



## SECTION 3. PLANNING PROCESS

### 2023 SHMP UPDATE CHANGES

- ❖ Expanded stakeholder outreach and integration into the planning process.
- ❖ Incorporation of updated Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) *State Planning Policy Guide* (effective April 2023) requirements.

### 3.1 Description of the Planning Process

**44 C.F.R. §201.4(b) and 201.4(c)(1):** The State plan must include a description of the process used to develop the plan, including how the plan was prepared; how the lead State agency coordinated with other State agencies, appropriate federal agencies, and interested groups; who was involved; how agencies participated; and how the mitigation planning process was integrated to the extent possible with other ongoing State planning efforts and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mitigation initiatives.

The steps taken to develop the 2023 State Hazard Mitigation Plan (SHMP) serve as the foundation for developing an effective plan to reduce risk and vulnerabilities posed by hazards across the State of West Virginia (the State). The planning process was led by the West Virginia Emergency Management Division (WVEMD), which serves as the State agency with the responsibility to oversee and manage the update and implementation of the SHMP. The SHMP was developed and updated in accordance with the planning requirements outlined in Section 404 of the Robert T. Stafford Act as amended by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, Chapter 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 201.4, and the *FEMA State Mitigation Planning Policy Guide* (effective April 2023) (FEMA 2022).

West Virginia developed its first SHMP in 2004, with subsequent updates in 2007, 2013, and 2018. Through each of the updates, the planning process has evolved to focus on the present and emerging risk and vulnerabilities and needs and concerns of the State. During the 2023 SHMP update, WVEMD recognized the impacts and challenges COVID-19 posed to the effectively implement the 2018 SHMP, which includes but is not limited to staff turnover, limited financial resources, and limited capacity from lead and supporting agencies to implement the mitigation strategy. The 2023 SHMP planning process was conducted with consideration of these challenges. In addition to challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, WVEMD Mitigation and Recovery has experienced staff turnover, retirements, and promotions over the course of the planning process.

WVEMD received a Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant in 2020 to update the SHMP and procured technical support services from Tetra Tech, Inc. in June 2022 to provide support for conducting the planning process, conducting the risk and vulnerability assessment, coordinating stakeholders, and drafting the plan. The planning process was kicked off on July 26, 2022, and consisted of a series of meetings to inform the development of the plan. The initial draft of the plan was reviewed with stakeholders in early June 2023, and the plan was submitted to FEMA for review on XXXX.



The 2023 planning process prioritized integrating a wider range of stakeholders into the process. WVEMD convened a multi-disciplinary Steering Committee and State Planning Team (SPT) to serve as advisory committees to guide the development of the plan. Both of these advisory committees consisted of partners from the sectors and community lifelines recommended by FEMA, to ensure an inclusive process that incorporates differing perspectives to identify the best solutions for the State. The sectors and community lifelines represented include the following:

- Emergency Management
- Economic Development
- Land Use and Development
- Housing
- Health and Social Services
- Infrastructure (including Dam Safety)
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Safety and Security
- Food, Water, and Shelter
- Health and Medical
- Energy
- Communications
- Transportation
- Hazardous Materials

### 3.1.1 Advisory Committees

The 2023 SHMP planning process was guided by a Steering Committee and the SPT. Both of these groups were consulted throughout the planning process and participated in meetings to inform the content of the plan and review plan drafts.

#### STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee provided strategic oversight of the planning process. The group served to identify and confirm the objectives of the planning process, identify stakeholders and subject matter experts, assist with data collection, inform the planning process, confirm the hazards of concern, and ensure the project remained on schedule. The Steering Committee was primarily composed of representatives from WVEMD, the West Virginia University Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Technical Center (WVU GISTC), and the State Resiliency Office (SRO). In addition to these representatives, there were members from other State agencies and local jurisdictions. The Steering Committee members are identified in Table 3-1, including the sectors and/or community lifelines they represent. Several members of the Steering Committee only served for part of the planning process before moving on to other roles.

