



INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

Planning for Hazards: Land Use Solutions for Colorado enables counties and municipalities to prepare for and mitigate multiple hazards by integrating resilience and hazard mitigation principles into plans, codes, and standards related to land use and the built environment. This guide provides detailed, Colorado-specific information about how to assess a community's risk level to hazards and how to implement numerous land use planning tools and strategies for reducing a community's risk.

Hazards are occurring more frequently in Colorado, and with greater severity. Experts believe this trend will continue; therefore, this guide helps Colorado to be more resilient and able to protect its residents and property from the devastating impacts of natural and human-caused hazards. This guide provides detailed descriptions of a range of land use planning mechanisms that can be used to reduce risk to hazards.

The Colorado Department of Local Affairs led the development of this guide, working with an Advisory Committee comprised of representatives from state and federal agencies, local government, and other subject-matter experts in hazard mitigation and land use planning. The Advisory Committee met three times throughout the course of the project and provided guidance and valuable input at critical milestones, identified key resources, and reviewed interim deliverables. The result is this guide that includes information from Colorado's leading experts on the subject, and represents varying community sizes, locations, and values.

HOW TO USE THE GUIDE

DESCRIPTION OF THE GUIDE ORGANIZATION

The remainder of this guide is divided into the following chapters:

- **Chapter 2 - Planning Framework.** This sets the foundation for why and how land use planning can address hazards through various approaches.
- **Chapter 3 - Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment.** This chapter is a how-to guide for preparing the risk assessment. Detailed information on identifying which hazards might affect a particular community (including detailed descriptions for each hazard) is provided in the Appendix, *Hazards in Colorado*. The following hazards are addressed in this guide:



- **Chapter 4 - Planning Tools and Strategies.** Several categories of specific land use planning tools and strategies are explored, including individual profiles for each tool that describe what hazards the tool addresses, how to use the tool, and which communities have already implemented the tool. For many of the planning tools and strategies, model code language and commentary is provided to illustrate how to implement the various tools through regulatory mechanisms. A table summarizing all the planning tools and strategies profiled in this guide is included at the beginning of the *Planning Tools and Strategies* chapter. The tools are divided into the following categories:
 - **Addressing hazards in plans and policies**
 - Comprehensive Plan
 - Climate Plan
 - Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)
 - Hazard Mitigation Plan
 - Parks and Open Space Plan
 - Pre-Disaster Planning
 - **Strengthening incentives**
 - Community Rating System
 - Density Bonus
 - Development Agreement
 - Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs)
 - **Protecting sensitive areas**
 - 1041 Regulations
 - Cluster Subdivision
 - Conservation Easement
 - Land Acquisition
 - Overlay Zoning
 - Stream Buffers and Setbacks

- **Improving site development standards**
 - Stormwater Ordinance
 - Site-Specific Assessment
 - Subdivision and Site Design Standards
 - Use-Specific Standards
- **Improving buildings and infrastructure**
 - Building Code
 - Critical Infrastructure Protection
 - Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Code
- **Enhancing administration and procedures**
 - Application Submittal Requirements
 - Post-Disaster Building Moratorium
- **Chapter 5 - Moving Forward.** This chapter is focused on implementation and provides helpful tips and resources for communities to move the ball forward on assessing risk, working with the local residents, selecting appropriate tools and strategies, and identifying available funding and technical assistance sources.
- **Glossary, Bibliography, and Index.** These sections of the guide include key term definitions, a bibliography of resources used in the guide, and an index for easy cross-referencing.
- **Appendix: Hazards in Colorado.** This appendix describes the individual hazards that may affect communities in Colorado and includes information on related hazards and applicable data sources.

Because Colorado communities vary in how they approach land use planning, several contexts are explored throughout the guide using examples and best practices – from big city to small town, urban to rural settings, and Western Slope to Eastern Plains.

THE WEBSITE COMPONENT

An essential component to this guide is the project website, www.planningforhazards.com. On this website, users may view the same information presented in this guide, supplemented over time with additional videos, links to resources, and new tools and strategies. From this website, users can choose to view the guide material “cover-to-cover,” or navigate the site through a more targeted route based on the user’s need for information. For example, a land use planner may be interested in specific tools applicable to mitigating wildfire. They can jump directly to that set of tools on the website rather than skimming the entire guide.

The Colorado Center for Sustainable Urbanism at the University of Colorado Denver will maintain this website to ensure that it remains relevant to Colorado communities and reflects new best practices as they develop, and to provide consistent website functionality.



[planningforhazards.com](http://www.planningforhazards.com)