

## Chapter 4 - Plan Implementation and Maintenance

The ability to keep a mitigation plan active, implementable, and accountable is essential to long-term project success. Oregon's recent fire and smoke seasons have created momentum for increased coordination and continued momentum and coordination will be needed long after the plan update is completed.

However, maintaining continuity for countywide wildfire and wildfire smoke planning has proven to be difficult. The 2011 CWPP directed a Wildfire Technical Committee (WTC) that had been established before the plan was written, with maintaining the plan and leading implementation of a number of mitigation strategies. After several years, the WTC stopped meeting. Challenges — then and now— include sustaining capacity for prioritizing mitigation and identifying a central body or position that can coordinate meeting planning, information distribution, and maintain contact lists as stakeholders change through job changes and retirements.

For wildfire mitigation, there are eleven fire departments in the county managing fire risk and many other partners involved in firefighting, land management, and other focus areas of need. The fire districts serve very different communities and have varying available resources, making it difficult to scale coordination and programming as well as locate plan maintenance responsibility within any one fire district. Wildfire smoke partners are more centralized due to Multnomah County government's countywide role in environmental health and human services, but still face the same issue with identifying a position that can be funded to manage communication between partners over time.

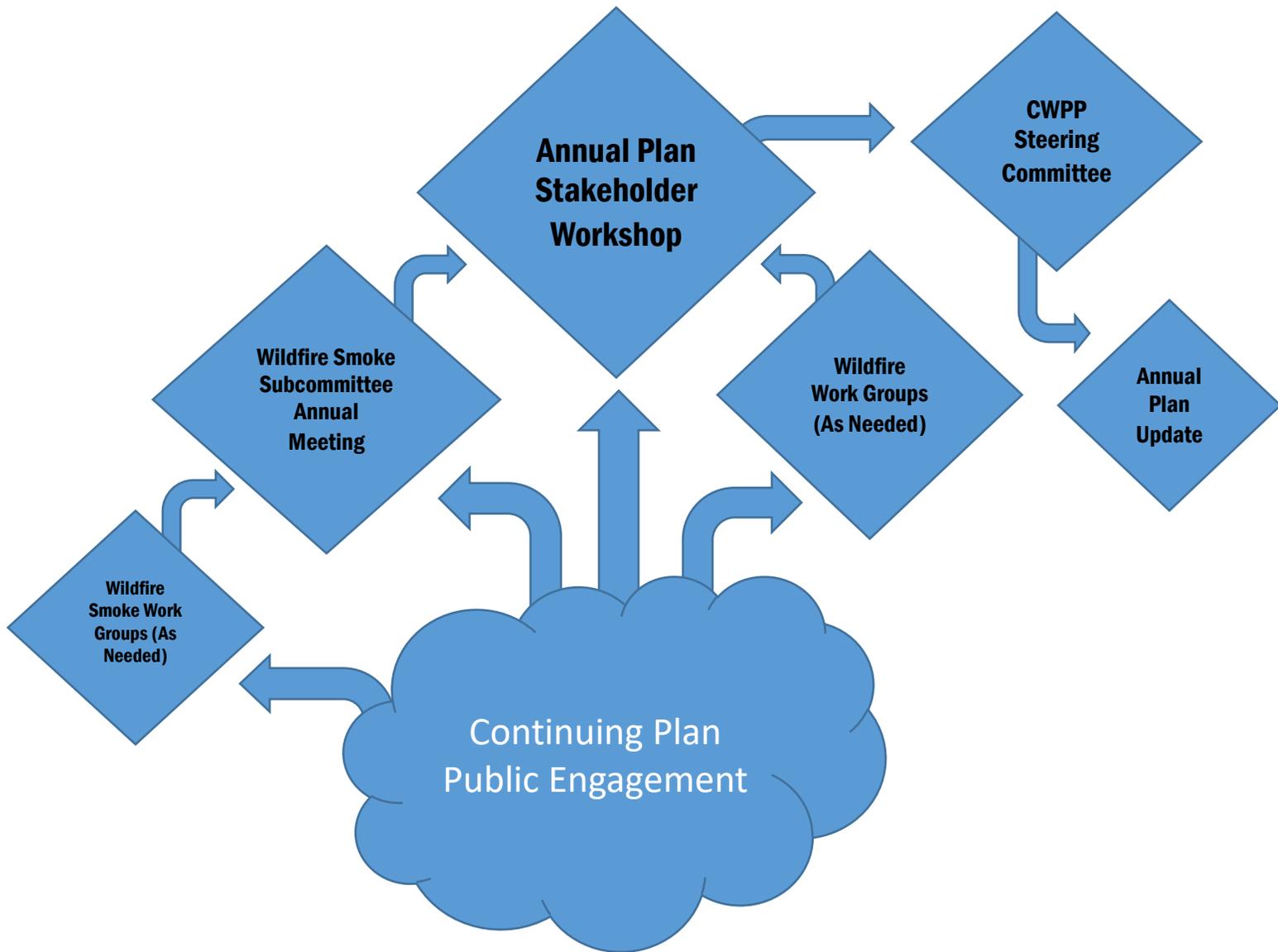
A benefit gained since the last plan is the increased prioritization of state resources for local mitigation, which can potentially be leveraged to support ongoing coordination.

