

# **Lane Regional Resiliency Collaborative**

## **The Purpose of the Lane Regional Resiliency Collaborative**

Natural hazards in Lane County such as extreme winter storms, flooding, and wildfires are becoming more common and cause negative economic, infrastructure, and social impacts that cross jurisdictional and agency boundaries. It is increasingly clear that resilience (reducing risk and recovering more quickly) from large-scale and long-duration disasters, including a Cascadia earthquake event, requires cross-jurisdictional and cross-agency leadership, coordination, and collaboration.

Many well-functioning collaborations among a variety of stakeholders in Lane County currently exist and provide the foundation to jointly pursue resources and planning in advance of the next disaster. The Lane Regional Resiliency Collaborative's goal is to implement mutually beneficial resiliency projects in the short term and increase coordination around a shared vision of resilience in the long term. Collaborative members will share information and best practices, link, leverage, and align local hazard mitigation efforts and resources, coordinate risk reduction policy approaches, and engage state and federal agencies with one regional voice for technical assistance and funding support.

In recent years, Lane County experienced an increased need for collaboration as disaster events increased in frequency and severity. Examples include the Holiday Farm Fire and the major ice-storm events. Further, the predicted Cascadia earthquake threatens significantly greater and sustained disruption. The COVID-19 pandemic forced Lane County to rethink how we work together, and underscored the need for a scalable collaborative structure like the proposed Lane Regional Resiliency Collaborative (LRRC). The need for expanded relationship building, shared resources, shared understanding, and collaborative decision-making is clear. The LRRC will allow Lane County public agencies and their non-profit allies to become better positioned to pursue and secure federal and state dollars that reward collaboration and regional planning.

## **Actions Taken to Spur the Creation of the LRRC**

The purpose of the LRRC is to link, leverage, and align community resources (e.g. county, city, special district, nonprofit, private sector, etc.) across Lane County using a whole community framework. Lane County, with assistance from University of Oregon staff and students, convened local stakeholders to create a collaborative centered on expanded collaboration focused on disaster planning.

In the fall of 2019, the Oregon Policy Lab and the Wayne Morse Center (both part of the University of Oregon) worked with the Lane County government to plan and facilitate two meetings to discuss the need for resiliency and collaboration across Lane County. These meetings brought together stakeholders from a range of local, state, and federal governments, utilities, hospitals, and others operating in the county to collaborate on developing a local collaborative to foster resilience. Initially, the focus was on climate change, storm events, and earthquakes, but COVID-19 became a key issue along the way.

Workshop attendees learned from the expertise of Dr. Lucy Jones, a US Geological Survey (USGS) seismologist and founder/chief scientist at the Dr. Lucy Jones Center for Science and

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Society. From these meetings a team of University of Oregon (UO) graduate students developed a collaborative organization framework to help prepare for, and be more resilient in the face of, disasters. This work helped to create the Lane Regional Resiliency Collaborative.

The UO graduate research teams worked closely with a “Core Team” of stakeholder advisors from Lane County, the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG), the Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB), the Cities of Eugene and Veneta, and the US Forest Service, amongst others, to design an operational framework for the LRRC. Based on the work to date, the short-term goal of the LRRC is to create a regional, cross-agency, cross-jurisdictional collaborative focused on pre-event hazard mitigation and risk reduction. This means that the LRRC is focused on buying down risk through pre-event mitigation actions, not emergency response.

Pre-event hazard mitigation and risk reduction actions are wide-ranging, depending on the specific hazard or risk being addressed. An ORS-190 intergovernmental agreement emerged as the best governing structure to facilitate the LRRC’s regional cooperation. The LRRC would coordinate funding and activities across the county to link, leverage, and align the resources to reduce and mitigate risks.

### **Current Projects**

1. Regional Resiliency Building on the University of Oregon campus designed to protect public safety communications systems and critical network infrastructure. This project aims to increase communications resiliency across Lane County.
2. Convening individuals from around the county that work in the same field to build relationships, discuss overlapping interests and potentially collaborate.
3. Pre-staging emergency response supplies at locations around the county.

### **Upcoming Projects**

1. Countywide fuel reduction project mapping. Developing a single source of data to create a common operating picture and assess where risk is being reduced in comparison with wildfire risk maps.
2. Interagency resilient communications technology strategic deployment.
3. Resiliency master planning with a Cascadia Subduction Zone context. This project will aim to identify “islands” and areas isolated by predicted bridge failures in a Cascadia event to pre-stage assets and construct resilient structures to improve resiliency.

### **Next Steps**

1. Identify project leads on all projects.
2. Continue to advance projects that improve the community’s resilience.
3. Continue to engage partners and expand collaborative membership.
4. Collaboratively assess Federal Notice of Funding Opportunities and other funding sources for partnership opportunities.