

1.5 Organizational Structure

Texoma Council of Governments (TCOG) is an organization comprised of city and county governments, colleges, service organizations, school districts, chambers of commerce, etc., with the goal to build strength through regional cooperation. It is through this regional cooperation that TCOG can serve its members by working to continually improve the economic, social, educational, and safety aspects of life for citizens of Fannin, Grayson, and Cooke Counties.

The Texoma Council of Governments (TCOG) is a partnership of governments and public representatives which will continually improve the economic, social and educational opportunities for the citizens of Fannin, Grayson and Fannin Counties by developing resources and developing quality programs and services.

TCOG served as the coordinating agency for the development of the plan and used the Direct Representation Model as guide in the planning process. TCOG's three emergency planners along with a contracted private consultant organized and facilitated the plan development to ensure the plan met the requirements of DMA 2000. As the coordinator, TCOG had many responsibilities including administration, content organization, and text development. The following is a brief summary of TCOG's responsibilities:

- ◆ Assign a lead planning staff member to provide technical assistance and necessary data to the Fannin County Hazard Mitigation Planning Team (HMPT).
- ◆ Schedule, coordinate and facilitate community meetings with the assistance of the planning team.
- ◆ Provide any necessary materials, handouts, etc., necessary for public planning meetings.
- ◆ Work with the planning team to collect and analyze data and develop goals and implementation strategies.
- ◆ Prepare, based on community input and team direction, the first draft of the plan and provide technical writing assistance for review, editing and formatting.
- ◆ Coordinate with stakeholders within the cities and the unincorporated areas of Fannin County during plan development.
- ◆ Submit the final plan to the State of Texas and provide follow up technical assistance to the Fannin County Community Mitigation Planning Team to cure any noted deficiencies subsequent to the review of the plan by the State of Texas.
- ◆ Upon approval by the State of Texas, submit the plan to FEMA and provide follow up technical assistance to the Fannin County Community Mitigation Planning Team to cure any noted deficiencies subsequent to the review of the plan by FEMA.
- ◆ Coordinate adoption and final approval process by all City and Town Councils and the Commissioners Court of the approved FEMA plan.
- ◆ Submit final plan, with adoption documentation and approval signatures for all participating jurisdictions, to the State and FEMA and ensure plan is noted as complete and approved by both agencies.

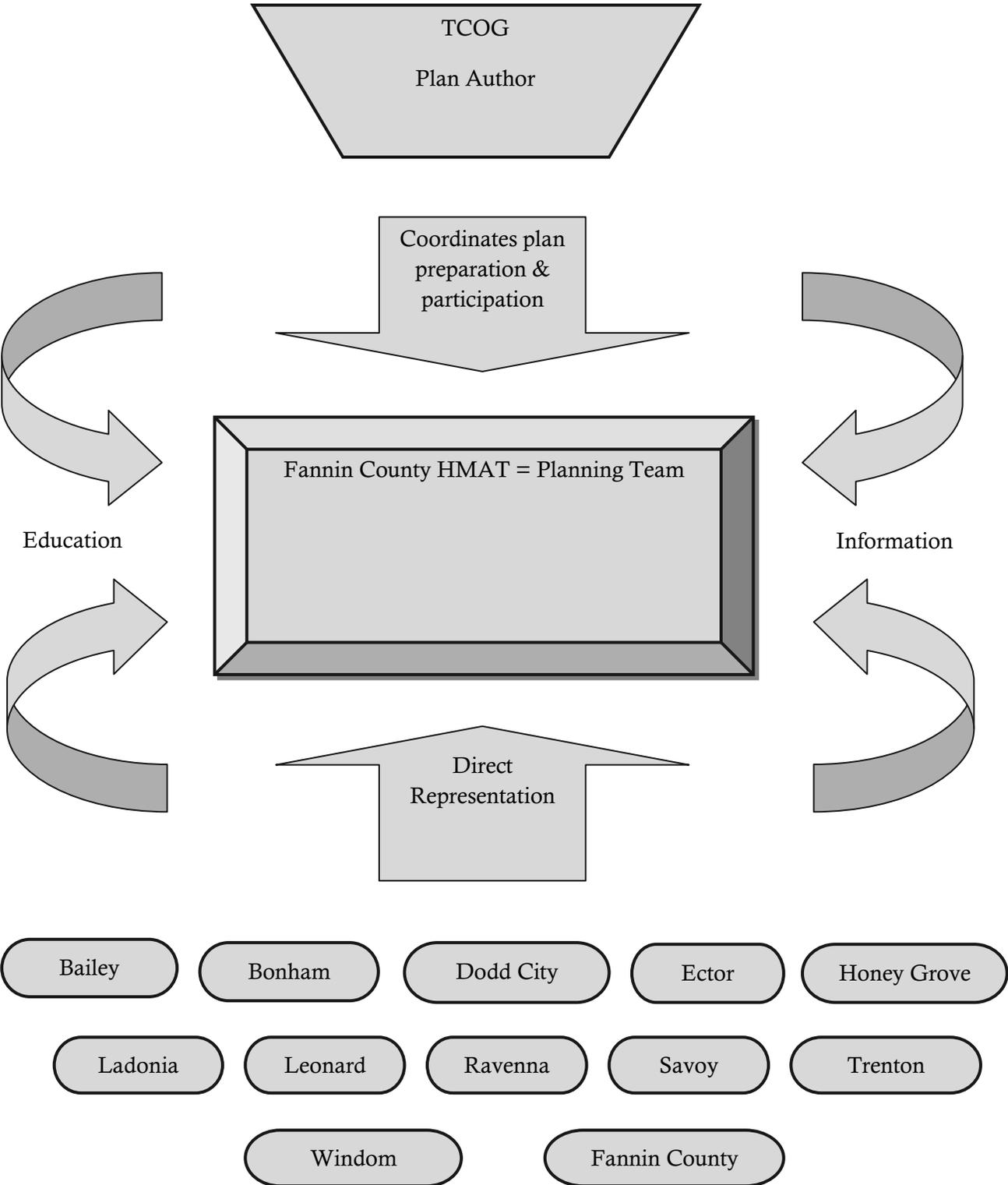
Fannin County Hazard Mitigation Planning Team (HMPT) is a team consisting of local interested individuals from the county, cities and unincorporated areas. They meet regularly with the mission to help establish a mitigation plan and to incorporate mitigation activities to prevent or reduce damage from both natural and man-made hazards.

