

NEW HAVEN CITY PLAN COMMISSION ADVISORY REPORT

RE: Program for Public Information (PPI) document relating to the City's Community Rating System (CRS) program

REPORT: 1519-11

ADVICE: Approval

BACKGROUND

Before the Commission is a resolution on the Program for Public Information (PPI) document, which is a required element of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)'s Community Rating System (CRS) program. The adoption of this PPI indicates the City's commitment to provide a coordinated approach on flood hazard outreach and education.

The City of New Haven is a member of FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which enables property owners in flood prone areas of the city to purchase flood insurance if they comply with minimum standards for floodplain management and mitigation. In 1990, NFIP implemented a voluntary incentive program called the CRS program, to recognize and encourage community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP standards. In 2013, this program was revised and PPI was introduced as an element for Activity 330 (Outreach Projects). This PPI is intended to provide a framework for a coordinated approach on flood hazard outreach and education within the city.

In July 2014, the City submitted a letter of interest to FEMA to enter the CRS program and subsequently met with FEMA and DEEP staff as part of FEMA's Community Assistance Visit (CAV). FEMA staff identified properties in flood prone areas that need mitigation and required that these actions be addressed if the City wants to officially enter the CRS program. Following this meeting, City staff worked with private property owners in addressing the mitigation actions that are required and subsequently sent all additional information that is required to close the CAV application (CAV was closed in April 2016). FEMA also sent an insurance agent to the city for reviewing our CRS documentation in January 2016. As mentioned earlier, the PPI document is an important element of this documentation. Between January 2016 and now, FEMA's technical review committee reviewed the city's draft PPI document and offered their feedback. This document was revised accordingly and now submitted for adoption.

CPC's adoption of this document is required in order to officially enter the program and get appropriately rated. In addition to demonstrating the City's commitment to floodplain protection and flood hazard preparedness, response, and recovery, the CRS rating would allow property owners in Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) of the city to avail a discount on their flood insurance.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

The goals of PPI are: to develop and sustain a long-term public outreach program that increases general awareness on flood hazards and preparedness and to reduce flood risk by providing the public with effective tools and information that can be used before, during, and after a flood. Based on the CRS Manual criteria, the City of New Haven has identified the City Plan Commission as the entity to serve as the PPI Committee, with representatives from the three departments (City Plan, Engineering, and Building) that share floodplain management responsibilities and one department (Emergency Management) that is concerned with safety of residents living in zones of flood risk. Given below is a list of proposed PPI Committee members and their affiliation:

Individual	Affiliation
Karyn Gilvarg	City Plan Executive Director, City Plan Department
Susmitha Attota	Assistant Director of Comprehensive Planning, City Plan Department
Margret Targove	Emergency Management Director
Dawn Henning	Project Manager, Engineering Department
Giovanni Zinn	City Engineer, Engineering Department
Dan O'Neill	Deputy Building Inspector, Building Department, Livable City Initiative
Kevin Diadamo	City Plan Commission
Adam Marchand	City Plan Commission
Edward Mattison	City Plan Commission
Leslie Radcliff	City Plan Commission
Maricel Ramos-Valcarcel	City Plan Commission
Audrey Tyson	City Plan Commission

The primary role of the PPI Committee is to assess the overall needs of the community with respect to flooding and develop strategies for conveying this information to the community through a comprehensive outreach plan. The committee members will assist in implementing the PPI plan by providing suggestions on areas of the City that should be targeted for outreach. The Committee will also determine what type of message should be conveyed and how often to distribute the materials. This PPI will become effective upon adoption by the City Plan Commission.

Following adoption, the PPI Committee will maintain a standing agenda item on the City Plan Commission's monthly agenda. During some months, there may not be any discussion associated with the PPI agenda item. During some months, only some PPI matters will be addressed. However, at a minimum, the committee will comprehensively discuss the PPI actions, outcomes, and the overall PPI document at least once per year in September or October. During this meeting, the PPI Committee will prepare the annual PPI evaluation report to be submitted to the Board of Alders for its consideration.

The City Plan Department will be the primary office responsible for public information logistics with assistance from the Office of Emergency Management. The Engineering Department and Building Department will contribute to public information message content, but will not be responsible for distributing public information. This arrangement will benefit from the close relationship between the PPI Committee and the City Plan Department, and avoid involving Engineering and Building Department administrative staff in the distribution of public information.

It is important to note that the City of New Haven maintains other offices and departments that periodically have the need to develop and distribute public information. These offices will continue to issue public information as needed, unrelated to this PPI.

