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DEPARTMENT OF
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

CITY OF SACRAMENTO
CALIFORNIA

August 20, 1993

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Honorable Members in Session:

SUBJECT: LAND USE PLANNING POLICY WITHIN THE 100 YEAR
FLOODPLAIN (REPORT #2)

LOCATION: Citywide

COUNCIL DISTRICT: All districts

RECOMMENDATION: Staff from the Planning, Public Works, and Utilities Departments recommends the City Council take the following actions:

- A. Lift the defacto residential moratorium in any part of the Natomas area when any of the following occurs: 1) adequate progress is made on the Local Levee project to enable the area to be designated normal A99 zone; 2) the Local Levee project is deemed complete and therefore provides 100 year protection to the Natomas area; or 3) areas of the Natomas area are designated Restoration Zone (AR) and comply with the AR criteria;
- B. Continue to allow non-residential buildings and residential/ commercial buildings (i.e. hotel/ motel) subject to the current building restrictions;
- C. Direct staff to conduct the following studies and analyses: 1) review the current emergency preparedness and evacuation plans and update as needed; 2) impact analysis and prevention measures for inundation of public facilities and infrastructure; and 3) review options to encourage flood insurance participation; and
- D. Adopt City policy related to flood protection for the City of Sacramento that affirms the critical importance of achieving 100 year flood protection and sets as a goal the achievement of a higher level of protection; at least 200 years.

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CONTINUED

FROM 8-31-93
9-14-93

FOR COUNCIL MEETING OF: August 31, 1993

SUMMARY

On August 17, 1993, City Planning and Public Works staff and representatives from SAFCA and FEMA presented an informational workshop to the City Council regarding the existing Land Use Planning Policy within the 100 Year Floodplain. The workshop was designed to provide the foundation on City-wide flood protection from which the Council could make a decision about the current Policy that imposes a defacto residential moratorium and building restrictions on the Natomas area.

In light of all the information available, staff recommends the City Council lift the defacto residential moratorium in the Natomas area when any of the following circumstances occur: a) adequate progress is made on the Local Levee project so that a normal A-99 designation is achieved; b) the Local Levee project is deemed complete and therefore provides 100 year protection to the Natomas area; or c) the area is designated and complies with the criteria of the AR zone. Staff recommends the non-residential building restrictions and residential/commercial building regulations be retained.

Staff also recommends the Council direct staff to prepare studies addressing other flood considerations, including: 1) emergency response and evacuation plans for a flood, 2) impact analysis and prevention measures for the potential inundation of public facilities and infrastructure, and 3) fostering participation in the flood insurance program.

Staff also recommends the Council adopt a policy stating that achieving 100 year flood protection is top priority and the City establishes a long term goal of obtaining a higher level of protection, at least 200 years.

COMMITTEE/ COMMISSION ACTION

The Planning Commission received a briefing on flood control on July 15, 1993. No action was taken by the Commission during that meeting and no additional information has been conveyed to them.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Summary of the Informational Workshop

On August 17, 1993, the City Council received an informational workshop on the Land Use Planning Policy related to flood control. The following statements encapsulate the important points made during the workshop:

- 1) With the completion of the Sacramento River Levee Stabilization project, both North and South Natomas have 63 year flood protection, approximately the same level of flood protection as the rest of the City within the 100 year floodplain (85 percent of the City area).
- 2) The Local Levee project, which has been authorized and funded, is expected to be completed by 1996. At that time, the Natomas area will have 100 year flood protection. A 404 permit from the Corps of Engineers is still required to allow the east side of the Natomas East Main Drain Canal levee improvement (North Sacramento) portion of the project.
- 3) The City area within the 100 year floodplain, outside Natomas, will not obtain 100 year flood protection until additional flood control measures are authorized, implemented and/ or constructed. Reoperation of Folsom Reservoir for added flood storage capacity for the American River has been requested but not yet authorized. Reoperation of Folsom has been informally achieved on a year by year basis so the City area within the floodplain, but out of Natomas, has defacto 100 year protection. With completion of the Local Levee project and formal reoperation of Folsom the entire City would have 100 year flood protection.
- 4) The Federal government, through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), places highly restrictive standards on development within the 100 year floodplain. Only through special Congressional legislation (special legislated A-99 and AR zones) has Sacramento been allowed to development within the 100 year floodplain, and still obtain NFIP insurance.

