MOTION BY SUPERVISOR SHEILA KUEHL                    February 8, 2022

**<u>Woolsey Fire After Action Final Report and Conclusion of Citygate Oversight</u>**

On November 8, 2018, the Woolsey Fire erupted and tore through the Santa Monica Mountains, and quickly became the most devastating wildfire in modern Los Angeles County ("County") history. The Woolsey Fire forced a quarter of a million people to evacuate their homes and ultimately took three lives, destroyed 1,643 structures, consumed 96,949 acres, and cost over $50 million dollars to extinguish. On December 18, 2018, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors ("Board") approved the hiring of an independent consulting firm, Citygate Associates, LLC ("Citygate"), to do a thorough analysis of the Woolsey Fire and to prepare a document reporting its findings and recommendations for the Board.  On November 19, 2019, the Board considered Citygate's report and directed Citygate to assist relevant County departments to develop a formal After-Action Plan ("AAP") designed to improve upon the County's emergency response and recovery operations, and independently monitor and oversee the implementation of the AAP. The Board further directed Citygate to provide ongoing status reports to the Board every 90 days (ultimately provided every 120 days) until the Board determines the AAP's elements have been significantly implemented, at which time a final report is to be presented to the Board.

<u>MOTION</u>

SOLIS          _____

KUEHL          _____

HAHN          _____

BARGER          _____

MITCHELL          _____

In coordination with Citygate, the involved County departments developed an AAP that was reviewed and approved by the Emergency Management Council. Once approved, departments immediately began addressing the elements of the approved AAP. Throughout the AAP implementation process, departments submitted quarterly progress updates with supporting documentation to Citygate, which were then utilized by Citygate to prepare updates to the Board. To date, Citygate, in coordination with the Chief Executive Office, has provided six progress reports to the Board detailing the ongoing progress made on the various recommendations sited in the AAP.

During the last quarter of 2021, Citygate conducted one-on-one meetings with representatives from the principal departments to discuss in depth the progress made by each department. Based on Citygate's assessment (and as detailed in the attached final report), the departments have completed 81% of the recommendations in the AAP despite the disruption and workload increase caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the completed recommendations include critical updates to the Emergency Ordinance of the Los Angeles County Code (Chapter 2.68) which identified the CEO as having the responsibility to maintain, manage, activate, and operate the County Emergency Operations Center (CEOC) and updated roles and responsibilities for the Sheriff, Fire Chief, and OEM Director. The recommended revisions to the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan were also adopted which introduced new fire hardening requirements and new provisions to rebuild homes destroyed by disaster based on lessons learned from the Woolsey Fire. Additionally, essential departments have improved their overall effectiveness in providing emergency public information, alerts and warnings, through the establishment of a Joint Information System, development of an Alert and Warning Task Force, and inclusion of the National Weather Service's Non-Weather Emergency Alerts as an additional alert and warning tool.

Upon further research by the involved departments, the remaining 19% of the more complex recommendations were evaluated and found to require longer term commitments and ongoing efforts over the course of multiple years or were deemed not feasible in the near term.

As provided in the attached final report, Citygate has determined that County departments have significantly implemented the AAP elements in a way that will benefit the full spectrum of future emergency response and recovery operations over the entire County.

**I, THEREFORE, MOVE** that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Find that the elements in the AAP have been significantly implemented based upon the attached final report from Citygate.

2. Find that Citygate has concluded its ongoing oversight, monitoring and reporting related to the implementation of AAP.

3. Direct OEM to undertake the oversight and monitoring of the remaining recommendations not yet implemented from the AAP where feasible.

S: DZ∕WoolseyFireAfterActionFinalReportandConclusionofCitygateOversight

January 27, 2022

Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Chair
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Janice Hahn
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

**RE:   WOOLSEY FIRE AFTER ACTION PLAN UPDATE #7 – FINAL REPORT**

On November 19, 2019, the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) received and accepted the Woolsey Fire Task Force After Action Review (AAR) study, facilitated by Citygate Associates, LLC (Citygate). The Board directed the Chief Executive Office (CEO) to amend and extend the current contract with Citygate, and specifically its Public Safety Principal, Stewart Gary, to facilitate the preparation of an After Action Plan (AAP) for the Woolsey AAR recommendations and then track progress toward implementation. The following is a summary of actions the County has undertaken to comply with the Board's motion since the sixth update in October 2021.

This report will serve as the final oversight report, as the Departments have completed 81 percent of the recommendations despite the workload caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Another 17 percent of the recommendations have been embraced by the agencies and multiple-year work is underway on those that need considerable phases and staff effort. Only 2 percent of the recommendations upon further research by the agencies were deemed not feasible in the near term.

This report will not be in the same format as the prior updates. Instead, it will summarize the overall key accomplishments by agency, identify the agency work remaining and as needed, suggest the ongoing strategic policy and capital funding support the Board can provide.

The appendix to this report is an abbreviated list of every recommendation's completion status, summarizing whether the agencies have made significant progress, have made just initial progress, or have deemed the recommendation as not feasible in the near-term.

## OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

Citygate is pleased to report to the Board that major reform work occurred that has already proven beneficial in significant emergencies during 2020 and 2021. The major themes accomplished are within these areas:

Policy – The Board adopted changes to Chapter 2.68 of the Los Angeles County Code, also known as the County's Emergency Ordinance. These changes were made to align to a more modern, best-practice model in conformance with existing emergency services laws and regulations at various government levels. Additionally, these updates to the Emergency Ordinance ensure a central coordination and support hub for all County departments and the operational area during all planning and coordinated response and recovery efforts. The most notable changes include:

◆ Placing disaster coordination within the CEO by resetting the operation of the Los Angeles County Emergency Operations Center (County EOC) to the Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management (County Emergency Management).

◆ Updating roles and responsibilities for the Sheriff, Fire Chief, and County Emergency Management Director.

◆ Expanding and redefining the membership of the Emergency Management Council (EMC).

Emergency Public Information – All of the relevant agencies changed their notification methods and interagency cooperation procedures during large-area, multiple-agency emergencies. New technologies are being implemented to support notification past that of traditional news and social media or reverse 9-1-1 call methods.

Response Coordination – Major multiple-agency work has resulted in improved procedures on evacuation and caring for the displaced populations and their animals. Revised procedure work also focused on supporting the populations not evacuated as well as re-population and debris clearing in evacuated areas.

Mitigations – The Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning (DRP) has nearly completed multiple major projects to include a draft ordinance revising County Title 21 Subdivision Code for the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan. In addition, DRP has drafted a comprehensive, Countywide (unincorporated areas only) Disaster Recovery Ordinance (DRO). This ordinance was approved by the Regional Planning Commission and is being scheduled for Board consideration in early 2022. The draft Safety Element Update was approved by the Regional Planning Commission in December 2021 and will be scheduled for a Board hearing in early 2022.

The new Safety Element includes groundbreaking policy recommendations to prohibit or strongly discourage new construction of subdivisions or intensification of building and resultant population

densities in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Citygate notes that for land-use safety changes and enhanced mitigations to work, they will need long-range vision by current and future Boards to support the revised Safety Element to be set forth in the County's General Plan.

## CITYGATE'S CONCLUDING OPINION AND RECOMMENDATION

The Woolsey AAP and its implementation, even when challenged by a historic pandemic, demonstrates that this Board's leadership to gain operational reform, improved public communications, and future mitigations has been successful. While it may take approximately an additional year or two to fully complete the largest ongoing recommendations, the public interest is being served by the Woolsey-Fire-driven reforms. These improvements should not become collectively a "one and done." Citygate advises clients that "what gets measured (or overseen) gets done."

We recommend this Board continues to support and adopt policies and ordinances to keep wildfire and other disaster preparedness at the forefront of its attention. Steps taken by the Board, CEO, and County leadership to develop key performance indicators related to disaster preparedness and emergency management for both departments as a whole and individuals holding management-level positions are highly commendable and are a great step toward ensuring institutional change. Further support from the Board could also include requiring a budget mechanism in which departments must separately state their disaster preparedness budget requests. Doing so would allow departments to separate their disaster budget requests from their ongoing, day-to-day constituent and community priorities. This would enable the County team to ensure fiscal focus on maintaining the ability to restore a quality of life and functional society when disaster strikes which, as the greater Los Angeles area understands, *will happen again*.

## AAP OVERSIGHT STRUCTURE

Citygate was retained in late January 2020 and continues to provide oversight both individually and as a group to the principal County departments tasked with implementing the Woolsey AAR recommendations. The primary departments include the Los Angeles County Fire Department (LA County Fire), the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (County Sheriff's Department), the Los Angeles County Public Works Department (County Public Works), the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control (County Animal Care), the Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management (County Emergency Management), the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH), and the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning (DRP).

## AGENCY AAP KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning (DRP)

DRP had a small number of recommendations, but they were the most comprehensive and long-range recommendations needed to improve pre-fire mitigation and adaptive land use policies. In many respects, they were stretch goals to minimize the impacts of future wildfires.

The agency is finalizing a draft ordinance to County Title 21 (Subdivision Code) based on a Community Planning Assistance for Wildlife technical assistance grant. The ordinance will be presented to the Regional Planning Commission in the spring of 2022, with a Board hearing thereafter. The proposed changes update structure and open space access requirements, as well as infrastructure requirements to prevent ignitions, open space buffers and other safety requirements for future subdivisions.

Second, the Board has recently adopted revisions to the Santa Monica Mountains North Area Plan. This amendment to the existing North Area Plan introduced new fire hardening requirements and new provisions to rebuild homes destroyed by disaster (based on lessons learned from the Woolsey Fire). These regulations mean the County would not have to implement a temporary rebuild ordinance in this area should a future fire disaster occur.

Third, DRP staff have drafted a comprehensive, Countywide (unincorporated areas only) DRO. The DRO was approved by the Regional Planning Commission and is being scheduled for Board consideration in early 2022. The DRO replaces the Woolsey and Bobcat/Lake fires' temporary rebuild ordinances and the rebuild ordinance adopted last year in the North Area Plan. It creates the most current standards and provisions for rebuilding homes and businesses in the face of a locally-, state-, or federally declared disaster (whether it is a fire, earthquake, flood, etc.). The new DRO includes lessons learned from the Woolsey, Lake, and Bobcat fires, as well as recent experiences and recommendations from applicants and DRP staff who have had to work through the prior rebuilding process.

