

Douglas County

Hazard Mitigation Plan Periodic Update

Public Participation Plan

March 2026



INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

Douglas County’s Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) is the community’s roadmap for reducing long-term risk to people, property, critical facilities, and the environment from natural hazards such as wildfire, flooding, severe storms, drought, landslides, and earthquakes. Updated on a regular cycle (typically every five years), the HMP identifies local hazards and vulnerabilities, evaluates capabilities, and sets prioritized mitigation actions for county and participating jurisdictions. Maintaining a current, FEMA-approved plan preserves eligibility for federal mitigation funding (e.g., BRIC, FMA, HMGP) and supports resilient land use, capital investment, and emergency management decisions. Effective hazard mitigation reflects local knowledge, values, and priorities.

Public participation provides value to the hazard mitigation planning process by:

- Incorporating people’s experiences, historical impacts, and community-specific risks.
- Building legitimacy and trust, strengthening support for adopted actions and future investments.
- Engaging populations most at risk, including rural residents, low-income households, people with disabilities, older adults, agricultural workers, limited English proficient (LEP) residents, and others who may face disproportionate hazard impacts.
- Creating partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions, tribes, businesses, utilities, nonprofits, and academia that are essential for multi-jurisdiction coordination and project implementation.
- Meeting state and federal requirements that enable plan approval and grant eligibility.

This plan outlines how Douglas County and participating jurisdictions will inform and involve the public and stakeholders throughout the HMP update process. It defines engagement objectives, key audiences (including underserved and high-risk populations), outreach tools and accessibility measures, roles and responsibilities, and methods for documenting input and showing how it shaped the final plan and mitigation action strategy. The public engagement process will follow a timeline that generally aligns with major planning milestones for both the HMP update and the Comprehensive Plan adoption process.



The Douglas County Hazard Mitigation Plan update is supported with funding from Washington’s Climate Commitment Act. The CCA supports Washington’s climate action efforts by putting cap-and-invest dollars to work reducing climate pollution, creating jobs, and improving public health. Information about the CCA is available at www.climate.wa.gov.

Public Participation Requirements

This plan is designed to meet or exceed federal and state requirements while meaningfully engaging the Douglas County community. The following requirements apply:

1. FEMA requirements for local mitigation planning¹:

- Providing opportunities for the public to participate during plan development and to comment before plan approval.
- Coordinating with and documenting participation by neighboring jurisdictions; local, state, and federal agencies; tribes; businesses; academia; and nonprofits throughout the process.
- Maintaining a strategy for continued public involvement during plan maintenance and future updates.

2. FEMA's Local Mitigation Planning Policy Guide²: Emphasizes inclusive, accessible engagement; early and ongoing stakeholder coordination; and documentation of outreach methods, comments received, and how feedback influenced the plan.

3. Washington State Emergency Management requirements³:

- Align with the Washington State Enhanced Hazard Mitigation Plan framework.
- Offer multiple, accessible opportunities for input (including virtual options, plain language materials, and translation/interpretation upon request).
- Engage federally recognized tribes with interests in or adjacent to Douglas County and consult early on shared risks and actions.
- Comply with the Washington Open Public Meetings Act for noticed public meetings and with applicable civil rights and accessibility requirements (e.g., Title VI, ADA, and language access for LEP populations).

4. Washington State Department of Commerce Climate Planning Guidance⁴: Emphasizes engagement across a diversity of community members in equitable and meaningful ways; early integration of community members into the planning process; and coordination with comprehensive planning public engagement.

¹ FEMA: [Local Mitigation Plans Code](#)

² FEMA: [Local Mitigation Planning Policy Guide](#)

³ WA State [Open Public Meetings Act](#)

⁴ WA Department of Commerce: [Climate Planning Guidance](#)

ENGAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Douglas County’s HMP update will be most effective when it reflects the knowledge, needs, and priorities of the people who live, work, farm, study, and do business in the county. Engagement objectives guide how we inform, invite, and incorporate public and stakeholder input throughout plan development, adoption, and ongoing maintenance.

