

over time, so the City should maintain an awareness of any changes and incorporate them into its response planning and practices.

POLICY 3.3

Have plans to accept, organize and utilize convergence workers.

Post-disaster, it is likely that the City will see an outpouring of citizens willing and wanting to help with recovery efforts. Mobilization and reinforcement of these resources will require significant management by City responders. If no system is in place to harness the potential provided by these spontaneous, or “convergent”, volunteers, this resource will be lost.

The City should continue the effort currently underway with the Red Cross on a plan for organizing and mobilizing convergent volunteers. The Volunteer Centers of the Bay Area have developed a program the City should review as a model for managing disaster volunteers. The City may also want to consider a civilian program similar to the Disaster Service Worker program, which deputizes non-employees to provide similar service functions after a disaster. This program should set forth how to receive volunteers, assess their skills and experience, and match them to the tasks, and be designed to work in concert with the City’s ongoing disaster service volunteer programs such as NERT. The City should also, as a part of this program, identify and establish a volunteer mobilization center as a meeting point to coordinate volunteer activity post-disaster.

POLICY 3.4

Have vendors and contractors available to respond immediately after a disaster.

When a disaster strikes, essential resources for managing emergency and continuity of business operations may become scarce. The deficit of these resources may impact public safety operations, food distribution, removal of solid waste, recycling and debris, traffic control, shelter operations, and many other functions critical in a disaster. The City should address the immediacy of need post-disaster by making arrangements with local and regional contractors before disaster strikes. Pre-qualifying of contractors who can respond in emergency and who have equipment to handle the work is another solution for immediate response.

The Office of Contract Administration (OCA) maintains an emergency list of supply vendors. OCA should work with other departments to understand the types of supplies that may be necessary in the case of a disaster and have contracting options readily available, including an up-to-date list of qualified contractors. The list should contain sufficient sources for the kinds of goods that will be most in demand after a disaster, such as shelter supplies, medical supplies, etc. As-needed contracts should be readily implementable to meet emergency need, and existing contracts and franchise agreements should be reviewed for their applicability in the case of a disaster.

DPW maintains a registry of construction-related contractors. This list can be a valuable resource after a disaster. The agency should ensure it is kept up-to-date, and that old or unavailable contractors are removed on an annual basis. The City should also explore methods that will enable small and local firms, including minority- and women-owned businesses, to take a more active role in the response and rebuilding process, it may be beneficial to develop a program to train and qualify local contractors for government-backed projects.

POLICY 3.5

Develop strategies for cooperating with the media.

Having a media communication strategy is an important component of responding to a disaster. Beyond communicating to local and regional residents, the media is the means by which the outside world understands what has happened. Media coverage leads to national, even global understanding, of a disaster and its impacts. Coverage can be a primary factor in attracting public and private aid. It can also fuel demands for action, and stimulate public support for actions to prevent or mitigate disasters.

The Mayor’s Office of Communication will direct all media responses, in cooperation with the Department of Emergency Management’s joint information center, which will provide a centralized source for department information. The Mayor’s Office’s crisis communications plan should include strategies for openly and honestly dealing with the media. Procedures for disaster media relations should also ensure that the designated spokesperson – and in the case of a disaster, this may not be the usual media spokesperson - understands the depth of the disaster and the details of its impacts. Media kits should be prepared and ready for distribution as soon as possible.

There are frequently concerns about the negative impact of media coverage on a community post-disaster. Because of the nature of media, often stories can be overtaken by a focus on deaths and damage to property. Political leaders may be concerned about publicity’s impact on tourism and outside investment, or fear that it could incite mass departure of business and residents. Even in the face of these fears, it is important that the City take a positive view of media operations, and cooperate with the media based on a policy of openness. Rather than restricting information, the City should work to present media organizations with a balance of information, about the kinds of public actions and safety measures that have succeeded well as those that have failed, so that coverage can go beyond simply accounting for totals of loss. A news story giving the amount of earthquake damage inflicted could just as easily include information about the number and types of structures that survived because of mitigation measures.

POLICY 3.6

Support the ability to shelter-in-place for residents.

