

**County of San Diego  
Floodplain Management Plan  
Progress Report**

Reporting Period: October 2008 through September 2009

**Background:** The County of San Diego's (County) Floodplain Management Plan (FMP) provides its vision for reducing the County's risk from flooding. The plan identifies strategies and actions, resource requirements and Department responsibilities.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Supervisors, stakeholders and the citizens of the County an annual update on the implementation of the action plan identified in the FMP. The objective of this annual evaluation is to ensure that there is a continuing and responsive planning process that will keep the County's FMP dynamic and responsive to changing needs and resource capabilities.

**I. Flood Related Events within the County during the Past Year**

No significant flood events occurred in the County of San Diego during the reporting period.

**II. Mitigation Success Stories**

**Community Rating System (CRS) Class 8 Rating** – On May 1, 2009, the County achieved a Class 8 rating in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) CRS program. The Class 8 rating was awarded in recognition of the County's efforts to eliminate or reduce the exposure of property owners and residents to flooding.

Property owners in high risk areas of the unincorporated areas of the County who renew or apply for flood insurance will now save ten percent on their policies thanks to the new federal rating. Citing flood hazard improvements made by the County, FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) improved the County's rating in 2009 from a "Class 9" to "Class 8," allowing for the rate reduction.

Participation in the CRS is limited to compliant NFIP communities that exceed the minimum NFIP floodplain management standards in areas such as public information, mapping and regulations, flood damage reduction, and flood preparedness. Credit points are assigned to each of the above categories, and a CRS classification is assigned based on the credit points. The classification determines the premium discount for policyholders. Premium discounts of up to 45% are possible under the CRS.

**County of San Diego Amends Building Code** – In 2009, the County of San Diego received top grades for its building codes and enforcement system, showing that homes

in the County are among the safest in the state, according to the Insurance Services Office's (ISO) review.

The grades contributed to the County being awarded a "Class 8" status in the CRS and the resulting flood insurance premium rates for San Diego County homeowners and businesses.

The County's Building Division earned a "2" on a 1 to 10 grading scale for its residential codes from the ISO. The ISO is an independent rating/advisory organization that serves the property/casualty insurance industry. The "2" grade puts the County in the top six percent of 302 graded California agencies. No agency earned a "1" grade and the County was one of just 17 to earn a "2." The County also received a "3" grade for its commercial building codes, ranking it in the top 17 percent.

The grades demonstrate that the County not only has rigorous codes, but that it strictly enforces them using highly qualified and trained staff. The codes are designed to create safer buildings and protect people and property from the damages that catastrophes can cause.

**StormReady** – Earlier this year the County of San Diego submitted its application to become a National Weather Service StormReady community and anticipates acceptance of its application by the end of the calendar year. StormReady is a program that helps municipalities and counties be prepared for the multiple hazards that can affect them as a result of severe weather. The goal of the program is to "provide the necessary communication and safety tools to communities across the nation to help prepare them to save lives and property within their communities during a severe weather event."

To become StormReady, the County had to go through several steps including:

- Providing documentation regarding the County's 24-hour warning and emergency operations
- Have more than three methods of receiving severe weather forecasts and warnings and alerting the public
- Create a system that monitors local weather conditions
- Promote the significance of public readiness through community seminars
- Develop a formal hazardous weather plan, which includes training and severe weather spotters and conducting exercises

**Emergency Alert System** – In 2008 the [AlertSanDiego](#) received national praise and attention for its role in safely evacuating more than 515,000 people during the 2007 fires. AlertSanDiego complements the County's Reverse 911 warning system, which sends emergency messages to landlines. AlertSanDiego allows residents to register their cell phones online to receive information during an emergency. The new program now includes over 159,416 registered cell phone numbers.

**Challenge Award** - The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) presented the County of San Diego with a prestigious Challenge Award and three Merit Awards. The Challenge Award was given to the County for its Rapid Response to Local Emergencies, referring to the four Local Assistance Centers (LACs) the County established and opened to help fire victims within 72 hours of the devastating October 2007 wildfires. CSAC praised the efficiency and speed with which County staff was able to respond and also cited the large number of people who were served at the LACs. This award was one of only 10 given this year, for which 58 California counties compete.

