

## 6: Maintenance & Implementation

The State of Vermont's various agencies have always been invested in mitigation activities, as identified in previous State Hazard Mitigation Plans (SHMPs). The events following Tropical Storm Irene, however, magnified the need for coordination and a comprehensive approach to mitigation and resilience planning statewide. As evidenced throughout this Plan, the results of this have been a multi-stakeholder coordination effort to build a stronger, more resilient Vermont. For information on the stakeholder engagement process and involvement of the State Hazard Mitigation Planning and Policy Committee (SHMPPC), see: [Planning Process](#).

### 2013 Vermont State Hazard Mitigation Plan Implementation

The 2013 SHMP provided a foundation upon which Vermont could implement identified mitigation projects as well as continue to carry out the extensive Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) process following Tropical Storm Irene. Progress made on previously identified mitigation actions is summarized in the [Appendix to Section 5](#). Capabilities that were developed based on 2013 SHMP actions are noted in the [State Capabilities List](#) with additional details and significant improvements since 2013 explained in [State & Local Capabilities](#).

Additional mitigation needs identified through the significant stakeholder engagement process are included in the [Mitigation Strategy](#). The [State Capabilities List](#) also notes specific needs that have been identified and whether they are addressed by actions in the 2018 SHMP.

Following the approval of the 2013 SHMP, the Deputy Secretary of Administration spearheaded an effort to elevate mitigation priorities at the policy level by separating the then State Hazard Mitigation Committee into two separate entities: the State Hazard Mitigation Project Review Committee (SHMPRC) and the State Hazard Mitigation Planning & Policy Committee (SHMPPC). The former is tasked with the technical review of all Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant applications submitted to the State for consideration, while the latter committee is responsible for discussing mitigation goals and policies to ensure cohesion across State agencies (see: [State & Local Capabilities](#)).

Following its creation, the SHMPPC met approximately three times per year to review mitigation progress, changes in policies and to reconsider prioritization of the 2013 SHMP actions based on new data. Over the course of several meetings in 2015, the SHMPPC identified 16 top priority actions of the 2013 SHMP that required attention from multiple State agencies. At subsequent meetings, progress on those actions was discussed and documented. Given the post-Irene, somewhat parallel, Roadmap to Resilience effort hosted by the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC) as part of the Resilient Vermont Network initiative (RVT), the SHMPPC decided that those actions identified in the Roadmap should be considered in tandem with the other actions identified in the SHMP in order to combine efforts and leverage resources.

In 2017, the focus of the SHMPPC shifted from implementation of the 2013 SHMP to development of the 2018 SHMP (see: [Planning Process](#)).

### 2018 State Hazard Mitigation Plan Implementation:

The previous SHMP provided the guidance and foundation upon which to build the Steering Committee, update this Plan, and give insight into Vermont's continually-evolving approach to mitigation. The 2018 planning process expanded stakeholder engagement with the intent of developing an action plan to be implemented by a broad range of stakeholders throughout Vermont, which led to increased ownership of the

Plan and, consequently, improves the likelihood of implementation success.

Based on their day-to-day functions, the following State entities are responsible for contributing to mitigation of Vermont’s hazards (in addition to Vermont Emergency Management):

Fluvial Erosion	Department of Environmental Conservation; Vermont Agency of Transportation; Buildings & General Services
Inundation Flooding	Department of Environmental Conservation; Vermont Agency of Transportation; Buildings & General Services
Ice	Vermont Agency of Transportation; Public Service Department
Snow	Vermont Agency of Transportation; Public Service Department
Wind	Public Service Department
Heat	Department of Health
Cold	Department of Health
Drought	Department of Environmental Conservation – State Geologist
Landslides	Department of Environmental Conservation – State Geologist; Vermont Agency of Transportation
Wildfire	Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation
Earthquake	Department of Environmental Conservation – State Geologist
Invasive Species	Agency of Agricultural, Food & Markets; Agency of Natural Resources
Infectious Disease	Department of Health
Hail	Public Service Department

#### **Monitoring and Evaluating the 2018 State Hazard Mitigation Plan:**

Vermont’s 2018 State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP) is a dynamic document. To ensure that the SHMP remains current and relevant to Vermont’s actual mitigation needs, it is important for the Plan to be periodically monitored and evaluated. It is the policy of Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) that the SHMP will be monitored and evaluated at least once a year and following a declared disaster. The responsibility for the maintenance and updating of the Plan lies with VEM’s State Hazard Mitigation Officer and Hazard Mitigation Planner, in coordination with the SHMPPC.

VEM mitigation staff and the SHMPPC will annually undertake a review of progress and efficacy of the SHMP actions in reaching the stated goals and strategies. Additionally, the SHMP will be reviewed following a declared disaster for any potential changes in vulnerability and to identify priority projects that can be implemented through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP).

To review progress on achieving mitigation goals annually with the SHMPPC, a report will be compiled by VEM mitigation staff defining progress on mitigation actions and SHMP implementation. These detailed reports will include:

- The status of mitigation actions on the full mitigation action list (see: [Mitigation Strategy](#));
- How well each action (completed or in progress) has contributed to the mitigation goals and strategies and reduced vulnerability; and
- A review of the defined mitigation priorities and an assessment of priorities moving forward.

The SHMPPC will carefully review the mitigation action report and make recommendations for amendments or changes to priorities for the following year.

