

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Saratoga County Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan was prepared in response to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000). DMA 2000 requires states and local governments to prepare all hazard mitigation plans in order to remain eligible to receive pre-disaster mitigation funds that are made available in the wake of federally-declared disasters. **To restate, by not participating in this process and adopting the resulting plan, municipalities and other local governments will not be eligible to receive future pre-disaster mitigation funding.** It is also important to remember that pre-disaster mitigation funds are separate and distinct from those federal and state funds used in direct post-disaster relief. The availability of those funds remains unchanged; if there is a federally-declared disaster in Saratoga County, the affected municipalities will still receive immediate recovery assistance regardless of their participation in this plan.

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.

However, DMA 2000 effectively improves the disaster planning process by increasing hazard mitigation planning requirements for hazard events and requiring participating municipalities to document their hazard mitigation planning process and identify hazards, potential losses, and mitigation needs, goals, and strategies.

Saratoga County Multi-Jurisdictional Planning Process

DMA 2000 requires states to submit comprehensive Hazard Mitigation Plans for approval to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to be eligible for future pre-disaster mitigation funding. Local entities must also develop plans. To comply, Saratoga County and Plan participants (all Towns and Villages in the County) have developed and adopted this Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (see the table below). Once the mitigation plan is completed and approved, the participants will begin to work collaboratively to implement complementary mitigation actions.

Towns		Villages
Town of Ballston	Town of Milton	Village of Ballston Spa
Town of Charlton	Town of Moreau	Village of Corinth
Town of Clifton Park	Town of Northumberland	Village of Galway
Town of Corinth	Town of Providence	Village of Round Lake
Town of Day	Town of Saratoga	Village of Schuylerville
Town of Edinburg	Town of Stillwater	Village of South Glens Falls
Town of Galway	Town of Waterford	Village of Stillwater
Town of Greenfield	Town of Wilton	Village of Victory
Town of Hadley	Cities	Village of Waterford
Town of Halfmoon	City of Mechanicville	
Town of Malta	City of Saratoga Springs	

To support the planning process for this Hazard Mitigation Plan, Saratoga County and Plan participants accomplished the following:

- Developed a planning group (Planning Committee);
- Identified hazards of concern;

- Profiled and prioritized these hazards;
- Estimated inventory at risk and potential losses associated with these hazards;
- Developed mitigation goals, objectives and actions that address the hazards that impact the area;
- Developed mitigation plan maintenance procedures to be executed upon conditional approval of the plan from the New York State Emergency Management Office (NY SEMO) and FEMA.

As required by DMA 2000, the participating municipalities and Saratoga County have informed the public about these efforts and provided opportunities for public comment and input on the planning process. In addition, numerous agencies and stakeholders were contacted and some have participated as core or support members to provide input and expertise to the planning process. This Hazard Mitigation Plan documents the process and outcomes of the participants' mitigation planning efforts.

Saratoga County and the participating municipalities intend to incorporate mitigation planning as an integral component of daily government operations through existing processes and programs. Announcements regarding the planning process were publicized in local newspapers. Additionally, the Plan is and was posted and available for review and comment on the Saratoga County web site (<http://www.saratogacountyny.gov/departments.asp?did=97>) and at locations within each participating jurisdiction. Updates to the plan will be similarly announced after annual plan reviews and 5-year updates. The County HMP Coordinator will be responsible for receiving, tracking, and filing public comments regarding this plan.

Saratoga County Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan Adoption

This mitigation plan will be reviewed and adopted by Saratoga County and participating jurisdictions. Copies of the resolutions regarding adoption of the plan will be included as Appendix B.

Saratoga County Profile

Saratoga County is located in the northeastern section of New York State. The County has a total area of 844 square miles (812 square miles of land and 32 square miles of water) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008). The County is located in the Capital-Saratoga Region of New York State (New York State Tourism, Date Unknown).

Saratoga County is bordered to the north by Warren County, to the south by Schenectady and Albany Counties, to the east by Washington and Rensselaer Counties, and to the west by Hamilton, Fulton and Montgomery Counties. The Hudson River forms the eastern and northern boundary and the Mohawk River forms the southernmost boundary. The Adirondack Mountains, the Kayaderrossas and Sacandaga Rivers, numerous lakes and streams, and farmland all make up the landscape of the County (Saratoga County Historian's Office, Date Unknown).

