

Purpose

This document serves as the City of Boardman's Annex to the Morrow County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan (MC MJ-NHMP, NHMP). The purpose of this annex is to guide the implementation of mitigation actions by the City of Boardman 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 Boardman 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 Boardman, 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 Boardman 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 Boardman joined the Morrow County NHMP update by agreeing to update the City of Boardman'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. The City of Boardman Planning Official, Public Works Director, and City Engineer have led the efforts 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 Boardman.

City of Boardman 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 Boardman's website.

The Morrow County NHMP was approved by FEMA on September 19, 2024, and the City of Boardman annex was adopted via resolution on July 1, 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 Boardman 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 the City of Boardman, 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 Boardman is a rapidly growing community of over 5,700 individuals in Morrow County, Oregon, approximately 164 miles east of Portland, Oregon, along the banks of the beautiful Columbia River. Primarily an agricultural community with moderate winters and warm summers, Boardman is a major hub for transportation of manufactured goods utilizing Interstates 84 and 82, as well as the Columbia River, to move goods throughout the world. Home to the Port of Morrow, the City of Boardman has seen the food processing industry provide an economic base that is now diversifying with the siting of numerous Amazon data centers. The City of Boardman is also home to the SAGE Center which provides visitors with a unique opportunity to learn about the technology that takes place locally within the Port of Morrow and throughout the region without visiting each industry. It also serves as a Travel Oregon Welcome Center.

Plans and Policies

Table 1. Plans and Policies of the City of Boardman

Document Name	Year
Emergency Operations Plan	2023
Comprehensive Plan	2003
Main Street Downtown Development Plan	2001
Transportation System Plan	2001
Main Street IAMP	2009
POM IAMP	2022
Boardman Development Code	2003
Water System Master Plan	2016
Wastewater Facilities Plan	2021
Emergency Response and Mitigation Plan – Wastewater System	2020
Emergency Response and Mitigation Plan – Water System	2024
Water Management and Conservation Plan	2017

¹ 44 CFR 201.6(2)(i)

Hazard Profile

The City of Boardman Hazard Profile can be found in the Morrow County adopted Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan at Table 70. 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 Boardman. 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 Boardman 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 Boardman 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 Boardman 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 Rail Road mainline.

Vulnerability: High

Mitigation Strategy

During the initial phase of the 2022-2023 Morrow County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan and City of Boardman Annex update process, Oregon Department of Land Conservation & Development and City of Boardman 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 Boardman prior to the adoption by Morrow County of those action items in the fall of 2024. The list of City of Boardman 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 Boardman have been incorporated as the information in the table are not consistent with internal City of Boardman discussion from 2023.

Corrections to the Adopted NHMP

The City of Boardman identified inconsistencies and errors in the adopted NHMP. The following identifies just some of the items that are corrected for the City of Boardman 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 Boardman. The following Parks and Recreational Facilities are available for Boardman residents: the Boardman Marina Park operated by the Boardman Parks District, City Park, City Hall Park, Zuzu Park, three community parks in the River Ridge and Tuscany subdivisions, Marker 40 park along the waterfront, and access to the Morrow County Heritage Trail.

Wildlife Refuges and Management Areas: The adopted NHMP identifies several regional assets but noticeably left off this list the Coyote Springs wildlife area that is immediately adjacent to the east of the City of Boardman. Coyote Springs is one of four wildlife areas in the Columbia Basin, providing an important land base for the conservation within a highly privatized and altered landscape and plays an important role for the fall and spring migrations of waterfowl in addition to resident upland game bird production. These wildlife areas provide a home to the red-tailed hawk, American kestrel, spotted sandpiper, Wilson’s snipe, savannah sparrow, white crowned sparrow, California Quail, mallards, widgeon, great blue heron, and great egret to name a few.

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

The City of Boardman, incorporated in 1927, is located in northeastern Oregon, along the Columbia River and Interstate 84, and 164 miles east of Portland. The city’s elevation is almost 310 feet above sea level and has a total area of 4.17 square miles.

Human Population: With almost 5,800 residents as of 2024, it is the largest city in Morrow County. Boardman also has a high percentage of socially vulnerable populations, including a large Hispanic/Latino population (67.5%), and 20.9% of the population live below the poverty level.

Economic Assets: A number of economic assets can be found in and around Boardman and include the Port of Morrow and the variety of businesses that are sited within the Port, Interstate 84 and the two interchanges that serve the City of Boardman and the Port of Morrow, the Columbia River and the barge terminals that move significant loads both to and from the Boardman area, the Union Pacific Railroad including the number of sidings and loops that the Port of Morrow have installed, and the High, Wide, and Heavy transportation infrastructure.

Environmental Assets: A short list of environmental assets includes the Columbia River providing both recreational and transportation opportunities, the Coyote Springs wildlife area just east of the City of Boardman, and an annual weather pattern that has moderate temperatures.

Cultural and Historic Resources: The City of Boardman was relocated to higher ground when the John Day Dam was built, resulting in a community that is now split by both Interstate 84 and the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) powerlines. The resulting Marina Park and the Heritage Trail, as it travels through Boardman, both tell that story alongside the SAGE Center. The Columbia River also has a rich history going back centuries with the Lewis and Clark expedition talking about this region in their journals.

Infrastructure and Critical Facilities: Boardman is primarily an agricultural community and is a major hub for transportation and manufactured goods. It is home to the Port of Morrow with several food processing and storage plants, a gas-powered generation plant, a wood chipping mill, an alfalfa hay processing plant, an ethanol producing plant, a bio-fuels terminal for loading ethanol in barges, and a mining company that mines aggregate used for cement, asphalt and other rock uses.