**County Planners Honored for Best Practices** - County planners won the only two “Best Practices” awards presented in June by the American Planning Association’s San Diego Chapter, for creating guidelines to evaluate environmental impacts and to reduce water pollution.

County teams won a first-place award for creating environmental guides known as the “California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines for Determining Significance”. The guidelines outline for planners and developers how to determine the level of environmental harm projects could cause and how that harm might be mitigated.

### **III. Review of the Action Plan**

The section that follows reviews the action plan and provides the status of each initiative. The following action plan matrix provides the following information:

- Brief summary of the initiative
- Responsible Department
- Time Line
- Priority
- Status

Reviewers of this report should refer to the Floodplain Management Plan (<http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/dpw/flood.html>) for more detailed descriptions of each initiative and the prioritization process. Under the “status” section the following questions are addressed with regards to each initiative:

- If no action was completed, why?
- Is the timeline for implementation for the initiative still appropriate?
- If the initiative was completed, does it need to be changed or removed from the action plan?

## Status of Action Items

Action Item	Responsible Office	Priority	Deadlines	Status
5-year Plan Review and Update	Flood Control District Mitigation Planning Committee	High	September 2012 June 2012	Scheduled for FY 2012
Monitor Mitigation Plan actions and report progress annually	Flood Control District County Departments	High	Oct. 1 annually August 1 annually	Completed for 2009
Adopt a resolution appointing the Flood Mitigation Planning Committee	Board of Supervisors	High	January 2008 Changed to 2010.	Rescheduled for 2010. The Committee will be responsible for developing the 2012 Floodplain Management Plan.
Maintain adequate Building Inspection staff and provide training and resources needed for a Building Code Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule (BCEGS) Class 3/3.	Department of Planning and Land Use	Very High	Ongoing	Training is provided to the Building Code Staff. Amendments to the Building Code were adopted in January 2008. The County received a BCEGS review from the Insurance Services Office in January 2009 and received a rating of 2/3.
Enforce the International Building Codes	Department of Planning and Land Use	High	Ongoing	Approximately 5,000 permits are reviewed each year.

Action Item	Responsible Office	Priority	Deadlines	Status
Draft freeboard regulations	Department of Public Works	Moderate	January 2009	The County amended its Floodplain management requirements to include 1 foot of freeboard. Adopted August 2009.
Hold hearing and consider adoption of Freeboard Regulations.	Department of Public Works	Moderate	March 2009	Hearings were held in the summer to allow for public comment on adoption of the freeboard requirement.
Maintain Flood Maps and Data	Department of Public Works	High	Ongoing	<p>All FEMA Letters changing maps were added to the system in 2008 and 2009.</p> <p>Paper copies of the Flood Insurance Study and Flood Insurance Rate Maps are available at DPW offices and County Libraries.</p> <p>The County is working with FEMA to ensure the most up-to-date information is included in the Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) currently being produced. This includes sharing its digital base map and topographic data.</p> <p>New maps are added as they are updated by FEMA.</p>

<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Responsible Office</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Deadlines</b>	<b>Status</b>
Draft Critical Facility Regulations	Department of Public Works	High	January 2010	This effort will be evaluated during 2010.
Hold hearing and consider adoption of Critical Facility Regulations.	Board of Supervisors	High	March 2010	This effort will be evaluated during 2010.
Draft Cumulative Substantial Improvement Regulations	Department of Public Works	Moderate	June 2009	Evaluated during 2009. County did not include this provision in its updated ordinances adopted in August 2009.
Hold hearing and consider adoption of Addition and Cumulative Substantial Improvement Rules	Board of Supervisors	Moderate	September 2009	Evaluated during 2009. County did not include this provision in its updated ordinances adopted in August 2009.
Conduct a study on the benefits of adding a Repetitive Loss Provision to the Flood Ordinance	Department of Public Works	Moderate	September 2009	This provision was incorporated into the County's floodplain management ordinance and adopted in August 2009.
Ensure Erosion and Sedimentation Permits are obtained	Department of Public Works	Moderate	Ongoing	Permit reviews are ongoing.
Continue to enforce Stream Dumping Regulations	Department of Public Works	Moderate	Ongoing	Enforcement of stream dumping is ongoing.

