

SAN FRANCISCO HAZARDS & CLIMATE RESILIENCE PLAN

Community Engagement Report

Executive Summary

October 2019

The City and County of San Francisco is developing a Hazards and Climate Resilience (HCR) Plan to ensure that the City and County is prepared for inevitable natural hazards. In addition to meeting requirements set by the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the HCR Plan will serve as the foundation for the City's next Climate Action Strategy and Community Safety Element update. The City and County of San Francisco Office of Resilience and Capital Planning is leading this effort in partnership with the Departments of Emergency Management, Public Health, the Environment, and Planning. Many other agencies (including SFO, Public Works, SFMTA, the zoo, SFPUC, Police and Fire, Recreation & Parks, Real Estate) have also contributed to the planning process.

Themes

Solutions Need to be Diversified, Multi-Pronged, and Coordinated. The most common theme from community engagement was that there is no "one-size-fits all" solution to addressing any of the hazards that may impact San Francisco. Workshop participants emphasized the importance of using different strategies to effectively engage with, communicate information to, and provide resources to the City's diverse communities. Workshop and survey participants also recognized the complexity and interdependence of the City's buildings, infrastructure, and economy, as well as how all of those impact residents.

Most Concerning Hazards. The vast majority of survey and workshop participants reported being the most concerned about earthquakes and poor/unhealthy air quality. Additionally, one of five survey respondents identified the following as one of the three hazards they are most concerned about: disease outbreaks, urban fires, drought, extreme heat, and flooding. Some workshop participants discussed concerns about hazardous materials and tsunamis.

Support for Improving Resilience of Key City Assets. Nearly all survey and workshop participants agreed that it is important for the City & County of San Francisco to improve the resilience of infrastructure (e.g., utilities and transportation), buildings (including housing, existing buildings, and new development), and communities (e.g., community connections, neighborhood preparedness).

Importance of Community Cohesion. Workshop participants emphasized the importance of strengthening relationships and interactions within individual neighborhoods, at the block-by-block level, within large multi-unit buildings, and through face-to-face social networks. Only half of survey participants said they know their neighbors well enough to help each other in an emergency. Increasing relationships and connections between neighbors and community members helps ensure that vulnerable residents stay safe during and following a hazard event, as traditional communication and outreach strategies will not reach everyone. This may require expanding support for community-serving organizations that address neighborhood resilience).

Community Engagement Goals

- **Help the City understand people's experience with hazard events** to inform how to improve the response to future hazards;
- **Gather community feedback on draft strategies** to incorporate into the Hazards and Climate Resilience Plan; and
- **Educate stakeholder groups** about
 - 1) Prioritized hazard issues and impacts for San Francisco, 2) Existing and planned work to increase resilience within San Francisco, and 3) Purpose and contents of the Hazards & Climate Resilience Plan.



Photo credits. *Left:* Alamy, photograph following 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake via Huffington Post <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/san-francisco-earthquake-safety_n_2475044>. *Center:* Jeff Elder via Instagram, 2012 <<https://www.instagram.com/p/SvaH2MDCLP/>>. *Right:* Pavel Fedorov via SFGate.com, 2018. <<https://www.sfgate.com/california-wildfires/article/camp-fire-smoke-air-quality-bay-area-mask-n95-pics-13406212.php#photo-16530117>>.

Information about Hazards and Emergency Preparedness. Most survey participants get information about hazard events from AlertSF and/or social media, while some rely on television, radio, and personal connects (i.e., friend, family member, neighbor). Workshop participants also identified specific methods and types of media that will be especially effective at reaching specific populations. Workshop participants were excited about the maps that will be shared with the Hazards & Climate Resilience Plan and how they and other community members will be able to use them to prepare for the specific types of hazards which they are likely to experience.

Only half of survey respondents said they know their neighbors well enough to help each other in an emergency.

Level of Preparedness. Most survey respondents believe that they and the people they live with are prepared for extreme heat days, earthquakes, and poor/unhealthy air quality days, while fewer are prepared for flooding. At the same time, more survey respondents felt that their housing in San Francisco would be a safe place to stay during flooding and extreme heat while fewer felt it would be safe place during a poor/unhealthy air quality day or earthquake. Workshop participants requested more concise information about how the organizations, businesses, and facilities in which they work should prepare for emergencies with specific recommendations based on location in the city and the people served (e.g., how much water an afterschool program should store on-site relative to the number of children served, what supplies are most important for managers of single-resident occupancy/SRO hotels to have available).

