

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



ALAMO AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
REGIONAL MITIGATION ACTION PLAN UPDATE

## Section 2 Executive Summary

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### 2.1 Overview

On October 30, 2000, the President signed into law the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, also known as DMA 2000. Among its other features, DMA 2000 established a requirement that in order to remain eligible for federal disaster assistance and grant funds, local and state governments must develop and adopt hazard mitigation plans. DMA-2000 (Public Law 106-390) was an amendment of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988 (Public Law 93-288). On February 26, 2002, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) published an Interim Final Rule (IFR) that set forth the guidance and regulations under which such plans are supposed to be developed. The IFR provides detailed descriptions of both the planning process that states and localities are required to observe and the contents of the plan that emerges. This Alamo Area Council of Governments Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (the Plan) responds to those requirements.

Hazard mitigation is often defined as actions taken to reduce the effects of natural hazards on a place and its population. The AACOG Region decided to develop this Plan Update because of increasing awareness that natural hazards, especially flood and wind, have the potential to affect people, physical assets, and operations in the region.

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The Alamo Area Council of Governments Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan is designed to protect people and property from the effects of natural and human-caused hazards. By taking action today, we can reduce the likelihood of injuries, loss of life and damage to our communities. That is what hazard mitigation planning is all about - taking action based on a solid understanding of our vulnerabilities to reduce the impacts of hazards that may strike sometime in the future. In addition to developing a framework for action, the Regional Mitigation Plan enables participating counties and municipalities to apply for pre and post-disaster mitigation funding that would not otherwise be available. This funding can help local jurisdictions implement desired goals and objectives outlined in the plan.

Participants in the AACOG regional planning process formulated the following guiding principles, which categorize the types of mitigation strategies ultimately adopted at the local level.

- **Communication and Coordination**
- **Financial Resources**
- **Technical Assistance**
- **Training**
- **Planning**
- **Education and Public Participation**
- **Critical Facilities**
- **Infrastructure and Utilities**
- **Weather Warning Systems and Hazard identification Technologies**
- **Environmental Concerns**

For each principle, regional-level goals were established along with more refined objectives. Each county and municipality was responsible for developing their own Mitigation Action Plan, which identified jurisdictionally-specific actions, written in the form of policies and projects. Each Mitigation Action Plan includes assigned responsibilities, potential funding sources and a timeline for implementation. Action plans link the broad ideas established in the AACOG Regional Mitigation Plan with strategic, action-oriented tasks.

This publication constitutes the Hazard Mitigation Plan, including instructions for its implementation, for the Alamo Area Council of Governments, the counties, and the incorporated communities within its borders, including:

- Atascosa County
  - City of Charlotte
  - City of Christine
  - City of Jourdanton
  - City of Lytle
  - City of Pleasanton
  - City of Poteet
- Bandera County
  - City of Bandera
- Bexar County
  - City of Alamo Heights
  - City of Balcones Heights
  - City of Converse
  - City of Helotes
  - City of Kirby

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- City of Leon Valley
- City of Live Oak
- City of St. Hedwig
- City of San Antonio
- City of Somerset
- City of Terrell Hills
- City of Universal City
- City of Von Ormy
- City of Windcerst
- Comal County
  - City of Bulverde
  - City of Garden Ridge
  - City of New Braunfels
- Frio County
  - City of Dilley
  - City of Pearsall
- Gillespie County
  - City of Fredericksburg
- Guadalupe County
  - City of Cibolo
  - City of Schertz
  - City of Seguin
- Karnes County
  - City of Falls City
  - City of Karnes City
  - City of Kenedy
  - City of Runge
- Kerr County
  - City of Ingram
  - City of Kerrville
- Medina County
  - City of Castroville
  - City of Devine
  - City of Hondo
  - City of Natalia
- Wilson County
  - City of Floresville
  - City of La Vernia
  - City of Stockdale
- San Antonio River Authority

The above list represents a change from the participants in the 2005 Plan. The table below identifies those 2005 participants who choose not to participate in the Update, as well as new participants to the Update.

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**Table 2.1-1  
 Changes in Participants Between 2005 and 2012 Plans**

2005 Participants Not Participating in Update	New Participants to the Update
City of China Grove (Bexar County)	City of St. Hedwig (Bexar County)
City of Castle Hills (Bexar County)	City of Von Ormy (Bexar County)
City of Fair Oaks Ranch (Bexar County)	City of Cibolo (Guadalupe County)
City of Grey Forest (Bexar County)	
City of Hill Country Village (Bexar County)	
City of Hollywood Park (Bexar County)	
City of Olmos Park (Bexar County)	
City of Selma (Bexar County)	
City of Shavano Park (Bexar County)	
Goliad County	
City of Goliad (Goliad County)	
City of Lacoste (Medina County)	
City of Poth (Wilson County)	
City of Marion (Guadalupe County)	
City of New Berlin (Guadalupe County)	
City of Staples (Guadalupe County)	

The continually changing nature of hazard risks within the region requires that updates to this plan occur on a regular basis.

