



Community Outreach Strategy

Valley of the Moon Water District Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
Sonoma, California

Prepared for:

Valley of the Moon Water District
19039 Bay Street, Sonoma, CA 95476

March 12, 2020
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1.0 Purpose of the Community Outreach Strategy

The purpose for the Community Outreach Strategy is to provide a meaningful process through which the Valley of the Moon Water District and its citizens, public officials, and stakeholder groups may effectively participate in the preparation of the Valley of the Moon Water District Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP). The District is preparing the LHMP to develop a hazard mitigation strategy for the District's service area. This strategy will be developed based upon the understanding that citizens and groups are the source of creativity, and that their input will produce better planning decisions. The emphasis is to recognize every citizen's right to participate in the process of making local government decisions.

A wide variety of public participation methods and tools, representing distinct purposes, will be employed in the strategy to provide for broad public engagement and participation. These purposes of public engagement are as follows:

- **Public Awareness** – to share information and to promote awareness of planning process, including ways the public can participate
- **Public Education** – to educate citizens and help them make more informed choices
- **Public Input** – to provide citizens and groups with opportunities to provide input and ideas during the planning process
- **Public Interaction** – to exchange views and ideas as a means of reaching consensus
- **Public Partnership** – to involve citizens in the decision-making process

2.0 Objectives of the Community Outreach Strategy

1. Recognizing that there are many levels of public participation, to provide for an effective mix of participation opportunities that include the above bulleted purposes.
2. Recognizing that not everyone participates in the same way or at the same time, to include a mix of participation strategies that provides for a broad and diverse set of participation opportunities that considers the diversity of the District's service area.
3. Recognizing the Valley of the Moon Water District's history of past public participation with planning projects, the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee (HMPC) will provide the public with opportunities to review, clarify, and provide input on generated information, as well as generate policies, goals, objectives, and information.
4. To build public support for, and ultimately ownership of, the Valley of the Moon Water District LHMP.

3.0 Local Government Public Outreach and Involvement Responsibilities

The requirements related to public involvement in hazard mitigation plans according to the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (44 CFR Section 201.6(b) and (c)) are listed below:

Requirement §201.6(b): In order to develop a more comprehensive approach to reducing the effects of natural disasters, the planning process **shall** include:

1. An opportunity for the public to comment on the plan during the drafting stage and prior to plan approval;



2. An opportunity for neighboring communities, local and regional agencies involved in hazard mitigation activities, and agencies that have the authority to regulate development, as well as businesses, academia and other private and non-profit interests to be involved in the planning process; and
3. Review and incorporation, if appropriate, of existing plans, studies, reports, and technical information.

Requirement §201.6(c)(1): [The plan **shall** document] the planning process used to develop the plan, including how it was prepared, who was involved in the process, and how the public was involved.

Requirement §201.6(c)(4)(iii): [The plan maintenance process **shall** include a] discussion on how the community will continue public participation in the plan maintenance process.

Based on the requirements, the public participation process ensures citizens and local and regional agencies understand the risk and vulnerability and can work with the Valley of the Moon Water District to support policies, actions, and tools to reduce future losses. This is why the public must have opportunities to comment on disaster mitigation plans during the drafting stage and prior to plan approval. The District is also encouraged to conduct a public workshop or open house to solicit additional public comments. Given the current limitations on group gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these workshops and open house forums can be conducted virtually via a webinar.

To meet DMA requirements as well as the goals of the Community Outreach Strategy, the District is expected to engage in various public outreach and feedback efforts, which can include:

- Engage community-based organizations
- Assist in distributing press releases and information to local media
- Share public input/comment with the HMPC
- Document and report on progress/activities related to public involvement
- Review public input for incorporation in plan, as appropriate
- Assist with advertising and holding one (1) public workshop (during draft development)
- Announcing the planning effort at other public and civic meetings, or holding additional public meetings, if desired.
- Announce how the plan can be accessed during the public review period. This can include providing links from the District's website to the project webpage or providing a hardcopy of the plan in a public location, such as the District office in El Verano, California or the Sonoma Valley Regional Library in Sonoma, California.
- Follow the recommendations for continued public involvement as designated in the implementation chapter of the LHMP.

