



**PLANNING FOR NATURAL HAZARDS:
*Comprehensive Plan Review***

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***Oregon Department of Land Conservation &
Development***

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This questionnaire was modeled from the Institute's Community Land Use Evaluation for Natural Hazards (CLUE). For more information: <http://www.ibhs.org>

Planning for Natural Hazards: Comprehensive Plan Review

The Oregon Land Use Planning Act (ORS Chapter 197) requires all cities and counties to develop and adopt comprehensive land use plans. Statewide Planning Goal 7 requires communities to (1) inventory known natural hazards, and (2) implement appropriate safeguards for development in hazardous areas. Goal 7, however, does not provide specific direction on how communities should address development in hazardous areas. Thus, a wide range of approaches exists for communities to address Goal 7. The Technical Resource Guide includes a questionnaire to help your community review your comprehensive plan for natural hazards.

The purpose of this review is to help you assess the natural hazard element of your community's comprehensive plan. Although each question is preceded by "yes" and "no" checkboxes, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. This review is *not* intended to evaluate the degree to which your community is in compliance with Statewide Planning Goal 7. Rather, it is intended to help you appraise and potentially improve the effectiveness of your community's natural hazard planning element.

This review should be used in combination with the rest of the Natural Hazards Technical Resource Guide. The Guide, as a whole, is designed to help local governments ensure that their comprehensive plans continue to meet and go beyond the intent of Goal 7 and other state land-use requirements related to natural hazards. The review will lead you to information presented in the hazard-specific Technical Resource Guides (TRGs) and in the accompanying appendices. These TRGs contain Oregon community case studies, resource listings and additional information on specific hazards. This review focuses on comprehensive plan elements. Implementing ordinances and regulations for reviewing development applications in hazard-prone areas are addressed in each hazard-specific TRG.

The review includes six sections. The questions found in each section address the key components of a comprehensive plan, as they relate to natural hazard planning. Included in the margin of each page is a blank column for you to make notes and jot down questions. A person familiar with his or her community's comprehensive plan should complete the review in about 30 minutes. However, it may take more time to gather or review the local documents needed for this process.



1. Statewide Planning Program Requirements

Oregon's planning laws require every community that has an area, or areas, subject to one or more natural hazards to have a comprehensive plan element addressing natural hazards. The most common natural hazards affecting Oregon communities include: earthquakes, floods, landslides, and wildfire. Depending on your community's location and topography, you may also have to consider the impacts of coastal erosion, wind storms, tsunamis, volcanoes, winter storms, or soil subsidence.

1.1. Does your community have areas of known (i.e., identified) natural hazards?

- YES
- NO

1.2. Does your comprehensive plan have a natural hazards element?

- YES
- NO

For record keeping purposes, write its name and the date when the hazards element was last revised here:


1.3. Does your comprehensive plan contain background information, policies and implementing measures to address natural hazards? (Check all that apply)

- Background Policies
- Implementing Measures

1.4. Does your comprehensive plan reference or contain appendices concerning other plans or studies that address natural hazards?

- YES
- NO

For record keeping purposes, write their name(s) and date(s) here:



TRG Key

Information on Statewide Planning Program requirements for flood, landslide, coastal, wildfire and seismic hazards can be found in Section 3 of each Hazard Specific Technical Resource Guide. Also, the full text of Statewide Planning Goals 2, 7, 17 and 18 can be found in Appendix A.

Notes

2. Quality of Factual Base

Every comprehensive plan must incorporate or reference factual data, including maps, to support the plan's policies, land-use designations (e.g., commercial, residential) and implementing measures. The natural hazards element should explain current conditions, trends and likely future conditions for each hazard in the community.

- 2.1. For each identified hazard, does the plan describe past natural disasters, their effects and costs, and the response to them?
- YES. DESCRIBES ALL.
 - YES. BUT DESCRIBES ONLY SOME.
 - NO
- 2.2. For each identified hazard, does the plan assess the degree of risk facing the community?
- YES
 - YES. BUT ONLY SOME.
 - NO
- 2.3. Does the factual base support the comprehensive plan's policies, maps with overlay districts and implementing measures?
- YES
 - NO
- 2.4. Does the plan describe the natural hazards in terms of the geographical extent, the severity, and the frequency of occurrence?
- YES
 - NO
- 2.5. Does the plan include or reference maps that identify hazardous areas?
- YES
 - NO



TRG Key

Information on factual base development for natural hazards can be found in Chapter 2: Key Elements of a Comprehensive Plan. For information on factual base development for flood, landslide, coastal, wildfire and seismic hazards, refer to Section 2 of each Hazard Specific Technical Resource Guide.



3. Identification of Issues

Well-written comprehensive plans explain why natural hazards are of significance, both to the community and to individual property owners, in order to support the plan's policies, land-use designations and implementing measures.


3.1. Does the plan discuss the importance, purpose and benefits of regulating development in hazardous areas?

- YES
- NO

3.2. Does the plan discuss specific issues related to development in hazardous areas? For example, foundation cracking in areas with unstable soils.

- YES. DESCRIBES ALL.
- NO
- PARTIALLY. IF PARTIALLY, PLEASE EXPLAIN.

3.3. List the major issues related to natural hazards in your community.



TRG Key

For information on the significance of flood, landslide, coastal, wildfire and seismic hazards in Oregon, refer to Section 1 of each Hazard Specific Technical Resource Guide. Refer to Section 4 of each guide for specific risk reduction techniques.

