

Future Hazards



SECTION 23 – FUTURE HAZARDS

Introduction

The primary purpose of the Hazard Mitigation Plan is to promote a community that is safe from both natural and technological hazards. Fortunately, the City of Navasota is situated in an area that does not face a wide range of threats. Nonetheless, there are certainly risks that need to be addressed that could reduce the loss of life and property during a hazardous event. This section addresses the two primary threats outlined in the Existing Hazards section (Section 13), flooding and hazardous material spills. In addition, opportunities to confront deficiencies in warning systems for tornados, severe weather, and hazardous chemical spills are discussed.

Goals and Objectives

Goal #1: Promote a community that is safe from hazards.

- Objective 1: Navasota should research options for installing sirens or other forms of community warning systems for severe weather events.
- Objective 2: The City should investigate the feasibility of a warning siren system to serve citizens along the railroad and in the Central Business District (CBD) during a hazardous cargo spill.
- Objective 3: The use of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) "All Hazards" radios should be promoted for early warning.
- Objective 4: "Safe places" should be designated in public buildings to serve as shelter from severe storms and tornados.
- Objective 5: Navasota should continue its participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and encourage citizens to purchase flood insurance.
- Objective 6: The City should utilize zoning as directed by the future land use plan to manage floodplain development.

- Objective 7: A hazard identification analysis should be completed every 5 years.
- Objective 8: Navasota should update its Hazard Mitigation Plan every 5 years.

Goal #2: Prepare to communicate with and aid the community before, during, and after a hazard event.

- Objective 1: Communication among the City’s employees through the use of two way radios should be considered a priority.
- Objective 2: Navasota should make its employees aware of their roles and responsibilities before, during, and after a hazard event.
- Objective 3: An emergency management plan should be established for the scenario of chemical spills along the railroad.
- Objective 4: The City should create an emergency management plan for the CBD, identifying safe areas and evacuation routes.
- Objective 5: Navasota should coordinate with the school system to create an emergency management plan for its schools and public facilities.
- Objective 6: Navasota should coordinate with police and fire departments in the creation of plans to inform and direct the public on what do in the event of an emergency, with particular attention to Navasota’s schools and the CBD.
- Objective 7: The City should practice each segment of its emergency management plan twice per year.

Goal #3: Participate in hazard/disaster grant programs.

- Objective 1: The City should begin participation in the FEMA Community Rating System Program.
- Objective 2: Applications for grant and aid programs should be submitted for the development of detailed emergency management plans.

- Objective 3: Navasota should hire qualified temporary or permanent staff to help with the emergency management planning process. Staff should be included in all grant proposals written by the City.
- Objective 4: The City should apply for grants to be used in the development of a warning siren system as described in Objectives 1 and 2.

Warning Systems

One strategy that the City of Navasota may employ for hazard mitigation is to install a system capable of announcing a hazard warning quickly when needed. This strategy can be implemented by installing a warning siren system with strategically placed sirens at various locations around the City. Upon hearing the siren, citizens may tune to a radio or television station for immediate updates as to what is occurring. A warning siren in Navasota could be utilized to warn residents and visitors in the event of a tornado, severe weather, or hazardous materials release.

Upon installing such a system, it will be important to inform residents about what to do. The system should be tested periodically in order to verify it remains in working order. However, testing should not be performed when threatening weather or a potentially dangerous situation is underway.

It is recommended that Navasota City Officials consult with the resources cited at the end of this section concerning the development of a public warning siren system.

Grant Opportunities

As a stated goal of this document, it is important to highlight hazard/disaster grant programs that are available to the City. These grant programs may be used for the development of emergency management planning activities and mitigation programs.

Hazardous Materials Assistance Program

The Hazardous Materials Assistance Program (HMAP) is available to “provide technical and financial assistance” through the states to support state and local governments in “oil and hazardous materials emergency planning and exercising.” The funding offered through this program must be utilized for projects that will further develop emergency management capabilities for the City to deal with potential oil and other hazardous materials as well as hazardous materials releases (CFDA, 2004).

Grants obtained from this program may be used for the development of emergency planning activities related to protection of the community from hazardous materials release along the City’s railroads and highways. At least some portion of any awarded grant should be used to hire a qualified temporary staff member or consultant in the emergency management or hazards management field. More information on HMAP can be found at the end of this section.

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program

The Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program was created in accordance with the Stafford Disaster Assistance and Emergency Relief Act to assist states and local governments in implementing cost-effective hazard mitigation activities that complement a comprehensive mitigation program. All applicants to this program must be National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) participants, and must not be suspended or on probation from the NFIP.



