

# Chapter 5.0

## Review, Adoption, Implementation, Evaluation, and Maintenance

### Keeping the Plan Current

No community ever achieves a state of invulnerability from storms, floods, earthquakes, wildfires, or other hazards, so hazard mitigation should be a continuous process. To achieve the plan's goals and objectives, each community's mitigation activities must keep pace with other plans, policies, funding opportunities, and changing conditions or emerging threats. Science, technology, and best practices for creating disaster resilient communities is expanding. The region has updated the Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region every five years since first adoption in 2003. This plan will be reviewed periodically to add or replace activities to make our communities stronger and safer. All partners to the plan will collectively monitor and evaluate any accomplishments or shortcomings so that communities can incorporate lessons learned into long-term mitigation strategies.

This chapter describes how both Washington State Emergency Management Division (WAEMD) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) review the plan before adoption. More importantly, it outlines the process for how participants will adopt, implement, evaluate, and maintain the plan.

### Review Process

Prior to adoption, jurisdictions first submit their plans to WAEMD and FEMA for review to ensure compliance with the Disaster Mitigation Act planning requirements in 44 CFR Section 201.6. The review also provides an opportunity for the state and federal reviewers to offer feedback that supports the development of effective mitigation strategies.

Each jurisdiction performs an internal review of their plan using FEMA’s Local Mitigation Plan Review Tool. If a community believes the plan satisfies all the planning requirements, the community submits the plan for state and federal review. The State Hazard Mitigation Officer may take up to 30 days to review the plan and provide feedback. If no substantive revisions are required, WAEMD will forward the plan to FEMA Region X for review. FEMA may take up to 45 days to review the plan and provide feedback. If no revisions are necessary, FEMA issues an “approvable pending adoption” status meaning that the plan is ready for federal approval, once evidence of local adoption is established. If FEMA or WAEMD identify unmet planning requirements, they notify the community and help, as necessary, to satisfy unresolved requirements.

## Adoption Process

Adoption by a jurisdiction’s governing body demonstrates the community’s commitment to fulfilling the mitigation goals, objectives, and initiatives outlined in their annex. Adoption legitimizes the plan and authorizes designated individuals or departments to execute the plan’s recommendations. Each participant will follow their established processes including adequate public notice for their governing body to adopt the plan. Through the multi-jurisdictional planning process, participants have one year to adopt the plan after receiving an “approvable pending adoption” notification from FEMA.

### Plan Review Process



## Adoption Requirements

All participants to the *Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region*, or an update thereof, must adopt the core plan including chapters 1 through 6 and the appendices. In addition, each agency must adopt their annex. The core plan plus the jurisdiction's annex constitutes a complete plan.

## Federal Approval and Plan Expiration

The final step for approval involves submitting evidence of adoption to FEMA. FEMA certifies the plan and issues an approval letter which includes the date of approval. The first jurisdiction to formally adopt the plan initiates the five-year approval period and sets the expiration date for the plan for all participating plan partners, regardless of when each adopts their plans. The approval letter is amended each time one or more communities submit evidence of adoption.

## Implementation

This plan intends to implement effective mitigation strategies. The nature of a multi-jurisdictional plan provides flexibility in implementation mechanisms, since each jurisdiction has unique resources and capabilities for implementing their priorities. Jurisdictions with approved plans must implement the mitigation initiatives identified in

their annex. Every mitigation action includes an estimated timeline, funding source, and project lead. The community will complete mitigation activities based on their priorities, funding availability, and other resources. This section provides an overview of the implementation mechanisms available in Thurston County.

Goal 8 of this plan is to “Implement effective mitigation strategies.” Objective 8B calls for the plan partners to integrate adopted mitigation strategies into other planning documents such as response plans, comprehensive plans, strategic plans, Critical Areas Ordinances, Capital Facility Plans, zoning code, and development regulations. Objective 8C is the call to action for the partners to apply for federal mitigation assistance grants and leverage other funding sources to finance mitigation projects.