The PPI has been developed to target all residents within the City of New Haven. However, more detailed information will be developed and distributed as noted below:

- All New Haven Residents – Basic information will be developed and distributed to all residents within the City of New Haven with respect to flooding, as flooding can occur anywhere.
- Repetitive Loss Areas and Residents within the Floodplain – Many of these areas are within FEMA designated flood zones and specific outreach material will be developed for these areas. There are

43 repetitive loss properties within the City of New Haven. These repeat claims demonstrate the serious nature of flood hazards and the need for greater flood protection measures.

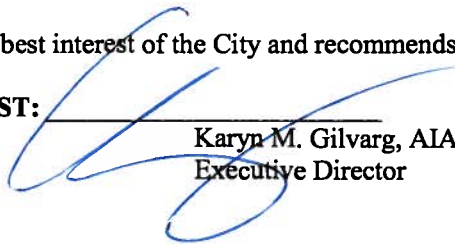
- Builders, Contractors, Engineers and Architects – It is important to ensure that these entities have a strong understanding of the permitting requirements, flood protection measures, and applicable mitigation grants.
- Real Estate Agents and Mortgage and Insurance Companies – Information will be provided that will allow agents and companies to notify potential homebuyers within special flood hazard areas of the flood hazard risk and flood insurance requirements.
- Spanish speakers: 27% of New Haven's population is listed by the US Census as “Hispanic or Latino origin” and 17% are “foreign born.” Plus, 33% of the population indicates that a language other than English is spoken at home. Committee members reported that Spanish speakers appear to be less aware about flood insurance and flood preparedness because most of the existing explanatory materials are in English.

Sections 4 and 5 of the enclosed PPI document (Pages 14-23), outline the various public information efforts that the City would undertake and the priority messages that would be delivered in these messages as part of flood hazard education and outreach.

ADVICE

The Commission finds the PPI document in the best interest of the City and recommends approval.

ADOPTED: June 15, 2016
Adam Marchand
Acting Chair

ATTEST: 
Karyn M. Gilvarg, AIA
Executive Director



**CITY PLAN COMMISSION
NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT
RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, the City of New Haven is a member of FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which enables property owners in flood prone areas of the city to purchase flood insurance if they comply with minimum standards for floodplain management and mitigation;

WHEREAS, in 1990, NFIP implemented a voluntary incentive program called the Community Rating System (CRS) program, to recognize and encourage community floodplain management activities that exceed the minimum NFIP standards;

WHEREAS, in 2013, this program was revised and Program for Public Information (PPI) was introduced as an element for Activity 330 (Outreach Projects);

WHEREAS, the PPI is intended to provide a framework for a coordinated approach on flood hazard outreach and education within the city and is an important element of the CRS documentation;

WHEREAS, the goals of PPI are: to develop and sustain a long-term public outreach program that increases general awareness on flood hazards and preparedness and to reduce flood risk by providing the public with effective tools and information that can be used before, during, and after a flood;

WHEREAS, in addition to demonstrating the City's commitment to floodplain protection and flood hazard preparedness, response, and recovery, the CRS rating would allow property owners in Special Flood Hazard Areas (SFHAs) of the city to avail a discount on their flood insurance;

WHEREAS, based on the CRS Manual criteria, the City of New Haven has identified the City Plan Commission as the entity to serve as the PPI Committee, with representatives from the three departments (City Plan, Engineering, and Building) that share floodplain management responsibilities and one department (Emergency Management) that is concerned with safety of residents living in zones of flood risk;

WHEREAS, the primary role of the PPI Committee is to assess the overall needs of the community with respect to flooding and develop strategies for conveying this information to the community through a comprehensive outreach plan;

WHEREAS, following adoption, the PPI Committee will maintain a standing agenda item on the City Plan Commission's monthly agenda and will comprehensively discuss the PPI actions, outcomes, and the overall PPI document at least once per year in September or October;

WHEREAS, during this annual meeting, the PPI Committee will prepare the annual PPI evaluation report to be submitted to the Board of Alders for its consideration;

WHEREAS, the PPI document will target all residents of the city and also more detailed information will be provided to residents in repetitive loss areas; builders, contractors, engineers and architects; real estate agents and mortgage and insurance companies; Spanish speakers within the city;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Plan Commission of the City of New Haven, that the PPI document be adopted with the updated document becoming effective from July 1, 2016.

ADOPTED: June 15, 2016
Adam Marchand
Acting Chair

ATTEST: 
Karyn M. Gilwarg, AIA
Executive Director