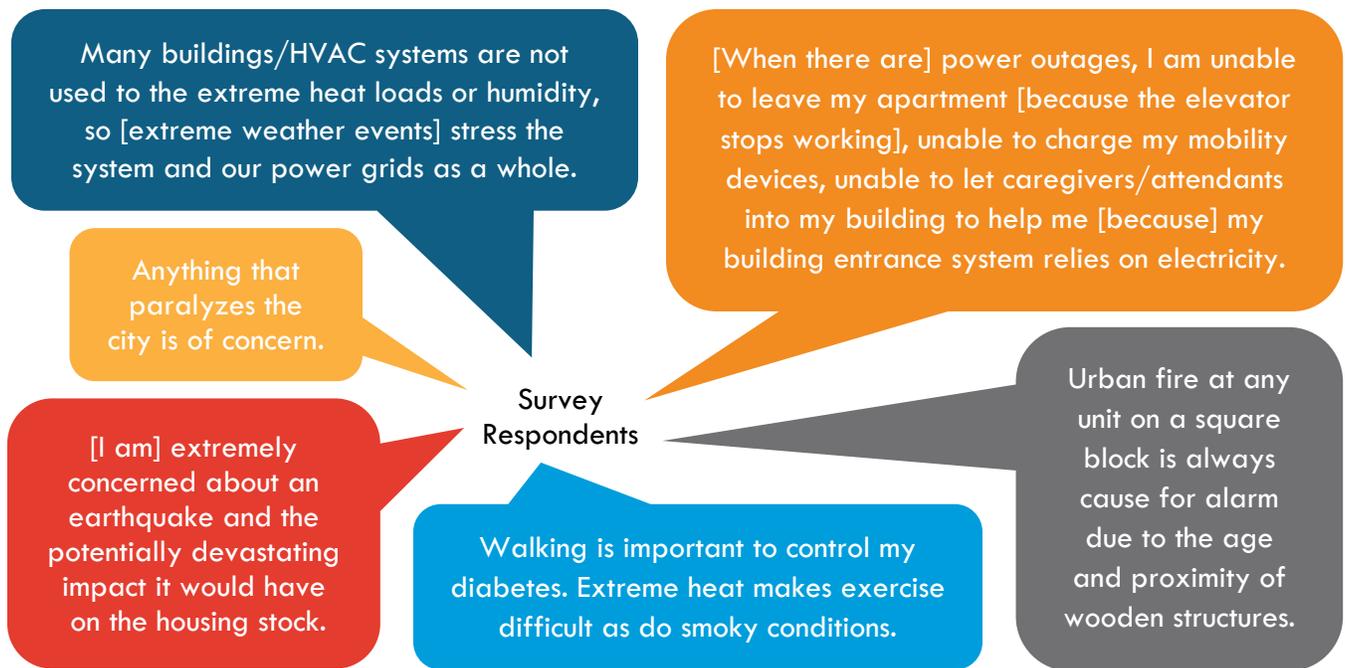
Experience with the Impacts of Hazards in San Francisco. More than half of survey participants shared how they, their homes, their workplaces, and their neighborhoods had been impacted by poor/unhealthy air quality, extreme heat, and earthquakes. Many respondents also reported how wind, storm flooding, hazardous materials, and urban fires have impacted them and their communities.

The HCR **community survey** was available online and on paper in six languages (English, Spanish, Chinese, Filipino, Russian, and Korean). The survey consisted of 20 questions focused on hazards and 7 demographic question and took participants 5-10 minutes to complete. A total of 597 surveys were submitted.

While the survey findings provide important information about the experiences, perceptions, and preferences of community members, the survey did not use a statistically random sample and participants are not representative of all San Franciscans. The survey was distributed through City departments and offices, organizations invited to participate in stakeholder workshops, and resilience-related networks. Because of how the survey was distributed, respondents were more likely to be connected to City departments or services and therefore have a higher level of knowledge about and trust in local government than the average community member. They may also have had a greater familiarity with hazards and/or climate resilience than the general public.

Five **stakeholder workshops** were held to gather feedback on draft HCR plan strategies from: Businesses and Commercial Properties (non-residential); Housing and Residential Property Managers/Owners; People with Disabilities (Access or Functional Needs) and Older Adults; Racial, Social, and Environmental Justice Organizations; and Organizations Serving Children, Youth, and Families.

