

## 5: Mitigation Strategy

The State of Vermont intends to create an efficient, effective, and consistent Hazard Mitigation Strategy that will focus efforts and priorities, enhance mitigation capabilities, and integrate State, regional, and local planning and risk assessment efforts in the short-term and long-term. The goals, objectives and actions stated herein are meant to serve as practical policy guidance for State of Vermont decision-makers in allocating resources for the Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program, and existing and future State resources, among many others. Additionally, this action list is intended to be a resource as VEM and partner agencies continue to collaborate with non-governmental stakeholders throughout Vermont during implementation. As the actions contained within this Plan reach significantly beyond what any one entity would be able to implement or fund, continued collaboration is considered necessary for more effectively leveraging resources.

For an overview of the robust stakeholder engagement process undertaken to develop the vision, mission, goals, guiding principles, and actions that follow, see: [Planning Process](#). To better understand how the actions relate to the identified hazards and the specific vulnerabilities created by those hazards, see: [Hazard Assessment](#).

**VISION:** Vermont will be safe and resilient in the face of climate change and natural disasters.

**MISSION:** To protect life, property, natural resources and quality of life in Vermont by reducing our vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters.

### GOALS

Protect, restore and enhance Vermont's natural resources to promote healthy, resilient ecosystems.

Enhance the resilience of our built environment – our communities, infrastructure, buildings, and cultural assets.

Develop and implement plans and policies that create resilient natural systems, built environments, and communities.

Create a common understanding of – and coordinated approach to – mitigation planning and action.

#### Guiding Principles for Mitigation Planning and Action:

- We will ensure that hazard mitigation work strengthens and protects Vermont's economy and affordability.
- We will reduce the risks and impact of hazards on vulnerable populations.
- We will ensure that hazard mitigation action accounts for – and helps us adapt to – climate change.
- We will work to build relationships and partnerships for action across sectors and disciplines.

## Action Development & Prioritization Process

In a March 2017 State Hazard Mitigation Planning & Policy Committee (SHMPPC) meeting, attendees approved the creation of a Steering Committee to guide the SHMP update process, with the specific instruction to devote considerable time to developing a robust, implementable mitigation strategy. Accordingly, over the course of the next year, using the Plan goals identified by the Steering Committee, Working Groups and Focus Groups developed a significant list of mitigation actions. These actions were sorted by goal and then further sorted according to similar themes, called “strategies”.

Given a healthy list of ninety-six (96) mitigation actions, organization by prioritization was necessary. Accordingly, the 96 mitigation actions were ranked based on the below criteria, developed by the Steering Committee.

**Table 41: Action Prioritization Criteria**

	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Feasibility</b>
<b>High</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significantly benefit the environment, OR</li> <li>Significantly benefit people/vulnerable populations, OR</li> <li>Significantly reduce risk in our built environment, OR</li> <li>Significantly benefit the economy, OR</li> <li>Create the opportunity to do one of the above (e.g. filling a data gap), AND</li> <li><b>Significantly reduce vulnerability to a high priority hazard</b> (erosion, inundation, ice, snow)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have political and community support, AND</li> <li>Are consistent with current state laws/policies, AND</li> <li>Have funding/other required resources available or identified, AND</li> <li>Are technically/logistically feasible</li> </ul>
<b>Medium</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderately benefit the environment, OR</li> <li>Moderately benefit people/vulnerable populations, OR</li> <li>Moderately reduce risk in our built environment, OR</li> <li>Moderately benefit the economy, OR</li> <li>Create the opportunity to do one of the above (e.g. filling a data gap), AND</li> <li><b>Moderately reduce vulnerability to a profiled hazard</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have political and community support, OR</li> <li>Are consistent with current state laws/policies, OR</li> <li>Have funding/other required resources available or identified, AND</li> <li>Are technically/logistically feasible</li> </ul>
<b>Low</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minorly benefit the environment, OR</li> <li>Minorly benefit people/vulnerable populations, OR</li> <li>Minorly reduce risk in our built environment, OR</li> <li>Minorly benefit the economy, OR</li> <li>Create the opportunity to do one of the above (e.g. filling a data gap), AND</li> <li><b>Minorly reduce vulnerability to a profiled hazard</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have political and community support, OR</li> <li>Are consistent with current state laws/policies, OR</li> <li>Have funding/other required resources available or identified, OR</li> <li>Are technically/logistically feasible</li> </ul>

Using the High, Medium and Low rankings for Impact and Feasibility within the action list, the Focus Groups organized by goal area began the process of defining priority actions under each goal, which was reviewed and modified by the Steering Committee. Any action that received a High Impact and High Feasibility score, and that requires coordination to be implemented, was automatically considered to be a priority action. The Steering Committee decided to also consider inclusion of certain High Impact actions with lower Feasibility scores in the priority action list based on Feasibility being potential flexible or subject to future change. Those priority actions with lower Feasibility scores were either highlighted by the Focus Groups or added by the Steering Committee. Taken together, this Plan includes twenty-four (24) priority actions, which are highlighted in the complete action list.

