

# Kit Carson County

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HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN ELEMENT DRAFT: JULY 17, 2020

2020

NORTHEAST COLORADO REGIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

## Section One – Introduction

### Overview

The purpose of the ***Kit Carson County Plan Element*** is to provide Kit Carson County and political subdivisions within the county with a comprehensive hazard mitigation strategy for reducing long-term risks to people, property and natural resources. It is the intent of this plan to help ensure that Kit Carson County remains a safe place to live and work and to provide a framework for addressing potential future hazards through hazard mitigation planning.

***Hazard mitigation*** is defined by FEMA as “any sustained action taken to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to human life and property from a hazard event.” Mitigation creates safer communities by reducing loss of life, risk of injury, property damage, and damage to the environment.

The ***Kit Carson County Plan Element*** is an annex of the ***Northeast Colorado Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan***. This Plan Element (“Plan”) is organized into the following sections:

1. ***Introduction – Overview and Community Profile***
2. ***Risk Assessment***
3. ***Capability Assessment***
4. ***Vulnerability Assessment***
5. ***Mitigation Strategy***
6. ***Maintaining and Updating the County Plan Element.***

### Participating Jurisdictions

The jurisdictions and organizations that participated in the 2020 plan update process are identified in Table 1.1 below. ***Participating Jurisdictions*** that adopt the updated plan are eligible to receive federal hazard mitigation grant funds directly from FEMA. In addition to participating in the planning process and formally adopting the updated plan, Participating Jurisdictions must also identify specific mitigation actions for reducing risks from local hazards. ***Stakeholders*** are jurisdictions or organizations that participate in and have an interest in the planning process, but are not required to formally adopt the updated plan or identify mitigation actions. Stakeholders that identify specific mitigation actions may be the recipient of federal hazard mitigation grant funds, but are required to work through a Participating Jurisdiction that agrees to sponsor the project application.

**Table 1.1 Participating Jurisdictions and Stakeholders**

Participating Jurisdictions	Stakeholders
Kit Carson County	Arriba-Flagler R-20 School District
City of Burlington	Burlington School District RE-6J
Town of Bethune	Hi-Plains School District R-23
Town of Flagler	Idalia School District RJ-3
Town of Seibert	Community Ambulance Service
Town of Stratton	Burlington Volunteer Fire Department
Town of Vona	KC Electric
	National Weather Service, Goodland, KS

	<b>Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management</b>
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## Planning Process and Public Involvement

A planning workshop was conducted on February 19, 2020, 7:00-9:00 PM, in Burlington to gather input and evaluate information to include in the 2020 updates to the Kit Carson County Hazard Mitigation Plan Element. The workshop was attended by representatives of Kit Carson County and its local partners. The workshop was facilitated by a mitigation specialist from the Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and the contractor hired to coordinate the project. Prior to the workshop, a survey of Participating Jurisdictions and Stakeholders was conducted to collect initial information for updates to the Plan, including hazard events and mitigation efforts from the previous five years.


The survey and workshop provided two opportunities to (1) review and update the Risk Assessment and assess the vulnerability of community assets to local hazards, (2) review local mitigation capabilities and update the Capability Assessment, and (3) determine the status of 2015 Mitigation Actions and identify new opportunities and projects to include in the updated plan. The workshop was open to the public and citizens and volunteers were also provided an opportunity to review and comment on draft updates prior to final review by the Kit Carson County Hazard Mitigation Planning Team. In addition to the workshop and survey, Emergency Manager Della Calhoon briefed members of the Kit Carson County EMS Council on the plan updates at the March 11, 2020 meeting in Stratton.

**Table 1.2 Kit Carson County Hazard Mitigation Planning Team**

<b>Kit Carson County Hazard Mitigation Planning Team</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organization</b>
<b>Della Calhoon</b>	Emergency Manager	Kit Carson County
<b>Michael Clark</b>	Superintendent	Hi-Plains School District R-23
<b>Justin Crisp</b>	Town Manager	Town of Flagler
<b>Randy Fagerlund</b>	Director of Operations	Community Ambulance Service
<b>Randy Gorton</b>	Supervisor	Kit Carson County Landfill
<b>Ed Holicky</b>	Meteorologist in Charge	National Weather Service, Goodland, KS
<b>Dave Hornung</b>	Commissioner	Kit Carson County
<b>Dawn James</b>	Director	Kit Carson County Public Health & Environment
<b>Darcy Janssen</b>	EPR Coordinator	
<b>Myles Johnson</b>	Superintendent	Idalia School District RJ-3
<b>Jim Keehne</b>	City Administrator	City of Burlington
<b>Gary Koop</b>	Commissioner	Kit Carson County
<b>Kevin Kuretich</b>	Field Services Area Supervisor	Colorado Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management
<b>Valorie McCleary</b>	Superintendent	Arriba-Flagler School District R-20
<b>Abbey Mullis</b>	Assessor	Kit Carson County
<b>Paul Norris</b>	Operations Manager	K.C. Electric Association
<b>Tom Satterly</b>	Superintendent	Burlington School District RE-6J
<b>Charlene Sayles</b>	Town Clerk	Town of Seibert
<b>Mark Thompson</b>	Mitigation Planning Specialist	Colorado Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management
<b>Cory Wall</b>	Commissioner	Kit Carson County
<b>Mark Weber</b>	Fire Chief	Burlington Volunteer Fire Department

<b>Paula Weeks</b>	County Administrator	Kit Carson County
<b>Bob Wold</b>	Consultant	Robert Wold Emergency Management Planning Services

## Community Profile

	<b>Established</b>	<b>1889</b>
	<b>Land Area (Square Miles)</b>	<b>2,162</b>
	<b>Elevation Range</b>	<b>3,400'-5,290'</b>
	<b>Assessed Value (2019)</b>	<b>\$199,379,080</b>
	<b>Top Industry</b>	<b>Agriculture</b>
	<b>Population (2010)</b>	<b>8,270</b>
	<b>Population (2017)</b>	<b>7,846</b>

## History

Kit Carson County is located on the I-70 corridor in East Central Colorado near the Kansas border and is home to 7,846 residents (2017 U.S. Census). Named for fur trapper and Army scout Kit Carson, Kit Carson County covers 2,162 miles of the Great Plains in eastern Colorado and is one of the state’s most productive agricultural counties.

