

Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan 2024 Annual Progress Report Thurston County, WA

Reporting Period: October 1, 2023 - September 30, 2024

Annual Review Meeting: September 24, 2024.

Background

The Thurston County Board of Commissioners adopted the Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan (FHMP) on October 3, 2017, as a strategy to reduce flood impacts in unincorporated Thurston County. The FHMP outlines steps for organizing resources, assessing flood risks, setting goals and objectives, exploring mitigation alternatives, and developing an action plan to address potential flood impacts. Both the plan and the annual progress reports can be accessed online:

<https://www.trpc.org/803/Flood-Hazards>

Purpose

This annual report highlights the progress made on implementing the 20 flood mitigation initiatives identified in the FHMP. It is a key component of the plan's ongoing evaluation process aimed at minimizing flood risks across Thurston County. The report includes:

- A review of the action plan.
- Flood events during the reporting period.
- Changes in risk exposure within the planning area.
- Success stories from mitigation efforts.
- Changes in capabilities that affect plan implementation.
- Recommendations for updates or enhancements.

Summary Overview of the Plan's Progress

The FHMP became effective on October 1, 2017, following FEMA approval. The plan contains 20 flood mitigation initiatives or actions, which are being pursued throughout the five-year performance period of the plan.

The Flood Planning Committee (FPC) convened on September 24, 2024, to perform an annual review on the action plan's progress. Thurston County staff reported on the status of each action, noting where progress was made, or challenges encountered. The draft 2024 Annual Progress Report was circulated among all FPC members for review. For the 2024 reporting period, the following progress was noted:

- 70% (14 of 20 initiatives) reported ongoing activity.
- 0 initiatives were fully completed.
- 30% (6 initiatives) reported no significant progress.

Progress was reported on 14 initiatives, however their scope requires ongoing efforts and coordination across department. None of the actions have been fully completed. For 6 initiatives, no notable progress was observed since the last report. Detailed updates on each initiative are provided in the "Review of the Action Plan" section.

The Flood Planning Committee

The Flood Planning Committee (FPC) consists of county staff and local stakeholders from the planning area. Established during the development of the FHMP in 2017, the FPC supports the annual review process and will assist Thurston County on the plan update. New members have been added to the committee as needed since the plan’s adoption. Membership is managed by the Thurston County CRS Coordinator, and the current membership is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. FLOOD PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS		
Name	Title	Affiliation
Community Members		
Katrina Sukola	Stakeholder	Water Resources Specialist, Office of the Chehalis Basin
Cal Bray	Stakeholder	Emergency Manager, Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation
Howard Glastetter	Community Representative	Nisqually River Valley Floodplain Resident
Thurston County Staff Members		
Cherie Carey	Emergency Management Coordinator	Emergency Services
Emily Schoendorf	Emergency Management Coordinator	Emergency Services
Stacy Klein	Public Information Officer	Community Planning and Economic Development
Kevin Hansen	Hydrogeologist	Community Planning and Economic Development
Kelly Alfaro Haugen	GIS Analyst III	Thurston GeoData
Mark Biever	Water and Hazards Data Services Program Lead	Community Planning and Economic Development
Shannon Peterson	Water Resources Utility Planner	Public Works
Tim Rubert	Plans Examiner, Floodplain Manager	Community Planning and Economic Development
Sarah Smith	GIS Analyst II	Thurston GeoData
Project Staff		
Amelia Schwartz	Associate Planner	Community Planning and Economic Development
Paul Brewster	Senior Planner	Thurston Regional Planning Council

2023/2024 Flood Events

Thurston County did not experience any flood stage notifications or losses due to flooding during the reporting period (October 2023 – September 2024). The last significant flood event occurred in March 2022, when both the Skookumchuck and Chehalis Rivers reached major flood stage, resulting in the county's inclusion in Federal Disaster Declaration 4650.

