

Chapter 4 – Public Comment and Planning Process

4.1 Public Comment

Gaining public input into mitigation plans is an important step in understanding the needs and priorities of the communities served, and how natural hazards can impact people disproportionately. This section is purposefully placed before the mitigation actions in order to emphasize the importance of this step in recognizing priorities.

Public participation is not a process limited to the period of time when the plan is being updated. The participating communities and districts in this plan have been gathering input continuously from constituents since 2017 through public meetings, community organization collaboration, outreach efforts, community communication and focus groups. Public input also does not end when the plan is published, as the needs of communities continue to evolve.

The Port of Portland and the Columbia Corridor Drainage Districts have each performed significant focus group efforts in the last few years to develop their priorities as part of the development of their first Natural Hazard Mitigation Plans.

All of the participating entities also distributed a short survey through social media and newsletters to gather community priorities and mitigation project ideas. For the 2017 plan, public input was primarily collected at live community events, with a table that allowed visitors to identify the hazards that they were the most concerned about. Because of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on community gatherings, public input for this process was primarily gained through the website survey. The survey asked the same question of respondents as in 2017 so that answers could be compared for changes in attitudes about hazards over the last five years.

Internet surveys can be more inclusive for those who cannot attend or do not wish to attend community events. The internet survey was also published in multiple languages, while community event tabling did not have translators. The internet survey also asked additional questions that were not part of previous NHMP tabling, as people could take longer with a survey than they might wish to while stopping by a table at a community event. The survey was also able to collect responses over a fairly long period of time, allowing those interested to pick a time of their choosing to respond.

However, internet surveys are less accessible for those who do not use the internet or who have technology accessibility barriers. The survey is not considered to be a complete method of soliciting input from the public, and additional and ongoing engagement methods are part of the action strategies in this plan.

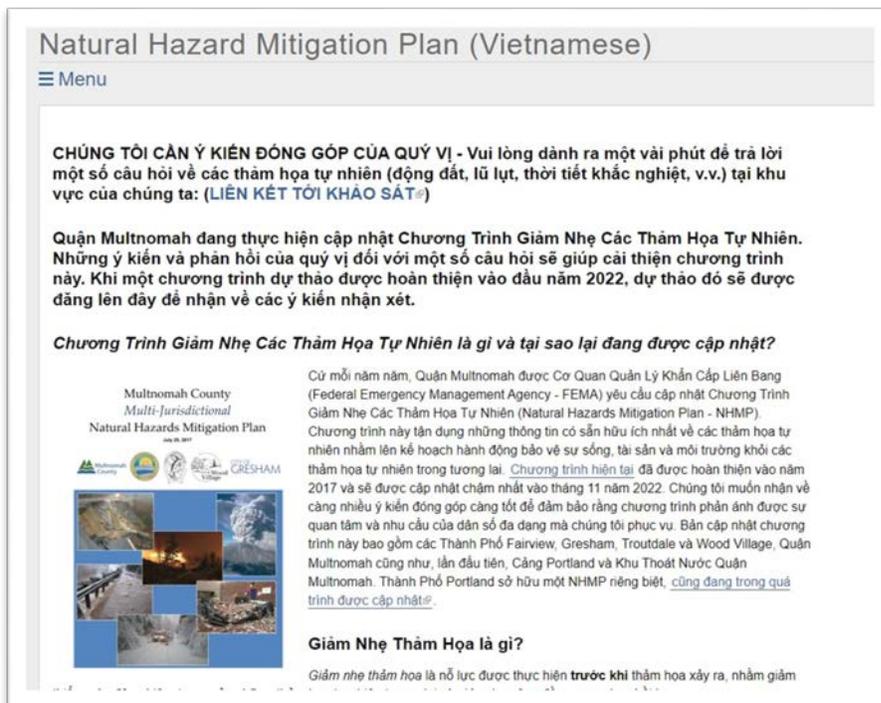


Figure 108 - [NHMP update page in Vietnamese](#), one of six language pages with natural hazard info and a link to the survey detailed below. The pages are still available for reference.

The 2022 survey was distributed in English and in the five next most widely spoken languages—Chinese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The survey was also publicized by the Multnomah County Office of Community Involvement to improve response rates in languages other than English.

