

Chapter 1 – Introduction

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1.1 Background

As this City Annex is intended to become incorporated into the countywide, Atlanta-Fulton County Hazard Mitigation Plan, this document is designed to be consistent with that Plan. As such, a majority of the document will focus on hazard mitigation impacts to the City of Alpharetta as a municipality while other parts of this document, such as this introduction, will also incorporate the countywide planning efforts.

Fulton County is home to 14 local jurisdictions including the City of Atlanta, which is the major metropolitan city in the Southeast United States. There are thirteen Fortune 500 and twenty-four Fortune 1000 headquarters in Atlanta, as well as Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport – the World’s Busiest Airport for four years and running. Atlanta also houses the State Capitol and the Fulton County Courthouse, both of which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Considering the assets that Fulton County holds, in addition to its nearly 1 million residents, it is imperative that Fulton County make hazard mitigation a primary focus.

In 2004, the Atlanta-Fulton County Emergency Management Agency (AFCEMA) developed its 2004 Atlanta-Fulton County Hazard Mitigation Plan in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. As required by law, the plan must be updated every 5 years. This plan has been updated to reflect compliance with regulations and requirements that have been enacted since 2004. As with the 2004 plan, this plan is a multi-jurisdictional guide for all communities that have participated in the preparation of this plan through the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (HMPC). It fulfills the requirements of the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000) as administered by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region IV.

1.2 Authority

The Atlanta-Fulton County Hazard Mitigation Plan has been prepared by the Atlanta-Fulton County Emergency Management Agency, pursuant to Section 322 of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-390).

Section 322 requires local governments to develop mitigation plans that include:

- (1) Documentation of the planning process used to develop the plan, including how it was prepared, who was involved in the process, and how the public was involved;
- (2) A risk assessment that provides the factual basis for activities proposed in the strategy to reduce losses from identified hazards;

- (3) A mitigation strategy that provides the jurisdiction's blueprint for reducing the potential losses identified in the risk assessment, based on existing authorities, policies, programs and resources, and its ability to expand on and improve these existing tools;
- (4) A plan maintenance process that includes a monitoring and evaluation schedule based on a five-year cycle, a process for the plan's incorporation into other planning mechanisms, and public involvement in the plan maintenance process;
- (5) Documentation that the plan has been formally adopted by the governing body of the jurisdiction requesting approval of the plan.

The Atlanta-Fulton County Emergency Management Agency (AFCEMA), through County Code, Chapter 130 (Sections 130.1 to 130.30) is designated as the Emergency Management Agency for Fulton County. In addition, Chapter 50 (Section 50.1-50.25) of the City of Atlanta ordinances designates AFCEMA as its primary emergency management organization. The Alpharetta Mitigation Plan is being completed in cooperation with the AFCEMA and will be reviewed by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency and the Federal Emergency Management Agency for compliance and ultimately adopted locally.

1.3 Overview of the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants

Adoption of this plan is the initial step towards continuing eligibility for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant assistance to participating localities. These FEMA grants include the following programs:

1. The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). The HMGP provides grants to states and local governments to implement long-term hazard mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration. The purpose of the HMGP is to reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters and to enable mitigation measures to be implemented during the immediate recovery from a disaster. The HMGP is authorized under Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.

2. The Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program (PDM). The PDM program provides funds to states, territories, Indian tribal governments, communities, and universities for hazard mitigation planning and the implementation of mitigation projects prior to a disaster event. Funding these plans and projects reduces overall risks to the population and structures, while also reducing reliance on funding from actual disaster declarations. PDM grants are to be awarded on a competitive basis and without reference to state allocations, quotas, or other formula-based allocation of funds.

3. The Flood Mitigation Assistance Program (FMA). The FMA program was created as part of the National Flood Insurance Reform Act (NFIRA) of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 4101) with the goal of reducing or eliminating claims under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). FEMA provides FMA funds to assist states and communities implement measures that reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to buildings, manufactured homes, and other structures insurable under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

4. The Repetitive Flood Claims (RFC) Program. The Repetitive Flood Claims (RFC) grant program was authorized by the Bunning-Bereuter-Blumenauer Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2004 (P.L. 108-264), which amended the National Flood Insurance Act (NFIA) of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4001, et al). Up to \$10 million is available annually for FEMA to provide RFC funds to assist states and communities reduce flood damages to insured properties that have had one or more claims to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

5. The Severe Repetitive Loss (SRL) Program. The Severe Repetitive Loss (SRL) grant program was authorized by the Bunning-Bereuter-Blumenauer Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2004, which amended the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 to provide funding to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk of flood damage to severe repetitive loss (SRL) structures insured under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

1.4 The City of Alpharetta's Update to the 2005 Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Alpharetta Mitigation Advisory Committee (MAC) began the update process in late 2011. With the exception of dam-related flooding incidents, this update addresses natural hazards only. The City of Alpharetta retained the firm of Dewberry, LLC to prepare the plan under the direction of the Mitigation Advisory Committee and leaders representing the Engineer / Public Works and Emergency Management functions for the City. Participants from the 2011 and 2012 MAC represent various departments within the City, unincorporated Atlanta-Fulton County, the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA), as well as other stakeholders and interested agencies. The MAC coordinated on a regular basis during the update process to oversee the drafting of the plan. Through a comprehensive planning process and risk assessment, the plan creates a unified approach for dealing with identified hazards and associated risk issues. It serves as a strategy for the City in its ongoing efforts to reduce community vulnerabilities.