Changes in Risk Exposure in the Planning Area

Thurston County has been part of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) since 1974 and has maintained a Class 2 rating in the Community Rating System (CRS) since 2016. This rating provides a 40% discount on flood insurance premiums for policyholders in unincorporated areas, saving an average of \$500 per policy. Approximately 7% of Thurston County lies within the NFIP 100-year floodplain, with 90% of this area located in unincorporated parts of the county. As of 2023, there are 419 active flood insurance policies countywide, totaling \$115,076,000 in coverage.

In 2023, the county conducted a flood risk assessment as part of the FEMA multi-hazard mitigation plan update. Using a Community Hazard Risk Rating Model, the county evaluated the probability and impact of various hazards. The assessment identified a high probability of annual riverine and groundwater flooding, with major floods expected every two to five years. Approximately 2,400 residents (1.7% of the unincorporated population) and 908 buildings are located in the 100-year floodplain, resulting in an overall medium risk rating for flood impacts.

Mitigation Success Stories

- **Hazards Mitigation Plan Adoption:** Thurston County adopted a FEMA-approved Hazards Mitigation Plan in February 2024, making the county eligible for various federal mitigation grant programs that are eligible for flood reduction activities.
- **Country Club Road NW Culvert Replacement:** Initiated work to replace a culvert with a new bridge on Green Cove Creek, improving fish passage and stream health.
- **Home Elevation Projects:** Provided guidance to homeowners on elevation projects, with one of three projects completed during this period.
- **Emergency Preparedness Expo:** Hosted a free in-person expo to educate the community on hazard preparedness and disaster response.

Review of the Action Plan

The FPC convened on September 24, 2024, to evaluate the progress of the action plan. Table 2 provides a summary of reported advancements for each initiative. For comprehensive descriptions and the prioritization process of each mitigation initiative, refer to Chapter 3 of the Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Prior to the meeting, Thurston County staff were asked to report on each initiative and consider the following:

- Were any elements of the initiative implemented during the reporting period?
- If no action was taken, what were the reasons?
- Is the current timeline for the initiative still appropriate?
- If the initiative was completed, should it be revised or removed from the action plan?

**TABLE 2.
ACTION PLAN MATRIX**

Action Taken?	Timeline	Priority	Status	Status
<p>Initiative #1 — Dam Failure Evacuation Planning and Response: Identify and sign evacuation routes and develop and train for evacuation procedures for communities downstream from the Nisqually, Yelm, and Skookumchuck hydroelectric project dams. Develop and implement a public outreach strategy to inform affected residents and businesses about routes and procedures. Leads: Emergency Services, Public Works, Sheriff’s Office, Central Services – Geo Data</p>				
No	2017-2030, Messaging will be ongoing	Medium	Meetings with the Skookumchuck Dam and Tacoma Public Utilities are scheduled for October 2024 and early 2025 to discuss possible evacuation routes, messaging, signage, and other dam failure response topics. Progress reported by Emily Schoendorf.	X
<p>Initiative #2 — Flood Detours and Response Planning: Identify detour routes for areas subject to frequent flood-related closures. Update emergency plans, create operational procedures, and provide public information and outreach resources to execute the detours when needed. Leads: Emergency Management, Public Works, Central Services – Geo Data</p>				
No	2017- 2025	High	Thurston County Water Resources division developed a prototype model to forecast when and where flooding is likely to occur. This tool could predict potential road inundation areas and inform public notifications about transportation route disruptions. Staff from CPED, TCEM, and GeoData met to discuss the feasibility to operationalize a flood forecasting model for roadways. Due to the prohibitive cost of moving data into a Linear Referencing System, no further action was taken at the time. Public Works updated the Debris Management Plan in March 2023, which includes planning and operations activities for response to flood-related debris in roadways. Ongoing efforts continue to increase enrollment in the TC Alert system and to prepare template messaging for public outreach on emergencies including flooding. Progress reported Emily Schoendorf, Emergency Management.	X

Status legend: ✓ = Project Completed | O = Action ongoing toward completion | X = No progress

Initiative #3 — Stream Culvert Replacement Flood Mitigation Program: Continue culvert replacement throughout the county for flood reduction, hazard avoidance, and to mitigate fish passage barriers. Replacement will occur as funds become available. **Leads: Community Planning and Economic Development, Public Works**