Notes

4. Policies

Statewide Planning Goal 2 requires that policies must be supported by a sound factual base. Depending on the types of hazards present in your community, not all policies listed below will necessarily apply. Indicate “not applicable” by checking the “N/A” box.

4.1. Does the plan have a policy supporting non-structural approaches to hazard mitigation?

- YES
- NO

4.2. Does the plan have a policy to consider the environmental issues of hazard mitigation activities?

- YES
- NO

4.3. Does the plan include policies to zone for low-intensity development in areas of high vulnerability to natural hazards? Examples of such policies include: cluster zoning to keep structures from being built in floodplains, zoning for recreational or open space, land acquisition priorities on high hazard areas, etc.

- YES
- NO
- N/A

4.4. Does the plan have a policy to locate public buildings, key facilities, or infrastructure (e.g., sewer lines and gas mains) out of the areas most vulnerable to natural hazards?

- YES
- NO

4.5. Does the plan have a policy to acquire or dedicate open space in hazard areas?

- YES
- NO

4.6. Does the plan have policies to reduce vulnerability to existing development in hazardous areas (such as retrofit or relocation)?

- YES
- NO

4.7. Does the plan have policies supporting public disclosure of the vulnerability to natural hazards for specific areas?

- YES
- NO



4. Policies (Continued)

4.8. Does the plan have policies regarding the incorporation of new natural hazards information into the comprehensive plan fact base, policies and implementing measures?

YES

NO

4.9. Does the plan require amendments for new information?

YES

NO

4.10. Does the plan have a policy calling for ongoing public education about, and awareness of, natural hazard vulnerabilities?

YES

NO

Notes

Surveying Flood Damage. Myrtle Creek, OR



Photo by: André LeDuc



TRG Key

Statewide Planning Goal 2 requires communities to have comprehensive land use plans. Complete Text of Statewide Planning Goal 2 is included in Appendix A. For information regarding policies for flood, coastal, landslide, wildfire and seismic hazards, refer to Section 3 of each Hazard Specific Technical Resource Guide. Additional policy-related information is contained in Chapter 2: Key Elements of a Comprehensive Plan, Chapter 3: Legal Issues Guide and Appendix C.

Notes

5. Coordination and Consistency

The plan should integrate key actions of other plans and policy instruments that are authored both within and outside the community. Natural hazards do not respect community boundaries.

5.1. Does the plan refer to federal policies and programs for hazard-prone areas?

- YES
- NO

5.2. Is the plan consistent with other plans internal to the community, such as the emergency response plan?

- YES
- NO

5.3. Does the plan describe the ways in which state, regional and local programs will be coordinated to promote the plan's goals and policies?

- YES
- NO



TRG Key

For information related to federal policies and programs and statewide guidelines for flood, coastal, landslide, wildfire and seismic hazards, refer to Section 3 of each Hazard Specific Technical Resource Guide.



6. Implementation Measures

To carry out the policies and objectives of a comprehensive plan, the plan must contain the means by which these policies and objectives can be implemented. This is accomplished through implementing measures, which are the ordinances and programs that carry out the plan's policies and objectives. They include zoning ordinances, land division ordinances, land-use regulations and non-regulatory practices.

- 6.1. Are the plan's policies supported by and/or carried out through specific implementing measures, rather than through general intentions? Specific implementing measures might be flood-plain development ordinances requiring specific construction practices, and a general intention might be to reduce the risk of flooding.
- YES
 - NO
- 6.2. Does the plan explain how its policies are to be implemented?
- YES
 - NO
- 6.3. Does the plan identify opportunities for project review and approval by other departments within the community (e.g., approval by emergency manager for siting new development in high-fire hazard area?)
- YES
 - NO
- 6.4. Are funding sources identified for implementing the plan?
- YES
 - NO
- 6.5. Does the comprehensive plan require that zoning decisions and subdivision approvals be in conformance with the plan?
- YES
 - NO
- 6.6. Does the plan include measures for reassessing risks related to natural hazards following a disaster event?
- YES
 - NO
- 6.7. Does the plan contain procedures for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the plan?
- YES
 - NO

Notes



TRG Key

For information on implementation measures for flood, coastal, landslide, wildfire and seismic hazards refer to Section 4 of each Hazard Specific Technical Resource Guide. Example implementation measures from Oregon communities are included in Section 5 of each hazard specific guide, and potential land use management tools are located in Appendix C.

Notes

Conclusion

The Comprehensive Plan Review Questionnaire is a tool your community can use to assess how natural hazards are addressed in your comprehensive land use plan. The purpose of having local comprehensive plan policies and implementing ordinances in your local land use plan is to reduce risk to life and property. Thus, your plan is the tool your community uses to weigh those risks through review of development applications. A good comprehensive plan and implementing policies should: describe a vision of what the community desires over the planning period; identify a set of goals, objectives, and policies to achieve the vision; provide guidance on land use decisions; and provide certainty about what land uses are allowable and the process for reviewing land use applications.

The Comprehensive Plan review focuses specifically on natural hazards. The questions reference a number of innovative approaches that go beyond Goal 7 requirements and are not typically included in most local comprehensive plans. The intent is to identify approaches your community might consider to strengthen development review. Your community may want to consider some of these approaches to strengthen your comprehensive plan policies and implementing ordinances.