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## **CITY OF LYNN HAVEN COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM PROGRESS REPORT 2020**

On July 28, 2015, the City of Lynn Haven's City Commissioners' adopted Resolution No. 2015-07-618, updating the Bay County Local Mitigation Strategy Plan (LMS). Upon acceptance, the City committed to continue participation in the updating and expansion of the Bay County LMS. This report shall serve as part of the City's effort to continue to update and expand on the LMS plan, and shall serve as the annual progress report required as part of the City's continued participation in the National Flood Insurance Programs (NFIP) and the Community Rating System (CRS). At the present time Bay County is in the process of updating the LMS.

### **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of the LMS plan is to identify strategies to help in the mitigation of future natural disasters, including flooding. The plan is intended as a guide or planning document to help the City achieve this. Communities that adopt a hazard mitigation plan must update their plan documents and processes to continue to remain eligible for various pre and post - disaster grant programs, funding opportunities, and other mitigation programs. In 2015, Lynn Haven, Bay County, and other municipalities undertook the process to update the LMS plan to avail our communities of these opportunities and programs. During this process, representatives from the County and local municipalities completed the update to the LMS plan through a coordinated effort. Once the Florida Division of Emergency Management and Federal Emergency Management Agency found the update to Bay Count LMS plan compliant with federal standards, the City of Lynn Haven has continued to coordinate with other local government jurisdictions to keep the LMS updated and monitor the progress of the goals and objectives specified in the plan.

The City of Lynn Haven, as well as the whole Bay County, is susceptible to a variety of natural hazards which endanger the health and safety of its citizens, jeopardize its economic vitality, and imperil the quality of its environment. Historical experience has demonstrated that the County and its municipalities can be effected by flooding, winds associated with tropical storm/hurricanes, tornadoes, and wildfires.

Storm hazards have the potential to seriously impact the general population. All residence near

water are subject to flooding during severe rainfall events. Bayous may overflow, wetlands reach their capacity, and lake levels rise up and can inundate surrounding property. Areas such as North Bay and West Bay are subject to flooding, as are properties surrounding smaller bodies of water. The City is relatively flat, water flows over land and tends to gather in depressed areas. Property that is only slightly lower than surrounding areas can become a holding pond for stormwater.

It is the mission of the Bay County Local Mitigation Strategy team to continue to evaluate the causes of vulnerabilities to natural disasters and hazards, and implement mitigation programs that will alleviate the sources of those vulnerabilities in order to establish a disaster resistant community. The LMS is a comprehensive multi-jurisdictional plan addressing the relevant hazards of the seven incorporated jurisdictions and unincorporated Bay County. For each incorporated jurisdiction and unincorporated Bay County the risk assessment will map and quantify in detail the potential impacts from flood damage, which is the greatest hazard risk to the County, and in more generalized terms potential damage from storm winds and wildfires. Bay County and the municipalities have more information and data on flooding issues, and consequently, have provided more detail for that hazard. Winds have been categorized as a high risk to all regions of the County, and wildfires as a moderate risk. There is less historical data available on these hazards; therefore, less detail is provided on their potential impacts. Sinkholes have been included in the analysis, however they are considered to be a much lower risk.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVE OF THE LMS**

Bay County's Local Mitigation Strategy identifies these natural hazards and assesses their potential impacts on each of Bay County's incorporated jurisdictions and unincorporated areas, focusing primarily on the asset inventory, existing land uses, and critical facilities. Based on these hazard identifications and risk assessments, the LMS proposes appropriate hazard mitigation projects to reduce damage or impairment to the homes, businesses, schools, and government offices.

Hazard mitigation is any sustained action taken to minimize long-term risk to people and property from natural hazards and their effects. This definition distinguishes actions that have a long-term impact from those that are more closely associated with immediate preparedness, response, and recovery activities. Hazard mitigation is the only phase of emergency management specifically intended to break the cycle of damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage.

## **IDENTIFYING AREAS VULNERABLE TO HAZARDS AND APPROPRIATE MITIGATIONS ACTIONS**

The City of Lynn Haven is concerned about repetitive flooding and has an active program aimed at helping citizens protect themselves and their property from future flooding. While tidal surges associated with hurricanes and issue outside of the City's realm of control, we have enacted stricter development guidelines in the Special Flood Hazard Areas located throughout the community. Additionally, our street department and Stormwater Division are constantly making improvements to the drainage system.

## REPETITIVE FLOOD LOSS PROPERTIES

As of April 30, 2020, the City had 65 properties listed on FEMA’s repetitive loss (RL) list; only 1 is a severe repetitive loss (SRL) property. This SRL is in the North Bay area—see below. Properties have been the recipients of flood risk reduction benefits from City stormwater projects, particularly in the area of 17th Street. These stormwater management efforts are described below.