Goals

<p>Early and continuous involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide engagement opportunities at key milestones: hazard identification and risk assessment, capability assessment, mitigation strategy development, draft plan review, and adoption. • Offer multiple avenues for participation (online, in person, etc.) to reduce barriers.
<p>Inclusive, equitable access</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively reaches residents most at risk from hazards and historically underrepresented in planning, including rural and agricultural communities, low-income households, seniors, people with disabilities, renters and manufactured home residents, farmworkers and seasonal workers, tribes, small businesses, and LEP populations. • Provide plain-language materials, translated content, and interpretation at no cost upon request.
<p>Two-way communication and transparency</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly explain how input will be used, document comments, and publicly share “what we heard/what we changed.” • Publish engagement materials, summaries, and the evolving mitigation action list on an accessible project website.
<p>Tribal and interjurisdictional coordination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite and consult with interested tribes early and throughout, consistent with state expectations and FEMA guidance. • Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions, special purpose districts, utilities, nonprofits, and private sector partners on shared risks and actions.
<p>Risk literacy and actionable input</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve understanding of local hazards, climate-influenced risks, and mitigation options using maps and data. • Structure activities to gather implementable ideas for projects, policies, and partnerships.

Equitable Engagement

The plan will include the following outreach practices to ensure meaningful participation by communities that face higher hazard exposure, sensitivity, or limited capacity to prepare, respond, and recover. These practices are carefully targeted using community data and are designed to reduce barriers to participation. Our team will use other ongoing planning efforts to bolster our public engagement. CAFÉ Connections, our translation

services partner, will also use their extensive network to obtain feedback from the Spanish-speaking community through surveys and events.

Identify and prioritize audiences

- Use local knowledge and available screening tools (e.g., Washington Environmental Health Disparities Map, CDC Social Vulnerability Index, and, as appropriate, the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool) to identify census tracts and communities with higher vulnerability.
- Focus outreach on areas with elevated wildfire, flood, landslide, drought, and severe storm risks, including but not limited to, mobile home parks, unincorporated rural areas, and places with seasonal agricultural workforces.

Language access

- Translate core materials into commonly used languages in Douglas County, including Spanish; add others based on need.
- Provide no-cost interpretation at public meetings when requested.
- Use plain language, visuals, and infographics to increase comprehension for all audiences.

Accessible formats and venues

- Offer hybrid and virtual options with dial-in numbers and recorded content; provide materials in large print, screen-reader-friendly PDFs, and other formats upon request.
- Provide childcare, refreshments, or transportation vouchers when feasible to reduce participation barriers.

Partnerships and trusted messengers

- Collaborate with community-based organizations, faith groups, farmworker and agricultural associations, senior centers, schools, libraries, housing providers, and health and disability advocates to co-host events and distribute information.

Culturally responsive, place-based methods

- Take engagement to where people already are (e.g., fairs, markets, school events).

ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Douglas County’s rural geography, dispersed populations, and mix of incorporated cities and unincorporated communities call for a flexible, multi-channel engagement framework that meets people where they already are—online, in town, and out in the field. The framework below blends a clear web presence, targeted in-person touchpoints, and trusted local messengers. It sequences outreach so residents and stakeholders can inform the risk assessment early, shape mitigation strategies mid-process, and review the draft plan before adoption. It also aligns with FEMA and Washington State expectations for inclusive, accessible engagement and ongoing documentation.

PHASE 1

Launch and listening (kickoff to early risk findings)

- Stand up the Emergency Management landing page and project identity.
- Brief the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and Planning Commission (PC) for early input and buy-in.
- Deploy a countywide project notice (online and paper) and light-touch tabling/pop-ups.

PHASE 2

Co-develop strategies (risk findings to draft actions)

- Hold city-specific sessions to surface local insights and priorities.
- Public-facing webinar to reach more community members.
- Participate in tabling opportunities at local events.
- Communicate progress and key updates via web and social channels.

PHASE 3

Review and refine (public draft to adoption)

- Late-summer open house aligned with Comprehensive Plan.
- Follow-up public-facing webinar.
- Presence at local events (e.g., NCW Fair in August) to broaden reach.
- Return to BOCC and PC to present results and receive direction prior to adoption.

Target Audiences

The following target audiences reflect Douglas County’s rural context and include the residents, partners, and sectors whose insights and participation are essential to identifying risks and shaping effective, community-driven mitigation actions.

General public	Residents in cities and unincorporated areas; homeowners, renters, and manufactured home communities.
Populations at higher risk or underrepresented	Low-income households; older adults; people with disabilities; limited English proficient residents (notably Spanish speakers); farmworkers and seasonal/temporary agricultural workers; families without reliable internet or transportation.
Tribes	Federally recognized tribes with interests in or adjacent to Douglas County.
Community partners	CBOs, faith-based groups, senior centers, libraries, food banks, housing providers, disability and health advocates, youth/parent organizations, emergency volunteer groups (CERT).
Private sector and institutions	Small businesses, chambers of commerce, major employers, schools/colleges, insurers, builders/developers, and realtors.