Hazardous conditions and situations exist in all communities, and the planning area is no exception. Hazards range from natural hazards such as tornadoes and drought to technological hazards such as chemical spills and traffic congestion. Ordinary citizens generally give little thought to these potential hazards until they occur or threaten the community. The Alamo Area Council of Governments, along with the county emergency managers, have the responsibility to identify real and potential hazards and, to the extent possible, prepare plans for coping when they occur.

County and municipal government response to life-threatening hazards requires continuous planning, training and education, all of which may be coordinated through the AACOG. This Hazard Mitigation Plan Update identifies hazards affecting the region, its counties and municipalities, and recommends actions to prevent or limit loss of life, injury, and property damage due to those hazards.

In the early stages of the development of this Plan Update, the previous plan was reviewed and the information in it considered by the participants in the Plan Update process. The first step in this update process was the review and consideration of the hazards identified and profiled in the 2005 plan. These hazards were considered by the Plan update participants, and their applicability to the current plan update was considered. After discussion, 14 hazards were identified for inclusion in this Plan Update; some of these hazards were also considered in the 2005 plan, and some are new to this Plan Update.

This Plan Update focuses on 14 region-wide hazards with the highest potential for damaging physical assets, people, and operations in the AACOG Region. These hazards are:

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Flooding (Flash and Riverine)  
Levee and Dam Failure  
Tornado  
Tropical Systems and Hurricanes  
Thunderstorm  
Drought  
Hail  
Wildfire  
Winter Storms  
Geologic Hazards: Earthquakes and Sinkholes  
Energy Pipeline Failure  
Hazardous Materials Incident (Transportation and Fixed Site)  
Pandemic (Human and Animal)  
Terrorism

Both the risk assessment and mitigation action plan sections reflect this emphasis, which was the result of careful consideration by AACOG Executive Mitigation Committee (EMC).

Emergency mitigation and response actions are designed for every person in the region who might be affected by an emergency. These services will be provided regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, or handicap.

The situations addressed by this plan are those in which the actions of many different agencies must be coordinated. This major coordination effort, being oriented toward disaster situations, differs from those emergencies handled on a daily basis by local fire, law enforcement, and medical services personnel.

The AACOG Region is subject to a number of natural and man-made hazards that threaten life and health and cause extensive property damage. To better understand these hazards and their impacts on people and property, and to identify ways to reduce those impacts, the AACOG has developed this Hazard Mitigation Plan.

“Hazard mitigation” does not mean that all hazards are stopped or prevented. It does not suggest complete elimination of the damage or disruption caused by such incidents. Natural forces are powerful and most natural hazards are well beyond human control. Similarly, man-made hazards are often unpredictable. Mitigation is not a quick fix, but rather a long-term approach for reducing vulnerability. As defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), “hazard mitigation” is any sustained action or strategy taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to life and property from a hazard event.

Planning is one of the best ways to spot vulnerabilities and produce strategies to correct shortcomings in the region’s approach to hazard response and preparation. A well-prepared plan will ensure that actions and strategies are reviewed and implemented so that problems are addressed by the most appropriate and efficient solutions. It can also ensure that activities are coordinated with each other and with other regional programs, preventing conflicts and reducing the costs of implementing individual activities.

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## 2.2 Organization of the Plan

The AACOG Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan generally conforms to the basic plan set forth in Federal Emergency Management Agency guidelines for the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. The Plan is organized to parallel the structure provided in the IFR. The Plan has 9 sections.

Section 1	Table of Contents
Section 2	Executive Summary
Section 3	Context
Section 4	Adoption and Approval
Section 5	Planning Process
Section 6	Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
Section 7	Capability Assessment
Section 8	Mitigation Action Plan
Section 9	Plan Monitoring and Maintenance
Appendices	

There are references to the IFR throughout the Plan. Where possible, these provide specific section and subsection notations to aid the review process. The Plan also includes references to the FEMA crosswalk document, which is used in reviewing mitigation plans.

