TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER

DEPARTMENT: PLANNING & COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

CMR: 415:00

DATE: DECEMBER 12, 2005

SUBJECT: ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION APPROVING A LOCAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN.

RECOMMENDATION
Staff recommends to Council the following actions:
1) Conduct a public hearing regarding the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) and
2) Staff recommends that Council adopt the attached Resolution approving the Palo Alto Annex to the regional LHMP prepared by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG).

BACKGROUND
On October 30, 2000, the President signed into law the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA 2000). This Act requires all state, local and tribal governments to develop and submit a local hazard mitigation plan as a condition of receiving Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) project grants. In spring 2005, ABAG received a grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to prepare a regional plan; all jurisdictions could choose to participate in this regional effort. Palo Alto, along with the majority of Bay Area cities, counties, and special districts, is participating with ABAG in the development of the LHMP.

DISCUSSION
DMA 2000 became Public Law 106-390 on October 30, 2000. Its purpose is “to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to authorize a program for pre-disaster mitigation, to streamline the administration of disaster relief, to control the federal costs of disaster assistance, and for other purposes.” The four phases of disaster response are mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Mitigation takes place before a natural hazard occurs and is recognized by FEMA as “the cornerstone of emergency management.” Simply put, mitigation has proven to save lives and property and, therefore, lessen the impact of natural hazards.
Regardless of how a jurisdiction creates its LHMP, all must have the same components. According to Section 201.1 of the Interim Final Rule, “the purpose of mitigation planning is for state, local, and Indian tribal governments to identify the natural hazards that impact them, to identify actions and activities to reduce any losses from those hazards, and to establish a coordinated process to implement the plan, taking advantage of a wide range of resources.” The Interim Final Rule identifies the following five items as essential to all mitigation plans:

1. Planning Process - The planning process requires that the project plan include the public, private industries, and neighboring communities to ensure that a comprehensive community approach is taken.

2. Performing a Risk Assessment - Risk Assessment includes analyzing the potential hazards a community faces, including historical events, and examining the risks to the current and future built environment. The risk assessment includes the type of hazard and vulnerability to the hazard. Performing a risk assessment is key to mitigation planning.

3. Developing a Mitigation Strategy - The mitigation strategy is a plan for reducing the impact of hazards identified in the risk assessment.

4. Plan Maintenance Schedule - Mitigation plans must be monitored, evaluated and updated every five years.

5. Adoption by a Governing Body - The authorizing governing body must approve each mitigation plan.

As mentioned previously, ABAG received a grant from FEMA to prepare a regional LHMP and to assist local jurisdictions. This regional plan was reviewed and approved by the ABAG Executive Board on March 17, 2005. The ABAG plan is available for review at http://quake.abag.ca.gov/mitigation/plan. Each participating jurisdiction must prepare an annex to the ABAG plan addressing local hazards, local risk assessment, and existing and proposed mitigation measures. A Palo Alto annex and a matrix of proposed mitigation measures has been drafted and reviewed by the appropriate City departments including the City Attorney’s Office, City Manager’s Office, Fire, Police, Public Works, Utilities, Planning and Community Environment, and Community Services. In addition, the Palo Alto Unified School District and Stanford Medical Center staff provided input to the draft LHMP. Contrary to Palo Alto’s normal process, FEMA requires that the City take input on the LHMP from the community prior to review and approval by the governing body. For this reason, staff implemented the following ABAG-recommended process:
The Palo Alto annex to the LHMP and the mitigation matrix was posted on the City website during September 2005.

Comments from the public were solicited and reviewed.

The revised drafts were transmitted to FEMA for review via ABAG (required by DMA2000). FEMA pre-approved the documents on October 5, 2005.

The plan annex, mitigation matrix, and resolution, when approved by Council, will be filed with FEMA (required by DMA 2000) and posted on ABAG’s website, after which Palo Alto will be eligible to apply for and receive grants from FEMA.

The LHMP will be reviewed annually by executive staff and updated every five years (required by DMA 2000).

**RESOURCE IMPACT**
Participating in the ABAG regional plan is far more cost effective than creating a stand-alone, Palo Alto-specific LHMP.

**POLICY IMPLICATIONS**
This recommendation is consistent with existing policies.

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**
This recommendation is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and no further environmental review is necessary.

**ATTACHMENTS**
A: Resolution  
B: Palo Alto Annex to the LHMP  
C: Matrix of Mitigation Measures

**PREPARED BY:**
FRED HERMAN  
Chief Building Official

**DEPARTMENT HEAD APPROVAL:**
STEVE EMLSLIE  
Director, Planning & Community Environment

**CITY MANAGER APPROVAL:**
EMILY HARRISON  
Assistant City Manager