



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Emergency Management

MICHAEL M. CLINE
State Coordinator

JANET L. CLEMENTS
Deputy Coordinator

L. RALPH JONES, JR.
Deputy Coordinator

10501 Trade Court
Richmond, Virginia 23236-3713
(804) 897-6500
(TDD) 674-2417
FAX (804) 897-6506

MEMORANDUM

To: Virginia localities developing or participating in the development of a Hazard Mitigation Plan

From: Michelle Pope
Acting State Hazard Mitigation Officer

Date: November 18, 2003

Re: Mitigation Planning Guidance #4
VDEM Priorities for Use of Available Planning Funds to Support Mitigation Planning in Virginia

In order to support the development of local hazard mitigation plans within the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) is providing assistance to its local and regional jurisdictions in several ways. Included among these efforts is the establishment of the flexible criteria necessary to determine where to distribute the limited mitigation planning funds. The paragraphs below describe these criteria, and how they have been and will be implemented as planning funds are made available for this process.

Criteria used to distribute available hazard mitigation planning funds

VDEM originally planned to distribute the limited planning funds first to those areas with the greater risks of hazard events and/or with the greater population densities. Unfortunately, several disasters occurred in 2001 and 2002, prompting a reconsideration of those priorities. Since that time the following criteria, in decreasing order of importance, have proven to be those used to determine what jurisdictions will receive planning funds as they are available.

a. Areas with recent disaster events:

Virginia has found that areas with recent events are more likely to be interested in performing the mitigation planning process. Further, funding sometimes is available following a disaster for this type of planning. When a hazard occurs in an area that currently does not have a mitigation plan, every effort is made to encourage the governing jurisdiction to develop a mitigation plan using the available funding. When a hazard event occurs in an area that already has or is working on a mitigation plan, any available planning money will be funneled to other areas based on the remaining priorities on this list. Acting on this priority led to funding for the Town of Bluefield and Planning District Commissions (PDCs) 1 through 6 in southwest Virginia following the 2001 and 2002 flood events in those areas.

b. Regional plans before local plans:

Due to currently limited funding sources for mitigation planning, VDEM determined that the most effective method of distributing the available funds for mitigation planning purposes was through the regional PDCs. The Virginia PDCs are recognized, well-organized, and regional planning agencies that maintain regular interaction with their constituent jurisdictions. Most PDCs have staff that is knowledgeable in the necessary

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planning processes and the corresponding methodologies. They are knowledgeable about local issues and also have the capacity to incorporate the regional perspective in their efforts. This makes the PDCs an ideal resource for mitigation planning at a regional level, and also represents for VDEM the most efficient and cost-effective use of available funds. Since outreach efforts by state mitigation planners began in August 2002, the focus has been to approach the regional PDCs as the primary agency to perform the local DMA2K plans due to the economies of scale noted above.

Where a PDC is unable or unwilling to perform this planning process for its constituent localities, VDEM will recognize other regional planning groups made up of two or more of the localities that normally would have used the PDC for this process. These alternative groups of localities still will qualify as a regional group for consideration for available mitigation planning funds.

c. Regions or localities ready to begin their planning efforts:

VDEM also realized that it did not make sense trying to negotiate with the localities of a PDC to support a regional planning effort when there may be other, perhaps lower priority, regions or localities already prepared to move ahead with this planning effort. Areas that are ready to take on this planning effort are moved to the top of the state’s priority list, though VDEM still tries to fund regional plans before single jurisdiction plans. This criteria led to funding for PDCs 9, 14, 18, and 22, all of which expressed an interest and moved forward to develop local political and financial support for a regional mitigation planning effort in order to position themselves for funding as soon as possible.

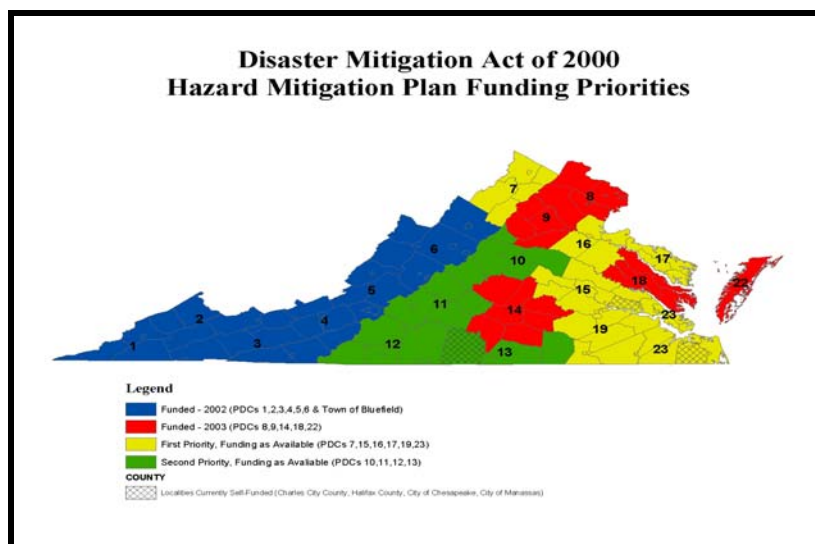
d. Areas with greater development pressures or density:

Specifically, these are the areas along the “Golden Crescent” that runs from Washington, D.C. in the north then swings south and southeast through the Richmond metropolitan area down into the Hampton Roads/Tidewater metropolitan area. All of these areas are growing rapidly due to government, commercial, and tourism development, placing more homes, businesses, and tourists in harms way.

e. Other areas as funding is available:

The areas that remain to be funded after application of the previous priority considerations should be those with the lowest population and development densities affected by hazard events. It still is a priority of the state to obtain funding for these areas as soon as it is available so that the planning efforts can be started before the DMA2K deadline in November 2004.

Figure 4-1, below, shows the current distribution of planning funds available as of August 2003, and the priority funding areas for future planning funds based on the priorities listed above.



Local mitigation planning fund distribution and priorities as of August 2003