



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: August 27, 2008 REPORT NO: 08-122

ATTENTION: Honorable Council President and City Council

SUBJECT: City of San Diego Flood Mitigation Plan
Docket of September 2, 2008

REFERENCE:

REQUESTED ACTION:

Authorizing the City Council to adopt the San Diego Flood Mitigation Plan, prepared by URS Corporation, dated June, 2007.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends adoption of the San Diego Flood Mitigation Plan

SUMMARY:

In 1968, the U.S. Congress passed the National Flood Insurance Act, which created the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The NFIP was designed to reduce future flood losses through local floodplain management and to provide protection for property owners against potential losses through an insurance mechanism that allows a premium to be paid for the protection of those most in need. As part of the agreement for making flood insurance available to communities, NFIP required the community to adopt floodplain management ordinances that meet minimum requirements intended to reduce future flood losses.

The responsibility for reducing flood losses is shared by local, state and federal units of government. The NFIP, part of the federal unit, provides the maps and regulatory basis for local floodplain management. It is also the primary source of insurance protection for flood-prone properties. Its success depends on the people responsible for administering its mapping, regulatory and insurance aspects. Ultimately, it is the local communities that are relied upon for planning and implementing needed floodplain management measures.

The National Flood Insurance Reform Act of 1994 resulted in major changes to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The Act, which amended the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, provides tools to make the NFIP more effective in achieving its goals of reducing the risk of flood damage.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) Program was created as part of the National Flood Insurance Reform Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 4101) with the goal of reducing or eliminating claims under the National Flood Insurance

Program (NFIP). FMA is a pre-disaster grant program that provides funding to states and communities to assist in their efforts to reduce or eliminate the risk of repetitive flood damage to buildings and structures insurable under the NFIP. Specifically, the program offers two types of grant opportunities: planning grants and project grants. The funds designated for planning grants are to be used by communities in developing and maintaining a Flood Mitigation Plan (FMP). Once a community develops their FMP, they become eligible for project grants, which provide funding to implement construction measures that will reduce flood losses.

The Engineering and Capital Projects Department applied for FMA's Planning Grant for the City of San Diego in order to create the City's first Flood Mitigation Plan. Because the City of San Diego is a participant in the NFIP, the City was selected by FMA as a recipient for this planning grant. FEMA has emphasized that FMA planning grant funds be used to focus on reducing the number of repetitive loss (RL) properties insurance by the NFIP. FEMA provided to the City upon receipt of the planning grant, a list of 23 properties within San Diego which were designated as RLs.

In December 2006, the City entered into agreement with planning consultant URS Corporation to develop the FMP for the City of San Diego. Community outreach was the first step in the planning process. Workshops were held in Mission Valley on February 28th, 2007, in San Ysidro on March 1st, 2007, and in La Jolla on March 5th, 2007. At each workshop, attendees were given background about the FMA program and the planning process, as well as a plan schedule. City staff also requested that attendees fill out a survey which asked for information regarding individual flooding concerns. These workshops were an opportunity for the community to learn about the City's participation in the NFIP and FMA programs, and to voice their concerns of potential flooding issues throughout the city.

Following the public workshops, City staff worked closely with URS to begin creating the FMP. The plan includes an introduction and description of the project, as well as comprehensive description of the community, including geography, demographics, climate, and soils. A detailed explanation of the planning process is also included to demonstrate the community input was a main focus. Next, Flood Hazard Profiles were compiled by gathering information from historical records and from FEMA to examine specific flood hazards that may affect San Diego, including coastal and riverine flooding, dam inundation, and tsunami run-up. Once these flood hazards were identified, the Vulnerability Analysis was completed. This section of the plan predicts the extent of exposure that may result from a given flood hazard, and provides quantitative data which was then used to identify and prioritize potential mitigation measures. The Vulnerability Analysis is, essentially, a summary of the impacts of flooding on the community and its economy.

Once the vulnerability was categorized, an analysis of the City's availability of resources for mitigation purposes was established and titled Capabilities Assessment. It includes a description of City's key ordinances and on-going programs that promote floodplain management. Next, the Mitigation Strategy is the portion of the plan that describes the City's mitigation goals. The primary goal, in order to meet the grant's requirements, is to reduce the amount of RLs within the city; and secondly, to reduce the potential for flooding from a city-wide perspective. Intensive research went into the creation of the mitigation strategy, including analysis of flood-

related claims made by citizens to the City of San Diego, coordination with City departments such as Risk Management and Development Services to obtain their knowledge and experiences related to flood losses, and finally, assessment of information gathered at the public workshops. The final portion of the document is the Plan Maintenance section which includes criteria for the long-term maintenance and success of the plan.

A draft was submitted by URS to the City in May 2007. The plan was reviewed by City staff, and was placed on the City's website for public review. After all comments were compiled, a final plan was prepared for the City in June 2007. Formal adoption of the plan by the City Council is a requirement to receive federal funds. On June 17, 2008, the plan was approved by FEMA and, upon City Council acceptance, the City will then be eligible to receive additional grant funds from FEMA to implement the mitigation strategies proposed in the Flood Mitigation Plan.

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

This action requires no funding.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTION:

Resolution Number R-301244, dated March 1, 2006

- Authorized the City to apply to the Office of Emergency Services for the Flood Mitigation Assistance planning grant, and to accept the grant in the amount of \$50,000
- Established CIP 13-200.0, San Diego River Flood Mitigation Plan
- Transferred \$16,667 from General Services to fund the required 25% match

Resolution Number R-302219, dated December 8, 2006

- Authorized the City to enter into the Agreement with URS Corporation for the purpose of providing engineering services in the amount of \$50,800

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORTS:

Engineering and Capital Projects staff has worked closely with the community to provide information about the plan, and to request input from citizens. A press conference was held by the Mayor on February 21, 2007 to highlight planning efforts and invite the community to participate in the plan by attending any of the public workshops that were held in La Jolla, Mission Valley, and San Ysidro. Additionally, a website was created where information could be obtained, the draft plan could be reviewed, and where comments and questions could be emailed to the project manager.


KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS:

Key Stakeholder: City of San Diego

Projected Impacts: The approval of this action will make the City eligible for future grant monies needed for flood mitigation projects.



Patti Boekamp, Director
Engineering and Capital Projects



David Jarrell
Deputy Chief Public Works