



## **Public Outreach Strategy**

City of Sebastopol Local Hazard Mitigation Plan  
Sebastopol, California

Prepared for:

**City of Sebastopol**

7120 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA 95472

November 16, 2020

Project No. SA20170850

# Public Outreach Strategy

City of Sebastopol Local Hazard Mitigation Plan  
Sebastopol, California

## Prepared for:

City of Sebastopol  
Planning Department  
7120 Bodega Avenue  
Sebastopol, CA 95472

## Prepared by:

Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.  
10940 White Rock Road, Suite 190  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670  
T: 916-636-3200

**November 16, 2020**

## Copyright and non-disclosure notice

The contents and layout of this report are subject to copyright owned by Wood (© Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.), save to the extent that copyright has been legally assigned by us to another party or is used by Wood under license. To the extent that we own the copyright in this report, it may not be copied or used without our prior written agreement for any purpose other than the purpose indicated in this report. The methodology (if any) contained in this report is provided to you in confidence and must not be disclosed or copied to third parties without the prior written agreement of Wood. Disclosure of that information may constitute an actionable breach of confidence or may otherwise prejudice our commercial interests. Any third party who obtains access to this report by any means will, in any event, be subject to the third-party disclaimer set out below.

## Third-party disclaimer

Any disclosure of this report to a third party is subject to this disclaimer. The report was prepared by Wood at the instruction of, and for use by, our client named on the front of the report. It does not in any way constitute advice to any third party who is able to access it by any means. Wood excludes to the fullest extent lawfully permitted all liability whatsoever for any loss or damage howsoever arising from reliance on the contents of this report. We do not however exclude our liability (if any) for personal injury or death resulting from our negligence, for fraud or any other matter in relation to which we cannot legally exclude liability.





## Table of Contents

- 1.0 Purpose of the Public Outreach Strategy..... 1
- 2.0 Objectives of the Public Outreach Strategy ..... 1
- 3.0 Local Government Public Outreach and Involvement Responsibilities..... 1
  - 3.1 Outreach Coordinator ..... 3
  - 3.2 Communication Platforms ..... 3
    - 3.2.1 Community-Based Organizations ..... 3
    - 3.2.2 Webpage..... 4
    - 3.2.3 Social Media ..... 4
    - 3.2.4 Newspapers ..... 4
    - 3.2.5 Press Releases ..... 4
    - 3.2.6 Public Survey ..... 5
    - 3.2.7 Informational Pop-Up Booths ..... 5
    - 3.2.8 Local Events and Weekly Newsletters ..... 6
    - 3.2.9 Public Workshops ..... 6
    - 3.2.10 Utility Roundtable ..... 6
    - 3.2.11 GIS Web Mapping Application ..... 7
    - 3.2.12 Map your Neighborhood Mailing List ..... 7

## Tables

- Table 1. Public Outreach Strategy..... 8**



## 1.0 Purpose of the Public Outreach Strategy

The purpose for the Public Outreach Strategy is to provide for a meaningful process through which the City of Sebastopol and its citizens, public officials, and stakeholder groups may effectively participate in the preparation of the City of Sebastopol Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). The City is preparing the LHMP to develop a hazard mitigation strategy for the City's planning area. This strategy will be developed based upon the understanding that citizens and groups are the source of tremendous creativity, and that their input will produce better planning decisions. The emphasis is to recognize every citizen's right to participate in the process of making local government decisions.

A wide variety of public participation methods and tools, representing distinct purposes, will be employed in the strategy to provide for broad public engagement and participation. These purposes of public engagement are as follows:

- **Public Awareness** – to share information and to promote awareness of planning process, including ways the public can participate
- **Public Education** – to educate citizens and help them make more informed choices
- **Public Input** – to provide citizens and groups with opportunities to provide input and ideas during the planning process
- **Public Interaction** – to exchange views and ideas as a means of reaching consensus
- **Public Partnership** – to involve citizens in the decision-making process

## 2.0 Objectives of the Public Outreach Strategy

1. Recognizing that there are many levels of public participation, to provide for an effective mix of participation opportunities that include the above bulleted purposes.
2. Recognizing that not everyone participates in the same way or at the same time, to include a mix of participation strategies that provides for a broad and diverse set of participation opportunities that considers the diversity of the City's planning area.
3. Recognizing the City of Sebastopol's history of past public participation with planning and public safety outreach projects, the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (HMPC) will provide the public with opportunities to review, clarify, and provide input on generated information, as well as generate policies, goals, objectives, and information.
4. To build public support for, and ultimately ownership of, the City of Sebastopol LHMP.