Tactics

The tactics below describe how Douglas County will reach and involve target audiences—combining a clear web presence, rural-friendly in-person and virtual touchpoints, and partnerships with trusted local messengers—while aligning with Comprehensive Plan outreach and meeting FEMA and Washington State requirements for inclusive, accessible engagement.

Core infrastructure

- **Emergency Management landing page:** (managed by PIO)
 - Content: plain-language overview; timeline and milestones; public outreach calendar; links to comment forms; draft documents; FAQ; resources; contact info.
- **Project branding and templates:** Consistent flyers, slides, social posts, and sign-in sheets; screen-reader-friendly PDFs.

Engagement activities

- **BOCC and PC touchpoints:** Early briefing to introduce scope, approach, and initial risks; later briefing to present findings and proposed actions.
- **Community Webinars:** Online events intended to provide an alternative engagement opportunity for community members unable to attend events in person. An early webinar will outline the HMP update process and offer an opportunity for Q&A. A webinar later in the process will provide assessment results and process updates.

- **City-specific sessions:** In-person meetings hosted with each city; provide localized risk maps and early hazard insights for feedback and discussion. Bridgeport, Mansfield, Rock Island + East Wenatchee, Waterville, and Coulee.
 - **Hazard/theme-based focus groups:** For example, wildfire and WUI, flood and irrigation/watersheds, critical facilities/utilities, agriculture and drought, vulnerable populations/access and functional needs.
- **Late summer open house:** Share draft plan highlights, mitigation actions, and how feedback shaped the plan; collect final comments. Align with the Comprehensive Plan if possible.
 - **(Optional) Experiential event:** For example, showcasing “hazard stations” (wildfire defensible space demo, floodproofing displays, home hardening materials); include kids’ activities and prize drawings to encourage attendance.
- **Tabling at existing events:** NCW Fair (August), farmers markets, open houses, grange meetings, library events, CAFÉ Connections sponsored events, etc. Align with Comprehensive Plan where possible.

Digital and print communications

- **Social media and web:** County channels plus cross-posts via partner organizations; maintain EM webpage with new information as it becomes available. Channels for promotion may include KPQ, Kozi, Wenatchee World, Everbridge, and County and Partner social media accounts and newsletters.
- **Physical postings:** When possible, post information at locations that reach more of the public: libraries, post offices, grange halls, feed stores, clinics, senior centers, laundromats, and faith centers.

Timeline

The timeline below outlines key engagement milestones from process launch through HMP adoption, sequencing outreach activities, meetings, and public comment periods to align with risk assessment, strategy development, BOCC/PC touchpoints, and state/FEMA review. Key dates will be aligned with the Comprehensive Plan where possible.



APPENDIX

Douglas County Demographics

Population & Demographics (2023 Estimates)

- Population: ~44,500
- Median Age: 38.4 years
- Racial Makeup: Roughly 63% White, with substantial Hispanic/Latino populations (many identified as 'Other Hispanic') making up a significant portion of the total, alongside smaller percentages of Black, Asian, Native American, and multiracial individuals.

Income & Housing

- Median Household Income: Increased to around \$80,374 in 2023
- Households: ~15,415, with over 70% owner-occupied

Key Characteristics

- Growing Diversity: A large segment of the population identifies as Hispanic or Latino.
- Rural & Urban Mix: The county includes cities like East Wenatchee and Waterville, experiencing varied local conditions.
- Economic Activity: Known for agriculture, with employment opportunities in various sectors.

Data Snapshot (from various sources)

- Density: Around 21.1 people per square mile
- Citizenship: About 87.7% are U.S. citizens

Sources:

Data USA: <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/douglas-county-wa>

Douglas County: <https://www.douglascountywa.net/390/About-Us>

World Population Review: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-counties/washington/douglas-county>.

Overburdened Communities

Disproportionate natural-hazard burdens fall on lower-income, farmworker, and rural communities in Douglas County, including Bridgeport/Bridgeport Bar, Mansfield, East Wenatchee's WUI fringe (including Badger Mountain/Orondo), and the Palisades–Moses Coulee area. The main drivers are high wildfire exposure and smoke, flash-flood/debris-flow hazards in coulees, steep-slope instability along the Columbia River bluffs, extreme heat affecting outdoor workers, and winter storm isolation on the Waterville Plateau.

