

SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

In response to the requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000), Montgomery County, and the towns and villages located therein, have developed this Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP), which is an update of the 2008 Montgomery County Hazard Mitigation Plan. DMA 2000 amends the Stafford Act and is designed to improve planning for, response to, and recovery from, disasters by requiring State and local entities to implement pre-disaster mitigation planning and develop HMPs. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has issued guidelines for HMPs. The New York State Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services (NYS DHSES) also supports plan development for jurisdictions in New York State.

Hazard Mitigation is any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate the long term risk and effects that can result from specific hazards.

FEMA defines a Hazard Mitigation Plan as the documentation of a state or local government evaluation of natural hazards and the strategies to mitigate such hazards.

Specifically, DMA 2000 requires that States with support from local governmental agencies update HMPs on a five year basis to prepare for and reduce the potential impacts of natural hazards. DMA 2000 is intended to facilitate cooperation between state and local authorities, prompting them to work together. This enhanced planning will better enable local and State governments to articulate accurate needs for mitigation, resulting in faster allocation of funding and more effective risk reduction projects.

1.1.1 DMA 2000 Origins -The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act

The **Federal Emergency Management Agency** (FEMA) estimates that for every dollar spent on damage prevention (mitigation), twice that amount is saved through avoided post-disaster damage repair.

In the early 1990s, a new federal policy regarding disasters began to evolve. Rather than simply reacting whenever disasters strike communities, the federal government began encouraging communities to first assess their vulnerability to various disasters and proceed to take actions to reduce or eliminate potential risks. The logic is simply that a disaster-resistant community can rebound from a natural disaster with less loss of property or human injury, at much lower cost, and, consequently, more quickly. Moreover, other costs associated with disasters, such as the time lost from productive activity by business and industries, are minimized.

DMA 2000 provides an opportunity for States, tribes and local governments to take a new and revitalized approach to mitigation planning. DMA 2000 amended the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act by repealing the previous mitigation planning provisions (Section 409) and replacing them with a new set of requirements (Section 322). This section sets forth the requirements that communities evaluate natural hazards within their respective jurisdictions and develop an appropriate plan of action to mitigate those hazards, while emphasizing the need for State, tribal and local governments to closely coordinate mitigation planning and implementation efforts.

The amended Stafford Act requires that each local jurisdiction identify potential natural hazards to the health, safety and wellbeing of its residents and identify and prioritize actions that can be taken by the community to mitigate those hazards—before disaster strikes. For communities to remain eligible for hazard mitigation assistance from the federal government, they must first prepare, and then maintain and update an HMP (this plan).

Responsibility for fulfilling the requirements of Section 322 of the Stafford Act and administering the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Program has been delegated to the State of New York, specifically to NYS DHSES. FEMA also provides support through guidance, resources, and plan reviews. Copies of the applicable federal and state regulations are found in Appendix A.

1.1.2 Organizations Involved in the Mitigation Planning Effort

Montgomery County and the participating jurisdictions intend to implement this HMP with full coordination and participation of County and local departments, organizations and groups, as well as by coordinating with relevant State and Federal entities. Coordination helps to ensure that stakeholders have established communication channels and relationships necessary to support mitigation planning and mitigation actions included in Section 6 and in the Jurisdictional Annexes in Volume II, Section 9.

In addition to Montgomery County, all jurisdictions within the County have participated in the planning process (Table 1-1 and Figure 1-1).

Table 1-1. Participating Jurisdictions in Montgomery County

Jurisdictions		
Montgomery County		
City of Amsterdam	Town of Mohawk	Village of Ft. Johnson
Town of Amsterdam	Town of Palatine	Village of Ft. Plain
Town of Canajoharie	Town of Root	Village of Fultonville
Town of Charleston	Town of St. Johnsville	Village of Hagaman
Town of Florida	Village of Ames	Village of Nelliston
Town of Glen	Village of Canajoharie	Village of Palatine Bridge
Town of Minden	Village of Fonda	Village of St. Johnsville

1.1.3 Multiple Agency Support for Hazard Mitigation

Primary responsibility for the development and implementation of mitigation strategies and policies lies with local governments. However, local governments are not alone; various partners and resources at the regional, state and federal levels are available to assist communities in the development and implementation of mitigation strategies. Within New York State, NYS DHSES is the lead agency providing hazard mitigation planning assistance to local jurisdictions. NYS DHSES provides guidance to support mitigation planning. In addition, FEMA provides grants, tools, and training to support mitigation planning.