- ◆ Prepare for and attend City Council/Commissioners Court/public meetings during plan consideration and plan adoption process.
- ◆ Complete and acquire approval of all necessary forms associated with the application for Fannin County's Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Grant.

A Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Planning Team (HMPT) was formed consisting of representatives appointed by local jurisdictions to work together with TCOG in the plan development. The team's primary duties were:

- ◆ Ensure that the Fannin County HMPT includes representatives from the neighborhood stakeholders groups, including all residents, neighborhood associations, community groups, property owners, institutions, businesses, schools, etc. Each participating city must provide at least one representative to the county team and provide active support, input and attendance at program meetings. TCOG will approve the final composition of the planning team.
- ◆ Attend regular meetings of the planning team as coordinated by TCOG.
- ◆ Assist TCOG staff with identifying hazards and estimating potential losses from future hazard events. Assist TCOG in developing and prioritizing mitigation actions to address the identified risks.
- ◆ Assist TCOG in coordinating public meetings to develop the plan.
- ◆ Identify the community resources available to support the planning effort.
- ◆ Assist with recruiting participants for planning meetings, including the development of a community-wide mailing list and distribution of meeting announcements (as prepared by TCOG) by mail and other available means.
- ◆ Gain the support of neighborhood stakeholders for the recommendations resulting from the planning process.
- ◆ Submit the proposed plan to all city/county departments for review and comment and work with TCOG to incorporate the resulting comments into the proposed plan.
- ◆ After adoption, appoint members to a committee to monitor and work toward plan implementation.
- ◆ After adoption, publicize the plan to neighborhood interests and ensure new community members are aware of the plan and its contents.
- ◆ Subsequent to State of Texas and FEMA approval of the plan, assume responsibility for bringing the plan to life by ensuring it remains relevant by monitoring progress, through regular maintenance and implementation projects.

Chart 1.5: Organizational Model



CHAPTER TWO – THE PLANNING PROCESS

2.1 Benefits of Mitigation Planning

Hazard mitigation plans such as this one help communities reduce their risk from hazards by identifying weaknesses and developing strategies to alleviate (if not eliminate) the effects of the hazard. The benefits of this process are numerous and are supported by reports and case studies. Benefits include but are not limited to:

- ◆ Saves lives, property, and money.
- ◆ Speeds recovery following disasters.
- ◆ Reduces future vulnerability through wise development and post-disaster recovery and reconstruction.
- ◆ Qualifies the receipt for pre-disaster and post-disaster grant funding.
- ◆ Demonstrates a firm commitment to improving community health and safety.

