

**Rockland County, New York  
Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Planning Project  
Project Initiation Meeting  
October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at 2:00 p.m.  
At 35 Firemen's Memorial Drive, Pomona, NY**

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**Meeting Minutes**

**Attending**

Christopher Jensen	Rockland County Office of Emergency Management
Pablo Ramos	Rockland County Office of Fire and Emergency Services
Douglas Schuetz	Rockland County Dept. of Planning
Andrew Connors	Rockland County Dept. of Highways
Edward Devine	Rockland County Drainage Agency
Anna Foley	URS
Richard Franks	URS

**Agenda Items Discussed**

Task 1 – Project Initiation Meeting – Refinement of Work Plan

- Work Plan and schedule: there are at present no questions or issues regarding the work plan. A revised schedule based on the actual Notice to proceed was distributed and accepted. The current schedule shows submission of the draft plan to NYSEMO by 07/20/2009.
- Wish list: the draft wish list was discussed, the content was generally accepted. There are two versions of the wish list: one for the County and one for distribution to the municipalities. Ms. Foley stressed that submission of wish list data is one of the ways that municipalities can demonstrate the participation in the planning process that FEMA will be looking for. Ms. Foley and Mr. Franks also stressed that while the municipalities would ideally be able to provide copies of all items on the list, failure to submit any of them would not bar any municipality from further participation or future eligibility for FEMA grant funding. Some concern was expressed that municipalities may not respond to the wish list if too much emphasis is placed on its non-mandatory nature. Mr. Schuetz volunteered to oversee the collection of items on the County wish list, and it was agreed that County staff would collect and collate wish list items from municipalities prior to forwarding to URS. The process by which

the County will be able to provide URS with comprehensive GIS data as per the County wish list has been initiated and is estimated to take a further four weeks to complete.

- Meetings: The work plan includes a total of six meetings with contractor participation.
  - 1 - Initiation Meeting
  - 2 - Kickoff Meeting
  - 3 - Risk Assessment Progress Meeting
  - 4 - Risk Assessment Interim Deliverable Presentation
  - 5 - Mitigation Strategy Working Session
  - 6 - Presentation of the Full Draft Plan

It was agreed that URS will prepare minutes for all meetings, for distribution by the County.

#### Task 2 – Establish the Planning Committee

- Guidance Memo #1: While the schedule currently shows completion by 11/7/08, this could be provided by URS within the next week. This memo provides guidance on establishing the planning committee and building support with the public and other stakeholders, and provides examples of organizations that could be considered as other stakeholders. “Targeted” Outreach to other stakeholders is discussed in the Guidance Memo. Ms. Foley and Mr. Franks stressed that while each municipality is expected to nominate one representative (and ideally one deputy) to attend meetings and to be the point of contact for that municipality, this representative should be considered to be the focal point of a local assessment team for each municipality which includes people on whom the representative may consult for information, advice, and help in completing the various questionnaires and worksheets that each municipality will be asked to submit.
- Sample Letters Inviting Municipalities to Participate in the Plan: While the schedule currently shows completion by 11/7/08, these could be provided by URS at the same time as Guidance Memo #1.

#### Task 3 – Project Initiation Kickoff Presentation with the Planning Committee

- A date of Thursday November 20<sup>th</sup> 2008 was tentatively agreed for the kickoff meeting, with the venue to be confirmed by the County. URS would be willing to attend two meetings in the afternoon and evening of 11/20/08, in order to maximize the attendance by municipal representatives, many of whom hold full-time jobs in addition to part-time municipal positions. Mr. Jensen suggested that the letter of invitation could request that the attendee indicate a preference regarding an afternoon or evening meeting, and the actual number and timing of meetings may be altered to reflect

the overall preference. It was agreed that after the kickoff meeting all subsequent meetings with consultant participation would not be split or duplicated.

- It was agreed that the kickoff meeting would be restricted to representatives of municipalities and certain County departments/entities. It was agreed that the County Legislature and County Executive would need to be represented at the kickoff meeting. A total attendance of around 50 people was therefore anticipated. Participation of the public and other stakeholders in subsequent meetings could be decided in the future.
- In addition to preparing the minutes, URS will prepare the sign-in sheet, agenda, handouts, and a Powerpoint presentation. The County will issue meeting notices, invitations, and final minutes.

#### Task 4 – Outreach Tools

- Fact Sheet: While the schedule currently shows completion by 11/22/08, a draft could be provided by URS at the same time as Guidance Memo #1 and the sample letters. The final version will require some photographs to illustrate the occurrence of natural hazards, ideally showing a variety of hazards in different locations in Rockland County. URS requested that County staff provide a selection of photos for consideration. It is intended that the final version of the fact sheet will be available for distribution at the kickoff meeting.
- Website: The intention is that URS will provide material in the form of a Powerpoint file giving examples and suggestions for a web page linked to the Rockland County government website and dedicated to all aspects of the hazard mitigation plan. This webpage should provide reference information for anyone interested in the plan, as well as a depository for all associated documents and deliverables ultimately including the final plan itself. Currently the County's website services are provided by an external contractor, but the cost of including extra pages to host the mitigation plan is not significant. It was suggested by URS that development of the website by the County would be suitable for inclusion in the County's in-kind match. While the schedule currently shows the provision of website support components by 11/22/08, URS anticipates that it could be provided earlier.

#### Task 9B – Land Use and Development Trends

- URS tabled an example of the Land Use and Development Questionnaire that was used for a previous plan. Mr. Schuetz volunteered to compile the County's response, which will include county population estimates projected to 2035, and information

from a current build-out analysis. The current intention is that the LUDT Questionnaire will be distributed at the kickoff meeting. Concerns were expressed regarding the currently scheduled two-week turnaround time for this deliverable, but it was stressed that the questionnaire comprises only two questions and responses need only be brief summaries of the situation in each municipality.

### **Other Items Discussed**

- County staff requested that in their presentation at the kickoff meeting URS lay out in advance the formal deliverables that will be required of the municipalities in addition to the wish list:
  - Land Use and Development Trends Questionnaire
  - Capabilities Assessment Questionnaire
  - Review of Draft Hazard Identification
  - Evaluation/Prioritization of Mitigation Actions Worksheet
  - Implementation of Mitigation Actions Worksheet

Ms. Foley and Mr. Franks described how the last two deliverables (which will be distributed and submitted simultaneously) are critical to FEMA's assessment of a municipality's participation. Failure of any municipality to identify at least one specific mitigation action will prevent FEMA from approving the plan for that municipality.

- During the meeting Ms. Foley clarified that approval of the final plan by FEMA is not dependent on the full participation of all 24 towns and villages in Rockland County; failure of any one municipality to provide FEMA with evidence that they have participated in the plan will not jeopardize approval of the overall plan. Regardless of how many municipalities actively participate, URS will compile the risk assessment sections of the plan to cover all municipalities in Rockland County, so that future plan updates will be easier if non-participating municipalities decide to join at a later date.
- County staff requested that all plan literature and deliverables clarify from the outset that at this time the plan is to consider natural hazards only, to avoid unnecessary focus by the municipalities on made-made/technological hazards such as terrorism.