

## HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING 101



**Hazard Mitigation = Action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from hazards.** FEMA further describes it as a process state and local governments use to identify risks and vulnerabilities associated with natural disasters, in order to develop long-term strategies for protecting people and property from future hazard events. [www.fema.gov/plan/mitplanning](http://www.fema.gov/plan/mitplanning)

**The process of developing the plan** is as important as the plan itself, by drawing the community together to identify and agree on actions that can be taken. The four parts include:

1. **Public involvement** – to request and consider input from diverse stakeholders, community-wide.
2. **Risk Assessment** – to identify the most probable hazards to plan for, estimate the potential frequency and magnitude of what the community could face during a hazard event, and assess potential losses by considering the built environment and population.
3. **Mitigation Strategies** – to develop goals and objectives aimed at mitigating future disaster losses. Actions proposed should be cost-effective, technically feasible, and environmentally sound – and timed to allow for strategic investment of scarce resources.
4. **Implementation and Monitoring** – to identify which actions will be taken by whom and by when. Action items must be included to monitor the success or effectiveness of implementation and results, to inform the next update of the plan.

### **Benefits of Mitigation Planning?**

- Increases awareness and understanding of vulnerable structures and people,
- Increases support for specific actions the town may ask voter approval for, to reduce losses in the future,
- Builds partnerships among diverse interests, establishing communication on the issues and opening opportunities to leverage resources,
- Improves understanding of potential risks and possible risk reduction measures, as development and land use in the town moves forward in the future, which
- Reduces physical, financial and emotional losses caused by disasters, significantly.
- Piques the community to be eligible for FEMA grants and aid following a federally-declared disaster and, in Vermont, is an initial step in becoming eligible for a higher match of state funds.