

City of Oakland

Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
Frequently Asked Questions

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Question: What is hazard mitigation, and what is a Hazard Mitigation Plan?

Answer: Hazard mitigation is defined as any sustained action taken to permanently eliminate or reduce long-term risks to human life and property from natural hazards. A Hazard Mitigation Plan is prepared by local governments in response to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-390). These plans act as a keyway to federal funding afforded under the Robert T. Stafford Act. These plans meet statutory requirements that include:

- Organizing resources
- Assessing Risk
- Engaging the public
- Identifying Goals and Objectives
- Identifying actions
- Developing plan maintenance and implementation strategies

Question: How does Hazard Mitigation help to create resilient communities?

Answer: Disasters can cause loss of life; damage buildings and infrastructure; and have devastating consequences for a community's economic, social, and environmental well-being. Hazard mitigation is the effort to reduce loss of life and property by lessening the impact of disasters. In other words, hazard mitigation keeps natural hazards from becoming natural disasters.

Hazard mitigation is best accomplished when based on a comprehensive, long-term plan developed before a disaster strikes. Mitigation planning is the process used by state, tribal, and local leaders to understand risks from natural hazards and develop long-term strategies that will reduce the impacts of future events on people, property, and the environment.

Question: Why is the City of Oakland Hazard Mitigation Plan Important?

Answer: The City of Oakland Local Hazard Mitigation Plan ("LHMP") sets the mitigation priorities, strategies, and actions for the City. The plan also describes how risk assessment and mitigation strategy information is coordinated and linked to the State of California's Hazard Mitigation Plan. Local Governments are required to review and revise its LHMP and resubmit it for FEMA approval at least every five years (5) pursuant to 44 Code of Federal Regulations §201.6 to ensure the continued eligibility of Stafford Act funding. This includes eligibility for FEMA's hazard mitigation assistance programs: Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC), and Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA).

Question: What hazards will the mitigation plan address?

Answer: At a minimum, the plan must address the natural hazards of concern that could impact the defined planning area. It may also include a select number of technological or human caused hazards, but these hazards are not required. It should also be noted that there are many secondary hazards that are directly attributable to these primary hazards that will also be addressed by the plan as part of the analysis of the primary hazard of concern.

Question: What is a Risk Assessment?

Answer: The risk assessment is the "hub of the wheel" for any hazard mitigation plan. Understanding risk is mission critical to the ability to identify actions to reduce risk. For the Oakland LHMP, risk has been defined as the probability of a hazard event occurring, times the impact that hazard can have on the people, property, economy, and environment of a defined planning area (Probability x Impact). The Oakland risk assessment uses the best available spatial data (GIS datasets) to map the extent and location of each identified hazard of concern to measure the exposure and vulnerability of the people,

