

# CITY OF THORNE BAY'S HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

June 2011

Newsletter 2

*This newsletter discusses the preparation of the City of Thorne Bay's Hazard Mitigation Plan. It has been prepared to inform interested agencies, stakeholders, and the public about the project and to solicit comments. This newsletter can also be viewed on the State of Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Website at <http://www.ready.alaska.gov>.*

The City of Thorne Bay was one of six communities selected by the State of Alaska, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM) for a Hazard Mitigation Planning (HMP) development project. The plan identifies natural hazards that affect the community including earthquake, flood, ground failure, tsunami, volcano, severe weather, and wildland fire. The HMP also identifies the people and facilities potentially at risk and ways to mitigate hazards. The public participation and planning process has been documented as part of the project. The Boutet Co. Inc. contracted with URS Corporation (URS) to assist in preparing the HMP. The Boutet Co. Inc. will prepare a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program project application for an eligible project identified within the City's Mitigation Strategy.

## What is Hazard Mitigation?

Across the United States, natural disasters have increasingly caused injury, death, property damage, and business and government service interruptions. The toll on individuals, families, and businesses can be very high. The time, money, and emotional effort required to respond to and recover from these disasters take public resources and attention away from other important programs and problems.

The people and property in the State of Alaska are at risk from a variety of hazards that have the potential for causing human injury, property damage, or environmental harm.

The purpose of hazard mitigation is to implement projects that eliminate the risk or reduce the severity of hazards on people and property. Mitigation programs may include short-term and long-term activities to reduce the hazards, reduce exposure to hazards, or reduce the effects of hazards. Mitigation could include education, and construction projects. Hazard mitigation activity examples include relocating buildings, developing or strengthening building codes, and educating residents and building owners.

## Why Do We Need A Hazard Mitigation Plan?

A community is only eligible to receive grant money for mitigation programs by preparing and adopting a HMP. Communities must have an approved mitigation plan to receive grant funding from the Federal Emergency

Management Agency (FEMA) for eligible mitigation projects. The Boutet Co. Inc. will work with the City of Thorne Bay to develop an eligible project grant application after the HMP is approved by DHS&EM and FEMA and adopted by the City.

## The Planning Process

There are very specific federal requirements that must be met when preparing a hazard mitigation plan. These requirements are commonly referred to as the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, or DMA2000 criteria. Information about the criteria may be found on the Internet at: <http://www.fema.gov/plan/mitplanning/guidance.shtm>

The DMA2000 requires the plan to document the following topics:

- Planning process
- Hazard identification
- Risk and vulnerability assessments
- Goals
- Mitigation programs, actions, and projects
- A resolution from the community adopting the plan

FEMA has prepared Planning Guidance which is available at: <http://www.fema.gov/library/viewRecord.do?id=4225>; and "How to" Guides that explain in detail how each of the DMA2000 requirements is met. These guides are available at <http://www.fema.gov/plan/mitplanning/resources.shtm>. The Thorne Bay Hazard Mitigation Plan will follow those guidelines.

In January 2011 the planning process kicked-off by establishing a local planning committee and holding a public meeting. During the meeting the planning committee examined the full spectrum of hazards listed in the State Hazard Mitigation Plan and identified seven hazards that the Thorne Bay HMP would address.

After the first public meeting, City staff and URS began identifying critical facilities, compiling the hazard profiles, assessing capabilities, and conducting the risk and vulnerability assessments for the identified hazards. Critical facilities are facilities that are critical to the recovery of a community in the event of a disaster. After collection of this information, URS helped to determine which critical facilities and estimated populations are vulnerable to the identified hazards in Thorne Bay.

A mitigation strategy was the next component of the plan to be developed. Understanding the community's local capabilities and using information gathered from the public and the local planning committee and the expertise of the consultants and agency staff, a mitigation strategy was developed. The mitigation strategy is based on an evaluation of the hazards, and the assets at risk from those hazards. Mitigation goals and a list of potential actions/projects were developed as the foundation of the mitigation strategy. Mitigation goals are defined as general guidelines that explain what a community wants to achieve in terms of hazard and loss prevention. Goals are positively stated future situations that are typically long-range, policy-oriented statements representing community-wide visions. Mitigation actions/projects are undertaken in order to achieve your stated objectives. In April 2011, the local planning committee identified actions/projects for each hazard that focus on six categories: prevention, property protection, public education and awareness, natural resource protection, emergency services, and structural projects. The mitigation actions identified as a high priority by the planning team are listed below, and explained in more detail in the plan.

