

ITEM #: 14
DATE: 02-11-25
DEPT: FIRE

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF 2024 STORY COUNTY MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

BACKGROUND:

The City of Ames participates in the Story County Hazard Mitigation Plan. A hazard mitigation plan is a document that outlines:

1. The history of natural or human-caused disasters in a community
2. The likelihood that those disasters could occur in the future
3. Populations, properties, critical facilities, and infrastructure that could be affected by a disaster occurrence
4. Strategies to protect those populations, properties, critical facilities, and infrastructure from potential disasters

Although participation in a hazard mitigation plan is not mandated by law, a jurisdiction must participate in an approved plan to receive certain forms of federal pre- and post- disaster funding. Those funds can be used to address the vulnerabilities identified in the plan. Hazard mitigation plans must be reviewed and updated from time to time.

The current Hazard Mitigation Plan expired January 1, 2025. The City joined the Story County Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee in January 2023. City staff and representatives from 23 other jurisdictions in Story County have been working with the County to revise the current plan. The update process consisted of the following steps:

1. Planning for public involvement, including issuing a survey to the public, placing an article in Tribune and issuing a press release
2. Identifying the hazards of the jurisdiction
3. Determining the risks presented by each hazard, using historical information as a context
4. Identifying assets, including critical facilities and infrastructure
5. Identifying the goals of the hazard mitigation plan
6. Developing mitigation actions to reduce the risk to critical facilities and infrastructure

Members of the Story County community participated in surveys where they were asked to indicate their opinion regarding the likelihood for each hazard to impact their jurisdiction. In all, 50 surveys were completed. After three Story County Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee meetings, which incorporated community feedback, historical data, and a risk assessment, a draft plan was developed. The final version includes 287 pages of discussion of the hazards faced by communities in Story County. The goals of the revised plan are as follows:

1. Protect lives and reduce injury
2. Minimize or reduce damage to property, especially critical facilities and infrastructure
3. Strengthen communication among agencies and between agencies and the public regarding hazard mitigation

The revised plan includes descriptions of 17 mitigation actions specific to the City of Ames. Eight of those actions are currently In Progress, two have Not Started, and seven were New to this plan. Iowa State University has identified an additional 11 actions, and the Ames Community School District has identified three actions. Other jurisdictions in Story County each developed their own mitigation actions.

It is important to note that the City is not obligated to pursue any of these actions. However, in order to receive federal funding for a mitigation project, the project must relate to one of these actions in some manner. Therefore, the actions described below have been written very broadly to give the City flexibility if it wishes to pursue federal funding for a future project.

The City's actions are:

1. Develop and enhance capabilities to communicate hazard-related information to City employees, other jurisdictions, and the public
2. Plan for and install backup power supplies to critical facilities
3. Identify security and environmental vulnerabilities in utility infrastructure. Develop procedures and policies, install equipment, or modify facilities to reduce the threat of utility infrastructure failure
4. Develop plans and preventative action, train personnel, and obtain equipment to be used to address hazards in the community in concert with other jurisdictions. These jurisdictions include other local, state, and federal agencies, and private organizations
5. Protect properties from river and flash flooding through construction of water storage areas, building of flood protection structures, implementation of non- structural measures such as buy-outs of flood-prone properties, implementation of policies, and other measures to reduce the risk of property damage and threats to resident safety
6. Install equipment to protect critical facilities from fire
7. Evaluate sanitary sewer infrastructure for deficiencies and improve them to reduce potential service backups in the sanitary sewer system and reduce peak flows to the treatment plant. Evaluate storm sewer infrastructure for deficiencies and improve them to reduce the potential for localized flooding
8. Develop and enhance a Continuity of Operations Plan
9. Evaluate the costs and benefits and consider joining the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System
10. Incorporate Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design strategies into future enhancements and revisions to community design guidelines
11. Plan for river/stream/slope stabilization and restoration actions to protect infrastructure by addressing erosion into waterways

12. Evaluate locations and costs associated with building a community safe room, which could be part of a cooling center project
13. Utilize the City's Urban Tree Management Program to reduce electrical outages caused by overgrown trees and remove diseased trees located in the right-of-way and on private property
14. Enhance the City's Water System Resiliency by connecting with other water suppliers, replace any remaining 4" water mains, construct a new 5-million-gallon ground storage reservoir, improve communications within the Water Plant, update hydraulic flood model, and build a new 1-million-gallon water tower
15. Enhance electric metering infrastructure for load management and to identify outages in real time
16. Install a new 161kV transmission line to serve the City and Iowa State University
17. Evaluate the feasibility and construction of solar panels with battery storage capabilities at Electric Distribution and Public Works Warehouse to provide both facilities with an independent electrical power source that is not dependent upon fossil fuels, and will allow for a quicker response during widespread power outages

The draft plan has been approved by FEMA and adopted by the Story County Board of Supervisors. Once the participant jurisdictions all adopt the plan, it will be filed with the Department of Homeland Security. The new plan will expire January 1, 2029. The plan calls for routine updates to add, modify, or remove mitigation actions as needed. These updates will be the opportunities to add new actions that the City may desire to have considered for federal funding.

Due to the length of the revised plan document, it is not attached to this report. However, it can be retrieved by [following this link](#).

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Adopt the 2024 Story County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.
2. Do not adopt the 2024 Story County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan and forego certain types of federal assistance for disaster mitigation.

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

A hazard mitigation plan is a critical document to establish the projects that the community plans to undertake to protect itself from disasters. It is important to note, while the City is not obligated to pursue any of the actions listed in the Hazard Mitigation Plan, having a current plan is a requirement to receive many forms of federal disaster aid. The revised plan will be updated routinely as the priorities of the City evolve.

Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby adopting the 2024 Story County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Sample Adoption Resolution.docx](#)