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Local Hazard Mitigation Plan Draft submitted; additional \$1.75M needed to cover storm damage

By Sora O'Doherty

In order to be eligible for FEMA mitigation funding, Contra Costa County has to submit a draft Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) by the end of August and Orinda's part was due to the county on Aug. 7. Prepared by Planner Daisy Allen, the draft plan aims to address future risk from hazards and floods. The final draft for city council adoption is anticipated by late fall 2017. Planning Director Drummond Buckley and the Orinda City Council praised Allen for her work on the very large and complex project.

The plan must assess the risk of eight natural hazards: dam and levee failure, drought, earthquake, flood, landslide, severe weather, tsunami, wildfire, and, as of this year, climate change. Hazard events affecting Orinda have overwhelmingly been related to storms, flooding and landslides.

All capital improvement projects from the 2010 LHMP have been completed. Other ongoing projects and policies from the 2010 LHMP have been carried over to the 2017 LHMP. Recommended actions include the following:

Countywide action items (suggested for adoption by all planning partners)

- Support retrofitting or relocation of structures in high hazard areas, prioritizing structures that have experience repetitive loss.

- Integrate LHMP into other plans and update the General Plan Safety Element with the new LHMP once it is approved.

- Maintain the LHMP (annual review and update).

- Maintain good standing and compliance under NFIP.

Capital Improvement Projects

- Camino Sobrante Slope Stabilization

- Santa Maria Park & Ride and City Hall parking lot slope stabilization

- Annual drainage facilities improvement program

- Oak Springs/Candlestick Road storm water improvements

- Miner Road Bridge over San Pablo Creek

Plans and Policies

- Consider hazard mitigation in CIP update; focus on unfunded projects for HMA grant opportunities.

- Continue to allocate funding for tree trim and removal.

- Prepare Green Infrastructure Plan

- Update San Pablo Creek Restoration Plan

- Investigate cost and timing for Floodplain Manager Certification.

- Investigate requirements to join CRS for floodplain management.

- Coordinate with State Division of Safety of Dams regarding dam inspections.

- Conduct inventory of soft-story structures in downtown Orinda.

- Develop and update educational materials for the public regarding hazards.

- Prepare a Climate Action Plan.

- Incorporate hazard mitigation concepts in downtown planning process.

- Train staff to understand LHMP and better disseminate hazard mitigation information to the public.

Storm damage costs

In another action, the city council adopted a resolution transferring \$1.75 million from the General Fund unrestricted reserves and the restricted emergency reserves to the capital improvement storm damage fund and appropriated the money to cover the storm damage expenditures from last winter's storms, including the Miner Road sinkhole, felled trees, slope destabilization and flooding. At the mid-year budget, the council approved the transfer of \$2 million but projected costs have now risen to \$3.75 million, leading staff to recommend the additional transfer of funds. At some point in the future, Orinda may qualify for federal reimbursement, but in the meantime, the contractors need to be paid.

No city manager yet

In other news, Orinda was not satisfied with any of the candidates for the vacant position of city manager, and so will continue its recruitment efforts. Interim City Manager Steve Salomon has agreed to remain.

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