

MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Montgomery County, Texas

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2023

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PART 1:

INTRODUCTION

Part 1: Introduction

The 2023 Montgomery County (the “County”) Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP or the “Plan”) update is designed to reduce loss of life, property, and community vulnerability while simultaneously increasing community resilience within Montgomery County. Since 2006, the County maintains an HMP that meets the requirements of the Stafford Act and Title 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §201.6. The County previously completed an update in 2017. The Plan serves as a strategy for implementation and maintenance of the mitigation program in the County. Funding for this planning process is supported by the Community Development Block Grant-Mitigation Local Hazard Mitigation Plans Program (LHMPP).

Purpose

The purpose of this hazard mitigation plan is to identify and plan for both natural and human-caused hazards facing Montgomery County and its 15 participating jurisdictions. Additionally, this plan includes strategies to reduce long-term risks facing the County. Hazard mitigation planning is driven by the requirements in Title 44 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 201.4 and 201.5.

While this Plan does not have legal implications or the authority to establish policy, there are several benefits of hazard mitigation planning, including:

- Increase public awareness of natural and human-caused hazards and community vulnerabilities;
- Improve the understanding of potential risks and possible risk reductions measures associated with existing and future development;
- Strengthen partnerships and lines of communications among diverse interests, including opportunities to leverage and share resources;
- Increase community and voter support for specific actions the County and its participating jurisdictions may propose to reduce future losses;
- Reduce the physical, financial, and emotional losses caused by hazards;
- Increase community resilience to withstand and more quickly recover from disasters; and
- Ensure County and participating jurisdictions eligibility for federal hazard mitigation grants and aid prior to and following federally declared disasters and for additional state matching funds for associated repairs and improvements.

Scope

The Plan applies to all incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County, which includes 16 participating jurisdictions. These jurisdictions fully participated in the planning update process and adopted the Plan to retain eligibility as direct recipients of Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grants. **Appendix B. Planning Process** summarizes the involvement of representatives from each of these jurisdictions.

Plan Organization

This Plan consists of a Base Plan and Appendices. The Base Plan includes the following:

Section 1: Introduction introduces the reader to the Plan and provides context for the information included in the Plan.

Section 2: Planning Process describes the planning process and records the participation of stakeholders in the planning process.

Section 3: County Profile analyzes the demographics, geography, and climate in the County.

Section 4: Risk Assessment analyzes the County's and jurisdictions' risks to natural and human-caused hazards.

Section 5: Capability Assessment identifies the County's capabilities and assesses how these capabilities can support mitigation programs or be improved to support mitigation.

Section 6: Mitigation Strategy describes the County's mitigation strategy, including the Plan's goals for a mitigation program, and provides a road map for implementing the Plan throughout the planning cycle.

The Appendices include tools and data to support the development and implementation of the Plan.



PART 2:

PLANNING PROCESS

Part 2: Planning Process

The following section describes the process for developing and updating the Plan. Detailed documentation of this process, including records of meeting attendance, presentations, and the Public Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement Plan can be found in **Appendix B. Planning Process**.

Stakeholder Organization and Responsibilities

The stakeholders involved in the development of the Plan are organized in three categories, as shown in *Figure 1*. This tiered structure is outlined by participation in the planning process. More details on the responsibilities of each group and their participation in the planning process are included in the subsections below.

Figure 1: Audience Organization



Planning Committee

The Planning Committee includes leadership and advisory support from participating jurisdictions, including the Montgomery County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, City of Conroe, City of Cut and Shoot, City of Magnolia, City of Montgomery, City of Oak Ridge North, City of Panorama Village, City of Patton Village, City of Roman Forest, City of Shenandoah, City of Splendora, City of Stagecoach, City of Willis, Woodbranch Village, The Woodlands Township, and the Town of Woodloch. Group responsibilities included organizing and executing the planning process, directing the development of the HMP, and reviewing drafts of planning documents. The Planning Committee contributed to high-level decisions about the purpose and goals of the HMP.