Yes	2017 – 2030, Long term	High	<p>Construction began July 2024 to replace the temporary culvert at Country Club Road NW and Green Cove Creek. The original culvert was a known fish barrier planned for future replacement but began to collapse. It was slip-lined as an emergency repair to maintain streamflow, protect the public, roadway, and utilities, and maintain access for residents until it could be permanently replaced. A new 150-foot bridge will replace the temporary culvert and remove the fish barrier which will result in enhanced fish passage, salmon recovery, and improvements to the overall health of the stream ecosystem.</p> <p>Progress reported by Shannon Peterson, Public Works.</p>	O
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Initiative #4 — Road Repair and Reconstruction Flood Mitigation Program: Prioritize the repair or replacement of roads and bridges that close during flood events. Upgrade these facilities as funds become available. **Leads: Community Planning and Economic Development, Public Works**

No	2017–2030, Long term	High	<p>There has been no progress towards this initiative during the current reporting period, however Thurston County Public Works continues to prioritize roads and bridges that have frequent maintenance callouts, which include closures due to flooding. Funding options to reduce flood impacts will continue to be explored for the upgrade of these facilities.</p> <p>Progress reported by Shannon Peterson, Public Works.</p>	X
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Initiative #5 — Flood Data Collection, Modeling, and Evaluation Program: Expand Thurston County’s flood prediction and forecast modeling capabilities for all types of flooding, including the impacts of climate change. **Leads: Community Planning and Economic Development, Emergency Management**

Yes	2017-2021, Ongoing	Medium	<p>Thurston County continued performing its ongoing data collection, monitoring, and analysis activities as reported in the 2022-2023 Annual report with two additional activities for the current performance period:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Climate data analysis work to forecast future flooding and climate conditions is currently under way in cooperation with the UW Climate Impacts Group and the State Climatologist. Analysis work includes county Ambient Program rivers and lakes data, compared with field data and forecasting done by the USGS, University of Washington Climate Impacts Group (this will continue to be the focus for the WRS II Hydrologist for Water year 2025). 2. Working with a consultant to update the Western Washington Hydrologic Model stormwater model to include future climate impacts models to predict stormwater impacts under various climate change models. <p>Progress reported by Mark Biever and Kevin Hansen, CPED.</p>	O
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Initiative #6 — HAZUS – Flood Model Development and Maintenance Program: Maintain and operate an in-house GIS HAZUS-Flood model using local data to support flood planning activities. **Leads: Emergency Services, Central Services – GeoData**

No	2017-2025, Short term	Low	<p>HAZUS is a FEMA recommended risk analysis and loss estimation GIS-based software tool.</p> <p>Thurston County has not pursued creating in house HAZUS-MH modeling capacity due to the level of effort and the highly specialized application and minimal usage of the tools.</p> <p>A contractor created HAZUS models, including flood scenarios in 2022 and 2023 for the multi-jurisdiction multi-Hazards Mitigation Plan. All data outputs are on file with Thurston County Emergency Management. Some outputs from the flood modeling may be applicable to the 2025 FHMP Update.</p> <p>(Progress reported by Kelly Alfaro Haugen, Thurston GeoData and Paul Brewster, Thurston Regional Planning Council).</p>	X
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Initiative #7 — RiskMAP Land Use and Development Regulation Review and Revisions: Evaluate land use and development regulations accounting for changes to special flood hazard areas resulting from FEMA’s RiskMAP process and the county’s flood studies. Consider appropriate watershed-specific revisions to zoning, development codes, and the Critical Areas Ordinance to refine flood hazard reduction strategies. **Leads: Community Planning and Economic Development**

