City of Sebastopol

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM REPORT FOR MEETING OF: November 17, 2026

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To:	Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
Requestor:	Chief of Police Sean McDonagh
Responsible Department:	Police Department
Subject:	Adoption of the 2026 Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, Including the City of Sebastopol Annex

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RECOMMENDATION: That the city council adopt a resolution (Attachment 1): (1) adopting the 2026 Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, Volume I, and the City of Sebastopol Annex in Volume II (Chapter 9); (2) finding the action exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); and (3) authorizing staff to transmit the adoption documentation to Sonoma County and FEMA as required.

PROCESS OF AGENDA ITEM:

1. If the item remains on the Consent Calendar, no presentation is required and the item will be approved as part of the Consent Calendar.
2. If the item is removed from the Consent Calendar, it will be heard as a regular agenda item, at the time determined by the Mayor, and will proceed as follows:

    a. Presentation of the item by the Requestor or responsible staff
    b. Council questions and discussion
    c. Public comment
    d. Council deliberation and action

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The city council is asked to adopt the 2026 Sonoma County Hazard Mitigation Plan. The 2026 update reflects current hazard data, recent events, and updated vulnerability and mitigation strategies. Each jurisdiction participating in the plan must formally adopt it in order to maintain eligibility for funding under Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant programs. FEMA and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) have found the plan "Approvable Pending Adoption." Adoption will replace the city's current hazard mitigation plan, adopted in 2022 by Resolution No. 6443-2022 (attached for reference).

Adoption of the 2026 Sonoma County Hazard Mitigation Plan is a required step for maintaining eligibility for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant programs. Adoption of the plan does not obligate the city to fund or implement any specific mitigation project; rather, it establishes an approved policy framework that supports future planning, funding, and resilience efforts.

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BACKGROUND: Hazard mitigation is the use of long-term and short-term policies, programs, projects, and other activities to minimize the loss of life, injury, and property damage that can result from a disaster. Hazard mitigation is the first step in reducing risk and is the most effective way to reduce costs associated with hazards. This hazard mitigation plan examines our vulnerability to identified hazards and outlines actions that we can take to mitigate those hazards.

The federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-390) requires local governments to have a current, FEMA-approved hazard mitigation plan as a condition of receiving FEMA hazard mitigation project grants. Plans must be updated every five years (44 CFR § 201.6(d)(3)).

This 2026 update to the plan was coordinated with 22 planning partners in the County, up from 14 in the prior countywide plan. The process started in June of 2023 when the city was invited by Sonoma County to participate in the planning process. The County of Sonoma Department of Emergency Management (DEM) led the update with a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program grant awarded in 2024, and its consultant, Tetra Tech, facilitated plan development with guidance from a Hazard Mitigation Working Group. The partners include Gold Ridge Fire Protection District, which now provides fire services to Sebastopol and has its own annex in the plan. The plan has been reviewed and was recently approved by both Cal OES and FEMA.

The plan has two volumes. **Volume I** contains the countywide elements: the planning process, public involvement, goals and objectives, the risk and capability assessments, and the plan maintenance strategy. **Volume II** contains an annex for each planning partner. The City of Sebastopol Annex (Chapter 9, Attachment 2) includes the city's profile, capability assessment, hazard rankings and vulnerabilities, the status of prior mitigation actions, and the city's mitigation actions for the next five years.

Chief McDonagh from the Police Department represented the city on the Planning Partnership and the Hazard Mitigation Working Group, with input from the Building Department and Public Works.

To complete local adoption, the County of Sonoma Department of Emergency Management has advised that each partner's resolution must include the local adoption date and must adopt both Volume I of the plan and the partner's annex in Volume II. The attached resolution does both.

Note on staff and contact information listed in the plan. The city's annex in Volume II includes staff names and contact information that were current when the plan was prepared, and some of it no longer reflects current city staff. According to the County of Sonoma Department of Emergency Management, these updates are administrative. They do not affect the plan's FEMA approval and are not part of the local adoption process. The county will process staff and contact updates during the year as part of routine plan maintenance. Staff will send the county the city's updated information after adoption.

Date	Milestone
June 2023	Sonoma County invites the City to participate in the plan update
October 20 – November 21, 2025	Draft plan released for public review and comment

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Date	Milestone
January 20, 2026	Draft plan submitted to Cal OES for review
June 15, 2026	FEMA issues Approvable Pending Adoption (APA) determination
September 1, 2026	Sonoma County Board of Supervisors adopts the plan (Concurrent Resolution No. 26-0348)
June 15, 2027	One year after APA; partners adopting later must first confirm their annex is still current or update it

DISCUSSION: The hazards examined in the plan include the following:

- Dam failure
- Drought
- Earthquake
- Extreme cold
- Extreme heat
- Extreme wind
- Flooding
- Landslide
- Sea Level Rise
- Tsunami
- Wildfire

The risk and vulnerability associated with each of these hazards were determined for each participating jurisdiction, based on past events, past and predicted future losses, and the expected probability of future occurrence. From this data we were able to identify actions that can be taken to mitigate the hazards. Our annex to the plan identifies our risk and vulnerability to the hazards and actions we can take to mitigate them.