*Table 3-1. Steering Committee Members*

Name	Title	Organization	Sector/Community Lifeline
<b>Ginger Barnett</b>	Chief of Mitigation and Recovery	WVEMD	Emergency Management/Safety and Security
<b>Kelli Batch</b>	Chief of Mitigation and Recovery (former)	WVEMD	Emergency Management/Safety and Security



Name	Title	Organization	Sector/Community Lifeline
<b>Gabriel Reed</b>	Hazard Mitigation Officer	WVEMD	Emergency Management/Safety and Security
<b>Timothy W. Keaton</b>	State National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)/Cooperating Technical Partner (CTP) Coordinator; former Hazard Mitigation Officer	WVEMD	Emergency Management/Safety and Security
<b>Brian M. Penix</b>	Former Hazard Mitigation Project Officer	WVEMD	Emergency Management/Safety and Security
<b>Al Whitaker</b>	Lead Planning Officer	West Virginia Emergency Management Division (WVEMD)	Emergency Management/Safety and Security
<b>Nuvia E. Villamizar</b>	GIS Manager	WVEMD	Emergency Management/Safety and Security
<b>Sherry Risk</b>	Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program Manager	West Virginia Department of Economic Development	Economic Development/Food, Water and Shelter
<b>Robert Martin</b>	Director	WVSRO	All
<b>Ed Martin</b>	Deputy Director	WVSRO	All
<b>Kurt Donaldson</b>	Senior Project Manager	WVU GISTC	All
<b>Eric Hopkins</b>	Lead GIS Specialist	WVU GISTC	All
<b>Maneesh Sharma</b>	GIS Project Lead	WVU GISTC	All
<b>Carla Dent</b>	Administrative Staff	Region 8 Planning and Development Council	All
<b>Rachel Snavely</b>	Executive Director	The Eastern Panhandle Planning and Development Council (Region 9)	All
<b>Mike Paprocki</b>	Executive Director	Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning and Development Council (Region 11)	All
<b>Ray Perry</b>	Floodplain Administrator, Logan County; Former Chair, West Virginia Floodplain Management Association	Logan County; West Virginia Floodplain Management Association	Emergency Management/Safety and Security
<b>Meesh Zucker</b>	Supervisory Community Planning, WV Hazard Mitigation Program	FEMA Region III	Emergency Management/Safety and Security



### STATE PLANNING TEAM

The SPT served to inform the Steering Committee of the State’s concerns and needs, provide subject matter expertise, assist with data collection, review and comment on draft sections of the plan, and serve as the implementers of the mitigation strategy. The SPT represents a larger cross-section of partners from multiple sectors and community lifelines. The State organizations represented on the SPT are listed below.

- WV Center for Threat Preparedness
- WV Department of Environmental Protection
- WV National Guard
- WVU Extension
- WV Community Advancement and Development
- WV Department of Transportation
- WVSRO
- WVU Fire Service Extension/ WV State Fire Training Academy
- WV Conservation Agency
- WVEMD
- WV State Fire Marshal's Office
- WVU GISTC
- WV Department of Arts, Culture, and History
- WV Division of Forestry
- WVVOAD
- WV Department of Economic Development
- WV Division of Natural Resources
- WVU
- WV Office of Energy
- WV Fusion Center
- WVU College of Law

SPT meetings (described below) were also open to regional, county, municipal, and other stakeholders. These stakeholders’ participation in the planning process is described in Section 3.2 below.