Yes	2017-2025, Short term	High	<p>Thurston County is nearing the completion of the Shoreline Master Program (SMP) update. This plan is updating shoreline designations and their development standards to comport with the state’s most recent requirements and best available science. The SMP is expected to be adopted in late 2024. Additional updates to flood hazard policies and the Critical Areas Ordinance may occur as part of the Comprehensive Plan update in December 2025.</p> <p>Progress reported by Amelia Schwartz, CPED.</p>	O
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Initiative #8 — Flood Map Refinement and Access: Update and maintain digital floodplain maps for all rivers, streams, lakes, high groundwater hazard areas, and flood of record areas. Make these maps available online. **Leads: FEMA, State Ecology, Community Planning and Economic Development, Public Works, Central Services-GeoData Center, Storm and Surface Water Utility**

Yes	2017-2021, Short term	Low	<p>Thurston County has complied with FEMA DFIRM updates and approving them for its special flood hazard area regulatory review and administration. On June 24, 2022, FEMA released a preliminary DFIRM and Flood Insurance Study for 40 Lakes in unincorporated Thurston County. The analyses included survey, hydrology, and flood risk products. A letter of final determination was issued on May 8, 2024. Thurston GeoData updated the county’s GIS database with the new DFIRM maps.</p> <p>Progress reported by Kelly Alfaro Haugen and Sarah Smith, GeoData.</p>	O
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Initiative #9 — Flood Map and Data Storage and Retrieval Program: Develop protocols to document previous flood events including data, imagery, losses, and other information about conditions that contribute to flooding. Leads: Emergency Services, Central Services - GeoData, local governments, and Thurston Regional Planning Council				
Yes	2017-2021, Short term	Medium	Work is ongoing. Thurston County continues to collect data as flood events occur. GeoData is evaluating contracting needs for aerial imagery and analytics to be able to request data collection flights on call during flood events. The County will be evaluating its strategy for updating data. Progress reported by Sarah Smith, GeoData.	O
Initiative #10 — River Channel Migration Zone and Habitat Mapping Program: Maintain up to date maps for the channel migration zones for all rivers in the region and the extent of high quality riparian habitat. Leads: Community Planning and Economic Development, Central Services – Geo Data, Public Works, Storm and Surface Water Utility				
Yes	2017-2021, Short term	Medium	High quality (QL1) LiDAR is available for all of Thurston County (captured in 2017 and 2021). Washington Department of Natural Resources will be collecting new high-quality LiDAR for all of Thurston County in 2025. This new data could be leveraged to map Channel Migration Zones if resources were allocated to the effort and prioritized by an identified county department sponsor. The work could be contracted out or performed in house, appropriately staffed. Progress reported by Sarah Smith, GeoData.	O
Initiative #11 — Building Inventory and Mapping Program: Update and maintain the Thurston County building footprint database to account for all existing structures such as homes, commercial buildings, barns, and other structures of value. Leads: Thurston County Assessors Office, Central Services - Thurston GeoData				
Yes	2017-2021, Short term	Medium	2024 building footprint data is available (product of Thurston County’s contractor’s, Eagle View, flights), but the data has not been processed to create a database to support countywide data needs. Thurston GeoData must develop a strategy to build the data layer and incorporate the tool into its enterprise data program. The plan needs to include a process for making the data available and having a database maintenance program. Funding is available to perform this work, but the tasks required to perform this project are currently not scheduled on GeoData’s work program. Progress reported by Kelly Alfaro Haugen, GeoData.	O

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Initiative #12 — Vulnerable Structures and Repetitive Loss Mitigation Program: Formalize a program to evaluate repetitive flood claim loss properties and other structures subject to repetitive flooding as candidate projects for elevation, relocation, or buyout. Develop project cost estimates and a finance strategy for priority projects, and evaluate a long-term implementation plan. Develop processes to partner with candidate property owners to inform them about the program’s opportunities and benefits. Implement projects as funds become available. **Leads: Community Planning and Economic Development, Central Services, Emergency Services, Storm and Surface Water Utility**