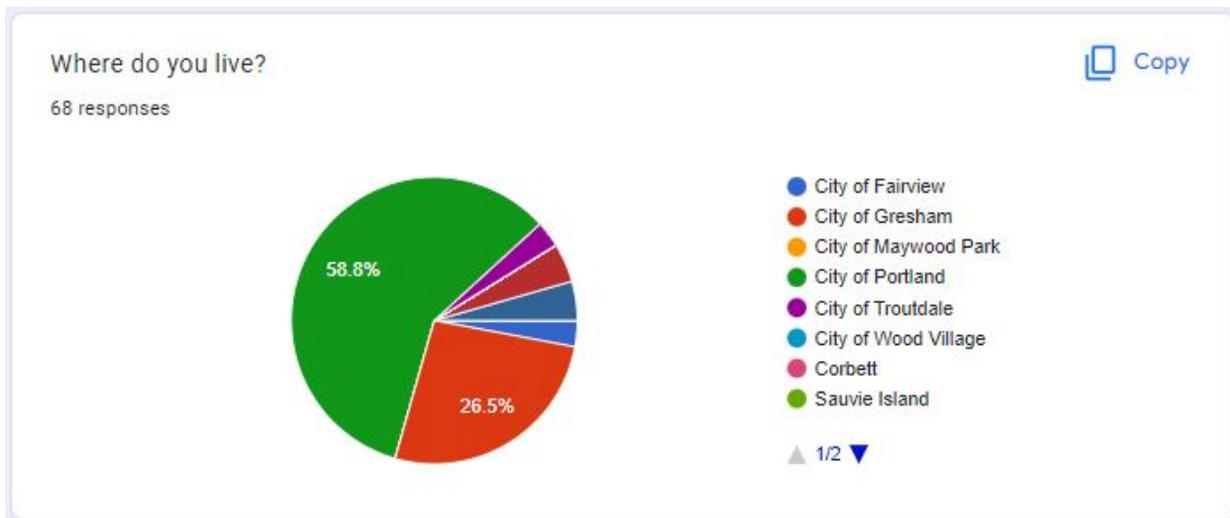


Figure 109 - English-language results from the NHMP survey.

The majority of English-language respondents identified as living in Portland (40), with a significant number also responding from Gresham (18). Other respondents selected being from unincorporated Multnomah County (3), outside of Multnomah County (3), the City of Fairview (2) and the City of Troutdale (2). Respondents from Portland may also include residents from parts of unincorporated Multnomah County with Portland addresses and constituents of the Columbia Corridor Drainage Districts and the Port of Portland.

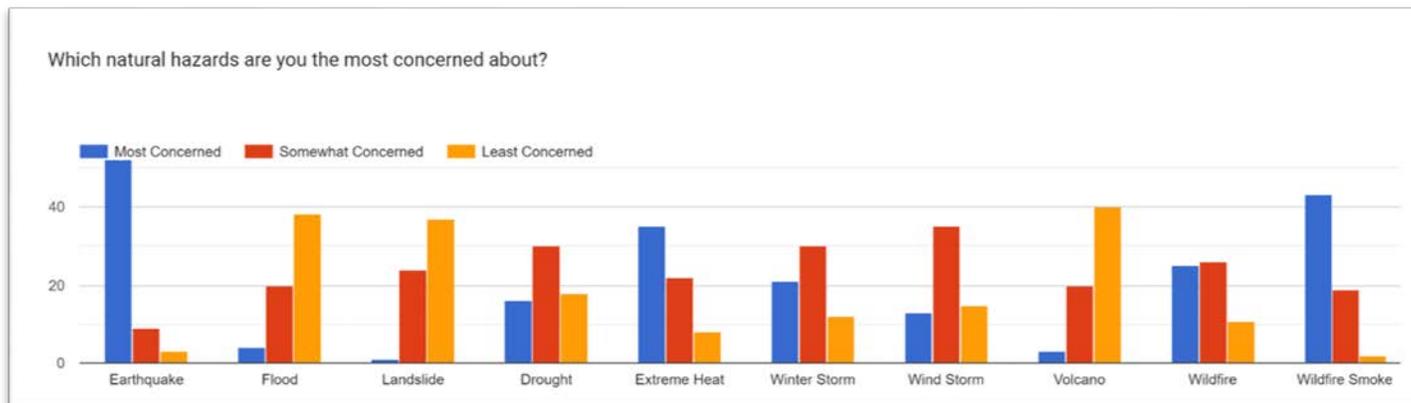


Figure 110 - English-language results from the NHMP survey.

