

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) encourages multi-jurisdictional planning for hazard mitigation. All participating jurisdictions must meet the requirements of Chapter 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations (44 CFR):

“Multi-jurisdictional plans (e.g. watershed plans) may be accepted, as appropriate, as long as each jurisdiction has participated in the process and has officially adopted the plan.” (Section 201.6(a)(4)).

For the *Sonoma County Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2021*, a planning partnership was formed to leverage resources and to meet requirements of the federal Disaster Mitigation Act for as many eligible local governments as possible. The Disaster Mitigation Act defines a local government as follows:

“Any county, municipality, city, town, township, public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments (regardless of whether the council of governments is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law), regional or interstate government entity, or agency or instrumentality of a local government; any Indian tribe or authorized tribal organization, or Alaska Native village or organization; and any rural community, unincorporated town or village, or other public entity.”

In addition, federally recognized tribes may participate in local/tribal multi-jurisdictional plans as long as the requirements of Section 201.7 of 44 CFR are met for tribal components of the plan.

Two types of planning partners participated in this process for the *Sonoma County Multijurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2021*, with distinct needs and capabilities:

- Incorporated municipalities
- Special districts

Each participating planning partner prepared a jurisdiction-specific annex to this plan. These annexes, as well as information on the process by which they were created, are contained in this volume.

THE PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

Initial Solicitation and Letters of Intent

A planning team made up of Sonoma County and consultant staff solicited the participation of all eligible municipalities and special districts at the outset of this project. A kickoff meeting was held on June 10, 2020, to identify potential stakeholders and planning partners for this process. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce

the planning process to jurisdictions in the County that could have a stake in the outcome of the planning effort. All eligible local governments in the planning area were invited to attend. The goals of the meeting were as follows:

- Provide an overview of the Disaster Mitigation Act.
- Review the *2016 Sonoma County Operational Area Hazard Mitigation Plan* and planning partnership
- Outline the work plan for this hazard mitigation plan.
- Describe the benefits of multi-jurisdictional planning.
- Outline planning partner expectations.
- Solicit planning partners.
- Solicit volunteers/recommendations for the steering committee.

Local governments wishing to join the planning effort were asked to provide the planning team with a “letter of intent to participate” that agreed to the planning partner expectations (see Appendix A) and designated a point of contact for their jurisdiction. In all, the planning team received formal commitment from 13 planning partners in addition to the County. A map showing the location of participating special purpose districts is provided at the end of this introduction. Maps showing risk assessment results for participating cities are provided in the individual annexes for each city. Risk assessment maps for all planning areas countywide are provided in Volume 1 of this hazard mitigation plan.

Planning Partner Expectations

The planning team developed the following list of planning partner expectations, which were provided and discussed at the kickoff meeting (see Appendix A for details):

- Complete a “letter of intent to participate.”
- Designate a lead point of contact for this effort.
- Support and participate in the selection and function of the Steering Committee.
- Provide support required to implement the public involvement strategy.
- Participate in the process through opportunities such as:
 - Steering Committee meetings
 - Public meetings or open houses
 - Workshops and planning partner specific training sessions
 - Public review and comment periods prior to adoption.
- Attend the mandatory jurisdictional annex workshop.
- Complete the jurisdictional annex.
- Perform a “consistency review” of all technical studies, plans and ordinances specific to hazards.
- Review the risk assessment and identify hazards and vulnerabilities specific to the jurisdiction.
- Review and determine if the mitigation recommendations chosen in Volume 1 will meet the needs of the jurisdiction.

- Create an action plan that identifies each project, who will oversee the task, how it will be financed, and when it is estimated to occur.
- Formally adopt the hazard mitigation plan.

By adopting this plan, each planning partner also agrees to the plan implementation and maintenance protocol established in Volume 1. Failure to meet these criteria may result in a partner being dropped from the partnership by the Steering Committee, and thus losing eligibility under the scope of this plan.

Final Coverage

All of the following planning partners submitted letters of intent to participate fully met the participation requirements for this update, completed an annex template, and will be covered by the current hazard mitigation plan upon FEMA approval and adoption by their governing bodies:

- County of Sonoma
- City of Cotati
- City of Santa Rosa
- City of Sonoma
- Town of Windsor
- Cloverdale Fire Protection District
- North Sonoma Coast Fire Protection District
- Northern Sonoma County Fire Protection District
- Rancho Adobe Fire Protection District
- Sonoma Valley Fire Protection District
- Timber Cove Fire Protection District
- Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District
- Sonoma Resource Conservation District
- Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District

Linkage Procedures

Eligible local jurisdictions that did not participate in development of this multi-jurisdictional plan may comply with Disaster Mitigation Act requirements by linking to this plan following procedures outlined in Appendix B.