No	2017-2030, Long term	High	<p>The number of flood repetitive loss properties in Thurston County decreased from 23 to 21 since the last reporting period.</p> <p>Thurston County has made no progress on this initiative due to funding and staffing constraints. However, Thurston County staff have provided consultation to three homeowners who are pursuing home elevation projects. In the last year one of three privately funded projects was completed.</p> <p>Progress reported by Tim Rubert, CPED.</p>	X
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Initiative #13 — Debris and Sediment Inspection and Flood Hazard Reduction Program: Develop and implement a program to periodically inspect floodways, channel migration zones, drainage ditches, and other floodwater conveyance areas to monitor and document debris, sediment accumulation, and excess vegetation and to detect and respond to potential flood hazards, especially in areas that experience recurring flood problems. **Leads: Public Works, Community Planning and Economic Development, Emergency Services**

No	2017-2021, Short-term	Medium	<p>No changes to the County’s inspection procedures have occurred since the last reporting period. Staff continue to inspect county infrastructure including ponds, pipes, ditches, etc. but have not expanded the effort to natural drainages, except for a few selected problem locations with a history of beaver or other debris activity. Updated high resolution LiDAR imagery will assist staff with identifying high priority areas for remedial actions.</p> <p>County staff believe this initiative should be evaluated and revised during the FHMP update so that field inspections are systematically identified by a data driven and evidenced based process to prioritize areas that are more likely to experience flooding. This approach will make better use of staff time and produce greater flood risk reduction outcomes. The initiative is being considered for inclusion/update in the FHMP.</p> <p>Progress reported Mark Biever, CPED.</p>	X
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Initiative #14 — Floodplain Restoration and Reconnection: Protect and connect aquatic habitat and flood ecosystem services through a variety of flood plain management activities to comply with the National Marine Fisheries Service Biological Opinion regarding the National Flood Insurance Program: 1. Research best practices with large woody debris management and other bioengineering methods to stabilize streambanks, improve channel conditions, and enhance fish and wildlife habitat; 2. Revise shoreline regulations, as appropriate, to permit bioengineering methods; 3. Convert flood acquisition properties to open space. **Leads: Community Planning and Economic Development, Public Works, Storm and Surface Water Utility, Thurston Conservation District**

Yes	2017-2030, Long-term	Medium	<p>No significant progress has been made since the last reporting period. NOAA’s biological opinion requires Endangered Species Act (ESA) habitat protection compliance in jurisdictions that contain waterways that drain to the Puget Sound. The Center for Biological Diversity has submitted a petition to the National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS) to add coastal Chinook to the federal Threatened and Endangered Species list. If NMFS lists this species, then NOAA may extend the Puget Sound Biological Opinion to the Chehalis River and other coastal rivers, or it might create a brand-new Biological Opinion to expand protection to salmon species in waterways that flow to the Pacific Ocean.</p> <p>Thurston County is partnering with the City of Tumwater, WRIA 13 Lead Entity, and other stakeholders on a Washington Dept. of Ecology Flood Plains by Design grant proposal for the Deschutes Watershed. The proposal will decrease flooding impacts to downstream properties by slowing the water and spreading out the flow, allowing for water to infiltrate into the ground. This is done by reconnecting historic floodplain and off-channels with the river, restoring wetlands that have been impacted by development, and preserving property that will allow for floodwater storage during high flow events. Each of these actions will reduce impacts on riverfront property owners and flooding in the City of Olympia.</p> <p>The county is moving an update to its shoreline regulations through the legislative process. See #7 for more information Progress Reported by Amelia Schwartz, CPED.</p>	O
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Initiative #15 — Riparian Flood Control and Habitat Reforestation Project: Formalize a program with landowners and other stakeholders to reforest corridors along river and stream shorelines where they can provide flood protection benefits and enhance riparian habitat. **Leads: Community Planning and Economic Development, Public Works, Thurston Conservation District**

