

2020 Annual Evaluation Report

Program for Public Information PPI (Activity 330)

Flood Insurance Promotion (Activity 370)

Community: Hattiesburg, MS

Name of PPI: City of Hattiesburg Program for Public Information and Coverage Improvement Plan

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Date of Report: December 4, 2020

Date PPI adopted by Council: December 18, 2018

Report Sent to Governing Body: 1/19/2021

1. Date of the annual PPI committee meeting for this evaluation: December 4, 2020
2. List of committee members that attended the annual PPI committee meeting above:
 - a. NAME
 - b. NAME
 - c. NAME
3. List of the Priority audiences for your community:
 - a. Target audience #1: Repetitive Loss Property Owners/Renters
 - b. Target audience #2: Property owners in Flood Zones
 - c. Target audience #3: Property Owners in Community Flood Hazard Areas
 - d. Target audience #4: City of Hattiesburg Residents
 - e. Target audience #5: Realtor/Insurance Agents/Bankers/Lenders
 - f. Target audience #6: Builders
4. List of the Topics and Associated Messages with the desired outcomes for each message:

Messages and Desired Outcomes	
Message	Outcome
1. Know your flood hazard	Increase protection of people & properties and increase flood insurance policies for structures and content and to decrease pollution
2. Insure your property for your flood hazard	Increase disclosure methods and Increase number of structural and contents flood insurance policies
3. Protect people from flood hazard	Increase citizens awareness on protecting themselves and their belongings; Decrease number of rescues; reduce calls to 911 for

	non-life threatening emergencies, stop preventable accidents
4. Protect property from flood hazard	Increase citizens awareness, thus protecting people, properties and our environment
5. Build responsibly	Increase the number of people getting technical assistance for better property protection and the reduction of repetitive loss properties and obtaining insurance for their belongings; Increase the number of citizens getting technical assistance for retrofitting and/or permits for compliance with all City regulations and responsible building
6. Protect natural floodplain functions	Lack of water pollution and dumping in storm drains
7. Everyone can buy flood insurance (even renters)	Increase number of flood contents insurance policies; Increase the number of people getting technical assistance for better property protection and the reduction of repetitive loss properties and obtaining insurance for their belongings
8. Have your emergency plan in place in advance	Increase citizens awareness on proper Storm Planning to protect lives and property
9. Get permits before you build	Increase the number of citizens getting technical assistance for retrofitting and/or permits for compliance with all City regulations and responsible building
10. Seasonal storm planning (hurricane, flash flooding, tornadoes, winter weather).	Increase protection of people & properties, maintain health throughout clean-up period and increase citizen awareness on safety measures; Increase citizens awareness on proper Storm Planning to protect lives and property

5. List of the projects that the PPI used to convey the above messages:

- City website
- Facebook and Twitter
- E-newsletter
- Employee newsletter
- Local media
- Targeted mailings
- Publications for pick-up (brochures, postcards, etc.) concerning floodplain management, flood insurance
- Flood Expo (2019, cancelled in 2020)
- Hub Alerts