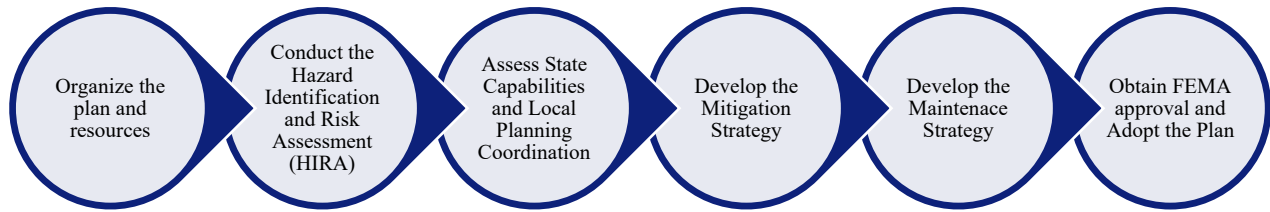
#### 3.1.2 Meetings and Milestones

The planning process utilized a variety of outreach and engagement methods to integrate stakeholders into the process. This included hosting in-person and virtual meetings, deploying surveys, developing a website, and regular communication through email. These engagement efforts served to facilitate obtaining stakeholder input on identifying the hazards of concern, assessing risk and vulnerability, identifying and describing State and local capabilities, providing status updates on the 2018 mitigation actions, updating and developing goals and objectives, and developing the mitigation strategy. Regular communication and engagement with the stakeholders permitted continuity throughout the process and kept the project on schedule.

The planning process occurred over the course of a 15-month period and consisted of six key tasks identified in Figure 3-1.



**Figure 3-1. Planning Process Tasks**



During each of the six key tasks, meetings were held to provide opportunities for the State agencies and stakeholders to provide input on the development of content for the plan and to review the risk assessment, capabilities assessment, and mitigation strategy. These meetings as well as other key milestones of the planning process are summarized in Table 3-2.

**Table 3-2. Key Planning Meetings and Milestones**

Meeting and Milestone Dates	Meeting Topic/Milestone	Participants
<b>July 26, 2022</b>	Kick off the planning process with the Steering Committee; identify hazards of concern	Steering Committee (see Section 3.1.1 above)
<b>August 4, 2022</b>	Discuss GIS data availability and needs	GIS experts from WVEMD, the WVU GISTC, and the Planning Support Consultant
<b>August 10, 2022</b>	Review FEMA Region III’s guidance and expectations for the plan update	FEMA Region III, WVEMD, and Planning Support Consultant
<b>September 13, 2022</b>	Kick off the planning process with the SPT and other stakeholders	SPT (see Section 3.1.1 above)
<b>November 9, 2022</b>	Discuss State-level capabilities	SPT
<b>November 16–17, 2022</b>	Capabilities Webinars - Gather more information on State capabilities, and discuss the integration of State capabilities with regional/local capabilities	SPT, Regional Planning Development Councils, and local jurisdictions
<b>January 4, 2023</b>	Review the initial results of the risk assessment and discuss statewide vulnerability to the hazards of concern	SPT



Meeting and Milestone Dates	Meeting Topic/Milestone	Participants
<b>January 18, 2023</b>	Discuss the results of the risk assessment, capabilities assessment, and the 2018 SHMP goals to begin developing goals and objectives for the 2023 SHMP	SPT
<b>February 9, 2023</b>	Review the goals and objectives; discuss mitigation actions for inclusion in the 2023 SHMP	SPT
<b>March 3, 2023</b>	Discuss the State’s dam safety programs and their current and future integration	WVEMD; WV State Resiliency Office; WV Department of Environmental Protection Dam Safety -Coal and -Non-coal Programs; WV Conservation Agency
<b>April 17, 2023</b>	First plan sections provided to the Steering Committee for review	Steering Committee
<b>May 25, 2023</b>	Discuss organization and layout of the draft SHMP to prepare for the stakeholder review period	SPT
<b>May 29, 2023</b>	Draft SHMP available on the SHMP website for review by the whole community	Whole community
<b>May 29–June 9, 2023</b>	Public Review Period	Whole community
<b>June 16, 2023</b>	Webinar to collect comments on the draft plan	WVEMD, WV Department of Economic Development, WVSRO, Region 3 Regional Planning and Development Council (RPDC), Region 7 RPDC, FEMA Region III
<b>July 10, 2023</b>	Public forum to collect comments on the draft plan	WVEMD, WV VOAD, WVU GISTC, Cabell County, Jefferson County, Kanawha County, Marshall County, Mercer County, Wayne County, Region 1 RPDC, Region 4 RPDC, Region 8 RPDC, Region 11 RPDC
<b>July 21, 2023</b>	Public meeting to collect comments on the draft plan	WVEMD, WVSRO, City of Charleston
<b>TBD</b>	State Plan Review	WVEMD