Additional input and support for this planning effort was obtained from a range of agencies and through public involvement (as discussed in Section 3). Oversight for the preparation of this plan was provided by the Montgomery County All Hazard Planning Committee (Planning Committee), which includes representatives from:

- Participating Jurisdictions
- Montgomery County Department of Planning and Economic Development
- Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management
- Montgomery County Highway Department
- Agencies and Non-Profit (input incorporated by stakeholder surveys and satellite meetings)

The Steering Committee is a subset of the Planning Committee and has been formed as a leadership group to plan, guide, expedite, and implement the planning process. The Steering Committee has provided guidance and

leadership, overseen the planning process, and acted as the point of contact for all partners and the various interest groups in the planning area.

A list of Steering Committee and Planning Committee members is provided in Section 3: Planning Process.

The Working Group is a subset of the Steering Committee which met periodically to review the status to the planning process and to address any comments or issues that might have had an effect on the plan schedule. The Working Group consisted of Montgomery County personnel from the Planning Department, Office of Emergency Management, and Highway Department.

Throughout the planning process, Montgomery County utilized the services of Tetra Tech Inc. (Tetra Tech) in the capacity of consultant to provide assistance in preparation of the HMP. Tetra Tech was present and participated in meetings as noted in Section 3: Planning Process. Tetra Tech developed the plan, supported the identification of goals and objectives, reviewed and compiled hazard data, performed risk analyses, hazard identification and profiling, vulnerability analyses, supported the development of mitigation strategies, provided planning support, and authored the plan with input from Montgomery County.

This HMP was prepared in accordance with the following regulations and guidance:

- Local Mitigation Plan Review Guide, October 1, 2011
- DMA 2000 (Public Law 106-390, October 30, 2000).
- 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 201 and 206 (including: Feb. 26, 2002, Oct. 1, 2002, Oct. 28, 2003, and Sept. 13, 2004 Interim Final Rules).
- FEMA. 2004. “How-To Guide for Using HAZUS-MH for Risk Assessment.” FEMA Document No. 433. February.
- FEMA Mitigation Planning How-to Series (FEMA 386-1 through 4, 2002), available at: <http://www.fema.gov/fima/planhowto.shtml>.
- FEMA Mitigation Ideas, A Resource for Reducing Risk to Natural Hazards, January 2013

Table 1-2 summarizes the requirements outlined in the DMA 2000 Interim Final Rule and where each of these requirements is addressed in this HMP.

Table 1-2. FEMA Local Mitigation Plan Review Crosswalk

FEMA Local Mitigation Plan Review Crosswalk	
Plan Criteria	Primary Location in Plan
Prerequisites	
Adoption by the Local Governing Body: §201.6(c)(5)	Volume I, Section 2.0; Appendix B
Planning Process	
Documentation of the Planning Process: §201.6(b) and §201.6(c)(1)	Volume I, Section 3.0
Risk Assessment	
Identifying Hazards: §201.6(c)(2)(i)	Volume I, Sections 5.2
Profiling Hazards: §201.6(c)(2)(i)	Volume I, Section 5.3
Assessing Vulnerability: Overview: §201.6(c)(2)(ii)	Volume I, Section 5.4
Assessing Vulnerability: Identifying Structures: §201.6(c)(2)(ii)(A)	Volume I, Section 4.0 Volume I Section 5.4
Assessing Vulnerability: Estimating Potential Losses: §201.6(c)(2)(ii)(B)	Volume I, Section 5.4
Assessing Vulnerability: Analyzing Development Trends: §201.6(c)(2)(ii)(C)	Volume I, Section 4.0; Section 9 Annexes
Mitigation Strategy	
Local Hazard Mitigation Goals: §201.6(c)(3)(i)	Volume I, Section 6.0; Volume II, Section 9 Annexes
Identification and Analysis of Mitigation Actions: §201.6(c)(3)(ii)	Volume I, Section 6.0; Volume II, Section 9 Annexes