Fourth, the draft Safety Element Update was approved by the Regional Planning Commission in December of 2021 and will be scheduled for a Board hearing in early 2022. The new Safety Element includes groundbreaking policy recommendations to prohibit or strongly discourage new construction of subdivisions or intensification of building and resultant population densities in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. Instead of sole reliance on fire hardening and increasing vegetation setback buffers in the urban-wildland interface, the Safety Element addresses the problem at its source; where the County permits new subdivisions to occur. The recommendations do not interfere with existing entitled projects, nor do they interfere with existing private property rights, but instead focus on not adding density nor intensification of occupancies/uses in hazard zones.

*Going Forward*

For land use safety changes and enhanced mitigations to work, they will need long-range vision by the Board to support the revised Safety Element, which is progressive in its recommendations to limit subdivisions in high wildland fire threat zones. Los Angeles County was already likely the first county in the state to voice that proposals for subdivisions or increased occupancy in very high wildfire threat areas are not appropriate. Next, that goal must be set forth in the County's General Plan Safety Element.

## Los Angeles County Public Works (County Public Works)

In total, County Public Works was listed as lead agency on six recommendations. Its most significant accomplishments were:

◆ County Public Works convened a debris management project team and developed a draft Private Property Debris Removal (PPDR) addendum local program that can activate a PPDR response without requiring the assistance of Cal OES or Cal Recycle.

◆ Further, to address hazardous debris removals for any emergency size, the County has developed a template emergency ordinance and included it in the County Public Works' PPDR Addendum. This template provides for the implementation of a government-sponsored debris removal program and local property debris removal protocols for specific County-declared disasters.

◆ To improve the safety and tactical location awareness at Unified Command of County Public Works field units during major emergencies, County Public Works has initiated a two-phase pilot program to use vehicle telematics to provide diagnostic and global positioning data on field response vehicles.

*Going Forward*

To cement the recommendation work to date, County Public Works will:

◆ Adopt the criteria for implementation of PPDR deployment and management teams by the end of 2022.

◆ Conclude reviews of PPDR Addendum and finalize the document by the end of 2022.

◆ Memorialize the language in the 2022 revision of the Public Works Integrated Emergency Response Manual to mitigate, as practical, the detrimental effects of employee fatigue during protracted responses that last beyond two operational working periods.

## Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control (County Animal Care)

Within nine key Woolsey AAR recommendations, County Animal Care worked to improve its disaster preparedness by focusing on and prioritizing training and imbedding revised best practices into County Animal Care's procedures. Its most significant accomplishments were:

◆ It hired a new Emergency Operations Coordinator in June of 2021 and have assigned him duties for training staff in the areas of emergency management.

◆ Fireline Safety Training was provided, as well as trailer training for 30 Animal Control Officers.

◆ County Animal Care developed new Operation Kits / Fire Boxes for staff assigned to the sheltering and staging sites.

◆ Since the Woolsey Fire, County Animal Care has added more volunteers to the Equine Response Team (ERT) program to provide volunteer support at large animal sheltering sites during evacuations.

◆ County Animal Care has improved its procedures and coordination of active volunteers as well as ad hoc volunteers during emergencies.

### *Going Forward*

County Animal Care continues to search for new opportunities for emergency temporary sheltering sites. County Animal Care has been able to procure and construct 50 additional stalls at its Castaic Animal Care Facility, and it is currently collaborating with Rolling Hills Estate on an agreement to use a City-offered park as a sheltering site during emergency activations.

## Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)

DPSS was the lead agency on two recommendations and assisted on two others. DPSS focused on modifying and adjusting policies and processes to strengthen the leadership it provides in the provision of emergency shelters for displaced populations. Its most significant accomplishments were:

◆ DPSS reviewed with the American Red Cross (Red Cross) the importance of having its representatives cover each of the work shifts at the County EOC Care and Shelter Branch desk during County emergency Level 1 and Level 2 activations.

◆ DPSS worked with the Red Cross on COVID-19 Shelter Training for Partners. The program is now available on YouTube.

◆ DPSS collaborated with the Red Cross to conduct virtual just-in-time shelter training, which is offered to Disaster Service Workers who are assigned to work in shelters.

◆ DPSS and the Red Cross collaborated in launching an extensive training program (Shelter Fundamentals, Everyone is Welcome, Shelter Management) which included 19 Mass Care and Shelter training sessions. In total, 636 County employees were trained.

◆ In 2021 DPSS conducted or participated in four significant virtual scale mass care and shelter exercises.

◆ Procedures and intra-agency methods were improved for the notification and as-needed follow-up for persons in the In-Home Supportive Services programs.

◆ DPSS and County Emergency Management updated the list of potential shelter sites that can support persons with disabilities.

### Going Forward

In later 2022, DPSS and the Red Cross plan to conduct an in-person, large-scale exercise.

## Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH)

Within the Woolsey AAR recommendation structure, DPH was tasked to assist other agencies on subjects within its technical services areas. In late 2019 and early 2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic, DPH:

◆ Developed a plan to notify suppliers/providers of durable medical equipment with preparedness messaging, including the need to provide additional equipment or power supplies to affected customers. This plan was implemented and utilized in numerous 2020 wildfires and Public Safety Power Shutoff events.