Meeting and Milestone Dates	Meeting Topic/Milestone	Participants
TBD	FEMA Plan Review	FEMA Region III
TBD	Adoption of the 2023 SHMP by the Governor of West Virginia	Governor
TBD	Formal approval of the 2023 SHMP by FEMA Region III	FEMA Region III

## 3.2 Stakeholder Coordination

The 2023 SHMP is the culmination of the knowledge and priorities contributed by participating stakeholders. WVEMD strived to engage more stakeholders in the 2023 SHMP update process as compared to the 2018 planning process. This was accomplished through persistent efforts to engage a cross-section of stakeholders to serve in varying capacities throughout the development of the plan. In addition to stakeholders, WVEMD provided an opportunity for the general public to review and comment on the plan.

Moving forward, WVEMD will continue outreach and engagement efforts and target stakeholders who had limited engagement during the 2023 SHMP update. The following sections provide a description of how the advisory committees, stakeholders, local jurisdictions, and the public were engaged and contributed to the plan.

### 3.2.1 Local Jurisdictions

Members of local jurisdictions, including the RPDCs, counties, and municipalities, were invited and encouraged to participate on the SPT. Representatives who participated provided invaluable insight into the concerns and challenges at the local level.

The Steering Committee made a concerted effort to involve all of the RPDCs, counties, and cities of West Virginia in the planning process. Representatives of all jurisdictions were invited to attend and participate in SPT meetings and to provide information and feedback via information-gathering surveys. The RPDCs, counties, and cities that participated in the planning process are listed below.

RPDCs	
• Region 1	• Region 6
• Region 2	• Region 7
• Region 3	• Region 8
• Region 4	• Region 9
• Mid-Ohio Valley Regional Council (Region 5)	• Brooke-Hancock Jefferson* Metropolitan Planning Commission (Region 11)

*Note: While Jefferson County does not participate in the Region 11 hazard mitigation plan, Jefferson County is represented by the Region 11 RPDC.*



Counties and Cities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of Charleston Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lincoln County Office of Emergency Services</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>City of Madison Emergency Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>McDowell County OEM</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Barbour County</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mercer County OEM</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Berkeley County OEM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monongalia County Emergency Management</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Braxton County Emergency Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monroe County OEM</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greenbrier County HSEM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nicholas County</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hardy County Office of Emergency Management (OEM)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tucker County HSEM</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jefferson County Department of HSEM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wetzel County Emergency Management/E-911</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kanawha County Office of Emergency Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wheeling-Ohio County Homeland Security and EMA</li> </ul>

In addition to those listed below, 62 local floodplain administrators provided information on floodplain management in their communities and how the State can provide additional support to the local level. WVEMD also presented information regarding the 2023 SHMP update during the 2023 West Virginia Floodplain Managers Association Conference. Although limited, the participation from local jurisdictions throughout the planning process assisted WVEMD in identifying specific mitigation actions to provide direct support and assistance to local jurisdictions.

State agencies and communities rely on many services provided by the Federal Government. As such, the State invited federal agencies to participate in the planning process. Participants are listed below:

Federal Agencies	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FEMA Region III</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NOAA NWS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>U.S. Army Corps of Engineers</li> </ul>	

Finally, other stakeholder organizations were involved in the planning process, providing input and expertise to help inform the 2023 SHMP. Those organizations are as follows:

Other Stakeholders	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alliance Consulting, Inc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tetra Tech, Inc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>International Code Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WVFMA</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PEW Charitable Trusts</li> </ul>	

WVEMD is committed to increasing coordination and collaboration with local jurisdictions in future hazard mitigation planning efforts at both the local/regional and State level. WVEMD has identified local jurisdiction engagement and participation as a focus area for future planning process and is working to identify methods to





increase participation. In addition to providing technical assistance and support for the development of local hazard mitigation plans (LHMP), WVEMD will socialize the 2023 SHMP through outreach efforts.