- 5) FEMA anticipates completing the Final AR Zone Regulations by June 1994 and the AR zone maps will become effective in December 1994. The "infill" and "deep water flood" criteria of the AR regulations will be used to determine what portion of the City's floodplain area, including Pocket/ Meadowview, North and South Natomas, can be developed pursuant to AR regulations. If the City Council lifts the moratorium and the Natomas area is not subsequently included in the AR zone or otherwise removed from the floodplain, the Federal government could impose a moratorium in Natomas.
- 6) The severity of potential flooding, as well as the frequency of flooding, must be considered when planning policies are considered. Although about 85 percent of the City is in the 100 year floodplain, the potential flood depths in Natomas and the Pocket area are deeper than elsewhere in the City.
- 7) FEMA is responsible for defining the flood control problem, i.e., analyzing flood risk, establishing flood zones, and designating flood zones. The Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) is responsible for improving flood protection in the Sacramento area, i.e., constructing flood protection projects and implementing protection measures. The City is responsible for determining where and when development may occur, taking into account the City's current and future levels of flood protection.

Options

In their role of determining where and when development may occur in the City, the City Council may choose whether or not to lift the existing defacto residential moratorium established by the adopted Land Use Planning Policy. The options for modifying the Policy can be framed in two dimensions: 1) by geographic area, the "where", and 2) by timing, the "when".

The geographic options include:

- 1) lifting the defacto residential moratorium in the City portion of the Natomas basin;
- 2) lifting the defacto moratorium in portions of Natomas that unequivocally meet the infill criteria for the proposed AR zone and/ or would flood to depths of less than five feet in a catastrophic flood;
- 3) retaining the moratorium in Natomas; and
- 4) retaining the moratorium in Natomas and adding a moratorium in the Pocket/Meadowview area.

The timing options include:

- A) lifting the defacto moratorium immediately;
- B) lifting the moratorium when the Corps 404 permit is obtained for the Local Levee project (estimated to occur in February 1994);
- C) lifting the moratorium when that portion of the Local Levee project that raises the west side of the Natomas East Main Drainage Canal (NEMDC) is complete;
- D) lifting the moratorium when adequate progress is made on the Local Levee project so the area can be designated normal A-99 (estimated to occur in 1995);
- E) lifting the moratorium when the Local Levee project is deemed complete and the Natomas area has 100 year flood protection (estimated to occur in 1996);
- F) lifting the moratorium(s) where and when the AR zone is established (estimated to occur in January 1995); and
- G) lifting the moratorium(s) when the Local Levee project is deemed complete (estimated to occur in 1996) and the formal reoperation of Folsom Reservoir is authorized (or other means of obtaining 100 year protection) (estimated to occur in the fall of 1994).

"Adequate progress" is defined by FEMA. "Deemed complete" is when the Corps of Engineers certifies the levee project as complete.

In assessing the wisdom of selecting any given option, the following **evaluation criteria** were used: 1) risk of personal injury; 2) risk of property damage; 3) provision of flood protection; 4) established infrastructure/ facilities financing mechanisms; 5) economic development impacts; 6) advancement of housing goals (i.e., jobs/ housing links and affordable housing).

Geographic Options

The following chart outlines the geographic options open to the City Council in responding to the existing Land Use Planning Policy. After each option, a list of the advantages and disadvantages is listed.

1. Lift the defacto moratorium in the Natomas area.

Advantages

Most beneficial to economic development efforts.

Most beneficial to advancing housing goals.

Disadvantages

If Natomas area does not obtain 100 year flood protection prior to lifting the moratorium, new residents in the area could be subjected to personal injury and property damage risks.

If Natomas area does not obtain 100 year flood protection or is not designated AR or normal A99 zones, Federal government may impose a moratorium.

2. Lift the moratorium in portions of the Natomas area that meet the infill criteria and would flood to depths less than five feet in a catastrophic flood.

Advantages

Beneficial to advancing housing goals.

Would decrease the personal injury and property damage risks in deep water flood areas.

