

Community Engagement Plan

Project Overview

Tioga County’s current Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) was created in 2018 and will expire on August 12, 2024. This updated HMP will allow the County to remain eligible for future mitigation funding including for the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program. The purpose of this HMP is to document the natural hazards that affect Tioga County, and outline practical mitigation strategies that can be implemented to reduce the effects of such hazard events. The updated Hazard Mitigation Plan will incorporate the new guidelines provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and New York State’s Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES).

Project Players

In an effort to solicit input from a diverse pool of stakeholders and community members, Tioga County has identified several stakeholders that will be actively engaged in the hazard mitigation planning process.

Core Planning Group

Plan: The Core Planning Group (CPG) will take lead on the development of the Hazard Mitigation Plan update for Tioga County. The Core Planning Group is composed of staff from several county departments, members of the consultant team, and representatives from New York State’s Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES). The Core Planning Group will meet monthly during the hazard mitigation planning process. These meetings will primarily be used to provide updates on the status of the plan, discuss strategies for meetings and public outreach, and to assess gaps in data and information that may be provided by other County departments. In addition, members of the Core Planning Group will meet individually with each jurisdiction to update their annexes for the new plan. Members of the Core Planning Group and their affiliations are included in Table 1.

Table 1: Core Planning Group

Name	Affiliation	Email
Wendy Walsh	Tioga Co. SWCD	walshw@tiogacountyny.gov
Elaine Jardine	Tioga Co. ED&P	jardinee@tiogacountyny.gov
Mike Simmons	Tioga Co. Emergency Services	simmonsm@tiogacountyny.gov
Bob Williams	Tioga Co. Emergency Services	williamsr@tiogacountyny.gov
Corinne Cornelius	Tioga Co. Emergency Services	corneliusc@tiogacountyny.gov
Jayme Breschard	Barton & Loguidice	jbreschard@bartonandloguidice.com
Kevin Clapp	DHSES	kevin.clapp@dhSES.ny.gov
Roland Paperman	DHSES	Roland.paperman@dhSES.ny.gov

Activities Completed: The Core Planning Group met monthly during the Hazard Mitigation Planning process, and SWCD staff members participated in jurisdictional interviews with Towns and Villages in Tioga County. Additionally, the CPG participated in the planning and facilitation of both public information meetings and the second jurisdictional team meeting, advertised both meetings, attended and spoke at additional meetings (e.g. the Local Emergency Planning Committee Meeting and Council of Governments Meeting), and participated in interviews with additional Tioga County departments in order to incorporate the voices of vulnerable populations within the County.

Steering Committee

Plan: The Steering Committee will serve as an advisory board overseeing the development of Tioga County’s Hazard Mitigation Plan update (HMP update). The Steering Committee will be responsible for reviewing agendas and materials for public engagement activities, providing feedback on draft reports, offering project guidance and local community knowledge, and promoting public input opportunities. The Steering Committee is composed of the Core Planning Group and several other key stakeholders within the County. The Steering Committee will meet on an as-needed basis during the development of the plan update. Members of the Steering Committee are included in Table 2.

Table 2: Steering Committee

Name	Affiliation	Email
Wendy Walsh	Tioga Co. SWCD	walshw@tiogacountyny.gov
Elaine Jardine	Tioga Co. ED&P	jardinee@tiogacountyny.gov
Mike Simmons	Tioga Co. Emergency Services	simmons@tiogacountyny.gov
Bob Williams	Tioga Co. Emergency Services	williamsr@tiogacountyny.gov
Corinne Cornelius	Tioga Co. Emergency Services	corneliusc@tiogacountyny.gov
Jayme Breschard	Barton & Loguidice	jbreschard@bartonandloguidice.com
Kevin Clapp	DHSES	kevin.clapp@dhses.ny.gov
Roland Paperman	DHSES	Roland.paperman@dhses.ny.gov
Todd Kopalek	Tioga Co. Public Health	kopalekt@tiogacountyny.gov
Julie Nucci	Village of Owego	jn28@cornell.edu
James Overhiser	Owego Historic Preservation Committee	joverhis@gmail.com
Bryan Goodrich	Tioga Co. IT	goodrichb@tiogacountyny.gov
T Hanson	Tioga Co. CCE	jn28@cornell.edu

Activities Completed: Members of the Steering Committee had their first meeting on Tuesday, June 20 by way of online video (Zoom) to discuss hazard profiling for the HMP update. As part of the Risk Assessment, attendees chose to profile the four hazards identified in the 2018 Hazard Mitigation Plan: flooding, drought, extreme temperatures, and severe storms. The hazards were then ranked based on impact, frequency of occurrence, extent of impacts, and level of preparedness. Additional mitigation actions were also suggested, including education and outreach regarding drought and water conservation, water storage on farms, tree management during storms, and tree management to mitigate extreme temperatures.

