

THE CITY OF NEW YORK



HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE 2014



DRAFT FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

NYC Hazard Mitigation Plan 2014

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HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

UPDATE 2014



THE PLAN

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1) Overview

Hazard mitigation planning, the effort to reduce or eliminate the risks from hazards to people and property, is the first of the four phases of emergency management. It is followed by preparedness, response, and recovery (see Figure 1). Although the mitigation planning stage of emergency management often gets the least attention, it is one of the most important steps in creating a disaster-resistant community.



Figure 1: Phases of Emergency Management

Hazard mitigation is any action taken to reduce or eliminate risks to people and property. It has been demonstrated time after time that hazard mitigation is most effective when based on an inclusive, comprehensive, long-term plan that is developed *before* a disaster actually occurs. Although it is impossible to predict exactly when and where disasters will occur or the extent to which they will affect localities, careful planning and collaboration among public agencies, stakeholders, and citizens can minimize losses that can occur.

The 2014 New York City Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) update is the result of extensive planning and collaboration. The New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM) partnered with the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP), working with the Mayor’s Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability (OLTPS), to develop the plan, which assesses hazard vulnerabilities, identifies mitigation opportunities, and secures funding for the benefit of New York City. The update differs from New York City’s original HMP, published in 2009, in two important ways: It includes *non-natural* hazards along with natural hazards, and it addresses the impacts of climate change on identified natural hazards. This document is the culmination of a cooperative partnership among dozens of city, state, and federal agencies, authorities, and organizations, with input from the private sector, academic institutions, community

organizations, and citizens. The plan is a living document and will be refined and updated every five years.

a) **Stafford Action and Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000**

This plan meets all requirements for hazard mitigation plans under the Robert T. Stafford Act Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act). The Stafford Act was signed into law in 1988 and provides the authority for Federal disaster assistance activities, including not just assistance for response and recovery, but also preparedness and mitigation.

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) amended the Stafford Act to reinforce the importance of mitigation planning and emphasize planning for disasters before they occur. DMA 2000 established provisions and requirements for State, local, and Indian Tribal entities to closely coordinate mitigation planning and implementation efforts. States and communities must have an approved Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) to be eligible to apply for and receive FEMA hazard mitigation funds. The plans must demonstrate that the proposed mitigation actions are based on a sound planning process that accounts for the risk to and the capabilities of the community. To facilitate plan development, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has issued guidelines under DMA 2000 regulations.

b) **Benefits of Mitigation Planning**

Hazard mitigation planning help communities reduce their risk from hazards by identifying vulnerabilities and developing strategies to lessen and sometimes even eliminate the effects of the hazard. Some of the benefits of mitigation planning to New York City agencies and other stakeholders are as follows:

- **Leads to selection of risk-reduction actions.** Hazard mitigation planning is a systematic process of learning about the hazards that can affect New York City; setting clear goals; and identifying and implementing policies, programs, and actions that reduce losses from disasters.
- **Builds partnerships.** Hazard mitigation planning enhances collaboration among a broad range of stakeholders to achieve a common vision. Increased collaboration also reduces duplication of efforts among organizations with similar or overlapping goals.
- **Creates a more sustainable and disaster-resistant city.** There is an intrinsic link between the concept of sustainability and natural hazard risk reduction. An essential characteristic of a sustainable city is its resilience to disasters.

- **Establishes funding priorities.** A mitigation plan allows New York City to better identify and articulate its needs to state and federal officials when funding becomes available, particularly after a disaster. With its HMP in place, New York City can propose projects as an integral part of an overall, agreed-upon strategy, rather than as projects that exist in isolation. Mitigation planning coordinates existing and potential mitigation actions into a unified mitigation strategy. Importantly, this plan ensures New York City's eligibility to receive FEMA's Unified Hazard Mitigation Assistance funds for mitigation projects, especially Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding, also known as 404 Mitigation due to it being Section 404 of the Stafford Act.
- **Increases public awareness of natural hazards.** Mitigation planning serves to help residents better understand the threat to public health, safety, and welfare, economic vitality, and the operational capability of critical infrastructure.

The New York State Office of Emergency Management (NYS OEM) supports development of HMPs for jurisdictions within the state, including New York City, through various planning initiatives. NYS OEM, under the NYS Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Services administers select hazard mitigation grants as well.

c) Planning Phases

New York City engaged in a four-phase planning process, as recommended by FEMA guidelines and as illustrated in the figure below.



Figure 2: Four-phase Planning Process

Phase 1: Organize Resources The first phase of the process involved coordinating with agencies and organizations, integrating hazard mitigation with other planning efforts, and involving community groups and other stakeholders in the planning process.

Phase 2: Assess Risks The second phase included identifying and profiling hazards, assessing vulnerability, and estimating potential losses. This phase helped establish the scientific and technical foundation for mitigation actions.

Phase 3: Develop the Plan The third phase included developing hazard mitigation goals and objectives, conducting a capability assessment, working with planning participants to identify and analyze mitigation actions, and documenting the planning process.

Phase 4: Implement the Plan and Monitor Progress New York City is currently in this fourth phase of mitigation planning. This phase involves adopting, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing the HMP to ensure the plan's goals and objectives are met.

2) Plan Organization

New York City's HMP is organized into the following sections:

Section I: Introduction

The Introduction—the section you are now reading—provides a brief overview of the HMP's background and purpose.

Section II: Planning Process

This section outlines the manner in which New York City created the HMP. It identifies which agencies and organizations were involved in the process, how they were involved, and the methods of public participation that were employed. It also provides a detailed description of the decision-making and prioritization processes.

Section III: Risk Assessment

This analysis of the hazards and risks facing New York City contains detailed hazard profiles and loss estimates—the scientific and technical basis for mitigation actions.

Section IV: Mitigation Strategy

This section shows how New York City intends to reduce losses identified in the Risk Assessment. It includes goals and objectives to guide the selection of actions to mitigate and reduce potential losses. It contains a prioritized list of cost-effective, environmentally sound, and technically feasible mitigation actions. It identifies current and potential sources of funding and other resources needed to implement the mitigation actions. Finally, it includes a discussion of New York City's policies and programs that will serve to help administer many of the identified actions.

Section V: Plan Adoption

As the Plan Adoption section indicates, New York City will formally adopt the HMP by executive order. This ensures comprehensive mitigation planning citywide, strong program management, and a citywide commitment to mitigation planning.

Section VI: Plan Maintenance

New York City will monitor, evaluate, and update its plan according to the process outlined in the Plan Maintenance section. The section establishes a review process and method for measuring progress during the five year time period for when FEMA requires the HMP is updated.

3) Plan Status and Contact

This report incorporates comments submitted by the Hazard Mitigation Planning Team, MPC Steering Committee, Mitigation Planning Council members, members of the public, and other stakeholders during the 30-public comment period as well as comments from NYS OEM and FEMA during the formal review process. The City formally adopted the final plan by Executive Order XXX in TO BE ADDED LATER.

If you have any questions or comments on the New York City HMP or require additional information, please contact:

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