The term “shelter in place” refers to San Franciscans ability to remain in their home while it is being repaired after an earthquake. For a building to have shelter-in-place capacity, it must be strong enough to withstand a major earthquake without substantial structural damage. This is a different standard than that employed by the current building code, which requires buildings to meet life-safety standards. In some cases a building may not collapse, but might be deemed unusable because of the level of damage. Shelter-in-place housing standards would mean that a building is safe enough to live in during the months after an earthquake, but may not be fully functional, as a hospital or other public facilities would need to be.

Supporting shelter-in-place standards can help to minimize the need for emergency housing post-disaster, keep current residents in their homes, and minimize disruption of the housing market units. This type of standard could greatly minimize recovery costs and allow communities to remain intact.

POLICY 3.7

Develop a system to convey personalized information during and immediately after a disaster.

In addition to conveying general public information about the disaster to citizens and the outside world, the City will also need to respond to more personal inquiries by impacted residents. This can include questions about what services and aid is available, as well as inquiries about the location, health and welfare of relatives or other residents.

The City should plan for an information system composed of a series of local Public Information Centers intended to convey this more personalized information to the public. These centers should be located in accessible community locations such as libraries, but should also be sited away from the centers of emergency activity. These centers should be connected to receive up-to-date information from law enforcement agencies, other City departments, the school district, -HSA, public shelters, local hospitals, and the coroner, and should also be linked to regional centers in other parts of the Bay Area. During a disaster, these regional information centers should be directly linked to consumers via the 311 City phone service.

POLICY 3.8

Establish centers to facilitate permits for repairs.

Rebuilding can be facilitated by increasing the points of access where permitting can occur. Satellite permitting centers that offer City services such as building permits, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical inspections can be one way to increase building owners’ access to services in their own neighborhood, and can reduce the possibility of overload at the central permitting facilities at Planning and the Department of Building Inspection. These centers can be operated on a temporary basis, perhaps until a targeted number of buildings are brought back on line.

POLICY 3.9

Work collaboratively with nonprofit partners to assist vulnerable populations during and immediately after a disaster and to ensure resumption of social services directly after a disaster.

In addition to disrupted infrastructure such as transit and transportation, power, water, gas and sewer, phone service, the City will also face disruptions to its social services at a time when they may be most needed. The City’s most vulnerable populations, including seniors, shut-ins, disabled, institutionalized or incarcerated youth and adults, children who have been separated from their parents due

to the disaster, and residents of single-room occupancy hotels and public housing, will be at risk of falling through the cracks. Hospitals and clinics may be damaged or overcrowded, schools and daycare centers will be closed, and families may be separated. Centers for special needs populations may be temporarily shut down, due to damage or unavailability of employees. Local services, particularly those meeting the needs of residents in lower-income areas, may be ill-prepared to cope.

The City should have continuity policies and plans in place for its municipally-run and municipally-funded services. One way of supporting their immediate resumption would be to establish a policy clarifying that for specified City employees, maintaining continuity of social service provision by carrying out their everyday positions is their primary role as disaster service workers. In advance of a disaster, processes should be established to ensure the continuity of payments to social service organizations under contract with the City.

The City is not, however, the only service provider that needs to plan for this inevitability. Nonprofit groups are key players in disaster response, providing food and shelter in the short term, and assisting in longer term recovery through health care and job placement. But in past disasters, lack of coordinated planning – between the City and among agencies – has resulted in gaps in aid or in redundant services. Therefore, the City should also assist local service providers, including mental health centers, substance abuse services, homeless shelters, community health centers, senior services and aids activities, so that they can resume services, to cope in a disaster. They can support religious and community organizations by providing them with employee response training, insurance coverage, and encouraging development of contingency plans.

POLICY 3.10
Support the efforts of the Controller’s Office to ensure service continuation and financing of post-disaster.

The Controller’s Office is the designated lead agency for the Finance and Administration Section of the Emergency Response Plan, supported by the Department of Administrative Services and the Office of the Treasurer. These groups are tasked with ensuring employee payment and compensation, and with payment of contractor and vendor accounts, in the immediate response phase of a disaster. These elements will be critical to the continuing operation of City services.