The District can implement a robust community outreach process by asking citizens to share local knowledge of the District's vulnerability to hazards based on past occurrences. For the District this may include vulnerability to earthquakes, flooding, and wildfires. Public involvement can be solicited by working with community-based organizations, or through direct outreach via multiple media platforms, including the District's website and social media, as well as traditional materials, such as newspaper notices, questionnaires, public workshops, involvement at public events, and distribution of the plan for public input at repositories.



The overall goal of communication is to inform the public about the process and to seek input, and to engage early and often. Messaging should cover the following topics:

- Announce kick-off of preparing a LHMP (typically within 30 days of kick-off meeting)
- Advertising the District's LHMP website
- Advertisement of Public Workshop and other events
- Distribution of the online survey
- Notification of public comment and availability of the Public Review Draft LHMP
- Announce virtual public meeting or open house (via Zoom Meeting invitation)
- Notification of availability of Final LHMP
- Announce at District Board Meeting

3.1 Project Manager/Outreach Coordinator

The District's Project Manager will lead the public involvement process and implementation of the Community Outreach Strategy. This strategy will be overseen and managed by Mr. Chris Petlock, the District's Project Manager for the plan preparation, as well as the District's consultant, Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc.

3.2 Communication Platforms

3.2.1 Community-Based Organizations

Inviting community-based organizations (CBOs) to participate during the LHMP planning process is important because they may represent traditionally under-served or disadvantaged communities. As defined by Senate Bill 1000 (Health and Safety Code § 39711) disadvantaged communities are low-income areas disproportionately affected by environmental pollution or other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation¹. Generally, CBOs represent various segments of the community. In some cases, CBOs may represent disadvantaged communities and engagement can be most successful when it is started early in the process. Outreach to CBOs is useful when providing information to members of the public whose first language is not English. A CBO representative may also be able to inform a segment of the community about the LHMP process, plan implementation, and foster communication with residents during an emergency. CBOs may include neighborhood groups, the business community, educational groups, faith-based organizations, or healthcare advocates. Several CBOs could be invited to participate on the HMPC, including the Sonoma Valley Community Health Center, Community Foundation Sonoma County, Sonoma Valley Chamber of Commerce, La Luz Center, and Sonoma Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies. Ongoing outreach with these CBOs will enhance communication and outreach to a larger segment of the citizens in the District's service area. The District has already successfully engaged key CBOs in Sonoma Valley such as the La Luz Center.

¹ According to the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) CalEnviroScreen Data and SB 535 Disadvantaged Community Geographic Information System (GIS) databases, there are no census tracts that intersect with the District's service area that contain disadvantaged communities. These maps show the disadvantaged communities designated by CalEPA; they represent the 25% highest scoring census tracts using the CalEnviroScreen 3.0 Tool along with other areas with high amounts of pollution and low income populations. Data is available for download here: <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/sb535>.

3.2.2 Webpage

At the beginning of the process, the District should create a Webpage to keep the public informed on the development of the LHMP and to solicit public input. This Webpage can be designed to complement the District’s existing main Webpage that includes information on flood and emergency preparation resources. The LHMP website address should be publicized on all media releases, mailings, newsletters, surveys, and public meeting advertisements. The website can also include a section for the public to sign up for project email updates. The District can also keep the Webpage active after the plan is completed to keep the public informed about the status of the mitigation actions (see Photo 1).

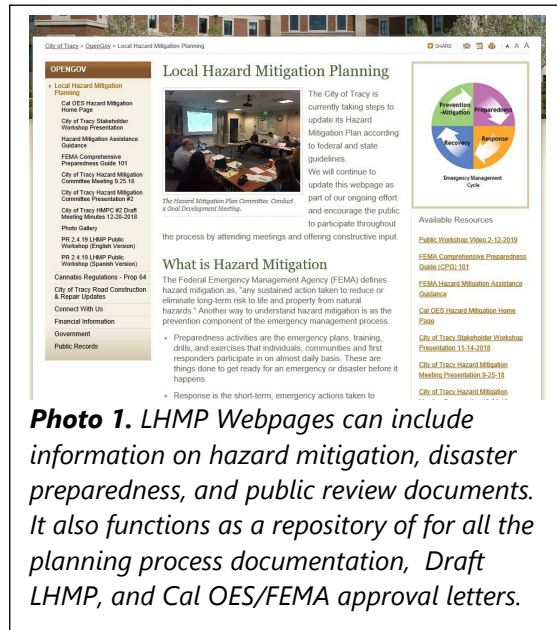


Photo 1. LHMP Webpages can include information on hazard mitigation, disaster preparedness, and public review documents. It also functions as a repository of for all the planning process documentation, Draft LHMP, and Cal OES/FEMA approval letters.

