



Disaster and Fire Safety Commission

INFORMATION CALENDAR

September 12, 2017

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: 2017 Disaster and Fire Safety Commission Work Plan

INTRODUCTION

As directed by the City Council, the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission (DFSC) hereby submits its annual workplan for Fiscal Year 2018.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

On June 28, 2017, the Disaster and Fire Safety Commission passed a motion to submit the attached annual commission work plan. Motion: R. Flasher, Second: R. Grimes, Vote: (6 Ayes: Grimes, Flasher, Bailey, Jones, Couzin, Griffin; 0 Noe; 3 Absent: Golomb, Legg, Degenkolb; 0 Abstain)

The proposed workplan focuses on five topics of concern: 1) Undergrounding of utilities; 2) Increasing fire safety and resilience in the wildland urban interface 3) Improving community resilience and community preparedness; 4) Monitoring Measure GG Fund expenditures; and 5) Assisting other city entities with incorporating a disaster and fire safety perspective

BACKGROUND

On July 19, 2016, 2016, the City Council approved a consent item that directs Berkeley Commissions, with the exception of the Board of Library Trustees, the Zoning Adjustments Board, and the Design Review Committee, to submit a workplan to the City Council at the beginning of each fiscal year.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Not applicable.

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Not applicable.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF POSSIBLE FUTURE ACTION

Not applicable.

CONTACT PERSON

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Attachments:

1: 2017 Disaster and Fire Safety Commission Work Plan

2017 Disaster and Fire Safety Commission WORK PLAN

Mission Statement

The Disaster and Fire Safety Commission serves as the public oversight group for Measure GG, charged with reviewing the budget on a regular basis to ensure that the funds are spent in accordance with the intent of the voter approved measure, recommending the appropriate annual increase to the tax rate, and recommending new programs and positions requiring Measure GG funding.

The Commission also focuses on ways to increase community safety and resilience, working on education, community disaster preparedness, and other strategies as appropriate, and making recommendations to the City Council for adoption and implementation.

Lastly, The Commission reviews and makes recommendations on items referred by the City Council or other Commission.

Summary of 2017 Work Plan Activities

	Topic	Resources	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
1	Undergrounding Subcommittee	Staff time, venue	Currently in Phase 2 of a 3 year plan. Meetings with PG&E, community, and others.	Report to City Council in late 2017 or early 2018	City Council to make a well informed decision on undergrounding efforts
2	Fire safety & community resilience in the face of a wildland-urban interface fire	Staff time, venue	Survey, community outreach, study, and information gathering	Educational outreach to the community to raise awareness of fire risk and mitigation.	City Council will be well informed on how to improve the safety of Hills Fire Zone residents, travelers and first responders.
3	Improve community resilience throughout Berkeley with a whole community approach	Community members' time (volunteer), Commissioner time, and staff time.	Participate in a working group for community resilience program reform; explore ideas for improvement	Recommendation(s) to City Council to improve community resilience throughout Berkeley. May include Measure GG fund expenditures.	Measurable improvement in community preparedness, especially previously underserved communities & neighborhoods
4	Ensure that Measure GG Funds are spent	Commissioner time, staff time	Measure GG spending report is	Recommendation(s) to City Council to ensure funds are	Fire stations remain open & disaster

	appropriately		reviewed by the Commission every 6 months	spent in accordance with the measure.	preparedness is improved by using Measure GG funds as intended.
5	Help other city entities incorporate a disaster and fire safety perspective into decisions	Commissioner time.	Respond to referrals seeking input on matters relating to disaster and fire safety.	Recommendation(s) or other documentation to City Council and other Commissions that send referrals.	Incorporates disaster preparedness into City decisions, leading to a safer and more resilient city.

Work Plan Details

1. UNDERGROUNDING SUBCOMMITTEE

Resources

Specific resources include staff time to properly notice meetings and council submissions prepared by the Undergrounding Subcommittee. It is anticipated that a venue and staff time will be needed for a series of community meetings.

Program Activities

The Undergrounding Subcommittee is in Phase Two of a proposed three year plan to study and make recommendations on the feasibility of undergrounding utility lines along arterial and collector streets throughout the City of Berkeley. This subcommittee is currently made up subcommittee members from the Public Works Commission and two liaison representatives, one each from the Disaster Fire Safety and Transportation Commissions.