- Local events such as Live at 5, HubFest (2019, cancelled in 2020)
 - Townhall meetings (cancelled in 2020)
6. List which projects were implemented in this reporting period:
- The hattiesburgms.com/stormcenter website, which includes our flood maps, flood insurance information, storm preparedness, proper dumping methods, stormdrain management, and more. Also functions as pre/during/post weather event information hub.
 - Flood hazard, preparedness and response messaging at events hosted by City partners
 - Publicize Flood Smart website at various locations in City offices
 - Discussion with homeowner and commercial property owners about flood risk/flood insurance
 - City's CCO provides updates to local media regarding preparedness/response
 - Incorporation of flood hazard, preparedness and response messaging in the city-wide newsletter, employee newsletter and social media channels
 - The CRS Coordinator will work with the Mayor's Office to develop and host an inaugural storm preparedness "expo." This will provide an opportunity to present storm preparedness information to residents, but also proper dumping methods so that storm drains are not affected
 - Through the City's chief communications officer and coordination with the Forrest County Emergency Management District, develop a protocol for the Emergency Alert System recently acquired by the City of Hattiesburg, as it pertains to storm preparedness and response.
 - Incorporation of flood hazard, preparedness and response messaging in the city-wide newsletter, employee newsletter and social media channels.
 - City-wide newsletter distribution has been suspended in 2020 so as not to undermine other messaging from the City on pandemic information. It will resume January 2021.
 - Handouts and fliers developed by the CRS Coordinator and mailed informing property owners of safety tips and evacuation processes
 - The CRS Coordinator will work with the Mayor's Office to develop and host an inaugural storm preparedness "expo." This will provide an opportunity to present storm preparedness information to residents, but also proper dumping methods so that storm drains are not affected
 - This was completed in 2019 and scheduled for March 2020, but was cancelled due to implementation of pandemic protocols.
 - Distribute National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) literature to new home buyers and property owners/renters.
 - Develop online toolkit for realtors, insurance agents, lenders and more for their ability to download and distribute to target audiences.
 - The CRS Coordinator will work with the City's Chief Communications Officer to plan Storm Ready Media Junket, twice a year (once before Hurricane season and once before winter storms) to allow local media the opportunity to interview and garner storm preparedness tips for traditional media audiences.
 - This project is implemented only once a year at the annual Flood Expo, not twice year.

- Through the City’s chief communications officer and coordination with the Forrest County Emergency Management District, develop a protocol for the Emergency Alert System recently acquired by the City of Hattiesburg, as it pertains to storm preparedness and response.
 - Administration limits the use of the “Hub Alerts” system to storm response only. Overuse of the system leads to messaging fatigue, which may result in citizens paying less attention to the messaging from the City.
7. List why some projects were not implemented (if any):
- The CRS Coordinator will attend and present to at least two neighborhood association meetings monthly and one council of neighborhoods meeting quarterly.
 - COVID-19 regulations and reduced staff have made this project unfeasible.
 - The CRS Coordinator, with the Mayor’s Office and City Council members, will host floodplain town hall meetings twice a year in each ward, to let property owners and renters know more about flood insurance, what can be done to reduce flood damage and storm preparedness
 - COVID-19 regulations and reduced staff have made this project unfeasible.
 - Partner with local neighborhood associations to disseminate monthly tips regarding flood hazards, preparedness, protection and response.
 - COVID-19 regulations and reduced staff have made this project unfeasible.
 - Develop and mail postcards that explain the need for flood insurance even when you're not located within the SFHA.
 - Staff feels that this target group is able to get information promoting flood insurance through the website and other outreach efforts.
 - Create refrigerator magnets to be placed in homes and businesses with flood safety tips.
 - Staff did not feel this was an effective way to communicate this information.
 - Flood Hazard Brochure will be edited and redesigned to highlight the importance of understanding flood hazards, storm preparedness, flood insurance and protection of property for owners and renters. This will be available in public spaces, but also mailed out once a year to all residents.
 - We are offering this brochure in public spaces and did a mailing of it in March 2020, prior to the scheduled Flood Week Expo, but the mailing was only sent to citizens in the SFHA.
 - A letter, signed by Mayor Toby Barker, will be distributed to all residents regarding the importance of flood hazards, storm preparedness, flood insurance and protection of property for owners and renters.
 - This letter has been drafted.
 - A letter from Mayor Barker, specific to the importance of flood insurance, to be distributed by insurance agents, bankers, lenders and realtors.
 - Planning Staff will work with Administration to complete this project in 2021.
 - Brochure on steps to getting building permits within the flood zone and requirements of each permit.
 - Place "NO DUMPING" signs in areas where frequent dumping has been observed.
 - Planning Staff is following up with Public Works regarding this item. It may have been completed without notifying the CRS Coordinator.