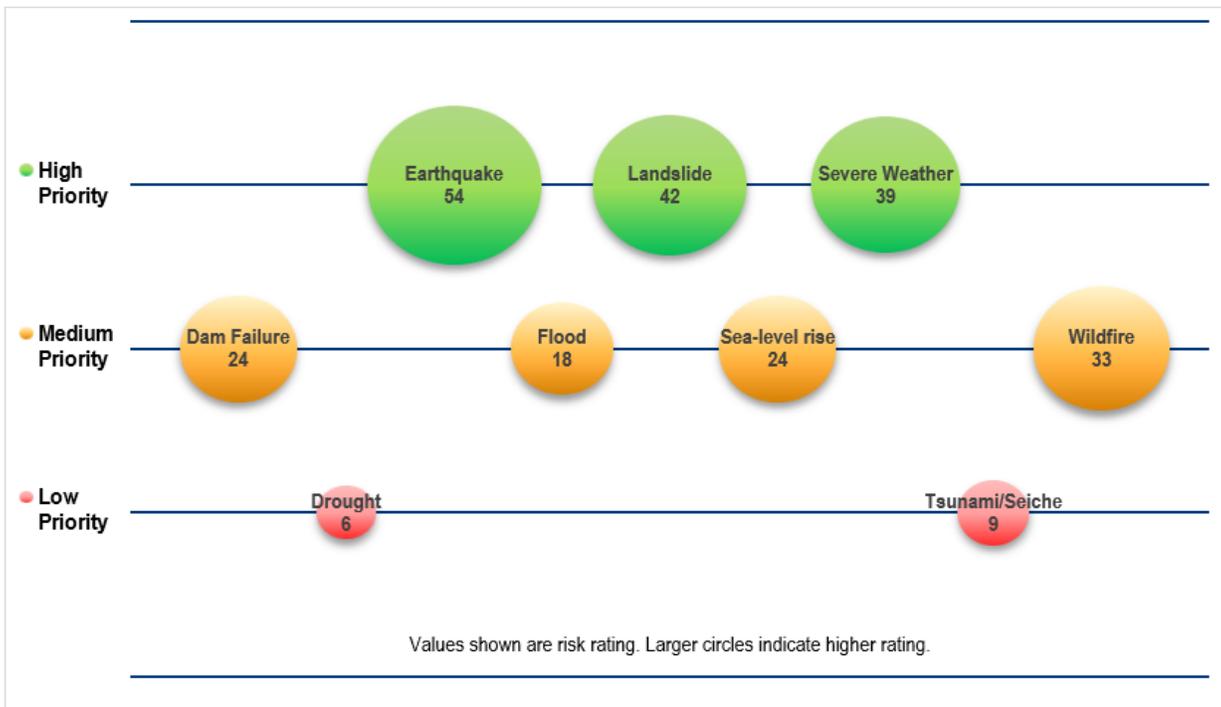
property, economy and environment. Models have been utilized to estimate the losses that can be expected for each hazard event. This is a very important aspect of any risk assessment, because for a project to be eligible for FEMA Grant funding, the net benefits of a project must equal or exceed the total costs for that project. For FEMA grants, a “benefit” is defined as an avoided loss.

Question: Why does the Oakland LHMP Rank Risk?

Answer: A Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is a multi-hazard plan, that must address all “natural” hazards that can impact a defined planning area. FEMA and CalOES require that the LHMP must address those hazards that have the highest impacts to the planning area. To meet this requirement, hazards impacts must be quantified and compared to each other to identify those that have the highest impacts. The Oakland LHMP utilized a “risk ranking” methodology that utilizes quantitative results from the risk assessment modeling to quantify those impacts so that they can be compared and ranked. Using the definition of “risk” (Probability x Impact), weighted metrics have been established for each component of the formula. Using these metrics, each hazard receives a score with the maximum impact scoring at 54, and no impact scoring at 0. These scores are then categorized as “High”, “Medium” or “Low based on the following breakdown:

- High = Weighted score of 35 to 54
- Medium = Weighted score of 15 to 34
- Low = Weighted score of 1 to 14
- None = Weighted score of 0 (i.e. no exposure)

The final risk ranking results for the City of Oakland LHMP were defined as follows:



Question: How can I find out more about hazards and the associated risk in my neighborhood?

Answer: Go to the City of [Oakland Hazard Mapper](#) for a visual depiction of the hazards being analyzed.

Question: Will Global Warming/Climate Change be addressed in the Hazard Mitigation Plan?

Answer: Yes. While climate change will not be viewed as a stand-alone hazard in this plan, there will be detailed discussions of the potential impact of climate change on those applicable hazards of concern.

Question: What about Pandemic?

Answer: The City of Oakland LHMP does include a hazard profile for pandemic in part 2, Chapter 17 (Other Hazards of Interest) of the plan, but the hazard was not fully assessed or ranked in accordance with the other natural hazards of interest. While Pandemic can be considered a naturally occurring event, at the time of this plan update, clear guidance from CalOES and FEMA does not exist on how to assess the Pandemic hazard in a similar plane as you would do for floods, fires, and earthquakes that focus on those hazards' impacts to the built environment.

Question: How will my city benefit by having an approved LHMP?

Answer: By participating in a planning effort and adopting the updated plan, Oakland will be eligible to pursue funding under any of the five (3) FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grant programs. These programs provide millions of dollars' worth of grant funding annually for risk reduction measures identified in these plans. Additionally, if your community participates in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) program, this plan may have direct impact on reducing the cost of flood insurance within your community.

Question: What are the benefits of hazard mitigation?