In order to ensure continuation, the Controller’s Office has programs underway to ensure that payroll continues to be processed for all City workers, implementing off- site payroll processing if needed; that employee compensation is resumed; that financial and accounting computer systems can recover and resume as soon as possible; and all payments, both to City workers and to outside vendors, are processed within a reasonable time.

The City should actively encourage the use of direct deposit by all City employees, and inform all employees of the potential loss of pay in the event of a disaster for those who do not use direct deposit. Additionally, the Controller’s Office should work with City employees not currently using direct deposit in order to provide backup account information that can be switched to direct deposit in the event of a disaster. The City should assist those employees without access to a bank account to open an account with a bank or credit union.

The Controller’s Office will also direct the financial policies established to guide the City in its response to an emergency, particularly as it relates to personnel time, contracts, and equipment and supplies relating to the emergency. As a part of this responsibility, the Office should work with other City agencies to determine need for contracts with vendors who do not already occur on existing approved vendor lists; and set up these new vendor contracts well before the emergency occurs.

POLICY 3.11
Ensure historic resources are protected in the aftermath of a disaster.

Preservation of the City’s historic resources is an immediate concern when damage is being assessed. The older construction techniques of historic buildings make them more vulnerable to damage, and if the damage is noted without recognition of the resources historic value, the building can be at risk of further damage or demolition.

Accurate information about heritage resources is fundamental to ensuring resources are not lost. Complete survey information ensures that resource documentation of relevant buildings exists, and this information can be mapped and used by assessors in the tagging of buildings post-disaster. Since the year 2000, the Planning Department has been actively engaged in survey work through

the Citywide Survey Program. The focus of the program is on neighborhoods that are undergoing long-range planning efforts or are the focus of intense development activity, but the Citywide Survey Program will continue survey efforts in neighborhoods outside of Area Plan study areas as resources become available. While that Citywide Survey is underway, the City should make use of existing survey information, including privately developed property reviews, and ensure it is made available to DBI and any other relevant contractors who may be charged with doing evaluations of damaged buildings.

Post-disaster assessment should include an analysis of the extent of the damage to historic areas and resources. In a typical assessment scenario, assessors will attach a green tag if a building is structurally sound, a yellow tag where repairs are needed, and a red tag if the structure is uninhabitable. This system should ensure sufficient protection for historic resources post-disaster, in that all tagged buildings receive further detailed evaluation considering survey information before any steps towards demolition are taken. The system could also include separate placards identifying the building as a historic resource. Without such identification, the buildings are at risk.

Policy 3.12

Address hazardous material and other spills by requiring appropriate cleanup by property owners per local, state, and federal environmental laws.

Accidental spills and releases of hazardous waste or hazardous substances can cause severe damage not only to the environment, but to the public's health. This is a particular issue for other older industrial properties with toxic spill issues as they convert to other uses or forms of development. In cases where environmental damage or hazardous conditions have occurred, the City shall require all property owners and other responsible parties to report spills or leakages and to perform clean up to the level required by local, state, and federal environmental regulations. Where such parties delay in this required cleanup, the City, working with other regulatory agencies, shall take all measures necessary to ensure the public's health and safety is protected.

4. RECOVERY AND RECONSTRUCTION

OBJECTIVE 4

ASSURE THE SOUND, EQUITABLE AND EXPEDIENT RECONSTRUCTION OF SAN FRANCISCO FOLLOWING A MAJOR DISASTER.

Short term recovery actions – ensuring re-connection of utilities, short term housing, re-initiation of services - are often an outgrowth of the response phase. Long-term recovery begins once many of those short-term actions are underway or have been completed – as the rubble and debris have been cleared, major urban services are restored, and daily urban operations – movement, employment, etc – are reinitiating. The actual reconstruction can typically takes 5 to 10 years, but it can be much longer, and even across the City, full recovery – return to the pre-disaster state, or improvement beyond that state – can vary considerable from neighborhood to neighborhood.

