

HOUSING PLANNING CONTEXT

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Marion County +
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Governments

Key Findings / Takeaways

- According to the Housing Impact Assessment Report coordinated by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the 2020 fires destroyed/damaged 633 homes in Marion County and 71 in Linn County. From **Housing Impact Assessment Oregon Wildfires and Straight-line Winds**, April 30, 2021 ([https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/get-involved/Documents/committees/ODHTF/05-03-2021-DR-4562-OR-Assessment_\(FINAL_2021-04-30\).pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/get-involved/Documents/committees/ODHTF/05-03-2021-DR-4562-OR-Assessment_(FINAL_2021-04-30).pdf)).
- As of May 26, 2021, 58 survivors of the wildfires remained housed in temporary housing, according to the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS). Of course, these figures only represent those households being assisted by ODHS. The true extent of survivors needing permanent housing and other unmet needs is not fully known and remains an issue throughout the state. By way of comparison, across the fire impacted areas in Oregon over 1,000 wildfire survivors were still in temporary housing at the end of May 2021. The reports of people in temporary housing is a fluctuating count, as households enter and exit the ODHS temporary housing system.
- FEMA's Direct Housing program offers temporary housing for up to 18 months after a disaster. It is possible for the State to request an 18-month extension of that timeframe. The latest **FEMA Recovery at a Glance** factsheets for Marion and Linn Counties (release date March 17, 2021, <https://www.fema.gov/about/news-multimedia/fact-sheets>) report the recovery financial assistance given to survivors for housing and other personal losses.
- The point-in-time homeless count in 2019 found 974 homeless individuals in Marion County and 277 in Linn. It does not appear there is follow up information on the homeless post-wildfire. Anecdotal reports throughout the state indicate that homeless survivors are seeking assistance.
- Recovery is largely a function of building back lost inventory and expanding the supply through new construction. To date, the number of residential permits granted in both counties has been small:
 - Linn County permits pulled as of 7/30/21: 20 (12 single family, 8 manufactured housing). As noted above, 71 homes were lost in the fires.
 - Marion County permits pulled as of 5/31/21: 221 (138 single family, 53 manufactured housing). As noted above 663 homes were lost.

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- The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) completed an assessment of the impact wildfires had on housing - **Housing Impact Assessment Oregon Wildfires and Straight-line Winds**, dated April 30, 2021 ([https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/get-involved/Documents/committees/ODHTF/05-03-2021-DR-4562-OR-Assessment \(FINAL 2021-04-30\).pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/get-involved/Documents/committees/ODHTF/05-03-2021-DR-4562-OR-Assessment%20(FINAL%202021-04-30).pdf)). The primary purpose was to document pre- and post-wildfire housing and demographic conditions and needs. The HUD report points out:
 - Prior to the fires, Oregon Housing and Community Services commissioned an analysis of statewide housing need, **Implementing a Regional Housing Needs Analysis Methodology in Oregon: Approach, Results, and Initial Recommendations**, (March 2021, <https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/about-us/Documents/RHNA/RHNA-Technical-Report.pdf>). The report shows that statewide, an estimated 583,600 new housing units are needed across Oregon by 2040, which amounts to roughly 30,000 new housing units constructed per year between 2020 and 2040. Included in this total number of units are 104,372 units in the wildfire-impacted counties. Current annual rates of housing production estimated by the Oregon Home Builders Association are between 15,000 and 20,000 per year, amounting to a significant shortage in production.
 - According to Oregon’s Office of Economic Analysis, “...new construction activity in recent years [2019] has barely kept pace with the increase in population growth. A market imbalance remains... [urban areas are] rebalancing and the supply of new apartments are beginning to hold down rents. However, these trends are not yet seen elsewhere in the state.” The rate of new construction compared to the rate of household formation also appears to bear this out, particularly within the disaster-impacted counties. In sum, significant demand for new-build housing was outpacing supply prior to either the recent wildfire disasters, or COVID-19.
 - All of the wildfire impacted counties have affordable housing needs. One key indicator of need in Marion County is the survivors still being housed in State and FEMA temporary housing locations. This most likely reflects how the loss of housing supply from wildfires has further exacerbated the pre-fire affordable housing shortage.
- The OHCS **Wildfire Housing Recovery Community Survey Results**, published in January 2021 (<https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/get-involved/Documents/committees/ODHTF/01-07-2021-OR-Housing-RSF-SurveyResults.pdf>), highlight the need for near-term recovery actions that prioritize equitable access to resources, temporary and transitional housing, and mental health services. Long-term recovery concerns also include equity and inclusion, the need for a full range of housing, financing for recovery activities, and for “comprehensive *local* planning.”