### 3.2.2 Other Stakeholder Organizations

**44 C.F.R. §201.4(b) and 201.4(c)(1):** The State plan must include a description how the state coordinated with other agencies and stakeholders including appropriate federal agencies. At a minimum, the plan must describe how the state coordinated with the following sectors: emergency management, economic development, land use and development, housing, health and social services, infrastructure, and natural and cultural resources.

Stakeholders were engaged in the process through email communication, meetings, and surveys. WVEMD deployed a series of surveys, each tailored to specific stakeholders listed below:

- Local (County and City) Emergency Managers
- Local (NFIP Community) Floodplain Managers
- State Departments
- Academia
- Neighboring States

The surveys were deployed during meetings and through email. The surveys gathered information related to what hazards impact the State, existing barriers and challenges to implementing mitigation actions, and assessing State and local capabilities.

WVEMD conducted targeted outreach to specific stakeholders in order to meet FEMA requirements. FEMA's most recently released *State Mitigation Planning Policy Guide* (FEMA 2022) requires the incorporation of considerations for socially vulnerable populations and underserved communities. When compared to other states, West Virginia exhibits greater social vulnerabilities than others. In addition, there are geographic areas within West Virginia and higher percentages of certain populations that may experience disproportionate impacts to hazard impacts.

During the initiation of the planning process, outreach was conducted to engage the following organizations representing socially vulnerable populations and underserved communities (see Section 2.4.4 for a discussion of socially vulnerable populations in the State):

- Herbert Henderson Office of Minority Affairs
- West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture & History
- West Virginia Housing Development Fund
- West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office
- West Virginia Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster
- Appalachian Center for Independent Living
- Mountain State Center for Independent Living - Beckley
- Northern West Virginia Center for Independent Living – Elkins



Not all of these organizations were available to engage in the process, but representatives from the Northern West Virginia Center for Independent Living – Elkins and the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office provided feedback or participated in interviews. Feedback from these organizations provided insight into the capabilities available to support socially vulnerable population and underserved communities and how information in the SHMP can be used to support mitigation efforts for these populations.

In addition to the new requirements for incorporating considerations for socially vulnerable populations and underserved communities, the FEMA *State Mitigation Planning Policy Guide* requires the incorporation of future conditions (FEMA 2022). Outreach was conducted to engage the State Climatologist in the process to gather additional data regarding future climatic conditions. The NWS was engaged throughout the process as a member of the SPT and informed how considerations for future conditions were integrated into the plan.

In addition to the organizations listed above, the following organizations provided input into the planning process by attending an SPT meeting and/or completing a survey:

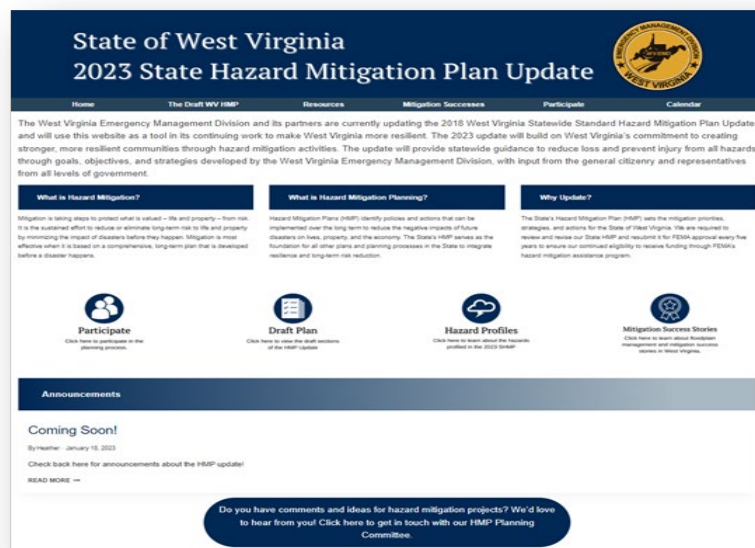
- Alliance Consulting, Inc.
- International Code Council
- PEW Charitable Trusts
- Tetra Tech
- WVFMA