### **4.1 Plan Maintenance Strategy**

The 2011 plan specified a five-year review cycle, with no firm date provided for the plan update. The goal for ongoing stakeholder coordination in this update is to:

- Hold an annual wildfire stakeholder workshop to identify updates to data, coordination goals, and mitigation strategies, and validate that information with the Steering Committee for minor annual updates to the CWPP.
- Identify countywide subcommittees or task forces to address ongoing planning needs in specific topic areas, with these groups meeting at least once per year and reporting out recommendations to the annual stakeholder workshop.
- Maintain and convene the wildfire smoke subcommittee at least annually to identify new or updated mitigation actions. More specific work groups should be created as needed, when specific topic areas become highlighted as in need of deeper analysis.
- Continue regular public engagement throughout the maintenance phase, so future updates will already have access to up-to-date public priorities and identified service gaps. Information received from public engagement activities should be presented at annual plan stakeholder workshops.

- Fully revise the plan within 10 years of this version’s adoption, with more frequent revisions developed if required by new risk data, lessons learned from future events, changed funding requirements, or shifts in federal, state, or local policy priorities.



It is recommended that the plan be continuously improved during annual reviews, so that planning momentum and coordination is maintained and the next major update will not require as much effort.

## **4.2 Policy and Strategic Planning Environment**

A critical development in wildfire and wildfire smoke mitigation implementation has been an increase in interest at the state and federal level, after a long period of highly destructive western fires. This has led to additional resources for mitigation and new policy frameworks for reducing risk. A key need for Multnomah County stakeholders going forward is to remain aware of external funding and policy priorities and to align local efforts with these priorities when possible, or to be involved in shaping policy when it does not meet local need.

A major initiative in Oregon was undertaken in 2019 with the establishment of the Governor's Council on Wildfire Response. This Council developed recommendations over nine months and released a report in November 2019 that became the basis of sweeping wildfire and wildfire smoke legislation in 2021. Many new programs are expected to initiate later in 2023, stressing the need to maintain coordination between Multnomah County stakeholders and state-level activities.

- **[Oregon Senate Bill 762 \(SB 762\)](#)**

[SB 762](#) was passed in the 2021 legislative session as a comprehensive law to attempt to address the growing risk of wildfire and wildfire smoke in Oregon. \$220 million was budgeted through the legislation for grants and other programs. After the passage of SB 762, a [Wildfire Programs Advisory Council](#) was created to recommend and implement policies to continue improvement of wildfire mitigation and response.

Overall, eleven state agencies were tasked with roles in implementation of SB 762. Some of those agency roles are provided in more detail here:

The **Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)** was tasked with developing statewide wildfire risk maps that classify Oregon lands into five categories of wildfire risk—extreme, high, moderate, low, and no risk. The maps will also identify a new Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) designation for every tax lot in the state. Lots in high or extreme risk in the revised WUI would potentially be subject to higher building code and defensible space requirements. The maps were initially released in 2022 before being rescinded and will be re-released in 2023. ODF was also tasked with creating a Certified Burn Manager Program to encourage prescribed fire and with the development of a 20-year strategic plan to prioritize large-scale landscape resilience in the face of climate change. ODF manages grant programs created through SB 762, which are noted in the grants section.

The **Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM)** is responsible for creating and maintaining the Oregon defensible space code and fire code using model language from the International Wildland Urban Interface Code. These code updates [are in final review](#) and are expected to go into effect in late 2023. OSFM is also meeting SB762 priorities with the development of the Response Ready Oregon and Fire Adapted Oregon programs. [Fire Adapted Oregon](#) includes a regional Community Risk Reduction Unit, which can provide mitigation support in education, community training, and data analysis. [Response Ready Oregon](#) also has regional representatives; they support firefighting mutual aid and modernization of wildfire response capacity.