- Work with and provide resources to our two selected Goldman School of Public Policy masters candidates researching 1) Future Technologies and 2) Benefit/cost Analysis and Social/geographic Equity issues related to undergrounding. A final report will be provided to the subcommittee in May, 2017.
- Working with Council-member Susan Wengraf, we will initiate meetings with the City of Palo Alto, San Diego and possibly one or two other California cities to learn how their undergrounding programs are set up and financed. Our first meeting, with the City of Palo Alto was on May 4, 2017. Southern California meetings are planned for late spring or early summer.
- Meetings have been held with Comcast (March 30), AT&T (April 6) and soon to be scheduled
- with PG&E for the purpose of learning their planned investments for the near and far future, how they approach disaster scenarios, and what insights they have on large scale undergrounding in the Bay Area. Additional meetings are planned with technology companies such as Google and Paxio.
- Community input is also included in Phase Two of our plan. For this phase, input will likely be in the form of an on-line survey to gauge community-wide interest in undergrounding.

Outputs

By the fall the subcommittee will have completed its research and will begin writing a report to City Council. We expect to submit the report in late 2017 or early 2018. This report will reflect our research findings and our recommendation on continuing into Phase Three.

Outcomes

City Council will have valuable information on the pros and cons of undergrounding utility wires that will allow council members to make an informed decision on whether to invigorate the existing efforts to underground utilities within city limits or use resources in other effective ways to achieve the same level of resilience in the face of disaster.

2. FIRE SAFETY AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF A WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE FIRE

Resources

Specific resources include staff time to properly notice meetings and council submissions prepared by the Disaster Fire Safety Commission. It is anticipated that a venue and staff time will be needed for a series of community meetings.

Program Activities

From 1965 forward, over 15 reports have been prepared for the benefit of city council and relevant commissions about the danger to life and property in the Hills Fire Hazard Zone. The two primary cited concerns are vehicle congestion and overgrown vegetation. This has been a seemingly intractable problem studied by both BFD and by the commission numerous times. In 2015-16 a work group was formed to research community WUI disaster planning in Northern and Southern California. The work group proposed a Red Flag Day No Parking program to the City of Berkeley and later refined our recommendation to model Laguna Beach's Red Flag Day pilot program. After the commission recommendation was made to City Council, City Council agreed to devote staff resources to this issue. Commission members are taking a two prong approach to address fire safety and community resilience as outlined below.

Access and Egress

- Conducted an online survey targeting residents of Council Districts 5, 6 and 8 to ascertain their ingress and egress concerns for themselves and for first responders, whether responding to a medical or a public safety emergency. The questionnaire was sent out in early May by council members' newsletters, posted on NextDoor, and through known CERT and BDPNN neighborhood groups and other groups to promote broad participation in the survey.
- Council members from Districts 5,6, and 8 hosted the third annual community fire safety meeting in June when the results of the survey were shared and community comments encouraged.

Vegetation Management

- We are seeking updated information on vegetation tonnage collected from the Chipper program since it appears actual tonnage collected has been dropping over a

number of years. If the trend has continued throughout this last historic drought we will review the literature handouts for residents and make recommendations for a public education campaign. This summer, commission work group members plan to go door to door with CALFire vegetation handouts to elicit greater resident awareness of fire safety measures in the Park Hills Neighborhood.

Outputs

We gain immediate feedback from the community based on our outreach efforts with an eye to supporting a Red Flag Day pilot project in the Hills Fire Zone and/or other measures to relieve street congestion.

Outcomes

We will report to council on our outreach efforts regarding community and personal safety concerns related to ingress and egress in the Hills Fire Zone, and on preventative measures adopted by residents to mitigate the risk of fire. The report will include recommendations for improving the overall safety of Hills Fire Zone residents, travelers and first responders.

3. IMPROVE COMMUNITY RESILIENCE THROUGHOUT BERKELEY WITH A WHOLE COMMUNITY APPROACH

Resources

Resources include community members' time (volunteer), Commissioners' and staff time to participate in working group and/or subcommittee work, and staff time to present yearly Berkeley Ready presentations to Commission.

Program Activities

Support accessible preparedness outreach and training, with a special focus on underserved and/or vulnerable members of our community, including residents of South and West Berkeley, seniors, persons with disabilities, families with children, Spanish-speakers, and renters.

CERT and Community Preparedness Reform

We believe that the City's current community disaster resilience program is not adequate nor is it equitable. Currently, the primary efforts are the neighborhood group cache program, a small number of public events, and the CERT training program. Neighborhood groups save lives. However, there are far too few organized neighborhood groups in Berkeley to provide sufficient protection for our residents. Furthermore, organized neighborhood groups do not serve all areas of the city equitably; notably, this program does not meet the community's needs in South and West Berkeley. There is minimal, if any, follow-up assistance provided by the City to help neighborhood groups maintain their organization and skills. There is no quantitative data on whether a group remains active and organized after their initial set-up.