3.2.3 Social Media

The Valley of the Moon Water District can use the following social media platforms to circulate information on the LHMP:

- Valley of the Moon Water District Facebook (162 followers)

At a minimum, the social media platforms should announce the kick-off of the LHMP planning process, advertise the District’s LHMP Webpage and other events, post a link to the public survey, notify the public about virtual meetings and workshops, and announce the availability of the plan for public input and comment. The District can also share LHMP information with other social media groups/organizations.

The District may want to post information about the LHMP on other agency social media platforms. The District could also circulate information regarding the LHMP on the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management Division webpage, as well as the jurisdictions within the District’s service area webpages and social media feeds.

3.2.4 Newspapers

The following regional and local print newspapers can used to circulate and advertise information on the LHMP:

- Sonoma News
- Sonoma Valley Sun
- Sonoma County Gazette
- Sonoma Index-Tribune
- Kenwood Press
- Press Democrat

3.2.5 Press Releases

The District can distribute and circulate press releases over the course of the LHMP development. They can also encourage HMPC participants and stakeholders to distribute press releases during the project. Press releases can be distributed as informational flyers, advertisements, and public notices during

community events. These communication platforms can be used to spread the news about the LHMP and invite the public to participate in the process. According to the 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, the Hispanic population in Sonoma County was 26.5 percent and approximately 25 percent of the population speaks another language at home other than English. Of this percentage, approximately 20 percent speak Spanish.² Based on this information, press releases should be published in English, and it is recommended that other advertisements also be available in Spanish.

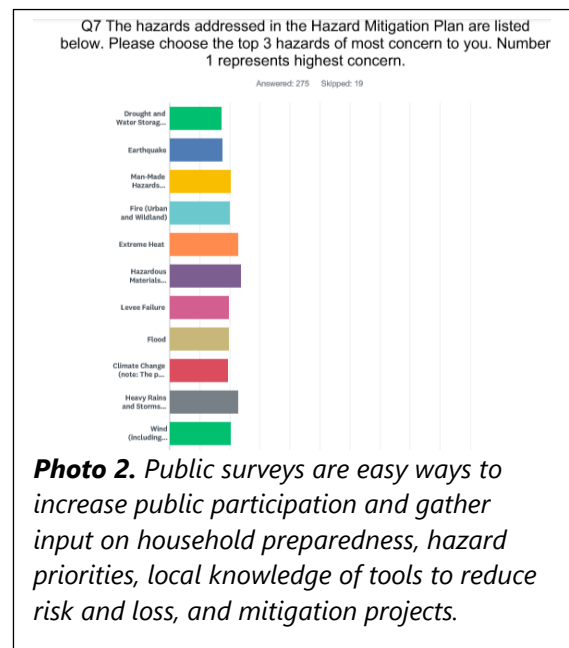
Advertisements can focus on emergency planning, natural hazards, mitigation projects, and how to get the community prepared for disasters. The press releases can also include posts and links to the District's Webpage and the public survey. As previously mentioned, the press releases should announce the kick-off of the LHMP planning process, advertise the District's LHMP Website and other events, post a link to the public survey, notify the public about meetings and workshops, and announce the availability of the plan for public input and comment.

3.2.6 Public Survey

The District can prepare and distribute a public survey during the planning process. The survey can gauge information on household preparedness, hazard priorities, local knowledge of tools to reduce risk and loss, and mitigation projects. The number of questions in public surveys can vary according to the jurisdiction, but they typically range from 10 to 30 questions. The questions are designed to help the District and HMPC understand local hazards and select mitigation actions.