English-language responses to the survey indicated continuing highest concern about earthquakes, with wildfire smoke and extreme heat rated as the next highest hazards of concern. The data collected in the 2017 plan had severe weather as one of the lowest hazards of concern, indicating that the extreme climate events of the last five years have significantly heightened public risk perception. This increased risk perception was also reflected in the suggested mitigation priorities provided by respondents.

Other hazards that impact Multnomah County on a more regional scale—drought, winter storm, windstorm and wildfire—were the next most concerning hazards. Flood, landslide, and volcano were of lowest concern, which perhaps reflects that these hazards are the most localized by geography and topography. Flood can happen regionally, but has not occurred at that scale since 1996, so these results may indicate that awareness of flood risk has become undervalued, especially considering that climate impacts are expected to increase the intensity of future floods.

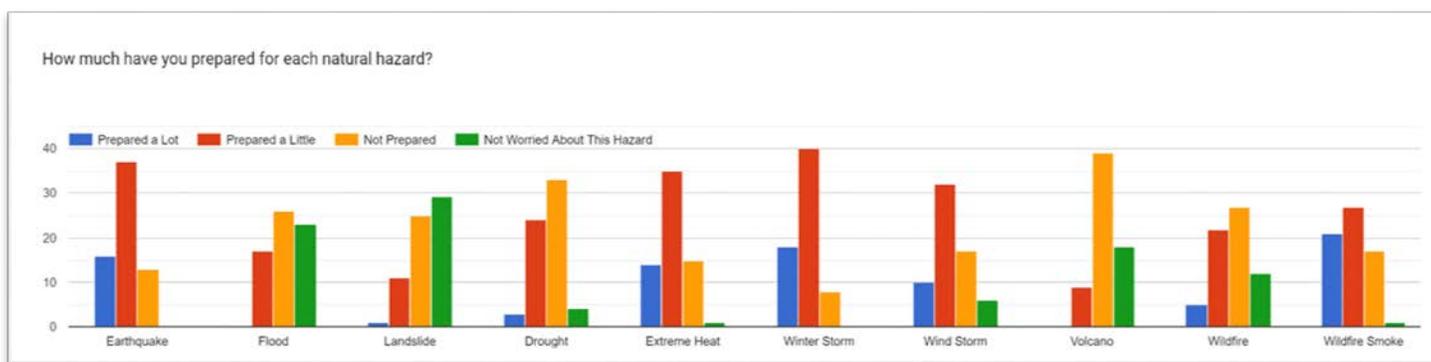


Figure 111 - English-language results from the NHMP survey.

The survey also asked how much people had prepared for each hazard, to get a further sense of risk perception and to cross-analyze which hazards are hardest for residents to feel prepared for.

Climate hazards were high on the list for preparation, showing the awareness of risk and that the preparation efforts for these hazards may be less costly and difficult to take on, such as adding air conditioning units, preparing homemade air filters, and low-barrier home weatherization. Preparation for earthquakes is not as complete compared to the high level of concern. This likely indicates a greater difficulty in preparing enough to feel safe—actions such as retrofitting homes and being able to provide long-term water and sanitation. The extreme and long-term impacts of a large earthquake may fundamentally make it difficult for residents to feel prepared.

Responses in languages other than English were provided in Russian (8) and Spanish (1).