Some jurisdictions have Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans (CEMPs). When the CEMPs are updated, they should include relevant parts of this plan, if appropriate, or reference this plan as appropriate.

## Plan Stewardship

To fulfill the goals and objectives outlined in Chapter 5, the plan must be monitored and maintained throughout its five-year cycle. A multi-jurisdictional plan requires coordination and collaboration among its partners. The Emergency Management Council (EMC)

of Thurston County is a formally organized intergovernmental board familiar with a variety of key community stakeholders involved with disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and hazard mitigation. As such, the EMC will serve as the steward for the *Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region*. As it did in the previous two editions, the EMC will assume the lead role for maintaining the plan and promoting its relevancy among the plan stakeholders. The remaining sections describe how the plan will be evaluated and maintained.

## Plan Evaluation

The plan will be evaluated annually as part of the EMC's regularly scheduled October meeting (the schedule may be revised to accommodate emerging issues). The EMC will include a special work session agenda item dedicated to a region wide assessment of the plan. The EMC will invite all plan partners to attend the meeting. This annual work session will assess the following:

1. Progress toward the plan's goals and objectives
2. Progress toward countywide and jurisdiction specific mitigation initiatives
3. Implementation problems such as technical, legal, or coordination issues among local agencies, the state, or FEMA
4. Public involvement activities
5. General information sharing (best practices) related to mitigation planning among the plan partners

## Assessment after a Significant Disaster Event

It is routine practice for the EMC to conduct an after action review within 60 to 80 days following a Federal Disaster Declaration or a significant emergency event that occurred within the planning area. As part of this meeting, a specific agenda item will be added to the after action review process to capture any lessons learned to enhance the plan (Goal 7, Expanding Understanding of Hazards). The EMC Council will assess:

1. The characteristics and severity of the hazard to determine if the region's risks have changed
2. Any response and recovery costs
3. The type and extent of damage and losses to determine if any new mitigation initiatives are warranted to offset impacts from similar future hazard events

The results of the assessment will be provided to all hazards mitigation planning partners for their review. If applicable, this information can be used for evaluating modifications to existing initiatives or new initiatives following the disaster event or during the next plan update cycle.

## Plan Maintenance

Done properly, plan maintenance is performed throughout the plan's five-year cycle. Regular maintenance keeps information current and helps inform decisions. Periodic revisions can also make the plan update less arduous.

Changes to the mitigation plan are initiated based on outcomes that are realized as part of annual monitoring, reviews after a major disaster, or as needed to reflect the needs of jurisdictions. Changes are also made when new planning partners join the region's hazard mitigation planning process and adopt their plan outside of the 5-year update cycle. Each jurisdiction is responsible for maintaining their annex. Thurston County Emergency Management assumes responsibility for executing all revisions to the core multi-jurisdictional plan, except for local annexes.

## Minor Revisions

Adding new maps, data, or making simple corrections will be handled by Thurston County Emergency Management.

## Major Revisions

If the state or FEMA specify significant changes to the plan, it will require a meeting, review, and approval by the Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan Workgroup. Major changes to a jurisdiction's annex are the responsibility of the affected community. Major revisions may require subsequent review and approval by EMD or FEMA.

## Technical Revisions

Requests for changes that will alter the technical content of the general plan such as additions or deletions of data, maps, or alterations to risk assessments will be the responsibility of Emergency Management staff. Such changes would require a review by the EMC and the Workgroup, or if applicable, the affected community.

## Distribution of Revisions

Thurston County Emergency Management staff will maintain a master copy of the plan and distribute updates to all adopted plan holders. Any revisions made to the plan, copies of any correspondence from the state or FEMA, along with supporting analysis and revised plan pages, will be sent to all the entities and holders of the plans. Conversely, any local agency that makes changes to the contents of its local annex should provide Thurston County Emergency Management a copy of its revised annex and documentation of the process that was used for revision.