FEMA Local Mitigation Plan Review Crosswalk	
Plan Criteria	Primary Location in Plan
Implementation of Mitigation Actions: §201.6(c)(3)(iii)	Volume I, Section 6.0; Volume II, Section 9 Annexes
Multi-Jurisdictional Mitigation Actions: : §201.6(c)(3)(iv)	Volume I, Section 6.0; Volume II, Section 9 Annexes
Plan Maintenance Process	
Monitoring, Evaluating, and Updating the Plan: §201.6(c)(4)(i)	Volume I, Section 7.0
Incorporation into Existing Planning Mechanisms: §201.6(c)(4)(ii)	Volume I, Section 7.0
Continued Public Involvement: §201.6(c)(4)(iii)	Volume I, Section 7.0

Organization

The Montgomery County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update has been organized into a two-volume plan to facilitate use of this plan as a resource for each participant. The plan provides a detailed review and analysis of hazards of concern, resources, and demographics of Montgomery County and participating municipalities.

Volume I is intended for use as a resource for on-going mitigation analysis. Volume II consists of an annex dedicated to each participating jurisdiction. Each annex summarizes each jurisdiction’s legal, regulatory, and fiscal capabilities; vulnerabilities to natural hazards; status of past mitigation actions; and provides an individualized mitigation strategy. The annexes are intended to provide an expedient resource for each jurisdiction for implementation of mitigation projects and future grant opportunities.

Goals and Objectives

The plan has incorporated a goals and objectives hierarchy as a basis for the planning process and to address all hazards of concern. This plan update has retained the 2008 goals, with corresponding objectives that meet multiple goals. A cross-walk indicating the plan criteria and location in the plan is included in Table 1-2.

Hazards of Concern

Montgomery County and participating jurisdictions reviewed natural hazards that caused measurable impacts in the planning area and evaluated the risk and vulnerability due to each of the hazards of concern on the assets of each participating jurisdiction. Although the resulting hazard risk rankings varied for each jurisdiction, the summary risk rankings corresponded with that of Montgomery County and are indicated in each jurisdictional annex. The hazard risk ranks were used to focus and prioritize individual jurisdictional mitigation strategies.

Plan Integration into Other Planning Mechanisms

It is the intention of this planning process that municipalities shall incorporate findings and recommendations of this plan into future local planning efforts and into overall execution of local land-use planning process (e.g. site plan review, permitting, and code enforcement).

1.1.4 Implementation of the 2008 Plan

The status of the mitigation projects in the 2008 plan are provided in Sections 6 and 9 of the plan. Numerous projects and programs have been implemented that have reduced hazard vulnerability to assets in the planning area. Due to the lack of resources, the 2008 plan has not been integrated with planning processes in many jurisdictions, but the integration of the 2013 plan is a high priority for the next five year cycle as noted in the municipal annexes and the plan maintenance procedure. The municipal annexes and plan maintenance procedure have been developed to encourage specific activities such as review of the HMP during update of codes, ordinances, zoning, and development to ensure that a more thorough integration, with its related benefits, will be completed within the upcoming 5-year planning period.

The County Hazard Mitigation Coordinator will encourage all jurisdictions to incorporate hazard mitigation plan aspects into their comprehensive and master plan updates, as well as making specific recommendations, such as having the Floodplain Administrator review all site plan review and zoning permits within the 100-year floodplain and including the hazards map in their plan.