This group was also invited to participate in the activities outlined for the Stakeholder Group (e.g., participating jurisdictions, County stakeholders, and utility districts) and the public. The responsibilities of the Planning Committee include:

- Organize and carry out the planning process;
- Make high-level decisions about the purpose and goals of the Plan;
- Collect information from the stakeholders to update the Plan;
- Participate in the Local Risk and Capability Survey in September 2022; and
- Develop and finalize drafts of the Plan documents.

Stakeholder Group

The Stakeholder Group includes a larger audience of community representatives. The Planning Committee defined the composition of the Stakeholder Group, involving key entities the County regularly interacts with, including:

- Law enforcement groups;
- Regional, state, and federal agencies;
- Community risk reduction groups
- Neighboring jurisdictions (e.g., Liberty County);
- Utility providers;
- Cultural and faith-based organizations; and
- County and City departments that manage economic development, land use, housing, health and social services, infrastructure, and natural resources.

The Stakeholder Group provided feedback on drafted plan sections and input on the development of the Plan given their understanding of local community needs and values. As needed, the Planning Committee consulted with individuals in the Stakeholder Group for subject matter expertise on specific topics. This group will also be invited to participate in the activities outlined for the public. The Stakeholder Group is responsible for the following:

- Maintain awareness of the Plan update process;
- Provide subject matter expertise as requested;
- Participate in the Local Risk and Capability Survey in September 2022;
- Participate in the Hazard Vulnerability and Risk Assessment Review Meeting in November 2022;
- Participate in the Mitigation Strategy Workshops in March 2023;
- Participate in the Updated Mitigation Strategy Conference Call in April 2023; and
- Participate in the Montgomery County HMP Update Revisions Review Meeting(s) in May 2023.

Table 1: Invited Members of the Stakeholder Group

Jurisdiction	Organizations	
Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Federal Emergency Management Agency 	
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Texas Department of Emergency Management 	
Regional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Montgomery County ● Montgomery County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management ● Montgomery County, Geographic Information Systems ● Montgomery County Public Health District ● Grimes County ● Harris County ● Liberty County ● San Jacinto County ● San Jacinto River Authority ● Waller County ● Walker County 	
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City of Conroe ● City of Cut and Shoot ● City of Magnolia ● City of Montgomery ● City of Oak Ridge North ● City of Roman Forest ● City of Shenandoah ● City of Splendor ● City of Stagecoach ● City of Willis ● City of Woodloch ● Panorama Village ● Patton Village ● Utility Districts ● San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA) ● The Woodlands Township ● Woodbranch Village 	

Public

The public consists of County residents. The public was invited to participate in the public comment period to document their understanding of community hazards and capabilities to mitigate those hazards. They also had the opportunity to directly review and provide feedback on the completed HMP prior to its submission to FEMA.

The public is responsible for reviewing the draft Plan during the public review period in May 2023.

Plan Update Process

Jurisdictional Participation

The HMP includes the 16 participating jurisdictions: Montgomery County Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, City of Cut and Shoot, City of Magnolia, City of Montgomery, City of Patton Village, City of Roman Forest, City of Conroe, City of Oak Ridge North, City of Panorama Village, City of Shenandoah, City of Splendora, City of Stagecoach, City of Willis, Woodbranch Village, The Woodlands Township, and Town of Woodloch. All 16 jurisdictions contributed to and participated in the collaborative planning process to produce the HMP. Participation in the HMP indicates the commitment of the 16 jurisdictions to mitigate risk to and increase the resilience of the Montgomery County community.

As part of the public comment period, surrounding counties were invited to review and provide feedback on the draft Plan. These participating county stakeholders include Grimes, Harris, Liberty, San Jacinto, Waller, and Walker Counties. Participation in the HMP indicates the commitment of the six neighboring counties to mitigate risk to and increase the resilience of the Montgomery County community regardless of political boundaries.

The HMP includes multiple participating utility districts. The utility districts contributed to and participated in the collaborative planning process to produce the Plan. Participation in the HMP indicates the commitment of the utility districts to mitigate risk to and increase the resilience of the Montgomery County community.

Changes in Priorities

Through the Plan update process, Montgomery County and all participating jurisdictions considered changes in priorities since the last Plan adoption in 2017. These considerations were implemented throughout the 2023 Plan update, including:

- New emerging hazards affecting the County;
- Recent occurrences of hazards;
- Changes in development;
- Changes in climate;
- Inclusion of FEMA Community Lifelines;
- Expansion of, improvement of, and new capabilities; and
- Progress of previous mitigation action items.