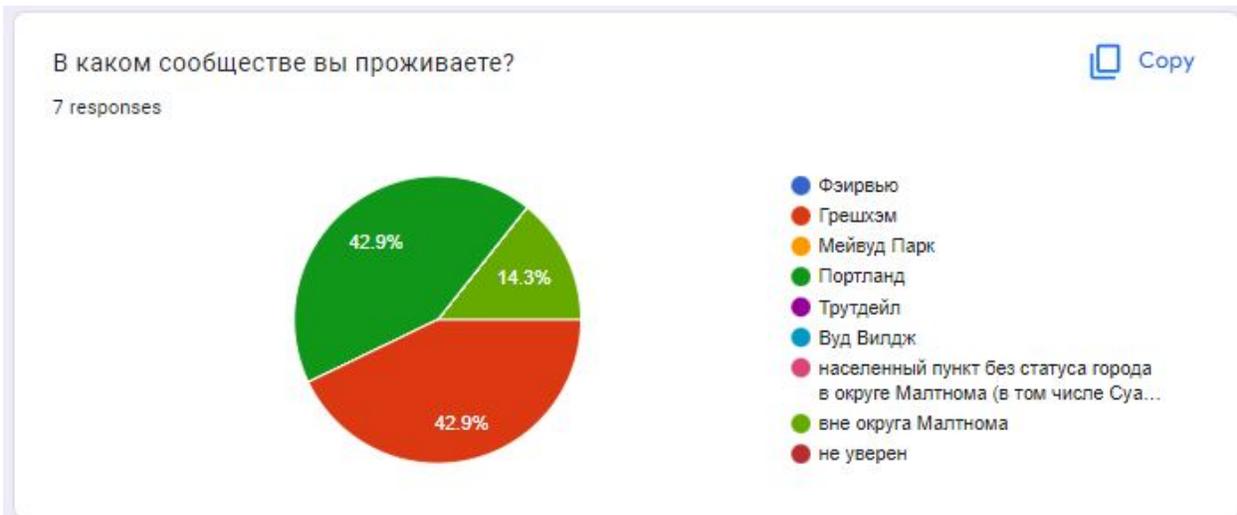


Figure 112 - Russian-language results from the NHMP survey.

Responses in Russian were evenly split between Portland (dark green) and Gresham (red), with one response from outside Multnomah County. Russian language respondents identified extreme heat and wildfire and wildfire smoke as of the most concern, and indicated less concern than English-language respondents around earthquake.

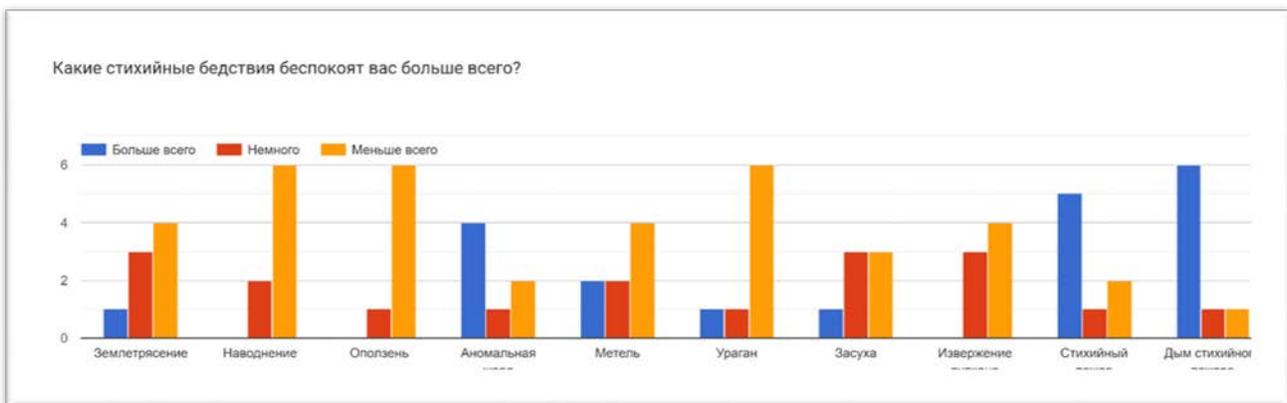


Figure 114 - Chart showing Russian language responses to the question of which hazards are you the most concerned about. Categories are in the same order as in the English-language version shown on the previous page.

The survey also asked respondents how money and resources could best be used to keep the community safe from natural disasters. Answers are printed in full in [Annex E](#), but have been roughly grouped into categories here.