Kit Carson County was established in 1889 and settled by Anglo-Americans, German Russians, and northern European immigrants. Before then it was inhabited by various Native American groups, including the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, and Pawnee tribes. In the 1870s, Kit Carson County was located along a popular cattle trail between Texas and Denver. The communities in the county sprang up with the arrival of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The City of Burlington was established in 1888 at a time when little towns were needed along the railroad during its construction. On Election Day, November 5, 1889, Burlington won over Claremont (present-day Stratton) by a vote of 451 to 170 to become the county seat. The Old Town Museum and Old Town’s 21 historic buildings are a regional tourist attraction that features the world-famous Kit Carson County carousel.



*Kit Carson County is famous for its agricultural production and a legendary carousel at the County Fairgrounds in Burlington.*

The Town of Stratton was named in honor of the gold miner and philanthropist William Scott Stratton and once had a famous hotel, the Collins Hotel, where the great baseball player Babe Ruth and legendary newspaper editor and publisher Horace Greeley stayed. The Town of Flagler was founded in 1888 and officially incorporated in 1918. Flagler is the site of a 1951 air show disaster that killed 20 spectators observing the show.



*The Flagler Town Hall was once a luxury hotel and hospital (left); today it is the Town Museum/Town Hall*

The Town of Bethune was incorporated in 1926 as a farming and railroad community that was the location of the first school district (1886). Once a thriving local economy, the town was hit particularly hard during the Great Depression of the 1930s and almost disappeared. The Town of Seibert was named after a railroad agent named Henry Seibert and the Seibert Post Office has been in operation since 1888. The Town of Vona was a bustling town in the early 20th century that was devastated by the Great Depression and the drought of the 1930s. According to a historical plaque on the east end of town (at the water tower), fire destroyed half of the town's business district in early June of 1936 while the town was awaiting the construction of a new water tower.

### **Geography**

Burlington is the county seat and is where roughly half of the county's total population lives (3,834 in 2017). The other five incorporated towns in the county also lie along I-70, which parallels U.S. 24 and a major east-west rail line: Bethune (pop. 227), Flagler (pop. 494), Seibert (pop.132), Stratton (pop. 652) and Vona (pop.63).

Kit Carson County is located on the Eastern Plains of Colorado, which are part of the High Plains along the western most portion of the Great Plains. The region is characterized mostly by rolling plains and divided by the South Platte River and the Arkansas River Valleys. The Eastern Plains rise from approximately 3,400 feet at the eastern border of Colorado with Kansas. The highest point in Kit Carson County is the Bledsoe windmill at 5,290 feet in southwestern Kit Carson County. Like much of eastern Colorado, Kit Carson County is arid but contains several important water sources, including the South Forks of the Arikaree and Republican Rivers and their tributaries. There are no mapped floodplains in Kit Carson County.

Kit Carson County is among the State's top livestock, wheat and corn producing counties with more than 700 farms. Expanded irrigation has allowed Kit Carson County farmers to produce more corn, which requires more water than the county's reliable staple, winter wheat. Kit Carson County is one of the top wheat producers in the state, with nearly 225,000 acres of winter wheat. In 2012, Kit Carson County was also one of the state's top cattle producers, with more than 350,000 head.

### **Climate**

Kit Carson County is a semi-arid climate and receives very little rainfall. Much of the area relies on irrigation to survive. Large thunderstorms are common in the spring and summer months and capable of producing small- to medium-size tornadoes, severe winds and crop-damaging

hail. Although winter weather is generally dry, severe winter weather events are fairly common, including blizzards and wind-blown snow that results in closed highways and isolated communities and rural residents. Multi-year drought is common to the area, such as the intense widespread drought of the early 2000s.

Between 2015 and 2019, the average high temperature in Kit Carson County was 67°F and the average low temperature was 38°F. The average annual precipitation for Kit Carson County for the same period ranged from 19 inches to 23 inches and the average annual snowfall ranged from 10.8 inches (2017) to 40.1 inches (2015). Precipitation is seasonal, with most of the annual total (70-80%) falling during the growing season from April through September.

## Population

Kit Carson County has experienced a slight decrease in population since 2010, declining from 8,270 to a total population in 2017 of 7,846. Other population characteristics for Kit Carson County from the 2017 U.S. Census are shown in the following table.

**Table 1.3 Population Characteristics**

Characteristic	Kit Carson County	Bethune	Burlington	Flagler	Seibert	Stratton	Vona
Population (2017)	7,846	227	3,834	494	132	652	63
Median Age	38.4	32.3	38.3	41.0	55.7	30.1	50.5
Population 65 Years and Over	1,365	31	669	98	46	97	31
Female Population	3,454	92	1,548	250	71	347	34
Male Population	4,392	135	2,286	244	61	305	29
Average Household Size	2.37	2.55	2.33	2.22	1.67	2.39	1.66
Average Family Size	2.98	2.93	2.86	3.14	2.33	3.16	2.21
Total Population with Disabilities (%)	16.4	21.1	20.2	21.5	34.8	19.8	30.2
Residents <18 Years Old w/Disabilities (%)	7.1	10.0	10.4	6.3	0.0	9.6	0.0
Residents 18-64 Years Old with Disabilities (%)	12.1	24.6	14.9	18.1	23.6	19.7	8.3
Residents over 65 Years Old with Disabilities (%)	42.0	32.3	46.7	52.0	63.0	45.2	54.8
Residents with Health Insurance Coverage (%)	86.1	87.1	87.7	87.4	90.9	88.6	98.4
Residents with High School Degree (%)	86.8	76.7	87.2	92.5	84.4	86.5	83.0
Residents with Bachelor's Degree (%)	15.8	7.3	14.4	17.2	8.3	21.8	31.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Select 2017 economic and housing statistics for Kit Carson County are provided in Table 1.4 below.