PARTNER ANNEX DEVELOPMENT

Capability Assessment

All participating jurisdictions compiled an inventory and analysis of existing authorities and capabilities called a “capability assessment.” A capability assessment creates an inventory of a jurisdiction’s mission, programs, and policies, and evaluates its capacity to carry them out. This assessment identifies potential gaps in the jurisdiction’s capabilities. If the capability assessment identified an opportunity to add a missing core capability or expand an

existing one, then doing so has been selected as an action in the jurisdiction’s action plan. The sections below describe the specific capabilities evaluated under the assessment.

Planning and Regulatory Capabilities

Jurisdictions can develop policies and programs and implement rules and regulations to protect and serve residents. Local policies are typically identified in planning documents, implemented via a local ordinance, and enforced by a governmental body. Because the planning and regulatory authority of municipal partners is generally broader than that of special-purpose districts, the assessment of these capabilities is more detailed for the municipal partners.

Development and Permitting Capability

This set of capabilities is not applicable to special purpose districts and was assessed only for municipal partners (cities and the County). Municipal jurisdictions regulate land use through the adoption and enforcement of zoning, subdivision, and land development ordinances, building codes, building permit ordinances, floodplain, and stormwater management ordinances. When effectively prepared and administered, these regulations can lead to hazard mitigation.

Fiscal Capabilities

Assessing a jurisdiction’s fiscal capability provides an understanding of the ability to fulfill the financial needs associated with hazard mitigation projects. This assessment identifies both outside resources, such as grant-funding eligibility, and local jurisdictional authority to generate internal financial capability, such as through impact fees.

Administrative and Technical Capabilities

Without appropriate personnel, the mitigation strategy may not be implemented. Administrative and technical capabilities focus on the availability of personnel resources responsible for implementing all the facets of hazard mitigation. These resources include technical experts, such as engineers and scientists, as well as personnel with capabilities that may be found in multiple departments, such as grant writers.

Education and Outreach Capability

Regular engagement with the public on issues regarding hazard mitigation provides an opportunity to directly interface with community members. Assessing this outreach and education capability illustrates the connection between the government and community members, which opens a two-way dialogue that can result in a more resilient community based on education and public engagement.

Compliance with National Flood Insurance Program Requirements

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is not available to special purpose districts, so this set of capabilities was assessed only for municipal partners (cities and the County). Flooding is the costliest natural hazard in the United States and homeowners face increasingly high flood insurance premiums. Community participation in the NFIP opens up opportunity for additional grant funding associated specifically with flooding issues. Assessment of a jurisdiction’s current NFIP status and compliance provides a greater understanding of the local flood management program, opportunities for improvement, and available grant funding opportunities.

Participation and Classification in Other Programs

Other programs, such as the Community Rating System, Storm/Tsunami Ready, and Firewise USA, can enhance a jurisdiction's ability to mitigate, prepare for, and respond to natural hazards. These programs indicate a jurisdiction's desire to go beyond minimum requirements set forth by local, state, and federal regulations in order to create a more resilient community. These programs complement each other by focusing on communication, mitigation, and community preparedness to save lives and minimize the impact of natural hazards on a community. The programs reviewed here are applicable to municipal partners only so they are not included in the capability assessments for special-purpose districts.

Adaptive Capacity

An adaptive capacity assessment evaluates a jurisdiction's ability to anticipate impacts from future conditions. By looking at public support, technical adaptive capacity, and other factors, jurisdictions identify their core capability for resilience against issues such as sea level rise. The adaptive capacity assessment provides jurisdictions with an opportunity to identify areas for improvement by ranking their capacity high, medium, or low.

Mitigation Action Plan Development

Risk Ranking

In the risk-ranking exercise, each planning partner was asked to review the ranked risk specifically for its jurisdiction, based on the impact on its population and/or facilities. Municipalities based this ranking on probability of occurrence and the potential impact on people, property, and the economy. Special purpose districts based this ranking on probability of occurrence and the potential impact on their constituency, their vital facilities, and the facilities' functionality after an event. The methodology followed that used for the countywide risk ranking presented in Volume 1. The objectives of this exercise were to familiarize the partnership with how to use the risk assessment as a tool to support other planning and hazard mitigation processes and to help prioritize types of mitigation actions that should be considered. Hazards that were ranked as "high" and "medium" for each jurisdiction as a result of this exercise were considered to be priorities for identifying mitigation actions, although jurisdictions also identified actions to mitigate "low" ranked hazards, as appropriate.

