

RESOLUTION NO. 25-07

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2024 MORROW COUNTY MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL NATURAL HAZARDS MITIGATION PLAN

WHEREAS, The City of Irrigon recognizes the natural hazards threaten life, businesses, property, and environmental systems in our community and throughout Morrow County.

WHEREAS, an understanding of the nature, extent, and potential impacts of natural hazards is the foundation for developing strategies to reduce or eliminate those impacts.

WHEREAS, natural hazards mitigation planning is the process through which such understanding and strategies are developed and a process for implementation is established in the City of Irrigon and throughout Morrow County.

WHEREAS, it is in the interest of Morrow County and the cities and special districts located therein to undertake natural hazards mitigation planning and implementation together as coordinated planning strengthens communities and better serves all.

WHEREAS, Morrow County and the Cities of Irrigon, Boardman, Heppner, Lone, and Lexington, previously prepared, implanted and updated multi-jurisdictional natural hazard mitigation plans in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. These plans were each approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for a period of five years.

WHEREAS, the 2016 Morrow County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan update is the most recent. It was approved on February 28, 2017 and it expired on February 27, 2022.

WHEREAS, having a natural hazards mitigation plan developed in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and approved by FEMA is a prerequisite for local government eligibility for certain federal pre- and post-disaster mitigation funds.

WHEREAS, Morrow County and the Cities of Irrigon, Boardman, Heppner, Lone, and Lexington each participated in initial work towards the updating of the 2024 Morrow County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan with Morrow County completing the 2024 Morrow County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan in accordance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000.

WHEREAS, the 2024 Morrow County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan was revised to combine the county's Basic Plan and individual addenda into a plan that incorporates all jurisdictions into a single plan document resulting in city information spread throughout the document instead of a single City of Irrigon Annex.

WHEREAS, adoption of the updated 2024 Morrow County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan is required for FEMA approval of the 2024 Morrow County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan and restores eligibility for certain federal pre- and post-disaster mitigation funds.

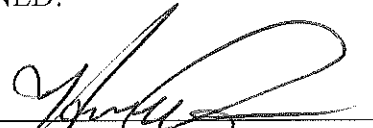
WHEREAS, adoption of the updated 2024 Morrow County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan demonstrates the City of Irrigon's commitment to reducing or eliminating the potential impacts of natural hazards and to achieving the Plan's goals.

WHEREAS, the City of Irrigon has developed an Annex (attached) to better reflect the city's identity and needs as well as to rectify errors and omission within the 2024 Morrow County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan. The City of Irrigon also recommends that Morrow County initiate the next update to the MC MJ-NHMP early, preferably within the next two years, to address these errors and omissions.


NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City OF Irrigon adopts the 2024 Morrow County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan and the attached City of Irrigon Annex

ADOPTED BY THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF IRRIGON THIS 15th DAY OF JULY, 2025.

SIGNED:

For 
Michelle Patton, Mayor

ATTEST:


Aaron Palmquist, City Manager

Purpose

This document serves as the City of Irrigon's Annex to the Morrow County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (MJ-NHMP, NHMP). The purpose of this annex is to guide the implementation of mitigation actions by the City of Irrigon to improve the resilience of the community. Please note that mitigation planning is a long-term endeavor—one that requires broad internal involvement and community engagement to be successful. Because the City of Irrigon was not invited to review the final draft of the NHMP there are several errors and omissions that this Annex attempts to capture.

Plan Process, Participation, and Adoption

In 2021 and early 2022, Morrow County partnered with the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) and the Oregon Military Department's Office of Emergency Management (OEM), and Morrow County cities, including the City of Irrigon, to update their annex to the Morrow County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, which expired August 16, 2022.

By developing this annex to the Morrow County NHMP, locally adopting it, and having it approved by FEMA, the City of Irrigon will gain eligibility for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) funding that includes three programs: Building Resilient Infrastructure & Communities (BRIC), formerly the Pre-Disaster Mitigation grant program, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), and the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program. This project is funded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) FY19 Pre-Disaster Mitigation Competitive Grant Program (PDMC-PL-10-OR-2019-003).

The City of Irrigon joined the Morrow County NHMP update by agreeing to update the City of Irrigon's Annex, provide documentation of time invested in support of the match requirement of the grant, and to adopt the Morrow County Multi-Jurisdictional NHMP. Carla McLane, Contract Planner, and Aaron Palmquist, City Manager, have led the efforts for the City of Irrigon which have included attendance at the project meetings, internal meetings to discuss the changes to the Annex and Action Items, and to complete the adoption process for the City of Irrigon.

City of Irrigon staff attended NHMP Steering Committee meetings on November 2 and 15 of 2022, January 17, February 21, March 21, April 18, May 16, and July 18, 2023, and promoted the NHMP survey and outreach efforts throughout the plan update, including public posts on the City of Irrigon's website. No Steering Committee meetings were held after July 18, 2023, nor were any held when the draft plan was announced in the late summer of 2024, eliminating any review by the Steering Committee and local communities of the final draft.