Saratoga County is located within the Capital District. This region refers to the four counties surrounding the New York State capital of Albany. These counties include: Albany County, Schenectady County, Rensselaer County and Saratoga County. It is located in the east-central portion of the State, at the confluence of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers. It covers a total land area of 2,200 square miles. The term "Capital District" was originated in the 1920s in an effort between the Albany Chamber of Commerce and the Albany Times Union (Capital District Regional Planning Commission, Date Unknown; Wechsler, Date Unknown).

This combination of natural and developed features lays the foundation for Saratoga County's vulnerability to natural hazards, both in terms of exposure to hazard events and the potential impact of

hazard events. The Saratoga County Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan provides a general overview of current and anticipated population and land use within the study area. This information provides a basis for making decisions regarding the type of mitigation approaches to consider and the locations in which these approaches should be applied. This information can also be used to support decisions regarding future development in vulnerable areas. For potential increases in vulnerability, the County can then plan ahead to mitigate those vulnerabilities early in the development process or can direct development to areas of lower risk. The Planning Committee will revisit the mitigation plan regularly to ensure that mitigation actions support sustainability in order to minimize increased risk and to support the implementation and targeting of specific mitigation actions to address the potential impacts of development over time.

Risk Assessment

A key component of a mitigation plan is the accurate identification of risks posed by a hazard and the corresponding impacts to the community. The process of identifying hazards of concern, profiling hazard events, and conducting a vulnerability assessment is known as a risk assessment. The risk assessment portion of the mitigation planning process included the steps shown in Figure ES-1. Each of these steps is summarized below.

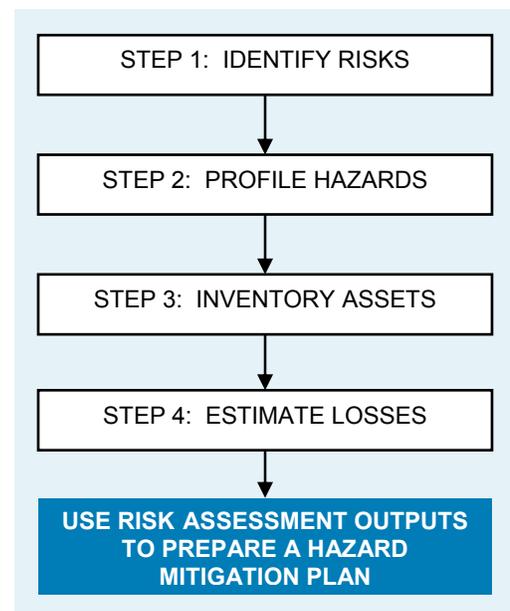
Step 1: The first step of the risk assessment process is to identify the hazards of concern. FEMA's current regulations only require an evaluation of natural hazards. Natural hazards are natural events that threaten lives, property, and many other assets. Often, natural hazards can be predicted, where they tend to occur repeatedly in the same geographical locations because they are related to weather patterns or physical characteristics of an area.

Saratoga County focused on considering a full range of natural hazards that could impact the area, and then identified and ranked those hazards that presented the greatest concern. The following list of five (5) hazards of concern, in order of hazard ranking determined by the Planning Committee, was selected for further evaluation in the mitigation plan:

1. Flood (riverine, flash, ice jam dam/beaver dam flooding/elevated ground water)
2. Severe Winter Storm (heavy snow, blizzards, ice storms, Nor'Easters) / Extreme Cold
3. Severe Storm (windstorms, thunderstorms, hail, tornadoes and hurricanes/tropical storms)
4. Ground Failure
5. Earthquake

Step 2: The next step of the risk assessment is to prepare a profile for each hazard of concern. These profiles assist communities in evaluating and comparing the hazards that can impact their area. Each type of hazard has unique characteristics that vary from event to event. That is, the impacts associated with a specific hazard can vary depending on the magnitude and location of each event (a hazard event is a specific, uninterrupted occurrence of a particular type of hazard). Further, the probability of occurrence of a hazard in a given location impacts the priority assigned to that hazard. Finally, each hazard will

Figure ES-1. Risk Assessment Process



impact different communities in different ways, based on geography, local development, population distribution, age of buildings, and mitigation measures already implemented.

Steps 3 and 4: To understand risk, a community must evaluate what assets they possess and which are exposed or vulnerable to the identified hazards of concern. Hazard profile information combined with data regarding population, demographics, general building stock, and critical facilities at risk prepares the community to develop risk scenarios and estimate potential damages and losses for each hazard.

For this risk assessment, loss estimates and exposure calculations rely on the best available data and methodologies. Uncertainties are inherent in any loss estimation methodology and arise in part from incomplete scientific knowledge concerning natural hazards and their effects on the inventory, or built, environment. Therefore, potential exposure and loss estimates are approximate and do not predict precise results but rather are used to characterize risk and assign priorities for mitigation efforts.