◆ Developed a template local emergency order which provides for the implementation of a local property debris removal protocol within the County Public Works and Cal OES framework. DPH participated in the debris management project team activities and was active in supporting County Emergency Management and County Public Works during Lake Fire and Bobcat Fire recovery.

◆ Developed guidance for members of the public interested in returning home for quick salvage checks on their property, including advice on the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

### Going Forward

Understandably, since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, all DPH emergency planning and response capacity pivoted to the needs of the public in the pandemic. As necessary, beyond the emergent phase of the pandemic, DPH will continue to support County Emergency Management and County Public Works on post-incident recovery as the methods needed affect public health.

## Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management (County Emergency Management)

In total, County Emergency Management was listed as lead agency on 49 recommendations, whether as the lead department or serving in a coordination role between multiple departments addressing a recommendation. This leading or coordination role was consistent with the Woolsey recommendation to restructure County Emergency Management's role to "be the hub of the wheel" for the preparedness and response across all County agencies and state and federal partners when disasters strike.

While significant cross-sectional progress was made across almost all recommendations, the key County Emergency Management improvements after the Woolsey Fire Disaster generally fall within three categories:

**Policy Updates:** In March 2020, the Board of Supervisors approved significant changes to Chapter 2.68 of the Los Angeles County Code, also known as the County's Emergency Ordinance. This ordinance update resulted in the following changes, among others:

◆ Identified the CEO as having the responsibility to maintain, manage, activate, and operate the County EOC. Doing so included updated roles and responsibilities for the Sheriff, Fire Chief and the County Emergency Management Director. The County Emergency Management reports to the CEO and is thus the hub for response to large, multiple-agency disasters.

◆ Redefined the membership, roles, and responsibilities of the EMC.

◆ Authorized the CEO, Sheriff, Fire Chief, and County Director of Public Health to issue, disseminate, and coordinate alerts, warnings, and emergency notifications. County Emergency Management is authorized to coordinate consistency of messaging.

◆ Established a Unified Coordination Group which is responsible for establishing strategic priorities and objectives that the County EOC uses to coordinate, integrate, support, and synchronize County response and recovery activities.

**Emergency Public Information, Alert and Warning:** As a result of work on the Woolsey AAR recommendations, the overall effectiveness of emergency public information, alerting, and warning, were significantly changed and enhanced, including the following:

◆ Establishment of a Joint Information Center led by County Emergency Management and comprised of representatives from all County departments that has been active since March 2020 to support COVID-19 and other emergencies.

◆ Development of an Alert and Warning Task Force led by County Emergency Management.

◆ Expansion of alert and warning training and exercise opportunities for additional staff members to ensure redundant capabilities exist to send emergency alert and warning messages without delay.

◆ Inclusion of the National Weather Service's Non-Weather Emergency Alerts as an additional alert and warning tool that does not require the same traditional infrastructure systems (i.e., power, cell service) as other systems to increase the diversity of emergency messaging capabilities. Initial testing and implementation of the program has occurred, and full buildout will be ongoing.

◆ Utilization of the lacounty.gov/emergency webpage to provide consolidated incident information (e.g., incident maps, evacuation shelter locations for humans and animals, road closures, etc.). Links to this webpage can be included in Weather Emergency Alerts (WEA) to direct recipients to more detailed information.

Putting new procedures for public notification in action, County Emergency Management led a coordinated effort with LA County Fire and County Sheriff's Department unified command representatives on the 2020 Bobcat Fire, as well as representatives from numerous incorporated cities, to launch 13 Wireless Emergency Alert messages for Evacuation Orders, 11 WEA messages for Evacuations Warnings, and 17 Alert LA County message campaigns. These emergency messages were supported by door-to-door notifications by law enforcement personnel, social media messaging, and press releases to traditional media sources to increase the effectiveness and reach of the messaging.

**Data Sharing / Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Capabilities:** County agencies have made significant improvements in their ability to share data and utilize GIS. A few of these improvements include:

◆ Development of a LA County Fire and County Emergency Management Memorandum of Understanding covering data sharing process and procedures.

◆ Procurement of a third-party vendor that specializes in the development of evacuation zones, maps, and tactical tools to assist in faster and more coordinated issuance and dissemination of protective actions. The final stages of the contract process expected to be complete in the very near future.

◆ Utilization of GIS to develop an emergency information map that is embedded on the lacounty.gov/emergency webpage to visually display geographic incident information.

◆ Increased awareness of the capabilities of GIS tools and the ability to utilize these tools to make more informed decisions during incident response (e.g., utilizing GIS data to monitor traffic in a real time Transportation Dashboard).

◆ Development of recovery GIS web services to capture and manage Damage Inspection data which is then shared with necessary partner agencies and via publicly accessible applications.

There remain certain solutions that will require additional support to adequately or completely address. The themes requiring additional resources follow.

◆ Multiple recommendations within the Woolsey AAR relate to replacement and modernization of the County EOC, as well as commitment of annual funds for County EOC equipment and building repairs. While County Emergency Management has made efforts to improve audio-visual and other technology within the County EOC with current funding, more substantial funding is required to address structural and space challenges. The impacts of COVID-19 and other budgetary adjustments has delayed the ability to address these recommendations.