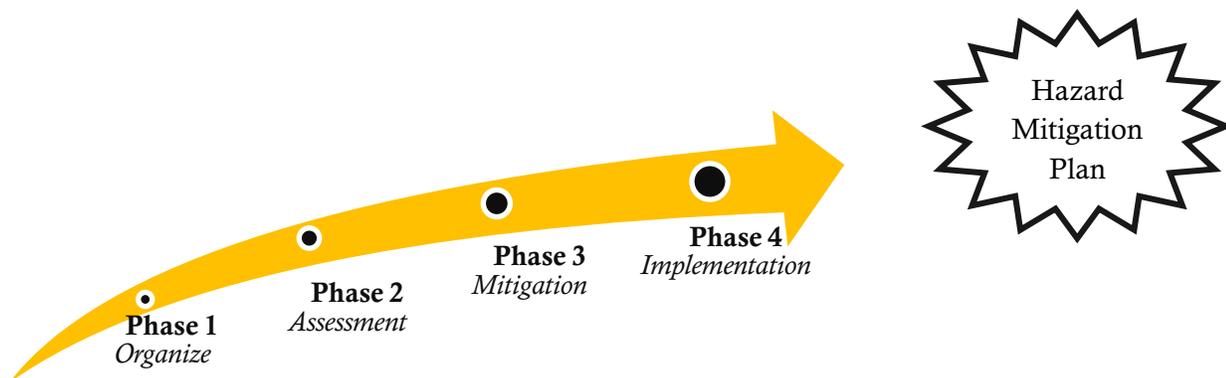
2.2 The Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Planning Process

Texoma Council of Governments (TCOG) is an organization comprised of city and county governments, colleges, service organizations, school districts, chambers of commerce, etc., with the goal to build strength through regional cooperation. It is through this regional cooperation that TCOG can serve its members by working to continually improve the economic, social, educational, and safety aspects of life for citizens of Fannin, Grayson, and Cooke Counties.

TCOG's Criminal Justice and Emergency Planning department with the assistance of a private consultant applied for a Regional, Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Planning Grant for Fannin County, Texas in September 2007. In February 2008 TCOG was notified of the approval of the funding of the grant with a completion deadline of February 20, 2010 or sooner. Quarterly reports of the progress were completed and submitted at the end of each quarter.

The planning process was an integral part of this plan. This section describes TCOG's and the Fannin County HMPT's planning process and how a four phase development process, was utilized.

Chart 2.2: 4-Phase Development Process



PHASE 1 - Organize Resources:

Effective planning efforts result in practical and useful plans, but written plans are only one element in the process. The planning process is as important as the plan itself. A successful planning process organizes resources by encouraging cooperation and bringing together a cross-section of government agencies, local entities, concerned citizens and other stakeholders to reach consensus on how to achieve a desired outcome or resolve a community issue. Applying a community wide approach and including multiple aspects adds validity to the plan. Those involved gain a better understanding of the problem and how solutions and actions were devised. The result is a common set of community values and widespread support for directing financial, technical, and human resources to an agreed upon action.

- ◆ A comprehensive county approach was taken in developing the plan. An open public involvement process was established for the public, neighboring communities, regional agencies, businesses, academia, etc. to provide opportunities for everyone to become involved in the planning process and to make their views known. This was done by having public meetings in multiple locations to provide easier accessibility. The meetings were advertised with notices in public places and by media press releases.
- ◆ To ensure the understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the jurisdictions and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was created and signed by each respective jurisdiction. This MOU is an inter-local agreement outlining the respective roles and responsibilities in the planning process.
- ◆ Each jurisdiction was asked to appoint at least two representatives to a county wide HMPT. This team was also open to members of incorporated jurisdictions or to citizens at large.
- ◆ A series of workshops were conducted to educate on the purpose, procedures, and general information regarding the Hazard Mitigation Planning Process. These workshops were also used to gather hazard information, develop mitigation strategies, and edit the plan during the writing process.
- ◆ The review and incorporation of appropriate existing plans, studies, reports, technical information, and other research was included into the plan during its drafting process.
- ◆ Support and information was obtained from other government programs and agencies such as the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), US Geological Survey (USGS), etc.
- ◆ Past experiences and education of TCOG's Criminal Justice and Emergency Management Department along with the collaboration of a contracted private consultant were utilized in the planning process and in the creation of the plan.
- ◆ Regular meetings were held to keep both the general public and team members informed of the progress, answer any questions, and notified of any changes to FEMA's guidelines for the creation of the plan. At these meetings, rough drafts constructed from previous meetings were distributed for review and corrections.

Coordination with other agencies is vital in the development of a valuable plan. A list of utilized resources is located in Appendix C.