Saratoga County Mitigation Strategy

The outcomes of the risk assessment, supplemented by Plan participant input, provided a basis to review past mitigation actions, future goals, and appropriate local mitigation actions.

Mission Statement and Goals

Per FEMA guidance (386-1), a mission statement describes the overall duty and purpose of the planning process, and serves to identify the principle message of the plan. Saratoga County’s mission statement is broad in scope, and provided direction for the Plan:

The mitigation strategy portion of the plan includes:

- A summary of past and current mitigation efforts;
- Local hazard mitigation goals and objectives;
- Identification and analysis of mitigation measures and projects being considered;
- Multi-jurisdictional mitigation strategy (goals and objectives);
- Mitigation action plan (summary of specific actions).

Mission Statement
Through partnerships and careful planning, identify and reduce the vulnerability to natural hazards in order to protect the general health, safety, welfare, quality of life, environment, and economy of the residents and communities within Saratoga County.

The Planning Committee identified the following five over-arching mitigation goals that summarize the hazard reduction outcomes that the County and participating jurisdictions want to achieve:

1. Protect Life and Property
2. Increase Public Awareness and Preparedness of Natural Hazards and their Risks
3. Promote a Sustainable Economy
4. Protect open space, the environment and natural resources
5. Promote Partnerships

Objectives and Capability Assessment

The Planning Committee developed numerous objectives that meet multiple goals. The goals, along with their corresponding objectives, then guided the development and evaluation of specific mitigation actions.

A capability assessment was prepared by Saratoga County and each participating jurisdiction. According to FEMA 386-3, a capability assessment is an inventory of a community's missions, programs and policies; and an analysis of its capacity to carry them out. This assessment is an integral part of the planning process. It identifies, reviews, and analyzes local and state programs, polices, regulations, funding and practices currently in place that may either facilitate or hinder mitigation.

By completing this assessment, Saratoga County and participating jurisdictions learned how or whether they would be able to implement certain mitigation actions by determining the following:

- Types of mitigation actions that may be prohibited by law;
- Limitations that may exist on undertaking actions; and
- The range of local and/or state administrative, programmatic, regulatory, financial and technical resources available to assist in implementing their mitigation actions.

Identification, Prioritization, Analysis, and Implementation of Mitigation Actions

The Planning Committee reviewed information garnered from the risk assessment and the public involvement strategy to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and obstacles in hazard mitigation within Saratoga County through a facilitated brainstorming session on risks, vulnerabilities, and capabilities. This information was used to prepare a catalog of mitigation alternatives (Appendix D) to be considered by the Planning Committee in preparing their individual jurisdictional annexes.

All proposed mitigation actions were identified in relation to the Plan's goals and objectives. The County and participating jurisdictions identified appropriate local mitigation actions, along with the hazards mitigated, goals and objectives met, lead agency, estimated cost, potential funding sources and the proposed timeline. These actions are identified in Volume II, Section 9 for the County and each participating municipality.

The Planning Committee performed a qualitative benefit/cost review on the identified mitigation actions that weighed the estimated benefits of a project versus the estimated costs to establish a parameter to be used in the prioritization of a project. Using this approach, projects with positive benefit versus cost ratios (such as high over high, high over medium, medium over low, etc.) are considered cost-beneficial and were prioritized accordingly.

Plan Maintenance Procedures

Hazard mitigation planning is an ongoing process. Section 7 of this plan presents procedures for plan maintenance and updates. Therefore, the Planning Committee will continue ongoing mitigation efforts to implement the mitigation plan and revise and update the plan as necessary.

To monitor implementation of the mitigation plan, the Planning Committee members will meet annually to discuss the status of plan implementation and will prepare a summary report of the plan status and any needed updates. The mitigation evaluation will address changes as new hazard events occur, as the area develops, and as more is learned about hazards and their impacts. The evaluation will include an assessment of whether the planning process and actions have been effective, whether development or other issues warrant changes to the plan or its priorities, if the communities' goals are being reached, and whether changes are warranted. In addition, the mitigation plan will be updated at a minimum within the 5-year cycle specified by DMA 2000.

POINT OF CONTACT

To request information or provide comments regarding this plan, contact Saratoga County Department of Emergency Services.

Mailing Address: Saratoga County Emergency Services
25 West High Street
Ballston Spa, New York 12020

Contact Name: Daniel Miller
Emergency Services Specialist
Saratoga County Office of Emergency Services

Telephone: 518-885-2243