## 3.0 Local Government Public Outreach and Involvement Responsibilities

The requirements related to public involvement in hazard mitigation plans according to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (44 CFR Section 201.6(b) and (c)) are listed below:

**Requirement §201.6(b):** In order to develop a more comprehensive approach to reducing the effects of natural disasters, the planning process **shall** include:

1. An opportunity for the public to comment on the plan during the drafting stage and prior to plan approval;





2. An opportunity for neighboring communities, local and regional agencies involved in hazard mitigation activities, and agencies that have the authority to regulate development, as well as businesses, academia and other private and non-profit interests to be involved in the planning process; and
3. Review and incorporation, if appropriate, of existing plans, studies, reports, and technical information.

**Requirement §201.6(c)(1):** [The plan **shall** document] the planning process used to develop the plan, including how it was prepared, who was involved in the process, and how the public was involved.

**Requirement §201.6(c)(4)(iii):** [The plan maintenance process **shall** include a] discussion on how the community will continue public participation in the plan maintenance process.

Based on the requirements, the public participation process ensures citizens and local and regional agencies understand the risk and vulnerability and can work with the City of Sebastopol to support policies, actions, and tools to reduce future losses. This is why the public must have opportunities to comment on disaster mitigation plans during the drafting stage and prior to plan approval. The City is encouraged to conduct a public workshop or open house within 60 days of the project kick-off, or first HMPC meeting to maximize the number of credits they can achieve under the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS).

- To meet DMA requirements as well as the goals of the Public Outreach Strategy, the City is expected to engage in various public outreach and feedback efforts, which can include:
- Engage community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Assist in distributing press releases and information to local media
- Share public input/comment with the HMPC
- Document and report on progress/activities related to public involvement
- Review public input for incorporation in plan, as appropriate
- Assist with advertising and holding one (1) public workshop (during draft development) and one (1) public workshop once the Public Review Draft LHMP is circulated
- Announcing the planning effort at other public and Planning Commission meetings, or holding additional public meetings, if desired
- Announce how the plan can be accessed during the public review period. This can include providing links from the City's Website to the LHMP Webpage or providing a hardcopy of the plan in a public location, such as a municipal building (e.g. library, community center).
- Follow the recommendations for continued public involvement as designated in the implementation chapter of the LHMP.

The City of Sebastopol can implement a robust public outreach process by asking citizens to share local knowledge of the City's vulnerability to hazards based on past occurrences. For the City of Sebastopol this may include vulnerability to flooding and wildfires. Public involvement can be solicited by working with CBOs, or through direct outreach via multiple media platforms, including the City's Website and social media, as well as traditional materials, such as newspaper notices, questionnaires, public workshops, involvement at public events, and distribution of the plan for public input at repositories.

The overall goal of communication is to inform the public about the process and to seek input, and to engage early and often. Messaging should cover the following topics:





- Announce kick-off of preparing a LHMP (typically within 30 days of kick-off meeting)
- Advertising the City's LHMP Webpage
- Advertisement of Public Workshop and other events
- Distribution of the public survey
- Notification of public comment and availability of the Public Review Draft LHMP
- Announce public meeting or open house
- Notification of availability of Final LHMP
- Announce City Council Hearing

### 3.1 Outreach Coordinator

The City's Outreach Coordinator, or designated Project Manager will lead the public involvement process and implementation of the Public Outreach Strategy. This strategy will be overseen and managed by Ms. Kari Svanstrom, the City's Planning Director for the plan preparation, as well as the City's consultant, Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. (Wood).

### 3.2 Communication Platforms

#### 3.2.1 Community-Based Organizations

Inviting CBOs to participate during the LHMP planning process is important because they may represent traditionally under-served or disadvantaged communities (DACs), or socially vulnerable populations, such as seniors or disabled. As defined by Senate Bill 1000 (Health and Safety Code § 39711) disadvantaged communities are low-income areas disproportionately affected by environmental pollution or other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation.<sup>1</sup>

Generally, CBOs represent various segments of the community. In some cases, CBOs may represent DACs, the senior population, parent-teacher/youth groups, church groups, or neighborhood associations and engagement can be most successful when it is started early in the process. Outreach to CBOs is useful when providing information to members of the public whose first language is not English. A CBO representative may also be able to inform a segment of the community about the LHMP process, plan implementation, and foster communication with residents during an emergency. CBOs may include neighborhood groups, the business community, educational groups, faith-based organizations, or healthcare advocates. Several CBOs were invited to participate on the HMPC, including the Sebastopol Area Senior Center, West County Community Health Center, and the City's Map your Neighborhood (MYN) program administrator. Ongoing outreach with these CBOs will enhance communication and outreach to a larger segment of the citizens in Sebastopol.

