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2023 PROGRESS REPORT – MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN (CRS ACTIVITY 510)

Date this Report was Prepared: July 25, 2023

Name of Community: County of Ventura, CA

Name of Plan: Ventura County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan, Update 2022

Date of Adoption of Plan: August 16, 2022

Location where copies are available for review:

County of Ventura Public Works

800 S. Victoria Ave. Ventura, CA 93009

<https://www.readyventuracounty.org/county-plans/>

DISCUSSION:

Communities in Ventura County face natural hazards such as earthquakes, wildfires, flooding, dam failures, landslides, debris flows, and tsunamis. The federal law known as the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires local hazard mitigation planning to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life and property from natural hazards. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) encourages local communities to participate in the Community Rating System (CRS) administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to reduce or eliminate exposure to floods. Credit points are provided in CRS for the adoption and implementation of the Ventura County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP). Since May 1, 2016, unincorporated County of Ventura has achieved class 5 in the FEMA CRS rating system. The owners of floodplain properties in the unincorporated Ventura County have been receiving an annual policy premium discount of up to 25% on new and renewal policies, with an estimated total annual saving of \$179,000 across 1,098 policies (Data from FEMA's Insurance Services Office).

The County of Ventura adopted its first FEMA-approved (then called) Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (MHMP) in 2011. As required by CRS, the MHMP needs to be updated every five years. An updated version of the MHMP was adopted by your board in 2015 and with approval by FEMA in 2016. Efforts to update the MHMP, renamed by FEMA to Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP), began in May 2021, led by the



Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES), was adopted by your board in July 2022, and approved by FEMA the following month.

Per CRS requirements, the MJHMP implementation progress report must be filed with FEMA on an annual basis. This report fulfills three purposes:

1. Hazard mitigation plan action items review: This report provides an evaluation and update on the implementation of the mitigation plan.
2. Outreach: This report must be submitted to the governing body and made available to the public
3. County's Annual CRS Recertification: This report must be submitted with the community's annual recertification.

Since the filing of the 2022 progress report (<https://ventura.primegov.com/portal/item?id=239551>), an updated plan was adopted with revised and updated actions plans. The following major progress has been made in the implementation of the update 2022 Ventura County MJHMP:

STATUS UPDATE OF THE MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

In Fiscal Year 2022-2023, the County of Ventura continued working closely with FEMA Region IX in implementing the newly revised Hazard Mitigation Action Plan identified in Section 1.9 in Volume II of the updated plan. The following is a list of the action items for Ventura County Unincorporated identified in the 2022 MJHMP and the detailed progress update for the 2022-2023 reporting period:

Action VUC-1—*Where appropriate, support retrofitting, purchase or relocation of structures located in hazard areas, prioritizing those that have experienced repetitive losses and/or are located in high- or medium-risk hazard areas.*

Ventura County experienced severe winter storms beginning January 2023. County staff provided disaster support and permitting efforts to assist rebuilding and encourage hazard avoidance or retrofit where appropriate.

Action VUC-2—*Integrate the Hazard Mitigation Plan into other plans, ordinances and programs that dictate land use decisions in the community, including the 2040 General Plan, Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance, and Local Coastal Program.*

The 2040 General Plan, Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance, and Local Coastal Program are maintained by the Ventura County Resource Management Agency (RMA). RMA staff were partners in the development of the updated Hazard Mitigation Plan. Calibration and integration are ongoing as updates and revisions are made to key ordinances and plans.



Action VUC-3—*Actively participate in the plan maintenance protocols outlined in Volume 1 of this hazard mitigation plan.*

Ventura County continues to actively participate in maintenance of the updated hazard mitigation plan. The progress report contained herein fulfills the plan requirement to prepare progress updates of the action plan. The Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services (OES) is working with their consultant to organize the progress reporting and plan maintenance.

Action VUC-4—*Continue to maintain good standing and compliance under the NFIP through implementation of floodplain management programs that, at a minimum, meet the NFIP requirements to:*

- *Enforce the flood damage prevention ordinance.*
- *Participate in floodplain identification and mapping updates.*
- *Provide public assistance/information on floodplain requirements and impacts.*

Ventura County continues to implement the Floodplain Development Ordinance 4521, which adopts the requirements of the National Flood Insurance Program. Staff with the Public Works Agency have worked closely with FEMA on the Santa Clara River remapping effort and a levee analysis effort. Through it's public counter, the Ventura County Public Works Agency continues to provide public assistance and information.

Action VUC-5—*Identify and pursue strategies to increase adaptive capacity to climate change including but not limited to the following:*

- *Implementation of 2040 General Plan programs including a Cool Roof Ordinance and Cool Pavement Standards, Performance-Based Building Code for Green Building, Groundwater Basins Resilience Program, Sea Level Impacts Monitoring Program, and Wildfire Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping Program.*
- *Develop programs to increase energy efficiency of new buildings above state-required design requirements*

The Ventura County Building Code was adopted January 1, 2023. The code incorporates the latest green building code requirements. Update Sea Level Impact policies contained in the 2040 General plan continue to be implemented as part of the discretionary review process.