◆ County Emergency Management is working to establish a 24/7/365 "Watch Center" that will enhance the County's capability to address many of the Woolsey AAR recommendations regarding initial incident coordination with resultant emergency alerting and warning in real time to match the pace of an unfolding disaster. To adequately staff such a center, an additional 13 full-time equivalent County Emergency Management staff would be needed.

## *Going Forward*

While significant progress has been made to meet the recommendations from the Woolsey AAR, County Emergency Management will work to ensure the planning, training, and exercise cycle continuously improve and that the Woolsey-driven changes are solidified to institutionalize them across all County departments.

## Los Angeles County Fire Department (LA County Fire)

LA County Fire, in its AAP implementation work, addressed 16 recommendations as the lead or co-lead agency, or supported other County departments on 41 others. The bulk of the fire work was centered on modifying policies, processes, and protocols. LA County Fire underwent training on these changes and tested them on major wildfires in the 2020 fire season. The key improvements after the Woolsey Fire disaster generally fell within three categories:

◆ An update to the Santa Susana Initial Action Zone agreement (where the Woolsey Fire started) has been completed and is currently in the process of approval. This addendum delegates command and communication center coordination actions to be taken if the most impacted agency cannot fulfill its obligations.

◆ Enhanced technology upgrades have been researched and are in the process of implementation. New mobile command software has been field tested and will be

    deployed for Department-wide use in the 2022 fire season. In addition, new handheld and vehicle mounted mobile radios and computers are being deployed for all operational units for improved communications and in preparation for the deployment of the LA-RICS radio system. These technology improvements provide for improved emergency communications and greater incident command situational awareness during large-scale emergencies.

◆    LA County Fire worked with County Emergency Management and all the Woolsey AAP stakeholders to update command and tactical maps for major threat areas throughout the County. Personnel have provided input on and participated in four evacuation zone planning workshops for areas within the Santa Monica Mountains. While County Emergency Management was the lead agency for these workshops, LA County Fire personnel provided subject matter experts and worked to ensure the decisions made during these workshops remained in alignment with LA County Fire local and mutual aid tactical operations.

## *Going Forward*

LA County Fire has identified two of the recommendations, #23 and #29, that represent opportunities for growth. However, funding, personnel, and regional and state partners are necessary to accomplish these recommendations.

*Develop a Wildland Fire Annex to the County's Emergency Plan.* Currently, the EOP is being globally revised, but has been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and typical larger emergencies. Upon completion of the Countywide EOP, the Wildfire Annex can be started, with the process requiring a team composed of County agencies as well the appropriate state agencies, such as CAL FIRE and Cal OES.

*Conduct a wildland fire deployment study to establish an appropriate ratio of emergency resources.* This would be a study intended to analyze wildland fire deployment and to identify an appropriate ratio of emergency resources in relation to population and animal risk factors in the high wildfire severity areas in the County fire district jurisdictions. No funding, team, nor timeline has been identified for this project.

LA County Fire made efforts within the Woolsey recommendations to improve technologies within current funding; however, remaining initiatives and planning will require significantly more funding. Funding reallocation because of the COVID-19 pandemic and other significant budgetary adjustments have delayed working on the higher-cost Woolsey AAR recommendations.

## Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (County Sheriff's Department)

Overall, the County Sheriff's Department was the lead or most-impacted agency across 15 recommendations. Thirteen of those were addressed and completed by the County Sheriff's

Department Emergency Operations Bureau (EOB), Tactical Planning Unit. Two others were better facilitated by County Emergency Management as long-term planning was required. The following are the two significant areas of improvement and/or success across the Woolsey recommendations. All the improvements driven by the recommendations have and will stay core to the County Sheriff's Department disaster preparedness, response, and recovery programs. Several were pilot tested very successfully during the 2020 wildfires in the County.

Approximately 3,388 law enforcement officers were used during the height of the Woolsey Fire for evacuations, sheltering, area containment, traffic control, and security missions, including the deployment of over 700 officers in a single operational period at the peak of the disaster response. While the operations were very successful, the Woolsey AAR recommendations identified friction points in training and the delivery services to the public that could be improved.

◆ At the conclusion of the fire response, EOB stepped back and completely broke down and streamlined the Incident Management Team (IMT) process (from notification to demobilization) which had been in place since its beginnings in 1992. The Tactical Planning Unit then taught themselves the process to make sure it worked to the benefit of the station or agency requesting an IMT before teaching it to the rest of the Department members. Several evolutions of training with the IMTs then took place covering process, check-in, missioning, ordering, and check out and demobilization, both with and without technology. The IMTs continue training monthly to stay competent.

◆ Other improvements spanned the updating of the written policies and Emergency Operation Procedures for all County Sheriff's Department members. Over the last two years, the EOB provided training that covered recent updates to Emergency Operations Policies and changes to IMT processes and operations for all personnel in the Department. This training material is available to all personnel via the intranet to access before, during, or after an incident to assist them with the best practices of procedures currently available.

