

# Multnomah County *Multi-Jurisdictional* Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan

## **Participating Jurisdictions:**

Multnomah County  
City of Fairview  
City of Gresham  
City of Troutdale  
City of Wood Village

**Public Comment DRAFT**

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CITY OF  
GRESHAM



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# Acknowledgements

This section will be completed in the final plan document.

# 1 Introduction

*Local hazard mitigation planning forms the foundation for a community's long-term strategy to reduce disaster losses and break the cycle of disaster damage, reconstruction, and repeated damage after the next disaster. The plan creates a framework for risk-based decision-making to reduce future damages and losses to property, people and the economy.*



## 1.1 What is Hazard Mitigation?

Hazard mitigation is the effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. Mitigation is taking action now — before the next disaster — to reduce human and financial consequences later. It is most effective when carried out on a comprehensive, community-wide, and long-term basis. Implementing coordinated mitigation activities over time is the best way to ensure that communities will be physically, socially and economically resilient to future hazard impacts (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA], 2013a).

Hazard mitigation helps to build a more disaster-resilient community by reducing risk before and after a disaster. Often, damaging events occur in the same locations over time (e.g., flooding along rivers) and cause repeated damage. Because of this, hazard mitigation is often focused on reducing repetitive loss, thereby breaking the disaster cycle.

Hazard mitigation activities can reduce existing risks (e.g., relocating a structure out of a floodplain) and ensure future development is not vulnerable to hazards (e.g., restricting new development in a floodplain). Involving stakeholders from a wide range of disciplines and perspectives in the mitigation planning process ensures plans are aligned. Likewise, integrating hazard mitigation into other planning efforts (e.g., comprehensive plans, climate adaptation plans and capital improvement plans) further supports long-term community resilience.

## 1.2 Purpose

A mitigation plan demonstrates the participating communities' commitment to reduce risks from hazards. It also serves as a strategic guide for decision-makers as they commit resources. In addition, each jurisdiction that adopts a FEMA-approved Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (NHMP) is eligible to receive federal hazard mitigation funding assistance (FEMA, 2013b).

This plan has been developed to meet the needs of stakeholders and represents our communities' priorities and vulnerabilities. The NHMP Steering Committee ensures the plan meets federal requirements (44 CFR §201.6) for local mitigation plans and follows best practice guidance.

The planning process is as important as the plan itself. The process is stakeholder-driven and includes hazard identification and risk assessment leading to the development of a comprehensive mitigation strategy for reducing risks to life and property. Key to the process is continued plan implementation and maintenance.

## 1.3 Participating Jurisdictions

Local governments may choose to develop a single jurisdiction mitigation plan or participate in a multi-jurisdictional mitigation plan. For the first time, Multnomah County and the cities of Fairview, Gresham, Troutdale and Wood Village have collaborated on a multi-jurisdictional plan. Previously, each of these jurisdictions had developed single-jurisdiction plans. Merging planning efforts resulted in format and content changes to the plan and organizational changes to the steering committee. See section **5.1 Developing the Plan** for a description of the plan update process and changes made during this update. Merging plans allowed the jurisdictions to plan cooperatively while meeting the following requirements (44 CFR §201.6(c)):

- The **Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment** addresses variations of each jurisdiction’s level of risk.
- The **Mitigation Strategy** includes action items specific to each jurisdiction.
- Each jurisdiction formally adopts the plan.

The City of Portland has a standalone Mitigation Action Plan (MAP) that is being updated concurrent to this plan update. Though the Multnomah County Multi-Jurisdictional NHMP does not include information about Portland’s hazards and risk, project managers for both plans have been involved in each other’s steering committees. The result is a coordination of data, planning processes and mitigation strategies to ensure regional alignment of hazard awareness and mitigation strategies. See section **5.1 Developing the Plan** for more information on regional mitigation collaboration.

## 1.4 Roles and Responsibilities

Resilience depends on the whole community — individuals, families, and households; communities; nongovernmental organizations; private-sector entities; local governments; regional agencies; state governments; and the federal government. Inclusiveness and partnership across the whole community ensures the best use of available knowledge, resources and efforts (FEMA, 2013a). The result is a comprehensive mitigation program that is integrated throughout the community. Some ways the whole community enhances mitigation planning include:

- **Individuals, Families and Households:** Mitigation begins with individual awareness and action. Many mitigation activities, such as making safety improvements to your home and maintaining insurance coverage, require individuals to take initiative and invest in risk reduction if they have the means to do so.
- **Communities/Neighborhoods:** Communities provide opportunities for sharing local hazard information, promoting collective action, and providing realistic perspective on what mitigation actions work for that particular group. They have the ability to promote and implement mitigation activities without necessarily holding a formal position of authority.

