

**TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL**



**ATTN: POLICY AND SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENTS: CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE  
FIRE DEPARTMENT  
POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**DATE: APRIL 24, 2007**

**CMR:213:07**

**SUBJECT: REVIEW OF DRAFT EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN**

**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Policy & Services Committee review and recommend to the City Council for approval, with any suggested changes, the City's revised Emergency Operations Plan.

**BACKGROUND**

Section 2.12.080 of the Palo Alto Municipal Code outlines the requirements for the preparation and adoption of an emergency plan for the City. The Fire Department has primary responsibility for preparation of this plan, which must be adopted by Council resolution. Local governments in California are required to develop and maintain emergency plans that provide for the effective mobilization of city resources to respond to declared emergencies. These plans must follow the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS), which enhances inter-agency disaster response coordination. The creation of this system stemmed from the Oakland Hills fires in the early 1990s where inadequate inter-agency coordination led to undesirable outcomes. The City's emergency organizational structure must comply with SEMS requirements to ensure eligibility for state funding of emergency response-related costs.

More recently, in February 2003, the President issued Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5, which mandated the Secretary of Homeland Security develop and administer the National Incident Management System (NIMS). This federal system provides for a consistent nationwide approach to disaster response at the local, state and federal levels that complements and builds upon the current California SEMS model. All agencies within the United States are required to comply with the NIMS guidelines in order to receive federal funding for disaster planning,

training, response and recovery. Compliance with the guidelines also ensures the City's eligibility for state disaster funds.

The City Council adopted the current Emergency Management Plan on January 11, 1999. The adoption of this plan brought the City into compliance with the SEMS model of emergency organization. The emergency plan is the official document that describes the City's responsibilities and the processes used to carry out emergency operations. Since 1999, the City has updated its plan to reflect responses to and planning for new types of local and national disasters that have occurred. In 2000, the Severe Winter Storm and Earthquake annexes were added to the plan. Following the 2001 terrorist attacks, the City completed a Terrorism Annex to the plan. The creation of the new National Response Plan (NRP) and the NIMS federal emergency organization model has necessitated a more comprehensive update to the City's emergency plan. The federal government created guidelines for local government compliance with the NIMS requirements in December 2005. Since then, City staff have been working to update the emergency plan.

On February 12, 2007, the Council reviewed an outline of the plan document as well as particular sections of the plan related to the Council's role as representatives of the City during a disaster and community partnerships/coordination. Comments received during that meeting are incorporated into the revised draft of the plan.

## **DISCUSSION**

Attachment A to this report provides the Council with the draft Emergency Operations Plan as of March 2007. This plan follows state and federal guidelines for organization and content. Most elements of the plan are standardized in nature and are consistent with other local government plans.

The plan is organized in the following fashion:

1. Introduction
  - A. Background and assumptions
  - B. Scope
  - C. Authorities and references
2. Hazard Analyses
3. Concept of Operations
  - Phase I: Preparedness
  - Phase II: Response
    - A. Activation of Emergency Plan/Emergency Operations Center
    - B. Alert, notification and implementation process
    - C. Leadership/Continuity of government
    - D. NIMS- and SEMS-based emergency organization and functions
  - Phase III: Recovery Operations
    - A. Concept of operations and organization
    - B. Damage/safety assessments
    - C. Documentation
    - D. Disaster Field Office (DFO)

- E. Disaster assistance programs
- F. Disaster Assistance Centers
- G. After-Action/Corrective Action Reporting
- Phase IV: Mitigation/Prevention
- 4. Training and Exercising
- 5. Multi-Year Strategy Program Management
- 6. Annexes
  - A. Glossary
  - B. Council emergency procedures
  - C. Operational checklists
  - D. Emergency Operations Center (EOC) procedures
  - E. Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
  - F. Recovery phase information
  - G. City Attorney templates
  - H. Organizational charts
  - I. – Q. Hazard-specific annexes
  - R. Maps

The City has chosen several areas of the plan on which to place additional emphasis, namely the Council’s emergency roles and procedures, community alert/notification procedures, and community coordination. Annex B of the plan presents a revised draft of the Council’s emergency procedures that incorporates comments made at the February 12 meeting.

It is important for the City to adopt this revised emergency plan because it meets the new requirements put into place after 2001. The City’s current plan is almost ten years old. Without an adopted and updated plan, the City will not be eligible for federal funding should a major earthquake or other disaster occur. This draft plan addresses the key federal and state requirements for local emergency plans and is tailored to Palo Alto’s unique conditions and circumstances. Staff recommends that the Policy & Services Committee provide comments on this draft and recommend approval of the plan to the City Council. Staff will incorporate comments made into the final draft presented to Council.

If there are other important, but non-required emergency planning elements, that the Council committee members feel are not sufficiently addressed or are missing from this EOP, staff would like to identify those supplemental elements and develop a timeline for returning to Council following adoption of this required plan.

#### Community Preparedness and Response Planning

One supplemental element already identified will be a community response plan. Recognizing the importance to the City of community partnerships and coordination, staff recommends creating a separate community response plan that stems from and supplements the concepts in the City’s Emergency Operations Plan to address community participation in disaster planning and response efforts. This plan will look at all phases of emergency preparation and planning from the Community’s, rather than the City’s perspective, and could address, among other issues, the role of volunteers in a disaster (both spontaneous and registered), the future of the Citizen Corps Council, partnerships with the business community, and the Red Ribbon Task

Force and any successor groups. The community plan could also focus on ways to enhance community alert/notification procedures. At the March 1 Red Ribbon Task Force meeting, staff presented information regarding the City's response capabilities during a major disaster and also discussed the idea of creating a subcommittee to work on the community response plan. Staff recommends that the Council move forward with the adoption of the City's EOP as presented in Attachment A and allow the development of a community response plan to continue on a separate timeline.

### **RESOURCE IMPACT**

While staff believes that the interdepartmental Steering Committee for emergency preparedness is still the most effective approach to emergency and disaster planning, it has become clear in the past year that resources are stretched to achieve what is required in this area with current staffing. The temporary addition of contract staffing in the Police Department and City Manager's Office has been helpful. However, the Police Department staff work has focused primarily on homeland security and the contract in the Manager's Office is very limited in scope and duration. Staff will be evaluating the adequacy of resources in this area during the 2007-09 budget process.

Staff is working with School District staff on plans for an alternate Emergency Operations Center (EOC). As discussions progress, staff may identify infrastructure and equipment needs for outfitting this alternate EOC. Staff is also investigating the cost and space requirements for storing emergency food and water supplies for employees during a disaster of varying lengths. Staff received a preliminary report before the holidays on these issues from a specialized consultant and will be analyzing the options for proceeding with this type of emergency supply procurement.

The City must also periodically update its emergency plan in accordance with State guidelines. The update process requires a significant staff time commitment from numerous departments. This process can also identify areas where disaster planning or training is deficient, leading to requests for additional resources.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This report is consistent with existing City policies and with the Council's designation of emergency preparedness/planning as a top priority for 2006 and 2007.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This is not a project requiring environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Attachment A: Draft City of Palo Alto Emergency Operations Plan (distributed with the April 16, 2007 Council packet – additional copies available in the City Manager's Office for review)

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