The 80 people who participated in the five workshops represented 69 organizations, agencies, and businesses in San Francisco.



Making Emergency Response More Efficient, Effective, and Equitable. Workshop participants made the following recommendations to improve response to future hazards:

- Designate trusted facilities in all neighborhoods where residents can go to be safe during or following a hazard and to get information and other resources—and publicize that information at the hyper-local level.
- Increase coordination between City agencies and departments around responding to hazards and in proactively sharing information (including client data) about vulnerable populations.
- Leverage the resources, connections, and skills of local businesses, local technology companies, community-based organizations, and regional partners to support a more efficient, effective, and equitable response to emergencies.

Feedback on Draft HCR Plan Strategies.

- Revise language to include all critical facilities involved in a given strategy.
- Address where lower-income residents may be able to live following a major hazard event given that recovery can take years and add more strategies to address the vulnerabilities both of low-income renters and homeowners.
- Consider expanding “extreme heat events” to be “extreme temperatures” since cold weather is a safety issue for residents who are homeless.

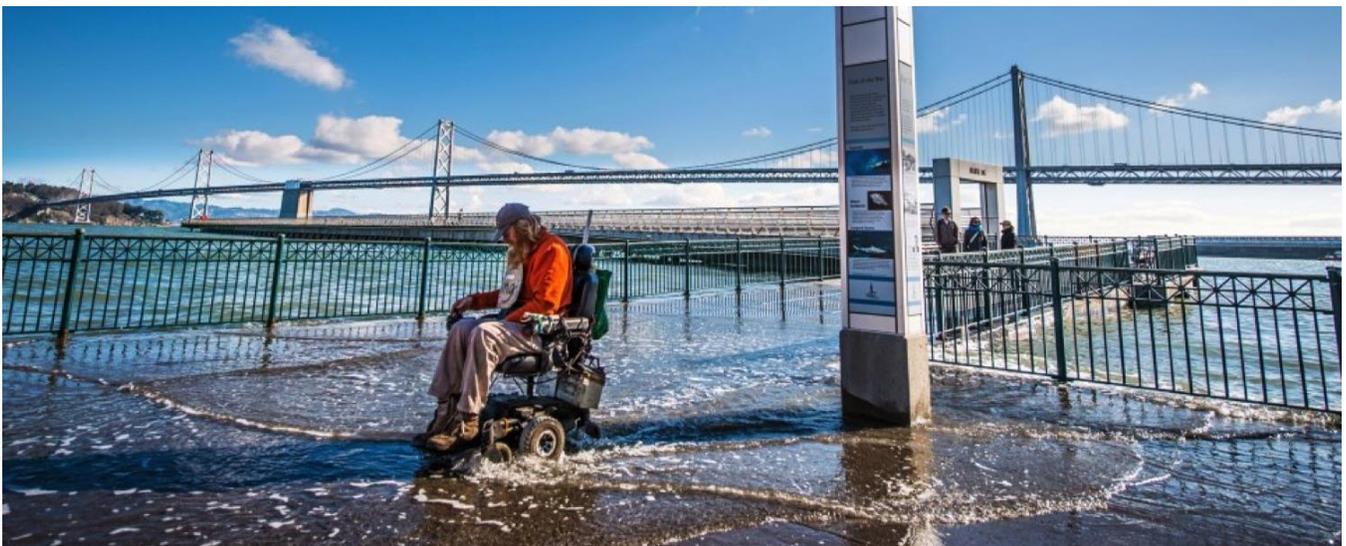


Photo credit: Michael Filippoff via KQED < <https://ww2.kqed.org/quest/2013/07/16/wetlands-horizontal-levees-sea-level-rise/>>.



Participants in Hazards & Climate Resilience Plan stakeholder workshops provided feedback on draft strategies.

Next Steps

Community-based organizations were engaged to gather input from stakeholders who directly interface with the public. Insights gleaned from this public engagement process have been integrated into the plan, by amending the summaries of strategies that were originally proposed by City departments to explicitly reflect and acknowledge the public input, or through creation of new strategies.

Sign up for emergency text message alerts to make sure you are informed when hazards effect San Francisco!

Text your ZIP code to 888-777 or visit AlertSF.org.



For more information and to see the draft plan when it is available for public comment, please visit: OneSanFrancisco.org/hazard/overview. If you have any questions or comments, please contact the following SF Office of Resilience and Capital Planning staff:

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