Twelve of the listed RL properties are primarily X zone properties that are scattered through the City, and are subject to flooding from heavy rains. The City has been and plans to continue to work on drainage projects to alleviate flooding for these areas.

The types of structures (and their numbers) on the Lynn Haven FEMA RL list are as follows:

- Other residential 1
- Single Family 64

## REPETITIVE FLOOD LOSS AREAS



*North Bay area*

There are a total of 452 properties listed within the Repetitive Flood Loss Areas. Of these 452 properties, seven (7) properties have been recently demolished. These are:

- 99 Kentucky Ave (AE 7’)
- 604 W 3<sup>RD</sup> St (AE 8’)
- 415 Montana (AE 8’)
- 504 Tennessee Ave (AE7’)
- 606 W 8<sup>TH</sup> St (X)
- 801 Alabama Ave (X)
- 1105 New Jersey Ave (AE7’)

North Bay/Lynn Haven Bayou area: There are 31 listed RL properties in the North Bay/ Lynn Haven Bayou area, including one SRL property. Many of these parcels are in the mapped flood hazard area, zones VE and AE; others are X zone parcels. Flooding in this part of the City is due primarily to coastal storm surge waters from the North Bay and Lynn Haven Bayou. The properties are older (in many case pre-FIRM), and would be mitigated primarily through elevation, acquisition/demolition or mitigation rebuild grant projects.

As willing owners are found, the City will assist RL owners in applying for federal funding to mitigate, plus storm damage from Hurricane Michael has activated the requirement to elevate properties as they apply for permits to rebuild.

North Harbor area: The properties in these neighborhoods were built around finger canals and a tributary that extend eastward from the Upper Goose Bayou. Six (6) RL properties are found here. Flooding in this area is from storm surge; again, the properties are older (in many case pre-FIRM), and would be mitigated primarily through elevation, acquisition/demolition or mitigation rebuild grant projects. If willing owners are found, the City will assist the owners in applying for federal funding to mitigate.

The City of Lynn Haven has an aggressive program for maintaining and upgrading stormwater conveyances throughout the City. Our ongoing maintenance includes digging existing open ditches from culvert inlet to culvert inlet or outfall and replacing culvert pipes that have begun to deteriorate with either galvanized steel or aluminum pipes. The last five years of maintenance has resulted in 6,555 lineal feet, or 1.24 miles of piped system being replaced or added to. There has also been 115,545 lineal feet, or 21.88 miles of open conveyances being maintained.

| <b>YEAR</b>    | <b>LINEAR FEET INTALLED / REPLACED</b> | <b>LINEAR FEET OF DITCHES DUG/ CLEANED</b> |
|----------------|--|--|
| Up to May 2020 | 1,180                                  | 20,415                                     |
| 2019           | 2,070                                  | 29,810                                     |
| 2018           | 1,555                                  | 16,260                                     |
| 2017           | 2,705                                  | 24,650                                     |
| 2016           | 1,480                                  | 24,410                                     |
| <b>TOTALS</b>  | <b>6,555</b>                           | <b>115,545</b>                             |

## **Current and Future Flood Mitigation Efforts**

### **17<sup>th</sup> Street drainage project**

The City has a deep stormwater conveyance ditch on East 17<sup>th</sup> Street. The City had for a number of years been constructing box culverts and piping to alleviate local stormwater flooding caused by this very deep, dangerous ditch, which due to financial constraints was being being piped in

phases. It was an ongoing mitigation project for years but is now finally complete at a cost of almost \$4 million, and has helped to relieve flooding in the Pine Forest Estates area.

### **Abandoned Railroad Easement Drainage Project**

An abandoned railroad track runs diagonally through the city; this old RR bed impounds water during heavy rains. The city is investigating the possibility of using this easement for stormwater drainage facilities. Properties in this area are primarily in the X zone, and drainage work will alleviate this flood problem for these properties.

Other current or future flood mitigation projects include:

- The City has recently applied for HMGP funds to address flooding for 19 projects throughout the City.
- The City has recently awarded stormwater improvement projects for the 1600 Block of Pennsylvania Avenue and the 1200 Block of Georgia Avenue to alleviate flooding in these two areas.

### **FLOOD SAFETY PROPERTY PROTECTION MEASURES APPROPRIATE FOR THE HAZARD**

Lynn Haven has implemented specific measures that result in greater protection of properties. The Building Department strictly enforces elevation certificate requirements, surveyor's benchmark regulations and other flood safety measures recommended by the NFIP. To overcome the problem of drainage issues the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) requires that for new development stormwater runoff cannot exceed predevelopment conditions. The ULDC also takes the local building code above NFIP development stands and require that homes not located in the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) designated flood zones, are elevated to at least one foot above the crown of the road. Homes built in A and AE zones require one foot above base flood elevation (BFE).