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- The Oregon Disaster Housing Task Force and the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department recently released the **Oregon Disaster Housing Recovery Plan**, June 2021 (<https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/get-involved/Documents/committees/ODHTF/07-22-21-Oregon-Disaster-Housing-Recovery-Action-Plan-June-2021.pdf>). This plan outlines recovery goals and strategies that the State will implement with local and tribal governments to address wildfire recovery and the pre- and post-disaster housing shortages statewide and, specifically, in the fire-impacted counties.
- Significant financial resources are being deployed to address affordable housing shortages in Oregon and across the country. The Oregon Legislature recently allocated some \$900 million over the next two years, while the CARES Act, FEMA, Oregon DHS, and the American Rescue Plan will bring unprecedented levels of funding to address housing needs in Oregon. The timely completion of the **Oregon Disaster Housing Recovery Plan** positions the State with a roadmap to direct these funds to create additional housing.

Existing Plans, Policies, Projects, or Funding

Pre-Disaster

- **Implementing a Regional Housing Needs Analysis Methodology in Oregon: Technical Report**, ECONorthwest for OHCS, revised February 2021 (<https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/about-us/Documents/RHNA/RHNA-Technical-Report.pdf>)
- **Oregon's Housing Supply**, Oregon Office of Economic Analysis, Lehner, J. 2019 (<https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/about-us/Documents/RHNA/2020-RHNA-Technical-Report-Final.pdf>)
- **Housing Underproduction in Oregon: Economic, Fiscal and Environmental Impacts of Enabling Transit-Oriented Smart Growth to Address Oregon's Housing Affordability Challenge**, 2018, ECONorthwest, Baron, M. et al. (<https://www.upforgrowth.org/research/housing-underproduction-oregon>)

Post-Disaster

- **Housing Impact Assessment Oregon Wildfires and Straight-line Winds**, May 6, 2021 ([https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/get-involved/Documents/committees/ODHTF/05-03-2021-DR-4562-OR-Assessment \(FINAL 2021-04-30\).pdf](https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/get-involved/Documents/committees/ODHTF/05-03-2021-DR-4562-OR-Assessment%20(FINAL%202021-04-30).pdf))
- OHCS **Wildfire Housing Recovery Community Survey** results, January 2021 (<https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/get-involved/Documents/committees/ODHTF/01-07-2021-OR-Housing-RSF-SurveyResults.pdf>)

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- **Oregon Disaster Housing Recovery Action Plan**, July 2021 (<https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/get-involved/Documents/committees/ODHTF/07-22-21-Oregon-Disaster-Housing-Recovery-Action-Plan-June-2021.pdf>)
- **FEMA Recovery at a Glance Fact Sheets for Linn and Marion Counties** (<https://www.fema.gov/about/news-multimedia/fact-sheets>)
- **FEMA Measures of Recovery / Disaster Assistance Dashboard** by fire-impacted counties, June 2021 (https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/6c42bf70be214725b8dd0de8d407eca9/page/page_5/?views=view_20)

Opportunities for Recovery

- The **Oregon Disaster Housing Recovery Action Plan**, published in July 2021 (<https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/get-involved/Documents/committees/ODHTF/07-22-21-Oregon-Disaster-Housing-Recovery-Action-Plan-June-2021.pdf>), will guide the expenditures of an unprecedented amount of state and federal dollars being made available to address wildfire and COVID-19 recovery issues related to affordable housing. Challenges include creating an organizational framework to address unique needs in specific geographic areas and then a delivery system of programs and policies to address identified needs. In some locations local capacity-building may not be possible and county, regional and state agencies and the non-profit and private sectors will need to be mobilized.
- **Project Turnkey Wildfire Response** (<https://oregoncf.org/community-impact/impact-areas/housing-stability/project-turnkey/>) - The Oregon Legislature allocated \$30 million of emergency funds for grants to local community organizations to be used for acquisition, retrofitting, and potential operation of hotel and motel properties in wildfire-affected areas, including Marion and Linn counties. The grants are being administered through the Oregon Community Foundation.
- Other best practices to consider with recovery planning:
 - Requiring fire-retardant materials for housing construction
 - Adopting defensible space zoning requirements
 - Rebuilding in areas with reduced threat of fire, flood and landslides
 - Improvements in utility and infrastructure access and placement
 - Improvements to the building permitting and inspection process – organize, streamline and provide online capacity
 - Explore opportunities to develop a variety of housing opportunities – single family, multi-family, mixed income, housing specific for aging population, families and singles
 - Explore opportunities for developing workforce housing to support economic development efforts

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Recommendations

- Housing affordability continues to be a challenge. To meet the needs of residents and economic growth in the Canyon, some housing will need to be available at lower costs. However, the current costs of construction, land, and other development expenses makes make building new, affordable homes infeasible. The counties and cities may want to consider potential incentives to achieve affordable housing development. Fortunately, given the large amount of federal and state dollars available for wildfire and COVID-19 recoveries, funds may be available for development incentives to help offset the high costs of building new homes.
- Financing affordable housing with public assistance is very complex. Because of this, there are not many affordable housing developers - most are non-profit and mission-driven organizations. For communities wishing to pursue affordable housing development, thought should be given to recruitment of non-profit developers with large portfolios, staff expertise and organizational missions dedicated to affordable housing, who can help the counties and Santiam Canyon communities bear the risk and navigate financing complexities.
- Work with local, state, and federal agencies to explore opportunities to streamline and prioritize housing resources for wildfire-impacted communities and displaced residents.