This document was authored by Kittitas County's planning consultant, Tetra Tech, and was provided to the planning partnership during the June 25, 2010 Kick-Off Meeting.
The Disaster Mitigation Act (DMA) passed by Congress in 2000 mandates that local governments have an approved Hazard Mitigation Plan to be eligible for federal mitigation grant funding programs. The purpose of the hazard mitigation program is to reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters (such as floods, landslides, wildfires, and earthquakes) by enabling mitigation activities to be implemented at the local level both before and after disasters occur. The following are some frequently asked questions relating to the hazard mitigation planning process.

**Q: Why has my community/district/jurisdiction been selected as a potential planning partner?**
A: Local governments must develop and adopt multi-hazard mitigation plans to be eligible for federal mitigation grant assistance. Your jurisdiction meets the definition of “local government”. For the purposes of this program “local government” means:

- Any county, municipality, city, town, township, public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments (regardless of whether the council of governments is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law), regional or interstate government entity, or agency or instrumentality of a local government; any Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, or Alaska Native village or organization; and any rural community, unincorporated town or village, or other public entity.

**Q: What are the benefits to participating in this effort?**
A: By becoming a planning partner, one planning effort will cover all those committed planning partners in one process. This will eliminate redundancy within the planning area and will also allow the involved jurisdictions pool resources. Every jurisdiction will be on the same planning cycle which will set the stage for easier updates in the future. It also creates the opportunity to share ideas and identify disaster mitigation actions that will have better chances of funding because they are multi-jurisdictional.

**Q: How much will participating in this effort cost my jurisdiction?**
A: This planning process is funded by a grant the County received from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). As far as a monetary contribution, the County is asking for nothing from the involved jurisdictions. However, as a committed planning partner, you will be expected to meet specified performance parameters (such as attending meetings and completing documents) in support of the process. A key component for DMA compliance is documenting that all planning partners “participated” in the effort. The costs for your jurisdiction will be limited to staff time and travel to meetings or other “in-kind’ contributions associated with your participation.

**Q: How much staff time is it going to take to meet these parameters for participation?**
A: It depends. We want to make sure that the finished product for this effort generates a plan that identifies a mitigation strategy for the County and the Planning Partners that will reduce risk and identify as many grant eligible projects as possible. One of the ways we reduce the level of effort for Planning Partners is with the formation of a Steering Committee. This body will be made up of Planning Partners and other stakeholders within the planning area. The Steering Committee will oversee the plan’s development from the beginning and will assume responsibility for decision making on such issues as: goals/objectives, public outreach strategy, a catalog of mitigation actions, plan layout and plan submittal. It is much easier to convene a committee for these task that to try to assemble the complete partnership. As a Planning Partner, you will endorse this committee and support and implement its recommendations. While this committee will reduce the level of effort for your jurisdiction, there will be phases of this process where your participation will be mandatory. Planning Partners will be apprised of these milestones as they approach.
**Q: What is needed from us to become a Planning Partner?**
A: No formal action from your governing body is necessary to participate. Formal action will only be necessary at the end of the process when it comes time to adopt the plan. If interested, your jurisdiction will need to submit a Letter Of Intent (LOI) to participate that will designate a lead point of contact for this planning effort. This letter does not need to be signed by your chief executive or chairperson; however, it should be signed by the head of the department or agency that will assume the responsibility for implementation and oversight of the recommendations of the plan. Typically, this has been the Emergency Management or Planning arm of the jurisdictional organization.

**Q: Who is Tetra Tech and what is their involvement in this process?**
A: The County has secured the consulting services of Tetra Tech, Inc. to facilitate this planning effort. Tetra Tech has vast experience in the field of Hazard Mitigation Planning and has developed a planning process that is proven effective. Our nationally recognized experts have facilitated dozens of hazard mitigation planning efforts for state and local jurisdictions across the country. Tetra Tech will serve as the “Planning Team” to support your jurisdiction and give you all the tools and templates necessary to lead you to an effective Hazard Mitigation Plan. You can learn more about us at [http://www.tetratech.com/tetratech/disaster-management.html](http://www.tetratech.com/tetratech/disaster-management.html).

**Q: What hazard mitigation grants are available to help reduce my jurisdiction’s vulnerability to natural disasters?**
A: A variety of hazard mitigation grants are available from federal, state, local and private programs. The primary Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) programs administered by FEMA and made available by local adoption of the Hazard Mitigation Plan are the:
- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)
- Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program
- Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program
- Repetitive Flood Claims (RFC) Program
- Severe Repetitive Loss (SRL) Program
Detailed information about these programs and the grant application process are available in the attached FEMA HMA fact sheet.

**Q: So what happens next?**
A: The first thing we need to do is formalize the planning partnership. If your jurisdiction would like to participate in this effort, your jurisdiction will be asked to complete a Letter of Intent (LOI) agreement to participate. Sample LOIs will be provided at the kick-off meeting. The LOI may be sent to:

Mr. Rob Flaner  
Tetra Tech, Inc  
90 S. Blackwood Ave.  
Eagle, ID 83616  
208-939-4391  
Rob.Flaner@tetratech.com

The next step will be to form the Steering Committee. If you are interested in serving as a member of the Steering Committee, please notify us when you submit your LOI. Once the partnership is formed and the Steering Committee assembled, we will convene the entire group to formally recognize the Steering Committee, establish ground rules, define participation and initiate the scope of work for this effort. We expect the total planning process to take 12 to 14 months to complete. Should you have any questions regarding this process, please feel free to call Rob Flaner at 208-939-4391.