The **Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)** [released a recommendations report in September 2022](#), identifying potential changes to state and local

land use planning programs to reduce wildfire risk. Implementation at the DLCD level is expected to take place between 2023 and 2024, and local implementation may begin by 2025. Recommendations include the prioritization of:

- inclusive community information and engagement in planning that creates wildfire adapted communities;
- assessing transportation networks for improved response and evacuation;
- amending new development land use codes for improved response and evacuation and to incorporate additional wildfire risk mitigation requirements;
- preparing for post-disaster wildfire recovery; and
- coordinating CWPPs with local comprehensive plans and codes.

SB762 provisions for wildfire smoke fall to the **Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)** and the **Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS)**. DEQ was tasked with developing a program for supporting local smoke response planning and to support their own ability to provide air quality data to communities. DHS was directed to establish a grant program for establishing emergency clean air shelters and improving air filtration systems in public buildings.

The [Oregon Public Utilities Commission \(PUC\)](#) was directed to work with power providers to begin developing wildfire protection plans and to continue to develop content requirements for those plans. The PUC coordinated rulemaking for the Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) program and also maintains work groups for risk analysis and community engagement.

- **[Oregon Wildland Urban Interface Code and Fire Code](#)**

As noted above, the [Defensible Space Code](#) is in final review as of March 2023. The code would create requirements for maintaining defensible space in areas determined to be in extreme or high-risk locations on the forthcoming ODF maps and mapped in the statewide WUI map. It is currently unknown what, if any, locations in Multnomah County will meet this threshold. Local communities can adopt selected elements of the Defensible Space Code by choice to apply higher standards.

The [Oregon Fire Code](#) was most recently updated in 2022 and serves as the state’s manual for fire prevention and safety standards for buildings. The code is based on the 2021 International Fire Code. The code does not address wildland fire, but structure measures for fire resistance and protection play a role in preventing structural fire caused by wildfire.

- **[Oregon Building Codes](#)**

Building codes are an important piece of wildfire mitigation when they can make new or rebuilt construction more resilient to wildfire ignition. Broadly, Oregon Building Codes seek to have statewide consistency and generally do not allow different jurisdictions to have stronger or weaker codes. However, there are exceptions that have been created to allow communities with particular natural hazard risks to strengthen codes beyond the statewide standard.

A new permanent rule was created in January 2019 allowing local communities to require more fire-resistant materials when the location of the construction was in an identified wildfire hazard zone. The update driven by SB 762 will make it a requirement to follow these rules when identified as being in a high-risk area under state risk maps. It is not yet known if any such areas will be mapped in Multnomah County.

- **Local Land Use Planning**

Each local jurisdiction in Multnomah County has land use and zoning codes. Local zoning classifications can include overlays that can provide provisions on land use approvals. Overlays can specifically be for the purpose of managing wildfire risk, or may be designed for other purposes and have effects on wildfire risk. These standards may restrict uses or create requirements when siting new development in a risk area. Development standards may also include preferred plant lists that can be designed to encourage drought- and fire-resistant landscapes.

- Each local jurisdiction has a comprehensive plan, which lays out long-term land use and policy statements for future development. Local comprehensive plans must be consistent with state comprehensive land use planning goals, including [Goal 7](#), which addresses natural hazard risk. Local plans address hazard risk, including from wildfire, and how that risk impacts future development plans.
- The [Columbia River Gorge Commission Management Plan](#) is an additional layer of land use planning for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. This plan was most recently updated in October 2020 and includes provisions for reducing wildfire risk and addressing risks being increased by climate change.

### **Wildfire Smoke**

- In response to the 2020 September Wildfire Smoke event, the State of Oregon passed a rule ([OAR 437-002-1081](#)) to better protect workers from wildfire smoke risk in occupational settings. Under the rule, employers must consider wildfire smoke as a workplace hazard and complete exposure assessments to monitor employees when particulate matter readings become unhealthy.

### **Regional Initiatives**

- A project funded through a 2019 Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO) grant will be to enhance the understanding of the wildland fire risk in the five-county Portland Metro region, focusing on the highest risk wildland-urban interface sites. The first phase will map the highest risk interface sites for each of the five counties and produce a report that outlines specifics of the risk in each site, including information on the vulnerable populations in the area. It will compile national best practices and evaluate gaps in current fire management, recommending next steps. The report is expected in 2023, and findings will be used to inform the next updates to the CWPP.
- Another RDPO-administered project was for a [Wildfire Smoke Regional Resilience Toolkit](#), released in 2021 in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Metro. The toolkit provides guidance for how to include wildfire smoke hazards in mitigation plans and outlines possible mitigation strategies. The toolkit was used in the development of this plan.