To improve monitoring and track progress of mitigation activities, these annual meetings will be combined with more regular informal exchanges of information among stakeholders, in conjunction with the RVT. The 2018 SHMP will rely on both the SHMPPC and the RVT, as well as the Steering Committee and the Working Groups, to improve implementability of this Plan by expanding stakeholder involvement and leveraging resources across Vermont. The RVT will be managed by staff in the Global Center for Resilience and Security at Norwich University and will play an active role in SHMP implementation.

The RVT will host biannual meetings of the full network to check-in on progress of resilience goals as defined in the Resilient Vermont Crosswalk<sup>1</sup>, which was developed in 2013 and is being updated in 2018. This biannual meeting will be held in conjunction with SHMP stakeholders at a check-in on SHMP implementation, starting in 2019. In the opposite years, beginning with the July 2018 SHMP Implementation Kick-Off meeting (see: [Planning Process](#)), members of the implementation working groups will be convened to review progress and effectiveness of the 2018 SHMP implementation.

Between these annual meetings, the implementation working groups will continue to meet and make progress on their respective mitigation actions. VEM mitigation staff and Norwich University staff will coordinate these working group meetings and SHMP implementation.

## **2023 State Hazard Mitigation Plan Update Process**

The SHMP update process, completed every 5 years, will incorporate changes in local, State and Federal statutes, changes in development and vulnerability, and changes in mitigation priorities in Vermont. VEM mitigation staff will be responsible for managing the update in close coordination with the SHMPPC. The update process will begin 18 months prior to the expiration of the 2018 SHMP.

A comprehensive update of the SHMP will examine:

- The overall efficacy of the SHMP in addressing real mitigation needs
- Actual savings realized by implementing cost effective projects
- How mitigation efforts support environmental protection regulations
- Areas for organizational and programmatic improvement
- How to more efficiently combine Federal, State, and local resources to implement the most cost effective hazard mitigation projects and planning
- How to better coordinate and implement State, regional and local mitigation efforts

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<sup>1</sup> <https://resilientvt.org/project-documents/>

**Plan Update Procedures:**

1. The State Hazard Mitigation Planning & Policy Committee (SHMPPC) will appoint a Steering Committee to work with VEM mitigation staff to manage the Plan update and the stakeholder engagement process.
2. The Steering Committee will determine if the hazard evaluation criteria are still appropriate or if modifications or additions are needed based on changing conditions since the last update. Data needs will be reviewed and data sources will be identified and collected.
3. VEM mitigation staff and partners will review each section of the SHMP to determine progress achieved in reaching mitigation goals and strategies. The following will be determined:
  - i. The status report concerning how well VEM and partners are achieving goals and strategies
  - ii. Whether goals and strategies still address current conditions
  - iii. Any obstacles in achieving mitigation goals and strategies
  - iv. Whether or not revisions to strategies, goals, and actions are warranted
4. A draft report will be prepared by VEM mitigation staff based on these evaluation criteria:
  - i. Changes in community and governmental processes, which are hazard-related and have occurred since the last review
  - ii. Progress in implementation of Plan initiatives and projects
  - iii. Effectiveness of previously-implemented initiatives and projects
  - iv. Evaluation of unanticipated challenges or opportunities that have occurred since the previous SHMP was adopted
  - v. Evaluation of hazard-related public policies, initiatives and projects
  - vi. Review and discussion of the effectiveness of public and private sector coordination and cooperation
5. The SHMPPC and the appointed Steering Committee will review the draft Plan. Consensus will be reached on changes to the draft.
6. VEM mitigation staff will incorporate changes and schedule public hearings in accordance with Vermont Title 3, Chapter 67, Paragraph 4020b.
7. VEM mitigation staff will provide a 30-day advance notice of the public hearings with specific notice to:
  - i. Executive director of each Regional Planning Commission (RPC),
  - ii. Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD),
  - iii. Agency of Natural Resources (ANR),
  - iv. Agency of Transportation (VTrans),
  - v. The council of Regional Commissions, and
  - vi. Business, conservation, environmental, low-income advisory and other community groups or organizations that have requested notice prior to the date the hearing is announced.
8. VEM mitigation staff will accommodate input received at the public hearings and will provide proposed revisions to members of the Steering Committee for consideration.
9. VEM mitigation staff will schedule a second round of public hearings per #6 and #7 above, if necessary.
10. VEM mitigation staff will finalize the Plan and provide it to the SHMPPC and Steering Committee for final concurrence.
11. Upon full SHMPPC concurrence, VEM mitigation staff will forward the updated SHMP to the Governor's Authorized Representative (GAR) for approval and submission to FEMA Region 1.

**Post-Disaster Review Procedures:**

In the aftermath of a declared disaster, if deemed necessary, a special review may occur in accordance with the following procedures:

1. Within six months of a declared emergency event or when feasible, VEM may initiate a post-disaster review and assessment. Members of the SHMPPC will be notified that the assessment process has commenced.
2. This post-disaster review and assessment will document the facts of the event and assess whether the existing SHMP effectively addresses the hazards and its vulnerabilities.
3. A draft after action report of the review and assessment will be distributed to the SHMPPC.
4. A meeting of the SHMPPC will be convened by VEM mitigation staff to make a determination on whether the Plan needs to be amended. If the SHMPPC determines that no modification is needed, then the report will be distributed to stakeholders.
5. If the SHMPPC should determine that modification of the Plan is needed, VEM mitigation staff will draft an amended Plan that will reflect their recommendations.