A major disaster resulting in extensive destruction in the City will require a public and private commitment to rebuild San Francisco, as quickly as possible, while providing needed interim facilities where people can live, conduct businesses, and provide services. The rebuilding of areas with extensive damage will present choices that have to be made between retaining existing land uses, regulations, land ownership patterns, circulation and infrastructure configurations, and other physical characteristics as they existed before the disaster, or, alternatively, reconsidering the area’s physical patterns, or a combination of the two approaches. While these issues are being considered, the City’s established development objectives and procedures (embodied in the General Plan) should be respected. A balance should be struck to enable new development to take advantage of opportunities to improve the building stock, neighborhood quality and City as a whole, while respecting the values of the past. Some areas might best be repaired and rebuilt in ways similar to their pre-disaster conditions,

while new area plans applying citywide objectives may be needed in others with pervasive damage.

Preparation and planning prior to a disaster can improve the effectiveness of post-disaster efforts. Longer-term recovery and reconstruction decisions will need to be made by decision-makers including the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors, the Planning Commission and others, with considerable public involvement. Advance planning for the recovery process will improve the City’s ability to make these decisions quickly, equitably, and effectively, which will profoundly influence the future of the City.

Advance Recovery Planning

POLICY 4.1

Before an emergency occurs, establish an interdepartmental working group to develop an advance recovery framework that will guide long-term recovery, manage reconstruction activities, and coordinate rebuilding activity.

Advance recovery planning has a critical role in the City’s disaster preparedness. A previously agreed-upon recovery and rebuilding planning process can reduce debates and disagreements about how to rebuild, and result in a much faster reconstruction period. Other disaster histories, including our own, have proven that rush to rebuild often takes place before the necessary planning is completed. Therefore, it is critical that the governance and planning framework for recovery and reconstruction be established before the disaster occurs

To provide direction for any planning that happens post disaster, the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors should establish an interdepartmental working group to create

a framework for recovery. The working group should be comprised of representatives from relevant City agencies and departments.

The recovery framework should outline the City’s top priorities for improving the City’s capacity to manage post-disaster recovery and reconstruction, and contain guidelines that outline how reconstruction planning will be undertaken after a disaster has occurred. This framework should provide the basis for the eventual development of a post-disaster recovery and reconstruction plan. While such an effort cannot anticipate the impact that such a disaster might have, and therefore will not have detailed recommendations to address every eventuality, the effort can provide a vision and a framework for how our community will rebuild after a disaster. Developing and adopting this framework prior to a disaster will allow for a well throughout process and prioritization within a “normal” environment.

POLICY 4.2
As a part of the advance recovery framework, develop and adopt a repair and reconstruction ordinance, to facilitate the repair and reconstruction of buildings.

The rebuilding and reconstruction efforts that will need to be undertaken after a disaster will need to be much more swift in repairing lifelines, homes, and other resources the City depends on. In the period after a disaster, the Department of Building Inspection and Planning will likely see a surge in permit applications. While the Department of Building Inspection already maintains procedures to deal with emergency repairs, the City does not have plans to deal with the sustained demand that may result from large-scale reconstruction. Upon completion of the advance recovery framework, the task force should develop a recovery and repair ordinance that help implement the framework and facilitate the repair and reconstruction of buildings following disaster.

The recovery and repair ordinance should build upon existing building and planning code standards and policies to facilitate an efficient reconstruction process, help to streamline and expedite the permitting and review process, while avoiding a hastily administered permitting process. The Ordinance should establish clear permit processing

and review procedures to expedite rebuilding in the post-disaster period, while providing the amount of review necessary to ensure that reconstruction meets the City’s objectives and appropriate local policies, plans, and code standards, yet is economically feasible.

The ordinance should consider policies to address nonconforming uses and buildings, explore modifications to outdated codes and standards, consider the applicability of the City’s notification or other review procedures, and address historic buildings to ensure repairs maintain the integrity of the structure without adversely affecting its historic nature. The ordinance should also revise post-earthquake building inspection protocols to identify buildings that can be occupied safely despite damage and loss of utilities, allowing residents to safely shelter-in-place while waiting to make repairs.

