

Emergency Preparedness and Response Ad Hoc Committee Work Plan

Goal – Enhance community Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR)

Objectives –

1. Learn about existing emergency preparedness efforts in the community, County and region
2. Identify emergency preparedness and response (EPR) needs in the community
3. Develop collaborative solutions for identified needs
4. Support the implementation of identified solutions to enhance EPR
5. Facilitate partnerships in the EPR community
6. Support outreach, education and information sharing - Be a conduit of EPR information and outreach within the NSVMAC community and with elected leaders/ County programs

Progress Report

1. Emergency preparedness efforts to date in the community
 - a. County vegetation management ordinance, Fire District inspections, and increased defensible space vegetation management implementation.
 - b. Readily available wildfire prevention and emergency preparedness educational materials from the County, CalFire, Fire Safe Sonoma and Fire Districts
 - c. Many solid programs and groups promoting preparation: SCOPE, Halter, Fire Safe Sonoma, Ready Glen Ellen
 - d. Many experts and consultants available from the community, County and private sector. Local experts providing input and advice include Julie Atwood with HALTER, Nancy Brown, with Sonoma County Emergency, and Stuart Mitchell, local home safety consultant.
 - e. Neighboring community efforts include Oakmont and Springs MAC/ SEC using Map Your Neighborhood (MYN) and Sonoma Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergency (SCOPE) outreach and education program materials
 - f. Local efforts include the Glen Ellen Forum and their Community Preparedness Committee, web site with Ready Glen Ellen outreach materials and archive.
 - g. Several existing neighborhood groups have formed since 2017 and a some are still active. These groups are a model for success and a great source of information.
2. Emergency preparedness needs identified
 - a. Better evacuation planning. Evacuation route limitations point to a greater need for more route options, better direction and traffic control by authorities, and increased public awareness of the limitations and the importance of leaving early when emergencies are imminent.
 - b. Comprehensive emergency planning. In addition to extreme wildfire, we need to prepare for earthquakes and flooding.
 - c. Structural Hardening. Emphasis on emergency preparedness has been on vegetation management and not on home improvements or hardening of homes to make them safe from embers and open fire. There is less information and

motivation to make improvements to existing housing stock in the absence of incentives such as regulations or rebates to encourage home improvements.

- d. Outreach and education that result in safer homes and a safer community. Even with readily available emergency preparedness educational materials, many residents have not taken actions to increase fire safety. Reasons for inaction can include financial limitations, physical inability, procrastination, denial, etc. Community-based education and outreach at the neighborhood level has proven to be an effective way to achieve broad participation in emergency planning and preparation.
3. Collaborative solutions
 - a. A Community network of Neighborhood Groups focused on emergency preparedness is known to be an effective and sustainable way to achieve wide-reaching emergency preparedness.
 - b. Programs such as MYN and SCOPE provide a template for forming neighborhood groups and planning community preparedness. These programs have proven to be successful and have been adopted by many communities, often used in conjunction with each other due to strengths and weaknesses of each.
 - c. Community-wide participation addresses identified emergency preparedness needs. A well-connected community with neighborhood group support is more likely to learn and take actions, such as:
 - i. Creating a functional phone tree for early warnings, along with the support needed to ensure timely evacuations.
 - ii. Informing groups about all types of emergencies and how to achieve comprehensive emergency planning.
 - iii. Sharing information about home protection and helping to find resources to implement home improvements.
 - iv. Emphasizing the importance of collective action to ensure safer homes and an overall safer community.
 - d. The identification and recruitment of neighborhood leaders is key to the formation of groups. Communities, such as Sebastopol, that have successful programs with many participating neighborhoods, have formed a leadership council to help train and support new leaders, thus ensuring the growth and long-term success of the program.
 - e. The success of the program is dependent on institutional support through partnerships with government agencies and local non-profits. Ideally, the program resides with a local non-profit as the project proponent, with ongoing support of County agencies, including the NSVMAC and Dept. of Emergency Management
 - f. A paid coordinator is needed to implement a neighborhood group-based outreach program. The coordinator will recruit neighborhood leaders; establish the leadership council, and manage the program for the first 3 years until the program is well established in the community. At this time, the project will be evaluated to determine if it needs further paid staffing or can be sustained with volunteer management.

Next Steps

4. Support for Implementation
 - a. Pilot projects
 - i. Initiate two neighborhood outreach projects
 - b. Establish non-profit lead agency for outreach program implementation
 - c. Proposed ad hoc committee support for outreach program
 - i. Share information, resources, contacts
 - ii. Help fund the local non-profit willing to adopt the outreach program.
 - iii. Help find an appropriate candidate for project coordinator position
 - iv. Continue support in an advisory role and/or membership in the Leadership Council for the program.

5. Facilitate partnerships in the EPR community
 - a. Continue to build and maintain partnerships for optimal community support
 - b. Form a Leadership Council once a non-profit project proponent is secured and outreach project implemented

6. Support outreach, education and information sharing between the community and the County.
 - a. Provide an effective communication link to convey information between the community and County representatives.
 - b. Collaborate with NSVMAC Outreach committee on Emergency Preparedness outreach to the community