◆ The EOB leadership also worked closely with County Emergency Management, LA County Fire, and County Public Works on updated policies and practices used during evacuation after the initial notices and during re-population.
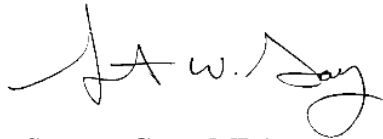
### *Going Forward*

The EOB will continue to closely coordinate with County Emergency Management and LA County Fire as the new mapping, alerting, and evacuation technologies are deployed Countywide.

## IN CONCLUSION

It has been a privilege to assist the County with the implementation of the Woolsey AAR recommendations. If you have any questions, please contact me at sgary@citygateassociates.com or (916) 458-5100, ext. 305.

Sincerely,

Stewart Gary, MPA

Public Safety Principal, Citygate Associates, LLC

cc:      Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
County Counsel
County Regional Planning
County Public Works
County Animal Care
County Public Social Services
County Public Health
County Emergency Management
LA County Fire
County Sheriff's Department

# APPENDIX 1

# CITYGATE ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS OF WOOLSEY FIRE AFTER ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATION IMPLEMENTATION BY COUNTY DEPARTMENTS

## Appendix 1:
## Citygate Assessment of the Progress of Woolsey Fire After Action Plan Recommendation Implementation by County Departments

| Category | Explanation | # of Recommendations in Each Category | % of Recommendations in Each Category |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Complete** | Recommendations included in this category are ones where Citygate determined that departments made enough significant improvements to meet the intent of the recommendation. In most cases, complete in this context does not mean that all work by departments on any one recommendation will simply stop. There will be ongoing training, exercising, and process improvements over time. | 69 | 81% |
| **Significant Progress** | Recommendations included in this category are ones where Citygate determined that significant progress had been made to address the recommendation, but due to complexity, departments will require more time, staff effort, budget allotment, etc., to fully implement. Work will be ongoing by departments to reach the "complete" stage. | 6 | 7% |
| **Initial Progress** | Recommendations included in this category are ones where Citygate determined that initial work by Departments has begun to address the recommendation, however ongoing efforts will need to occur to continue to increase progress. These are generally recommendations that will take a longer term to address. | 9 | 10% |
| **Not Feasible** | Recommendations included in this category are ones where Citygate determined, based on further assessment and feedback from Departments, that completion is not feasible at the current time. | 2 | 2% |
| | | **86** | **100%** |

| **Recommendations Identified as Complete** |
|---|---|
| **Rec. No.** | **Recommendation** |
| 2 | Reset the operation of the Los Angeles County Emergency Operations Center (County EOC) to the Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management (County Emergency Management) to become the central coordination and support hub for all County agencies and the County Operational Area by activating and managing the County EOC. |
| 3 | Closely practice and communicate the understanding that the unified ordering point may start with the originating jurisdiction but may be best located at the jurisdiction that has the largest incident exposure. |
| 4 | Draft an addendum to the Santa Susana mutual threat zone (MTZ) agreement that delegates action if the other party cannot fulfill its obligations. |
| 5 | Review radio frequency coverage to ensure effective talk/receive capability on incidents. Add additional command frequencies or upgrade the radio system with repeaters to cover from the Cheseboro to Malibu areas. |
| 6 | Ensure all staff have communications training for satellite phones and Countywide Interoperable Radio System radios. |
| 7 | Develop plans to assign Command Aids / Drivers to field command chief officers during augmented staffing fire weather days and long-term incident response to enhance operational effectiveness. |
| 8 | Continue to train officers and commanders on TIER (Take Initiative Engage and Report) for Fire Front Following and Life Safety First implementation to allow flexible engagement. |
| 10 | Reinforce existing triage criteria for critical infrastructure and key resources (residential, commercial, governmental) and other properties when firefighting resources are scarce and priorities must be set. |
| 11 | Update command and tactical maps for major threat areas throughout Los Angeles County. |
| 12 | Ensure incident response / tactical maps can be sustained without internet connection and digitally or physically transferred to outside resources. |
| 13 | Recognize and mitigate, as practical, the detrimental effects of fatigue on safety, operations, and decision-making. |
| 14 | Incorporate the concepts of Fire Front Following and Life Safety First into Department wildfire programs to educate the public and policy leaders. |
| 15 | Install Global Positioning System tracking technology on all **FIELD RESPONSE** vehicles for safety and tactical location awareness **at Unified Command**. |
| 16 | Increase participation at all Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Emergency Operations Bureau (EOB) trainings. |
| 17 | Conduct thorough briefings for all personnel prior to deployment. County Sheriff's Department Deputies will be able to make more informed decisions and provide better explanation of limitations to the public. |
| 18 | Incident Command System (ICS) training should be conducted not by agency but via mixed discipline classes to build relationships and knowledge of shared experiences, including elected officials and their staff. |
| 19 | Ensure County public safety agencies meet on at least an annual basis to discuss authority/responsibility/tactics in general terms and specific to challenging locations. |
| 20 | Hold at least one annual training, in strategically identified operational areas, to include area County Sheriff's Department Deputies/leadership (including representation from Incident Management Teams (IMTs)), Los Angeles County Fire Department (LA County Fire) personnel/leadership, Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control (County Animal Care), Los Angeles County Public Works (County Public Works), County Emergency Management, California Highway Patrol (CHP), and other appropriate strategic partners. |
| 21 | The County Departments must embrace SEMS. Provide regular, ongoing Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) / ICS training for all Los Angeles County and city personnel likely to fill an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and field ICS positions. |
| 22 | OEM should review and revise the emergency organization of the County to better define the roles and responsibilities of the Emergency Management Council (EMC) members and provide training and exercises to strengthen the Council's capabilities. |
| 24 | Expand the political and public notification role of County Emergency Management to allow initial incident command staff to focus on respective operational priorities. |
| 25 | Exercise the EOC more frequently to facilitate better EOC/incident communication, cooperation, and coordination. |
| 26 | Add an Information/Intelligence Section to the EOC. |
| 28 | Provide geographic information system awareness training for EOC and RCC staff, including capabilities and sample products. |
| 31 | Consider establishing local government Type 1 Incident Management Teams within Region 1. |
| 32 | Pre-identify Incident Command Posts (ICPs) that have the size and technology capability to support command and control actions and pre-position a cache of support items. |
| 33 | Support the ongoing FIRESCOPE work in the California Mutual Aid System regarding increasing the tempo for catastrophic, fast-moving incident resource triage and resource availability. |
| 34 | Shorten approval tempo of evacuation alerts, use of alerting tools, and the notification process. This requires a more robust multi-department process. |
| 35 | Increase the quantity, diversity, and redundancy of early public notification/communications tools for evacuations, especially for limited access areas (e.g., canyons). |
| 36 | Plan a communications system that functions when cellular service and/or radio communications do not work. |
| 37 | Recognize digital divide issues and design additional types of alert systems to gain public attention. |
| 38 | Reset Countywide public notifications policies to provide a strategic, single message across all platforms of traditional, auxiliary, and social media, to include a Public Information Officer (PIO) organization chart, information flow protocols, social media message templates, and a regularly updated 24-hour area media contact list. |
| 39 | When multiple County departments or agencies respond to a major incident, they must implement a joint information system strategy for the incident and adhere to the Operational Area Emergency Public Information Annex. |
| 40 | Develop and practice a low-tech back-up plan for relaying critical public information during high-tech infrastructure failure (AM radio, ham radio, etc.). |

