

Cities of Pawtucket and Central Falls, Rhode Island Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

Planning Together for a Safer Future

To become better prepared and more resilient to potential emergencies and disasters, the Cities of Pawtucket and Central Falls are developing a Multi-Jurisdictional 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

Pawtucket and Central Falls are 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 their communities. These hazards include but are not limited to hurricanes, nor'easters, floods, severe winter storms, and other naturally occurring events that threaten the region. In recognition of these prevalent hazard threats, these cities are developing a *hazard mitigation plan* to help improve their preparedness for such events and to reduce their 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.

The City of Pawtucket Department of Planning and Redevelopment and the City of Central Falls Department of Planning and Economic Development are jointly leading the development of the new hazard mitigation plan. This collaborative and “multi-jurisdictional” plan is the first-of-its-kind in Rhode Island, and upon completion will be submitted to the

Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency (RIEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for approval. The plan will be based off previous mitigation planning efforts for each city, including the existing “Strategy for Reducing Risk from Natural Hazards” plan documents for Pawtucket and Central Falls.

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 established by the Cities of Pawtucket and Central Falls 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 that may impact Pawtucket or Central Falls. 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 Cities' 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 their 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 the cities' 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 Cities 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 each

For More Information

To learn more about this project, or to find out more details on how you can be involved, please contact Jay Rosa, Senior Planner, at (401) 728-0500 x450 or at jrosa@pawtucketri.com. Additional information and regular updates through the duration of the project may be found on the project website at <http://www.jamiecaplan.com/projects/pawtucket-central-falls>.

City over the long-term, and within their existing planning frameworks.



The mitigation planning process includes opportunities for community members 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 each city will 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 Meetings
- Draft Plan Reviews