

**CITY OF MERCED**  
**Development Services**

TO: Disaster Council  
FROM: Julie Sterling, Associate Planner  
DATE: April 19, 2013  
SUBJECT: Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

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TOPICS AND ACTIONS REQUIRED:

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Disaster Council Actions</u>
1. Chapter 5 – Plan Maintenance	Information & Discussion
2. “Draft” Local Hazard Mitigation Plan	Discussion & Action (vote)

The “Draft” Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) is completed and ready for review, discussion, and recommendation. Staff has shared the various chapters of the LHMP over the course of 15 months and six Disaster Council Meetings. The attached “draft” Plan is an overview of what you have previously reviewed, discussed, and commented on throughout the development process. The only new information is the Plan Maintenance section found in Chapter 5 of the Plan.

**CHAPTER 5 – PLAN MAINTENANCE**

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Updating

The “Plan Maintenance” Chapter of the Merced Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP) includes a method and schedule for monitoring, evaluating, and updating the Plan at least every 5 years. It also includes an explanation of how the City of Merced will incorporate the mitigation strategies into existing planning mechanisms, such as the General Plan, Zoning Code, Capital Improvement Programs, etc. Lastly, it outlines the City’s continuing public participation process for the Plan.

Implement the Plan and Monitor Progress

This phase of the mitigation planning process includes: (a) approval and adoption process of the MHMP; and, (b) establishing a *Plan Maintenance Program*, to ensure that the MHMP will remain an active and relevant document. Periodic review of the plan helps keep the plan current, reflecting the changing needs of the community or state. Upon receipt of a recommendation from the Disaster Council, the process will be as follows:

- *State and Federal Plan Approval* — The draft plan will be submitted to the State Emergency Management Agency (Cal EMA), who will forward their comments and the

**ATTACHMENT 2**

MHMP to FEMA. FEMA will in turn review, comment, and provide one combined review and letter to the City. If necessary, the MHMP will be revised by staff to address any comments.

- *Local Adoption* — After receipt of an “approval, pending adoption” from FEMA, upon recommendation by the Disaster Council, the Merced City Council will be tasked with adopting the MHMP by resolution at a public hearing. The City will then forward the official adoption paperwork to FEMA, and the MHMP becomes “officially approved.”
- *General Plan Consistency* — Under AB 2140, adopting the FEMA “Approved” LHMP into the Safety Element of the General Plan is optional. However, doing so entitles compliant communities to additional available recovery reimbursements after a major disaster declaration, and to receive priority consideration for hazard mitigation grant funding. Staff will make sure that the Local Adoption noted above includes the action to include the MHMP as part of the *Merced Vision 2030 General Plan*.

### Continued Public Involvement

With adoption of this plan, the Disaster Council is tasked with plan implementation and maintenance duties, including:

- Act as a forum for hazard mitigation issues.
- Keep the concept of mitigation in the forefront of community decision making by identifying plan recommendations when other community goals, plans, and activities overlap, influence, or directly affect increased community vulnerability to disasters.
- Maintain a vigilant monitoring of multi-objective cost-share opportunities to help the community implement the plan’s recommended actions for which no current funding exists.
- Monitor and assist in implementation and update of this plan. Inform and solicit input from the public.

As an advisory body, one of the Disaster Council’s primary duties is to see the MHMP successfully carried out and to report to the City Council and the public on the status of plan implementation and mitigation opportunities. Other duties include reviewing and promoting mitigation proposals, considering stakeholder concerns about hazard mitigation, passing concerns on to appropriate entities, and posting relevant information on the City website.

Staff recommends that the Disaster Council meet at least once annually to perform the above noted tasks. The meetings will provide an opportunity to discuss the progress of the action items and maintain the partnerships that are essential for the sustainability of the Plan. To assist in this task, Table 5-1 from Chapter 5 is provided to keep track of the Implementation of the Hazard Mitigation Plan Action Items (Attachment B).

The City is dedicated to involving the public directly in the monitoring, evaluation, and updates of the MHMP, therefore, the update process provides an opportunity to publicize success stories from the plan implementation and seek additional public comment.

Staff recommends noticing the public hearing(s) to receive public comment on plan maintenance and updating. When the Disaster Council meets to discuss plan maintenance and future plan updates, it is recommended that they coordinate with all stakeholders participating in the planning process — including those that joined the committee since the planning process began. The plan maintenance and update process will include continued public and stakeholder involvement and input through attendance at designated committee meetings, web postings, and press releases to local media.

The public will also have the opportunity to provide feedback about the Plan. Staff proposes that copies of the Plan will be catalogued and kept at all of the participating agencies in the City and County. Also, the existence and location of these copies will be publicized in the City newsletter which reaches every utility customer in the City. In addition, copies of the Plan and any proposed changes will be posted on the City's Website. This site will also contain an email address and phone number to which people can direct their comments and concerns.

#### **“Draft” Local Hazard Mitigation Plan**

At the January 25, 2013, Meeting, the Disaster Council suggested that the LHMP be distributed for review two weeks prior to the meeting to allow for adequate time to review the Plan. Although there will be minimal information being included in the Plan subsequent to the Disaster Council's recommendation, we are still on schedule to submit the Plan to Cal EMA and FEMA in May 2013.

The Disaster Council is requested to review, comment, discuss, and take formal action on the “Draft” Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (Attachment A). Staff will incorporate comments from the Disaster Council, Stakeholders, and the general public following the meeting. Please bring your “Draft” plan to the Disaster Council/Community Meeting on April 19, 2013.

Since FEMA requires that the LHMP be reviewed by the general public, the meeting has been moved to the City Civic Center in the **Council Chambers** to allow for citizens to participate. Also, please note that the time has been changed to **10:00 a.m. to noon**.

#### Attachments

- A. “Draft” Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
- B. Sample: Table 5-1 – Merced Hazard Mitigation Plan Action Item Implementation