

**Island County**  
**Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan**

**Section One**

**INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE**

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**Introduction**

The Island County mitigation planning effort has been undertaken to make the population, neighborhoods, businesses and institutions of the community more resistant to the impacts of future disasters caused by natural hazards. Island County departments, political jurisdictions, special taxing districts and residents have undertaken a detailed evaluation of the natural hazard vulnerabilities of the county to identify ways to make the county more disaster resistant. This document reports the results of that evaluation and the mitigation planning process for this initial three-year planning period.

**Purpose**

The Island County Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan is intended to serve many purposes. These include the following:

*Provide a Methodical, Substantive Approach to Mitigation Planning*

The approach utilized by Island County relies on a phased application of soundly based planning concepts in a systematic process to identify vulnerabilities to future disasters and to propose the mitigation initiatives necessary to avoid or minimize those vulnerabilities. Each phase in the planning process builds upon the previous, so that there is a high level of assurance that the mitigation initiatives proposed by the participants have a valid basis for their justification and priority of implementation. One key purpose of this plan is to document that process and to present its results to the community.

*Enhance Public Awareness and Understanding*

Island County is interested in finding ways to make the community as a whole more aware of the natural hazards that threaten the public health and safety, the economic vitality of businesses, and the operational capability of important institutions. This information will be very helpful to individuals that wish to understand how the community could be made safer from the impacts of future disasters.

The planning effort includes a public information and interaction objective whose purpose is to provide information and education regarding ways to be more protected from the impacts of future disasters. The planning effort has been active in communicating with the public and engaging interested members of the community to participate in the planning process. This document, and the analyses contained herein, is the principal information resource for this activity.

### *Create a Decision Tool for Management*

The Island County Multi-Jurisdiction Mitigation Plan provides information needed by the managers and leaders of local government, business and industry, community associations and other key institutions and organizations to take actions to address vulnerabilities to future disaster. It also provides proposals for specific projects and programs that are needed to eliminate or minimize those vulnerabilities.

These proposals, called “mitigation initiatives” in the plan, have been justified on the basis of their need to address an identified problem or vulnerability, economic benefits using a uniform analysis, and prioritized for implementation using standard criteria. This approach is intended to provide a decision tool for participating jurisdictions and associations to answer why scarce financial resources should be used for the proposed initiatives, the priority of implementation, and the economic and public benefits of doing so.

### *Promote Compliance with State and Federal Program Requirements*

There are a number of state and federal grant programs, policies, and regulations that encourage or mandate local governments to develop and maintain a comprehensive hazard mitigation plan. A hazard mitigation plan is specifically required under the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 44, Section 201.6, and Section 322, “Local Mitigation Plans,” to qualify the participating jurisdictions for Pre Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program and Hazard Mitigation Grant Program eligibility.

This plan is specifically intended to assist local governments, special tax jurisdictions, and some not for profit private organizations in complying with Federal law and other requirements and to enable the jurisdictions to more fully and quickly respond to state and federal mitigation-related project funding opportunities. The plan defines, justifies and prioritizes mitigation initiatives that have been formulated through a valid hazard analysis and vulnerability assessment process. For this reason, the participating organizations are better prepared to more quickly and easily develop the necessary grant application materials for seeking state and federal funding.

### *Enhance Local Policies for Hazard Mitigation Capability*

A component of the hazard mitigation planning process is the analysis of the existing policy, program and regulatory basis for control of growth and development. This process involved cataloging the current mitigation-related policies of local government so that they can be compared to the hazards that threaten the county and participating jurisdictions. When the risks of specific hazards are not adequately addressed in county or municipal policy or regulatory framework, the impacts of future disasters can be even more severe.

The planning process utilized by the Island County DEM involved research and detailed comparison of county and municipal policy and ordinances. This comparison provides a first level of screening that identifies where adequate policy and controls already exist. With this completed, the county and participating jurisdictions can move on to those areas where new policy, controls, or program initiatives should be introduced.

### *Assure Inter-Jurisdictional Coordination of Mitigation-Related Programming*

A key purpose of the planning process utilized by Island County is to ensure that proposals for mitigation initiatives are shared with, reviewed by, and coordinated among the participating jurisdictions. In this way, there is greater assurance that mitigation initiatives proposed by one jurisdiction will when implemented be compatible with the interests of adjacent jurisdictions and unlikely to duplicate or interfere with mitigation initiatives proposed by others.

A well-coordinated mitigation planning process will prevent duplication of effort and costly repetitive work by each jurisdiction. This planning process means that mitigation initiatives, regardless of their origin, would be coordinated among all of the participants prior to their inclusion in the plan.

### *Create Jurisdiction-Specific Hazard Mitigation Plans for Implementation*

A key purpose of the Island County Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan is to provide local jurisdictions with an action plan that can be easily adopted and implemented pursuant to appropriate authorities and responsibilities. It is the intent of the implementing section of the Code of Federal Regulation that participating Island County jurisdictions adopt this plan, add their specific requirements and initiatives, and avoid duplication of the entire planning effort once the plan is approved by the State of Washington and FEMA Region X.

*Provide a Flexible Approach to the Planning Process*

The process used by the Island County is flexible in meeting the analysis and documentation needs of the planning process. The plan also provides a process for adding jurisdictions and organizations that wish to qualify for hazard mitigation grant funding.

The following sections of the Island County Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan describe the planning organization developed by the County, as well as its approach to managing the planning process. It then summarizes the results of the hazard identification and vulnerability assessment process. The plan also documents mitigation initiatives proposed by the participating jurisdictions to address the identified vulnerabilities as well as the process for initiative development and prioritization. The plan concludes by detailing the process to maintain the plan as a viable and useful planning tool.