**Table 1.4 Economic and Housing Characteristics**

Characteristic	Kit Carson County	Bethune	Burlington	Flagler	Seibert	Stratton	Vona
Median Household Income	\$45,881	\$31,250	\$41,047	\$39,148	\$31,250	\$38,750	\$38,750
Total Population that is Unemployed (%)	5.3	8.6	3.2	8.2	13.6	11.0	2.9
Families Living Below Poverty Level (%)	8.0	1.4	7.1	6.8	10.0	12.4	0.0
Individuals Living Below Poverty Level (%)	11.5	1.8	13.0	12.1	17.4	14.2	0.0
Total Housing Units	3,548	99	1,478	269	103	357	80
Vacant Housing Units	553	10	148	46	24	90	42
Homeowner Vacancy Rate (%)	1.2	8.3	0.0	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Rental Vacancy Rate (%)	9.7	0.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	16.9	20.0
Number of Businesses/Companies*	779	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

\* 2012 Survey of Business Owners

## Section Two – Risk Assessment

**Risk** is the potential for damage, loss, or other impacts created by the interaction of natural or other types of hazards with community assets. The purpose of the **risk assessment** is to provide a better understanding of local risks and establish a framework for developing and prioritizing mitigation actions to reduce risk from future natural hazard events.

### Local Natural Hazards

The risk assessment matrix below reflects the results of the rating-ranking exercise conducted during updates to the plan in 2014 and 2020. **Probability** is defined by FEMA as the likelihood of the hazard occurring in the future, based on historical frequencies or statistical probability models. **Magnitude** refers to the scale or severity of a hazard event in terms of the impacts to public safety, critical infrastructure, private property, economic activity, natural resources and other community assets. **Significance** is a measure of the need for planning and mitigation action, based on the geographic extent, probability and magnitude of potential impacts.

In light of the growing incidence of severe hail events in the years 2014-2019, the Significance rating for the **Hailstorm** hazard was increased from *Medium* to **High**, meaning the hazard should be a high priority in planning and mitigation efforts. The Probability and Magnitude ratings for all other hazards in the table below were validated and no further changes were made.

**Table 2.1 Kit Carson County Risk Assessment**

KIT CARSON COUNTY HAZARDS	Geographic Extent	Probability	Magnitude	Significance
Biological Hazards: Pandemic	Extensive	Occasional	Critical	High
Biological Hazards: Pestilence	Extensive	Occasional	Limited	Medium
Biological Hazards: Zoonotic Diseases	Limited	Likely	Limited	Medium
Blizzards and Severe Winter Storms	Extensive	Likely	Critical	High
Dam Failures/Levee Failures	Limited	Likely	Limited	Medium
Drought	Extensive	Likely	Critical	High
Earthquake	Limited	Occasional	Limited	Low
Flooding	Limited	Likely	Negligible	Medium
Fog	Significant	Likely	Negligible	Low
Hailstorms	Extensive	Highly Likely	Limited	High
Landslides	Limited	Occasional	Negligible	Low
Lightning	Extensive	Highly Likely	Limited	Medium
Noxious Weeds/Tumbleweeds	Extensive	Highly Likely	Negligible	Low
Straight-Line Winds	Extensive	Highly Likely	Limited	High
Temperature Extremes	Extensive	Highly Likely	Limited	Low
Tornadoes	Extensive	Likely	Critical	High
Wildland and Grassland Fires	Extensive	Highly Likely	Limited	High

Legend		
Geographic Extent	Extensive	50-100% of planning area.
	Significant	10-50% of planning area.
	Limited	Less than 10% of planning area.
Probability	Highly Likely	Near 100% chance of occurrence each year.
	Likely	10-100% chance of occurrence each year (recurrence interval: 10 yrs. or less).
	Occasional	1-10% chance of occurrence each year (recurrence interval: 11-100 yrs.)
	Unlikely	Less than 1% chance of occurrence each year (recurrence interval: >100 yrs.).
Magnitude	Catastrophic	Mass casualties and/or illnesses; extraordinary levels of destruction and service interruptions; sustained impacts to infrastructure, government functions and the economy; local and state resources overwhelmed (>50% of property severely damaged).
	Critical	Isolated deaths; multiple injuries and/or illnesses; major property damage; impacts to critical infrastructure; and/or disruption of essential services (25-50% of property severely damaged).
	Limited	Minor injuries, manageable number of illnesses; minor property damage; and/or interruption of essential services for less than 24 hrs. (10-25% of property severely damaged).
	Negligible	No injuries or illnesses; little or no property damage; brief disruptions of essential services (<10% of property severely damaged).
Significance	High	Widespread potential impacts (planning and mitigation priority: high).
	Medium	Moderate potential impacts (planning and mitigation priority: medium).
	Low	Minimal potential impacts (planning and mitigation priority: low).

**Significant Hazard Events in Kit Carson County, 2015-2020**

As the updates to this plan were being completed, the **2020 COVID-19 Pandemic** spread across the globe, United States and Colorado. COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus that was unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China in December 2019. The illness rapidly spread to other continents and on March 5, 2020, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment’s (CDPHE) public health laboratory confirmed the first presumptive positive COVID-19 test result in Colorado. Soon thereafter, most areas in eastern and northeastern Colorado reported cases of the virus.



Locations where groups of people congregate in confined spaces – nursing homes/assisted-care facilities, manufacturing plants, correctional facilities – were prime locations for rapid disease transmission. The crisis resulted in statewide “stay at home” and “safer at home” orders as well as orders closing certain businesses (e.g., restaurants, bars, gyms and non-essential retail stores) and prohibiting gatherings of 10 or more people in a confined space. Many local governments and health departments also instituted requirements relative to safe-distancing, wearing face masks and other protective measures.

The other significant hazard events that occurred in Kit Carson County between 2015-2020 were reviewed at the workshop and through the survey process and the most significant events during the period are summarized in the table below, with additional data from the National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) Storm Events Database.

