation by private organizations and the public is strictly voluntary, their attendance, comments, contributions, and support are actively invited, sought, monitored, and fully documented.

In order to promote the opportunity for broad participation, at a minimum, notices and agendas for all general meetings of the LMS are posted through some combination of newspaper ads or public service announcements; social media, postings on county and municipal websites, announcements in the county and municipal newsletters and calendars, and blast e-mailings to all previous participants. Additionally, the LMS Coordinator actively solicits new LMS members by reaching out to at least 30 private sector and/or non-profit organizations annually to encourage their participation in the LMS.

1.5 Jurisdictional Adoption

All jurisdictions wishing to participate in and share in the benefits deriving from the LMS program must complete and file a fully executed resolution which conforms to the adoption standards jointly established and amended by the PBC BCC and the LMS Steering Committee.

1.6 New Jurisdictions/Entities

In the event municipal jurisdictions are added, deleted, or merged within the County, the LMS will appropriately adjust its membership rolls as necessary and require any newly defined jurisdictions to provide documentation necessary for participation in the program.

1.7 Jurisdictional Participation

The County has 39 municipalities. In addition to jurisdictions being encouraged to participate, each member is provided minutes from the previous LMS Working Group or LMS Steering Committee meeting within one week following the meeting. Participation is also monitored with sign-in sheets. This information along with a roster of the primary LMS representative from each municipality can be found in Appendix L. Also located in Appendix L are the minutes and sign-in sheets of the LMS Working Group, Steering Committee, HVA Subcommittee, and Revisions Subcommittee meetings.

The following jurisdictions currently have LMS members. Details (such as names and titles) can be found in Appendix L:

Atlantis, Belle Glade, Boca Raton, Boynton Beach, Briny Breezes, Cloud Lake, Delray Beach, Glenn Ridge, Golf, Greenacres, Gulf Stream, Haverhill, Highland Beach, Hypoluxo, Juno Beach, Jupiter, Jupiter Inlet Colony, Lake Clarke Shores, Lake Park, Lake Worth Beach, Lantana, Loxahatchee Groves, Manalapan, Mangonia Park, North Palm Beach, Ocean Ridge, Pahokee, Palm Beach, Palm Beach Gardens, Palm Beach Shores, Palm Springs, Riviera Beach, Royal Palm Beach, South Bay, South Palm Beach, Tequesta, Wellington, West Palm Beach, Westlake, and unincorporated Palm Beach County.

1.8 Guiding Principles

The LMS guiding principles are an expression of the community's vision of hazard mitigation and the mechanisms through which it is striving to achieve that vision. The principles address concerns of the community relative to natural, technological, and human caused hazards. The County's LMS prides itself on working to reduce hazards and vulnerability through well-designed and effective mitigation projects and activities.

1.9 Process

As part of the process, a survey was distributed to each jurisdiction to understand their local issues. The LMS Steering Committee, along with the LMS Working Group, assessed existing plans, studies, and strategies. Using state and federal guidance on how an LMS update should be constructed, the LMS Steering Committee and LMS Working group developed a comprehensive list of hazards of concern. From these defined hazards, the LMS Working Group identified areas of concern from existing plans and future considerations.

These areas of concern include:

- Loss of life
- Loss of property
- Community sustainability
- Health/medical needs
- Sheltering
- Adverse impacts to natural resources (e.g., beaches, water quality)
- Damage to public infrastructure (e.g., roads, water systems, sewer systems, stormwater systems)
- Economic disruption
- Fiscal impact
- Recurring damage
- Redevelopment/reconstruction
- Development practices/land use
- Intergovernmental coordination

- Public participation
- Repetitive flood loss properties
- Historical structures

1.10 Strategy

The strategy used for the development and revision process of the LMS, consisted of the following tasks:

- 1) Public involvement to ensure a representative plan
- 2) Coordination with other agencies or organizations
- 3) Hazard area inventory
- 4) Risk and Vulnerability Assessment
- 5) Incorporating existing plans, reports, best practices, and technical information into the LMS
- 6) Review and analysis of possible mitigation activities
- 7) Evaluation of effectiveness of current LMS
- 8) Local adoption following a public hearing
- 9) Periodic review and update

1.11 Benefits

Adoption of this strategy will provide the following benefits to both County and municipal governmental entities:

- Compliance with Administrative Rules 9G-6 and 9G-7, Florida Administrative Code (FAC), requirements for local Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans to identify problem areas and planning deficiencies relative to severe and repetitive weather phenomenon, and to identify pre and post-disaster strategies for rectifying identified programs
- Universal points from the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) CRS Program for developing a Floodplain Management Program, which may help further reduce flood insurance premium rates for property owners
- Access to FEMA's Federal grant programs
- Compliance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000
- Set forth the guiding principles with which both the County and municipal governmental entities of PBC will address the issue of all hazard mitigation
- Identify the known hazards to which the County is exposed, discuss their range of impacts, and delineate the individual vulnerabilities of the various jurisdictions and population centers within the County ([Section 2, Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Analysis](#))
- Develop a detailed method by which PBC (municipalities and County government) can evaluate and prioritize proposed mitigation projects along with new federal requirements
- Develop the process and schedule by which this entire LMS will be reviewed and updated to include public participation

1.12 Criteria and Procedures for Revision

This section partially addresses the following FEMA requirements:

Requirement: §201.6(b)(1) The plan must document how the public was given the opportunity to be involved in the planning process and how their feedback was incorporated in the plan. The opportunity for participation must occur during the plan development, which is prior to the comment period on the final plan and prior to the plan approval/adoption. **(Element A1 and A3)**

Requirement: §201.6(c)(1) Documentation of how the plan was prepared must include the schedule or timeframe and activities that made up the plan's development as well as who was involved. **(Element A3)**

This document will be updated a minimum of every five (5) years by the LMS Coordinator with the assistance and input of the LMS Revision Subcommittee, LMS Steering Committee, LMS Working Group, and approval of the LMS Steering Committee.

As many items have changed in the past five (5) years for PBC communities, the following is a description of the review process to show changes the development of several of the sections and priorities from the previous plan:

- **Planning Introduction Section:** This section includes an overview of the plan, an introduction, a discussion on the scope and purpose of the document, along with goals and objectives, and the participants in the planning process. This section was revised to reflect the most current approaches taken by the PBC LMS Working Group and standing committees.
- **Hazard Identification and Vulnerability Analysis:** All hazards received a new review and identified as potential or emerging trends with other hazards classified as “threats” and not “hazards.” Most of the historical occurrences were updated to include current events, facts, or figures since the previous update. Other methodologies for a hazard and vulnerability tool were assessed. Extreme Heat and Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) objectives received new emphasis which were incorporated into the LMS.
- **Development of Mitigation Initiatives:** Several LMS Committee meetings and Working Group meetings were devoted to enhancing project submissions and revisions to the Project Priority List and Project Submission Form in order to more accurately rank older projects and receive information on new projects. Much of this section was revised to reflect the changes discussed. However, some of the information on funding sources and benefit cost ratios remains unchanged from its source information and remains a subject of detailed education efforts to stakeholder members in order to form well detailed project submissions.

- **Implementation and Maintenance of the LMS:** This remains important due to continuing turnover from the membership of the Working Group. New members have been identified and continue to act as stakeholders to the whole community.
- **Appendices:** These sections were updated accordingly based on newer and relevant information. As PBC supports many LMS Committees, we utilized sample document outcomes from each Group to detail actions taken to implement the LMS.

The public is given an opportunity to review this document and provide comments through the County website, public meetings held during and after revisions have been made to actively solicit public input into the LMS, online surveys, as well as committee meetings. Ongoing maintenance revisions may also be made based upon experience from any significant events such as a hurricane, tornado, sea level rise, hazardous materials spill, or any other occurrence where mitigation could benefit the community. Changes in federal, state, and local laws will also be reflected in the updated version of this document. The revisions will then be distributed to all affected parties by the LMS Coordinator. The Record of Changes, located at the front of this document, will be used to record ongoing maintenance of the plan during interim periods between complete revision cycles.

- The evaluation criteria which are used include:
 - New mandates from federal, state, or local agencies that require changes to the Local Mitigation Strategy, including new or changing laws, policies or regulations.
 - Societal developments or significant changes in the community that must be added to the current LMS.
 - Changes in the Comprehensive Plan or any other form of standard operating procedure.
 - The mitigation opportunities implemented. The priorities for implementation are the same.
 - Recommendations or lessons learned from any major incidents that have occurred since last adoption.

During the revision process, each criterion is addressed to determine if they are still valid and adjustments are made as necessary. All existing mitigation opportunities that are determined to still be viable projects will be left standing. All those that are determined to be no longer workable will be set aside for further review and revision, or dropped as no longer feasible.