Efforts are underway at the City level to address the inadequacy of the community resilience programs. Berkeley Ready staff in the Fire Department is working on establishing Resilience Centers, with a focus on underserved neighborhoods. The CERT Program Manager and the CERT Advisory Committee are working on engaging volunteer District Coordinators. These efforts as well as the neighborhood cache

program should be evaluated for effectiveness, with additional funding and staffing channeled to programs that cause measurable improvement in community resilience and equity.

Commission member(s) will participate in a working group to develop a proposal for CERT and Community Resilience Reform with the goal of widening the reach of CERT training, neighborhood preparedness, and other community programs to equitably and adequately serve all people who live, work, study or play in Berkeley. Reform may include a restructuring of the CERT program, as well as new directions such as developing a database of volunteers for emergency response. If needed, the Commission will create a Subcommittee to work on CERT reform and develop recommendations.

To stay apprised of CERT and Berkeley Ready activities in the City, the Commission will host presentations at Commission meetings by the following groups:

- CERT Advisory Committee presentation(s)
- Berkeley Ready staff presentation(s)
- Berkeley Disaster Preparedness Network (BDPNN)

Shut Off Valves

The Commission will also work on a plan to increase the number of properties in Berkeley protected by seismically-activated gas shutoff valves. Possible elements in Commission's recommendation to Council:

- Expand the program to pay for the entire cost of installing the valve through a list of pre-approved contractors.
- Require seismic gas shutoff valves to be installed before transfer of title, or in conjunction with alteration greater than \$10,000 (currently set at \$50,000).
- Require seismic gas shutoff valves for rental units, with partial recovery of costs for landlords.

Additional Items

Commissioners working independently in other capacities (such as with schools and businesses) may develop ideas to improve community resilience in those environments and bring these to the Commission for consideration throughout the year.

Output(s)

- Develop recommendation(s) to City Council to enhance Berkeley Ready, CERT and other city programs to support community resilience. This may include scaling up current activities, or redirecting efforts towards new activities.
- Develop recommendation(s) to City Council to increase the number of properties in Berkeley protected by seismically-activated gas shutoff valves

Outcomes

Measurable improvement to Berkeley's community preparedness. Measurement may be in number of people reached, or number of active volunteers, or new previously underserved populations reached. An increase in the number of properties in Berkeley protected by seismically-activated gas shutoff valves.

4. ENSURE THAT MEASURE GG FUNDS ARE SPENT APPROPRIATELY

Resources

Commissioners' time and staff time to generate financial reports and present them to the Commission every 6 months

Program Activities

- Staff to generate a Measure GG spending report every 6 months
- Commission to review staff report every 6 months.
- A Commission member will sit on the Berkeley Energy Assurance Transformation (BEAT) microgrid project Technical Advisory Committee to stay apprised of microgrid plans.

Output(s)

The Commission will create recommendations to Council if needed to ensure that Measure GG funds are used to enhance the safety of the Berkeley community and remain within the definition, scope, and intentions of the original law.

Outcomes

With funds correctly allocated, the goal of Measure GG is maintained: keeping all fire stations in the city open 24-7 as well as improving community resilience through programs such as Berkeley Ready.

5: HELP OTHER CITY ENTITIES INCORPORATE A DISASTER AND FIRE SAFETY PERSPECTIVE INTO DECISIONS

Resources

Commissioners' time for research and recommendation creation

Program Activities

Respond to requests for input on matters relating to disaster and fire safety. Requests may come from City Council, City Staff, other Commissions, or the public.

- Examples of recent referrals:
 - City council request for feedback on T1 infrastructure spending
 - Police Commission request for feedback on Surveillance Ordinance
 - Council request for information on Alta Bates closure impact on disaster response
- Provide input into Council decisions when decisions will affect disaster resilience or fire safety in Berkeley

Output(s)

Recommendations to City Council or communications with other city entities, often in response to referrals.

a. Outcomes

City Council will incorporate disaster preparedness considerations into decisions, leading to a safer and more resilient city. Examples:

- Seismic retrofits that are planned for Measure T1 spending will also incorporate renovations needed for disaster sheltering. This creates resiliency and avoids inefficient spending.
- City council can advocate against Alta Bates closure with the awareness of how a closure would impact disaster resilience.
- Decisions relating to other matters (surveillance, Urban Shield) will be made with City Council well-informed of the impact on disaster and fire safety.