## 2.3 Hazards and Risks

### 2.3.1 Hazards

Section 6 of this Plan include detailed descriptions of the process that was used to assess and prioritize the region's risks from natural hazards, quantitative risk assessments for the AACOG as a whole, and more detailed assessments for certain asset classes. Fourteen hazards were initially identified and profiled by the AACOG EMC. These are:

- Flooding (Flash and Riverine)
- Levee and Dam Failure
- Tornado
- Tropical Systems and Hurricanes
- Thunderstorm
- Drought
- Hail
- Wildfire
- Winter Storms
- Geologic Hazards: Earthquakes and Sinkholes
- Energy Pipeline Failure
- Hazardous Materials (Transportation and Fixed Site)
- Pandemic (Human and Animal)
- Terrorism

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After these initial 14 hazards were profiled, the AACOG EMC used an evaluation system with five criteria to reduce the range of hazards to those with the most potential to impact the planning area. The criteria are also discussed in detail in Section 6. The criteria included: (1) History, (2) Potential for mitigation, (3) Presence of susceptible areas, (4) Data availability, (5) Federal Disaster Declarations and local emergency declarations. Where available and applicable, data from the 2005 plan's hazard profiles and risk assessment was considered in the Plan Update process. In some instances, the existing data was used as a starting point, with updated data added as required and applicable.

As a result of this evaluation, the AACOG EMC determined that 5 hazards present the greatest risk to the AACOG Region and its residents – flooding (flash and riverine), flooding (dam/levee failure), tropical system/hurricane, wildfire, and earthquake/sinkhole. These hazards were further examined to determine the extent of the risk and to start to identify potential projects.

For each of these hazards, the profiles in Section 6 include:

- Description
- Geographical Extent
- Severity
- Impact on Life and Property
- Occurrence (probability)

### 2.3.2 Risks

A risk calculation is a FEMA requirement. Risk is a numerical indication of potential future damages. Although a range of events from winter weather to hurricanes all have some potential to affect the AACOG Region, flooding and severe storms are clearly the most significant region-wide hazards, based on the criteria and experience.

The region-wide hazards were selected for much more detailed assessments and estimations of future damages. The risk assessment found in Section 6 describes and analyzes the risks and vulnerabilities to the AACOG Region from the hazards profiles. The assessment includes a vulnerability description and information as to the identified risk to public and private assets (where applicable).

The AACOG Executive Mitigation Committee (EMC) conducted a risk assessment exercise to determine the vulnerabilities to assets within the planning area. The exercise was conducted at an EMC meeting. The updated hazard profiles were used as the basis to determine the vulnerability of and risk to assets within the region.

Prioritizing the potential impacts of hazards on regional assets was based on both a quantitative and a qualitative analysis of the identified hazards. This allowed the EMC to focus planning effort on the hazards most likely to cause future impacts to the community. The EMC used historical data, local knowledge and experience to rate the exposure, probability and impact of each of these hazards. Each hazard identified and profiled received a qualitative risk assessment. The anticipated impact of the hazards was then assigned a value of Low, Moderate or High. Table 2.3.2-1 describes the definitions assigned to these terms.

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**Table 2.3.2-1  
Definitions of Risk Assessment Impact Terminology for Qualitative Risk Assessment**

Term	Potential Impact to People (Life Safety/Livelihood)	Potential Impact to Buildings/Critical Facilities	Potential Impact to Infrastructure
Low	Some injuries possible but unlikely	Cosmetic damages to structures Loss of Function for less than 1 day	Some roads/bridges temporarily blocked Temporary power loss
Moderate	Injuries expected, some deaths possible	Some structural damages Loss of Function for 1-2 days	Road/bridge closures Power and utility loss
High	Several deaths expected	Some structures irreparably damaged Loss of Function for 3-5 days	Long-term road/bridge closures Long-term power and utility loss

These ratings were then used to determine the qualitative ranking of the hazards, the regional risk of exposure to the hazard, the probability of the hazard occurring and the potential impact of that hazard to the AACOG region or any one of its counties including the San Antonio River Authority (SARA).

Where applicable, data from the 2005 Plan’s risk assessment was used as a starting point for the risk assessment found in this Plan Update. Some of this data was refined throughout the Plan Update process; new data was added to or inserted where applicable. Section 7 includes details about calculation methodologies and results of the region-wide risk assessment.

## 2.4 Goals and Actions

Section 8 of this Plan describes the AACOG Region’s priorities for mitigation actions. The section divides the actions by priority, and describes the funding required, sources of funding, the level of support, and the timing of the action. The section also includes the AACOG region’s hazard mitigation goals and objectives.

As part of the Plan Update process, the goals and actions described in the 2005 Plan were reviewed and considered. These previous goals were considered and refined. Where applicable, these previous actions were updated. New actions were developed in response to the updated hazard and risk data developed as a result of the Plan Update process.

### 2.4.1 Planning Area Hazard Mitigation Goals

**Goals** are general guidelines that explain what the region wants to achieve. Goals are expressed as broad policy statements representing desired long-term results. The AACOG region’s mitigation planning goals include:

1. Increase regional emergency preparedness, response and recovery capability.
2. Build capacity for hazard mitigation at the county and municipal levels through technical and financial assistance programs.