The ordinance should create priority categories for building types, prioritizing critical response facilities first. The ordinance should also be clear on the length of time during which it is applicable. It is important that the ordinance not work at cross-purposes with other City goals. Large-scale damage to confined areas might warrant specific neighborhood-level plans or reconstruction guidelines, and these will take time to prepare. If necessary, the ordinance should allow for periods of non-building while important changes are adopted into law. The ordinance should also include sufficient provisions to ensure that it is evaluated and amendments can be made as needed, post-disaster, to appropriately address the disaster impacts.

POLICY 4.3
As a part of the advance recovery framework, coordinate the realignment of government post-disaster, so City employee’s skills can be used effectively towards recovery and reconstruction efforts.

New roles and responsibilities for governments will emerge after a disaster strikes. It is imperative that government be able to be nimble enough to adjust to the various roles after the disaster. The City should be willing to reconfigure offices, departments, and services to best serve the public after a disaster.

One example of such realignment might be the need for the Planning Department or Department of Building Inspec-

tion to be decentralized and set up offices in neighborhoods that were particularly devastated by a disaster. By placing them in neighborhoods their time can be better spent on the ground understanding what type of reconstruction is necessary and possible. Another example of such realignment might call for certain departments to assist others for a longer-term as the original department’s services are not required until the City is fully functioning.

POLICY 4.4

Update the advance recovery framework on a regular basis.

The advance recovery framework should be updated as necessary to reflect changing conditions, changes in City policy and technology, and changes in state and federal regulations that affect post-disaster recovery management, financing, and other processes. The task force should set, in its creation of the plan, a schedule for regular updates to ensure it keeps up with shifting community priorities as well as to keep it present and important in the public’s mind.

POLICY 4.5

Develop and maintain public support for the advance recovery framework to ensure its eventual implementation.

Once an advance recovery framework is developed, its work is not over. Implementation of the framework post-disaster is its critical conclusion, and achieving this in the aftermath of a disaster will require vigilance on the City’s part. The Burnham Plan, developed for the City’s reconstruction after the 1906 earthquake, was never implemented, for several reasons. The plan required money from the City’s taxpayers, cooperation from property owners, and strength from the City’s leadership – things that were difficult to garner from populations who were not a part of its development. Whether or not one supported the specific Burnham vision or an alternative prospect, it is clear that no plan could have succeeded without community and City leadership support. Community demands for rapid reconstruction will likely be perceived by many to be in conflict with calls for post-disaster planning and time needed to complete such a process.

The City should develop an ongoing program to regularly train the City’s leadership and build community support for the framework to ensure its implementation in a time-

compressed, and high-pressure post-disaster environment. While there will always be tensions to rebuild quickly post-disaster, the desire for haste should not preempt the implementation of the recovery framework or undermine a potentially necessary recovery and rebuilding process. The community outreach process for the advance recovery framework should provide a vehicle to strengthen community support.

Recovery and Reconstruction Policies

POLICY 4.6

Post-disaster, build upon the advance recovery framework to create a recovery and reconstruction plan to direct the City’s reconstruction activities, manage the long-term recovery period, and coordinate rebuilding activity.

Using the pre-disaster framework as the basis for all planning, the next step is turning that framework into tangible actions to direct and manage the specific impacts of an actual disaster.

Therefore, after a disaster occurs, the City shall establish a recovery and reconstruction task force to guide the planning process and plan development built upon the City’s recovery framework. The task force should be made up not only of City agencies represented in the working group, but also a range of community representatives, including business interests, nonprofits and industry leaders, policy advocates, and neighborhood representatives. The task force should also engage with and involve representatives of other counties, state and federal agencies. The task force’s efforts should be directed by a designated lead agency or individual who can facilitate the recovery and reconstruction planning process and plan development, and oversee its implementation.

The task force will be responsible for the development, drafting and adoption of the post-disaster recovery and reconstruction plan, following the established framework and guidelines. Perversely, a disaster may present the City with a unique opportunity to physically, economically, and socially strengthen the City and the region; and the recovery and reconstruction plan should take advantage of this opportunity.

