

Benjamin Franklin once said that “By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail”. Many lessons have been learned about disaster preparedness in recent years; most of which have proved this Founding Father to be wise beyond his years.

The City of Merced has engaged in emergency preparedness planning since 1984 when it developed and adopted its first Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). The Plan was revised in 1995, 2003, and the current Plan was revised and adopted by the City Council in 2011.

The City of Merced is fortunate to not have experienced a major disaster in many years; the optimist would see the City as the safest community to live in; whereas the pessimist would see Merced as being due for a disaster. Planning is the key to proving the optimist correct and the pessimist wrong: “Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now” (Alan Lakein).

Outside of the EOP there have not been any City documents that elaborated on the risks that threaten the community’s viability. The EOP identifies many risks to the community; however, the brevity and generalized nature of the hazards and risks identified in the EOP did not provide quantifiable data that the City could use to effectively plan for and prevent the disasters from occurring.

The City of Merced Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) has been developed through a participative and collaborative effort that was championed by the City Planning Staff. The purpose of the plan is to identify all potential risks, analyze the likelihood of occurrence, and by planning accordingly, the vulnerability for harm will be greatly diminished. The LHMP will enable the City to effectively plan to prevent and prepare for major events that pose real risks to our City.

This Plan would not be possible without the commitment and contributions of the City of Merced Disaster Council and City Staff. The continued support, comments, and input by the stakeholder organizations and the citizens of our City were invaluable in helping to make the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan an effective, relevant planning tool.



Michael W. McLaughlin, Fire Chief

The City of Merced's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is Online.

In an effort to conserve resources and to protect our natural resources, this document is available online at:

http://www.cityofmerced.org/depts/cd/planning/local_hazard_mitigation_plan/default.asp

CD's of the Plan are also available for purchase at the City of Merced Planning Department.

When printing, please print on recycled paper. We also hope that you will help us continue to be sustainable by sharing printed plans with friends and recycling when it is needed.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CITY OF MERCED DISASTER COUNCIL

Disaster Control in the City of Merced is guided by Chapter 8.20 of the Merced Municipal Code, which declares its purposes are to provide for: 1) the preparation and carrying out of plans for the protection of persons and property within the City in the event of an emergency; 2) the direction of the emergency organization; and, 3) the coordination of the emergency functions of the City with all other public agencies and affected private persons, corporations, and organizations. To accomplish these purposes, the chapter establishes a “Disaster Council,” and describes its powers and duties:

- It shall be the duty of the City of Merced Disaster Council, and it is empowered, to develop and recommend for adoption by the City Council, emergency and mutual-aid plans and agreements and such ordinances and resolutions and rules and regulations as are necessary to implement such plans and agreements; and.
- The City of Merced Disaster Council shall be responsible for the development of the City of Merced emergency operations plan.

Disaster Council Members:

- Chair: **John Bramble**, City Manager (Director of Emergency Services)
- Vice-Chair: **Mike McLaughlin**, Fire Chief (Deputy Director of Emergency Services)
- Police: **Norm Andrade**, Police Chief
- Public Works: **Mike Wegley**, Director
- Public Works: **Stan Murdock**, Director
- Development Services: **David Gonzalves**, Director
- Finance: **Brad Grant**, Director
- Civic Representative: **Dr. Laurie Dickinson**
- The Appraisal Group: **John Sundgren**
- American Red Cross: **Sherry Pitchford**
- Merced Irrigation District: **Dan Aguilar**
- Pacific Gas & Electric: **Richard Dye**
- Merced City School District: **RoseMary Parga Duran**
- Merced Union High School District: **Kelly Bentz**

PLAN LEADERSHIP TEAM

In 2009, the City Manager's Office directed the Development Services Department to spearhead the effort to secure planning funds to prepare a LHMP. The Planning Division of the Development Services Department led this effort, and upon award of a planning grant from FEMA in 2010, formed a Plan Leadership Team (PLT).

- **Bill King** — City of Merced Planning Division (Development Services Department)
- **Mike McLaughlin** — City of Merced Fire Chief
- **Ken Elwin** — City of Merced Engineering Division (Development Services Department)

SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE STAFF TEAM

Members of the *Skills and Knowledge Staff Team* consisted of City Staff who are currently involved in duties that provide skills and knowledge that were utilized to craft the Plan. The team was established during the initial stages of drafting of the Plan and continued throughout the planning process, providing the following tasks:

- **Joe Angulo** -- Environmental Project Manager / Hazardous Waste
- **Dan Arnold** -- Public Works Manager - Operations / Mitigation Strategies
- **Stuart England** -- Building Plans Examiner, NFIP Coordinator
- **Kim Espinosa** — Planning Manager / Plan Integrations and Maintenance
- **John Franck** — Senior Engineer / Risk Assessment
- **Mark Hamilton** -- Planner / Asset Inventory and Loss Estimates
- **Ruthanne Harbison** -- GIS Specialist / Mapping and HAZUS
- **Shawn Henry** — City of Merced Fire Battalion Chief / Capability Assessment
- **Nancy Lee** -- Secretary II / Plan Format and Design
- **Julie Nelson** -- Planner / Public Outreach Coordinator
- **Kim Nutt** -- Planning Technician II / Hazard Identification
- **Julie Sterling** -- Planner / Public Outreach Coordinator
- **Don Wolcott** -- Building Plans Examiner / Risk Assessment

AGENCIES AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Prior to formal presentation and action by the City of Merced Disaster Council and the City Council, many local agencies and partners were invited to review and comment on the Merced Hazard Mitigation Plan to offer technical and professional guidance, and include:

Local and Regional Agencies and Neighboring Communities

Merced County Fire Department
Merced County Public Works - Roads Division
Merced County Sheriff's Office
Merced County Operations of Emergency Services (OES)
Merced County Courthouse Museum
Weaver Union Elementary School District
Merced College
UC Merced
City of Merced Economic Development
City of Merced Information Technology Department
US Army Corp of Engineers
Caltrans District 10
Merced County Local Agency Formation Commission
Merced County Planning Department
Merced County Environmental Health Department
Merced County Public Health Department
Merced County Farm Bureau
City of Atwater

Businesses, Academia, and Other Private and Non-Profits

Merced Ahead
The Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce
The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Local Developers and Builders (BIACC)
Mercy Medical Center
Golden Valley Health Center

Riggs Ambulance
Merced County Fair
League of Women Voters
Merced Lao Family Community
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
Neighborhood Watch Representatives
Environmental and Conservation Groups
Railroad Contacts
Merced Sun Star
Merced County Times
Merced County Historical Society
United Way of Merced
Building Healthy Communities

INTERNSHIP TEAM

The City of Merced extends its gratitude and appreciation to several student interns who contributed greatly to the preparation of the Merced Hazard Mitigation Plan.

- **Denise Zitnik** – Climate Adaption / Hazardous Materials
- **John Hansen** – Hazard Risk Assessments
- **Rick Navares** – Benefits of Hazard Mitigation Planning

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FEMA

Local Hazard Mitigation Planning Program

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