

Plan Implementation & Maintenance

The section details the formal process that will ensure that Wasco County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan remains an active and relevant document. The plan implementation and maintenance process includes a schedule for monitoring and evaluating the Plan annually as well as producing an updated plan every five years. This section also includes an explanation of how the County intends to incorporate the mitigation strategies outlined in this Plan into existing planning mechanisms and programs such as the County comprehensive land use planning process, capital improvement planning process, and building codes enforcement and implementation. Finally, this section describes how the County will integrate public participation throughout the plan maintenance and implementation process.

Implementing the Plan

After the Plan is locally reviewed and deemed complete Wasco County Planning & Development will be responsible for submitting it to the State Hazard Mitigation Officer at Oregon Emergency Management. Oregon Emergency Management will then submit the Plan to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA–Region X) for review. This review will address the federal criteria outlined in FEMA Interim Final Rule 44 CFR Part 201. Upon acceptance by FEMA the County will adopt the plan via resolution. At that point the County will gain eligibility for the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program, the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds, and Flood Mitigation Assistance program funds.

Co-Conveners

Wasco County Planning & Development and Wasco County Emergency Management shall serve as co-conveners of this plan. The agencies shall split responsibilities with (1) Emergency Management coordinating emergency service related aspects of the plan and its projects; and (2) Planning & Development coordinating documentation, GIS and land use related aspects.

Emergency Services Convener: Wasco County Emergency Management

The County's Emergency Management system strives to coordinate activities to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from major emergencies or disasters. As the agency responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the mitigation plan, Wasco County Emergency Management shall:

- Serve as a communication conduit between the Steering Committee, County Court, local stakeholders, and State/Federal government agencies; and
- Identify emergency management related funding sources for natural hazard mitigation projects.

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Land Use Convener: Wasco County Planning & Development

The agency administers and enforces land use planning regulations for the County. Wasco County Planning & Development strives to protect life, property, the environment, and economic health of the County by (1) coordinating private development with the provision of public services and infrastructure and (2) determining how and where development occurs in a way that preserves and enhances the beauty, livability and economy of Wasco County for future generations. As the agency responsible for the implementation and maintenance of the mitigation plan, Wasco County Planning & Development shall:

- Coordinate Steering Committee meeting dates, times, locations, agendas, and member notification;
- Document outcomes of Committee meetings;
- Incorporate, maintain, and update Wasco County's natural hazards risk GIS data elements; and
- Utilize the Risk Assessment as a tool for prioritizing proposed natural hazard risk reduction projects.

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Coordinating Body

The Steering Committee will serve as the coordinating body for the mitigation plan. The roles and responsibilities of the coordinating body include:

- Serving as the local evaluation committee for funding programs such as Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program, the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds, and Flood Mitigation Assistance program funds;
- Prioritizing and recommending funding for natural hazard risk reduction projects;
- Documenting successes and lessons learned;
- Evaluating and updating the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan in accordance with the prescribed maintenance schedule; and
- Developing and coordinating ad hoc and/or standing subcommittees as needed.

Members

The following organizations were represented and served on the Steering Committee during the development of the Wasco County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan: The Wasco County Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from eight County area organizations:

Table 5.1 Steering Committee Members

NAME	TITLE	ORGANIZATION
Dan Boldt	Director	Wasco County Public Works
Mike Davidson	Emergency Manager	Wasco County Emergency Management
Todd Cornett	Director	Wasco County Planning & Development
Jennifer Clark	Project Coordinator	Wasco County SWCD
Richard Gassman	Senior Planner	City of The Dalles
Sherry Holliday	County Commissioner	Wasco County Court
Stu Nagle	Fire Marshall	Mid-Columbia Fire & Rescue
Hannah Settje	District Manager	Red Cross

To make the coordination and review of Wasco County Hazard Mitigation Plan as broad and useful as possible, the Steering Committee will engage additional stakeholders and other relevant hazard mitigation organizations and agencies to implement the identified action items.

The Steering Committee will meet quarterly to review the plan and ensure that appropriate County agencies are actively pursuing grant funding for targeted mitigation activities.

Implementation through Existing Programs

The Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan includes a range of action items that, when implemented, will reduce loss from hazard events in the County. Within the plan, FEMA requires the identification of existing programs that might be used to implement these action items. Wasco County currently addresses statewide planning goals and legislative requirements through its comprehensive land use plan, capital improvement plans, mandated standards and building codes. To the extent possible, Wasco County will work to incorporate the recommended mitigation action items into existing programs and procedures.