Information Reviewed to Develop Action Plan

The tool kits were used during the workshops and in follow-up work conducted by the planning partners. A large portion of the workshop focused on how the tool kit should be used to develop the mitigation action plan. Planning partners were specifically asked to review the following to assist in the identification of actions:

- The Jurisdiction's Capability Assessment—Reviewed to identify capabilities that the jurisdiction does not currently have but should consider pursuing or capabilities that should be revisited and updated to include best available information; also reviewed to determine how existing capabilities can be leveraged to increase or improve hazard mitigation in the jurisdiction.
- The Jurisdiction's National Flood Insurance Program Compliance Table—Reviewed to identify opportunities to increase floodplain management capabilities.
- The Jurisdiction's Review of Its Adaptive Capacity for Climate Change—Reviewed to identify ways to leverage or continue to improve existing capacities and to improve understanding of other capacities.

- The Jurisdiction’s Identified Opportunities for Future Integration—Reviewed to identify specific integration actions to be included in the mitigation strategy.
- Jurisdiction-Specific Vulnerabilities—Reviewed to identify actions that will help reduce known vulnerabilities.
- The Mitigation Best Practices Catalog—Reviewed to identify actions that the jurisdiction should consider including in its action plan.
- Public Input—Reviewed to identify potential actions and community priorities.

Action Plan Prioritization

The actions recommended in the action plan were prioritized based on the following factors:

- Cost and availability of funding
- Benefit, based on likely risk reduction to be achieved
- Number of plan objectives achieved
- Timeframe for project implementation
- Eligibility for grant funding programs

Two priorities were assigned for each action:

- A high, medium or low priority for implementing the action
- A high, medium or low priority for pursuing grant funding for the action.

The sections below describe the analysis of benefits and costs and the assignment of the two priority ratings.

Benefit/Cost Review

The action plan must be prioritized according to a benefit/cost analysis of the proposed actions (44 CFR, Section 201.6(c)(3)(iii)). For this hazard mitigation plan, a qualitative benefit-cost review was performed for each action by assigning ratings for benefit and cost as follows:

- Cost:
 - **High**—Existing funding will not cover the cost of the action; implementation would require new revenue through an alternative source (for example, bonds, grants, and fee increases).
 - **Medium**—The action could be implemented with existing funding but would require a re-apportionment of the budget or a budget amendment, or the cost of the action would have to be spread over multiple years.
 - **Low**—The action could be funded under the existing budget. The action is part of or can be part of an ongoing existing program.
- Benefit:
 - **High**—Action will provide an immediate reduction of risk exposure for life and property.
 - **Medium**—Action will have a long-term impact on the reduction of risk exposure for life and property, or action will provide an immediate reduction in the risk exposure for property.
 - **Low**—Long-term benefits of the action are difficult to quantify in the short term.

To assign priorities, each action with a benefit rating equal to or higher than its cost rating (such as high benefit/medium cost, medium benefit/medium cost, medium benefit/low cost, etc.) was considered to be cost-beneficial. This is not the detailed level of benefit/cost analysis required for some FEMA hazard-related grant programs. Such analysis would be performed at the time a given action is being submitted for grant funding.

Implementation Priority

Implementation priority ratings were assigned as follows:

- **High Priority**—An action that meets multiple objectives, has benefits that exceed costs, and has a secured source of funding. Action can be completed in the short term (1 to 5 years).
- **Medium Priority**—An action that meets multiple objectives, has benefits that exceed costs, and is eligible for funding though no funding has yet been secured for it. Action can be completed in the short term (1 to 5 years), once funding is secured. Medium-priority actions become high-priority actions once funding is secured.
- **Low Priority**—An action that will mitigate the risk of a hazard, has benefits that do not exceed the costs or are difficult to quantify, has no secured source of funding, and is not eligible for any known grant funding. Action can be completed in the long term (1 to 10 years). Low-priority actions may be eligible for grant funding from programs that have not yet been identified.

Grant Pursuit Priority

Grant pursuit priority ratings were assigned as follows:

- **High Priority**—An action that meets identified grant eligibility requirements, has high benefits, and is listed as high or medium implementation priority; local funding options are unavailable or available local funds could be used instead for actions that are not eligible for grant funding.
- **Medium Priority**—An action that meets identified grant eligibility requirements, has medium or low benefits, and is listed as medium or low implementation priority; local funding options are unavailable.
- **Low Priority**—An action that has not been identified as meeting any grant eligibility requirements.

