



# FAIRHAVEN HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

## *Planning for a Safer Future*

*To become better prepared and more resilient to potential emergencies and disasters, the Town of Fairhaven is developing its first-ever natural hazard mitigation plan. This fact sheet provides a brief description of the project, a summary of the key steps involved in the planning process and ways you can participate, and how to obtain additional information.*

### **Project Overview**

Fairhaven is vulnerable to a range of natural hazards that have the potential to cause property damage, loss of life, service disruption, economic hardship, and other adverse impacts to our community. These hazards include but are not limited to hurricanes, nor'easters, floods, severe winter storms, and other naturally occurring events that threaten our region. In recognition of these prevalent hazard threats, the Town of Fairhaven is developing a *hazard mitigation plan* to help improve our community's preparedness for such events and to reduce our vulnerability to their potential impacts.

#### **What is hazard mitigation?**

Hazard mitigation may be defined as any action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to life and property from hazards. Mitigation actions are the things we do today to become better prepared and more protected in the future. They can include structural measures, such as strengthening a building to withstand high winds, or non-structural measures, such as increasing public awareness or creating a pre-disaster plan to avoid future damage or loss.

In 2015, the Town of Fairhaven's Planning and Economic Development Department applied to the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) for a grant to develop a comprehensive natural hazard mitigation plan. Local communities with a state and federally-approved hazard mitigation plan are eligible and better positioned to receive additional grant funding through MEMA and

FEMA for mitigation projects. In 2016 the Town was awarded the planning grant from MEMA, and in turn hired a consultant team to assist with the plan development process. A draft plan is scheduled for completion by August 2017 and the Town hopes to have the final plan approved and adopted by December 2017.

Upon completion, Fairhaven's hazard mitigation plan will serve as a road map to planning for a safer future. As further described below it will include the identification, evaluation, and communication of natural hazard risks; an assessment of local capabilities to reduce those risks; a strategy for implementing practical hazard mitigation actions; and a process for maintaining the plan over time.

### **Planning Process**

The hazard mitigation plan is being developed through a process consisting of six key steps as outlined below, including: (1) Project Initiation & Public Engagement Strategy; (2) Hazard Analysis & Risk Assessment; (3) Capability Assessment; (4) Mitigation Strategy; (5) Plan Maintenance Process; and (6) Documentation. The process will be facilitated by mitigation planning consultants and overseen by a Local Planning Team (LPT) established by the Town, with numerous opportunities for community members and other stakeholders to participate and provide input along the way.

#### **Project Initiation & Public Engagement Strategy**

The first step focuses on the organization of resources to help prepare the plan. This includes the collection of relevant data and information, as well as the creation of a local team of people to provide input and lend support throughout the planning process. This also includes preparing a strategy to generate public interest, solicit citizen input, and engage additional partners or stakeholders at various points in the process.

## Hazard Analysis & Risk Assessment

This step includes the identification and detailed analysis of all potential natural hazards in Fairhaven. It involves the collection and review of best available data and information to determine the potential impacts of hazards on the people, economy, and built and natural environments of the community. The risk assessment identifies specific vulnerabilities that become the basis for evaluating and prioritizing risk reduction actions for the mitigation strategy.

## Capability Assessment

The purpose of the capability assessment is to determine the Town's ability to effectively implement hazard mitigation measures. It includes the review of existing plans, policies, programs, or activities relevant to hazard risk, and an analysis of the Town's current capacity and resources to carry them out. The assessment helps to identify which types of mitigation actions are practical and achievable over time, as well as any opportunities to leverage or improve measures already in place.

## Mitigation Strategy

The mitigation strategy serves as the blueprint for reducing Fairhaven's vulnerability to natural hazards. It includes the overall community goals, objectives, and specific mitigation actions required to achieve the vision of a more disaster resilient community. The mitigation strategy is based on the results of the risk assessment, capability assessment, and a thorough review of potential mitigation measures that include policies, projects, and other activities. It also includes a detailed implementation plan for carrying out each proposed mitigation action.

## Plan Maintenance Process

The step includes the creation of a method and schedule for the Town to routinely monitor, evaluate, and update the plan after it becomes adopted. It also identifies ways the plan and its specific mitigation actions can be integrated into other existing plans and procedures. A key objective for the plan maintenance process is to ensure the plan remains a relevant and effective tool for the Town over the long-term, and within the Town's existing planning framework.



*The Town's mitigation planning process includes a series of meetings for community members and other stakeholders to be involved.*

## Documentation

The final step includes the drafting of a complete plan document for review prior to moving forward with local plan approval and adoption procedures. Once a final draft plan is approved by the Local Planning Team, it will be submitted along with all other documentation required for review and approval by state and federal plan reviewers. Once these approvals are issued the Town proceed with local adoption of the final plan.

## Public Participation

There are several ways for community members and other stakeholders to participate in the plan development process, including but not limited to:

- Public Meetings
- Public Opinion Survey
- Local Planning Team and Stakeholder Committee Meetings
- Draft Plan Reviews

## For More Information

To learn more about this project, or to find out more details on how you can be involved, please contact Bill Roth, Director of Planning and Economic Development, at (508) 979-4082 ext. 122 or at [broth@fairhaven-ma.gov](mailto:broth@fairhaven-ma.gov). Additional information and regular updates through the duration of the project may be found on the project website at [www.jamiecaplan.com/projects/fairhaven](http://www.jamiecaplan.com/projects/fairhaven)