Ventura County Public Works Agency has adopted an Agency-wide sea level rise policy to assess existing coastal infrastructure's sea level rise vulnerabilities, to develop mitigation and/or adaptation plans, to inform design of future coastal facilities, and to identify sea level rise mitigation/adaptation projects.



Action VUC-6—*Purchase and install permanent generators for critical facilities and infrastructure that lack adequate backup power.*

Ventura County is in the early planning stages for this item.

Action VUC-7—*Purchase and install mobile generators for critical facilities and infrastructure that lack adequate backup power.*

Ventura County Public Works Agency – Watershed Protection deploys teams with mobile generators to its critical facilities where power interruption would increase flooding hazards. To support storm fighting efforts, mobile generators were replaced for Hueneme Pump Station.

Action VUC-8—*Develop and implement plans to increase building owner’s general knowledge of and appreciation for the value of seismic upgrading of their building’s structural and nonstructural elements.*

The ‘Ready Ventura County’ website was refreshed and updated as part of the hazard mitigation planning effort. Resources are available to the public at the following website: <https://www.readyventuracounty.org/earthquake/>.

Action VUC-9—*Maintain new vegetation management program that provides vegetation management services to elderly, disabled, or low-income property owners who lack the resources to remove flammable vegetation from around their homes.*

The Ventura County Fire Protection District provides online resources and guides to reduce fire hazards through fuel reduction and home retrofits online: <https://vcfd.org/fire-prevention/fire-hazard-reduction-program-fhrp/>. For locations prone to wildfire, free home and wildfire hardening assessments are provided.

Action VUC-10—*Maintain wildfire hazard fuel reduction program for areas that have been identified with overgrown or dead brush, trees, and weeds to reduce the potential for tree-to-tree ignition. Ensure that a “maintenance now” component to provide continued fire resistance is part of the program.*

The Ventura County Fire Protection District annually implements fuel reduction and public outreach programs that benefit all residents through the unincorporated Ventura County. The fire department sends out a “Notice to Abate Fire Hazard” annually to affected property owners. Those property owners are expected to maintain their property free of hazards or nuisance vegetation year-round. Common requirements are 100-feet of vegetation clearance from structures and 10-feet for road access.



Action VUC-11—*Continue to participate in the National Weather Service’s (NWS) StormReady and TsunamiReady Programs.*

Ventura County continues to participate in the StormReady and TsunamiReady Programs. In 2012, the County of Ventura was certified by FEMA as a Tsunami Ready Community. Approximately 70 tsunami warning signs have been installed at specified locations along the county's coastline informing residents and visitors about the hazard.

Action VUC-12—*Develop a plan to identify funding to replace/relocate the Operational Area Emergency Operations Center (EOC).*

Funding has been secured and plans are underway to build a new Emergency Operations Center in the City of Camarillo. Upon completing construction, all primary Emergency Operations Center activities will be based out of Camarillo.

Action VUC-13—*Update Seismic Standards for Communications (Cell Towers) Facilities (Building Code).*

The Ventura County Building Code was updated on January 1, 2023 and incorporates by reference the 2022 version of the California Building Code.

Action VUC-14—*Develop a countywide Evacuation Route Plan to identify and evaluate evacuation routes for wildfires and other hazards.*

Ventura County staff are currently working to complete an All-Hazards Evacuation Plan. The target completion date is February 2024.

Action VUC-15—*Implement a Post Disaster Critical Facilities Risk Impact Assessment Program designed to capture and geo-reference perishable data after significant events (e.g., preliminary damage estimates, damage photos, event mapping, etc.) in support of future hazard mitigation efforts including the implementation and maintenance of the HMP. Leverage applications (Maintstar v15, ArcGIS Online) to capture information related to VCPWA-RT, W&S, and WP critical facility asset impacts, and establish a centralized location to document and archive critical facilities geospatial data related to disaster events which will facilitate the development and optimize the pursuit of grant funding for future hazard mitigation projects. (Coordinates with Action VCPWA-WP-3)*

In 2022-2023, Ventura County Public Works Agency facilities experienced a severe January 2023 winter storm disaster which produced significant impact to public infrastructure requiring emergency actions and continued recovery projects.



Ventura County Public Works Agency – Roads and Transportation (VCPWA-R&T) used GIS to identify all critical infrastructure, critical bridges, pinch points, emergency staging areas and other O&M facilities. The mapping data was updated after the 2023 winter storm season and is currently used by the VCPWA-R&T Department Operations Center.