POLICY 4.7

Ensure the recovery and reconstruction plan is comprehensive and consistent with already established City programs and policies.

The recovery and reconstruction plan will need to prepare the City to meet immediate changing needs after a disaster. Special services and facilities will be needed on a short-term basis, including temporary housing, commercial facilities, and health and human services. It may be necessary to locate these facilities in areas not normally available for development, or at higher densities than is normally allowed. The damage may warrant reconsideration of large-scale issues such as housing locations, transit and public infrastructure such as streets.

The recovery and reconstruction plan should build upon established General Plan objectives and policies, and ensure consistency with City programs, policies, and regulations. The plan should include clear policies and programs addressing the following issues, including the following at a minimum:

- Coordination with federal and state agencies
- Coordination with other regional cities and counties
- Plans for interim housing (considered to be a part of long-term planning, because many of the housing solutions may become permanent).
- Planning for, financing and incentivizing housing repairs and construction of potentially large numbers of replacement housing units, including consideration for affordability needs.
- Land use decisions and recommended changes in response to local opportunities.
- Establishment of public reconstruction priorities

The recovery and reconstruction plan may also consider potential changes to the City’s physical framework and development pattern, potentially reviewing issues such as:

- Structurally and geologically hazardous conditions and mitigation options
- Re-examination of street patterns, street design, and standards such as required width, etc.

- Designation of areas for consideration of land acquisitions, reconfigurations, consolidations, and subdivisions.
- Recommendations for changes and improvements to major transportation routes, transit networks and other lifelines.
- Revisions to City infrastructure networks, including possible undergrounding of utilities, and use of new technologies in service provision.
- Guidance for financing and advancing the City’s long-term economic recovery.

POLICY 4.8

Where necessary, use public authority to expedite repair, reconstruction and rebuilding.

In the aftermath of a disaster, there may be properties that lie fallow for some time. The damage may be so severe that owners without insurance simply abandon properties; absentee owners and landlords could choose simply to not return, and there may be cases where it is not be economically feasible or possible for owner to rebuild.

The City maintains the authority to impose policies, rules and regulations to protect the public welfare, order, and security. If public welfare is at stake – for example in damaged rental properties that remain unrepaired and unoccupied, are a safety or health hazard, or have deteriorated to such a degree that they are unlikely to be restored to quality housing – the City may need to explore ways of restoring these units through partnerships with nonprofits.

POLICY 4.9

Engage the community in the reconstruction planning process.

Reconstruction is too important and too big a task for City departments to take on their own. Residents themselves must play a central role in the decisions determining how their city is rebuilt.

The leaders of the process must develop an education-based involvement process. Recovery planning efforts should not only identify, but actively engage, the varied interests of the community. They should hold citywide workshops

and utilize social media to encourage at large participation. They should also structure a planning process which fosters engagement at the neighborhood scale, through neighborhood-based workshops, committees and special issue focus groups. Citizens should be presented with options for the City’s future, and with all of the information necessary to make a choice from those alternatives. Based on the information provided, and the exercises in which they are engaged, the community should come together around a vision for how they want to rebuild after a disaster, what they want their future to look like, and how, physically, that future should take shape. In the end, the entity tasked with recovery and reconstruction planning must build public support for the plan, and further its adoption as the community’s vision for its future.

The City should also help to develop community skill sets pre-disaster, on both an individual and neighborhood level, to empower residents to meaningfully participate in a post-disaster reconstruction planning process, being able to working effectively together to identify and prioritize community needs, and work collaboratively with the City to communicate these needs and ensure that they are met. Programs such as the Department of Emergency Management Community Engagement and the Neighborhood Empowerment Network help to build community capacity and develop these essential skills before the disaster strikes, so that residents are ready to participate effectively in the reconstruction planning process after the disaster.

POLICY 4.10

View recovery as a partnership with neighborhoods.