- The most commonly promoted strategy was to **provide personal disaster safety gear to residents**, especially those with less financial resources. Mentioned items included air conditioning units, portable air filters, evacuation go kits, earthquake post-disaster supplies, and informational resource booklets.
- A number of respondents asked for increased efforts to **financially support home retrofits** for earthquakes and weatherization. Providing subsidies for those homeowners who have faced historic housing discrimination was mentioned.
- **Increasing the resilience of infrastructure and critical facilities** was also a high priority, with bridges and reservoirs especially mentioned. Mitigating risk from earthquake to the Critical Energy Infrastructure Hub was also a top priority. Concern over water supplies after a major earthquake was frequently noted.
- Other suggestions focused on pre- and post-disaster actions for catastrophic disaster were the development of **supply cache locations, expanded and more accessible evacuation plans and evacuation exercises/events**.
- **Reducing the risk of wildfire through more intensive forest management**, including the use of controlled burning, was mentioned by multiple respondents.
- **Community building** was cited by multiple respondents as a strategy for increasing neighborhood resilience, including more use of local resources such as the City of Portland's Neighborhood Emergency Teams (NETs).
- **Continuing and increased emergency sheltering** those most at risk from extreme weather events was supported.
- Other suggestions related to climate disasters were to **increase tree planting and preserve more large trees**.

Port of Portland Focused Engagement

The Port of Portland undertook focused engagement related to earthquake mitigation and preparedness, in collaboration with a research team from the Portland State University School of Social Work. This engagement was to complete an analysis of community concerns and interests with respect to the role the Portland International Airport plays in emergency earthquake response and recovery. Specifically, the engagement sought to learn about the needs of individuals and groups most likely to be directly affected by a prolonged closure of the airport, based on demographic information about those working in major employment sectors in the region.

The research findings were that:

- A fast earthquake recovery is more important than other factors, particularly for people of color.
- Resuming airport service, even when solely emergency services, is symbolically important because it provides a sense of hope.

These findings indicate that using mitigation to reduce vulnerability to earthquakes in a way that maintains the ability to run operations at PDX is essential.

The Port also hosted a discussion about natural hazard risks at the public PDX Community Advisory Committee meeting on January 26, 2022. Priorities raised included:

- Mitigating harm to natural resources
- Having a coordinated plan across facilities to ensure the greatest benefit from investment
- Having continuous and independent power provision
- Using a climate-action lens in decision making
- Determining how the Port will serve the surrounding community and those at the airport, including understanding communication and preparedness limitations and barriers for some served communities.

Multnomah County Drainage District Focused Engagement

During Fall 2021, Multnomah County Drainage District staff created an online and mail survey to assess natural hazard concerns and priorities of people who work, live, or own property within all four of the existing drainage districts included in this plan. The survey was promoted in the district’s newsletter and at District Board and landowner meetings.

The survey received 231 responses with the following key themes emerging:

- Participants recommended activities related to levee improvements, monitoring and maintenance as approaches to flood mitigation.
- Participants shared concerns about the impacts that camps of unsheltered residents have on the integrity and maintenance ability of flood infrastructure.
- Participants recommended that the drainage district engage in better education and outreach related to flood risk and general emergency preparedness.

Mitigation actions aligned with these engagement priorities are noted as such in the CCDD chapter.

Multnomah County Community Involvement Committee

The [Community Involvement Committee \(CIC\)](#) is Multnomah County government’s advisory body for community engagement and involvement. The CIC makes direct recommendations to the Multnomah County Office of Community Involvement and County Leadership on topics relating to the removal of barriers to civic participation.



Multnomah County Emergency Management staff were invited to a committee meeting in January 2022 to discuss mitigation and response efforts for severe weather hazards. The committee also met with representatives from Multnomah County Sustainability, Health, Human Services, and Communications and the Joint Office of Homeless Services, and created a set of recommendations for actions to lessen the harm from extreme weather events.

The recommendations made are to:

- Resource the most vulnerable members of our community around severe weather events.
- Continue expanding and strengthening relationships with the community, including mutual aid organizations and school districts.
- Continue to assess the efficacy and accessibility of warming and cooling shelters for our most vulnerable community members.
- Increase collaboration with other jurisdictions to support long term solutions for community resilience.
- Increase collaboration with other jurisdictions to resource community members to shelter in place during an extreme weather event.

Each topic includes specific approaches and further implementation recommendations. The recommendations are available [online](#).