Many of the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan's recommendations are consistent with the goals and objectives of the County's existing plans and policies. Where possible, Wasco County should implement the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan's recommended actions through existing plans and policies. Plans and policies already in existence have support from local residents, businesses, and policy makers. Many land-use, comprehensive, and strategic plans get updated regularly, and can adapt easily to changing conditions and needs.¹ Implementing the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan's action items through such plans and policies increases their likelihood of being supported and implemented.

Examples of plans, programs or agencies that may be used to implement mitigation activities include:

- Community Wildfire Protection Plan
- Wasco County Budget
- Wasco County Economic Development Action Plan
- Wasco County Comprehensive Land Use Plan
- Soil & Water Conservation District
- Mid-Columbia Council of Governments

For additional examples of plans, programs or agencies that may be used to implement mitigation activities, please refer to Appendix E: Existing Plans & Programs

Plan Maintenance

Plan maintenance is a critical component of the natural hazard mitigation plan. Proper maintenance of the plan will ensure that this plan will maximize the County's efforts to reduce the risks posed by natural hazards. This section was developed by the University of Oregon's Oregon Natural Hazards Workgroup and includes a process to ensure that a regular review and update of the plan occurs. The steering committee and local staff will be responsible for implementing this process in addition to maintaining and updating the plan through a series of meetings outlined in the maintenance schedule below.

Semi-Annual Meeting

The Committee will meet on a semi-annual basis to:

- Review existing action items to determine appropriateness for funding;

- Identify issues that may not have been identified when the plan was developed; and
- Prioritize potential mitigation projects using the methodology described below.

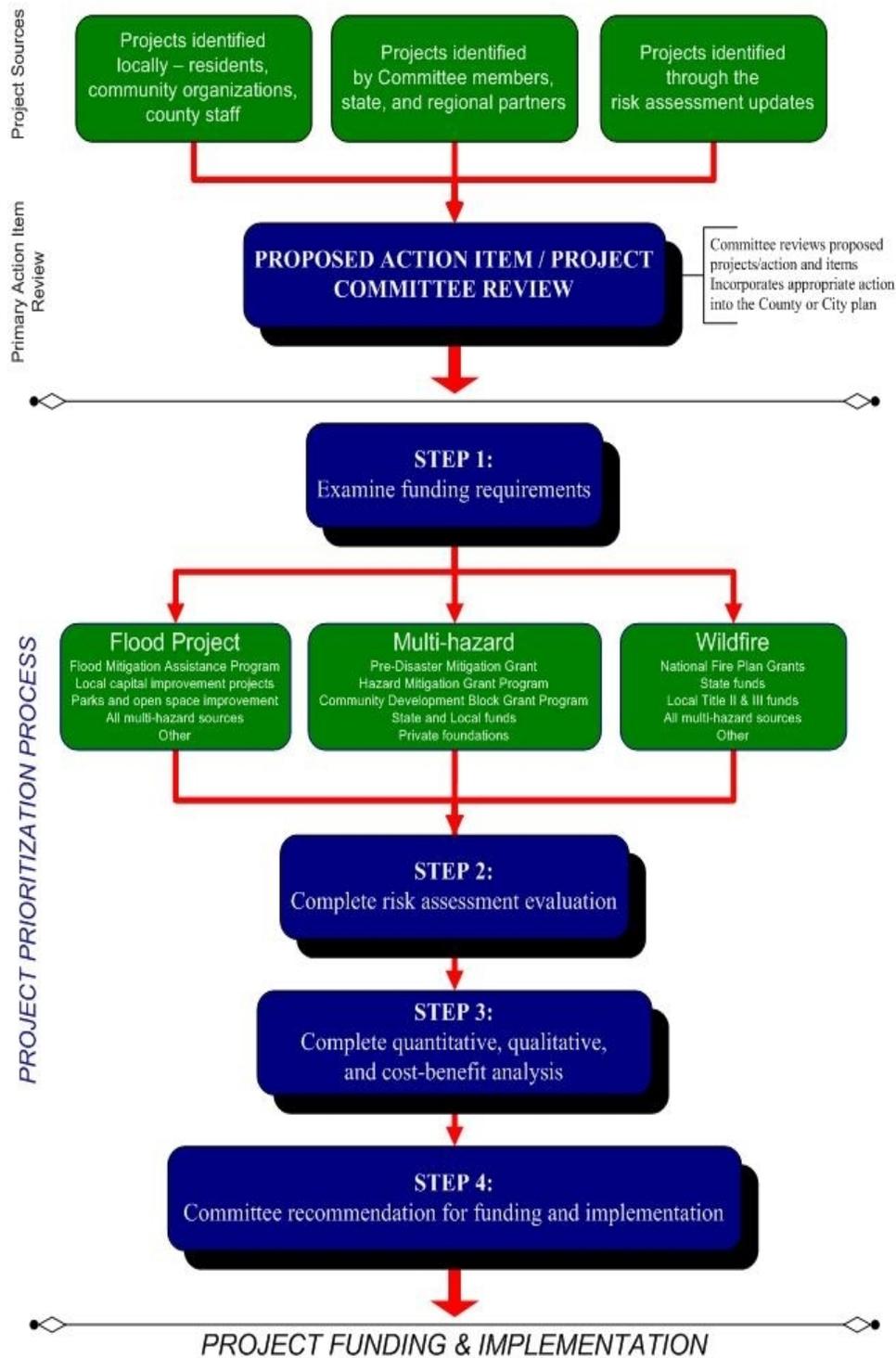
The co-conveners will be responsible for documenting the outcome of the semi-annual meetings. The process the Committee will use to prioritize mitigation projects is detailed in the section below.

