

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

The New Hampshire Bureau of Emergency Management (NH BEM) has a goal for all communities within the State of New Hampshire to establish local hazard mitigation plans as a means to reduce and mitigate future losses from natural hazard events. The NH BEM outlined a process whereby communities throughout the State may be eligible for grants and other assistance upon completion of a local hazard mitigation plan. A handbook entitled *Hazard Mitigation Planning for New Hampshire Communities* was created by NH BEM to assist communities in developing local plans.

The *Salem Hazard Mitigation Plan* was prepared by participants from the Town of Salem Hazard Mitigation Team. The *Salem Hazard Mitigation Plan* serves as a strategic planning tool for use by the Town of Salem in its efforts to identify and mitigate the future impacts of natural and/or manmade hazard events. Upon adoption of the *Plan* by the Salem Board of Selectmen and approval by the Salem Planning Board, it will become an official appendix to the Salem Master Plan.

### Methodology

On August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2004 the Salem Emergency Management Director and the Salem Community Development Director met to discuss a strategy as how to develop a Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Town. At that meeting the Community Development Director developed the content of the *Plan* using the nine-step process set forth in the *Hazard Mitigation Planning for New Hampshire Communities*. On August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2004, the Salem Emergency Management Director organized the first meeting with emergency management officials from the Town of Salem to begin the initial planning stages of the *Salem Hazard Mitigation Plan*. This meeting precipitated the development of the *Natural Hazards Mitigation Committee* (herein after, the *Committee*). The following is a summary of the nine-step process conducted to compile the *Plan*.

#### Step 1 – Map the Hazards

Participants in the *Committee* identified areas where damage from historic natural disasters have occurred and areas where critical man-made facilities and other features may be at risk in the future for loss of life, property damage, environmental pollution and other risk factors. The GIS (Global Information System) division of Salem's ITS (Information Technology Services) Department generated a set of base maps with GIS that were used in the process of identifying past and future hazards. Through the use of these maps individual properties (identified by tax map and lot number) affected by each of the hazards could be identified. By cross referencing the map and lot numbers of affected properties with the Salem Assessors' Office the affected properties could be subdivided by land use. This process allowed critical facilities at risk to be quickly located.

#### Step 2 – Identify Critical Facilities and Areas of Concern

Participants in the *Committee* then identified facilities and areas that were considered to be important to the Town for emergency management purposes, for provision of utilities and community services, evacuation routes, and for recreational and social value.

### **Step 3 – Identify Existing Mitigation Strategies**

After collecting detailed information on each critical facility in Salem, the Committee identified existing Town mitigation strategies relative to drought, flooding, wind, fire, ice and snow events and earthquakes.

### **Step 4 – Identify the Gaps in Existing Mitigation Strategies**

The existing strategies were then reviewed by the Committee for coverage and effectiveness, as well as the need for improvement.

### **Step 5 – Identify Potential Mitigation Strategies**

A list was developed of additional hazard mitigation actions and strategies for the Town of Salem.

### **Step 6 – Prioritize and Develop the Action Plan**

The proposed hazard mitigation actions and strategies were reviewed and each strategy was rated (good, average, or poor) for its effectiveness according to several factors (*e.g.*, technical and administrative applicability, political and social acceptability, legal authority, environmental impact, financial feasibility). Each factor was then scored and all scores were totaled for each strategy. Strategies were ranked by overall score for preliminary prioritization then reviewed again under Step 7.

### **Step 7 - Determine Priorities**

The preliminary prioritization list was reviewed in order to make changes and determine a final prioritization for new hazard mitigation actions and existing protection strategy improvements identified in previous steps.

### **Step 8 - Develop Implementation Strategy**

Using the chart provided under Step 9 in the handbook, an implementation strategy was created which included person(s) responsible for implementation (who), a timeline for completion (when), and a funding source and/or technical assistance source (how) for each identified hazard mitigation actions.

### **Step 9 - Adopt and Monitor the *Plan***

The Committee compiled the results of Steps 1 to 8 in a draft document. This draft *Plan* was reviewed by members of the Committee and by Salem's municipal staff. The draft *Plan* was placed on the Town of Salem's website for the public, neighboring communities, agencies, businesses, and other interested parties to review and make comments via email. A letter was sent to the abutting communities of Pelham, Windham, Derry, Atkinson, and Methuen, MA, to insure their opportunity to review the *Plan* prior to finalization. Two duly noticed public meetings were held in accordance with the public outreach and review process indicated at the end of this chapter. These meetings allowed the community to provide comments and suggestions for the *Plan* in person, prior to the document being finalized. The draft was revised to incorporate comment from the Selectmen, Planning Board and general public; then submitted to the NHBEM and FEMA Region I for their review and comments. Any changes required by NHBEM and FEMA were made and a revised draft document was then submitted to the Salem Board of Selectmen and the Salem Planning Board for their final review. The intent of these public hearings was to adopt the *Plan* by the Board of Selectman, and include the *Plan* as an appendix to the Salem Master Plan by the Salem Planning Board.

## **Hazard Mitigation Goals and Objectives of the State of New Hampshire**

The *State of New Hampshire Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan*, which was prepared and is maintained by the New Hampshire Bureau of Emergency Management (NH BEM), sets forth the following related to overall hazard mitigation goals and objectives for the State of New Hampshire:

1. To improve upon the protection of the general population, the citizens of the State and guests, from all natural and man-made hazards.
2. To reduce the potential impact of natural and man-made disasters on the State's Critical Support Services.
3. To reduce the potential impact of natural and man-made disasters on Critical Facilities in the State.
4. To reduce the potential impact of natural and man-made disasters on the State's infrastructure.
5. To improve Emergency Preparedness.
6. Improve the State's Disaster Response and Recovery Capability.
7. To reduce the potential impact of natural and man-made disasters on private property.
8. To reduce the potential impact of natural and man-made disasters on the State's economy.
9. To reduce the potential impact of natural and man-made disasters on the State's natural environment.
10. To reduce the State's liability with respect to natural and man-made hazards generally.
11. To reduce the potential impact of natural and man-made disasters on the State's specific historic treasures and interests as well as other tangible and intangible characteristics which add to the quality of life of the citizens and guests of the State.
12. To identify, introduce and implement cost effective Hazard Mitigation measures so as to accomplish the State's Goals and Objectives and to raise the awareness of, and acceptance of Hazard Mitigation generally.

***Through the adoption of this Plan the Town of Salem concurs and adopts these goals and objectives.***

***THIS SECTION NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED***

<b><i>Meeting Date time</i></b>	<b><i>Meeting venue</i></b>	<b><i>Meeting purpose</i></b>	<b><i>Meeting result</i></b>
	Hazard mitigation committee	Determine scope of project and establish roles and responsibilities for plan preparation. Establish committee	Establish staff committee Delegated plan development and developed resource allocation.

<b><i>Board or Committee</i></b>	<b><i>Composition / Role</i></b>
Hazard Mitigation Committee	Command and professional staff from Fire, Community development, Public Works, and Police. Established to developed plan resources, collect background information and write objective sections of the report.