**Table 2.2 Significant Hazard Events in Kit Carson County, 2015-2020**

Hazard Event	Date(s)	Impacts
Blizzard	November 11, 2015	High winds; blowing snow; zero/near-zero visibilities
Blizzard	March 23, 2016	High winds; blowing snow; zero/near-zero visibilities
Blizzard	January 21, 2018	High winds; blowing snow; zero/near-zero visibilities
Blizzard	April 13, 2018	High winds; blowing snow; zero/near-zero visibilities
Blizzard	January 22, 2019	White-out conditions; closure of I-70
Blizzard	March 13, 2019	Bomb Cyclone* caused severe straight-line winds; ground blizzards; stranded motorists; road closures; 78 mph gusts recorded in Kit Carson County
Blizzard	December 28-29, 2019	High winds/accumulation of ice on power lines caused widespread power outages lasting for two days. Town of Flagler lost ability to pump water to residents and sewage away from homes (power surges disabled backup battery power), resulting in a drastic reduction of the town water supply.
Dust Storm	January 10, 2018	Wind gusts of 40-50 mph resulted in near-zero visibility conditions due to blowing dust across I-70 between Bethune and Seibert
Hailstorm	July 27, 2018	3.5" hail reported in Seibert
Hailstorm	July 29, 2018	Hail and wind damage in Flagler, including softball-size hail and winds that damaged virtually every structure and vehicle left outside in town
Hailstorm	August 13, 2019	5" hail reported in Stratton
Hailstorm	2015-2019	Hail damage reported in every year 2015-2019; 43 days with severe hail (hailstones measuring 1" in diameter or greater); 14 days with hail 2" in diameter or greater
Pandemic	2020**	The COVID-19 pandemic was still at a crisis stage in Colorado as updates to this plan were completed in July 2020. Impacts to date in Kit Carson County include multiple deaths, a surge in infections and illness, economic losses, and public health orders requiring social distancing.
Straight-Line Winds	2015-2019	14 days with winds recorded at 50 kts (57.5 mph) or greater

<b>Tornado</b>	May 28, 2018	Three EF0 tornadoes on ground at same time; one tornado destroyed irrigation pivot (\$60,000) in Flagler
<b>Tornado</b>	2015-2019	14 reported tornadoes touched down, most in open fields with no damage reported

Source: National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) Storm Events Database

\* According to the National Weather Service, a “bomb cyclone” is a storm with rapidly plummeting atmospheric pressure, usually when a cold air mass collides with a warm air mass.

\*\* The Coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak began in Colorado in March 2020 was still impacting Kit Carson County as of the completion of updates to this document.

## History of Natural Hazard Events in Kit Carson County

Extreme weather events in Kit Carson County occasionally result in major damage to homes, businesses, utilities, agricultural operations and crops. A 25-inch rainfall event over 10 hours on May 30, 1935 damaged properties along the North Fork of the Republican River and led to the construction of the Bonny Reservoir Dam in Yuma County.

High wind events can result in extensive damage to property, including a storm in 2002 that damaged a school in Seibert and structures in Flagler (\$130,000 in damages) and another storm in 2011 that caused \$1 million in damages in the Burlington area, including two hangars and eight airplanes at the Burlington-Kit Carson County Airport.

A hailstorm in 1997 caused \$500,000 in damages to buildings and cars from Stratton to Burlington and on June 14, 2014, a combination of hail and high winds caused \$20 million in damages countywide.

When the response capacity of an affected jurisdiction is exhausted by a natural disaster, a **state disaster declaration** may be issued, allowing for the provision of state assistance, usually for the purpose of covering the costs of state assets committed to response operations. Kit Carson County has been designated as a state-declared disaster area 11 times since 1980, including eight statewide declarations.

**Federal disaster declarations** are granted when the magnitude and severity of impacts caused by an event surpass the ability of state and affected local governments to respond and recover. Most disaster assistance programs are supplemental and require a local cost-sharing match. Kit Carson County has received a major federal disaster declaration on only one occasion: June 19, 1965 for tornadoes, severe storms and flooding (DR-200) that occurred on May 23, 1965. During the storms, an F1 tornado touched down briefly in northern Kit Carson County and did \$25,000 damage.

A **USDA disaster declaration** is the most common type of federal disaster assistance and is limited to low-interest loans to farmers and ranchers to help compensate for losses due to natural hazards, including drought, freezing, hail, and insect infestations. Kit Carson County received USDA disaster declarations for drought, hail and other hazard events 16 times between 2003-2019.

## Section Three – Capability Assessment

**Mitigation capabilities** refer to the programs and policies currently in place to reduce hazard impacts, principally through the identification and implementation of cost-effective hazard mitigation measures. Capabilities can take the form of regulatory requirements (e.g., building codes or hazard-specific zoning ordinances), plans (e.g., hazard mitigation plans or

stormwater master plans), certification programs (e.g., *Firewise* or *StormReady*), personnel (e.g., floodplain administrators and community planners), insurance (e.g., National Flood Insurance Program), and structural projects that protect critical facilities and other property. Hazard awareness and public education programs are also proven measures for preparing citizens to cope with hazard events that cannot be avoided.

The political jurisdictions within Kit Carson County enforce a range of regulations that support mitigation goals and principles by restricting development in areas prone to natural hazards. In most jurisdictions, the local comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance and building codes are the primary tools utilized to regulate development in hazard-prone areas. The mitigation capabilities and resources currently in place in the Participating Jurisdictions are summarized in the table below.

**Table 3.1 Mitigation Capabilities**

Planning and Regulatory Capabilities							
Capability	Kit Carson County	Bethune	Burlington	Flagler	Seibert	Stratton	Vona
Building Codes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Building Codes Year	N/A	N/A	2018	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
BCEGS Rating	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Capital Improvements Program or Plan (CIP)	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Community Rating System	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Comprehensive, Master or General Plan	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Elevation Certificates	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Floodplain Management Plan or Ordinance	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Flood Insurance Study (FIS)	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Growth Management Ordinance	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Non-Flood Hazard-Specific Ordinance	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Participant	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Site Plan Review Requirements	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Stormwater Plan, Program or Ordinance	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Zoning Ordinance	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Financial Capabilities							
Levy for Specific Purposes with Voter Approval	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Utilities Fees	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
System/Impact Development Fee	Yes*	No	Yes**	No	No	No	No
General Obligation Bonds to Incur Debt	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No

Stormwater Service Fees	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Funding	Yes	No	Yes***	No	No	No	No
CDBG Funds	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No
* Wind Farms Only* ** Annexation process *** Requires voter approval							
<b>Administrative and Technical Capabilities</b>							
Emergency Manager	Yes	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*
Floodplain Administrator	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Land Use/Community Planner	Yes	No	No	No	No		No
Planner/Engineer (Land Development)	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Engineer/Professional	No	No	Yes**	No	No	No	No
Building Official	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
GIS Specialist/Capability	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Grant Manager/Specialist	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No
Warning Systems	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
♦ General	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
♦ Flood	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
♦ Wildfire	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
♦ Tornado	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
♦ Geologic Hazards	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
* Provided by Kit Carson County Office of Emergency Management ** Out-Sourced							
<b>Education and Outreach Capabilities</b>							
Citizen Groups that Communicate Hazard Risks	Yes	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*
<i>Firewise</i>	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
<i>StormReady</i>	Yes	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*	Yes*
* Provided by Kit Carson County Office of Emergency Management							

## Section Four – Vulnerability Assessment

### Community Assets at Risk

This section describes the community assets at risk to natural hazards in Kit Carson County, including people and property; economic assets; critical facilities and infrastructure; and natural, cultural, and historic resources.