Answer: Mitigation is an investment in your community's future safety and sustainability. Mitigation planning helps you act now, before a disaster, to reduce impacts when a disaster occurs. Hazard mitigation planning helps you think through how you choose to plan, design, and build your community, and builds partnerships for risk reduction throughout the community. Consider the critical importance of mitigation to:

- Protect public safety and prevent loss of life and injury.
- Reduce harm to existing and future development.
- Maintain community continuity and strengthen the social connections that are essential for recovery.
- Prevent damage to your community's unique economic, cultural, and environmental assets.
- Minimize operational downtime and accelerate recovery of government and business after disasters.
- Reduce the costs of disaster response and recovery and the exposure to risk for first responders.
- Help accomplish other community objectives, such as capital improvements, infrastructure protection, open space preservation, and economic resiliency.

Having a hazard mitigation plan will increase awareness of hazards, risk, and vulnerabilities; identify actions for risk reduction; focus resources on the greatest risks; communicate priorities to state and federal officials; and increase overall awareness of hazards and risks.

Question: What type of mitigation activities can these plans consider?

Answer: Possible mitigation activities may include:

- Adoption and enforcement of regulatory tools, including ordinances, regulations, and building codes, to guide and inform land use, development, and redevelopment decisions in areas affected by hazards.
- Acquisition or elevation of flood-damaged homes or businesses retrofit public buildings, schools, and critical facilities to withstand extreme wind events or ground shaking from earthquakes.
- Creating a buffer area by protecting natural resources, such as floodplains, wetlands, or sensitive habitats. Additional benefits to the community may include improved water quality and recreational opportunities.
- Implement outreach programs to educate property owners and the public about risk and about mitigation measures to protect homes and businesses.

Mitigation actions presented in the Oakland LHMP plan are designed to reduce or eliminate losses resulting from hazard events. The development process resulted in the identification of 21 mitigation actions. Many of these actions are within the current capabilities of the City of Oakland, resulting in a high priority for implementation over the next five years. The table below summarizes the actions and their priority for implementation and for seeking grant funding.

Action Number and Description	Priority for Implementation	Priority for Pursuing Grants
O-1: Safer Housing for Oakland: Soft Story Apartment Retrofit Program	Medium	High
O-2: Continue the Earthquake Safe Homes Program	Medium	High
O-3: Green Stormwater Infrastructure Program	Medium	High
O-4: Identify stormwater infrastructure projects that would be good projects for which to pursue funding under FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant programs	Medium	High
O-5: Defensible Space Vegetation Program to manage wildfire hazards; preparation of a Vegetation Management Plan	High	Medium
O-6: Continuity of Operations Emergency Planning	High	Medium
O-7: Implement the City's Energy Assurance Plan	Medium	N/A
O-8: Assessment and retrofits of critical facilities & infrastructure	Medium	High
O-9: Continue to maintain the City's good standing and compliance under the National Flood Insurance Program	High	N/A

Action Number and Description	Priority for Implementation	Priority for Pursuing Grants
O-10: Create a comprehensive master plan for three city facilities to reliably serve as resilience hubs	Medium	High
O-11: Develop an “integrated preparedness plan” that will consider the range of preparedness activities within the Integrated Preparedness Cycle	High	Medium
O-12: To support implementation of and future updates to the City’s local hazard mitigation plan, Safety Element, and Environmental Just Element, use the best available local data to identify racial disparities in the City of Oakland	High	High
O-13: Maritime Terminal Study on Liquefaction Potential	Medium	High
O-14: Middle Harbor Shoreline Park dike repair	High	Medium
O-15: Maritime Intelligent Transportation System	High	N/A
O-16: Maritime Area Seismic Monitors	Medium	High
O-17: Sea-Level Rise Vulnerability and Assessment Improvement Plan	Medium	High
O-18: Tree Planning.	High	Medium
O-19: Reestablish Full Compliance and Good Standing Under the NFIP	High	N/A
O-20: Update Sea Level Rise Road Map	High	N/A
O-21: Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Plan	High	Medium

Question: Why is HMP implementation and monitoring important?

Answer: History shows that hazard mitigation planning and the implementation of risk reduction activities can significantly reduce the physical, financial, and emotional losses caused by disasters. Putting the plan into action will be an ongoing process that may include initiating and completing mitigation projects and integrating mitigation strategies into other community plans and programs. Monitoring the plan’s implementation helps to ensure it remains relevant as community priorities and development patterns change.