For more information on the process for development of the 2018 SHMP actions, the criteria and action prioritization, see: [Planning Process](#).

In addition to these priorities, the Steering Committee also voted individually on their top three actions from the priority list, resulting in the following top priority actions:

- Establish a working group to design a robust cross-sector buyout program, considering funding, ownership, use restrictions, incentives, stewardship, and prioritization.
- Inventory and protect critical headwater and floodplain storage areas that would result in a measurable abatement of flooding.
- Create a “Reconnect Vermont Rivers” initiative (or similar state planning, prioritization, and tracking mechanism) to enhance the funding eligibility and incentives for flood resiliency, water quality, and habitat projects as co-benefits.
- Audit all state/federal funding/technical assistance programs to determine the degree to which they directly or indirectly help or hinder the ability of the State to achieve Vermont’s State Hazard Mitigation Plan goals.
- Support the development of an Academic Resilience Collaborative (ARC) of State agencies, academic partners, researches, students and entities with research needs around hazard mitigation and resilience.

The complete mitigation action list includes all 96 actions, categorized by similar themes into 24 strategies that then fall under the appropriate overarching goal, of which there are four. The list also identifies the:

- source of the action,
- pertinent category (e.g. technical assistance, data gap),
- hazard(s) that the action addresses,
- entity(s) responsible for implementing the action,
- potential resources to fund action implementation,
- timeline for completing the action, and
- the overall Impact and Feasibility ratings.

For those actions that use the term “hazard-prone areas”, the Steering Committee aimed to address all hazards to which that specific action may reduce vulnerability. To that end, “hazard-prone areas” can mean a FEMA-mapped Special Flood Hazard Area, an area identified as vulnerable to landslides, or those regions of the State that are more vulnerable to drought or extreme cold, for example.

Though the mitigation action list identifies the hazard(s) addressed, some hazard-specific actions and capabilities can also be found and further explained in the mitigation subsection within each of the hazard profiles (see: [Hazard Assessment](#)).

**Table 42: 2018 State Hazard Mitigation Plan Actions Acronym List:**

AAFM	Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets	NFIP	FEMA National Flood Insurance Program
ACCD	Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development	NRCD	Vermont Natural Resources Conservation Districts
ADS	Vermont Agency of Digital Services	NRCS	USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
AHS	Vermont Agency of Human Services	PSD	Vermont Public Services Department
ANR	Vermont Agency of Natural Resources	RPC	Regional Planning Commission
AOA	Vermont Agency of Administration	SHPO	Vermont State Historic Preservation Officer
ARC	Academic Resilience Collaborative	TNC	The Nature Conservancy
BGS	Vermont Buildings & General Services	USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant	USDA-RD	USDA - Rural Development
CLF	Conservation Law Foundation	USGS	United States Geological Survey
COAD	Community Organizations Active in Disaster	UVM	University of Vermont
CRO	Community Resilience Organizations	VAAHM	Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems
CVOEO	Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity	VCGI	Vermont Center for Geographic Information
DPS	Vermont Department of Public Safety	VEM	Vermont Emergency Management
EMPG	Emergency Management Performance Grant	VHCB	Vermont Housing & Conservation Board
ERAF	Emergency Relief & Assistance Fund	VHS	Vermont Historical Society
EWP	Emergency Watershed Protection Program	VLCT	Vermont League of Cities & Towns
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency	VLT	Vermont Land Trust
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration	VNRC	Vermont Natural Resources Council
GMP	Green Mountain Power	VOAD	Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
HWA	FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance	VRC	Vermont River Conservancy
HMGP	FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program	VTrans	Vermont Agency of Transportation
HMTAP	FEMA Hazard Mitigation Technical Assistance Programs	WUV	Watersheds United Vermont
NESEC	Northeast States Emergency Consortium		