### 3.2.3 Public

A dedicated website (see Figure 3-2) was developed and deployed to keep the public and stakeholders informed of the 2023 SHMP planning process ([www.westvirginiahmp.com](http://www.westvirginiahmp.com)).

The State issued announcements to stakeholders via email and regular communications channels to direct individuals to the website. The website served as a way for the State to make materials available to the public. An overview of hazard mitigation and mitigation planning was provided to inform the public of the importance and reasoning for the SHMP. Visitors to the website were able participate in the planning process through exploring the risk assessment and learning more about risk in the State, commenting on the draft plan to inform the process, and

Figure 3-2. Project Website





learning more about mitigation success stories throughout the State. As of July 24, 2023, the home page was viewed over 3,800 times, however the site did not track unique users.

The website was also a repository to ensure transparency of the plan development and provide resources of interest to the public and stakeholders. Surveys developed for State agencies and stakeholders were made publicly available and mitigation focused resources were posted.

The draft 2023 SHMP was made available electronically and posted on the website on June 4, 2023, for public review and comment for a period of 10 business days. The public was encouraged to submit comments by submitting them to WVEMD. All comments received through June 16, 2023 were reviewed and taken into consideration by the WVEMD. Once approved by FEMA, the FEMA-approved plan will be posted on the WVEMD website.

### 3.3 Program Integration

**44 C.F.R. §201.4(b):** The State plan must include a description of the process used to develop the plan, including how it was prepared, the schedule or timeframe, specific milestones and activities, agencies and stakeholders involved, and if the process was integrated to the maximum extent possible with other State planning efforts.

Mitigation plan implementation is most effective when mitigation planning efforts are integrated and coordinated with other State and federal programs and initiatives. The 2023 SHMP planning process aims to enhance coordination among sectors, as discussed previously, and integrate the SHMP with other planning efforts.

Within West Virginia, there are several State programs and initiatives that foster SHMP integration and coordination. These programs and initiatives are summarized below with further details discussed in Section 6 (State Mitigation Capability Assessment). The following highlights integration opportunities during the planning process as well as a sampling of plans that were integrated into the risk assessment.

- **State National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)/Cooperating Technical Partners (CTP) Coordinator** — The State NFIP/CTP coordinator was an integral part of the plan’s development and served to guide the planning process, facilitate outreach with local jurisdictions, provide NFIP data, identify challenges and barriers to implementing mitigation actions, and provide subject matter expertise.
- **WVU GISTC Collaboration on the Risk Assessment** — WVEMD worked closely with WVU GISTC to integrate data and products developed by WVU GISTC (particularly the TEIF and TEAL models) into the SHMP’s risk assessment. WVU GISTC served as the primary provider of data for the entirety of the SHMP. They were engaged through email, one-on-one meetings, and as a member of the Steering Committee.
- **LHMPs** — The LHMPs were reviewed, and data and information were integrated to the maximum extent possible, including hazards of concern, local capabilities, and mitigation actions.
- **Annual Risk Reduction Consultation** — The FEMA Region III annual consultation summary was reviewed and used to identify challenges and opportunities as documented in Section 6 (State Mitigation Capability Assessment).



- **State of West Virginia Flood Resiliency Plan** — As of the writing of this SHMP, the State’s Flood Resiliency Plan (created in 2004) is in the process of being reviewed by the WVSRO to identify updates and enhancements to be made in an upcoming update of that plan. The director and deputy director of the WVSRO served on the 2023 SHMP Steering Committee and will integrate the analysis from the SHMP into the update of the Flood Resiliency Plan.