Jurisdictional Team

Plan: The Jurisdictional Team will be composed of two representatives from each jurisdiction within Tioga County. The Jurisdictional Team will meet with the Core Planning Group prior to the two public meetings and after other project milestones have been achieved. The meetings will help to establish a more unified county-wide approach to reduce the risks that identified hazards pose, such as the implementation of shared services.

Activities Completed: The Jurisdictional Team met twice during the Hazard Mitigation Planning process, as described in the In-Person Meetings and Engagements section below.

Municipal Officials and Staff

Plan: Meetings between the Core Planning Group and each municipality are an essential component of the hazard mitigation planning process. Creating new hazard mitigation actions and updating a municipality’s planning mechanisms, critical facilities, previous mitigation actions, and more, requires information from multiple officials.

Activities Completed: Jurisdictional interviews were conducted with all 15 of the Villages and Towns in Tioga County, as described in the In-Person Meetings and Engagements section below.

New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (NYS DHSES)

Plan: The New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) is responsible for producing the guidelines that counties in the state must adhere to when developing a Hazard Mitigation Plan update. DHSES is also responsible for determining if plans meet the state's standards for hazard mitigation plans. Several representatives from DHSES will serve as members of the Core Planning Group and attend monthly meetings. Early and frequent involvement of DHSES will ensure that the state's standards are met or exceeded.

Activities Completed: Representatives from DHSES met regularly with the Core Planning Group and were available for questions and correspondence as to various elements and requirements in the plan.

The Public

Plan: The greater Tioga County community will play an essential role throughout the development of the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. This includes Tioga County residents, local businesses, property owners, County and municipal staff and officials, school districts and local colleges, and other individuals with an interest in mitigating the natural hazards that impact Tioga County. In order to ensure the public is engaged throughout the HMP in an accessible fashion, public engagement activities will be offered in several formats, including two public informational meetings and an online survey.

Activities Completed: So far, one public informational meeting, an online and printed survey, and focus groups through Tioga Opportunities provided opportunities for the public to give input on the plan. More details are provided in Section 3 of the main report and in the following sections: Public Informational Meetings, D. Online Engagement, and E. Engaging Underserved Communities within Tioga County.

[Narrative to be updated following public information meeting #2 and public review of draft plan]

Neighboring Counties

Plan: While they are not necessarily considered to be major players in the hazard mitigation planning process for Tioga County, neighboring counties will be notified of the Hazard Mitigation Plan update. The appropriate offices for Chemung County, NY; Tompkins County, NY; Broome County, NY; and Bradford County, PA will be invited to a monthly Core Planning Team meeting. Staff or officials from these neighboring counties will be encouraged to provide input about high risk areas that share borders with Tioga County and develop mitigation strategies that utilize the resources that are available in multiple counties.

Activities Completed: Neighboring communities were invited to participate in the hazard mitigation planning process by taking a Neighboring Community Survey. Several representatives from neighboring communities also attended the Local Emergency Planning Committee Meeting in September, as described in Section 3 of the main report.

In-Person Meetings and Engagements

County Roundtable

Plan: The County Roundtable meeting will be held early in the hazard mitigation planning process to update Tioga County's annex from the 2018 HMP. Representatives from appropriate County departments, programs, and agencies will be asked to attend this meeting. During the roundtable discussion, goals and objectives for the plan will be developed, the status of mitigation actions from the 2018 HMP will be

updated, and new mitigation actions will be created. Polling exercises will be used to solicit input from attendees.

Activities Completed: Invited county agencies/departments met on Wednesday, May 17, 2023 at the County Office Building to review the capability assessment, identify critical facilities and infrastructure, review/update goals and objectives, and review/update the County-wide mitigation actions from the 2018 HMP. County departments were also invited to take a survey to rank the proposed County mitigation actions by order of importance to assist in prioritizing the actions.

