

# Floodplain Resilience Plan

## ***Reducing future flood risk while protecting salmon and steelhead***

Portland is a river city, susceptible to periodic flooding that threatens lives and property. Climate change is increasing the types of severe weather events that cause flooding, so managing the risk of flooding is a priority for the City of Portland.

While improving river and floodplain health and resilience is essential to our communities and our economy, it's also crucial to the recovery of ecologically and culturally irreplaceable salmon and steelhead.

As a part of the settlement of a lawsuit brought by Audubon Society of Portland, National Wildlife Federation, Northwest Environmental Defense Center, and the Association of Northwest Steelheaders, the federal National Marine Fisheries Service issued a Biological Opinion (BiOp) in 2016 stating that the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) implementation of the National Flood Insurance Program in Oregon negatively impacts protected salmon and steelhead by encouraging development that reduces floodplain habitat. FEMA worked with Oregon jurisdictions since then to develop a proposed implementation plan that responds to the BiOp, Oregon Land Use law and local conditions.

The Floodplain Resilience Plan incorporates guidance from the BiOp, updating development regulations to expand and improve floodplain habitat for salmon and steelhead.

A parallel project led by the Bureau of Development Services is updating the building code to ensure capacity for flood waters is maintained along rivers and streams with new development.

Without these actions, Portlanders risk losing access to FEMA's federally backed flood insurance and disaster relief grants. And salmon, steelhead and other natural resources will likely suffer.



***Updated floodplain development regulations, along with other City projects and programs, will help ensure Portlanders have continued access to FEMA's federally backed flood insurance and financial assistance after floods.***

## **The Floodplain Resilience Plan is a collaboration between City bureaus**

When the BiOp was released, the City developed a multi-phase work plan to meet federal requirements, as well as the needs of the community. This effort involves several bureaus and agency partners.



City of Portland, Oregon | Bureau of Planning and Sustainability | [www.portland.gov/bps](http://www.portland.gov/bps)  
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As a part of the Floodplain Resilience Plan, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability will:

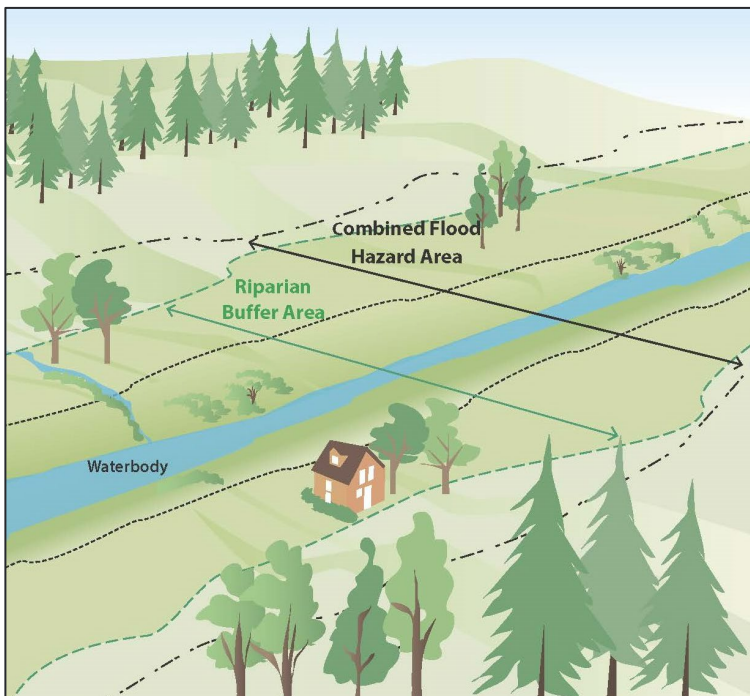
- Apply new floodplain development and vegetation management requirements to maintain fish and wildlife habitat through the application of Environmental or River overlay zones.
- Apply additional protections within 170 ft of ordinary high water to expand fish habitat.
- Incorporate the results of a new model of a 1996 flood-like event into the City's regulated floodplain or "combined flood hazard area."

The Bureau of Development Services is leading a project to:

- Update building requirements (Title 24) to increase the required excavation when new soil and/or structures are placed in the floodplain. Currently, excavation is only required with placement of soil.

The Bureau of Environmental Services is:

- Evaluating options to support mitigation banks as an alternative to onsite mitigation.
- Identifying restoration sites in the floodplain to improve habitat for salmon and steelhead.



Regulatory updates are proposed for the **combined flood hazard area**, which includes the FEMA 100-year floodplain, the recently developed "Modeled" Willamette River 1996 Flood Extent and Metro's 1996 Flood Inundation Area.

Development in the **combined flood hazard area** will be required to avoid impacts to floodplain habitat, whenever possible, and to minimize and mitigate impacts that are unavoidable.

Development in the Willamette River **riparian buffer area** (170 ft from ordinary high water) will require additional mitigation for impacts to riverbank habitat.

## Project steps and timeline

November 2021:	Discussion Draft Released
August 2022:	Proposed Draft Released
November 2022:	Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) amendments and recommendation
August - October 2023:	City Council public hearing, deliberation and adoption

### For more information

[www.portland.gov/bps/enviro-planning/floodplain-project](http://www.portland.gov/bps/enviro-planning/floodplain-project)

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