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### ***Benefits of a Multi-Jurisdictional Plan***

*Improves communication and coordination among jurisdictions and other regional entities*

*Enables comprehensive mitigation approaches to reduce risks that affect multiple jurisdictions*

*Maximizes economies of scale by leveraging individual capabilities and sharing costs and resources*

*Avoids duplication of efforts*

*Provides an organizational structure that local jurisdictions may find supportive*

— *Beyond Basics, no date*

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- **Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs):** NGOs — including voluntary organizations, faith-based organizations, national and professional associations, and educational institutions — can represent a wide cross section of priorities and values. NGOs often represent populations who historically have been underserved or underrepresented in emergency management planning processes and disproportionately impacted by disasters. Bringing these perspectives to the planning table is one step toward developing a plan that is equitable for everyone impacted by hazards and by the plan itself.
- **Private Sector:** Mitigation is a sound business practice that enables a reduction in disaster losses and a quicker restoration of normal operations. Private-sector investments in continuity and vulnerability reduction have broad benefits by helping to sustain economic vitality and ensuring the continued delivery of goods and services in the aftermath of a disaster.
- **Local and Regional Governments:** Local and regional governments work to protect the health, safety and welfare of the people and property they represent. They assess risk, develop strategies, and implement projects to reduce risk. Local and regional governments also develop community plans, regulate development, and construct and maintain infrastructure, which can greatly influence the resilience of a community.
- **State Government:** State government can promote resilience through its legislative bodies by implementing legislation that facilitates mitigation at the local level, such as laws governing local land use, development decisions and building codes. Several state departments develop hazard data at the local, regional and state level that inform emergency management decisions across the Disaster Cycle. The state also updates the Oregon NHMP, which assesses risk at state and local levels, determines statewide mitigation goals and objectives, and prioritizes mitigation actions to reduce risk. Several state departments provide technical assistance for hazard mitigation. Furthermore, the state is the conduit for federal hazard mitigation grants.
- **Federal Government:** The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) coordinates federal mitigation policy and determines the effectiveness of mitigation capabilities across the nation. FEMA provides guidance for and approves state and local Hazard Mitigation Plans and administers mitigation funding assistance. Many other federal agencies also play a role in hazard mitigation, from setting national policy to providing funding. For example, the Department of Housing and Urban Development has been integral to many risk reduction initiatives through the use of Community Block Grants.

## 1.5 How the Plan Is Organized

Each section of the plan provides specific information and resources to assist readers in understanding the hazard-specific issues facing the citizens, businesses and the environment in the five participating jurisdictions: unincorporated Multnomah County and the cities of Fairview, Gresham, Troutdale and Wood Village. Throughout this plan, these jurisdictions are referred to as the *Planning Area*.

The sections work together to create a mitigation plan that furthers the Planning Area's ability to foster a disaster-resilient community. This plan structure enables stakeholders to use the section(s) of interest to them.

- **1 Introduction** briefly defines mitigation and the purpose of an NHMP. This section also defines the Planning Area, and the roles and responsibilities of the whole community in developing a comprehensive mitigation plan.

- **2 Community Profile** describes the Planning Area's trends in geography, environment, demography, economy, housing, transportation, utilities, historic and cultural resources, critical facilities and infrastructure, land use and development, and community connectivity. Trends identified in this section indicate the people and places more likely than others to experience greater impacts from natural hazards.
- **3 Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment** describes the risk assessment process and summarizes best available hazard data. It is organized according to federal requirements for a risk assessment: hazard overview, history, probability and vulnerability. In this section, hazards and risk that are common to all jurisdictions in the Planning Area and those that are unique to each jurisdiction are described.
- **4 Mitigation Strategy** defines the mitigation vision, goals and objectives for the Planning Area. This section also includes a list of mitigation actions prioritized by each jurisdiction, and articulates how each action may be funded and implemented.
- **5 Planning Process** explains how the plan was developed, who was involved — including public participation — and how the plan will be maintained during the five-year update cycle.

## 1.6 References

Beyond the Basics. (no date). Retrieved from <http://mitigationguide.org/about-us/>

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). (2013a, May). National Mitigation Framework. Retrieved from <https://www.fema.gov/national-mitigation-framework>

FEMA. (2013b, August 19). Restrictions on Grant Obligations to State, Tribal, and Local Governments without a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-approved Mitigation Plan. Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration (FIMA) Policy. FP 306-112-1.