4.2 Steering Committee and Stakeholders

The development of this plan was guided by stakeholders representing all of the participating entities, with multiple members from larger communities and an advisory and coordinating member from the City of Portland. In some cases, there was change of stakeholders during the plan process—those no longer with jurisdictions or districts are included to note their contributions to this effort.

Steering committee members provided specific information and mitigation strategies for their jurisdictions, through internal processes. Steering committee meetings were held with all participating members to develop shared plan content and collaborate on jurisdictional mitigation approaches.

Chapter 4 – Public Comment and Planning Process

City of Fairview

- Nolan Young, City Manager
- Allan Berry, Public Works Director

City of Gresham

- Kelle Landavazo, Emergency Manager
- Shannon Martin, Solid Waste and Recycling Manager
- Tina Núñez-Osterink, Natural Resources and Parks Planner
- Robin Pederson, Utility Resilience Coordinator
- Michael Whiteley, Water Division Manager

City of Portland

- Jonna Papaefthimiou, Chief Resilience Officer

City of Troutdale

- Arini Farrell, Assistant Planner
- Ryan Kruger, Assistant Planner
- Alex Lopez, Assistant Planner

City of Wood Village

- John Niyama, Public Works Director

Columbia Corridor Drainage Districts

- Matt Burlin, Emergency Manager and Project Planner (Multnomah County Drainage District)
- Brian Eberhardt, Emergency Manager and Project Planner (Multnomah County Drainage District)
- Colin Rowan, Deputy Director (Multnomah County Drainage District)

Port of Portland

- Alex Howard, Senior Policy Development Manager

Multnomah County

- Jenny Carver, Human Services Emergency Manager
- Kevin Cook, Senior Land Use Planner
- Lisa Corbly, Emergency Management Planning Division Chief
- Mark Dorin, Facilities Specialist
- Tina Lefebvre, Transportation Division
- David Lentzner, Emergency Management Planner

Additional support and content were provided by:

- Beth Britell, Multnomah County Bridges
- Ashley Carroll, Multnomah County Disability Resource Specialist
- Celeste Duvall, Emergency Manager, Joint Office of Homeless Services
- Arini Farrell, Multnomah County Emergency Management Planner

- Ryan Linskey, Project Manager, Multnomah County Health Department
- Megan Neill, Engineering Services Manager, Multnomah County Transportation
- Mike Pullen, Multnomah County Communications Office

Content for the chapter on wildfire and wildfire smoke was provided by the many stakeholders of the ongoing update to the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

4.2.1 Steering Committee Meetings

All meetings listed were intended for all participating jurisdictions. This list does not include internal content meetings held stakeholders or individual content development meetings. When members were not able to attend a meeting, individual discussions were arranged to share meeting information.

2020

- **December 14 – Final 2017 NHMP Maintenance Meeting**

2021

- **February 5 – Plan Update Kickoff**
 - **Introduction/News**
 - **Project Timeline**
 - **Review of Mission, Goals, Objectives**
 - What has been successful about the current plan?
 - What would make the plan more useful for your jurisdiction/organization?
 - What are the key outcomes for this revision?
 - What new data/information is needed to make the plan more relevant?
 - How do we make the plan more equitable?
 - **Plan Revision Organization**
 - Decision Making Rules
 - Including Special Districts
 - Public Comment Strategy
 - [44 CFR § 201.6 \(b\) \(1\)](#)
 - Additional Stakeholders
 - CWPP Integration
 - Plan Structure
 - Meeting Scheduling
 - Contingency Planning
 - Adoption
 - **Next Steps**
 - Next Meeting
 - Collecting information
 - Critical Facilities Review
 - Hazard Mapping
 - Event Histories
 - Development Trend Data
 - GIS Mapping
 - Photos (disasters, mitigation projects)
 - Other Plans, Studies, Technical Reports

- **May 25 – Equity Goals Discussion**
 - **Introduction**
 - Applying equity goals to NHMP planning process and completed plan
 - **Meeting Goal**
 - How can the plan be maintained/improved to meet your jurisdiction/district equity goals?
 - What in the plan should be defined collectively and what should be defined individually?
 - What are the next steps?
 - **Current Plan Elements (2017)**
 - **Vision, Goals and Objectives**
 - **Community Profile**
 - **Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment**
 - **Public Engagement**
 - **Mitigation Actions**
 - **Round Table Discussion**
 - **Next Steps**

