

# Prioritize and Plan | STAPLEE Descriptions and Guiding Questions

## WHO

This exercise is for the practitioner and core planning team in the Prioritize and Plan step.

## WHAT

This resource provides descriptions and additional guiding questions and criteria to consider for STAPLEE and can be used during the prioritization exercise.

- STAPLEE is a standardized and systematic method developed by FEMA for consistently evaluating resilience actions using a set of criteria that fall into seven categories: **S**ocial, **T**echnical, **A**dministrative, **P**olitical, **L**egal, **E**conomic, and **E**nvironment.
- The criteria outlined in STAPLEE reflect where the urgency is, community acceptance, and what can get the biggest bang for the buck.
- When looking at the criteria established in the STAPLEE method, use the goals, vision, and values developed for the project to determine if anything needs to be altered or added within the criteria.

## SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- Bring forward the actions and projects from [4.2 Develop Resilience Objectives - Worksheet](#)
- Use [5.4 STAPLEE Score Sheet - Worksheet](#) for the evaluation exercise ([adapted from Santa Rosa, FL, scoring sheet](#))

## INSTRUCTIONS

Evaluate projects according to the determined criteria for prioritization.

- Bring in the projects and specific actions identified in the Investigate Options step.
- Review the criteria listed in [5.1 Criteria for Evaluating Options - Worksheet](#), excluding those that are irrelevant to the community or updating them to better fit the community's unique circumstances.
- Duplicate or make a copy of the MASTER score sheet tab (keep everything within the same sheet). Complete the exercise for each action, going through them one at a time. In [5.1 Criteria for Evaluating Options - Worksheet](#), there are questions and considerations for each STAPLEE evaluation criteria to help team members weigh the pros and cons of different actions.
- As many department representatives as possible should complete this exercise.

# Social

A mitigation option will only be viable if it is socially accepted within the community where it is implemented. The public is instrumental in guiding decisions such as these through their support or lack thereof.

## Criteria

- Community acceptance
- Effect on population segment

## Guiding Questions

- Will the proposed action adversely affect any one segment of the population?
- Will it give some disproportionate benefit to only one segment?
- Will the action disrupt established neighborhoods, break up legal, political, or electoral districts, or cause the relocation of lower-income people?
- Is the action compatible with present and future community values?
- Will the actions adversely affect cultural values or resources?

# Technical

If the proposed action is not technically feasible, it is clearly a poor option. It is important to investigate when looking into the technical feasibility whether it will help to reduce losses in the long term and whether it has any secondary effects that could eventually nullify its benefits.

## Criteria

- Technical feasibility
- Long-term solution
- Secondary impacts

## Guiding Questions

- How effective is the action in avoiding or reducing future losses? It is important the measures taken are able to achieve the anticipated results, not a fraction thereof.
- Will it create more problems than it fixes?
- Does it solve the problem or only a symptom?

# Administrative

Investigates the community's capabilities for carrying out the projects that would be required to implement each of the mitigation options. Specifically, looking at the requirements in terms of staffing, funding, and maintenance. Some options may require outside assistance.

## Criteria

- Staffing
- Funding allocated
- Maintenance operations

## Guiding Questions

- Does the jurisdiction have the capability (staff, technical experts, and or funding) to implement the action, and can it be readily obtained?
- Can the community provide the necessary maintenance work required to maintain the method of mitigation?
- Can the implementation project be accomplished in a timely manner, without excessive disruption to the community?

## Political

Mitigation actions tend to be highly political topics and tend to entail more than just the dedication of public funds. They commonly require the use of local services, permits and permissions, involve some alteration to the fabric of the community, may involve some use of public lands, and involve a certain amount of risk for the political leaders who authorize the actions. Emergency managers will need to be aware of or will need to investigate how local, regional, and national political leaders feel about issues related to such agenda items as the environment, economic development, safety, and emergency management. Political support is one of the most common sources of failure for mitigation actions.

## Criteria

- Political support
- Local champion
- Public support

## Guiding Questions

- Is there political support to implement and maintain this action?
- Have political leaders participated in the planning process so far?
- Is there a local champion willing to help see the action to completion?
- Who are the stakeholders in this proposed action, and how do they feel about the changes that will occur as a result of the action?
- Is there enough public support, toward which political leaders are likely to lean, to ensure the success of the action?
- Have all of the stakeholders been offered an opportunity to participate in the planning process?
- How can the mitigation objectives be accomplished at the lowest “cost” to the public?

## Legal

Many mitigation options will require actions to be taken that need legal authority in order to be lawfully conducted. Emergency managers must determine whether they will be able to establish the legal authority to implement the proposed action. It may be necessary to propose the passage of new laws or regulations if such legal authority is weak or does not exist. Identify the unit of government that will ultimately have the authority to grant or deny the permission to undertake the actions necessary to implement the action.

## Criteria

- State authority

- Existing legal authority
- Potential legal challenge

## Guiding Questions

- Does the government in question have the authority to grant permission or permits for the work that is to be conducted?
- Is there a technical, scientific, or legal basis for the mitigation action (i.e., does the mitigation action “fit” the hazard setting)?
- Are the proper laws, ordinances, and resolutions in place to implement the action?
- Are there any potential legal consequences?
- Will there be any issues of liability for the actions or support of actions, or lack of action, by any of the mitigation stakeholders?
- Is the action likely to be challenged by stakeholders who may be negatively affected?

## Economic

Mitigation options must prove to be cost-effective to the community before they are considered viable for implementation. The measures must also be affordable to those who will be funding the project. Mitigation projects often require maintenance after the project is completed, at the expense of the community where it is implemented. For this reason, affordability means many things.

### Criteria

- Benefit of action
- Cost of action
- Contributes to economic goals
- Outside funding required

## Guiding Questions

- Are there currently sources of funds that can be used to implement the action?
- What benefits will the action provide?
- Does the cost seem reasonable for the size of the problem and likely benefits?
- What financial burden will be placed on the tax base or local economy to implement or maintain this action?
- Will the result of the action negatively affect the economy in some secondary manner, such as reducing some form of income generation that was dependent upon the existence of the hazard?
- Does the action contribute to other community economic goals, such as capital improvements or economic development?

## Environment

Many mitigation factors affect the natural environment; emergency managers must consider these effects, as their actions could have long-term effects on the community and could negate any positive gains of the mitigation action. Benefits to the environment that often arise from the implementation of a mitigation measure must be considered in the choosing of options.

## **Criteria**

- Effect on land/water
- Effect on endangered species
- Effect on HAZMAT sites
- Consistent with community environmental goals
- Consistent with federal regulations

## **Guiding Questions**

- How will this action affect the environment (including land, water, and air resources, and endangered species)?
- Will this action comply with environmental laws and regulations?
- Is the action consistent with the community's values and goals?