Key changes from the prior plan. Extreme wind replaces the broader "severe weather" hazard; extreme heat and extreme cold are new hazards, consistent with Assembly Bill 2684, which requires General Plan Safety Elements to address extreme heat by 2028; the partnership grew from 14 to 22 partners; and each annex now includes an expanded capability assessment with specific opportunities to build mitigation into local plans and operations.

The following goals were established for the 2026 hazard mitigation plan update:

1. Protect people and minimize loss of life and injury.
2. Minimize potential for loss of property, economic and social impacts, and displacement due to hazards.
3. Minimize potential for environmental impacts and consider a broad range of mitigation strategies, including nature-based solutions where feasible.
4. Communicate and improve public understanding of natural hazard risk to the whole community within Sonoma County.
5. Support the advancement of effective mitigation policies, programs, and projects that are adaptive, proactive, cost-effective, and environmentally sustainable to build a resilient Sonoma County.

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6. Enhance the capability/capacity of the Sonoma County planning area to prepare, respond, and recover from the impact of natural hazards.

The city ranked its own risk for each hazard. Sebastopol's rankings and key local exposure from the annex are summarized below.

Hazard	Ranking	Key Local Exposure (City Annex)
Wildfire	High	631 buildings (15.4%) and 1,055 residents in the Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone; no High or Very High zones in City limits. Seven critical facilities exposed, including Sonoma West County Hospital and the Community Center.
Drought	Medium	Citywide water supply; three City water tanks identified as vulnerable lifelines.
Extreme Heat	Medium	Health risk to 1,970 adults over 65 and 612 residents below the poverty line; strain on water and energy systems.
Extreme Cold	Medium	Risk to persons experiencing homelessness (118 in the 2024 count). The current warming center (Community Center) is in the floodplain.
Extreme Wind	Medium	Tree falls, damage to structures and utility lines, power outages and blocked transportation corridors.
Earthquake	Low	3.3% of buildings on soft (NEHRP D/E) soils. A 500-year event could displace 153 households and damage 7.9% of building value.
Flood	Low	184 buildings in the 1% annual chance floodplain, including the Community Center; the Police Station is in the 0.2% floodplain. 15 NFIP repetitive loss properties.
Landslide	Low	46.1% of buildings in moderate and 4.0% in high landslide susceptibility areas; erosion along the south side of Bodega Avenue.
Dam Failure, Sea Level Rise, Tsunami	No exposure	Not hazards of local concern; excluded from the City's mitigation strategy.

The annex reports on the 30 mitigation actions in the city's prior plan: 7 are complete, 4 are ongoing or in progress, and 19 were not completed. The annex notes that, because of the city's fiscal constraints and significant staffing shortages and turnover, little mitigation work took place over the last five years. Actions that remain relevant were carried forward or combined into the new actions below.

The city identified eight actions for the next five years:

No.	Action	Hazard	Lead	Est. Cost	Priority
01	Upgrade water line infrastructure to increase capacity and reliability	Drought	Public Works	High	Medium
02	Building inventory; consider a mandatory seismic retrofit program	Earthquake	Building & Safety	Medium	Medium
03	Evaluate and modify building codes for wind; develop a tree ordinance	Extreme Wind	Building & Safety	Low	High
04	Identify alternate warming center locations outside the floodplain	Extreme Cold	Building & Safety	High	Medium

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No.	Action	Hazard	Lead	Est. Cost	Priority
05	Identify an alternate community cooling center location	Extreme Heat	Building & Safety	High	Medium
06	Hydrology study and design to daylight Calder Creek through Ives Park	Flood	Public Works	High	Medium
07	Stabilize the Bodega Avenue hillside and rehabilitate the roadway	Landslide	Public Works	Medium	Medium
08	Develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan	Wildfire	Fire (see Staff Analysis)	High	Medium

Upon adoption, the city will remain eligible to participate in plan implementation, annual monitoring, and future updates, and may pursue mitigation projects identified in the annex through separate funding or approval processes. Maintenance of the plan includes a schedule for monitoring and evaluating the plan annually and producing an updated plan every five years. The plan will be available online at https://sonomacounty.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/emergency-management/sonoma-county-multi-jurisdictional-hazard-mitigation-plan-2026-update