Ventura County Public Works Agency -Watershed Protection (VCPWA-WP) leveraged post-storm data and estimated disaster damages and recovery costs to drainage facilities of over \$13 million. VCPWA-WP is currently working with FEMA and State on recovery actions including sediment cleanout of impacted flood control channels, debris dams, and damaged levees. In addition, VCPWA-WP is providing continued annual activities such as cleaning flood control channels and debris basins to prepare for winter storm seasons. Emergency project to reconstruct Arundel Tributary drainage system was completed May of this year.

Action VUC-16—*Improve public awareness and community response to flood event emergencies by upgrading and modernizing the Flood Warning System (FWS) optimized to leverage multi-social media venues. Expand the public outreach of the FWS through targeted marketing based on web-site analytics and develop multiple language interfaces to better reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity found in Ventura County communities. (Coordinates with Action VCPWA-WP-4)*

VCPWA-WP continues to update and modernize the flood warning system. An update of the flood warning system web interface was recently completed to improve accessibility to the public. VCPWA-WP also launched a new flood preparedness website that refreshed and modernized its existing website – www.vcfloodinfo.org.

Action VUC-17—*Prioritize efforts to upgrade County bridges, culverts, dams, debris and detention basins, flood conveyance channel and pipeline infrastructure, pump stations, roads, water and wastewater community infrastructure, and other critical facilities required to provide adequate flood-proofing protection and enhance the resiliency of vital community lifelines in Ventura County. (Coordinates with Action VCPWA-WP-5)*

Ventura County Public Works Agency – Roads and Transportation completed the upsizing of the culvert on Avocado Place. The construction of Bradley Road Bridge is underway. The Camino Cielo Bridge, which is part of the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project, is at 30% design and the current work is to secure funding for the eventual reconstruction. Future projects will include Grand Ave. bridge in the Fillmore area.

Construction of Phase 2 of the Santa Clara River Levee (SCR-3) Rehabilitation Project is scheduled to begin in 2024. Ventura County Public Works Agency - Watershed Protection secured FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation funding and additional construction funding from



CA State Department of Water Resources. For the Calleguas Creek and Somis Drain Levee system (CC-2), 60% design drawings have completed and the 90% design package is in progress.

Action VUC-18—*Complete project feasibility analyses, design engineering and CEQA work for the Ventura River Levee (VR-2) in the unincorporated community of Casitas Springs, and the Live Oak Acres Levee near the unincorporated community of Oak View required to evidence local compliance with Federal Levee Certification Regulations (44 CFR 65.10) (Coordinates with Action VCPWA-WP-6)*

Ventura County Public Works Agency – Watershed Protection continues the planning and design of levee rehabilitation projects on Ventura River Levees (VR-1 and VR-2). VCPWA-WP is currently preparing 90% design and environmental documents for submission to United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to obtain Section 408 permission (VR-1). For VR-2, contract authorization for design is in progress with a goal for being ready for construction beginning in 2025.

Action VUC-19—*Strengthen the unincorporated area’s participation in the NFIP by maintaining a CRS Class 5 Rating; and pursue a renewed emphasis on the planning and implementation of flood mitigation projects for repetitive loss properties eligible for grant funding under FEMA’s Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program with the goal of reducing the number of repetitive loss properties in Ventura County. (Coordinates with Action VCPWA-WP-7)*

Active and increased participation in the NFIP has resulted in the unincorporated county of Ventura being elevated to Class 5 in the CRS rating since May 1, 2016. Owners of floodplain properties in the Unincorporated Ventura County have been receiving an annual policy premium discount of up to 25% on new and renewal policies since then. The estimated annual total saving for policy holders is \$179,000 across 1,098 policies.

Action VUC-20—*Partner with the Nature Conservancy, Santa Clara River Conservancy, Ojai Valley Land Conservancy, and other NGOs in cooperative efforts to acquire floodplain properties, carry out restoration projects, and enhance resiliency to natural disasters with green design elements included in hazard mitigation projects where feasible. (Coordinates with Action VCPWA-WP-8)*

Ventura County Public Works Agency - Watershed Protection (VCPWA-WP) continues to monitor and maintain its existing restoration projects and look for opportunities for new projects. VCPWA-WP is working on a cooperative agreement with The Nature Conservancy to enhance the existing real estate holdings, while new opportunities are identified. The agreement is expected to be finalized by fall 2023.



Action VUC-21—*Advance planning, feasibility analyses, preliminary design, and ultimate construction of multi-benefit stormwater capture projects through a regionally collaborative approach; as well as pursue strategies to maximize stormwater as a resource (enhance recycled water, stormwater capture and sanitary system diversion, and groundwater recharge) where possible in infrastructure planning and implementation of WP stormwater capital projects. (Coordinates with Action VCPWA-WP-9)*

The Ventura County Public Works Agency (VCPWA) is working collaboratively with Caltrans to capture stormwater runoff from about 41 acres of the County unincorporated urban community of Saticoy for subsurface infiltration at Caltrans Right-of-Way (ROW) site in Saticoy. Funding for design and construction will be provided by CalTrans. The project is expected to be completed in 2023 after which, the County will maintain the system.

