



APPENDIX H LINKAGE PROCEDURES

This Appendix contains the linkage procedures for the Fort Bend County Hazard Mitigation Action Plan 2023 Update.

H.1 Administrative Process for “Linkage” to the Fort Bend Hazard Mitigation Action Plan

The 2023 Fort Bend County Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) update (the Plan) included Fort Bend County and some participating municipalities. However, not all eligible local governments within the defined planning area are included in this plan. Completed jurisdictional annexes are presented in Section 9. Any non-participating local governments and other local jurisdictions such as Fire Districts, Utility Districts, School Districts, and any other eligible local government as defined in 44 CFR 201.2 within the Fort Bend planning area can join this plan as a participating jurisdiction and to ultimately achieve approved status by following the linkage procedures defined in this appendix.

It is assumed that some or all these non-participating local governments may choose to "link" to the plan at some point in time to gain eligibility for programs under the DMA. In addition, some of the current partnership may not continue to meet eligibility requirements due to the lack of active participation as prescribed by the plan. These "linkage" procedures will define the requirements established by the Fort Bend HMP Planning Team for dealing with the increase or decrease in planning partners linked to this plan. It should be noted that currently non-participating jurisdictions within the defined planning area are not obligated to link to this plan. These jurisdictions can choose to do their own “complete” plan that addresses all required elements of section 201.6 of 44CFR.

H.1.1 Increasing the Partnership Through Linkage

Eligibility

Eligible jurisdictions located in the planning area may link to this plan at any point during the plan’s performance period (5 years after final approval). Eligibility will be determined by the following factors:

- The linking jurisdiction is a local government as defined by the Disaster Mitigation Act.
- The boundaries or service area of the linking jurisdiction is completely contained within the boundaries of the planning area established during the 2023 Hazard Mitigation Action Plan development process.
- The linking jurisdiction’s critical facilities were included in the critical facility and infrastructure risk assessment completed during the 2023 Plan development process.

Requirements

It is expected that linking jurisdictions will complete the requirements outlined below and submit their completed template to the lead agency for review within six months of beginning the linkage process:

The Fort Bend HMP Planning Team has established an annual window for which linkage to the plan can occur. Linking jurisdictions are instructed to complete the following procedures during this time frame.

The current non-participating jurisdiction contacts the Fort Bend Hazard Mitigation Planning Coordinator for the plan and requests a "Linkage Package". The Fort Bend Hazard Mitigation Project Contact is:

Greg Babst, Emergency Management Coordinator
Fort Bend County





(281) 238-3428 | Gregory.Babst@fortbendcountytexas.gov

The Fort Bend Hazard Mitigation Planning Coordinator will provide a linkage package that includes:

- Copy of Volume 1 and 2 of the Plan (CD-ROM or flash drive).
- Planning Partner's Expectations Sheet.
- A Sample "Letter of Intent" to Link to the Plan.
- A Jurisdictional Annex Template and Instructions.
- Catalog of Hazard Mitigation Alternatives or the Mitigation Catalog.
- A copy of Section 201.6 of Chapter 44, the Code of Federal Regulations (44CFR), which defines the federal requirements for a local hazard mitigation plan.

The new jurisdiction will be required to review both volumes of the plan which includes the following key components for the planning area:

- The Fort Bend HMP risk assessment;
- The plan's goals and objectives;
- Plan implementation and maintenance procedures; and
- Catalog of potential mitigation actions.

Once this review is complete, the jurisdiction will complete its specific jurisdictional annex by following the template and its instructions for completion provided by the Fort Bend Hazard Mitigation Planning Coordinator. Technical assistance can be provided upon request by completing the request for technical assistance (TA) form provided in the linkage package. This TA may be provided by the Fort Bend Hazard Mitigation Planning Coordinator or any other resource within the Planning Team. The Fort Bend Hazard Mitigation Planning Coordinator will determine who will provide the TA and the possible level of TA based on resources available at the time of the request.

The new jurisdiction will also be required to develop a public involvement strategy that ensures their public's ability to participate in the plan development process. At a minimum, the new jurisdiction must try to solicit public opinion on hazard mitigation at the onset of this linkage process and a minimum of one public meeting to present their draft jurisdiction specific annex for comment, prior to adoption by the governing body. The Planning Partnership will have available resources to aid in the public involvement strategy such as the plan website. However, it will be the new jurisdiction's responsibility to implement and document this strategy for incorporation into their annex.

It should be noted that the Jurisdictional Annex templates do not include a section for the description of the public process. This is because the original partnership was covered under a uniform public involvement strategy that covered the operational area that is described in Volume 1 of the plan. Since the new partner was not addressed by that strategy, they will have to initiate a new strategy, and add a description of that strategy to their annex. For consistency, new partners are encouraged to follow the public involvement format utilized by the initial planning effort as described in Volume I of the plan.

Once their public involvement strategy is completed and they have completed their template, the new jurisdiction will submit the completed package to the Fort Bend Hazard Mitigation Planning Coordinator for a pre-adoption review to ensure conformance with the regional plan format.

The Fort Bend Hazard Mitigation Planning Coordinator will review for the following:





- Documentation of public involvement and mitigation action development strategies.
- Conformance of template entries with guidelines outlined in instructions.
- Chosen actions are consistent with goals, objectives, and mitigation catalog of Fort Bend Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Designated point of contact.

The Fort Bend Hazard Mitigation Planning Coordinator may utilize members of the HMP Planning Team or other resources to complete this review. All proposed linked annexes will be submitted to the HMP Planning Team for their review and comment prior to submittal to the TDEM.

Plans approved and accepted by the HMP Planning Team will then be forwarded to TDEM for review with cover letter stating the forwarded plan meets local approved plan standards and whether the plan is submitted with local adoption or for review of the criteria met/plan not adopted.

The TDEM will review plans for state and federal compliance. Non-compliant plans are returned to the jurisdiction for correction. Compliant plans are forwarded to FEMA Region VI office for review with annotation as to the adoption status.

FEMA Region VI reviews the new jurisdiction's plan in association with the approved plan to ensure DMA compliance. Region VI notifies new jurisdiction of results of review with copies to the TDEM and approved planning authority.

New jurisdiction corrects plan's shortfalls (if necessary) and resubmits to the TDEM through the approved plan lead agency.

Region VI Director notifies new jurisdiction governing authority of plan approval.

The new jurisdiction plan is then included with the Fort Bend County HMP 2023 update, and the linking jurisdiction is committed to participate in the ongoing plan implementation and maintenance identified in Volume 1 of the HMP.