

Efficiently use county resources to minimize the loss of life and property from natural hazards and protect county assets, infrastructure, and critical facilities.

Hazard mitigation is commonly defined as sustained actions taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from hazards and their effects. A hazard mitigation plan states the aspirations and specific courses of action that a community intends to follow to reduce vulnerability and exposure to future hazard events.

The intention of this Plan update is to serve as a blueprint for coordinating and implementing hazard mitigation policies, programs, and projects. It provides a list of mitigation goals, objectives, and related actions that may assist Montgomery County in reducing risk and preventing loss from future natural and technological hazard events. The impacts of hazards can be lessened and sometimes avoided altogether if appropriate actions are taken before hazardous events occur. By avoiding unnecessary exposure to known hazard risks, communities will save lives and property and minimize the social, economic, and environmental disruptions that commonly follow hazard events. Montgomery County and its municipalities agree that hazard mitigation makes sense. Through the identification of vulnerable areas and the implementation of measures aimed at minimizing exposure, the negative impacts of both natural and technological hazards may be reduced for Montgomery County.

Communities face significant challenges during post-disaster redevelopment in balancing the driving need for rapid recovery with implementing long-term hazard mitigation. The necessity to meet basic needs and resettle displaced populations immediately following a disaster often overshadows the more abstract, longer-term sustainability considerations. Once full-scale reconstruction is initiated, it is difficult to modify projects in progress to meet sustainability objectives. This trend highlights the need for pre-disaster mitigation planning that incorporates principles of sustainable development within the context of reconstruction, so that communities can more easily rebuild in a manner that will make them less vulnerable to future hazard events while improving the quality of life.

It is essential that local decision makers become and stay involved in this planning process to provide new ideas and insight for future updates to the Hazard Mitigation Plan for Montgomery County. It will remain a challenge and a goal for Montgomery County to provide necessary updates as mitigation techniques are implemented. It will remain imperative that all local agencies, units of government, non-profit organizations, businesses and industries, and private citizens continue their involvement and dedication to hazard mitigation.

This update serves as a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation plan that represents a combined county and local commitment to reduce risks from natural hazards. The intent of this update is to produce a document that local officials can refer to in their day-to-day activities and in decisions regarding land use and planning decisions, regulation and ordinance creation and enforcement, granting permits, capital improvement investments, disaster planning and other community initiatives. Additionally, the update to this hazard mitigation plan serves as the basis for States to prioritize future grant funding as it becomes available.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *2018 Montgomery County Plan Update* will continue to be a useful tool for all community stakeholders by increasing public awareness about local hazards and risks and by providing information about options and resources available to reduce those risks. Educating the public about potential hazards will help each jurisdiction protect itself against the effects of future hazards and will enable informed decision-making regarding where to live, purchase property, or locate business.

The Montgomery County Hazard Mitigation Plan was developed by members of a Mitigation Planning Committee (MPC) that consisted of county agencies, regional partners, and the following local jurisdictions:

Barnesville
Brookeville
Chevy Chase
Chevy Chase View
Chevy Chase Village
Chevy Chase Village Section 3
Chevy Chase Village Section 5
Gaithersburg
Garrett Park
Glen Echo
Kensington
Laytonsville
Martin's Additions
The Village of North Chevy Chase
Poolesville
Rockville
Somerset
Takoma Park
Washington Grove

Hazards were ranked by the MPC and reevaluated during the planning process to determine the hazards with the largest impact on the county and its communities. The following table summarizes the results of the hazard identification, which are explained in [Section X](#) of this plan.

Severe Storm	High Rank
Winter Storm	Medium Rank
Extreme Heat	Medium Rank
Flooding	Medium Rank
Hurricane/Tropical Storm	Medium Rank
Fire	Medium Rank
Water Shortage/Drought	Medium Rank
Tornado	Medium Rank
Earthquake	Medium Rank

Land Subsidence/Karst	Low Rank
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The MPC members used the results of the Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) as well as the Capability Assessment to develop goals and form updated strategies, actions, and projects for the county and its independent jurisdictions. The new 2018 mitigation strategy was re-organized to better correspond with both county agencies', as well as local jurisdictions', programs and plans.

The MPC members reviewed the 12 goals that were presented in the 2012 plan goals and re-worked them to include one overarching goal with 7 distinctive objectives. The 2018 Updated plan goals and objects are as follows:

Goal:

Efficiently use county resources to minimize the loss of life and property from natural hazards and protect county assets, infrastructure, and critical facilities.

Objectives:

1. Encourage building and land use regulations that increase safety and resiliency and reduce risks posed by natural disasters.
2. Protect public health, safety, and welfare by increasing public awareness of existing natural hazards and by fostering individual and public responsibility in mitigating risks caused by those hazards.
3. Ensure that infrastructure is adequate and properly maintained to provide continued functionality of all critical services necessary to protect residents and property.
4. Improve communications and increase natural hazard awareness through education and citizen participation.
5. Enhance the capabilities of local jurisdictions to identify and mitigate natural hazards.
6. Participate and comply with the National Flood Insurance Program through floodplain identification and mapping and floodplain management.
7. Promote actions that protect historic and cultural resources, while enhancing hazard mitigation and community resiliency.

Montgomery Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security staff conducted in-person interviews with each community to discuss the status of action items that were identified in the 2012 strategy and to develop new actions for the 2018 strategy. These actions were compiled and prioritized for each jurisdiction. Communities shared common strategies and developed community-specific actions that varied somewhat from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

As part of the in-person interview, Montgomery County staff also conducted a survey to evaluate each jurisdiction's capability. This assessment evaluated the current capacity of each jurisdiction to mitigate the effects of the natural hazards identified in the HIRA. By providing a summary of each jurisdiction's existing capabilities, the Capability Assessment serves as the foundation for designing an effective hazard mitigation strategy.

The *2018 Montgomery County Mitigation Plan Update* embodies the continued commitment and dedication of the local jurisdictions and community members of the county to enhance the safety of residents and businesses by taking action before a disaster strikes. While nothing can be done to prevent natural hazard events from occurring, the region is poised to minimize the disruption and devastation that so often accompany these disasters.

The plan update is organized as follows, with detailed table and figure lists provided, by chapters, in the Table of Contents.

Executive Summary provides the plan update context of the county and its local jurisdictions. The MPC is described, along with the planning process, HIRA outcome, refreshed mitigation plan goals and a brief summary of updated mitigation action organization and plan implementation.

Chapter 1 – Planning Process summarizes the planning history behind the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, its regulatory requirements, the planning process used by Montgomery County during the plan update, and a description of stakeholder involvement and outreach. This section also provides a physical and demographic profile of the county, examining characteristics such as geography, hydrography, development, people, and land uses.

Chapter 2 – Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment evaluates the natural hazards likely to affect or impact the county, quantifying whom, what, where, and how the area might be affected by natural hazards.

Chapter 3 – Mitigation Strategy addresses local and regional hazard-related issues and concerns by establishing a revised framework for mitigation activities and policies. The strategy includes a range of updated mitigation strategies, actions, and projects to support achievement of the plans goal and objectives.

Chapter 4 – Capability Assessment, Implementation and Plan Maintenance Procedures describes available programs and resources that can support plan implementation. This section describes how the plan will be monitored, evaluated, and updated, including a process for continuing stakeholder involvement after the plan is completed.

Chapter 5 – Plan Adoption describes the local plan adoption process following FEMA Region III conditional approval of the plan update draft.

References includes a list of the reports and data used to develop this plan.

Appendices are included at the end of the plan and contain supplemental reference materials and more detailed calculations and methodologies used in the planning process.