Jurisdictional Team Meetings

Plan: The Jurisdictional Team Kickoff meeting will provide appropriate municipal officials with key information about the hazard mitigation planning process and encourage them to participate. The meeting will also be used to inform officials on what information will be collected from them during the jurisdictional meetings. A Doodle Poll will be distributed to officials in attendance so that they can sign up for meetings with the Core Planning Group.

Activities Completed: The Jurisdictional Team had their first meeting on Wednesday, May 3 at the Public Safety Building. This meeting was the official kick-off to the HMP update for Tioga County. The meeting included an overview of the hazard mitigation planning process, a polling exercise, and an overview of jurisdictional participation expected in the plan. The second jurisdictional team meeting was held on October 5, 2023, after the majority of the jurisdictional interviews were completed. This meeting was an opportunity to learn about mitigation actions that other jurisdictions had implemented in their annexes, ask questions, and make revisions accordingly.

Jurisdictional Interviews

Plan: The Core Planning team will distribute a Doodle Poll link at the Jurisdictional Team Kickoff meeting and follow up with an email with the same link so that municipal officials can sign up for meetings (interviews). During these meetings officials and the Core Planning Team will work to update each municipality's annex from the 2018 plan. This process will include checking the list of the municipality's planning mechanisms and critical facilities, and updating the status of the previous mitigation actions. After information from the 2018 annex has been updated, new mitigation actions with accompanying alternatives will be developed. Municipal officials will be provided with the meeting materials in advance of the meeting, and they will be encouraged to come to meetings with mitigation actions in mind. If necessary, follow up meetings between municipal officials and the Core Planning Team will be scheduled. These meetings may be held in-person or virtually, depending on the preferences of the municipal officials.

Activities Completed: Jurisdictional interviews were conducted with all 15 of the Villages and Towns in Tioga County, some virtual and some in-person. During these interviews, the above information was collected and refined, and new mitigation actions were developed. Depending on the jurisdiction, between 1 and 14 municipal officials and local stakeholders attended each interview. Participants included stakeholders such as the municipal mayor or supervisor, code enforcement officer, highway superintendent or DPW superintendent, and even a local business owner. After each interview, each jurisdiction was given an opportunity to review their jurisdictional annex and provide revisions before the plan was finalized.

Public Informational Meetings

Plan: Two public meetings will be held during the hazard mitigation planning process. After several jurisdictional meetings have been conducted, the Core Planning team will prepare a presentation that covers the goals of hazard mitigation planning and presents sample mitigation actions that have been developed by municipalities. Depending on the anticipated attendance for the first public meeting, a

polling exercise may be made available for this event to obtain input from Tioga County residents. The public meeting will end with information about next steps and ways for the public to provide input. A public survey will be distributed to attendees at this meeting and posted to the County's website upon the meeting's conclusion.

A second public meeting will be held when the first draft of the updated Hazard Mitigation Plan for Tioga County has been completed. Like the first public event, this meeting will include a discussion of the role that hazard mitigation plans play in reducing vulnerability to natural hazards. During this meeting the contents of the draft will be presented and the results of the survey will be displayed. After input from the meeting attendees has been received, the meeting will close with information about opportunities to provide additional input for the HMP. Both public meetings may be held in-person or virtually.

Activities Completed: So far, one public informational meeting was held during the hazard mitigation planning process. The first public information meeting was held on October 4, 2023, during which the public was given an overview of the hazard mitigation planning process, preliminary findings, and example mitigation actions, and was given an opportunity to provide input via an online poll and paper survey. Participants were also given the link to the online survey to fill out after the meeting. The meeting was held in a hybrid format – both in person at the Owego Nazarene Church, and virtually via Zoom – to make the meeting more accessible. To increase accessibility, closed captions were provided on Zoom, and the public meeting flyer included a contact person for any accessibility requests. The meeting was advertised via a press release to the media – resulting in media coverage including on 12 WBNG¹ – as well as via social media, a flyer, and to various County departments who were asked to spread the word via their channels.