Yes	2017-2030, Long term	Medium	<p>The county used a National Estuaries Program grant to develop a program of incentives for voluntary riparian restoration. The grant enabled Thurston County to implement five pilot projects to restore private lands that were in agricultural use or part of a single-family residential lot.</p> <p>Additionally, the county is partnering with Thurston Conservation District to implement agricultural conservation practices, such as riparian restoration as part the Voluntary Stewardship Program. Program performance metrics will be captured in the upcoming five-year monitoring report that was completed in July 2024.</p> <p>Progress reported by Amelia Schwartz, CPED.</p>	O
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Initiative #16 — Comprehensive Flood Program Finance Strategy: Pursue a coordinated interdepartmental approach to evaluate and implement a finance strategy for the county’s flood management programs and projects. **Leads: Thurston County Manager, Department and Division Directors, Community Planning and Economic Development, Emergency Services, Public Works, Storm and Surface Water Utility, Board of County Commissioners**

Yes	2023-2024, Short term	High	<p>Interdepartmental discussions are ongoing about improving communication and workflow to support the county’s flood management activities.</p> <p>Thurston County received a Phase 1 Washington Department of Commerce grant for Integrated Watershed Planning in August 2024. The two-year grant is intended to augment inter-coordination on water-related issues. The grant is mainly focused on salmon recovery but also includes frameworks for unified watershed-wide planning initiatives across departments and agencies. The county plans to pursue the Phase 2 grant for implementation of initiatives identified in Phase 1.</p> <p>Progress reported by Mark Bieber, CPED.</p>	O
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Initiative #17 — Community Rating System Program: Strive to maintain a Class 5 or better Community Rating System (CRS) classification as a means of reducing flood risks. **Leads: Community Planning and Economic Development, Storm and Surface Water Utility, Emergency Services, Public Works**

Yes	Ongoing	High	<p>Thurston County is currently rated as a Class 2 CRS community. The CRS Program recertification was successfully completed in 2023. The County successfully maintained a Class 2 rating. Staff are also reviewing activities and programs to maintain the current rating at least until the next verification cycle in 2025. Planned activities include an update to the Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan scheduled in 2024-25.</p> <p>The update of the Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan and preparation for the 2025 CRS verification are underway.</p> <p>Thurston County appointed Amelia Schwartz as the new CRS coordinator in 2024 and will spearhead the update of the flood plan.</p> <p>Progress report by Mark Bieber, CPED.</p>	O
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Initiative #18 — Thurston Climate Adaptation Plan Evaluation and Plan Integration: Evaluate the priority flood hazard adaptation actions from the Thurston Climate Adaptation Plan and incorporate them into the Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan and other appropriate county plans. **Leads: Community Planning and Economic Development, Storm and Surface Water Utility, Emergency Services, Public Works, Thurston Regional Planning Council, and other jurisdictions and stakeholders**

Yes	2018-2025, Short-term	Medium	<p>The County is in the process of updating its Shoreline Master Program. Information from the Thurston Climate Adaptation Plan and the subsequent Climate Mitigation Plan will be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan update in December 2025.</p> <p>The Washington State Legislature amended the state’s Growth Management Act (GMA) in 2023 to require comprehensive plans to include a resiliency strategy to reduce natural hazard risks induced by climate change, including flood hazards. A new climate chapter is currently being drafted to be included in the final adoption of the Plan update in 2025.</p> <p>Key items will be incorporated into development codes, as required by the Growth Management Act.</p> <p>Progress reported by Amelia Schwartz, CPED.</p>	O
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Initiative #19 — Flood Hazard Education and Hazard Reduction Public Outreach Strategy: Continue to develop and implement an annual public outreach campaign to maintain flood risk awareness and improve peoples’ understanding of resources and capabilities within the county. This includes activities for both broad audiences and direct contact with property owners affected by flooding. **Leads: Community Planning and Economic Development, Storm and Surface Water Utility, Emergency Services, Public Works, Central Services**