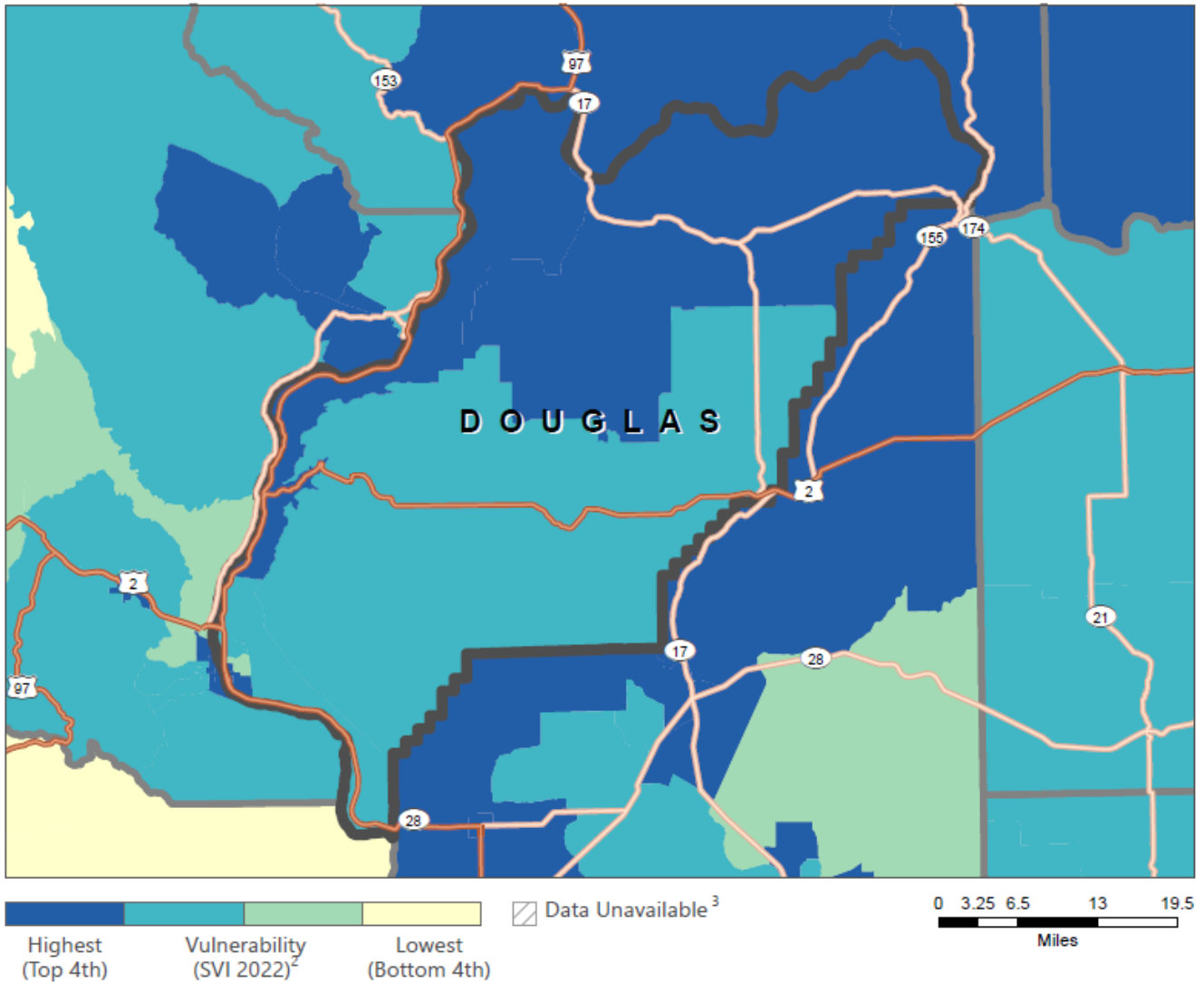
Additionally, East Wenatchee has been identified as overburdened and highly impacted by air pollution because it meets the statewide screening criteria based on the Washington Environmental Health Disparities map ranking and the EJScreen demographic index. The city also experiences elevated levels of short-term exposure to fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}). More details about this designation can be found in the Department of Ecology's 2025 [Report](#).