Project Prioritization Process

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA2K) via the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program requires that County identify a process for prioritizing potential actions. Potential mitigation activities will often come from a variety of sources; therefore, the project prioritization process needs to be flexible. Projects may be identified by committee members, local government staff, other planning documents, or the risk assessment.

Depending on the potential project's intent and implementation methods, several funding sources may be appropriate. Examples of mitigation funding sources include, but are not limited to: FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation competitive grant program (PDM), Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program, National Fire Plan (NFP), Title II funds, Title III funds, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), local general funds, and private foundations. Some of these examples are used in the figure 5.1 on the next page to illustrate the project development and prioritization process.

Figure 5.1: Project Prioritization Process Overview



Step 1: Examine funding requirements

The Steering Committee will identify how best to implement individual actions into the appropriate existing plan, policy, or program. The committee will examine the selected funding stream's requirements to ensure that the mitigation activity would be eligible through the funding source. The Committee may consult with the funding entity, Oregon Emergency Management, or other appropriate state or regional organization about the project's eligibility.

Step 2: Complete Risk Assessment Evaluation

The second step in prioritizing the plan's action items was to examine which hazards they are associated with and where these hazards rank in terms of community risk. The committee will determine whether or not the plan's risk assessment supports the implementation of the mitigation activity. This determination will be based on the location of the potential activity and the proximity to known hazard areas, historic hazard occurrence, and the probability of future occurrence documented in the Plan. To rank the hazards, community's natural hazard risk assessment was utilized. This risk assessment identified various hazards that may threaten community infrastructure and population in a range from:

- Low
- Moderate
- High

The rank ordering of hazards by risk follows:

1. Wildfire
2. Flood
3. Drought
4. Severe Storm
5. Landslide
6. Earthquake
7. Volcanic

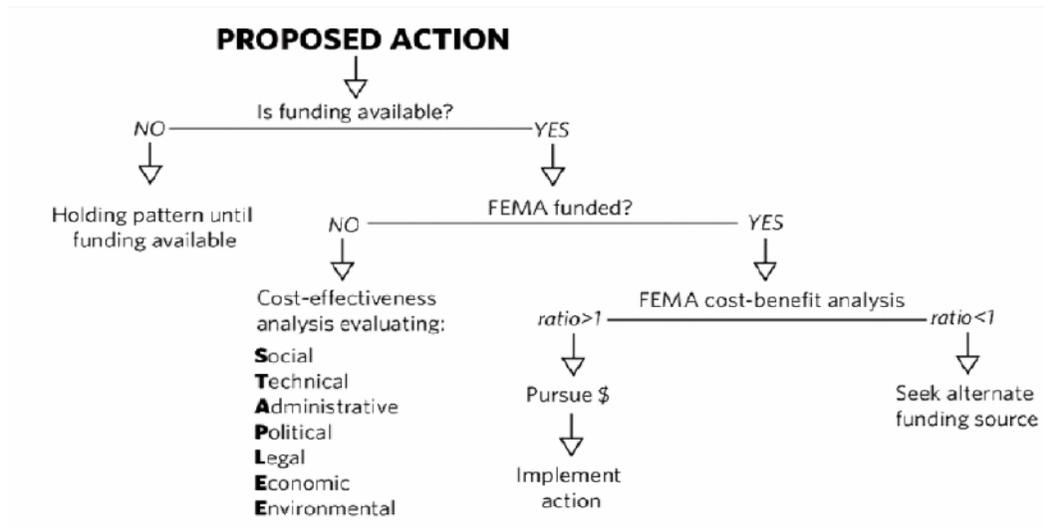
Each of the action items in the plan addresses risk from one or more of these hazards.

