

If a major earthquake strikes Seattle...

... the resulting damage will have severe effects for residents living in the Mount Baker neighborhood. Many may lose their access to housing, power, clean water, food, transportation, communication, and other everyday essentials. In addition, agencies like the Seattle Office of Emergency Management (OEM) state that public services will be significantly burdened in such a drastic event, and unable to meet the disaster needs of everyone affected. Furthermore, many experts estimate that affected local residents may go as long as seven days without significant outside assistance. However, by using and augmenting existing community assets, establishing a Neighborhood Emergency Response Organization (NERO), and implementing temporary solutions to accommodate their needs, people in Mount Baker can better support themselves during those seven days of privation and uncertainty.

Precedents...



Community Emergency Hubs

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has designated a series of Community Emergency Hubs throughout the city. In practice, city staff and other professionals won't actually be stationed at these hubs. They are intended as gathering sites for ordinary residents to self-organize and support one another, as public resources may not be readily available in major emergencies. Currently, 27 hubs have been designated in and around the Mount Baker neighborhood, and more can be created through a straightforward application process.



Neighborhood Emergency Response Organization (NERO)

Located just west of Seattle, the community of Vashon Island has created a remarkable disaster response system, one which empowers and mobilizes local residents to support one another and coordinate with emergency responders. A key part of this system is the Neighborhood Emergency Response Organization (NERO), in which a local resident coordinates multiple households in gathering information for emergency response agencies, as well as supporting one another in surviving and recovering from a disaster.

Community Assets...



Emergency Hubs The OEM's emergency "hubs" – though currently a rather underdeveloped system – can play an expanded role in our Seven Days of Survival scenario. If we locate them where other key amenities are clustered around them, these hubs can play a much more pivotal and comprehensive role in Mount Baker.



Temporary Shelter A severe earthquake will damage or destroy many homes, leaving local residents without sufficient shelter. Also, commuters passing through Mount Baker may become stranded, increasing the number of those in need of temporary housing. To mitigate this, tents and other makeshift shelters can be assembled in open areas, like parks and parking lots.



Emergency Equipment Storage Tents, first aid kits, emergency food rations, and other useful items can be stockpiled at certain locations, so they can be quickly mobilized and distributed as needed during earthquakes and other emergencies.



Cold Storage Interruptions to power and transportation services might cause food shortages post-Earthquake. A number of grocery stores, drug stores, and warehouses are located in this area, and their refrigeration systems can be put to use for storing and distributing food.



Solar Power Systems Ideally, these panels should be located on the same site as cold storage facilities, in order to provide electricity to the aforementioned refrigeration systems. Additionally, they may be utilized for charging stations, where locals can power up cellular phones and other electrical equipment.



Water Storage Cisterns Water is essential for human survival, and underground cisterns may be installed in the neighborhood to store it for emergencies. (Proposals for such cisterns have been made in other related studio projects.)



Other Community Amenities Mount Baker is also home to a LINK light rail station, the KVRU community radio studio, and a University of Washington laundry facility. All of these amenities can be utilized in a disaster situation to assist the local community, adding their unique services to Mount Baker's Seven Days of Survival.

