



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
701 OCEAN STREET, 4TH FLOOR, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
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ALVIN D. JAMES, DIRECTOR

May 11, 2000

Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

AGENDA: May 23, 2000

SUBJECT: Disaster Recovery Ordinances and Policies

Members of the Board:

When your Board first discussed this issue in October of 1998 during your deliberations of proposed revisions to the Geologic Hazards Ordinance, your Board expressed a desire to review, evaluate and possibly memorialize disaster policies developed after the Loma Prieta Earthquake to assist in community recovery from future disasters. As we reported to your Board on November 16, 1999 and January 11, 2000, staff has been evaluating the policies developed in response to the Loma Prieta Earthquake as well as the post disaster policies of other jurisdictions and recovery policy models developed by a number of governmental and professional organizations.

Our review of practices, policies and ordinances utilized after Loma Prieta resurrected memories of the myriad of complex issues which had to be resolved under extremely stressful circumstances during the response and recovery periods. After reviewing the effect of **not** having policies at hand to respond to recovery issues, it is our assessment that the County could only benefit by developing a specific set of policies to guide land use matters in the aftermath of a disaster. In fact, the concept of developing ordinances and policies to address post disaster recovery is considered by professional planning and disaster management organizations to be one of the most effective steps local jurisdictions can take in mitigating the impacts of future disasters. It is strongly supported by the Federal Emergency Management Agency under its Project Impact program, which can serve as a source of funding for such efforts. As mentioned in our previous reports, a significant amount of resource materials are available, particularly from professional organizations such as the American Planning Association, which has, for example, recently published a 350 page compendium and guide to post disaster recovery and reconstruction.

Although we have model materials and previous County policies to utilize as a foundation, it is important to recognize the wide scope and complexity of issues which could be considered in developing effective policies and ordinances for Santa Cruz County. For example, the APA's generic model ordinance contains 66 elements in 12 major sections covering topics such as the extent of community involvement in development of the policies, hazard identification and risk assessment, treatment of non-conforming structures, development moratoriums, links to the General Plan and other long-term policy documents, suspension of normal policies, powers of County officials and many other equally challenging policy considerations. These are in addition to overriding considerations such as financial and legal issues.

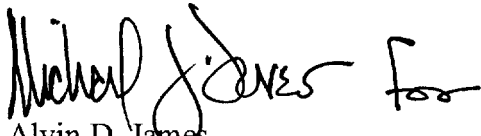
It seems clear that the development of such policies and implementing ordinances before the next major

disaster strikes would be in the County's best interest. However, given the significant commitment of staff resources which would be required, it would be most prudent to evaluate development of this project as part of your Board's consideration of the Planning Department's Fiscal Year 2000-2001 work program in August.

It is, therefore, RECOMMENDED, that your Board:

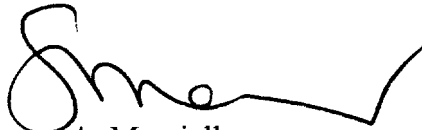
- I. Direct the Planning Department, in consultation with Emergency Services, County Counsel and the County Administrative Office, to provide a further report on development of post-disaster policies and ordinances during your Board's consideration of the recommended Fiscal Year 2000-2001 Planning Department work program on August 1, 2000, and;
2. Accept and file this report.

Sincerely,



Alvin D. James
Planning Director

RECOMMENDED:



Susan A. Mauriello
County Administrative Officer

CC: Nancy Car-r-Gordon
Dwight Herr