When possible, plan updates will be sent by email or by other electronic file sharing services. A current version of the plan will be accessible online at [www.co.thurston.wa.us/em](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/em) or at [www.trpc.org](http://www.trpc.org). The general public may request paper copies through Thurston County Emergency Management.

## Procedure to Add a Community to the Hazards Mitigation Plan

All local governments and special districts are encouraged to develop a hazards mitigation plan through the region's planning framework. Communities are invited to participate in the plan update process, however other priorities may prevent a community from participating as a full partner during that process. A local government entity can develop a plan between the 5-year update interval.

The following steps outline the process by which local governments, special districts, tribes, or non-profit entities can develop and adopt a hazard mitigation plan through this plan's multi-jurisdictional planning framework:

1. Interested communities should contact Thurston County Emergency Management.
2. Thurston County Emergency Management will notify the EMC of the community's intent to join the regional plan. County staff will direct the community to resources for building a plan including a copy of the *Hazards Mitigation Plan for the Thurston Region*, online resources, and contact information for state and federal mitigation planners, and the necessary forms and instructions for developing an annex.
3. The community would review the plan and the plan requirements. The entity would develop a plan that is consistent with the regional plan and meets all the planning requirements specified in 44 CFR Section 201.6 (201.7 for tribes). Portions of the regional plan that meet the planning requirements for that entity should be referenced in the plan eliminating the need for redundancy.
4. The community would submit their draft plan to Thurston County Emergency Management for review to ensure conformance with the regional plan.
5. The community would follow the steps described in the "Review Process" and "Adoption Process" sections at the beginning of this chapter.

## Future Plan Updates

Hazard mitigation planning is a multi-step process that may take between one to two years to complete. Sufficient time must be allotted to educate newly elected officials and staff about the purpose of the plan and its development process. Multijurisdictional plans are costly to produce, local funding is scarce, and the availability of federal mitigation grants to update plans are highly competitive and often insufficient. It may take 12 months or more to secure funding to perform a plan update and local governments need to establish work programs and approve budgets prior to starting work on a plan.

To attempt to overcome these challenges, the EMC and the region’s planning partners will use the following schedule to guide a future plan update:

1. Two years after FEMA approves a plan, the EMC will coordinate with partners to apply for planning grants and seek other funding sources.

2. Assuming funds are secure by the third year, the plan partners will establish work programs, refine a scope of work, and approve budgets.
3. At the beginning of the fourth year, the EMC and the plan partners will initiate the planning process.
4. Midway through the fifth year, a draft plan will be available to the public, and submitted to the state and FEMA for review.
5. The plan partners will adopt the updated plan within one to two months of the expiration date of the current plan.



## Hazard Profiles

During future updates of the plan, consideration will be made to expand the plan to address additional hazard profiles such as catastrophic dam failure, cyber-attack, or sea level rise. As this information is developed, the plan partners will evaluate the information to consider new mitigation initiatives.

## Continued Public Involvement

The Emergency Management Council, and the plan partners will continue engaging plan stakeholders, residents, property owners, and businesses about the risks the region faces from the hazards identified in this plan. The EMC and staff will explore opportunities to educate and involve the public about the region's mitigation strategy. This plan includes policies and mitigation initiatives to promote public involvement and education. The Thurston County Emergency Preparedness Expo, the Executive Disaster Recovery Seminars, meetings with neighborhood and home owners associations, and the online GIS Thurston Region Hazards Assessment story map are examples of effective ongoing public outreach activities. The EMC will continue evaluating options to promote the plan and educate the public about hazard mitigation within existing emergency preparedness education and outreach programs.

Hazard mitigation is more effective when integrated into existing programs and factored into community decisions about land use and capital investments. Incorporating mitigation strategies into comprehensive plans and other strategic plans will provide additional opportunities to promote public dialogue about hazard mitigation.

Copies of the plan will be accessible online from Thurston County Emergency Management's website at [www.co.thurston.wa.us/em](http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/em) and from [www.trpc.org](http://www.trpc.org).