Yes	2017-2024	Medium	<p>Thurston County Emergency Management coordinates the design and distribution of the annual Flood Bulletin. In September 2024, the bulletin was mailed to 10,843 residents who live in the 100-year floodplain, a high groundwater area, or a flood of record area. The bulletin is available at all TRL branches, distributed at outreach events, and is posted online each year. The Board of County Commissioners is schedule to issue a Flood Awareness Week Proclamation on October 15, 2024.</p> <p>TCEM continues to perform community outreach to increase enrollment in the TC Alert system and to prepare template messaging for public notification for emergencies including dam failure evacuation. Subscriber promotion activities include public engagement at community events such as the TC Fair and the Preparedness Expo. Electronic billboard along I5 near Grand Mound and on Old Pacific Highway near Reservation Road promote TC Alert and offer a way for residents to sign up from their phones.</p> <p>Public education and awareness are ongoing actions. Future FHMP updates should reflect this need.</p> <p>Progress reported by Cherie Carey, Emergency Management.</p>	O
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Initiative #20 — Flood Website Development: Revise Thurston County’s website to consolidate all flood-related information and contents to improve accessibility. Expand the use of interactive tools such as GIS story maps with flood data and other relevant information. **Leads: Community Planning and Economic Development, Storm and Surface Water Utility, Emergency Services, Public Works, Central Services**

Yes	2017-2024, Ongoing	High	<p>Recent improvements to the county’s website make searching for flood content significantly faster, and the format of the delivered search items makes it easier for users to quickly scan for the information they’re looking for.</p> <p>A search of the word “flood” brings up 29 items, including news releases or announcements from past 24 months of efforts or initiatives around flooding which gives insight into the county’s investment of time and effort in public outreach.</p> <p>Most flood-related content has been updated to reflect all code and grammatical changes, however, the consolidation efforts have not moved forward significantly, possibly due to staff turnover, and project prioritization by the elected Board of County Commissioners, etc.</p> <p>Nonetheless, vital emergency, insurance, flood map locations, flood reporting information, flood programs and permit process details are maintained, easy to find and up to date.</p> <p>Progress reported by Stacy Klein, CPED.</p>	O
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Flood Planning Committee Comments

Howard Glastetter provided the following comment regarding a damaged culvert in the Nisqually Valley, which relates to Initiative #3 — the Stream Culvert Replacement Flood Mitigation Program (email message, September 25, 2024):

“The February 8, 1996, flood was the flood-of-record for lower Nisqually Valley*. Erosion temporarily made the Durgin Road Tunnel under the rail line impassible to Nisqually Delta neighbors upstream of the tunnel. Heavy equipment was brought in to reinforce an access road along the south side of the rail line between Durgin Road and 6th avenue to allow neighborhood access to and from those homes while the tunnel was out. Those doing this work crushed the south side of the Medicine Creek culvert about halfway between Durgin and 6th that runs under the rail line.

This creek location is on all County maps that picture the Delta. In fact, these maps still show Medicine Creek beginning as an off shoot of the Nisqually River a few hundred yards upstream from the rail line. The county maps were never changed after the creek was blocked. This summer the creek was completely dry below the rail line where it passes under Old Pacific Highway just west of Kuhlman Road.

*November 2006 had the real Nisqually Valley flood record, but it only effected the valley above Alder Dam. TPU had ignored their FERC license requirement to keep water levels no lower than 10’ from capacity between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The level was 53’ below capacity when the November storm hit and rose 37’ in about 2 days leaving the level a safe 16’ below capacity. This may have broken a FERC license rule, but it proved that Nisqually flood mitigation is possible.”

Recommendations for Changes or Enhancements

Thurston County is commencing an update of the Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan to align with Community Rating System (CRS) Section 510 planning requirements. In 2025, the FPC will conduct a thorough evaluation of the current initiatives to determine whether they should be revised, replaced, or carried forward into the updated plan, ensuring continued effectiveness and alignment with evolving flood risk management needs. On September 24, Amelia Schwartz briefed the FPC on the planning process and number of FPC meetings the county expects to convene. The plan update process will recruit new stakeholders and community representatives to round out the composition of the FPC.

Public review notice: The contents of this report are subject to public disclosure. Copies of the report are provided to the Thurston County Manager and shared with the Board of County Commissioners. Upon approval, the report is posted on the Thurston County Flood Hazards Mitigation Plan website. Any questions or comments regarding the contents of this report should be directed to:

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