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3. Reduce the impact of natural disasters on populations and private property.
4. Identify, introduce and implement programs designed to raise awareness and acceptance of the principles of hazard mitigation.

Please refer to Section 8 for more information on the new and updated goals for the AACOG Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

### 2.4.2 Actions

**Action Items** are the specific steps (projects, policies, and programs) that advance a given goal. They are highly focused, specific, and measurable. The AACOG Region's mitigation actions include, but are not limited to:

- Develop and implement community education and outreach programs to address all-hazards
- Ensure emergency communication capability during hazard events
- Design and implement projects to address flooding and drainage issues
- Ensure emergency notification systems are in place and effective

Where applicable, county/municipality-specific mitigation actions are included with attention paid to facility identification.

The above list is intended to be illustrative of the overall action items, rather than an exhaustive list. Please refer to Section 8 for more information on county/municipality specific mitigation actions, both new and updated.

## 2.5 Planning Process

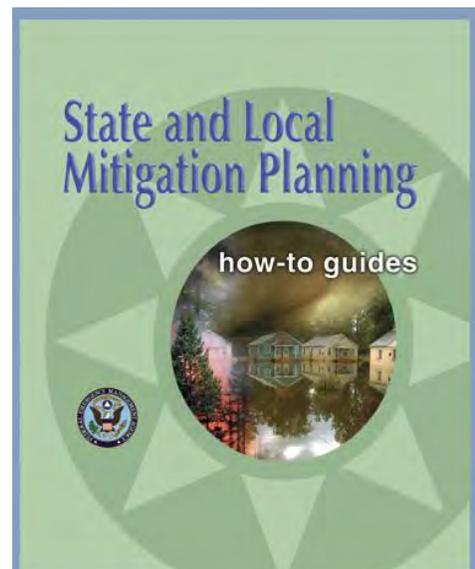
Section 5 provides details about the process that was used to develop this Plan. The process closely followed the guidance in the FEMA 386 series of planning guidance, which recommend a four-stage process for developing mitigation plans.

- Step 1 Organize resources
- Step 2 Assess risks
- Step 3 Develop a mitigation plan
- Step 4 Implement the plan and monitor progress

**Step 1**, organizing resources, is described in Section 5 (Planning Process). The section includes details about who was involved, the processes that were used to establish leadership and advisory groups, and public and other outreach and involvement efforts.

**Step 2**, the risk assessment, was completed by the AACOG EMC. The Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment is included as Section 6 of the Plan.

**Step 3**, development of the Mitigation Plan is described in Section 5 (Planning Process) and Section 8 (Mitigation Action Plan). Section 5



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includes details about who was involved, the processes that were used, and the products that were developed. Section 8 includes specific details about the identification and development of mitigation goals, objectives, and actions based upon Section 6 (Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment) and Section 7 (Capability Assessment).

**Step 4**, implementing the Plan, is described in the Mitigation Action Plan in Section 8, which includes details about who is responsible for implementation of specific strategies and actions; and in Section 9, the Plan Monitoring and Maintenance section, which describes long-term implementation through periodic updates and reviews.

## 2.6 Adoption and Approval

**NOTE TO REVIEWERS: Dates will be added after approval.**

The Alamo Area Council of Governments, with the endorsement of the EMC, was responsible for recommending plan approval. Consistent with that recommendation, the Alamo Area Council of Governments approved this Hazard Mitigation Plan on [Insert DATE]. Following adoption, the Plan was submitted to FEMA Region VI. FEMA reviewed and approved the Plan on [Insert DATE]. Subsequently, the participating counties and municipalities also adopted the Plan, submitted their adoption resolutions to AACOG, and received their own approval notifications (see Appendices C and D).

## 2.7 Implementation

The implementation process is described as part of the specific actions in the Mitigation Action Plan in Section 8.

## 2.8 Monitoring and Updating the Plan

Prior to completion of the Plan Update process, the monitoring and maintenance process described in the 2005 Plan was evaluated by the participating jurisdictions. It was determined that the process must be refined, to allow for ease of separation of monitoring and maintenance responsibilities during the next Plan Update. Section 9 (Plan Monitoring and Maintenance) describes the schedule and procedures for ensuring that the Plan stays current. The section identifies when the Plan must be updated, who is responsible for monitoring the Plan, and ensuring that the update procedures are implemented. This section provides a combination of cyclical dates (oriented toward FEMA requirements) and triggering events that will initiate amendments and updates to the Plan. The Alamo Area Council of Governments is responsible for monitoring the Plan and initiating the cyclical update process. The point of contact at AACOG is:

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