

**Press Release  
August 24, 2022**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Calling for Public Review and Comment on the Draft of the George Washington Regional Commission Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan - 2022 Update**

**Media Contact:**

Kate Gibson  
540-642-1579  
gibson@gwregion.org

**Fredericksburg, VA:** The George Washington Regional Commission (GWRC; Virginia Planning District 16), in partnership with the City of Fredericksburg, the Counties of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania, and Stafford, and the Towns of Bowling Green and Port Royal, along with the Rappahannock Tribe, is updating the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to identify hazards which threaten the Region and its communities and determine and prioritize strategies to lessen the impacts of future hazards on people and property. The Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan is an important tool for the Region's localities in reducing the risks and impacts to communities from hazards.

Public input is a critical component in the development of the Plan, and the previously released public survey conducted to support development of the Plan received responses from 194 individuals across the Region offering their perspectives regarding the hazards that impact local communities. Responses to the survey, along with other information collected over the last several months, have resulted in the development of a draft of the Plan, available online at the following link <https://gwregion.org/hmp> and in hardcopy form in the Commission's offices at 406 Princess Anne Street, Fredericksburg. In addition to an Executive Summary and Appendix (which includes a report summarizing the results of the public survey) the Plan consists of the following content:

- Chapter 1, *Introduction*: introduces the purpose and applicability of the Plan;
- Chapter 2, *Regional & Community Profiles*: provides an overview of the region and localities, including demographics and development context;
- Chapter 3, *The Planning Process*: outlines the process to update to the Plan;
- Chapter 4, *Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment*: identifies each of the hazards that the region faces, provides background and descriptive history of the hazards across the GWRC region, and provides jurisdiction-specific profiles of the hazards that are considered most critical;
- Chapter 5, *Vulnerability Assessment*: offers an assessment of the region's vulnerability to identified hazards based upon historical occurrence and other evidence of risk, as well as an assessment of specific hazards and vulnerabilities for individual jurisdictions within the region;

- Chapter 6, *Capability Assessment*: provides jurisdiction-specific capability assessments, designed to demonstrate the mitigation tools and capabilities that each jurisdiction may employ;
- Chapter 7, *Mitigation Strategies*: outlines mitigation goals, objectives, and strategies for the Region and for each participating local jurisdiction; and
- Chapter 8, *Plan Implementation & Maintenance*: inventories Plan adoption, implementation, and integration information, as well as objectives for ongoing monitoring and maintenance of the Plan.

The public's review of the draft is appreciated, and comments and question are welcomed and encouraged. Comments or questions may be emailed to [hazardplan@gwregion.org](mailto:hazardplan@gwregion.org).

“Planning for potential hazards and their impacts before they occur is essential to the health and safety of all who live and work in our region. This plan update is the latest step in advancing hazard preparedness in our region, efforts that began with the adoption of the first regional hazard mitigation plan in 2006. We hope the public will take the opportunity to review the Plan and provide any comments where they see opportunity for improvement in the interest of our region and localities.”

– Chip Boyles, GWRC Executive Director

Moving forward, each of the participating localities will be considering the draft, and then the Plan's Project Management Team will consider approval of the draft plan at a meeting in mid- to late September to which the public will also be invited to participate and comment on the draft Plan.

Hazard mitigation plans are required by federal regulations to be updated every five (5) years in order to remain eligible for certain Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grants, programs, and disaster relief funds. The GWRC Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan was last updated in 2017, and the 2022 update is expected to be completed this fall with approval by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and FEMA. The project to update the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan is largely funded through a FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant, awarded as the result of a successful application submitted by GWRC.

For any questions or additional information, you may contact the Project Management Team at [hazardplan@gwregion.org](mailto:hazardplan@gwregion.org).

Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact the GWRC at (540) 642-1579 or [gibson@gwregion.org](mailto:gibson@gwregion.org).

Las personas que requieren alojamiento especial de acuerdo con el Americans with Disabilities Act, o personas que requieren servicios de traducción (libre de cargo) deben comunicarse con la GWRC al (540) 642-1579 o [gibson@gwregion.org](mailto:gibson@gwregion.org).

###