In 2019, the total assessed value of residential properties in Kit Carson County was \$26,272,823, an increase of 11.97% in total value from 2014. The total assessed value of agricultural properties increased from \$38,627,058 in 2014 to \$55,542,759 in 2019, a 43.79% increase. The total assessed value of commercial properties also increased, from \$32,453,224 in 2014 to \$39,070,964 in 2019, a 20.39% increase. Overall, the value of assessed properties in Kit Carson County increased 45.12% in the six-year period from 2014-2019.

**Table 4.1 Summary of Taxable Properties in Kit Carson County, 2014-2019**

Property Classification	2014 Assessed Value	2019 Assessed Value	% Change
Agricultural Properties	\$38,627,058	\$55,542,759	43.79

Commercial Properties	\$32,453,224	\$39,070,964	20.39
Industrial Properties	\$1,195,431	\$1,098,151	-8.13
Natural Resources	\$1,072,867	\$1,032,401	-3.81
Oil and Gas Properties	\$781,358	\$369,733	-52.68
Residential Properties	\$23,464,646	\$26,272,823	11.97
State Assessed Properties	\$38,913,500	\$75,075,900	92.93
Vacant Properties	\$879,975	\$916,349	4.13
<b>Total Taxable Property</b>	<b>\$137,388,059</b>	<b>\$199,379,080</b>	<b>45.12</b>

Source: 2014 Kit Carson County Abstract of Assessment; 2019 Kit Carson County Abstract of Assessment

**Table 4.2 Summary of Taxable Properties for Municipalities, Schools and Fire Districts**

2019 Assessed Values					
Municipalities		School Districts		Fire Protection Districts	
Bethune	\$688,602	Arriba-Flagler R-20	\$19,214,074	Burlington	\$124,740,968
Burlington	\$42,150,053	Bethune R-5	\$19,721,704	Flagler	\$22,041,967
Flagler	\$3,665,339	Burlington RE-6J	\$104,020,991	Seibert	\$13,232,677
Seibert	\$1,253,400	Hi-Plains R-23	\$30,604,369	Stratton	\$27,730,217
Stratton	\$3,011,105	Stratton R-4	\$24,509,863	Vona	\$11,418,557
Vona	\$337,274				

Source: 2019 Kit Carson County Abstract of Assessment

### Critical Facilities

**Critical facilities** and infrastructure are the structures and systems that are integral to day-to-day functions and, if damaged, would have serious adverse impacts on disaster response and recovery operations. Infrastructure and facilities that are commonly considered *critical* include law enforcement facilities, fire service facilities, health care facilities, government facilities, emergency operations centers, public shelters, transportation systems, water supply facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, agricultural production facilities, electrical power systems and other utilities. In addition, critical facilities are those that house vulnerable populations, such as schools and assisted living or senior housing.

Since 2015, there has been one new critical facility built in Kit Carson County, a new school in the Town of Seibert (Hi-Plains School District R-23).

**Table 4.3 Critical Facilities in Kit Carson County**

Critical Facility	Kit Carson County	Bethune	Burlington	Flagler	Seibert	Stratton	Vona
Law Enforcement Facilities	1	0	1	0	0	1	0
Fire Stations	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Hospitals/Clinics	0	0	3	1	0	1	0
EMS/Ambulance Stations	0	0	1	1	1	1	0
Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs)	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Public Safety Communications Centers	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Courthouse/City Hall/Town Hall	1	1	1	1	1	1	0

Schools	0	1	3	1	1	3	0
Assisted Living Facilities	0	0	2	1	0	1	0
Wastewater Treatment	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Water Utilities/Treatment	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
Airports	1*	0	1*	0	0	0	0

\* Burlington-Kit Carson County Airport

## Economic Assets

Farming for wheat and other small grains and cattle ranching are the main components of the agriculture-based economy of Kit Carson County. Other economic contributors include irrigation farming, oil and gas production, and wind energy projects.

**Table 4.4 Industry Distribution – Top Three Industrial Sectors by Jurisdiction**

Jurisdiction	Sector	Employees	Percent of Workforce
Kit Carson County	1. Educational Services/Health Care/Social Assistance	804	22.1
	2. Agriculture	780	21.5
	3. Retail Trade	526	14.5
Bethune	1. Agriculture	42	35.9
	2. Retail Trade	18	15.4
	3. Wholesale Trade	11	9.4
Burlington	1. Educational Services/Health Care/Social Assistance	472	30.1
	2. Retail Trade	288	18.4
	3. Construction	201	12.8
Flagler	1. Educational Services/Health Care/Social Assistance	56	25.1
	2. Retail Trade	45	20.2
	3. Construction	26	11.7
Seibert	1. Manufacturing (*Tie)	11	21.6
	1. Retail Trade (*Tie)	11	21.6
	2. Agriculture	7	13.7
Stratton	1. Educational Services/Health Care/Social Assistance	60	21.1
	2. Retail Trade	47	16.5
	3. Agriculture	46	16.2
Vona	1. Retail Trade	12	35.3
	2. Educational Services/Health Care/Social Assistance	7	20.6
	3. Wholesale Trade	4	11.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2012 Survey of Business Owners

## Social Vulnerability

Certain demographic and housing characteristics are important considerations when identifying and prioritizing mitigation goals and actions. *Age* can affect the ability of individuals to safely evacuate away from hazardous conditions. *Language and cultural barriers* can affect the communication of warning information and access to post-disaster information. *Low-income residents* generally have fewer resources available for mitigation, preparedness, and recovery and are more likely to live in vulnerable structures.