[To be updated following public information meeting #2 and public review of draft plan]

¹ <https://www.wbng.com/2023/09/28/tioga-county-update-hazard-mitigation-plan-seeks-community-members-input/>

Online Engagement

Plan: SurveyMonkey and Poll Everywhere are other online tools that the B&L team has used successfully for meeting facilitation and various planning processes. SurveyMonkey can be used as an online public survey tool for the Tioga County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. Poll Everywhere encourages dialogue using live online polling, surveys, Q&As, quizzes, and word clouds. Examples of questions that may be asked in a survey include the following:

1. What municipality do you reside in?
2. Which of the following hazards impacting Tioga County are you most concerned about?
(Participants will select from a list of hazards.)
3. On a scale of 1 to 5, how well prepared are you if the hazard selected in Question 2 were to occur within the month?
4. Have you ever received information about how to make your place of residence safer from natural disasters?
5. Are you confident you are adequately insured in the event of a major loss?
6. Do you feel the expense involved in safety measures would outweigh the benefit?
7. In the last 5 years, were you evacuated from your home as a result of a disaster (such as flooding)?
 - 7a. If you answered Yes to Question 7, how long were you displaced?
 - 7b. If you answered Yes to question 7, did you go to a shelter?
8. How do you receive your information concerning a disaster? (Participants will select from a list of sources.)
9. What types of projects do you think can best reduce the public's risk to natural hazards?
(Participants will select from a list of strategies.)
10. Which of the following infrastructural assets and services in your municipality are most vulnerable to natural hazards? (Participants will choose High, Moderate, or Low for a range in infrastructural assets.)
11. Which of the following groups of people in your community are most vulnerable to natural hazards? (Participants will choose High, Moderate, or Low for a range of groups of people.)
12. Which of the following natural resources in your community are most vulnerable to natural hazards? (Participants will choose High, Moderate, or Low for a range of natural resources.)
13. Which of the following services, businesses, and municipal operations in your municipality are most vulnerable to natural hazards? (Participants will choose High, Moderate, or Low for a range of options.)
14. Are there any specific locations, facilities, or resources in your community that you are most concerned about being impacted by natural hazards?
15. What, in your opinion, would help make Tioga County more resilient in the event of a natural disaster?

16. How concerned are you about the impacts of climate change for your community as a whole?
(Participants will choose Extremely Concerned, Somewhat Concerned, or Not Concerned.)

Activities Completed: An online survey was conducted via SurveyMonkey, based off of the above questions and input from the Core Planning Group, and was made available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TiogaHMP>. SurveyMonkey was also utilized to administer a Neighboring Community Survey as well as a survey provided to County departments to rank proposed County mitigation actions. Additionally, Poll Everywhere questions were used at the county roundtable meeting, jurisdictional team meeting #1, and public information meeting #1 to collect input from attendees. The results of these surveys and polling exercises are included in Appendix E of the HMP.

[To be updated following public information meeting #2 and public review of draft plan]