Classification of Actions

Each recommended action was classified based on the hazard it addresses and the type of mitigation it involves. Mitigation types used for this classification are as follows:

- **Prevention**—Government, administrative or regulatory actions that influence the way land and buildings are developed to reduce hazard losses. Includes planning and zoning, floodplain laws, capital improvement programs, open space preservation, and stormwater management regulations.
- **Property Protection**—Modification of buildings or structures to protect them from a hazard or removal of structures from a hazard area. Includes acquisition, elevation, relocation, structural retrofit, storm shutters, and shatter-resistant glass.
- **Public Education and Awareness**—Actions to inform residents and elected officials about hazards and ways to mitigate them. Includes outreach projects, real estate disclosure, hazard information centers, and school-age and adult education.
- **Natural Resource Protection**—Actions that minimize hazard loss and preserve or restore the functions of natural systems. Includes sediment and erosion control, stream corridor restoration, watershed

management, forest and vegetation management, wetland restoration and preservation, and green infrastructure.

- **Emergency Services**—Actions that protect people and property during and immediately after a hazard event. Includes warning systems, emergency response services, and the protection of essential facilities.
- **Structural Projects**—Actions that involve the construction of structures to reduce the impact of a hazard. Includes dams, setback levees, floodwalls, retaining walls, and safe rooms.
- **Climate Resiliency**—Actions that incorporate methods to mitigate and/or adapt to the impacts of climate change. Includes aquifer storage and recovery activities, incorporating future conditions projections in project design or planning, or actions that specifically address jurisdiction-specific climate change risks, such as sea-level rise or urban heat island effect.
- **Community Capacity Building**—Actions that increase or enhance local capabilities to adjust to potential damage, to take advantage of opportunities, or to respond to consequences. Includes staff training, memorandums of understanding, development of plans and studies, and monitoring programs.

Annex-Preparation Process

Templates

Templates were created to help the planning partners prepare their jurisdiction-specific annexes. Separate templates were created for the two types of jurisdictions participating in this plan. The templates were created so that all criteria of Section 201.6 of 44 CFR for local governments would be met based on the partners' capabilities and mode of operation. Separate templates were available for partners updating a previous hazard mitigation plan and those developing a first-time hazard mitigation plan. These templates were deployed in three phases during the course of this plan update process. These phases are described as follows:

- **Phase 1**—Profile, Trends, Previous Plan Status
 - Deployed: November 26, 2020
 - Due: December 31, 2020
- **Phase 2**—Capability Assessment and Information Sources
 - Deployed: February 19, 2021
 - Due: March 29, 2021
- **Phase 3**—Risk Ranking, Action Plan, and Information Sources
 - Multiple on-line Phase 3 Jurisdictional Annex Workshops: week of March 29, 2021
 - Due: May 14, 2021

The templates were set up to lead all partner through steps to generate Disaster Mitigation Act-required elements specific to their jurisdictions. The templates and their instructions are included in Appendix C of this volume.

Tool Kit

Each planning partner was provided with a tool kit to assist in completing the annex template and developing an action plan. The tool kits contained the following:

- The *2016 Sonoma County Operational Area Hazard Mitigation Plan Annexes*
- A catalog of mitigation best practices and adaptive capacity
- The guiding principle, goals and objectives developed for the update to the plan
- A list of jurisdiction-specific issues noted during the risk assessment
- Information on the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant program
- Information on past hazard events that have impacted the planning area
- County-wide and jurisdiction-specific maps for hazards of concern
- Special district boundary maps showing the sphere of influence for each special purpose district partner
- The risk assessment results developed for this plan
- Information on climate change and expected impacts in the planning area
- Jurisdiction-specific annex templates, with instructions for completing them
- FEMA guidance on plan integration
- The results of a public survey conducted as part of the public involvement strategy
- A copy of the presentation that was given at the workshop sessions.

Workshop

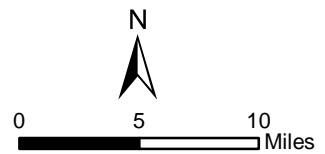
All partners were required to participate in a technical assistance workshop, where key elements of the template were discussed, and the templates were subsequently completed by a designated point of contact for each partner and a member of the planning team. Multiple online workshops were held the week of March 29, 2021 and attended by at least one representative from each planning partner, addressed the following topics:

- The templates and the tool kit
- Natural events history
- Jurisdiction-specific issues
- Risk ranking
- Status of prior actions
- Developing your action plan
- Cost/benefit review
- Prioritization protocol
- Next steps.



Special Purpose District Boundaries

- Gold Ridge RCD
- Sonoma RCD
- Fire Protection Districts
- County Boundary
- Highways



Data Sources: Sonoma Co.

Note: The service area for the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District is the entire county