**Table 4.5 Social Vulnerability Indicators from U.S. Census, 2013-2017**

Jurisdiction	Total Population	Housing Units	% Female	% Under 18 Yrs.	% 65 and Over	% Non-English at Home	Individuals < Poverty Level (%)
Kit Carson County	7,846	3,548	44.0	22.8	17.4	14.6	11.5
Bethune	227	99	40.5	30.8	13.7	30.5	1.8
Burlington	3,834	1,478	40.4	20.4	17.4	16.2	13.0
Flagler	494	269	50.6	28.7	19.8	1.7	12.1
Seibert	132	103	53.8	10.6	34.8	4.7	17.4
Stratton	652	357	53.2	31.9	14.9	7.7	14.2
Vona	63	80	54.0	12.7	49.2	3.3	0.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### Historic, Cultural and Natural Resources

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. The table below lists the properties in Kit Carson County that are on the National Register of Historic Places.

**Table 4.6 Historic Properties in Kit Carson County on the National Register**

Property	Location	Year Listed
Burlington Gymnasium	450 11 <sup>th</sup> St., Burlington	2007
Burlington State Armory	191 14 <sup>th</sup> St., Burlington	1984
Kit Carson County Carousel	Kit Carson County Fairgrounds	1978
Flagler Hospital (Flagler Town Hall)	311 Main Ave., Flagler	1991
Sim Hudson Motor Company	1332 Senter Ave., Burlington	2007
Spring Creek Bridge	U.S. 24 near Vona	2002

Source: Directory of Colorado State Register Properties

The Colorado State Register of Historic Properties is a listing of the state's significant cultural resources worthy of preservation for the future education and enjoyment of Colorado's residents and visitors. The table below lists the one property in Kit Carson County that is on the Colorado State Register of Historic Properties.

**Table 4.7 Historic Properties in Kit Carson County on the State Register**

Property	Location	Year Listed
Second Central School	404 4 <sup>th</sup> St., Flagler	1996

Source: Directory of Colorado State Register Properties

### Growth and Development Trends

The total population in Kit Carson County declined between 2010 and 2017 from 8,270 to 7,846 for a growth rate of -5.13 percent. The population of Burlington declined from 4,254 to 3,834 (-9.87%) and the population of Stratton remained essentially the same (-0.91%). According to the State Demography Office, the rate of population growth for Kit Carson County will be slow between 2010 and 2050, increasing from 8,270 in 2010 to 8,974 in 2050 (8.51%).

**Table 4.8 Population Change, 2010-2017**

Jurisdiction	2010 Population	2017 Population	Percent Change
Kit Carson County	8,270	7,846	-5.13
Bethune	237	227	-4.22
Burlington	4,254	3,834	-9.87
Flagler	561	494	-11.94
Seibert	181	132	-27.07
Stratton	658	652	-0.91
Vona	106	63	-40.57

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### **Vulnerability to High Priority Hazards in Kit Carson County**

The entire population of Kit Carson County is more or less equally vulnerable to the high priority natural hazards identified in this plan. The vulnerability of community assets in Kit Carson County to high priority hazards is summarized in the following discussion.

#### ***Blizzards and Severe Winter Storms***

Winter storms will continue to occur with high frequency throughout Kit Carson County and occasionally cause widespread impacts. The greatest risk is to the safety of the public, including travelers on the county's highways and roads and citizens with medical conditions or other special needs that may become isolated. Highway closures and power outages can present a need to open and manage public shelters and provide mass care services. Winter storms can occasionally lead to school and business closures, road closures, and extraordinary requirements to remove snow and maintain critical emergency services.

#### ***Drought***

The most significant impacts from drought are related to water-intensive activities, such as agriculture (both crops and livestock), wildfire protection, municipal usage, commerce, recreation, and wildlife preservation, as well as a reduction of electric power generation and water quality deterioration. Secondary impacts of drought are wildfires, wind erosion, and soil compaction that can make an area more susceptible to flooding. Drought impacts increase with the length of a drought.

Drought does not usually present life safety issues or directly impact critical infrastructures such as roads, bridges, utilities, communications systems, or public safety resources. However, drought presents ongoing challenges for all communities in Northeast Colorado and the Eastern Plains, requiring sustained planning and conservation efforts to ensure a reliable water supply to meet current and future needs.

#### ***Hailstorms***

Hail is primarily a risk to property and agriculture activities -- vehicles, roofs, crops and landscaping are the property most commonly damaged by hail. However, large hail can also cause death or injury to people caught outside and exposed to the elements. Although large hail events frequently result in high aggregate insured losses, property damages are generally



limited, serious injuries are rare, and there is typically little or no impact to critical facilities, which are generally able to operate without disruption to services.

### ***Pandemic: COVID-19 and other Novel Virus Infections***

Older adults and individuals with serious chronic health conditions are most at risk for becoming very ill or dying from a serious respiratory virus like COVID-19 and other novel virus infections. In eastern and northeastern Colorado, the population skews to the older side of the state average (approximately 2-8 years older per capita, depending on the county) and residents with underlying health problems have less access to the health care services they need.

With fewer people and wide-open spaces, rural Colorado provides a natural social-distancing environment. However, rural residents still tend to congregate in common places where diseases can be passed from person-to-person, including schools, churches, grocery stores and post offices. Communities located along interstate highways may be more susceptible to exposure from the traveling public, including truck drivers from all parts of the country. Large rural employers, including packing plants, feedlots, grain elevators, and confined livestock operations as well as prisons, can also be prime locations for rapid virus transmission, as was experienced during the COVID-19 crisis at the Cargill meatpacking plant in Morgan County and the Sterling Correctional Facility in Logan County. Sadly, nursing home and assisted living facility residents have been the most vulnerable citizens to the highly contagious COVID-19 virus, due to their age, underlying health issues and congregate living setting.

Although most individuals who contract COVID-19 do not become seriously ill, persons with mild symptoms and asymptomatic COVID-19 illness can still place other vulnerable members of the public at significant risk. A large surge in the number of persons with serious infections can overwhelm local hospitals and clinics and compromise the ability of the health care system to deliver necessary health care to the public.<sup>1</sup> Most rural hospitals are not as equipped as larger hospital systems and many face significant health care workforce shortages on a normal basis, meaning patients in a pandemic may need to be transferred to larger hospitals or cared for in an unconventional, alternate setting. Other challenges to small town hospitals posed by a pandemic include limited inpatient and intensive care beds, disadvantages in competing for critical equipment and supplies, and loss of revenue from cancellation of elective procedures.

