



City of Carson

Report to Mayor and City Council

July 3, 2012
New Business Discussion

SUBJECT: CONSIDERATION OF A REPORT FOR THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY'S NEW NATIONAL FLOOD INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS, AND LOS ANGELES COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT FLOOD RISK MITIGATION ALTERNATIVE STUDY - PROJECT UPDATE

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Submitted by Farrokh Abolfathi
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David C. Biggs

Approved by David C. Biggs
City Manager

I. SUMMARY

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is modernizing the nation's flood maps. Preliminary maps indicate that numerous properties within the city of Carson and adjacent to the Dominguez Channel and Compton Creek may be inundated during a 100-year flood. The LA County Flood Control District is developing a number of possible solutions for inclusion in a Flood Risk Mitigation Alternatives Study that will lead to the recertification of the levees along Compton Creek and Dominguez Channel as required by FEMA. The city of Carson has been asked to provide the community with an update on Compton Creek and Dominguez Channel Flood Risk Mitigation Alternatives Study.

II. RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE.

III. ALTERNATIVES

None.

IV. BACKGROUND

Levee systems were built to contain, control, or divert the flow of water to provide some level of protection from flooding. Some levee systems were built for agricultural purposes. Urban levee systems were built to provide flood protection and flood-loss reduction for population centers and the industrial, commercial, and residential facilities within them.

Urbanization of previously undeveloped areas consequently changed the volume of water in existing channels which may exceed design capacity and may compromise the purpose of existing levees. Storms that cause larger floods than the levee systems are designed to control, can result in catastrophic damage and loss of life. No levee system provides full protection from all flooding events to the people and structures located behind it. Thus, some level of flood risk exists

in these levee-impacted areas. Many of the current levee systems have not been evaluated for a number of years and may not be in compliance with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), which is administered by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

FEMA requires levee owners, like the Los Angeles County Flood Control District (District), to provide documentation certifying that their levees meet the federal requirements for flood protection. Over the past three years, the District conducted extensive analysis to certify its levees. However, its analysis concluded that the levees within Compton Creek and Dominguez Channel can no longer contain the 1-percent-annual-chance flood. Areas subject to inundation will be shown as a Special Flood Hazard Area on FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Maps.

Properties near these levees will be mapped, in the future, as being within the flood zone, until the levee's capacity can be increased. When the Flood Insurance Rate Maps are revised, properties located within the flood zone, and financed by federally backed mortgages, will be required to maintain flood insurance. In the event of a flood, flood insurance protects both property and possessions.

Last year, the city of Carson, along with the District, held community meetings to discuss flood risk management issues pertaining to communities near the Compton Creek and Dominguez Channel. The purpose of the meeting was to gather public input and to develop a number of possible solutions for inclusion in a Flood Risk Mitigation Alternatives Study (Alternatives Study) being prepared by the District. Residents/property owners were invited to attend the meeting, and they were given chances to provide input and ask questions related to the levee certification analysis, flood insurance requirements, flood zone mapping, and possible ways to improve the levee's capacity.

The Alternatives Study is designed to identify projects that will lead to the recertification of the levees along Compton Creek and the Dominguez Channel, as required by FEMA. Currently, certain segments of the levees along these two bodies do not meet FEMA standards; therefore, property owners with federally backed mortgages in these areas will be required to purchase flood insurance in the near future.

The original timeline for purchasing mandatory flood insurance has been extended, as FEMA continues to revise its flood hazard maps and mapping procedures. FEMA's new mapping procedures are intended to provide a more accurate depiction of the flood protection provided by the levees, as well as the properties that may be affected by flood hazard zone remapping. At this time, it is not known when the revised guidelines will take effect.

District engineers have identified solutions and sites that can potentially be developed into projects to improve the protection provided by the levees. These potential solutions are now being analyzed in greater detail by the District. The Draft Alternatives Study Report is scheduled for completion in late fall 2012. As development of the Alternatives Study moves forward, the city and the District will hold additional community meetings to share the proposed plan of action and to share the final recommendation.

Another subject relevant to the Alternatives Study and FEMA's Levee Certification Program, is legislative Bill House Resolution No. 1309 (HR 1309), known as the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011. This Bill contains provisions that may delay the implementation of mandatory flood insurance requirements. To date, HR 1309 has been approved by the U.S. House of Representatives. The U.S. Senate has not yet taken action on the Bill.

Approximately 7,600 properties in the city are adjacent to the Dominguez Channel and the Compton Creek, which may be inundated in a 100-year flood. The city has been asked to provide the community with the project update on Compton Creek and Dominguez Channel Flood Risk Mitigation Alternatives Study. Updated information regarding the Alternatives Study will be available for the community through the city's website and will also be published on the Carson Report. Staff will also display flyers and information that will be available to the public in city hall at the Engineering Services Division counter (Exhibit No. 1).

V. FISCAL IMPACT

None.

VI. EXHIBITS

1. Project Update (pg. 5)

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Prepared by: Gilbert M. Marquez, P.E.

TO:Rev04-23-12

Reviewed by:

City Clerk	City Treasurer
Administrative Services	Development Services

Economic Development	Public Services
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Action taken by City Council	
Date_____	Action_____



**COMPTON CREEK AND DOMINGUEZ CHANNEL
LEVEE ALTERNATIVES STUDY
PROJECT UPDATE - MAY 2012**



Dear Neighbor:

Last year, the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works (Public Works) held community meetings to discuss flood risk management issues pertaining to communities near the Compton Creek and Dominguez Channel. The purpose of these meetings was to gather public input and to develop a number of possible solutions for inclusion in a Flood Risk Mitigation Alternatives Study (Alternatives Study).

The Alternatives Study is designed to identify projects that will lead to the recertification of the levees along Compton Creek and the Dominguez Channel, as required by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Currently, certain segments of the levees along these two water bodies do not meet FEMA standards; therefore, property owners with federally backed mortgages in these areas will be required to purchase flood insurance in the near future.

The original timeline for purchasing mandatory flood insurance has been extended, as FEMA continues to revise its flood hazard maps and mapping procedures. FEMA's new mapping procedures are intended to provide a more accurate depiction of the flood protection provided by the levees, as well as the properties that may be affected by flood hazard zone remapping. At this time, it is not known when the revised guidelines will take effect.

Public Works engineers have identified solutions and sites that can potentially be developed into projects to improve the protection provided by the levees. These potential solutions are now being analyzed in greater detail. The draft Alternatives Study report is scheduled for completion in late fall 2012. As development of the Alternatives Study moves forward, we will hold additional community meetings to share our proposed plan of action and to share our final recommendation.

Another issue relevant to the Alternatives Study and FEMA's Levee Certification Program, is Legislative Bill House Resolution No.1309 (HR 1309), known as the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2011. This Bill contains provisions that may delay the implementation of mandatory flood insurance requirements. To date, HR 1309 has been approved by the U.S. House of Representatives. The U.S. Senate has not yet taken action on the Bill.

To view frequently asked questions on FEMA's Levee Certification Program, please visit the following website at: www.lawatersheds.org and click the Quick Links for Levee Certification FAQs.

For more information on the Alternatives Study, please contact the following Public Works staff: Mr. Diego Rivera at (626) 458-3978 or dirivera@dpw.lacounty.gov or Mr. Bill Johnson at (626) 458-4319 or wjohnson@dpw.lacounty.gov.

Sincerely,

County of Los Angeles Department of Public Works

EXHIBIT NO. 01

