

Lowell

The Lowell neighborhood contains large swaths of agricultural land in the east and pre-1972 structures along its western boundary, between I-5 and the railway. This location, between two potential hazardous material transit routes and near one hazardous material facility, places the area at risk of hazardous materials exposure during disasters. Site classes D and D to E soils dominate the entire area, with most of the development in site class D to E areas. The developed area lies along a steep slope area, leaving the neighborhood vulnerable to landslides. This combination of steep slopes, older buildings, hazardous facilities routes, and poor soils means this neighborhood faces elevated risk from major hazards, especially earthquakes.

As noted, the census-tract-level analysis does not take these factors into account, and thus HAZUSMH's prediction of low amounts of household displacement is likely inaccurate.

Large sections of Lowell also lie within the Snohomish River floodplain. While these areas are generally open space or farmland, there are some areas of manufacturing, utilities, and residential uses that are also exposed. This exposure may increase as FEMA continues to update local floodplain designations.

Finally, the combination of hazards to which the neighborhood is exposed puts it at risk of isolation. Floods and landslides could cut some areas off from the rest of the neighborhood and the city, potentially stranding people. Workers at manufacturing and utility sites in the area would be most at risk. Much of the housing in the area is cut off from neighboring areas by steep slopes.