Step 3: Complete Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment, and Economic Analysis

The third step is to identify the costs and benefits associated with natural hazard mitigation strategies, measures, or projects. Two categories of analysis that are used in this step are: (1) benefit/cost analysis, and (2) cost-effectiveness analysis. Conducting benefit/cost analysis for a mitigation activity can assist communities in determining whether a project is worth

undertaking now, in order to avoid disaster-related damages later. Cost-effectiveness analysis evaluates how best to spend a given amount of money to achieve a specific goal. Determining the economic feasibility of mitigating natural hazards can provide decision makers with an understanding of the potential benefits and costs of an activity, as well as a basis upon which to compare alternative projects. Figure 5.2 shows decision criteria for selecting the method of analysis.

Figure 5.2: Project Prioritization Process Overview



Source: Community Service Center's Oregon Natural Hazards Workgroup at the University of Oregon, 2006.

If the activity requires federal funding for a structural project, the Committee will use a Federal Emergency Management Agency - approved cost-benefit analysis tool to evaluate the appropriateness of the activity. A project must have a benefit cost ratio of greater than one in order to be eligible for FEMA grant funding.

For non-federally funded or nonstructural projects, a qualitative assessment will be completed to determine the project's cost effectiveness. The committee will use a multivariable assessment technique called STAPLE/E to prioritize these actions. STAPLE/E stands for Social, Technical, Administrative, Political, Legal, Economic, and Environmental. Assessing projects based upon these seven variables can help define a project's qualitative cost effectiveness. The STAPLE/E technique has been tailored for natural hazard action item prioritization by the University of Oregon's Oregon Natural Hazards Workgroup. See Appendix D: Economic Analysis of Natural Hazard Mitigation Projects for a description of the STAPLE/E evaluation methodology.

Step 4: Committee recommendation

Based on the steps above, the committee will recommend whether or not the mitigation activity should be moved forward. If the committee decides to move forward with the action, the coordinating organization designated for the activity will be responsible for taking further action and documenting success upon project completion. The Committee will convene a meeting to review the issues surrounding grant applications and shared knowledge and or resources. This process will afford greater coordination and less competition for limited funds.

The Committee and the community's leadership have the option to implement any of the action items at any time, (regardless of the prioritized order). This allows the committee to consider mitigation strategies as new opportunities arise, such as funding for action items that may not be of highest priority. This methodology is used by the Committee to initially prioritize the plan's action items, in addition to maintaining the action list during annual review and update.

Annual Meeting

The steering committee will meet annually to review updates of the Risk Assessment data and findings, discuss methods of continued public involvement, and document successes and lessons learned based on actions that were accomplished during the past year. The convener will be responsible for documenting the outcomes of the annual meeting.

The plan's format allows the County to review and update sections when new data becomes available. New data can be easily incorporated, resulting in a natural hazards mitigation plan that remains current and relevant to Wasco County.

Five-Year Review of Plan

This plan will be updated every five years in accordance with the update schedule outlined in the DMA2K. During this plan update, the following questions should be asked to determine what actions are necessary to update the plan. The convener will be responsible for convening the Committee to address the questions outlined below.

- Are the plan goals still applicable?
- Do the plan's priorities align with State priorities?
- Are there new partners that should be brought to the table?
- Are there new local, regional, state, or federal policies influencing natural hazards that should be addressed?
- Has the community successfully implemented any mitigation activities since the plan was last updated?

- Have new issues or problems related to hazards been identified in the community?
- Do existing actions need to be reprioritized for implementation?
- Are the actions still appropriate given current resources?
- Have there been any changes in development patterns that could influence the effects of hazards?
- Have there been any significant changes in the community's demographics that could influence the effects of hazards?
- Are there new studies or data available that would enhance the risk assessment?
- Has the community been affected by any disasters? Did the plan accurately address the impacts of this event?

The questions above will help the committee determine what components of the mitigation plan need updating. The Committee will be responsible for updating any deficiencies found in the plan based on the questions above.

Continued Public Involvement & Participation

Wasco County is dedicated to involving the public directly in the continual reshaping and updating of the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan. Although members of the Steering Committee represent the public to some extent, the public will also have the opportunity to provide feedback about the Plan.

During plan development, public participation was incorporated into every stage of the plan development process. To ensure continued public engagement and support of this plan, Wasco County shall invite the public to participate in future plan developments in the following ways:

- Post plan on Wasco County Planning & Development Website for comment (<http://co.wasco.or.us/planning/planhome.html>);
- Post notices that invite public to participate in one of the semi-annual Steering Committee meetings
- Hold community hazard workshops
- Implement various other outreach activities documented in this plan (see Section IV: Mission, Goals & Action Items)

ⁱ Burby, Raymond J., ed. 1998. Cooperating with Nature: Confronting Natural Hazards with Land-Use Planning for Sustainable Communities.