- **June 23 – Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment Review**
 - **Plan Overview**
 - Introductions
 - Project Timeline
 - Plan Structure
 - **Equitable Hazard Planning**
 - Equity Strategy
 - Mapping and Data
 - Public Engagement
 - **Hazard Assessments**
 - Risk Rankings Exercise
 - Hazard Characterization Update
 - **Next Steps**
 - Future Meetings
 - Parking Lot Items
 - Conclusion

- **November 2 – External/Regional Stakeholder Input Workshop**
 - **Introductions**
 - **NHMP Update Process and Mitigation Action Development Process**
 - **NHMP Stakeholders Report**
 - What are your current priorities for reducing risk from future natural hazards events? What has happened in your community/district in the last five years that is determining those priorities?*
 - City of Gresham

- City of Fairview
- City of Troutdale
- City of Wood Village
- Port of Portland
- Multnomah County Drainage District
- Multnomah County

- **Regional/External Stakeholders Report**
 - What do you see as the biggest concerns from natural hazards for your communities/constituents?*
 - City of Portland
 - Tri-Met
 - Home Forward
 - NAACP Environmental Justice Committee
 - Portland Harbor Community Coalition
 - Metro
 - Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office

- **Shared Mitigation Action Brainstorm Exercise**

- **Brainstorm Review and Discussion**

2022

- **May 3 – Mitigation Action Workshop**
 - **Welcome, Introductions**
 - **Project Status**
 - **Mitigation Strategy Overview**
 - **Group Discussion – Mitigation Strategies**
 - All-Hazard Strategies
 - Earthquake
 - Severe Weather
 - Flood
 - Wildfire and Wildfire Smoke
 - Landslide
 - Volcano
 - Adjourn

- **August 24 – Mitigation Action and Plan Adoption Discussion**
 - **Introductions and Meeting Goal**
 - **Revised Plan Update Timeline**
 - **Plan Adoption Discussion**
 - **Open Questions**
 - **Finalize Maintenance Plan**
 - **Mitigation Action Discussion**
 - Breakout Discussions
 - Large Group Discussion
 - **Next Steps and Close**

4.2.2 External Stakeholder Input

Input from external stakeholders was received through multiple methods. Most significantly, the Steering Committee included a representative from the City of Portland. Portland maintains their own plan, but is an essential partner for the Special Districts in this plan, works closely on initiatives with Multnomah County, and has additional services or infrastructure (such as the Bull Run Reservoir) with importance to residents outside Portland itself.

A meeting was held on November 2, 2021 to share information and mitigation planning with other partners, including those representing organizations supporting affordable housing, regional transit, emergency services and environmental justice.

Regional coordination was maintained by the participation of Multnomah County Emergency Management in a regional mitigation/recovery sub-committee to the REMTEC (Emergency Managers Work Group) committee of the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO). RDPO supports work over five Portland-area counties. The Mitigation/Recovery Subcommittee provides a venue for county or city planners to convene and share information about mitigation planning work, including NHMP updates.

The inclusion of the Columbia Corridor Drainage Districts and Port of Portland as partners in this update has created an important enhancement of priority and coordination with key lifelines. These districts represent some of the most important infrastructure in Multnomah County for natural hazard mitigation or recovery.

4.3 Continuing Plan Comment and Further Plan Updates

After this plan is formally adopted it enters a period of maintenance, the timespan before the next required update in five years.

As part of a transition of the NHMP to become a more living document and because of some limitations of soliciting input during the plan revision process due to COVID-19 - public and additional stakeholder comment will continue to be sought during the maintenance period.

Revisions will be considered annually, or comments will be maintained throughout the maintenance period to be used in the next update. Ideally, public comment will be prioritized outside of the update process itself, so that it is not bound by update timelines.

Steering committee meetings will be held twice per year during the plan maintenance period. Along with the incorporation of new public or external stakeholder input, these meetings will discuss:

- Funding opportunities
- New risk or vulnerability data
- Mitigation action progress and mitigation successes
- Ongoing public engagement outcomes
- Elected official priorities
- Lessons learned
- Plan update priorities
- Shared project work and new mitigation action identification