- **Bridgeport and Bridgeport Bar:** High wildfire exposure at the WUI and along the Columbia, housing that includes older and manufactured homes, high share of Latino and farm-worker households, limited redundant evacuation routes. The 2020 Pearl Hill Fire burned large areas of northern Douglas County and destroyed homes in and around Bridgeport/Bridgeport Bar; prolonged smoke and power/water disruptions were reported. State wildfire-risk maps show elevated structure exposure here, and social-vulnerability indices flag Bridgeport tracts as among the county's most vulnerable.
- **Mansfield and the northern plateau:** Sparse population, long emergency response and evacuation distances, single primary access routes, high wind and grass-fire spread potential, limited services if power is out. Pearl Hill Fire advanced rapidly across rangeland into the Mansfield area in 2020; state risk tools rate this zone as high for fast-moving wildfire. Winter storms and blowing snow also isolate the area.
- **East Wenatchee fringe, Badger Mountain, and Orondo corridor:** Rapid growth in the WUI on steep, windy slopes; ember exposure from fires on either side of the Columbia; slope/landslide and canyon-wind issues; mixed incomes with pockets of higher social vulnerability. The 2021 Batterman Road Fire in Douglas County prompted evacuations and threatened subdivisions near Badger Mountain/East Wenatchee; the 2021 Red Apple Fire across the river in Chelan County showered embers toward East Wenatchee/Orondo. Steep-slope areas above the river carry mapped landslide susceptibilities, and canyon corridors have seen rockfall and debris-flow closures.
- **Palisades and Moses Coulee:** Flood and debris-flow propensity in steep coulees after cloudbursts or rain-on-snow; limited communications coverage and long response times; lower household incomes relative to metro areas. Multiple recent events have washed out local roads and culverts in the Palisades/Moses Coulee area; county hazard plans and WSDOT maintenance reports note recurring drainage and debris-flow problems here. Wildfire and smoke are also recurrent in surrounding rangelands.
- **Waterville and the plateau communities:** Winter storms, ice, and strong winds that close roads and cut power; agricultural livelihoods sensitive to drought and heat. County and state hazard profiles identify significant winter-storm and blowing-snow impacts on the Waterville Plateau, with occasional multi-day transportation disruptions.

Social Vulnerability

Social vulnerability refers to a community's capacity to prepare for and respond to the stress of hazardous events ranging from natural disasters, such as tornadoes or disease outbreaks, to human-caused threats, such as toxic chemical spills. The CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index County Map depicts the social vulnerability of communities, at census tract level, within a specified county. The map groups sixteen census-derived factors into four themes that summarize the extent to which the area is socially vulnerable to disaster. The factors include economic data as well as data regarding education, family characteristics, housing, language ability, ethnicity, and vehicle access. Overall Social Vulnerability combines all the variables to provide a comprehensive assessment.

Figure 1: Overall Social Vulnerability

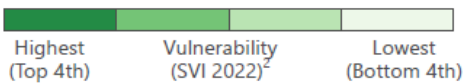
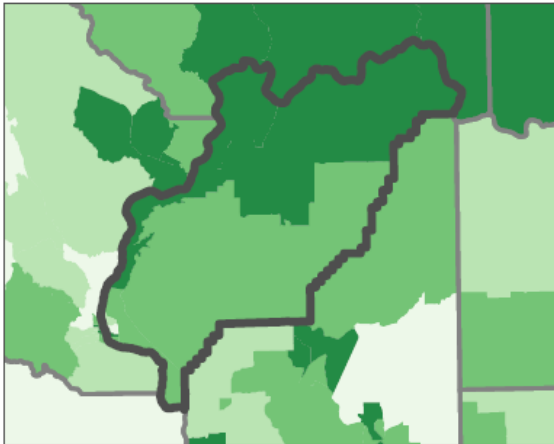


Social Vulnerability Themes

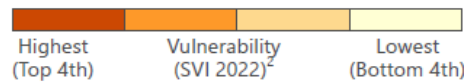
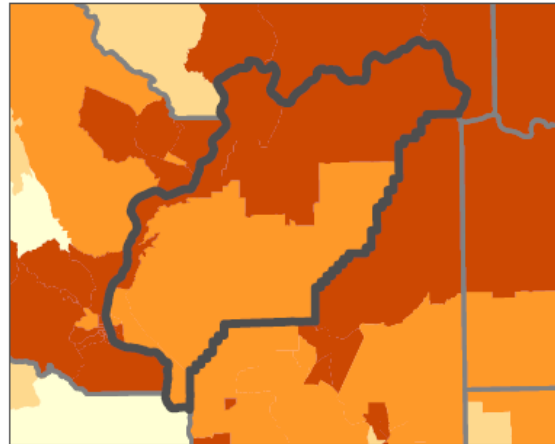
The CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index uses four key themes to rank community vulnerability for disaster preparedness and health equity: Socioeconomic Status, Household Composition/ Disability, Racial/Ethnic Minority Status & Language, and Housing Type & Transportation. These themes identify areas that need support by analyzing factors such as poverty, age, disability, language barriers, crowded housing, and access to vehicles, helping officials target resources effectively.