### 4.3 Grants

Grants are an essential part of successful mitigation implementation, because local jurisdictions often lack budget and other resources to perform all of their risk reduction priorities. As wildfire seasons have lengthened and become more intense, new grant programs have been created to fill that gap.

This list should not be considered to be fully up to date or complete. It is a starting point for identifying funding paths for mitigation implementation and should be reevaluated annually to include newly identified opportunities. Some of the grants are expired as of 2023 and may not necessarily be continuing opportunities. Those grants are included to provide a view of funding priorities that have recently existed and which may inform best practices and indicate priorities for future grants. Local wildfire mitigation stakeholders should continue to work with federal, state, and regional agencies to track new funding opportunities.

Although there has been an increase in external funding available to local jurisdictions specifically for wildfire mitigation, the short-term nature of those opportunities – compared to FEMA’s annual grants and predictable post-disaster funding – makes grant planning and management more difficult, so additional resources for grant management may also be needed.

#### **FEMA/Oregon Emergency Management administered grants**

- [Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\)](#)
  - BRIC grants are annual, nationally competitive, pre-disaster natural hazard mitigation grants that can fund wildfire and wildfire smoke mitigation projects and planning identified in Natural Hazard Mitigation Plans.
- [Hazard Mitigation Grant Program \(HMGP\)](#)
  - HMGP grants are post-disaster grants that are managed in this state by the Oregon Department of Emergency Management, with funding based on a percentage of FEMA relief funds from a declared disaster. While funds are usually prioritized for the type of declared disaster and in the counties where the disaster occurred, there is often additional money available for statewide projects of any type.
- [FEMA Fire Mitigation Assistance Grants \(FMAG\)](#)
  - FMAGs are an active disaster grant specific to wildfire mitigation, based on state requests to FEMA of a threat of major disaster from a fire or fire season. FMAG funds can be used to pay for needed response capacity, including field camps, repair and replacement tools, mobilization and demobilization activities, and equipment, material and supplies.



**FEMA**

### Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) administered grants

- Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CDWG)
  - A federal grant program funded the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to provide \$200 million a year nationally for the next five years to develop CWPPs and to implement risk reduction strategies in those plans. The program began in Fall 2022 and will be renewed each Spring. CWPPs must be less than 10 years old for project eligibility.
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  - *Firewise Community Grant (Expired)*
    - A 2022 grant that was funded through Senate Bill 762 to support fuel treatment efforts outside of Oregon Urban Growth Boundaries.
  - *Small Forestland Grant Program (Expired)*
    - A grant created through Senate Bill 762 to support small forestland owners in reducing wildfire risk, completed in 2022.
  - *Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants (VFA) (Expired)*
    - A one-time grant, also from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, for the purchase of fire shelters. The grant application deadline was in April 2023.
- Wildland-Urban Interface Grants (WUI)
  - To support communities in reducing wildfire vulnerability. Managed through local ODF field offices.

### Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) administered grants

- *Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant (Expired)*
  - A 2022 grant that was funded through Senate Bill 762 and provided funds for risk reduction projects, equipment, and staffing.
- *Oregon Fire Service Capacity Program (Expired)*
  - Another 2022 opportunity through Senate Bill 762 that provided funds for small to medium sized fire agencies in need of permanent positions for firefighters and fire prevention staff.



### Oregon Emergency Management state grants



- State Homeland Security Program (SHSP)
  - Annual homeland security grant program that provides funds via Oregon counties to limit impacts from terrorism events, but may also support catastrophic natural hazard events with connected goals.
- State Preparedness and Incident Response Equipment Grant (SPIRE)
  - A grant that has had two rounds via Oregon House Bill funding and provides for the purchase of specific equipment and vehicles available through pre-identified state procurement.

### Regional grants

- Urban Area Security Initiative Grants
  - Annual grants managed by the Regional Disaster Prevention Organization, to identify regional projects that can meet mission areas under FEMA’s National Preparedness Framework, including mitigation, community resilience, and long-term vulnerability reduction.



### **Wildfire Smoke Grants**



- *Smoke Management-Community Response Plan Grant (Expired)*
  - A 2022 grant administered by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality that funded community response plans for smoke and pilot projects promoting alternatives to open burning.
- [Wildfire Smoke in Community Buildings Grant](#)
  - A 2023 grant administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to provide funds for research and studies for the assessment, prevention, or reduction of wildfire smoke hazard in community buildings.