DRAFT

Engaging Underserved Communities within Tioga County

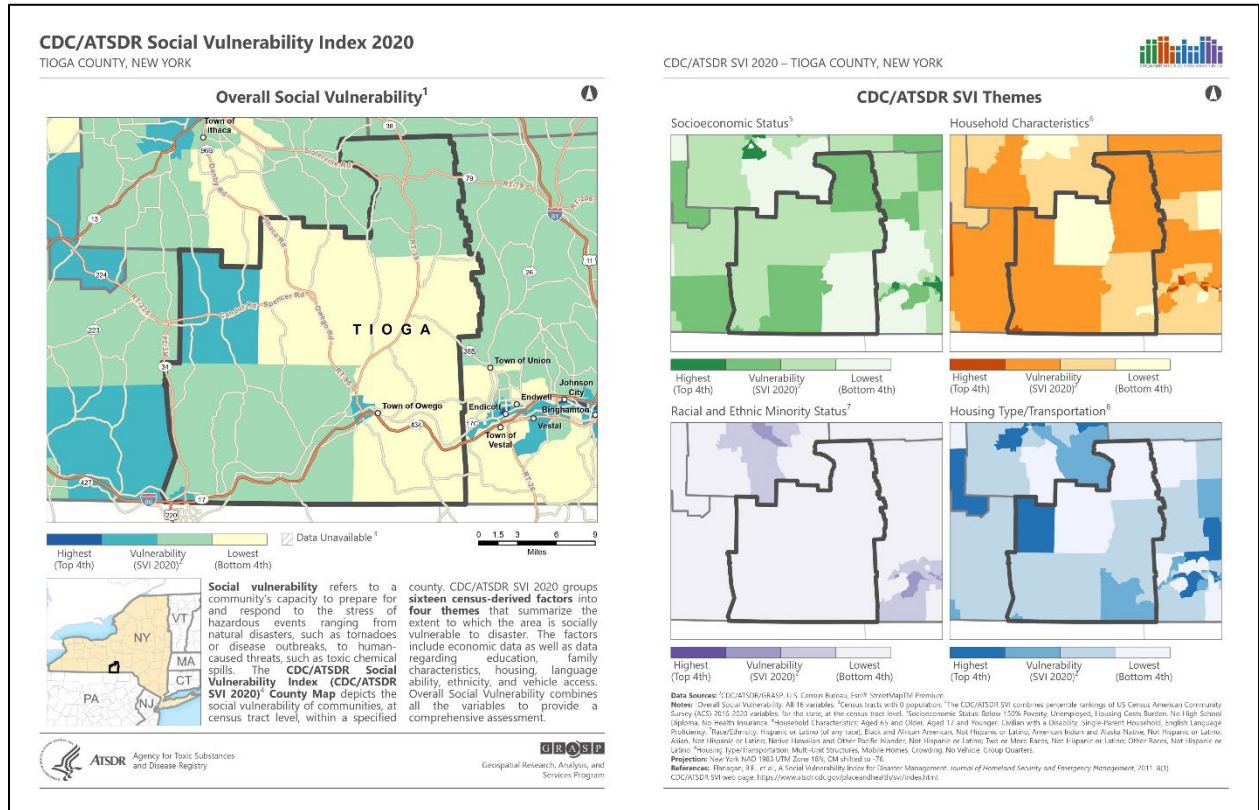
Background: Natural hazards do not impact everyone equally. Across the United States, it is evident that people who struggle to achieve a high quality of life under normal circumstances are highly vulnerable when natural hazards occur. Within New York State, a warmer climate will mean increasingly intense storms and higher temperatures. While these and other hazards may impact the entire State, some neighborhoods and communities lack the resources, capacity, and support to implement adaptation measures to cope with these impacts. Frontline communities, such as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), have historically been given little choice but to reside in places that are at a high-risk from natural hazards, and there is often a need for social and physical infrastructure in these areas that can be relied upon during emergencies. Even in the absence of major natural hazard events, many of these communities will feel the effects of hotter days and heavier rains to a larger degree than communities that are more affluent.

