



Disaster and Fire Safety Commission

ACTION CALENDAR
May 1, 2018

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
 From: Disaster and Fire Safety Commission
 Submitted by: Paul Degenkolb, Chairperson, Disaster and Fire Safety Commission
 Subject: Recommendation for Fire and Health Departments to Participate in Urban Shield Exercises and UASI Grant Funded Trainings

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that City Council direct Berkeley Fire Department and Health Department staff, including Firefighters/Paramedics, hazardous materials personnel, Office of Emergency Services (OES) staff, Police and CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) volunteers to continue their participation in Urban Shield exercises and UASI-funded trainings and workgroups, with the condition that these activities be thoughtfully selected to enhance the City's capacity for a Whole Community approach to planning, organizing and preparing for life endangering hazards faced by Berkeley, including earthquakes, wildfires, hazardous materials release, building collapse, terrorism, and radiation emergencies.

We further recommend that the extent and details of participation in Urban Shield and UASI-funded trainings be fully transparent and shared with the public. We recommend that there be focused and consistent oversight by publicly elected officials and/or appointed people, to ensure transparency and accountability to the public. Through the additional transparency and review, the nature of Urban Shield and UASI-funded trainings and the benefit to the public can be monitored and evaluated.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

This recommendation will have no fiscal impact. Urban Shield and UASI trainings are funded by the federal government. If the city were to stop participation in all Urban Shield and UASI-funded trainings, which is not our recommendation, the City would incur a significant cost to replace these trainings.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

City of Berkeley personnel currently participate in the following UASI and Urban Shield events:

- annual Urban Shield exercise and associated workshops
- multiple year-round UASI grant-funded trainings
- multiple year-round UASI-organized workgroups

These events and working groups improve the City of Berkeley's ability to respond in a coordinated and efficient manner to life threatening situations, which may include a disaster such as a major earthquake.

Berkeley's continued participation in these events and workgroups is now in question due to community concerns about participation.

This recommendation addresses primarily Fire Department and Health Department scenarios and the coordination with other departments and groups as appropriate.

Current Participation: Urban Shield Exercise

In recent years, the Fire Department has participated in the disaster-related components of the Urban Shield exercise to a modest degree, sending 1-5 staff members and 5-10 CERT volunteers to participate in a variety of events. Events have included:

- Simulated disaster scenarios for engine crew
- Simulated disaster scenarios for Hazardous Material Teams (observation)
- Water rescue practice
- Working in an Emergency Operation Center (EOC)
- Lectures on lessons learned from other disasters
- Mass care & sheltering exercise
- Participating and networking at disaster preparedness fair

Current Participation: UASI Trainings

UASI offers no-fee trainings year-round. Trainings that the Fire Department attends include:

- Emergency Management Training
- Hazardous Material classes and drills
- Disaster Recovery, Planning, and Mitigation
- Essential Emergency Management Concepts
- Organization of Disaster Service Workers
- Earthquake Response
- Public Information Officer / Joint Information Center Training

Many of these trainings are required for Berkeley's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Hazardous Materials credentialing. If Berkeley wishes to continue to run a credentialed EOC and have a credentialed Hazardous Materials team, these trainings will need to either be continued for free with UASI, or at a greater expense through another provider.

Current Participation: UASI Workgroups

Berkeley’s Fire Department and Health Department staff participate in regional workgroups organized by UASI. These include:

- Medical and Public Health Workgroup
- Mass Care and Sheltering Subcommittee
- Emergency Management Working group
- Public Information and Warning Workgroup
- Communication Capabilities During a Disaster

These regional workgroups bring together regional partners to talk about emergency management, care and sheltering, information sharing, planning, and recovery. They provide an opportunity for Berkeley staff to meet their counterparts from other cities and counties in the region to share knowledge and discuss plans for cooperation in large disasters.