Once revisions are approved by the LMS Steering Committee, the LMS Coordinator provides the copy to all members, on the website, and to the State of Florida's Mitigation Bureau for approval. After approval by the State, the LMS Steering Committee and LMS Coordinator hold a public showcase to allow a final chance for public input. Once the LMS Revisions Subcommittee reviews public comment for possible inclusion, and makes any final revisions required by the State, the LMS Coordinator distributes to members for final adoption by governing bodies. Communities will then present the LMS to the public after adoption through the same public meetings/websites/etc. process used in the update cycle.

The following graphic shows the current LMS2024 Timeline, detailing the schedule and timeframe adopted by the LMS Steering Committee in 2023 for the 2024 revision cycle.

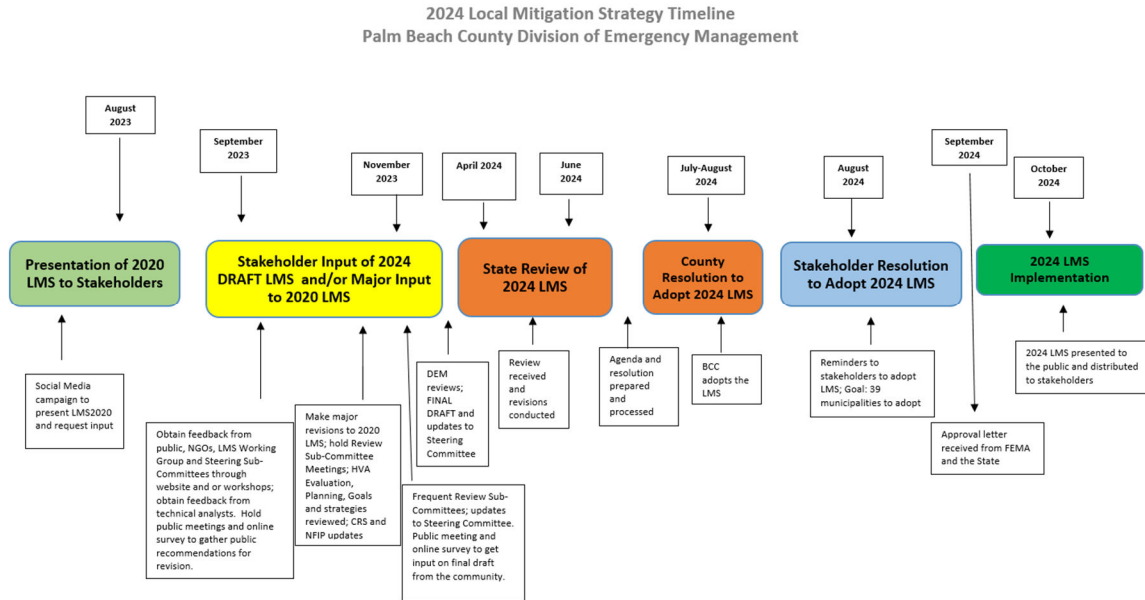


Figure 1.2: LMS2024 Timeline for PBC

1.13 Goals

1. Reduce the loss of life, property, and repetitive damage from the effects of natural, human caused, and technological hazards from all sources but especially hurricanes, tornadoes, major rainfall, and other severe weather events.
2. Achieve safe and fiscally sound, sustainable communities through thoughtful long-range planning of the natural and man-made environment.
3. Take preventative actions to reduce the number of repetitive loss properties published annually by FEMA on the list of “Repetitive Loss Properties.”
4. Qualify the county and jurisdictions for incremental improvements on the CRS classification in relation to flood insurance under the NFIP and to reduce flood hazard risk.
5. Optimize the effective use of all available resources by establishing public/private partnerships, and encouraging intergovernmental coordination and cooperation.
6. Promote awareness and preparedness through the distribution of information on hazards and measures to mitigate them.
7. Increase the level of coordination of mitigation management concerns, plans and activities at the municipal, county, state, and federal levels of government in relation to all hazards.
8. Establish a program that facilitates orderly recovery and redevelopment, and minimizes economic disruption following a disaster.
9. Ensure an enforceable commitment for the implementation of the local hazard mitigation strategy.

1.14 Objectives

The ultimate objectives of the LMS are to:

1. Improve the community’s resistance to damage from known natural, human caused, and environmental hazards.
2. Place PBC in a position to compete effectively and productively for pre- and post-disaster mitigation funding assistance.
3. Encourage strong jurisdictional, nongovernmental, and public participation and support of LMS activities.
4. Reduce the cost of disasters at all levels.

5. Facilitate community recovery when disasters occur.
6. Minimize recurrence of damage by incorporating mitigation into post-disaster rebuilding.
7. Promote intelligent development.

FIRST DRAFT

This page intentionally left blank