

FLOOD PREPAREDNESS WINTER 2017 – 2018

The rainy season is upon us and the City of Petaluma would like to remind residents and property owners of the flood hazards posed by the Petaluma River and its tributaries and suggest ways to protect both people and property. Below are several flood related priority topics to be aware of:

FLOODING IN PETALUMA: The City of Petaluma incurred major damage in the 1980's, the 1990's, and the New Year's event of 2005/06. Additionally, the December 11, 2014 storm event caused flooding of the Industrial Avenue area and localized street flooding in various areas as did recent storm events in December 2016 and January 2017. It is important to be aware of this potential danger and to properly prepare for it. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the City of Petaluma completed the Petaluma River Flood Control Project in fall of 2015. The project is designed to provide protection to the Payran Area from the 100-year flood. As you may be aware, the Petaluma River and its tributaries have a history of flooding during severe storms.

KNOW YOUR FLOOD HAZARD: Know if your property is within a special flood hazard area or is subject to repetitive flood events. Research the City of Petaluma flood insurance rate maps and known problem sites to understand which areas of the City are subject to flooding. During a flood event you can receive updates by listening for emergency alerts broadcasts, signing up to receive emergency alerts from the City through <http://www.nixle.com/>, or check the City's social media sites for regular updates.

INSURE YOUR PROPERTY FOR YOUR FLOOD HAZARD: It is important to note that your homeowners insurance may not cover damage caused by flooding. The City's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program gives property owners a 20% discount on their flood insurance. Flood insurance is particularly important and may be required as a condition of your mortgage if you live in a Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA). Special lower cost, preferred risk policies may be available for qualified properties. Check with your insurance agent for eligibility and latest available insurance policy premiums. The SFHA is the area that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has determined will be flooded during a storm that has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year, also known as the 100-year flood. Maps showing the 100-year flood areas, as well as elevation certificates back to 1999, are available free-of-charge from the City's Department of Public Works and Utilities. The City and FEMA updated the City's flood insurance rate maps which became effective on February 19, 2014 and October 2, 2015.

PROTECT PEOPLE FROM FLOOD HAZARDS: To help protect its citizens, particularly those in the most flood prone areas, the City has developed and continues to update its Flood Alert System. With this system, City staff will give areas at risk as much warning time as possible. The Flood Alert System is a computer system that monitors weather conditions and records stream heights and precipitation. This system allows emergency managers to coordinate resources and/or evacuations as needed. Please remember, we have limited resources and during inclement weather we are being summoned to assist in numerous other areas of the City. We strongly suggest you take the time to formulate a family evacuation plan. In a flood emergency, the following precautions should be taken only if time permits: 1) Fill containers with an adequate source of drinking water; 2) Turn off all utilities, and contact P G & E to assist you in turning them back on; 3) Move valuable papers and objects to higher elevations (shelves, attics, etc.); 4) Bring outdoor items into the garage so they don't become floating debris; 5) Take necessary medications with you; 6) Do not walk through flowing water; 7) Do

not drive through flooded areas (turn around, don't drown!); 8) Stay away from power lines and electrical wires.

PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY FROM THE HAZARD: There are many ways in which you can protect your property from floodwaters. Information on retrofitting techniques such as relocation, elevation, flood proofing, and selecting a qualified contractor is available through the City's Building staff as well as the Floodplain Administrator. Please note that substantially improving a structure that is located in the floodplain requires that not only the addition be elevated, but that the original structure be elevated as well. Substantial improvement means any repair, reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition or improvement of a structure, the cost of which exceeds 50 percent of the market value of the structure, not including the value of land. Any construction being done without a permit is illegal should be reported to the City at 778-4301.

BUILD RESPONSIBLY (FLOODPLAIN AND FLOODWAY REGULATIONS): - The City's comprehensive Floodplain/Floodway regulations have undergone a number of revisions to keep them current with State of California and National Flood Insurance Program regulations. To protect the natural areas and natural functions of the floodplain, the City of Petaluma has: 1) protected approximately 160 acres of wetlands in the Petaluma Marsh, 2) implemented regulatory constraints on development in natural or riparian areas, 3) enforced erosion and sediment control policies, 4) developed storm water pollution control guidelines.

PROTECT NATURAL FLOODPLAIN FUNCTIONS: Don't dump anything in storm drains. Dumping of materials in water bodies can block drainage ways, reduce flood carrying capacity and harm sensitive aquatic plant species and wildlife. Storm drains are intended to discharge only rainwater runoff into our creeks and the Petaluma River. Dumping of debris in any channel or any illicit discharge into the storm drain system is illegal and should be immediately reported to the Public Works and Utilities Department (778-4546) or Police Department (778-4372).

MAINTENANCE OF DRAINAGE CHANNELS: The City of Petaluma and the Sonoma County Water Agency inspect all drainage channels over which they have jurisdiction. The City actively clears and maintains creek and storm drain system segments and coordinates with the Sonoma County Water Agency regarding maintenance of its creek segments within Petaluma. However, there are many channels on private property that must be maintained by the property owner. It is important to keep all channels clear of debris at all times to allow adequate drainage of storm water to the Petaluma River.

FLOOD EDUCATION: If you would like to find out if a particular property is within the FEMA designated floodplain and what zone it's in or need any additional information on any of the subjects discussed in this notice, please contact the City's Floodplain Administration Office at (707) 778-4303. You may also visit the FEMA's map service center website at <https://msc.fema.gov/portal> to view Petaluma's flood insurance rate maps. Additional floodplain management information is also available at the Petaluma Public Library and City website, www.CityofPetaluma.net.