The drawn-out nature of a pandemic also places additional strain on EMS, fire and other response resources that rely heavily on volunteers, who together with their families already face greater exposure to the virus and a higher risk of infection. Every community in eastern and northeastern Colorado depends on volunteers to provide fire, EMS and ambulance services.

In addition to the loss of life and human suffering caused by COVID-19, the pandemic is expected to have an extensive negative effect on the global economy for years to come, with substantial drops in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) accompanied by extraordinary increases in unemployment in the U.S. and around the world.

COVID-19 presents a number of challenges for farmers and ranchers in Colorado, including (1) uncertain impacts on markets and farm prices, (2) supply chain shortages and slowdowns, (3) health impacts to the farm-ranch workforce, and (4) potential shortages of safety gear such as protective gloves and N-95 masks due to their critical need by health care workers.<sup>2</sup> If large hog-

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<sup>1</sup> Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, [covid19.colorado.gov](https://covid19.colorado.gov).

<sup>2</sup> Colorado Farm Bureau, [coloradofarmbureau.com](https://coloradofarmbureau.com).

packing plants in Oklahoma, Kansas or Texas had to shut down due to the spread of a virus through their workforce, agricultural COOPs and commercial hog farms in northeastern Colorado could be affected by the supply chain disruptions that would be created. In a worst-case scenario, local hog farms would have to depopulate animals because there would be no place to ship them for processing.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends community mitigation strategies such as social distancing measures to limit spread of the virus. A community mitigation strategy is a set of actions that individuals and communities can take to help slow the spread of respiratory virus infections. Community mitigation is especially important before a vaccine or drug becomes widely available. Community mitigation aims to slow the spread of a novel influenza virus and protect health care and critical infrastructure workers through the use of nonpharmaceutical interventions (NPIs). NPIs are readily available actions and response measures that people can take including staying at home, covering coughs and sneezes, frequent handwashing and routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces.

Community-level NPIs help reduce social contacts between people in schools, workplaces, and other community settings by dismissing schools temporarily, providing telework options, postponing large gatherings and issuing public health orders. A community mitigation strategy outlines recommended actions that can be taken by individuals/families at home, schools and childcare facilities, assisted living facilities, workplaces, health care facilities, and community- and faith-based organizations.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Tornadoes and Straight-Line Winds***

Since 1950, 100 confirmed tornadoes have touched down in Kit Carson County, including 42 Fo/EF0 tornadoes, 24 F1/EF1 tornadoes and 6 F2/EF2 tornadoes. Most of these tornadoes occurred over open country and, to date, Kit Carson County has been spared the serious impacts of even a small-scale tornado with a path through one or more communities. Although no fatalities have occurred as a result of tornadoes in Kit Carson County, the hazard poses the greatest threat to people and property of all of the natural hazards.

During blizzards, straight-line winds magnify the dangerous effects of cold temperatures and impede safe travel by reducing visibility. Prolonged power outages can result when power lines are brought down by a combination ice buildup on the lines and strong winds. During dry periods, high winds can contribute to rapid fire growth in open spaces and other areas where natural grasses can grow tall and ultimately cure. High winds can also damage roofs and structures and cause secondary damages as a result of flying debris.

### ***Wildland/Grassland Fires***

All areas of Kit Carson County are subject to the risk of wildfire, including non-irrigated pastureland, harvested dry land crop areas (corn stalks and wheat stubble) and natural grassland areas (e.g., land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, or CRP). Wildfires in these areas are typically caused by severe weather events (lightning) and tend to spread rapidly. The greatest risk exists during severe weather season (spring/summer months), when cloud-to-ground lightning is common. Fall is also considered a high-risk time as crops have matured and

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<sup>3</sup> *Implementation of Mitigation Strategies for Communities with Local COVID-19 Transmission*. March 12, 2020. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19).

are drying out in the fields and harvesting is in progress. Most controlled burns by property owners are conducted in the Spring.

### ***Vulnerability to Flooding***

None of the communities in Kit Carson County participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and there are no mapped floodplains within the county. According to the State Engineer's Office, the condition of the Flagler Dam, the only Class I, High Hazard dam in Kit Carson County, is Conditionally Satisfactory. Storage in the dam is restricted and the nearest downstream community is St. Francis, Kansas (51 miles).

## **Section Five – Mitigation Strategy**

This section describes the ***Mitigation Strategy*** developed by Kit Carson County, based on the assessment of risks and vulnerable community assets that was updated at the planning workshop and through survey feedback and interviews with local officials. The Mitigation Strategy includes Mitigation Actions for reducing local risks and accomplishing the following goals:

1. Reduce loss of life, property damages, and economic impacts caused by natural hazard events.
2. Improve County-level capabilities to reduce disaster losses.
3. Increase public awareness of potential hazard impacts.
4. Improve preparedness for future pandemic events by collaborating with government, business, education, medical and public health partners on plans that address identified lessons learned from the COVID-19 public health disaster on a local, region and state level.
5. Maintain FEMA eligibility and qualify participating communities for federal mitigation funding.

At the planning workshop, participants reviewed the status of 2015 projects and determined which incomplete actions to retain in the updated plan. Table 5.1 below provides a report on the status of Mitigation Actions identified in the previous 2015 version of this plan.