AR criteria would likely be met, so Federal government would not likely impose a moratorium.

Disadvantages

Subject new residents to personal injury and property damage risks.

Disadvantageous to economic development efforts.

3. Retain the defacto moratorium in the Natomas area.

Advantages

Does not subject additional residents in the Natomas area to personal injury or property damage flood risks.

Disadvantages

Disadvantageous to economic development efforts.

Disadvantageous to advancing housing goals.

4. Retain the defacto moratorium in the Natomas area and add a defacto residential moratorium in the Pocket/ Meadowview area.

Advantages

Does not subject new residents to injury or property damage risks from flooding.

Disadvantages

Most disadvantageous to economic development efforts and housing goals.

Timing Options

The following chart outlines the timing options open to the City Council in responding to the existing Policy. After each option, a list of the advantages and disadvantages is listed.

A. Lift the defacto moratorium immediately.

Advantages

Most beneficial to economic development efforts.

Most beneficial to advancing housing goals.

Further development of South Natomas would be able to occur.

Development of North Natomas could be started once the Community Plan and Finance Plan are adopted.

Disadvantages

Subjects new Natomas residents to personal injury and property damage risks from flooding.

If Natomas area is not designated AR zone or normal A99 zone, Federal government could impose a moratorium.

B. Lift the defacto moratorium when the Corps 404 permit has been issued.

Advantages

Additional development could occur in approximately February 1994.

Disadvantages

Subjects new Natomas residents to personal injury and property damage risks from flooding.

If Natomas is not designated AR or normal A99, Federal government could impose a moratorium.

- C. Lift the defacto moratorium when that portion of the Local Levee project that raises the west levee of the NEMDC is complete.

Advantages

100 year flood protection would be provided to the Natomas area so Federal government would not impose a moratorium.

Personal injury and property damage risks to new residents and property in Natomas would be decreased.

Eliminates the "window of vulnerability" for the Natomas area.

Disadvantages

Economic development, housing goals, and development in Natomas would be delayed until the west levee was completed.

- D. Lift the defacto moratorium when adequate progress is made on the Local Levee project so FEMA can designate the area a normal A99 zone.

Advantages

Federal government would not impose a moratorium.

Personal injury and property damage risks to new residents and property in Natomas would be decreased.

Minimizes the "window of vulnerability".

Disadvantages

Economic development efforts, advancement of housing goals, and further development in South Natomas would be delayed until approximately 1995.

Start up of North Natomas development would be delayed until approximately 1995.

- E. Lift the defacto moratorium when the Local Levee project is deemed complete and 100 year flood protection is obtained.

Advantages

Federal government would not impose a moratorium.

Personal injury and property damage risks would be statistically limited to greater than 100 year floods.

Disadvantages

Further development in South Natomas and start of development in North Natomas would be delayed until 1996.

Development delay is disadvantageous to economic development efforts and advancing housing goals.

Eliminates "window of vulnerability".

F. Lift the defacto moratorium(s) where and when the AR zone is established.

Advantages

Federal government would not impose a moratorium.

Development of South and North Natomas could begin as early as January 1995.

Disadvantages

Development in South Natomas and North Natomas would be delayed until approximately January 1995, if the Natomas area is designated AR.

Further development of the Pocket/Meadowview area could be delayed until about January 1995, if Pocket/Meadowview is designated AR.

G. Lift the defacto moratorium(s) when the Local Levee project is deemed complete and the formal reoperation of Folsom Reservoir is authorized.

Advantages

Personal injury and property damage risks due to flooding would be statistically limited to greater than 100 year floods.

Disadvantages

Further development of South Natomas and start up development in North Natomas would be delayed until about 1996.

Further development in the Pocket/Meadowview area would be delayed until the reoperation of Folsom is authorized, estimated to occur in the fall of 1994.

Development delays would be most disadvantageous to economic development efforts and advancement of housing goals.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Council select:

- ✓ Geographic option #1- Lift the moratorium in the Natomas area; and

✓ Any one of the following Timing options D, E, or F-

(D) when the normal A99 zone is designated because adequate progress is made on the Local Levee project,

(E) when the Local Levee project is complete and therefore provides 100 year flood protection, or

(F) where and when the area is designated AR.