The survey should be made available on the LHMP Webpage, and paper copies should be left at informational booths. Recently, some cities have also made the survey available on tablets at various community events. In summary, the public survey is designed to help the District better understand the following based on public input:

- Perception of natural hazards and risks
- Hazards with the most concern
- Best communication methods
- Level of public support for mitigation actions
- Willingness to invest in hazard mitigation



3.2.7 Informational Pop-Up Booths

The District can advertise the LHMP planning process and seek public input at informational booths during local events or booths displayed at local libraries or other public repositories. During local events, informational booths can be staffed by HMPC participants, or by other District staff. HMPC participants or District staff should be able to speak to the public about the LHMP project, invite them to visit the LHMP

² United States Census Bureau, 5-Year American Community Survey (ACS) Results for Sonoma County, California. Available at: <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?q=0500000US06097>

Webpage, and ask them to take the public survey. Tablets, if available, could be provided at the informational booths for easy access to the public survey, but these tools may not be appropriate at this time given the public health concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead paper copies should be provided, and informational flyers that include a link or QR code to the public survey.

Some cities have provided real-time hazard mapping services to the public interested in viewing hazard assessments for their property. For the District, this could include providing hazard mapping information. Informational booths displayed at libraries and other repositories should provide map displays, handouts, copies of public surveys, and flyers.

3.2.8 Local Events

The District and HMPC may also want to consider advertising the LHMP process during the following weekly events:

- Sonoma Tuesday Night Market
- Sonoma Valley Certified Farmer's Market (Sunday event)

These local and weekly events are good opportunities for the District to advertise the LHMP or set-up an informational booth. The District could also set up advertise the LHMP at the Sonoma Community Center.

3.2.9 Virtual Public Meetings/Workshops

The District should invite the public to attend a public workshop at the beginning of the planning process. At this time, these meetings or workshops should be held virtually to limit large gatherings and to protect the public health of the community.

The public workshop should cover the purpose of the plan, the components of the LHMP, background on hazard mitigation planning, and next steps. The District can also provide regular and ongoing project status updates on the LHMP during Board hearings. Wood recommends the District host the public workshop within 60 days of the kick-off meeting or after the second HMPC meeting to be able to share the hazard profiles and risk assessment findings with the public.

During the public comment period, the District can hold a public meeting, either as a stand-alone public workshop, or as part of a regularly scheduled Board hearing. These meetings should be advertised to the public and provide an opportunity for public comment. The public can also comment on the LHMP during final review and consideration by the District Board of Directors.



Photo 3. Requirement §201.6(b) of the Disaster Mitigation Act states the planning process shall include an opportunity for the public to comment on the plan during the drafting stage and prior to plan approval.

3.2.10 Utility Roundtable

The District could schedule a roundtable meeting with local utility providers, such as Pacific Gas & Electric and Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) to review and discuss hazards specific to local utilities, such as electric, gas, water, sewer and wastewater treatment, stormwater management, and telecommunications.

3.2.11 GIS Web Mapping Application

The District can develop a mapping platform as an extension to the existing GIS Web Mapping Application (GIS Viewer) that uses hazard data layers developed in the LHMP. The platform could display hazard maps that can be viewed individually or with multiple hazard layers. The development of a GIS Web Mapping Application could also be developed as part of the LHMP Mitigation Strategy.

Table 1 summarizes the community engagement steps and activities in conjunction with the hazard mitigation planning steps to demonstrate how they are linked in the process. This Community Outreach Strategy is a document that will be utilized and updated during the plan development process. It can also serve to document the efforts made to involve the public during each plan update.

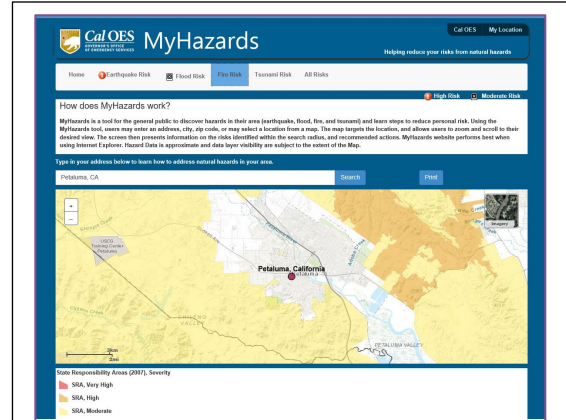


Photo 4. The California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) MyHazards tool provides the public an opportunity to research earthquake, flood, fire, and tsunami hazards in their community.