| Recommendations Identified as Complete (Cont.) | |
|---|---|
| **Rec. No.** | **Recommendation** |
| 42 | Mandate common data sharing and ensure all communications, intelligence, and decision support tools can interface with each County agency. |
| 43 | Develop sustainable PIO surge capacity / bench depth for all agencies, including elected office resources. |
| 44 | Develop a qualified PIO staff roster; County departments should invest in high-level PIO training for all personnel assigned as PIOs and include American Sign Language and Spanish language PIOs, as well as any other identified language needs. |
| 45 | The personnel commitment to the Joint Information Service function must be greatly expanded and the manager of the JIS should be of sufficient rank to communicate to the highest levels of local, county, state, and federal government representatives. |
| 46 | Provide adequate space for a fully staffed Joint Information Center (JIC) at the EOC, and/or designate alternate site(s) that will meet the need. |
| 47 | Provide regular, ongoing training on the Emergency Public Information Annex of the Emergency Operations Plan for all County and Operational Area cities' personnel potentially involved in emergency incident information management. |
| 48 | As part of training, practice using more traditional techniques for communications, intelligence, and decision-making. Future training exercises should include emergency operations problem solving without the use of commonly available technology. Problem-solving, without the use of technology, and demonstrated skills, such as map reading, should be part of a checklist of requisite skills. |
| 49 | Dramatically increase the tempo of pre-alerting and evacuations. |
| 50 | Prepare a playbook of detailed evacuation plans with traffic engineering capacity, to include, at a minimum:<br>➢ Areas defined by geography<br>➢ Pre-defined routes and the signage needed<br>➢ Estimated time frames for alerting and then areas to evacuate<br>➢ Pre-determined trigger points<br>➢ Contraflow plans for the Pacific Coast Highway (PCH) |
| 51 | Create pre-planned evacuation management procedures in conjunction with law enforcement and County Public Works. |
| 52 | Establish a Standard Operating Order Process for monitoring traffic flow of vital ingress and egress routes. |
| 53 | Create a matrix to ensure that when a field entity orders an evacuation it is confirmed by the responsible entity facilitating the evacuation. |
| 55 | Conduct thorough safety training and issue personal protective equipment for Deputies prior to fire evacuation deployment, which should include LA-County Fire-led training on fire behavior, the hazards associated with premature reentry, and how to explain these issues to the public in the field. |
| 56 | Working in conjunction with appropriate County health agencies and public utilities (medical baseline customer list), identify and develop a plan for individuals who may require a more specific notification process and evacuation assistance. |
| 57 | Build stronger LA County Fire / County Animal Care ties for evacuation information and possible synergies with the Occupant Support Team. |
| 58 | Explore alternate long-term emergency animal sheltering sites with a funding mechanism for displaced animals. |
| 59 | Continue to support, enhance, and build public support for the Ready! Set! Go! program. |
| 61 | Invite DPSS and Red Cross personnel to participate in large scale exercises that will include an activation of the Mass Care and Shelter Branch. |
| 62 | **Improve and document,** as needed, the repopulation process and establish a decision-making process, including establishing the final authority regarding repopulation determination. |
| 63 | **Implement a program** that allows safe, timely, and appropriate access for evacuees to see, grieve, and perform a quick salvage check on their property. |
| 65 | Create a PIO decision flow process to pre-notice all affected agencies and announce repopulation decisions with phased timeframes. |
| 66 | Conduct annual repopulation training for all involved agencies (public and private). |
| 67 | Develop a program to better manage and distribute spontaneous volunteer and donation efforts. Include coordination with the Occupant Support Team. |
| 68 | Activate the RCC as early as possible for any emergency with a likely need for disaster assistance. |
| 69 | Update the Damage Assessment annex to the County Emergency Response Plan to include a common data structure and capture tool across all County agencies. |
| 70 | Develop and maintain a list of suitable pre-designated sub-regional Disaster Assistance Center (DAC) facility sites across the County to reduce the time/effort required to identify and acquire such facilities in the early phases of a disaster event. |
| 71 | Convene a debris management project team with representatives from California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), CalRecycle, County Emergency Management, County Public Works, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH), Environmental Health, participating cities, and other regional stakeholders to develop a local program and team capable of activating a private property debris removal (PPDR) response without requiring the assistance of Cal OES or CalRecycle. |
| 72 | Secure standing contracts with approved, licensed vendors for debris assessment and removal if the County chooses to activate a locally funded PPDR program in smaller incidents. |
| 73 | With the DPH, adopt standards, protocols, resources, and timeline expectations for mitigating public health risks associated with post-emergence hazardous debris removal. |
| 75 | Review Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement requirements to ensure the County contract award process is aligned (or accept that FEMA does not recognize some contract award considerations reflective of Los Angeles County's interests around minority- and veteran-owned businesses, etc.). |
| 76 | Establish an IMT for PPDR operations, train local personnel to staff it, and adopt trigger points for PPDR implementation. |
| 78 | Los Angeles County should develop and implement a standard policy regarding the collection of damage information and the release of the Damage Inspection Report by the Damage Inspection Specialist Unit. |
| 81 | Build a unified strategic vegetation management plan for the Santa Monica Mountains among private property owners and land managers for the County, the federal government, the state, and non-profits. As appropriate, to manage the landscape, use the best-fit tool based on a strategic plan. |
| 82 | Create a layered fire defense approach using structure hardening and fuel reduction / change of fuel types to buffer development in relation to managing a neighborhood's expected fire intensity potential. Implementation is the property owners' responsibility. |
| 84 | Increase requirements for development/construction codes and public education programs to gain more hardening of structures. |