Staff recommends this action in that the proposed revised Policy places a priority on minimizing personal injury and property damage risks; attempts to comply with Federal policy that does not allow development in the 100 year floodplain unless the area conforms to normal A99 or AR zone criteria; and treats all areas of the City equitably. All three of the conditions used to lift the moratorium result in less risk to persons and property. Also, the conditions are the direct result of Federal flood policy and the revised Policy shows the City's willingness to comply with Federal directives. And the revised Policy acknowledges that the area within the 100 year floodplain, outside Natomas, is unofficially protected to 100 year protection by the defacto reoperation of Folsom Reservoir and the only circumstance separating Natomas from other areas within the 100 year floodplain is the completion of the Local Levee project. Staff recommends the non-residential building and hotel/ motel restrictions be retained.

In order to better prepare the City and City residents for a flood, the Planning, Public Works, and Utilities staff also recommends that the Council direct them to conduct the following studies and analyses: 1) review and improve emergency preparedness and evacuation plans to decrease the risk of personal injury and death; 2) impact analysis and prevention measures for the inundation of public facilities and infrastructure to enable the City to respond with needed public services; and 3) means to encourage participation in the flood insurance program to decrease cost of property damage for residents inside and outside the 100 year floodplain.

Staff also recommends that the Council establish a City policy related to flood protection. In that the safety of existing and future residents of the City of Sacramento is paramount, the City sets forth the following goals: 1) To attain 100 year flood protection for all areas of the City is a peak priority. 2) To decrease the future risks of personal injury and property damage from flooding, a long term goal of obtaining greater flood protection, at least 200 years, is established. This policy is consistent with the current SAFCA and State Reclamation Board policies targeting flood protection of at least 200 years for the Sacramento area. If approved, the resolution would direct staff to coordinate efforts with SAFCA to expeditiously strive to obtain a higher level of flood protection.

When the City Council is prepared to make a decision, staff recommends the Council make an intent motion and direct staff to report back with findings and resolutions two weeks after the motion is made. Any additional environmental documentation and review schedule would be outlined in the report back.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the event of a flood, the City could incur costs to respond to the emergency, provide interim services, and rebuild the damaged public facilities and infrastructure. Individuals are at risk of personal injury or property damage in the event of a flood.

Arguing in favor of lifting the defacto moratorium, such an action would enable residential development to occur in the South Natomas area which in turn would encourage non-residential development and enhance the economic position of the City. Also, lifting the moratorium in Natomas would remove one more hurdle to allowing development to occur in North Natomas. Current development hurdles in North Natomas include adopting the proposed Community Plan, completing and adopting a Finance Plan, and resolving the flood control issue.

No estimate is available for the cost of the staff analyses and studies recommended by this report. The work program for each study will outline the cost, the timeline, and environmental review needed for completion of each analysis.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Revising the existing Land Use Planning Policy involves policies related to public safety, economic development, housing goals and community cohesion. Public safety issues involve personal injury and property damage risks due to flooding. The goal of the revised policy is to minimize public safety risks by decreasing the "window of vulnerability" for a 100 year or less flood when less than 100 year protection is provided. Efforts to enhance economic development in Natomas and the City are stymied when residential development is not allowed, especially where public infrastructure must be financed jointly by residential and non-residential development.

Housing goals, including jobs/housing linkages and affordable housing programs, are clearly hindered by a residential moratorium. The North Natomas Community Plans, both adopted and proposed, are based on providing a balance of housing and jobs to mitigate air quality and traffic congestion impacts. If residential development cannot proceed, most new employees must live outside the Natomas area. Community cohesion issues involve the integrated development of residential, non-residential, and public facilities. Lifting the moratorium when public safety and Federal policy considerations have been met will enable progress to be made on economic development efforts, housing goals, and community cohesion.

MBE/WBE

Not applicable.

Respectfully submitted,



GARY L. STONEHOUSE
Planning Director

APPROVED:



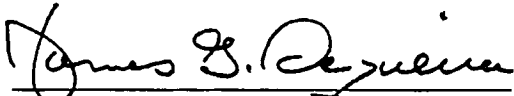
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