1.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process and findings are to be documented in local HMPs. To support the planning process in developing this HMP Update, Montgomery County and the participating jurisdictions have accomplished the following:

- Developed a Planning Committee
- Reviewed the 2008 Montgomery County Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Identified/reviewed hazards that are of greatest concern to the community (hazards of concern) to be included in the update
- Profiled these hazards
- Estimated the inventory at risk and potential losses associated with these hazards
- Confirmed mitigation goals and actions that address the various hazards that impact the area
- Reviewed 2008 mitigation strategy and actions to indicate progress
- Developed new mitigation actions to address reduction of vulnerability of hazards of concern
- Developed mitigation plan maintenance procedures to be executed after obtaining approval of the plan from NYS DHSES and FEMA

Based on a hazards identification worksheet and ranking process, subsequent input from the Planning Committee, and review of other available data, the planning process then proceeded to identify, rank, and profile those hazards of concern. The hazard profiles include location, extent, previous occurrences and losses, and the probability of future events. The process also included a vulnerability assessment to evaluate which county, town, and village assets are exposed or vulnerable to the hazards. The rankings have been updated with respect to the 2008 results primarily due to a more accurate vulnerability analysis and steering committee input.

To address the requirements of DMA 2000 and better understand potential vulnerabilities to and losses associated with hazards of concern, Hazards U.S. – Multi-Hazard (HAZUS-MH or HAZUS) software package (discussed in greater detail later in this Plan) supplemented by local data, as feasible, was used to support the risk assessment and vulnerability evaluation. HAZUS-MH assesses risk and estimates potential losses for natural hazards. It produces outputs that will assist state and local governments, communities, and the private sector in implementing emergency response, recovery, and mitigation programs, including the development of HMPs.

As required by DMA 2000, Montgomery County and participating jurisdictions have informed the public and provided opportunities for public comment and input. In addition, numerous agencies and stakeholders have participated as core or support members, providing input and expertise throughout the planning process.

This Multi-Jurisdictional All-Hazard Mitigation Plan Update documents the process and outcomes of Montgomery County and the jurisdictions' efforts. Additional information on the plan update process is included in Section 3, Planning Process. Documentation that the prerequisites for plan approval have been met is included in Section 2, Plan Adoption.

1.2.1 Benefits of Mitigation Planning

The planning process will help prepare citizens and government agencies to better respond when disasters occur. Also, mitigation planning allows Montgomery County as a whole, as well as the participating Montgomery County cities, towns, and villages to remain eligible for mitigation grant funding for mitigation projects that will reduce the impact of future disaster events. The long-term benefits of mitigation planning include:

- An increased understanding of hazards faced by communities
- More sustainable and disaster-resistant communities
- Financial savings through partnerships that support planning and mitigation efforts
- Focused use of limited resources on hazards that have the biggest impact on the community
- Reduced long-term impacts and damages to human health and structures and reduced repair costs

1.2.2 Organization of this Mitigation Plan

This Plan was organized in accordance with FEMA and NYS DHSES guidance. The structure of this Plan follows the four-phase planning process recommended by FEMA and summarized in Figure 1-2. The Plan is organized into two volumes: Volume I includes all information that applies to the entire planning area (Montgomery County); and Volume II includes participating jurisdiction-specific information.

Volume I of this Plan includes the following sections:

Section 1: Introduction: Overview of participants and planning process

Section 2: Plan Adoption: Information regarding the adoption of the Plan by Montgomery County and each participating jurisdiction.

Section 3: Planning Process: A description of the Plan methodology and development process, Planning Committee and stakeholder involvement efforts, and a description of how this Plan Update will be incorporated into existing programs.

Section 4: County Profile: An overview of Montgomery County, including: (1) general information, (2) economy, (3) land use trends, (4) population and demographics, (5) general building stock inventory and (6) critical facilities.

Section 5: Risk Assessment: Documentation of the hazard identification and hazard risk ranking process, hazard profiles, and findings of the vulnerability assessment (estimates of the impact of hazard events on life, safety and health; general building stock; critical facilities and the economy). Description of the status of local data and planned steps to improve local data to support mitigation planning.

Section 6: Mitigation Strategies: Information regarding the mitigation goals and objectives identified by Montgomery County in response to priority hazards of concern.

Section 7: Plan Maintenance Procedures: The system established by Montgomery County to continue to monitor, evaluate, maintain and update the Plan.