Planning Meetings

The planning process included bi-weekly meetings to engage the Planning Committee and collect necessary information to develop the Plan. **Table 2** provides an overview of the meetings conducted during the planning process and describes the purpose of each

meeting. Documentation from each of these meetings, including agendas, presentation materials, and notes, are included in **Appendix B. Planning Process**.

Table 2: Planning Meetings and Workshops

Title	Date	Purpose
Planning Committee Meeting	8/30/2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a project overview • Discuss the logistics for the Kickoff Meeting
Planning Committee Meeting	9/12/2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Kickoff Meeting Agenda and presentation • Introduce the Public Engagement Strategy
Kick-off Meeting	9/21/2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the hazard mitigation planning process • Review project schedule and deliverables • Discuss approach to the Risk Assessment
Risk Assessment Meeting	12/01/2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review results of the risk assessment • Prioritized selected hazards • Gathered information pertaining to the FEMA Community Lifelines • Presented an overview of the mitigation strategy process
Mitigation Strategy Workshops	3/08/2023 – 3/09/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual meetings with each participating jurisdiction to develop mitigation action items
Public Comment Period	5/5/2023 – 5/19/2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draft HMP was sent to all participating jurisdictions, surrounding counties, utility providers, and other County departments. • Public comments were received and incorporated into the HMP, as detailed in Appendix B.3: Public Review.

Outreach

To promote participation of the whole community in the planning process, Montgomery County developed a Public Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement Plan and conducted outreach throughout plan development. This section details various aspects and components of this outreach. **Appendix B. Planning Process** includes documentation of this engagement.

Engagement Strategy

The Planning Committee developed a Public Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement Plan to identify goals for the engagement, define the various audiences, and describe different methods that will be considered and utilized during the planning, execution, and evaluation of various outreach activities. The objectives identified in the Public Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement Plan are as follows:

- Increase community knowledge about relevant hazards and related mitigation activities;
- Collect comprehensive feedback and input; and
- Promote collaboration among stakeholders that may extend beyond the HMP process.

These objectives were established to focus the planning process on effectively engaging the whole community.

The Plan was open for public comment to gather feedback and insights from the public, nonprofit organizations, and community-based organizations. Information on the public comment period was available through a widely distributed press release to give the public and other organizations a chance to view and provide comments on the Plan.

Workshops and Webinars

The Planning Committee and Stakeholder Group were invited to participate in seven workshops or webinars over the course of the planning process. The purpose of these events was to engage the participants, gather information needed to develop the Plan, and collect feedback on drafted deliverables. The County used a variety of meeting platforms, both in-person and virtual, to meet the needs of the community.

Table 3 provides an overview of the workshops and webinars offered to the Planning Committee and Stakeholder Group, including the date, purpose, and format of the event.

Table 3: Planning Committee and Stakeholder Group Workshops and Webinars

Title	Date	Format	Purpose
Project Kick-off Meeting	9/14/2022	In-Person Meeting	Introduce the HMP planning process and begin discussions on the goals of the project.
Local Risk and Capability Survey	9/14/2022	Survey	Identify stakeholder capabilities in existing plans and regulations, financial processes and staff, administrative and technical staff and systems, and public education and outreach systems.

Title	Date	Format	Purpose
Hazard Vulnerability and Risk Assessment Review Meeting	11/14/2022	Virtual Meeting	Review the document and provide feedback.
Mitigation Strategy Meeting	12/12/2022	Virtual Meeting	Identify and prioritize mitigation strategies.
Mitigation Strategy Workshops	3/08/2023 – 3/09/2023	In Person Workshops	Individual meetings with each participating jurisdiction to develop mitigation action items
Montgomery County HMP Update Revisions Review Meeting(s)	5/2/2023	Virtual Meeting	Review the document and provide feedback.
Conference Call to Discuss Public Comments and Recommended Changes	5/18/2023	Virtual Meeting	Discuss public comments and recommended changes.