Navasota River Flooding

Funds from this program may be used in Navasota for mitigation projects and planning aimed at making the City less vulnerable to the hazards it faces. Like the

HMAP, a portion of any funds received should be allocated for the hiring of a temporary staff member or consultant to aid in the proposed planning activity. Unlike the HMAP, this grant is available for all types of hazards planning with the following exceptions:

- Major flood control projects
- Warning Systems
- Engineering designs, feasibility studies and drainage studies not integral to proposed project
- Generators not integral to a proposed project
- Phased or partial projects
- Flood studies or mapping
- Response and communication equipment

More information for this program may be found at the end of this section.

Community Rating System

The Community Rating System (CRS) is a voluntary incentive program administered through the NFIP. The goal of this program is to recognize and encourage floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements. Communities that are active participants in the CRS receive discounted flood insurance premium rates that reflect the reduced flood risk. For CRS participating communities, flood insurance premium rates are discounted in increments of 5% by the rating class that the community has obtained. The CRS classes are based on 18 creditable activities, organized under four categories:

- Public Information
- Mapping and Regulations
- Flood Damage Reduction



Navasota River Flooding

- Flood Preparedness

More information for this program may be found at the end of this section.

General Guidance

The Federal Emergency Management Agency has made seven guidebooks available called the Mitigation “How-To” Series. These books are available on the internet for download in Microsoft Word or PDF format, more information is available at the end of this document.

Conclusion

Overall, the City of Navasota is a fairly safe city, although there is potential for a hazardous materials spill along the railroad as it runs through the heart of the community. The City needs to prepare and organize its staff to be ready to serve the citizens before, during, and after a hazardous event.

In order to make the City safer, Navasota’s leaders should exhaust every opportunity within their grasp to make the City a safer place to live. Building an emergency preparedness system through the use of grant programs, outreach programs, and warning systems described throughout this section is the first step in achieving this goal.

Sources:

- April 13, 2004. <http://www.ci.nacogdoches.tx.us/PublicSafety/WarningSiren.htm>.
- April 13, 2004. <http://www.ci.longview.tx.us/CityServ/PSCComm/PSCSirens.html>.
- April 13, 2004. <http://www.ci.desoto.tx.us/siren.htm>.
- April 13, 2004. <http://www.cfda.gov/static/97021.htm>.
- April 13, 2004. <http://www.fema.gov/fima/pdm.shtm>.
- April 13, 2004. <http://www.fema.gov/nfip/crs.shtm>.
- April 13, 2004. <http://www.fema.gov/fima/planhowto.shtm>.
- April 13, 2004. <http://www.fema.gov/nfip/crs.shtm>
- April 13, 2004. Nacogdoches: <http://www.ci.nacogdoches.tx.us/PublicSafety/WarningSiren.htm>
- April 13, 2004. Longview: <http://www.ci.longview.tx.us/CityServ/PSCComm/PSCSirens.html>
- April 13, 2004. Desoto: <http://www.ci.desoto.tx.us/siren.htm>
- April 13, 2004. <http://www.cfda.gov/static/97021.htm>
- April 13, 2004: <http://www.fema.gov/fima/pdm.shtm>.
- April 13, 2004: <http://www.fema.gov/fima/planhowto.shtm>

The following 5 year action agenda is suggested for implementation of this section of the Comprehensive Plan.

Action Agenda

Year 1:

- Promote the use of alert capable weather or “All Hazards” radios for early warning.
- Designate “safe places” in public buildings to serve as shelter.
- Continue participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and encourage citizens to purchase flood insurance.
- Begin researching options for installing sirens or other forms of community warning systems for severe weather events.

Year 2:

- Research the feasibility of a warning siren system to serve citizens along the railroad and in the CBD in the event of a hazardous cargo spill.
- Hire qualified temporary or permanent staff to help with the emergency management planning process.

Year 3:

- Apply for grants to be used in the development of a warning siren system.
- Apply for grant and aid programs for the development of detailed emergency management plans.

Year 4:

- Begin crafting evacuation and management plans for hazardous spills along the railroad and in the CBD.
- Coordinate with the school system to create an emergency management plan for schools and public facilities.
- Coordinate with police and fire departments in the creation of plans to inform and direct the public on what to do in the event of an emergency.
- Begin participation in the FEMA Community Rating System Program.

Year 5:

- Complete a hazard identification analysis.
- Update the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Ongoing Activities:

- Make city employees and elected officials aware of their roles and responsibilities before, during, and after a hazardous event.
- Practice each segment of the emergency management plan.

- Keep up to date on new grant programs and opportunities for help from other state and federal agencies.
- Keep up to date on any emerging technologies that could aid in the emergency warning, management, or planning process.