### **ENHANCED PUBLIC AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING**

As a participant in the Community Rating System (CRS) program and working within the defined goals of the Local Mitigation Strategy Plan. The City of Lynn Haven regularly promotes public awareness of flood risk, as well as other natural disasters. Through the use of their website, informative articles in local newspapers, relaying specific messages in monthly water bills, and annual direct mailings to the 452 properties located in two repetitive loss areas, the CRS/Flood Awareness Team constantly strives to keep residents aware of the potential for flooding, mitigation suggestions, and the importance of flood insurance. The City also sends annual mailings to local real estate agents, insurance agents, and mortgage companies to make them aware of these efforts and to encourage their participation to help keep residents aware of the threat of flooding, flood protection measures for property owners and the need for flood insurance.

The City has been a participant in updating the Bay County Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) Plan, adopting the Bay County LMS Plan by resolution. Due to the fact that the Bay County LMS Plan has been adopted by the City, the City remains eligible for various pre- and post-disaster grant programs and other mitigation programs to help fund projects. More specific information on property protection and safety measures utilized by the City can be found on the City of Lynn Haven website and at the City of Lynn Haven Building Department.

The public is involved when plans and projects are being proposed, discussed or approved, by their involvement in the planning process. The public is invited to attend public workshops. The City coordinates with Bay County, therefore, has fallen under the umbrella of Bay County's planning, public outreach, and public participation processes Planning Board meetings and City Commission meetings. In this way they have the opportunity to comment. In addition, board members are also members of the public.

## **FLOOD RELATED PUBLIC INFORMATION ACTIVITIES CURRENTLY BEING IMPLEMENTED WITHIN THE COMMUNITY**

The City of Lynn Haven is located within Bay County. The Bay County Planning and Zoning Libraries currently contain a number of countywide FEMA booklets, brochures, and historic and current FIRMS in the reference section. Public information pages on the topic of flooding, hurricane safety, and other natural disasters are published each year in the Bay County Yellow Pages Phone Book. The Panama City News Herald issues a "Hurricane Guide" every year that shows flood-prone areas in the County, and provides a wealth of other flood related information. At various times during the year, flood protection information is included in the newsletter sent out by individual municipalities, the Chamber of Commerce, and various local companies.

The Bay County Emergency Management / Emergency Operations Center (EOC) provides countywide presentations to increase flood awareness at local schools, nursing homes, and a variety of other public and private organizations. The Fire Chief (head of the Bay County EOC), is frequently hosted on radio and television programs where he explains the flood safety program, and advises where to get additional assistance and information. The Emergency Management organization publishes evacuation maps which are also downloadable from the Bay County Emergency Management website. In addition, that organization publishes a booklet, "A Pocket Guide to Emergency Services in Bay County," which is distributed at a variety of public events throughout the year.

## **LMS MITIGATION INITIATIVES**

Due to the fact that the Bay County LMS Plan has been adopted by the City, the City remains eligible for various pre- and post- disaster grant programs and other mitigation programs to help fund projects listed in the Mitigation Initiative Prioritization List.

## **PLANNING PROCESS**

Planning with regard to how the City will deal with its flooding problem has necessarily involved the Department of Public Works, Development & Planning Department, Building Department, and the Fire Department as well as the contracted City Engineer. Planning to identify and mitigate for flooding requires a coordinated effort, as seen through such things as the NPDES program, and the Technical Review Committee (TRC) meetings held to review and comment upon proposed development within the City. The City has been a participant in updating the Bay County LMS Plan, and adopting by resolution.

The planning process with regards to floodplain management is now being coordinated by the City Planning Director and will be conducted through a committee composed of staff from those departments that will be implementing the majority of the plans recommendations. The committee will have representation from the following departments:

- Building Department
- Public Works
- Code Enforcement
- Development & Planning
- Emergency Management
- Engineering
- Park & Recreation

The public is involved when plans and projects are being proposed, discussed or approved, through their involvement in the planning process. The public is invited to attend public workshops, Planning Board and Commission Meetings when they are able to comment upon proposed projects. In addition, board members are also comprised of citizens. It is proposed that the planning process will look for ways to reach out to the community members to actively engage them further into the planning process.

It is proposed that there will be at least one public meeting at the end of the planning process where proposals are explained and the general public can ask question and submit comments.

The City coordinates with Bay County, therefore, has fallen under the umbrella of Bay County's planning, public outreach, and public participation process.