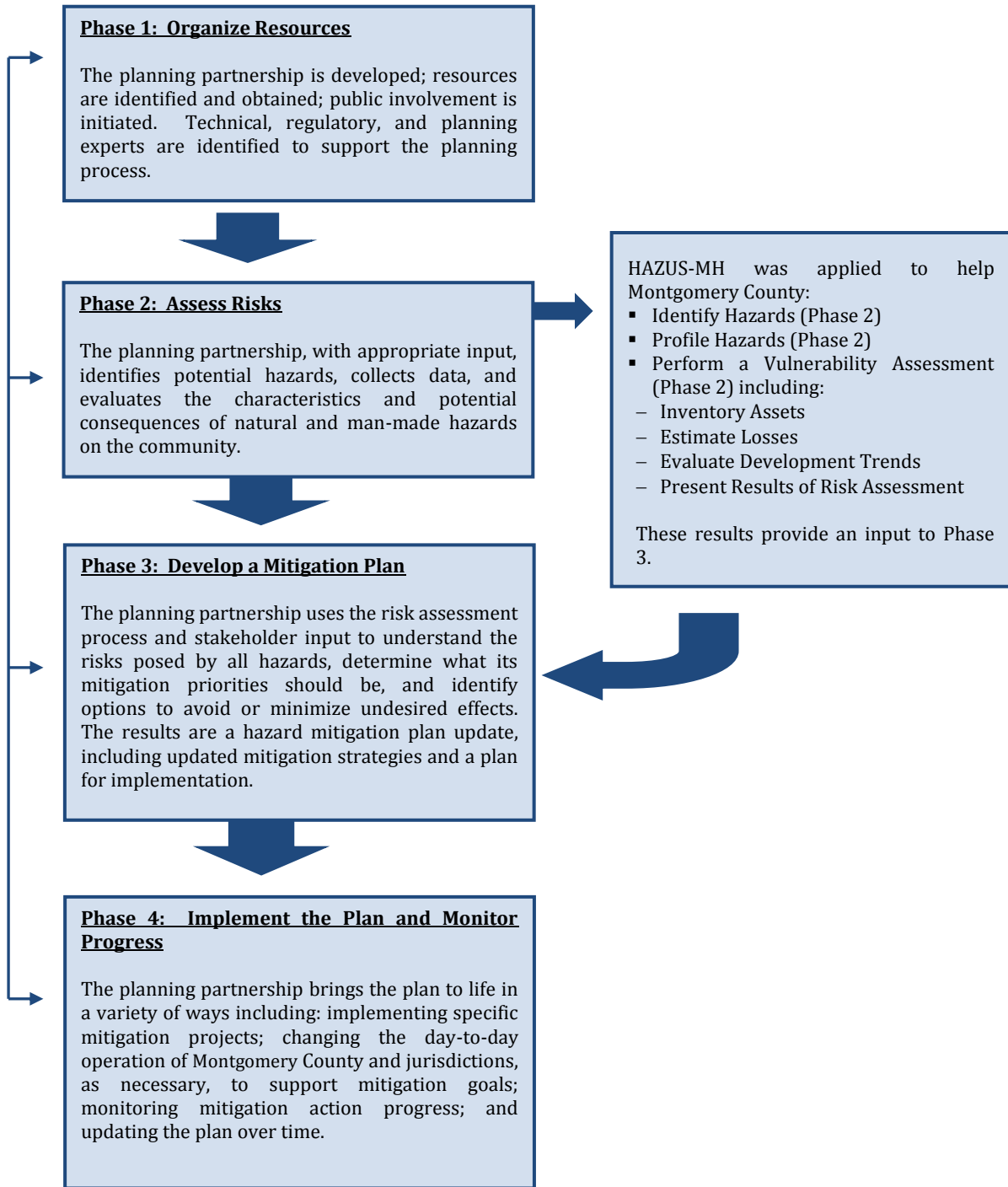
Volume II of this Plan includes the following sections:

Section 8: Planning Partnership: Description of the planning partnership, and jurisdictional annexes.



Section 9: Jurisdictional Annexes: A jurisdiction-specific annex for each participating jurisdiction and Montgomery County containing their hazards of concern, hazard risk ranking, capability assessments, mitigation actions, action prioritization specific only to Montgomery County or that jurisdiction, progress on 2008 mitigation actions, and an overview of 2008 plan integration into local planning processes.

Figure 1-2. Montgomery County Hazard Mitigation Planning Process





Appendices