- After a weather event, packets of information will be handed out door to door in flooded neighborhoods. It will include contact information for all city services and utility information. It will also include 30, 60 and 90-day recovery tips inclusive of the permitting process, flood insurance, the inspection process and more.
 - Planning Staff is working with Code Enforcement on this item.
8. List of what progress was made toward the desired outcomes:
- Outreach efforts continue to encourage residents to know their flood hazards and notify them how to get flood information. A heavy social media presence and City website, especially the storm center, helps protect people from flood hazards and encourages them to have their emergency plans in place. The Flood Expo in 2019 was an effective outreach project, and the City is disappointed the 2020 Expo had to be cancelled. Ongoing communications with homeowners/commercial property owners and Staff about flood risks, building in the flood zone, and flood insurance helps the community build responsibly and protects people and property from flood. Mailed outreach to people living in the SFHA promoted flood insurance, flood protection, and avoiding flood risk.
9. List what should be changed (if anything). This should include what messages, outcomes and projects should be revised or dropped and what new ones should be initiated.

Staff proposes removing or amending the following projects:

- The CRS Coordinator will attend and present to at least two neighborhood association meetings monthly and one council of neighborhoods meeting quarterly.
 - Staff proposes making neighborhood associations aware that Staff is willing to attend their meetings as requested.
- The CRS Coordinator, with the Mayor's Office and City Council members, will host floodplain town hall meetings twice a year in each ward, to let property owners and renters know more about flood insurance, what can be done to reduce flood damage and storm preparedness.
 - Instead, Staff proposes one town hall meeting per Ward annually.
- Partner with local neighborhood associations to disseminate monthly tips regarding flood hazards, preparedness, protection and response.
 - Staff instead proposes to digitally provide flood information to the Neighborhood Associations, and make them and the Neighborhood Coordinator aware that Staff can provide additional guidance as requested.
- Develop and mail postcards that explain the need for flood insurance even when you're not located within the SFHA.
 - Staff feels that this target group is able to get information promoting flood insurance through the website and other outreach efforts.
 - Staff proposes adopting new outreach for the 2021 CRS Addendum: adding a flood insurance brochure to be handed out with every building permit, even permits not in the flood zone, and mailing the same brochure to all citizens in the City annually.
- Create refrigerator magnets to be placed in homes and businesses with flood safety tips.

- Remove item in lieu of better communication methods (digital/printed media). The City is undergoing upgrades to their water billing printing, which will allow improvements to flood tip dissemination as well.

10. Staff also proposes the following changes to the PPI/CP document beyond the proposed changes to the PPI activity:

- PAGE 2: Consider expanding PPI Focus Committee Members to include additional stakeholders, such as lenders, emergency/medical community, ADP, and/or USM.
 - Each of these has a unique way to reach various populations in Hattiesburg and their input or assistance in promoting the PPI could be beneficial. They may provide better opportunities at outreach.
- PAGE 3-4: Review goals and objectives to ensure they are truly goals and executable objectives
- PAGE 4-5: Revisit community needs assessment
 - FEMA offers a Community Needs Assessment Tool, outlined in Activity 240, which is not required but beneficial to the CRS program. I believe that it will provide substantiated data and can be utilized across various CRS activities. It will take a day or less to complete per the CRS Resources website.
- PAGE 5: Expand flood hazards section to identify river flooding, river flash flooding, and flash flooding due to urban runoff/drainage. While other hazards are identified, flash flooding due to urban drainage seems to come across as the primary flood concern.
- PAGE 6-8: Re-evaluate insurance coverage and provide information on percentage of structures covered in the SFHA. It appears that we previously only calculated the total percentage of covered structures throughout the City. More up-to-date coverage data is also beneficial.
- PAGE 6-8: Identify specific coverage improvement goals. There is no definite measureable goal for Coverage Improvement set at current. We must have a measureable to show whether or not our PPI/CP is effective.
 - Example:
 - Increase number of buildings insured in SFHA
 - Increase number of buildings insured by occupancy designation
 - Improve coverage levels in areas where damage would be highest
- Include list of existing non-governmental stakeholders outreach efforts. ISO has requested this be added to the PPI.
- PAGE 18- Include date submitted to FEMA for review, initial date adopted by City Council. Update for any adopted amendments.
- PAGE 18- Add specific language regarding the preparation of an annual report that will be submitted to City Council, made available to the media, and the public.