Action Item	Responsible Office	Priority	Deadlines	Status
Continue to maintain the Drainage System	Department of Public Works	High	Ongoing	Planned inspections and maintenance to ensure the carrying capacity of channels and detention basins was performed in accordance with SOPs and County's schedules
Continue to enforce the County's Stormwater Regulations	Department of Public Works	High	Ongoing	The County of San Diego revised its municipal stormwater permit in 2008 to incorporate regulation to hydromodification. Enforcement is ongoing.
Study of the drainage system and make recommendations on needed improvements	Department of Public Works	High	Ongoing	Completion or update to 10 Drainage Facilities Master Plans are underway or complete. The results will form the basis of future drainage capital improvement plans. It is anticipated that all 10 plans will be finalized by January 2013.
Document damages from inadequate drainage and develop a Capital Improvements program to eliminate problem sites.	Department of Public Works	High	Ongoing	Capital Improvements Program for Drainage Improvements updated in 2009.

Action Item	Responsible Office	Priority	Deadlines	Status
Adopt an updated Emergency Operations Plan that includes Hazard Mitigation Actions and identifies resources needed to accomplish response and mitigation Tasks	Emergency Services and the Board of Supervisors	High	January 2009	Review of 2007 Emergency Operations Plan conducted in 2009.
Conduct an annual exercise of the Emergency Operations Plan	Emergency Services	High	Ongoing – Annually	The annual exercise of the Emergency Operations Plan will be performed in September 2009 during the County of San Diego’s annual Emergency Preparedness Month.
Prepare an application for designation as a StormReady Community.	Emergency Services	Low	October 2009	Application submitted in 2009. Acceptance on the program is anticipated by the end of calendar year 2009.
Provide adequate maintenance for ALERT system components	Department of Public Works	High	Ongoing	Staff level maintained in 2009 budget.
Continue the public awareness program “Preparedness Starts with You”	Emergency Services	High	Ongoing	Completed by Emergency Services in 2009.
Incorporate updated FEMA digital FIRM data into SANGIS	Building Division and Department of Public Works	High	2008 Changed to 2009.	Issuance of FEMA digital FIRM was delayed. Updated flood hazard information to be integrated once effective.

Action Item	Responsible Office	Priority	Deadlines	Status
Provide Flood Map Information to the public (residents, business owners, developers, realtors, insurance agents, lenders)	Building Division and Department of Public Works	High	Ongoing	<p>Flood Control Counter staff at the County Operations Center Annex provide flood hazard and insurance information to the public.</p> <p>Updated information on CRS and floodplain information services provided by the County were shared with local associations and their members in September 2009.</p>
Send Flood Mitigation Brochures to the public (residents, business owners, developers, realtors, insurance agents, lenders)	Department of Land Use and Planning and Department of Public Works	High	Annually	<p>A new Flood Mitigation brochure was developed in 2008 and mailed to 4,466 residents located in or near the Special Flood Hazard Area designated by FEMA.</p> <p>An updated mailing was released in September 2009.</p>

Action Item	Responsible Office	Priority	Deadlines	Status
Prepare News Releases on Property Protection Measures and progress made in implementing the Mitigation Plan	Department of Public Works	Moderate	Quarterly	News Releases published in 2009 included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood Insurance Rate Reduction for County Homeowners.</li> <li>• Emergency Alert System Gets Award.</li> <li>• County's AlertSanDiego successfully expanded to include cell phone numbers.</li> <li>• Building Code gets top grades from ISO.</li> </ul>
Prepare a Public Outreach Strategy	Department of Public Works	Moderate	October 2009  Postpone until 2010	This effort will be evaluated during FY 2010.
Continue to provide mitigation materials in the library.	Department of Public Works and Department of Land Use and Planning	Low	Update Annually	Updated materials provided to the County Library in 2009.