

Planning for Hazards: Land Use Solutions for Colorado



In 2013, many Colorado communities were heavily impacted by record and widespread flooding and wildfires. The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) spent the next two years working to assist those communities with their recovery efforts. Because hazards are occurring more frequently in Colorado, and with greater severity, DOLA sought to prepare a guide to help Colorado to be more resilient and able to protect its citizens and property from the devastating impacts caused by both natural and human-caused hazards. DOLA retained a team of experts led by [Clarion Associates](#) to prepare a guide for local governments that describes how to better integrate hazard mitigation into land use planning. The team worked with an advisory committee comprised of Colorado subject matter experts ranging from local planners to FEMA officials. The committee was essential to providing a range of perspectives around the state and scrutiny on the utility of the various planning tools.



The Planning for Hazards guide takes hazard mitigation principles that are most often considered the purview of emergency managers and describes the many ways that planners can make their communities more resilient by making changes to their land use codes, plans, and programs. The guide presents over 25 planning tools in the following six categories:

1. Addressing hazards in plans and policies
2. Strengthening incentives
3. Protecting sensitive areas
4. Improving site development standards
5. Improving buildings and infrastructure
6. Enhancing administration and procedures.

Nearly half of the planning tools in the guide are accompanied by model code language that local governments can tailor to their community such as development agreements, transfer of development rights, cluster subdivision, and stormwater ordinances.

In addition to the printed version of the guide, the team developed a dedicated project website – planningforhazards.com. The website includes mixed-media content such as video interviews with Colorado local government leaders to showcase their innovative solutions to planning for hazards and will be expanded over time.

The website component of the guide will be maintained by the Colorado Center for Sustainable Urbanism at the University of Colorado Denver to ensure that it remains relevant and reflects new best practices as they develop. The website has been viewed by thousands of people across the globe and serves as a valuable resource for various



audiences within and beyond Colorado.

The guide has been well received by Colorado communities and other subject matter experts in the field of planning and hazard mitigation, including the American Planning Association and FEMA. DOLA is currently developing additional resources to accompany the Planning for Hazards guide intended assist communities in structuring the planning process, and is working with two Colorado communities – Manitou Springs and Milliken – to pilot these

materials and develop and adopt land use planning tools. To learn more, see planningforhazards.com for upcoming events, webinars, and opportunities to receive technical assistance or training in your community.



PLANNING FOR HAZARDS
Land Use Solutions for Colorado

MARCH 2016