---

<sup>1</sup> According to the Department of Water Resources (DWR) DAC Mapping Tool, there are no census tracts that intersect with the City of Sebastopol that contain a DAC. These maps only show census tracts that meet the DAC definition (i.e., only those census tracts with an annual median household income (MHI) that is less than 80 percent of the statewide annual MHI (Public Resources Section 75005(g)). The census tract data within the City of Sebastopol is available for download here: <https://gis.water.ca.gov/app/dacs/>.



### 3.2.2 Webpage

At the beginning of the process, the City should create a Webpage to keep the public informed on the development of the LHMP and to solicit public input. This Webpage can be designed to complement the City’s existing Disaster Preparedness Webpage that includes information on flood and emergency preparation resources. The LHMP Webpage should be publicized on all media releases, mailings, newsletters, surveys, and public meeting advertisements. The Webpage can include a section for the public to sign up for project email updates. The City can also keep the Webpage active after the plan is completed to keep the public informed about the status of the mitigation actions (see Photo 1).



**Photo 1.** City LHMP Webpages can include information on hazard mitigation, disaster preparedness, and public review documents. It also functions as a repository of for all the planning process documentation, Draft LHMP, and Cal OES/FEMA approval letters.

### 3.2.3 Social Media

The City of Sebastopol can use the following social media platforms to circulate information on the LHMP:

- City Facebook (7,530+ followers)
- City Twitter (1,000+ followers)

At a minimum, the social media platforms should announce the kick-off of the LHMP planning process, advertise the City’s LHMP Webpage and other events, post a link to the public survey, notify the public about meetings and workshops, and announce the availability of the plan for public input and comment. The City can share LHMP information with other social media groups and organizations.

The City of Sebastopol may also want to post information about the LHMP on other agency social media platforms. The City could circulate information regarding the LHMP on the Sonoma County Fire and Emergency Services Department Emergency Management Division Webpage, as well as the Sonoma Water Webpage and social media feeds.

### 3.2.4 Newspapers

The following regional and local print newspapers can be used to circulate and advertise information on the LHMP:

- Sonoma West Times & News
- Press Democrat

### 3.2.5 Press Releases

The City can distribute and circulate press releases over the course of the LHMP development. They can also encourage HMPC participants and stakeholders to distribute press releases during the project. Press releases can be distributed as informational flyers, advertisements, and public notices during community events. These communication platforms can be used to spread the news about the LHMP and invite the public to participate in the process. According to the U.S. Census American Community Survey Population Estimates, the racial/ethnic distribution of Sebastopol residents for 2019 (July 1, 2019) was 82.6 percent White, 9.3 percent Hispanic, 2.7 percent Asian, 2 percent African American, and a small percentage of

Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and other races. Based on this information, press releases will be published in English.

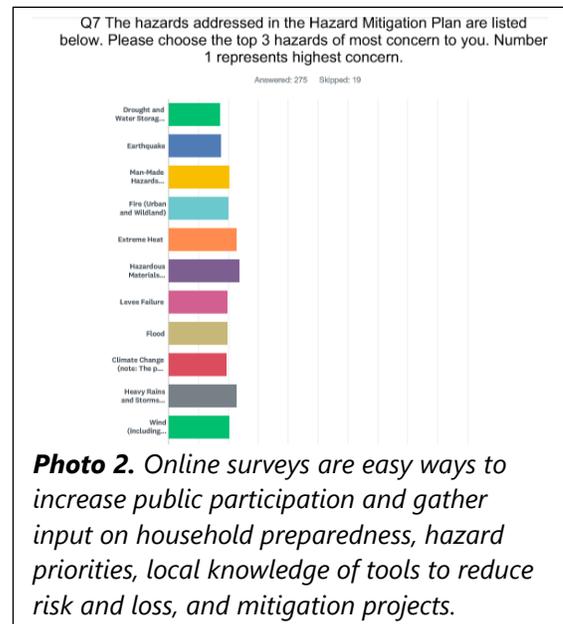
Advertisements can focus on emergency planning, natural hazards, mitigation projects, and how to get the community prepared for disasters. The press releases can include posts and links to the City’s LHMP Webpage and the public survey. As previously mentioned, the press releases should also announce the kick-off of the LHMP planning process, advertise the City’s LHMP Webpage and other events, post a link to the public survey, notify the public about meetings and workshops, and announce the availability of the plan for public input and comment.