## Recommendations Identified as Having Significant Progress Made

| Rec. No. | Recommendation |
|---|---|
| 1 | Memorialize the successes of the Woolsey responses and recovery effort into policies, guidelines, and procedures to ensure ongoing success. |
| 9 | Grow a program to assist with survival and support of individuals within evacuation areas. |
| 27 | Provide regular **tabletop** exercises for designated EOC staff, County department heads, County Chief Executive Officer (CEO) leadership, and County Board of Supervisors chiefs of staff. |
| 41 | Develop and **annually maintain agreements** with local AM radio stations regarding their role in critical public information dissemination. |
| 74 | In a manner reflective of the Public Health Agency requirements, ensure hazardous debris removal is addressed at all scales of emergency, from a single family house fire to loss of an entire community. |
| 85 | Commit dedicated funds annually for County EOC equipment and building repairs. |

## Recommendations Identified as Having Initial Progress Made

| Rec. No. | Recommendation |
|---|---|
| 23 | Develop a Wildland Fire Plan annex to the Emergency Response Plan that addresses key response issues for all known high-hazard areas. |
| 29 | Conduct a wildland fire deployment study to establish an appropriate ratio of emergency resources in relation to population and animal risk factors. This study should also help to support funding changes as needed. |
| 54 | Develop and provide additional instructions/handouts for residents during an evacuation. |
| 60 | Update the Mass Care plans, procedures, and mutual aid agreements to ensure that they reflect the need for government liaison-trained American Red Cross (Red Cross) response personnel to be actively involved in the Los Angeles County Emergency Operations Center (County EOC) and the Los Angeles Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) Mass Care and Shelter Branch during all Level 2 and Level 1 activations. |
| 64 | Conduct a public repopulation education campaign commensurate with evacuation training to manage expectations. |
| 79 | Identify critical infrastructure sites and ensure associated defensible space needs. |
| 80 | Increase awareness for voluntary home/property safety inspections through which residents can hear from local firefighters regarding how safe their structures are and/or what the resident can do to enhance survivability and accessibility for firefighters. |
| 83 | Explore methods to enhance the soil's ability, through carbon and moisture retention, to increase fuel moisture in defensible landscaping plants. |
| 86 | Study and plan for the replacement and modernization of the County EOC facility to meet current and emerging standards. |

## Recommendations Identified as Not Feasible

| Rec. No. | Recommendation |
|---|---|
| 30 | Allow case-by-case diesel vehicle exemptions from the County's clean-air policy to allow for agencies to fulfill mission critical tasks. |
| 77 | Work with FEMA to ensure inclusion of foundation removal reimbursement when necessary. This is not included in FEMA's debris removal program, which may be based on tornado and hurricane emergencies that do not typically affect foundations. |