

# Millwood, WA

## Vulnerability Assessment



## Extreme Weather Events and Climate Impacts

The City of Millwood, located in east central Spokane right near the city of Spokane and Spokane Valley, is home to 1,881 residents (Figure 1). The city is suburban surrounded by housing on its east and west borders, a state highway and railway to the south, and the Spokane River to the north. Millwood faces potential risks from existing and future climate hazards, including to community health and safety, natural resources and ecosystems, and built infrastructure.

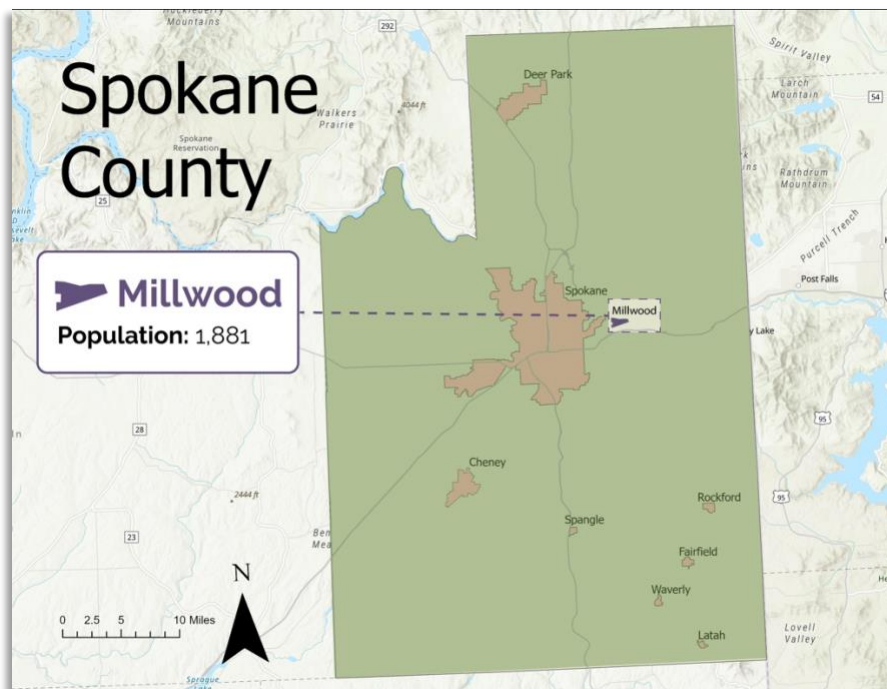


Figure 1. Location of Millwood within Spokane County, Washington, included in the Climate Vulnerability Assessment.

Some of the extreme weather events and climate impacts expected for Millwood include:

- **Increased annual temperature:** Higher annual temperatures with an expected 9.5°F temperature increase by 2100 and more frequent extreme heat events.
- **Wildfire and wildfire smoke:** Increased wildfire activity and risk from extreme heat and heightened drought conditions, raising wildfire and wildfire smoke impacts.
- **Changing precipitation:** Changes to precipitation patterns, with more winter precipitation falling as rain rather than snow, increasing streamflow and risk of flooding.

## Impacts on Health and Well-being

While climate change will affect all residents, certain groups face greater risks. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, local demographics highlight key populations who may be especially vulnerable:





## Impacts on Infrastructure, Community and Natural Resources

Of Millwood's 821 housing units, 346 properties (approximately 42% of all homes) are at risk of flooding over the next 30 years. Commercial areas are also at risk, and major roads are classified at extreme risk, threatening to delay emergency response and disrupt travel throughout the city. Flood risk in Millwood is concentrated along the Spokane River floodplain. Although much of the city center is outside of the high-risk area, Millwood still faces localized hazards.

Extreme weather and climate events such as wildfire smoke, extreme heat, and flooding will affect all residents of Millwood and place added stress on the city's infrastructure and natural resources. Although Millwood's direct wildfire risk is relatively low, nearby fires could still force evacuation. Displacement places added strain on emergency systems, disrupts medical care, and increases stress and instability for residents. Wildfire smoke traveling from other areas can further degrade local air quality, impacting outdoor activity and visibility.

In Millwood, limited tree cover and extensive paved areas intensify heat exposure, creating harsh conditions for people walking, biking, or waiting for transit. Hotter nights further limit opportunities for cooling, disrupt sleep, and increase stress, while households face rising costs to keep homes safe and livable during extreme heat. Wildfire smoke and extreme heat compound these risks, with smoke triggering asthma, weakening the immune system, affecting brain development in children, and worsening heart, lung, and memory issues among older adults.



## Resilience Opportunities

Millwood has several opportunities to strengthen resilience:

- ✓ **Transportation options:** As a busy commuter and freight corridor, Millwood can reduce risks by improving traffic management on Trent Avenue, expanding sidewalks and bike paths, improving public transit access, and planning detour routes to keep emergency response moving during floods or severe weather.
- ✓ **Spokane River stewardship:** Restoring riparian areas along the Spokane River with trees and native plants can both reduce flood and erosion risks and improve water quality.
- ✓ **Protecting health:** With many drivers and outdoor workers in Millwood, providing shaded rest areas, clean-air shelters, and hydration stations at community facilities could help residents cope with wildfire smoke and extreme heat.