Figure 2: Social Vulnerability Themes

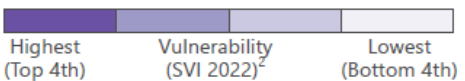
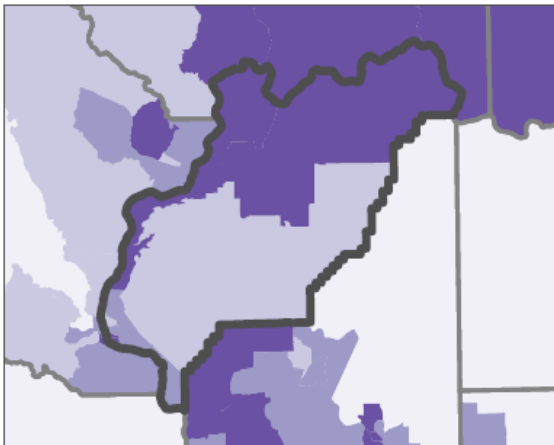
Socioeconomic Status⁵



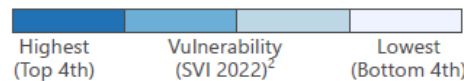
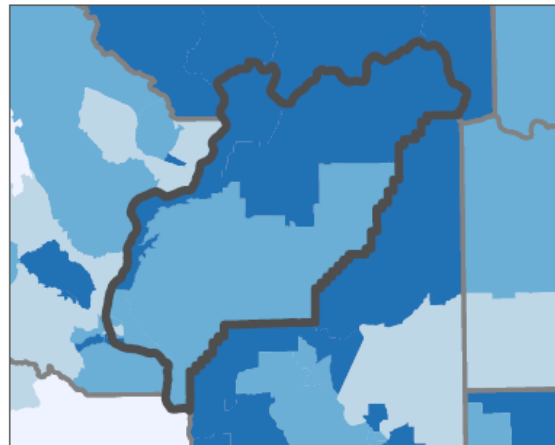
Household Characteristics⁶



Racial and Ethnic Minority Status⁷



Housing Type/Transportation⁸



Data Sources: ²CDC/ATSDR/GRASP, U.S. Census Bureau, ArcGIS StreetMap Premium.

Notes: ¹Overall Social Vulnerability: All 16 variables. ³One or more variables unavailable at census tract level. ⁴The CDC/ATSDR SVI combines percentile rankings of U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2022 variables, for the state, at the census tract level. ⁵Socioeconomic Status: Below 150% Poverty, Unemployed, Housing Costs Burden, No High School Diploma, No Health Insurance. ⁶Household Characteristics: Aged 65 and Older, Aged 17 and Younger, Civilian with a Disability, Single-Parent Household, English Language Proficiency. ⁷Race/Ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino (of any race); Black and African American, Not Hispanic or Latino; American Indian and Alaska Native, Not Hispanic or Latino; Asian, Not Hispanic or Latino; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, Not Hispanic or Latino; Two or More Races, Not Hispanic or Latino; Other Races, Not Hispanic or Latino. ⁸Housing Type/Transportation: Multi-Unit Structures, Mobile Homes, Crowding, No Vehicle, Group Quarters.

Projection: NAD 1983 StatePlane Washington South FIPS 4602.

References: Flanagan, B.E., et al., A Social Vulnerability Index for Disaster Management. *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*, 2011. 8(1).
 CDC/ATSDR SVI web page: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/placeandhealth/svi/index.html>.

Sources:

- Douglas County Hazard Mitigation Plan (latest HMP update)
- Washington DNR's 'Wildfire Risk to Communities' maps
- FEMA National Risk Index and Flood Insurance Rate Maps
- CDC/ATSDR Social Vulnerability Index
- Washington DOH Environmental Health Disparities Map
- WSDOT incident/landslide and maintenance logs
- Incident summaries for the 2020 Pearl Hill Fire and 2021 Batterman Road/Red Apple fires