### 3.2.6 Public Survey

The City can prepare and distribute a public survey during the planning process. The public survey can gauge information on household preparedness, hazard priorities, local knowledge of tools to reduce risk and loss, and mitigation projects. The number of questions in public surveys can vary according to the jurisdiction, but they typically range from 10 to 20 questions. The questions are designed to help the City and HMPC understand local hazards and select mitigation actions.

The public survey should be made available on the LHMP Webpage, and paper copies should be left at informational booths. Some counties and cities have made the public survey available on tablets at various community events, although this may no longer be safely feasible with the recent shelter-in-place restrictions and health and safety precautions. In summary, the public survey is designed to help the City better understand the following based on public input:

- Perception of natural hazards and risks
- Hazards with the most concern
- Best communication methods
- Level of public support for mitigation actions
- Willingness to invest in hazard mitigation



**Photo 2.** Online surveys are easy ways to increase public participation and gather input on household preparedness, hazard priorities, local knowledge of tools to reduce risk and loss, and mitigation projects.

### 3.2.7 Informational Pop-Up Booths

The City can advertise the LHMP planning process and seek public input at informational booths during local events or booths displayed at the local library or other public repositories. During local events, informational booths can be staffed by HMPC participants, or by other City staff or provide a repository of hard-copy informational brochures and flyers. HMPC participants or City staff should be able to speak to the public about the LHMP project, invite them to visit the LHMP Webpage, and ask them to take the public survey. Tablets, if available and feasible based on current safety precautions in Sonoma County, could be provided at the informational booths for easy access to the public survey. Paper copies can also be provided. Some cities have provided real-time hazard mapping services to the public interested in viewing hazard assessments for their property. For the City, this could include providing hazard mapping

information. Informational booths displayed at libraries and other repositories should provide map displays, handouts, copies of public surveys, and flyers.

### 3.2.8 Local Events and Weekly Newsletters

The City of Sebastopol and HMPC may want to consider advertising the LHMP process during the popular community events, such as local farmer's markets. The HMPC can also advertise the LHMP process in the City's Weekly Newsletter.

### 3.2.9 Public Workshops

The City should invite the public to attend a public workshop at the beginning of the planning process. The public workshop should cover the purpose of the plan, the components of the LHMP, background on hazard mitigation planning, and next steps. The City can provide regular and ongoing project status updates on the LHMP during regular Planning Commission and City Council hearings. Wood recommends the City host the first public workshop within 60 days of the kick-off meeting or by October after the first HMPC meeting.

During the public comment period, the City can hold a second public workshop. The public workshops can be scheduled as either stand-alone public workshops, or as part of a regularly scheduled Planning Commission or City Council hearing. These meetings should be advertised to the public and provide an opportunity for public comment. The public can also comment on the LHMP during final review and consideration by the City Council.



**Photo 3.** Requirement §201.6(b) of the Disaster Mitigation Act states the planning process shall include an opportunity for the public to comment on the plan during the drafting stage and prior to plan approval.

### 3.2.10 Utility Roundtable

The City can schedule a roundtable meeting with local utility providers, such as Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) and Sonoma Water to review and discuss hazards specific to local utilities, such as electric, gas, water, sewer and wastewater treatment, stormwater management, and telecommunications.

### 3.2.11 GIS Web Mapping Application

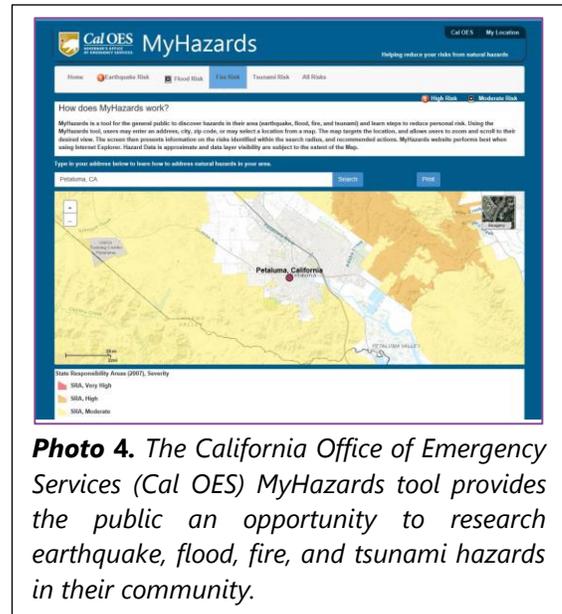
The City can develop a mapping platform that uses hazard data layers developed in the LHMP. The platform could display hazard maps that can be viewed individually or with multiple hazard layers.