The Morrow County NHMP was approved by FEMA on September 19, 2024, and the City of Irrigon annex was adopted via resolution on July 15, 2024. This NHMP is effective through September 19, 2029.

Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is intended to provide the “factual basis for activities proposed in the strategy to reduce losses from identified hazards.”¹ This City of Irrigon annex can serve as the factual basis for addressing Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 7 – Areas Subject to Natural Hazards for the city.

Community Profile

This section provides information on city specific assets and populations. For additional information on the characteristics of City of Irrigon, in terms of geography, environment, population, demographics, employment and economics, as well as housing and transportation in the Community Profile. Many of these community characteristics can affect how natural hazards impact communities and how communities choose to plan for natural hazard mitigation. Considering the city specific assets during the planning process can assist in identifying appropriate measures for natural hazard mitigation.

Community Characteristics

The City of Irrigon is in Morrow County, Oregon, along the beautiful Columbia River with views of tugboats and barges, sailboats, speed boats, fishing boats, and paddle wheelers enjoyed almost daily. The City of Irrigon is up and coming with downtown development underway, a great small-town atmosphere, great schools, and many active civic and volunteer organizations. With a population nearing 2,400 people the City of Irrigon is known for its recreation activities along the Columbia River, its agricultural heritage, and outstanding community spirit. The Irrigon Watermelon Festival is held on the last Saturday of July and is a fun, family-oriented day with kids’ games, good food, and entertainment all day long. The Irrigon Multicultural Arts Center (IMAC) provides local artists and musicians with an outlet for their talents.

Plans and Policies

Table 1. Plans and Policies of the City of Irrigon

Document Name	Year
Emergency Operations Plan	2012
Comprehensive Plan	2021
Transportation System Plan	2014
Downtown Concept Plan	2009
Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	2014
Development Code	2024
Water System Master Plan	2006
Wastewater Facilities Plan	2019
Water Conservation and Mitigation Plan	2006

¹ 44 CFR 201.6(2)(i)

Hazard Profile

The City of Irrigon Hazard Profile can be found in the Morrow County adopted Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan at Table 73. Based on the information in that Table the following Hazard Characteristics have been developed.

Hazard Characteristics

Hazard History, Characteristics and Extent for Morrow County apply also to the City of Irrigon. The Morrow County Risk Assessment adequately describes the characteristics of natural hazards, as well as the location and extent of potential events. This section identifies vulnerabilities specific to the City of Irrigon and documents recent local hazard events and impacts.

Drought

Events: Eastern Oregon has a desert environment and can experience long periods of drought on a regular basis. When drought impacts the local agricultural economy the Morrow County Board of Commissioners are asked to declare a local emergency.

Vulnerability: Moderate

Earthquake

Events: While earthquakes do occur in eastern Oregon, they are infrequent and usually of a small magnitude. Most of the buildings in Irrigon are newer and have been built to the requirements for the region based on the Oregon Structural Code.

Vulnerability: High

Extreme Heat

Events: Living in a desert does come with hot days. In 2021 north Morrow County saw temperatures above 120 degrees Fahrenheit for 3-days in a row with limited relief in the evening and overnight hours. Seniors and those without air conditioning are the most severely impacted.

Vulnerability: Moderate

Flood

Events: North Morrow County lies along the Columbia River which has some level of flood protection through the Columbia River system of dams. John Day Dam's primary purpose is flood control with all four of the lower Columbia River dams managing river flow throughout the year with particular attention to the spring months when flooding is most likely to occur.

Vulnerability: Low

Landslide

Events: North Morrow County is predominately flat with limited areas of landslide potential.

Vulnerability: Low

Severe Weather

Events: Severe weather is not uncommon in north Morrow County with cold weather in the winter, high temperatures in the summer, freezing fog, windstorms and thunderstorms, and blowing dust are all of concern.

Vulnerability: Moderate

Tornado

Events: Tornadoes have occurred in Morrow County, but damaging ones are not common.

Vulnerability: Low

Wildfire

Events: Wildfire events are common in the summer months with fires often ignited during summer electrical storms. Communities and residents work to establish fire lines and keep weeds and other flammable organics mowed to lower risk and vulnerability.

Vulnerability: Moderate to High

Volcano

Events: While there is not a volcano within Morrow County there are several along the Cascade Mountain range with the City of Irrigon in the predominate path of any ash fall that may occur. There is also concern that a Mount Hood event could significantly impact transportation along the Columbia Gorge closing Interstate 84 and the Union Pacific Railroad mainline.

Vulnerability: High

Mitigation Strategy

During the initial phase of the 2022-2023 Morrow County Hazard Mitigation Plan and City of Irrigon Annex update process, Oregon Department of Land Conservation & Development and the City of Irrigon developed a list of priority actions. These actions were prioritized and then reviewed internally by staff between the fall of 2022 and the spring of 2023. No follow up was done with the City of Irrigon prior to the adoption by Morrow County of those action items in the fall of 2024. The list of City of Irrigon action items as of 2023 are found in the Morrow County adopted Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan within Table 76 and Table 77. It is unclear whether requested changes from the City of Irrigon have been incorporated as the information in the table are not consistent with internal City of Irrigon discussion from 2023.