Table 1. Community Outreach Strategy Schedule of Activities

Timeframe	Mitigation and CRS Flood Mitigation Planning Steps	Public Participation Steps/Ideas	Specific Activities/Actions
February 2020 – September 2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Getting Organized 2. Plan for public involvement 3. Coordinate with other departments and agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider inviting CBOs to participate in the process. • Set-up an informational booth or display at a local event or local library (if feasible during COVID-19 pandemic). • Create a website for the LHMP (new Webpage or one linked to the District’s main Webpage): what is hazard mitigation, invitation to take an online survey, input on mitigation actions/projects (Wood will provide the LHMP backgrounder content for webpage). • Build public awareness through media channels/platforms, such as Facebook. • Outreach through other groups, Private, Non-Profit. Non-governmental organizations • Possible public groups include: Local media, Chamber of Commerce, La Luz Center, and Sonoma Valley Community Health Center. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HMPC formed in March 2020 (5 representatives on District Steering Committee; 5 public/stakeholder representatives on Steering Committee/Working Group) • HMPC Meeting #1 – Planning Process (June 2020) • Design a stand-alone LHMP Webpage • Advertisement for Public Workshop via: Facebook, Newspapers, Webpage, Paper Flyers • Invite stakeholders to Public Workshop #1 and extend invitation for HMPC Meetings to (agencies and organizations not formally invited to participate on the HMPC): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PG&E ○ Cal FIRE ○ Cal OES ○ CNRA ○ FEMA Region IX ○ NOAA/NQA ○ Managers/Facilities ○ CHP, Caltrans ○ Army Corps of Engineers ○ BAAQMD ○ Others • Schedule Utility Roundtable (if desired; not currently included in LHMP scope) • Develop and display content on the LHMP update project Webpage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assessment Summary • Design and circulate a Public Survey (via Survey Monkey or Microsoft Forms) (https://bit.ly/LHMP_Public_Input_Survey)





<p>September 2020 – October 2020</p>	<p>4. Identify the hazards 5. Assess the risks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide survey and materials at meetings • Share public input with HMPC • Cooperative review of public input • Announce workshops • Build contact list of interested citizens based on survey to inform of future activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and circulate press releases, post on Webpage posting, • Re-circulate Public Identification Survey (https://bit.ly/LHMP_Public_Input_Survey) • Collect public comments from a survey developed specifically for the plan update. • HMPC Meeting #2 – Risk Assessment (September 2020) • Extend invitation for HMPC Meeting #2 to Stakeholders • Public Workshop #1 (if scheduled after the risk assessment is complete) • Additional outreach for Public Survey • Collection and compilation of survey results
<p>October 2020 – December 2020</p>	<p>6. Set planning goals 7. Review mitigation alternatives 8. Draft an action plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place draft plan online on District's LHMP Webpage • Determine duration of public comment period (e.g. 30 days) • Advertise the plan and public comment period • Email list of interested citizens identified in previous step about the public review draft 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop links from District Website to project Webpage, encourage review and comment on Public Review Draft LHMP. • Develop Online Form so public could leave comments on Public Review Draft LHMP • HMPC Meeting #3 – Mitigation Strategy (November 2020)
<p>January 2020 – February 2020</p>	<p>9. Adopt the plan 10. Implement the plan, evaluate its worth, and revise as needed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage public review of Final Draft LHMP • Continue to host the LHMP on the District Website with contact information for public inquiries • Celebrate successes – including receiving hazard mitigation funding, implementation of projects, and publicizing where the plan and its implementation is making a difference and building hazard and climate resilience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post Cal OES Approval Letter on District's LHMP Webpage • Post FEMA Region IX Approval Letter on District's LHMP Webpage • Presentation at Board of Directors meeting during adoption • Schedule Annual HMPC Meetings (to discuss status of mitigation projects) • 5-Year Update (scheduled for 2025)





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