



Executive Summary

Mitigation is commonly defined as sustained actions taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from hazards and their effects. Hazard mitigation focuses attention and resources on community policies and actions that will produce successive benefits over time. A 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. These plans are formulated through a systematic process centered on the participation of citizens, businesses, public officials, and other community stakeholders.

The area covered by this plan includes:

Participating Communities	
Counties	Towns
Arlington County	Town of Clifton
Fairfax County	Town of Dumfries
Loudoun County	Town of Haymarket
Prince William County	Town of Herndon
	Town of Leesburg
	Town of Middleburg
	Town of Purcellville
	Town of Occoquan
	Town of Quantico
	Town of Round Hill
	Town of Vienna

Cities
City of Alexandria
City of Fairfax
City of Falls Church
City of Manassas
City of Manassas Park

The additional contents of this Plan are designed and organized to be as reader-friendly and functional as possible. While significant background information is included on the processes used and studies completed (e.g., risk assessment, capability assessment), this information is separated from the more meaningful planning outcomes or actions (e.g., mitigation strategy, mitigation action plans).

Chapter 2, Planning Process, provides a complete narrative description of the process used to prepare the Plan. This includes the identification of who was involved, who participated on the planning team, and how the public and other stakeholders were involved. It also includes a detailed summary for each of the key meetings held along with any associated outcomes.

Chapter 3, Regional Information, describes the general makeup of the Northern Virginia region, including prevalent geographic, demographic, and economic characteristics. In addition, transportation, housing, and land-use patterns are discussed. This baseline information provides a snapshot of the regional planning area and thereby assists county and municipal officials to recognize those social, environmental, and economic factors that ultimately play a role in determining community vulnerability to natural hazards.



The Regional Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) is presented in Chapter 4. This section serves to identify, analyze, and assess the Northern Virginia region’s overall risk to natural hazards. The risk assessment also attempts to define any hazard risks that may uniquely or exclusively affect the individual municipal jurisdictions.

The Risk Assessment builds on available historical data from past hazard occurrences, establishes detailed profiles for each hazard, and culminates in a hazard risk ranking based on conclusions about the frequency of occurrence, spatial extent, and potential impact of each hazard. FEMA’s HAZUS^{MH} loss estimation methodology was also used in evaluating known hazard risks by their relative long-term cost in expected damages. In essence, the information generated through the risk assessment serves a critical function as communities seek to determine the most appropriate mitigation actions to pursue and implement — enabling communities to prioritize and focus their efforts on those hazards of greatest concern and those structures or planning areas facing the greatest risk(s). The hazards analyzed in this plan include: Flood, High Wind, Tornadoes, Winter Storms, Drought, Earthquakes, Landslides, Wildfire, Sinkholes, and Dam Failure.

The Capability Assessment, found in Chapter 5, provides a comprehensive examination of each participating jurisdiction’s capacity to implement meaningful mitigation strategies and identifies existing opportunities to increase and enhance that capacity. Specific capabilities addressed in this section include planning and regulatory capability, staff and organizational (administrative) capability, technical capability, fiscal capability, and political capability. Information was obtained through the use of detailed survey questionnaires for local officials and an inventory and analysis of existing plans, ordinances, and relevant documents. The purpose of this assessment is to identify any existing gaps, weaknesses, or conflicts in programs or activities that may hinder mitigation efforts, and to identify those activities that should be built upon to establish a successful and sustainable regional hazard mitigation program.

The Regional Information, Risk Assessment, and Capability Assessment sections collectively serve as a basis for determining the goals for the Hazard Mitigation Plan; each contributing to the development, adoption, and implementation of a meaningful Mitigation Strategy that is based on accurate background information.

The Mitigation Strategy, found in Chapter 6, consists of broad regional goal statements as well as specific mitigation actions for each local government jurisdiction participating in the planning process. The strategy provides the foundation for detailed jurisdictional Mitigation Action Plans, found in Chapter 7, that link specific mitigation actions for each jurisdiction to locally-assigned implementation mechanisms and target completion dates. Together, these sections are designed to make the Plan both strategic (through the identification of long-term goals), but also functional through the identification of short-term and immediate actions that will guide day-to-day decision-making and project implementation.

In addition to the identification and prioritization of possible mitigation projects, emphasis is placed on the use of program and policy alternatives to help make the communities of the Northern Virginia region less vulnerable to the damaging forces of nature while improving the economic, social, and environmental health of the community. The concept of multi-objective



planning was emphasized throughout the planning process, particularly in identifying ways to link hazard mitigation policies and programs with complimentary community goals related to housing, economic development, downtown revitalization, recreational opportunities, transportation improvements, environmental quality, land development, and public health and safety.

The Plan Maintenance Procedures, found in Chapter 8, include the measures that the Northern Virginia Regional Commission and participating jurisdictions will take to ensure the Plan's continuous long-term implementation. The procedures also include the manner in which the Plan will be regularly evaluated and updated to remain a current and meaningful planning document.