BACKGROUND

The disaster preparedness component of Urban Shield is relatively new, at about four years old. Here is a timeline of Berkeley Fire Department participation in Urban Shield:

Year	Berkeley Fire Department Participation in Urban Shield
2016	Minimal participation, including observation, participation as an evaluator and water rescue practice.
2017	<p>Slightly increased participation. Berkeley’s Office of Emergency Services (OES) took part in an exercise focused on how to provide care and shelter for our population after a large disaster.</p> <p>An Assistant Fire Chief participated at the emergency operations center, learning how the county EOC runs in a regional disaster.</p> <p>This was the first year in which Urban Shield included a CERT exercise. Berkeley’s CERT Program Manager along with 6 CERT volunteers participated in the CERT component of the exercise, practicing skills in simulated disaster scenarios.</p>
2018	<p>The mass care and sheltering focus will continue in 2018. These exercises will culminate in a real-world sheltering drill in 2018, in which participants will practice setting up actual disaster shelters. This will improve City of Berkeley’s ability to provide the needed sheltering after a disaster.</p> <p>Additional events may be available for participation in 2018.</p>

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There is no environmental impact of this recommendation.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

It is critical for City government to be able to quickly respond using a coordinated effort to emergency situations that can gravely impact human lives, housing, key infrastructure, economic sustainability and long-term security of the City of Berkeley. Funding from UASI and the participation in Urban Shield exercises described here will support this effort.

We recommend Fire Department and Health Department ensure that employee engagement is focused on disaster response and preparedness, mass casualty response, and rescue. That the trainings and exercises that these teams participate in are focused on life-saving skills.

The skills practiced by these teams are applicable to a wide range of emergencies, including but not limited to terrorist incidents. For example, urban search & rescue and control of hazardous materials releases would be extremely important after an earthquake.

Practicing life-saving skills for use after a natural or man-made disaster is an essential activity for these teams. We believe that increased transparency from the First Responder Organizations would help the community remain aware of these activities and ensure that activities continue to be tailored to Berkeley’s needs.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

Due to concerns about participation, one option that we considered is for Berkeley to make its own alternative exercises. There are two key factors that limit Berkeley’s ability to replicate the benefits of Urban Shield and UASI trainings:

Limitation	How Urban Shield and UASI help
1. Designing and running exercises, drills and other educational events is costly and labor-intensive.	Urban Shield and UASI events are funded by the federal government.

<p>2. A simulation of a regional disaster (such as a large earthquake) is not as realistic without participation from the various cities and other entities that would be involved in a real disaster response. Coordinating between these multiple entities is a key component of a real disaster response.</p>	<p>Other local cities, counties & organizations participate in Urban Shield and other UASI events and workgroups. This allows Berkeley staff to meet and practice working with the same people they would need to coordinate with in a major disaster.</p>
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In considering whether Berkeley can replicate the disaster preparedness benefits that it currently gains from Urban Shield and UASI-funded events, we conclude the following:

- With sufficient funding and by hiring consultants to design, manage, and run the events, it may be possible for Berkeley to match many of the benefits of these events, but a new source of sustainable and ample funding would need to be found. This would be costly for the City and taxpayers otherwise.
- It is not feasible for City of Berkeley to replicate on its own the benefits of meeting and collaborating with counterparts from other cities and regional organizations at Urban Shield and the year-round UASI trainings and workgroups. Even if Berkeley could reproduce all of these events and workgroups, there is no guarantee that other participants would participate in a separate set of events and workgroups created by Berkeley.
- Drawing from a smaller demographic, there would likely be a significant loss of participating volunteers. This loss of volunteers would result in less realistic training, and less feedback to and from the community.

Because of the significant costs and challenges faced with trying to replicate the benefits of these events, and the current lack of a specific plan, funding, or staff to replicate the events, we believe that continuing to participate in the Urban Shield exercise and UASI trainings and workgroups is the best available choice at this time.

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager takes no position on the content and recommendations of the Commission’s Report with the following modification:

The proposed recommendation should be to direct the City Manager to allow the Berkeley Fire Department, Health Department staff, and Public Information Officers, including Firefighters/Paramedics, hazardous materials personnel, Office of Emergency Services (OES) staff, Police and CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) volunteers to continue their participation in Urban Shield exercises and UASI-funded trainings and workgroups, with the condition that these activities be thoughtfully

selected to enhance the City's capacity for a Whole Community approach to planning, organizing and preparing for life endangering hazards faced by Berkeley, including earthquakes, wildfires, hazardous materials release, building collapse, terrorism, and radiation emergencies.

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