**Table 5.1 Status of 2015 Mitigation Actions**

<b>Kit Carson County</b>			
<b>#</b>	<b>2015 Mitigation Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Agency</b>	<b>Status</b>
1	Obtain <i>StormReady</i> certification from National Weather Service.	OEM	Complete (approved 3-8-19)
2	Promote benefits of tornado shelters and safe rooms and foster their construction.	OEM and Town administrative staff	Ongoing
3	Implement an overall communications program update.	OEM	Upgrades to Flagler and Bethune Towers complete
4	Implement a countywide emergency management public education program.	OEM	In process; Family Disaster Plans and other preparedness information distributed at Health Fair
5	De-register the historic Spring Creek bridge.	OEM	No progress/retain for 2020?
6	Provide a backup power source for Seibert sewage pump.	Seibert Public Works	Complete

7	Plan, design and construct drainage improvements in the Town of Stratton.	Town/County Staff	Complete
8	Develop Local Emergency Operations Plan for the Town of Bethune.	OEM/Town Staff	Complete (signed County EOP)
9	Develop Local Emergency Operations Plan for the Town of Vona.	OEM/Town Staff	Complete (signed County EOP)

**Mitigation Achievements**

Since 2015, significant progress has been made with implementation of the Mitigation Actions recommended in the previous plan, including the following achievements:

1. Certification of Kit Carson County as a **StormReady** community by the National Weather Service on March 6, 2019;
2. Completion of upgrades to Flagler and Bethune communications towers;
3. Completion of stormwater drainage improvements in the Town of Stratton;
4. Acquisition and installation of emergency backup power for the Seibert Wastewater Treatment Plant; and
5. Formal adoption of the Kit Carson County Emergency Operations Plan by the Town of Bethune and the Town of Vona.

**Mitigation Actions 2020-2025**

The evaluation and prioritization of proposed 2020 Mitigation Actions were based on the updated risk assessment (i.e., probability and magnitude of impacts for each hazard), significant events from the last five years, and the informed judgement of local officials who weighed the pros and cons of proposed actions based on their subject matter expertise and experience with local hazards. The STAPLEE evaluation tool was considered as an additional method for evaluating the effectiveness of each action item. STAPLEE considers social, technical, administrative, political, legal, economic, and environmental constraints and benefits of each proposed activity.

Ongoing actions from the 2015 plan and proposed new mitigation actions were rated as High or Medium priority (actions considered low priority are not included in the update of this plan). The results of this effort are summarized in the table below, including a description of each mitigation action, the action’s priority, and the offices, departments or agencies responsible for implementing the action.

**Table 5.2 Mitigation Actions 2020-2025**

Kit Carson County			
#	Proposed Mitigation Actions	Responsible Agency	Priority
1	Purchase and install emergency generators in the following facilities:		High
	• Burlington Community Center (designated public shelter)	City of Burlington, OEM	High
	• Burlington Wastewater Treatment Plant	City of Burlington, OEM	High
	• Blending Plant, Well 11, Well 12 and Well 13	City of Burlington, OEM	High
	• Aspen Leaf Assisted Living Center in Flagler	Town of Flagler, OEM	High
	• Wheatland Conference Center in Flagler (designated public shelter).	Town of Flagler, OEM	High
2	Purchase new transformer for substation or build new substation on north side of town to service critical infrastructure.	City of Burlington, OEM	High

3	Establish emergency public shelter for the Town of Stratton at the Church of God.	Town of Stratton, OEM	High
4	Update building codes in the City of Burlington.	Burlington City Manager	High
5	Update City of Burlington Comprehensive Plan and incorporate goals, concepts and recommended mitigation actions from the Kit Carson County Hazard Mitigation Plan Element.	Burlington City Manager	High
6	Develop a comprehensive After-Action Report that documents COVID-19 impacts and captures lessons learned related to government services, public safety, education, agriculture, health care and the economy.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners	High
7	Develop a countywide mitigation strategy that outlines recommended actions that can be taken at different stages of a pandemic by individuals/families at home, schools and childcare facilities, assisted living facilities, workplaces, health care facilities, and community- and faith-based organizations.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners	High
8	Develop a medical surge capacity plan, in cooperation with local, regional and state partners, to improve capabilities for scaling up the coordinated delivery of health interventions during a pandemic event, including vaccinations, patient transport and care, medical staffing, and critical medical and personal protective equipment.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners	High
9	Develop a plan for acquiring, maintaining and refreshing a local stockpile of vaccines, medicines (including antibiotics and antivirals), and equipment (such as masks, gowns, and ventilators) and identify reliable vendors and other external sources to supplement local stockpiles.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners	High
10	Develop public education guidelines for communicating with the public during a pandemic that: (1) ensures information is timely, accurate and coordinated, (2) addresses the needs of non-English speaking residents, and (3) includes provisions for addressing rumors, misinformation and public perceptions of risk.	OEM with EMS, Public Health and Medical Services Partners	High

## Section Six – Maintaining and Updating the County Plan Element

### Formal Plan Adoption

In accordance with protocols established by the Colorado Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (CDHSEM), the final draft of this updated plan is submitted to CDHSEM for state-level review and recommended changes prior to FEMA review. FEMA then reviews the plan and, pending any required changes, issues a notice that the plan is Approvable Pending Adoption (APA) by the governing body of each participating jurisdiction. According to CDSHEM requirements, the plan must be formally adopted by participating jurisdictions within eight months of receiving notice of FEMA APA status.

### Plan Maintenance

Regular maintenance of this plan will help maintain a focus on hazards that pose the greatest risks and on the recommended measures for reducing future potential hazard losses. The Kit Carson County Emergency Manager will serve as the primary point of contact and will coordinate all local efforts to monitor, evaluate, and update this plan. Participating jurisdictions

and individual departments are responsible for implementing their specific mitigation actions and reporting on the status of these actions to the Emergency Manager.

Plan maintenance involves an ongoing effort to monitor and evaluate the implementation of identified action items in the plan, and to update the plan as progress, opportunities, obstacles, or changing circumstances are encountered. At least once a year, the Emergency Manager will convene a meeting to review new hazards data or studies, discuss new capabilities or changes in capabilities, consider any input received from the public, evaluate the effectiveness of existing mitigation actions, and modify or add mitigation actions.

### **Incorporation of Mitigation Strategy into Other Plans and Programs**

Mitigation is most successful when it is incorporated within the day-to-day operations of land use planning, road and bridge/public works, public health and other mainstream functions of local government. Multi-objective projects that mutually benefit partners and stakeholders are usually more cost-effective and more-broadly supported. Many other local plans present opportunities to address hazard mitigation in a way that can support multiple community objectives.

Ideally, identified mitigation actions should be implemented through existing plans and policies, which already have support from the community and policy makers. The incorporation of elements of this plan into existing planning mechanisms requires coordination between the Emergency Manager and the staff of each department responsible for implementing specific mitigation actions. The Emergency Manager, with support and guidance from Participating Jurisdictions, will work with the responsible agencies to incorporate this County Plan Element into existing planning mechanisms.