STAFF ANALYSIS: Staff recommends adoption so the city remains covered by a current, FEMA-approved plan and keeps its eligibility for FEMA mitigation grants. Adopting well before June 15, 2027 avoids the need to re-validate the city's annex. Staff notes the following for implementation:

- **Fire services.** Action 08 lists the city's fire department as lead. Fire services are now provided by Gold Ridge Fire Protection District, which is listed as a supporting agency and has its own annex. Police Department will coordinate with Gold Ridge on the lead role and reflect it in the plan's annual review.
- **Plan maintenance.** Police Department will provide the county with the city's current points of contact after adoption and will participate in annual monitoring and progress reporting.
- **Emergency Operations Plan.** The city's Emergency Operations Plan was adopted in 2026 and will be reviewed for any potential updates in 2031 and draw on the risk assessment in the annex.
- **General Plan Safety Element (AB 2140).** Incorporating the adopted Local Hazard Mitigation Plan into the General Plan Safety Element may allow the State to cover more than the standard 75 percent of eligible local costs under the California Disaster Assistance Act following a declared disaster. This will require a separate General Plan amendment, to be coordinated by the Planning Department in consultation with the Director of Emergency Management. While there is no statutory deadline, incorporation should occur as soon as practicable following adoption of the plan, preferably as part of the next scheduled Safety Element update, and before the plan's five year expiration.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS / PRIORITIES / GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY:
This action supports the city council's goals and priorities, including:
• High-Performance Organization
• Restoring public trust through open, accountable, and transparent government

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- Maintaining compliance with state law, including the Political Reform Act
- Public safety and emergency preparedness
- Maintaining and improving City infrastructure
- Fiscal sustainability through continued eligibility for federal mitigation grant funding

PUBLIC COMMENT: As of the preparation of this staff report, no public comments have been received. Any written public comments received after publication of this report will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials prior to or at the meeting. Members of the public may also provide oral comments during the public comment portion of the agenda item.

The County led countywide outreach for the plan, including a project website in English and Spanish, an online survey with more than 580 responses, six public meetings, four Hazard Mitigation Working Group meetings open to the public, and a public review period for the draft plan from October 20 to November 21, 2025. The city's annex also describes outreach to the Latinx/Hispanic community and to persons experiencing homelessness through West County Community Services. No Sebastopol-specific public comments were received during the update.

PUBLIC NOTICE: This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was made available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to the scheduled meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT: Adoption of the plan has no direct fiscal impact. The County funded preparation of the plan through a FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program grant; the City's contribution was staff time. Adoption keeps the City eligible to apply for FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grants for the actions in the annex. These grants typically require a local match (often 25 percent). Any grant application, match, or project budget would be brought to the City Council for approval separately.

RESTATED RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution (Attachment 1): (1) adopting the 2026 Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, Volume I, and the City of Sebastopol Annex in Volume II (Chapter 9); (2) finding the action exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15262 and 15061(b)(3); and (3) authorizing staff to transmit the adoption documentation to Sonoma County and FEMA as required.

OPTION(S):

1. Defer adoption and provide direction to staff. Partners that adopt more than one year after FEMA's June 15, 2026 approval must first confirm their annex is still current or update it, and the City may not be covered by a current FEMA-approved plan in the meantime.
2. Do not adopt the plan. The City would lose eligibility for FEMA hazard mitigation grants unless it prepared its own stand-alone plan at City expense.
3. Provide other direction to staff.

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ATTACHMENTS:

1. Draft Resolution No. ____-2026
2. 2026 Sonoma County MJHMP, Volume II, Chapter 9 – City of Sebastopol Annex
3. 2026 Sonoma County MJHMP, Volume I (also available on the County website linked above)
4. Sonoma County Board of Supervisors Summary Report, September 1, 2026
5. Sonoma County Concurrent Resolution No. 26-0348, September 1, 2026
6. Sonoma County Board of Supervisors Presentation, September 1, 2026
7. City Resolution No. 6443-2022
8. City of Sebastopol Adopted Emergency Operations Plan

APPROVALS:

Department Head Approval: Approval Date: 11/10/2026

CEQA Determination (Planning): Approval Date: 11/10/2026

Adoption of the plan is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15262 (feasibility and planning studies) and Section 15061(b)(3) (common sense exemption), each as a separate and independent basis. The plan identifies hazard risks and possible future actions but does not commit the City to approve, adopt, or fund any action, and it can be seen with certainty that adoption will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Administrative Services/Financial Approval: Approval Date:11/10/2026

Costs authorized in City Approved Budget: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Account Code (if applicable) _____

City Attorney Approval: Approval Date: 11/10/2026

City Manager Approval: Approval Date: 11/10/2026