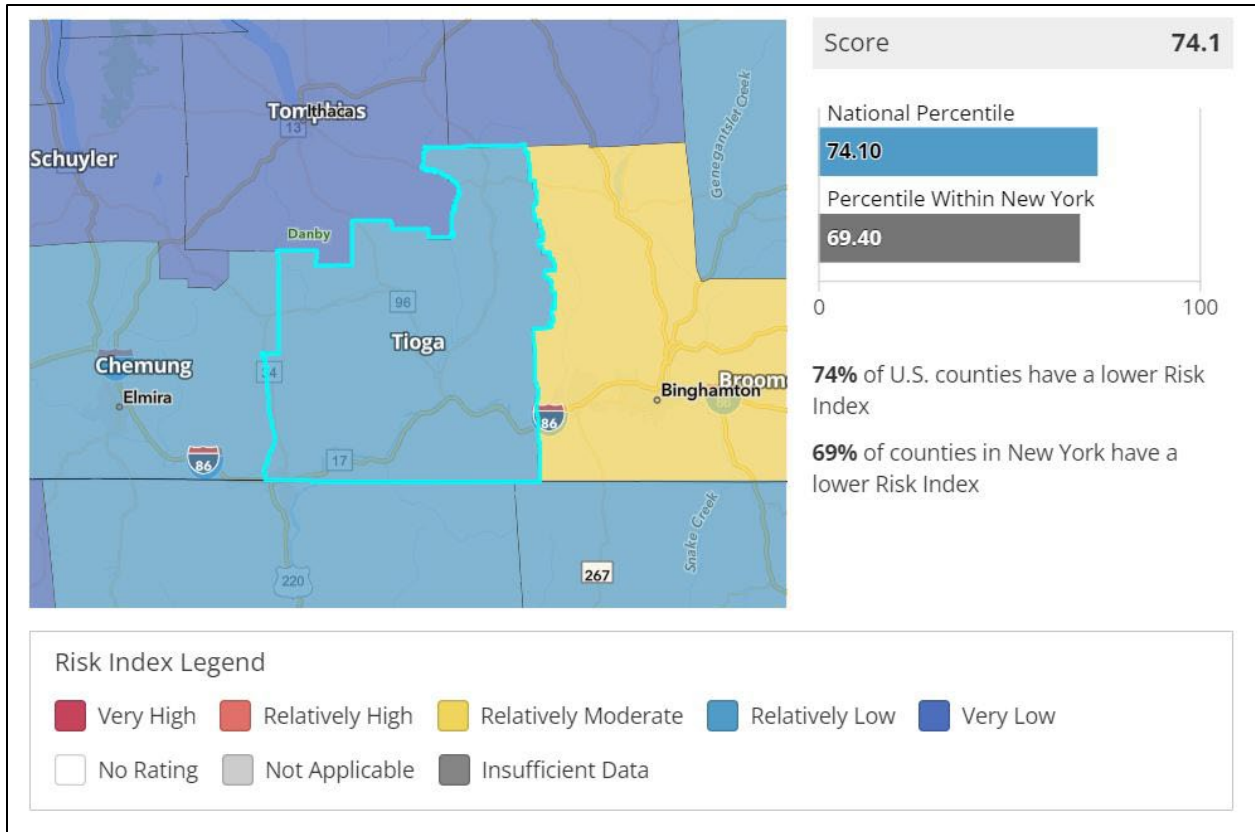
The graphic below displays data on Tioga County's at-risk population. Within the County there are nearly 9,888 people over the age of 65, in addition to almost 5,721 households with disabilities and over 1,247 households without a vehicle. The residents who are living within the County that lack mobility or transportation are likely more vulnerable to natural hazards as their ability to leave a potentially dangerous location could be limited. Furthermore, within Tioga County there are just under 1,967 households below the poverty level. These households may lack the resources to pursue sound mitigation and adaptation measures that will reduce their risk to natural hazards.



Social vulnerability is understood as the level of sensitivity that social groups have to the negative impacts of natural hazards, such as disproportionate death, injury, and loss (CDC, 2022). The Social Vulnerability Index (SoVI) is a metric developed by the University of South Carolina, College of Arts & Sciences, Hazards and Vulnerability Research Institute (HVRI). The index is used to compare the vulnerability of different geographic areas to natural hazard events. The SoVI is calculated based on multiple variables obtained from recent Census data. The average 2020 SoVI score for Counties in NYS is 0.45. Tioga County had a 2020 Statewide Overall SVI score of 0.05 and a National Overall SVI Score of 0.13, both of which indicate low levels of vulnerability. The 2020 SoVI map for Tioga County is provided in the figure below. According to these data, the SVI score is highest in Census Tracts 207.01 (Town of Spencer) and 205 (Village of Owego).

The National Risk Index is a dataset and online tool that provides information about the risk that 18 different hazards pose to communities in the United States that are highly vulnerable. The National Risk Index for Tioga County was created in April, 2023. The report assesses risk, expected losses, social vulnerability, and community resilience for the county. Tioga County was given a Risk Index rating of 74.1, which corresponds to relatively low risk. This score is equal to the national percentile and slightly higher than the percentile within New York State (69.4). The 2023 National Risk Index map for Tioga County is provided in the figure below.





According to the Tioga County, NY 2022-2024 Community Health Assessment, the following populations within the County may experience severe hardship both during and after natural hazards.

- 9.9% of the families within Tioga County are below poverty level
 - 11.6% of children under 18 are below poverty level
 - 15.6% of children under age 5 are below the poverty level in the County
- 15.3 % of the County’s population has a disability
 - This number is 32.8% for residents who are 65+
- Tioga County has an Amish Population that is served by a school in Berkshire

Plan: A strategy for engaging underserved communities has been developed to ensure that the most vulnerable residents within the County have a significant say in creating strategies for reducing risk.

