

Hazard Mitigation Plan 2026 Update

Sonoma County, California

Petaluma Public Meeting



MINUTES

JANUARY 22, 2025 | 5:00-6:00 PM | PETALUMA FAIRGROUNDS

PURPOSE

The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the Hazard Mitigation Plan update process to the public, describe Sonoma County disaster preparedness resources, and obtain public input on natural hazards, problems, and possible solutions.

ATTENDEES

Planning Team

- Sage Limpp, Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management, Supervising Hazard Mitigation Coordinator
- Sam Wallis, Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management, Deputy Director
- Nancy Brown, Ph.D., Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management, Preparedness Manager
- Tom Jordan, City of Petaluma, Emergency Manager
- Bart Spencer, Tetra Tech, Project Manager
- Sasha Jones, Tetra Tech, Lead Planner

Attendees

- 19 Members of the Public
- 3 County staff
- 2 City staff
- 2 Consultants
- 3 Dogs

AGENDA

1. Welcome & Introductions

- Tom Jordan, City of Petaluma, introduced himself and provided a safety briefing to attendees.
- Sage Limpp, Sonoma DEM, welcomed attendees, and shared the purpose of the meeting.
- Bart Spencer introduced those from Tetra Tech assisting with the plan update highlighting the point of contact, Lead Planner, Sasha Jones, before presenting slides to the group.

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2. Emergency Management Overview

- Provided overview of emergency management phases and described that mitigation is one of four primary phases.
- Nancy Brown, Ph.D., described Sonoma County’s preparedness program, urged participants to create a disaster plan, and described the disaster preparedness kit available on a table at the entrance of the facility.
- Described the legislation that guides the emergency management process, existing plans that the HMP must coordinate with, and programs the HMP must align with, such as the Community Rating System (CRS).

3. 2026 Sonoma County Hazard Mitigation Plan

- Described the benefits of maintaining an HMP, including eligibility for FEMA’s mitigation grants, and changes to guidance since the 2021 plan, including climate change, Community Lifelines, and socially vulnerable populations.
- Listed the 24 planning partners and described their role in the HMP update process.
- Introduced the six guiding goals of the HMP and described how the goals are implemented during the planning process.

4. Community Rating System

- Provided an overview of the CRS program, the 10-step planning process, the benefits of participation, activities that fall within the CRS program, and Sonoma County’s history of participation in the program.

5. Public Participation

- Described the ways in which the public is invited to participate in the HMP planning process including
 - Public Survey: Available in English and Spanish, used to determine how natural hazards impact the people of Sonoma County, hazard problems, and potential solutions to those problems.
 - Meetings: Both in-person and virtual meetings are available to the public throughout the planning process.
 - Draft Plan: There will be a 30-day public comment period when the draft plan is available later in 2025.
- Described the communication channels where the public can track the HMP planning process, including the DEM website, press releases, social media, and newsletters.

6. Questions

What is the highest Class in CRS and which communities have achieved it?

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Answer: The CRS program rates participating communities from Class 1 to 10 on a points-based system. The lower your class, the higher your discount on flood insurance premiums. There are two Class 1 communities in the nation: the first is Roseville, California, and the second is Tulsa, Oklahoma.

How do animals factor into government evacuation planning?

Answer: Each person in Sonoma County is strongly urged to create a disaster preparedness plan and create an emergency kit that includes provisions for pet safety. The Sonoma County Evac Pack contains a fill-in-the-blank personal emergency plan with a checklist for pet preparedness. To request an Evac Pack, contact HazardMitigation@sonoma-county.org. Additional information about pet evacuation preparedness is available at <https://www.ready.gov/pets>. For larger animals, Petaluma developed an Agriculture Pass program to identify farm operators; these businesses are provided with a pass to identify themselves to first responders to ensure they are allowed access to evacuate livestock.

Will the HMP consider hazardous materials?

Answer: The HMP will include HazMat in cascading impacts of the primary hazards. For example, hazardous liquids spread through water will be considered in the flood chapter.

Does the county have an evacuation plan?

Answer: Yes, Sonoma DEM has a robust planning section including an evacuation plan, mass care plan, and several hazard-specific plans, including terrorism, extreme heat, and Russian River flood. To view all county emergency plans, visit <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/emergency-management/plans>.

What is the process for assigning shelter manager duties?

Answer: As demonstrated in the 2017 fires, the American Red Cross may be deployed to other locations and unavailable to manager shelters in Sonoma County during a disaster. In Petaluma, city staff are being trained on how to manage shelters. If the city requires assistance managing shelters in an emergency, they can request assistance from Sonoma County.

Action Items

- Sonoma DEM to post meeting materials on Sonoma County Hazard Mitigation website.

Additional Information

- English Public Survey: <https://forms.office.com/r/QQJCT1zgeL>
- Spanish Public Survey: <https://forms.office.com/r/pmcjqMN9ig>
- 2021 Sonoma County Hazard Mitigation Plan: <https://permitsonoma.org/hazard-mitigation>

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- 2026 Sonoma County HMP Update Website: <https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/emergency-management/multi-jurisdictional-hazard-mitigation-plan>
- 2023 California State Hazard Mitigation Plan: <https://www.caloes.ca.gov/office-of-the-director/operations/recovery-directorate/hazard-mitigation/state-mitigation-planning/>