VCPWA has also contracted for an update to the existing 2015 unified Countywide Storm Drain Geographic Information System (GIS) to provide more information about outfalls, total maximum daily loads, and other data to support updates in the latest permit.

Action VUC-22—*Coordinate with FEMA Region IX to proactively address flood plain management and flood risk mapping issues that could adversely impact local hazard mitigation project planning and implementation efforts which may arise from updates to the Countywide DFIRMs, Community Assistance Visits, and/or other risk mapping initiatives. (Coordinates with Action VCPWA-WP-10)*

County staff with the Ventura County Public Works Agency continue to work closely with FEMA on the Santa Clara River remapping effort and a levee analysis effort. For the Santa Clara River mapping effort, revised preliminary maps were released in August 2022 and the appeal period ended May 2023. A letter of final determination and effective date are not yet available. Final hydraulics and mapping for the levee study are expected by the end of 2023.

Action VUC-23—*Work closely with CA Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD), County Sheriff Office of Emergency Services (OES), and other Federal, State, and local agencies to update and refine the Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) for the state size dams owned by the County. (Coordinates with Action VCPWA-WP-11)*

Ventura County Public Works Agency – Watershed Protection (VCPWA-WP) completed the update for all eight state-sized dams owned and operated by VCPWA-WP within the County. Final approval from the California Office of Emergency Services was received in November 2022.



Action VUC-24—*Complete project feasibility analyses, design engineering, CEQA, and implementation of the removal of Matilija Dam, reconstruction of the Camino Cielo Bridge crossing, and work with the Casitas Municipal Water District to reconstruct the Robles Diversion, as well as complete the construction of flood protection projects in the unincorporated community of Meiners Oaks in compliance with DSOD requirements. (Coordinates with Action VCPWA-WP-12)*

Ventura County Public Works Agency – Watershed Protection (VCPWA-WP) and its partners continue to make progress on the Matilija Dam Ecosystem Restoration Project. This watershed scale project seeks to benefit native wildlife, restore ecosystem function, and enhance local water resilience. In October 2022 the Santa Ana Bridge project was completed and is a significant downstream component of the current project. In February 2023 Ojai Valley Land Conservancy hosted a series of dam removal visioning and local discussions. VCPWA-WP received grants from the State Coastal Conservancy and State Wildlife Conservation Board to continue project design and CEQA compliance requirements. An overview of the project was presented to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors on May 16, 2023.

Action VUC-25—*Collaborate with the City of Oxnard, Nature Conservancy, and State Coastal Conservancy to advance planning, design, and implementation of the Ormond Beach Restoration and Access Plan (OBRAP), particularly those components alleviating flooding along the Ormond Lagoon Waterway and creating public access along tšumaš Creek. (Coordinates with Action VCPWA-WP-13 and supports the City of Oxnard Action OXN-12)*

The City of Oxnard is the lead Agency for this effort. Ventura County Public Works Agency – Watershed Protection continues to work with the City of Oxnard and other partners on this project.

Action VUC-26—*Coordinate efforts to plan, develop, and ultimately construct multi-benefit, flood resiliency and other risk hazard mitigation projects with the Watershed Coalition of Ventura County (OBRAP) 3-Watershed Councils, its Disadvantaged Community Committee, and nonprofit partners by increasing outreach and engagement with disadvantaged and socially vulnerable communities and tribal groups to better understand their unique community-lifeline vulnerabilities, facilitate the development of flood hazard mitigation multibenefit projects, and align and leverage advocacy efforts to optimize grant funding opportunities. (Coordinates with Action VCPWA-WP-14)*

Ventura County Public Works Agency – Watershed Protection is applying for a State of California's Regional Resilience Planning Grant under the Integrated Climate Adaptation and Resiliency Program for the disadvantaged community of Saticoy/East Ventura. The Saticoy/East Ventura Climate Resilience Planning Collaborative will assess future



changes in climate, evaluate climate change impacts on severe storm and weather, extreme heat, drought, wildfire, and flooding, develop mitigation alternatives, and propose implementation plans. The planning collaborative will be achieved through stakeholders' collaboration between the county, city, watershed groups, and nonprofit partners.

IMPLEMENTATION:

At this time all strategies for Ventura County listed in the 2022 MJHMP are on schedule.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The 2022 MJHMP update identifies new and revised hazard mitigation strategies both short-term and long-term. Ventura County will continue to implement the strategies identified in the action plans. Many strategies will require external funding and Ventura County will continue to work with its partners to obtain funding.

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