The selected actions/projects will be implemented over the next five years. A maintenance plan has also been developed for the hazard mitigation plan. It outlines how the community will monitor progress on achieving the actions/projects that will help meet the stated goals and objectives, as well as an opportunity for continued public involvement.

The draft plan is available in the City Office and on the State website (<http://www.ready.alaska.gov>) for public review and comment. Comments should be made via email, fax, or phone to the contact person below and be received no later than May 20, 2011. The plan will be provided to DHS&EM and FEMA for their approval prior to formal adoption by the City Council of Thorne Bay.

## The Planning Committee

The plan was developed with the assistance from a planning committee consisting of a cross section of the community. Planning committee members who helped with development of the plan include Mayor Jim Gould, Team Leader Wayne Benner, Harvey McDonald, and Denise Boule. URS Corporation, The Boutet Co. Inc., and DHS&EM are also providing assistance to the planning committee.

Sample of the City of Thorne Bay's Mitigation Actions. Review the draft HMP for a complete list.		
The City will aggressively manage their existing plans to ensure they incorporate mitigation planning provisions into all community planning processes such as comprehensive, capital improvement, and land use plans, etc. to demonstrate multi-benefit considerations and facilitate using multiple funding source consideration.	Develop and incorporate mitigation provisions and recommendations into zoning ordinances and community development processes to maintain the floodway and protect critical infrastructure and private residences from other hazard areas.	Develop and incorporate building ordinances commensurate with building codes to reflect survivability from flood, fire, wind, seismic, and other hazards to ensure occupant safety.
Identify and pursue funding opportunities to implement mitigation actions.	Update public emergency notification procedures and develop an outreach program for potential hazard impacts or events.	Determine and implement most cost beneficial and feasible mitigation actions for locations with repetitive flooding and significant damages or road closures.
Purchase and install generators with main power distribution disconnect switches for identified and prioritized critical facilities susceptible to short term power disruption. (i.e. first responder and medical facilities, schools, correctional facilities, and water and sewage treatment plants, etc.)	Maintain and update erosion hazard locations, identify critical facilities potentially impacted and develop mitigation initiatives such as bank stabilization or facility relocation to prevent or reduce the threat.	Update the storm water management plan to include regulations to control runoff, both for flood reduction and to minimize saturated soils on steep slopes that can cause landslides.
Complete a landslide location inventory; identify threatened critical facilities and other buildings and infrastructure.	Develop and implement programs to coordinate maintenance and mitigation activities to reduce risk to public infrastructure from severe winter storms.	Implement and enforce the most current State adopted building codes to ensure structures can withstand winter storm hazards such as high winds, rain, water, and snow.
Develop water plant protection or sustainability plan.	Develop Community Wildland Fire Protection Plan.	

*We encourage you to learn more about the City of Thorne Bay's Hazard Mitigation Plan. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep you informed and to allow you every opportunity to voice your opinion regarding this important project. If you have any questions, comments, or requests for more information, please contact:*

Scott Simmons  
 URS Corporation  
 560 E 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 100  
 Anchorage, Alaska 99503  
 (907) 563.3366  
 (800) 909.6787  
 scott\_simmons@urscorp.com

Jim Galanes (Project Application Development)  
 The Boutet Co., Inc.  
 56927 Old Seward Highway, Suite 201  
 Anchorage, AK 99518  
 907.522.6776  
 jgalanes@theboutetcompany.com

Ervin Petty or Chris Tomsen  
 DHS&EM  
 P.O. Box 5750  
 Fort Richardson, Alaska 99506  
 (907) 428.7015  
 (800) 478.2337  
 Ervin.petty@alaska.gov or