Corrections to the Adopted NHMP

The City of Irrigon identified many inconsistencies and errors in the adopted NHMP that could have been raised if the Steering Committee had either continued to meet through the entire plan development timeline or been invited back to the table to accomplish a review of the final draft plan. The following identifies just some of the items that are corrected for the City of Irrigon as part of this Annex.

Public Review and Comment: The adopted NHMP outlines the adoption process and describes the two Open Houses that occurred, one in south Morrow County and the other in north Morrow

County. However, there is not a clear description of the north Morrow County event. Without this description it appears that north Morrow County was not given the same opportunity to participate in the development of the NHMP.

Parks and Recreational Facilities: There is a listing of “City Parks in Morrow County” that is incomplete and does not accurately reflect the parks in the City of Irrigon. The following Parks and Recreational Facilities are available for Irrigon residents: the Irrigon Marina Park operated by the Irrigon Parks and Recreation District, the Park Blocks (greenway) along Highway 730 that has a walking path, a secure park for families with a variety of play structures, renowned skate park, developing splash park, and access to the Morrow County Heritage Trail.

Morrow County City Profiles: The adopted NHMP includes City Profiles, but it is unclear where these were drawn from as the City of Irrigon would edit the profile as published and add significant information. That revision would begin with the following:

The City of Irrigon, incorporated in 1957, is also in northeastern Oregon, along the Columbia River and Interstate 84. It has an elevation of almost 300 feet above sea level and has a total area of 1.45 square miles. The city has two parks, the City Park, which fronts State Highway 730, and Marina Park, which is located along the Columbia River.

Human Population: Irrigon is a community of the larger economic region. Over the almost 2,300 residents, the demographics of the town has a large Hispanic or Latino population (38.0%). The importance of language for emergency communications is elevated in Irrigon, especially with approximately 10% of the population who are not highly proficient in English. Communication in both Spanish and English during common hazard event such as extreme heat event or a wildfire is important to reduce risk. The elderly and disabled populations are also significant, so communication methods are an important topic in Irrigon for risk reduction through communication.

Economic Assets: Local businesses operate as essential facilities during times of actual or potential power outages. People depend on the two convenient stores, and two gas stations/stores for batteries, water, ice, food, and fuel needs, as well as other essentials. There has been consensus that these local establishments should be identified as an essential economic asset for Irrigon. Other local restaurants and the bank were also identified as essential economic assets. The city also has various home-based businesses, a post office and a local fruit stand.

A recently developed Food Truck Pod was installed by the city that will host up to five various vendors, functioning as up and coming entrepreneurs developing their various food choices.

Environmental Assets: Irrigon has two parks, which include the park and marina on the Columbia River and the City Park on Main Street, which fronts State Highway 730.

The Irrigon Marina Park, located along the river, is a beautiful, family-oriented park that offers boating from the public access boat ramp, Marina facilities, picnic, fishing and playground activities in a tranquil, scenic riverside setting. This park is the site of the annual Irrigon Watermelon Festival and co-host to summertime Music in The Park performances.

The city has an annual summertime Farmers Market that is vital to building community. Each year over 35 vendors bring homemade items and crafts to sell.

Cultural and Historic Resources: Irrigon has several cultural and historical resources that are beneficial and meaningful to the community, including the Heritage Trail, Wildlife Refuges, cemeteries, and the Oregon Trail Spur, all of which are vulnerable to wildfire. The Paterson Ferry dock and the old train docking area are also important city facilities.

Infrastructure and Critical Facilities: The city depends on a sewer system and a water system comprised of two water wells which supply the city with quality drinking water. Updates have been made over the years to the potable water system, including a new storage tank south of the city on Division Street, a new water facility, obtaining new sources of water and the beginning stages of replacing selected water mains, fire hydrants and residential supply piping. The wastewater treatment updates include a new, larger wastewater treatment facility that reduced the level of nitrates in the effluent; the addition of new sewer services and the continuing conversion of the old effluent style residential septic/sewer hybrid systems to conventional sewer systems.

The city schools, Irrigon Medical Clinic, Irrigon Rural Fire Protection District facilities, Oregon Trail Library, and City Hall are critical facilities. The churches in Irrigon may also function as essential facilities following a disaster to provide food to people in need during an emergency. The Morrow County Government Building, located in Irrigon, houses the Sheriff's Office, Justice Court, Veteran's Services, Morrow County Public Transit, Planning, and administrative offices.

The old US Army Depot has been transferred to the Oregon National Guard (NG) with the development of a Regional Training Center (RTC). The NG continues to develop partnerships and community support with the City of Irrigon.