

When floods strike, individuals and communities are subject to significant economic and social costs. Many British Columbians are unaware of the flood risk they face, due to out-of-date floodplain maps.

BC has the opportunity to take steps to minimize damage from future floods—this is the purpose of the British Columbia Real Estate Association’s (BCREA) initiative to ensure existing floodplain maps are updated and remain current.

Effective flood management is complex, and floodplain maps are a logical starting point. A floodplain map shows areas subject to high flood hazard, and helps guide land use decisions. Ongoing changes in hydrology, land use and climate require maps to be updated regularly, but that hasn’t happened in most parts of BC. Outdated floodplain maps compromise the ability of decision makers to effectively assess and manage flood risks, putting BC communities in jeopardy.

BCREA Floodplain Maps Action Plan

On March 8, 2013, with financial support from the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia, BCREA hosted a workshop with nearly 70 stakeholders to examine the state of floodplain maps in BC. The key output was an action plan designed to advance progress to update existing floodplain maps.



Implementation and Progress

Since the publication of the initial Floodplain Maps Action Plan in April 2013, a collaborative Floodplain Maps Working Group, consisting of BCREA, and volunteers from the Adaptation to Climate Change Team at Simon Fraser University, Fraser Basin Council, Ebbwater Consulting, Northwest Hydraulic Consultants Ltd, Insurance Bureau of Canada, Urban Development Institute, Okanagan Basin Water Board and the Planning Institute of BC have worked together, and as champions within their own spheres of influence, to move forward this Floodplain Maps Action Plan.

Because the Action Plan is very much a working, evolving document, it requires regular updates. Regardless of how much the plan changes over time, it continues to focus on ways to overcome political, technical and financial challenges. The following revised actions support a single objective: to ensure that existing floodplain maps are updated and remain current.

Having already established a multi-stakeholder Working Group and delivered key research outcomes, the Action Plan has generated movement toward updating existing floodplain maps in BC. Moving forward, BCREA will continue to provide progress updates and revise the Action Plan, as needed.

This Action Plan, plus quarterly progress reports and resulting research reports, are available on the BCREA website at www.bcrea.bc.ca.

Technical Actions

The following technical actions address the ongoing need for standards, guidelines and collaboration. They are complex and require support and funding from a variety of partners.

Actions	Partners	Timeline
1. Monitor provincial and federal government developments related to flood mapping, management and insurance.	BCREA and Working Group	Ongoing since June 2014
2. Monitor and report on efforts to improve data-sharing protocols and procedures related to overcoming proprietary interests and data management requirements.	Working Group	Ongoing since June 2014
3. Update the BC Floodplain Map Inventory Report published by BCREA in October 2015 to develop an up-to-date inventory of floodplain maps in BC and a better understanding of the quality and quantity of data available.	BCREA to lead with support from Working Group	2020

Political Actions

The priority to acquire political support provincially and locally on the urgency of floodplain mapping remains. The following actions continue this effort. They are also designed to overcome capacity issues within local governments to undertake floodplain mapping projects, and support the need for ongoing dialogue among all stakeholders.

Actions	Partners	Timeline
4. Communicate the progress and outcomes of the Lower Mainland Flood Management Strategy to enable opportunities to advance flood hazard mapping provincially.	Fraser Basin Council and others	Phase 1 complete in June 2016; Phase 2 underway
5. Through a coordinated approach, take opportunities to raise awareness among decision makers, stakeholders and the media to strengthen political support.	BCREA and Working Group	Ongoing since April 2013
6. Ask the provincial and federal governments to clarify liability and access to emergency funds, with respect to local governments and residents, in designated floodplains.	BCREA and others	Ongoing since October 2013

Financial Action

In 2014, the federal government announced \$200 million to establish a National Disaster Mitigation Program (NDMP). The program provided funding to provincial and territorial governments for floodplain mapping, and these governments redistributed funding to eligible entities such as local governments, public or private sector bodies and band councils. While the NDMP spurred many flood mapping projects in BC, its last intake occurred in 2018 and no information has been provided about whether the program will continue or be replaced.

Actions	Partners	Timeline
7. Review the Floodplain Mapping Funding Guidebook for BC Local Governments (first published in May 2014) every year and update as required.	BCREA	June 2019

Aspirational Actions for Government

The original Floodplain Maps Action Plan identified several aspirational actions to advance progress on updating existing floodplain maps. These actions are beyond the capacity of BCREA and the Working Group to deliver alone, but reflect the foresight of the attendees at the March 2013 workshop.

Actions	Partners
8. Create a province-wide plan to map flood hazards for all BC communities, and ensure those maps are reviewed every five years—as part of community planning cycles—and updated as needed.	Federal, provincial and local governments
9. Provide local governments and First Nations with financial and technical assistance to strengthen the capacity of local governments to develop floodplain maps and implement flood management. Technical assistance should include checklists, templates and other resources that are updated as new information becomes available.	Provincial government

Actions	Partners
10. Develop, and review every five years, floodplain mapping guidelines and specifications to reflect current technologies and realities, improve consistency, and build technical capacity to support the use of a broader suite of technical tools.	Provincial government
11. Develop a firm understanding of the consequences of wildfires on flood risks and provide technical support to communities that have experienced wildfires to help mitigate the expected flood damage.	Provincial government



The British Columbia Real Estate Association (BCREA) is the professional association for about 23,000 REALTORS® in BC, focusing on provincial issues that impact real estate. Working with the province’s 11 real estate boards, BCREA provides continuing professional education, advocacy, economic research and standard forms to help REALTORS® provide value for their clients.

To demonstrate the profession’s commitment to improving Quality of Life in BC communities, BCREA supports policies that encourage economic vitality, provide housing opportunities, respect the environment and build communities with good schools and safe neighbourhoods.