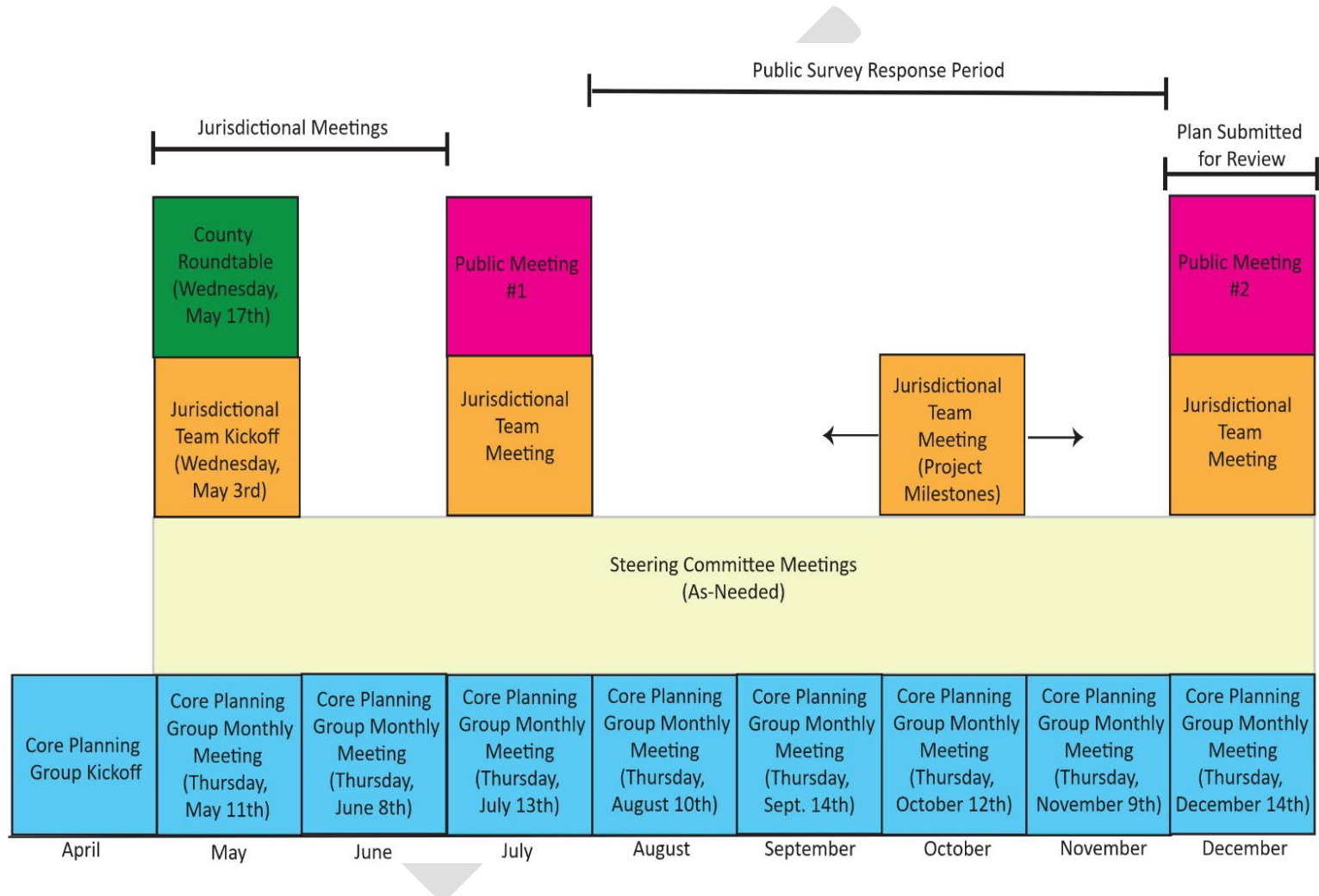
- The Core Planning Group will work closely with Tioga County’s Departments of Public Health and Social Services to implement a targeted outreach strategy that incorporates several of the following elements:
 1. A survey distributed to residents who are served by either departments seeking information about their preparedness for hazards;
 2. A series of meetings with residents that are served by either departments to discuss the impacts that hazards have on their lives and develop solutions for reducing risk; and
 3. A workshop provided by the Core Planning Group to provide information to vulnerable residents on steps that they can take on their own to remain safe during natural hazard events.