The following community engagement steps and activities are outlined in conjunction with the hazard mitigation planning steps to demonstrate how they are linked in the process. This Public Outreach Strategy is a document that will be utilized and updated during the plan development process. It can also serve to document the efforts made to involve the public during each plan update.

### 3.2.12 Map your Neighborhood Mailing List

The City has an existing email distribution list as part of their MYN program. The Sebastopol MYN program is administered by the City's Public Safety Outreach Coordinator and is designed to help groups of neighbors prepare to and respond to an emergency together. This program has helped neighborhoods work together to develop stronger communities.

The MYN email distribution list currently consists of up to 400+ emails of community members. The City and HMPC should build on this existing email distribution list to announce the LHMP planning process. The City and HMPC should also use this email distribution list to spread the word about the LHMP public survey and other announcements related to public workshops and the availability of the Public Review Draft LHMP.



**Photo 4.** The California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) MyHazards tool provides the public an opportunity to research earthquake, flood, fire, and tsunami hazards in their community.



**Table 1.** Public Outreach Strategy Schedule of Activities

Timeframe	Mitigation Planning Steps	Public Participation Steps/Ideas	Specific Activities/Actions
July – September 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Getting Organized</li> <li>2. Plan for public involvement</li> <li>3. Coordinate with other departments and agencies</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider inviting CBOs to participate in the process (i.e., Sebastopol Area Senior Center).</li> <li>• Schedule HMPC Meeting #1</li> <li>• Set-up an informational display at a local library.</li> <li>• Create a Webpage for the LHMP (new Webpage or one linked to the Disaster Preparedness Webpage): what is hazard mitigation, invitation to take a public survey, input on mitigation actions/projects (Wood can provide the LHMP backgrounder content for webpage).</li> <li>• Build public awareness through media channels/platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.</li> <li>• Outreach through other groups, Private, Non-Profit. Non-governmental organizations</li> <li>• Possible public groups include: Local media, Chamber of Commerce, and Sebastopol Union School District.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HMPC formed in September 2020 (5 representatives on City Steering Committee; 5+ public/stakeholder representatives on Steering Committee) (Working Group)</li> <li>• HMPC Meeting #1 – Planning Process</li> <li>• Public Workshop #1/Planning Commission Meeting</li> <li>• Design a stand-alone LHMP Webpage</li> <li>• Advertisement for Public Workshop via Facebook, Twitter, Newspapers, Webpage, Paper Flyers, City Weekly Newsletters</li> <li>• Schedule Utility Roundtable (if desired)</li> <li>• Develop and display content on the LHMP Webpage               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Risk Assessment Key Findings</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Design and circulate a Public Survey</li> </ul>
October 2020 – January 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Identify the hazards</li> <li>5. Assess the risks</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide survey and materials at meetings</li> <li>• Share public input during HMPC Meeting #2</li> <li>• Cooperative review of public input</li> <li>• Announce workshops</li> <li>• Build contact list of interested citizens based on survey to inform of future activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and circulate press releases, post on LHMP Webpage</li> <li>• Collect public comments from a survey developed specifically for the plan</li> <li>• HMPC Meeting #2 – Hazard Identification</li> <li>• Additional outreach for Public Survey</li> <li>• Collection and compilation of survey results</li> </ul>





February – April 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Set planning goals</li> <li>7. Review mitigation alternatives</li> <li>8. Draft an action plan</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place draft plan online on City's LHMP Webpage</li> <li>• Advertise the plan and public comment period</li> <li>• Email list of interested citizens identified in previous step about the public review draft</li> <li>• Encourage public review of Final Draft LHMP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HMPC Meeting #3 – Mitigation Strategy</li> <li>• Develop links from City's Main Website to LHMP Webpage, encourage review and comment on draft plan.</li> <li>• Develop Online Form so public could leave comments on Public Review Draft LHMP</li> <li>• Public Workshop #2/Planning Commission Meeting</li> </ul>
May – August 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Adopt the plan</li> <li>10. Implement the plan, evaluate its worth, and revise as needed</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to host the LHMP Webpage on the City's Main Website with contact information for public inquiries</li> <li>• Celebrate successes – including receiving hazard mitigation funding, implementation of projects, and publicizing where the plan and its implementation is making a difference and building hazard and climate resilience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation at City Council meeting during adoption</li> <li>• Annual HMPC Meetings (to discuss status of mitigation projects)</li> <li>• 5-Year Update (scheduled for 2026)</li> </ul>





**wood.**