## **PROMOTE COMPLIANCE WITH STATE & FEDERAL PROGRAMS**

There are a number of State and federal programs, policies, and regulations that encourage local governments to develop and adopt hazard mitigation strategy plans. Since adopting the Bay County LMS Plan on July 28, 2015 by Resolution No. 2015-07-618, the City has promoted and continues to encourage consistency with these programs, policies, and regulations. In order to comply with these policies and regulations of the NFIP, the City amended portions of its floodplain management regulations and adopted the revised FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps in 2009.

Since that time, the City has continued to enforce all applicable floodplain management regulations and requirements.

## **ENHANCED LOCAL POLICIES FOR HAZARD MITIGATION CAPABILITY**

The Bay County office of Emergency Management warns the community of approaching hazards through the Emergency Alert System (WFSY 98.5 FM radio, WPAP 92.5 FM radio, WJHG TV (channel 7) and WMBB TV (channel 13). This service provides time for homeowners to take necessary steps to secure valuable property and to evacuate safely. This service is widely publicized through all media outlets (radio, print, and television), frequent Emergency Management, County, Red Cross, and extension office seminars, as well as the Telephone Book Yellow Pages.

While regulatory measures offer some degree of protection, the City outreach programs stress that it is up to the homeowner or renter to take additional measures to ensure that their homes and properties are protected. Through the City Community Rating System (CRS) outreach programs, homeowners and renters are made aware of the additional safety measures they can take, insurance protection that is available to them, as well as the availability of grant funds. For example, and existing, older structure may be permanently elevated, so that the lowest floor is at least one foot above base flood elevation. Homeowners are also counseled to locate heating, hot water system, electrical panels, and all components of the electrical system (including the wiring) and utilities are above the flood level. Repetitive Loss property owners are made aware of grant programs that can assist in elevating their home, buying the property outright, or demolishing and rebuilding the structure.

Hurricanes bring high winds that damage inland and coastal areas. If the area immediately surrounding a structure contains trees, outbuilding, trashcans, yard debris, or other materials that can be moved by the wind, it will likely cause damage to the structure. Citizens are advised to bring in outdoor possessions, such as lawn furniture, grills, and trashcans, or any other items that become flying debris or secure them in place during high winds. Fuel Tanks should be anchored.

Permanent hurricane shutters provide long term means of protecting a home. Temporary method of securing windows, such as plywood, will protect glass from wind born debris damage, but are time consuming to install with every storm threat. Although the City and Bay County do not provide direct assistance with these types of measures, citizens can become better informed through additional public education activities. The builders Service inspectors are trained on flood proofing/ prevention measure.

More specific information on property protection and safety measures utilized by the City can be found at [www.cityoflynnhaven.com](http://www.cityoflynnhaven.com) and the City's Building Department, as well [www.baycountyfl.gov](http://www.baycountyfl.gov), Bay County Emergency Services office, County Planning and Zoning, and the Bay County Libraries reference section. The libraries also provide computers and residents can

access the FEMA website as well as the County GIS website at no charge. The Bay County website contains elevation certificates from 1990 through current time. FEMA flood maps, evacuation zone maps, insurance information, properties with LOMAs and other flood related resources.

The Florida Building Code has recently been amended to comply with FEMA/NFIP standards. City staff has coordinated with State Officials to draft and adopt new standards based on the State's model ordinance that has aligned the City's floodplain management regulations with both State and Federal requirements. Two ordinances were adopted in April 2019 in order to bring the City's regulations into compliance (Ordinance 1075 and Ordinance 1076). During the past several years, the City has adopted and implemented policies in its Comprehensive Growth Development Plan that are aimed at enhancing hazard mitigation. To ensure timely and safe evacuation from coastal areas, Lynn Haven has implemented land use and growth management policies to maintain a roadway clearance time for a hurricane evacuation of 16 hours for a category 3 storm at high tourist occupancy. Policies have been put in place to direct future growth away from coastal high hazard areas and buffer from environmentally sensitive areas, including low lying wetlands and tributaries. The City has adopted policies to limit increases in densities, and restrict development and redevelopment in vulnerable coastal areas. Most recently, the City has adopted regulations to control erosion and sediment during development and construction activities. Erosion and sediments controls will ultimately reduce the frequency of repairs to the drainage and storm sewers, and will have a long term benefit for drainage and stormwater runoff in the City.

## **YEAR END STATUS OF THE COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM (CRS) PROGRAM**

Since the last Community Rating System (CRS) Annual Recertification, City staff continues to coordinate with Bay County and other local municipalities concerning updates to LMS Plan and hazard mitigation efforts. The City has considered improvements to deficient stormwater infrastructure a top priority. The City has completed a number of drainage projects that will aid in controlling stormwater runoff and help relieve areas from flooding. To help further the City's efforts to mitigate flood hazards, as specified above, the City has adopted new floodplain management regulations that align with the standards now incorporated in the Florida Building Code and FEMA/NFIP requirements.