Activities Completed: At the August 2023 Core Planning Group meeting, the CPG was presented with an overview of the statistics given above, and asked to identify priority vulnerable groups to engage with based on who they identified as most vulnerable to the hazards in the HMP. Then, the CPG identified potential engagement strategies, starting with the list above, and potential partners in helping reach these populations. There was also a discussion about how to make the public information meetings accessible. Additionally, the project team asked for input from other local officials at the Local Emergency Planning Committee Meeting about how to engage with vulnerable populations in the County.

Based on this input, interviews were conducted with several Tioga County departments/organizations that serve vulnerable populations, including the Department of Public Health, the Department of Economic Development and Planning, and Tioga Opportunities which serves low-income populations, seniors, and people with disabilities, among others. These departments/organizations were asked for their input as to how the hazards identified in the plan affect the populations they serve and what mitigation actions they would like to see put in the plan to ameliorate the impact on vulnerable populations.

Additionally, Tioga Opportunities held two focus groups with the populations they serve, to ask them for input on how they are affected by these hazards and what would help them in the face of these hazards. The first focus group was held at Long Meadow Apartments, in the Village of Owego, on 10/23/2023. Long Meadow Apartments is an income-based apartment complex for older adults (age 62+) or individuals with disabilities. 12 individuals were in attendance. The second focus group was held at the Springview Apartments in the Village of Waverly, on 10/24/2023. Springview Apartments is an income-based building for older adults (age 62+) and people with disabilities (age 18+). Six people were in attendance. Feedback from the focus groups was given to the Core Planning Group and evaluated for inclusion as part of the plan. Additional information on the focus groups is included in Appendix E.

Planned Engagement Timeline



What is Hazard Mitigation Planning? Why Do We Need a Plan?

A hazard mitigation plan identifies and evaluates risk and vulnerabilities associated with natural hazards and disasters. This process aims to reduce the losses of life and property by minimizing the impact of natural hazard events. Hazard mitigation leads to the development of short-term and long-term strategies to reduce and manage risk.

Benefits of Having a Hazard Mitigation Plan



Protect public safety
& prevent loss of life
and injury



Minimize operational
downtime &
accelerate recovery



Prevent damage to
your community's
unique assets



Reduce harm to
existing & future
development



Maintain community
& strengthen social
connections



Reduce the cost of
disaster response &
the exposure risk

Available Funding

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires that state, local, tribal, and territorial governments prepare natural hazard mitigation plans as a condition of future funding. With a FEMA approved Hazard Mitigation Plan, your community WILL be eligible to apply for funding through the following Hazard Mitigation Assistance and Resilience Grant programs:

- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant (PDM)
- Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program
- Flood Mitigation Assistance Grant (FMA)
- Post Fire/Fire Management Assistance Grant
- Rehabilitation of High Hazard Potential Dam (HHPD) Grant Program

These Programs Will Allow Your Community to...

- Retrofit structures, utilities, and infrastructure
- Create buffer areas to protect floodplains and wetlands
- Repair, replace, reconstruct or remove dams
- Purchase hazard prone structures
- Make drainage improvements
- Address soil stabilization and erosion control
- Implement flood diversion
- Complete reforestation projects
- Implement outreach programs
- Adopt and enforce ordinances, regulations and building codes
- Perform engineering, design and feasibility studies

For every \$1 spent on mitigation, an average of \$6 is saved!

Tioga County is updating its Hazard Mitigation Plan!



How can you Participate?

Contact your local municipality or Barton & Loguidice at astone@bartonandloguidice.com.

- Learn about the Plan
- Share ideas that can help reduce the risk of hazards

Contact the Office of Emergency Services for information about future public meetings



What is a Hazard Mitigation Plan?

A hazard mitigation plan identifies and evaluates risks and vulnerabilities associated with natural hazards and disasters. This process aims to reduce the loss of life and property by minimizing the impact of natural hazard events. Hazard mitigation planning leads to the development of short-term and long-term strategies to reduce and manage risk. Mitigation strategies identified in an updated hazard mitigation plan may be eligible for grant funding for implementation.

Benefits of Hazard Mitigation

 <p>Protects public safety & prevents loss of life and injury</p>	 <p>Prevents damage to your community's unique assets</p>	 <p>Reduces harm to existing & future development</p>
 <p>Minimizes operational downtime & accelerates recovery</p>	 <p>Reduces the cost of disaster response & the risk of exposure</p>	 <p>Maintains community & strengthens social connections</p>