Neighborhoods can be a driving force in recovery efforts. They understand their priorities, and they have personal motivation – often lacking at the government level - to ensure projects and programs are carried out. In the worst-case scenario – where the City government is unable to meet its commitment to the residents - community-directed recovery is a good option. Pre-existing community organizations provide a ready structure for development of a strong local force that can step into roles that an overtaxed government may not be able to fill. These groups, if strong, can be the lynchpin for the rebuilding effort. And even in cases where government is prepared and able to meet its citizens’ needs, its efforts can be made stronger if it views response and

recovery as a partnership with its neighborhoods.

In recognition of the neighborhoods’ critical role in recovery, the City should work to increase the capacity of neighborhoods and neighborhood groups. The City currently maintains a number of programs, such as NERT and the Neighborhood Empowerment Network, that empower residents and community groups to share in mitigation and recovery efforts. These programs should be viewed as part of developing framework of efforts to prepare communities in advance of a disaster, beginning with outreach and provision of information, and extending into disaster preparedness activities such as mapping projects and emergency management planning development. These programs should also include community capacity building to teach residents the skills and capacities they need to participate in problem solving activities that support post-disaster decision making around issues such as land use, transportation planning, economic development, etc.

POLICY 4.11

Promote partnerships with non-governmental agencies, including public/private partnerships, to ensure support is ready to step in after a disaster.

Public/private partnerships can be a strong tool in revitalization after a community disaster. Relationships with corporate entities, particularly those with local ties, can lead to financial and other support in reconstruction and restoration efforts. In the Broadmoor neighborhood example of New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina, public/private partnership enabled neighborhood planning, helped secure grants to fund rebuilding efforts, and led to donations of corporate services, marketing materials and even construction support. By laying the groundwork necessary for strong public/private partnerships now - by establishing relationships with universities, corporations and foundations – the City can put itself in a strong position to receive support outside of state and federal aid, which could be critical if disaster is widespread and government resources must be extended.

POLICY 4.12

Rebuild after a major disaster consistent with established General Plan objectives and policies.

The General Plan has been adopted, after much public consideration, to assure the preservation and enhancement

Case Study: New Orleans and the Recovery from Hurricane Katrina

The possibility of land speculation may impact the ability of residents to rebuild. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, several communities have seen developers take advantage of residents' losses to purchase large swaths of property



Photo by Golden-Eye-/ Flickr

The Broadmoor neighborhood in New Orleans, which first developed a neighborhood recovery plan and is currently implementing it with the reconstruction of a local elementary school, library, and eventual community center, provides an example of results that can occur from community directed recovery, provided it is fostered with public and even private support



Photo by infrogmation/ Flickr

The result of a soft story collapse.



Photo by dsb_nola/ Flickr

The Broadmoor Improvement Association played a pivotal role in response and recovery for its neighborhood.



Broadmoor Improvement Area Plan



Rendering by Eskew + Dumez + Ripple

Rosa Keller Public Library and Community Center

and safety of this very desirable urban environment. In the efforts to restore damaged areas of the City, existing development policies and regulations should be respected. Opportunities may be created for realizing General Plan policies, such as improvements to circulation systems, the provision of needed public or private open space, or hazard reduction. In areas with extensive building and infrastructure damage, coordinated rebuilding to take advantage of opportunities for neighborhood improvement, may be best achieved with an area plan approach. The rebuilding process may also enable possibilities for increasing mobility through improved and increased public transit, as well as other alternatives to the private automobile. Future Elements and Area Plans of the General Plan, transportation policies and guiding principles developed by the City should be formulated with an awareness of their potential applicability in relation to earthquake recovery.

Restoration of Housing & Infrastructure

POLICY 4.13

Support existing policies to create and maintain affordable housing choices.

Post-disaster, the City’s already existing affordable housing shortage will be exacerbated. Some of the neighborhoods most vulnerable to serious damage in an earthquake provide a significant portion of the City’s affordable housing stock. Much of the City’s lowest-cost housing is located in older buildings, which are more likely to sustain damage in the case of an earthquake. Many of these older units are kept affordable through rent control, which through state-mandated vacancy decontrol may be increased when the unit is vacated, and does not have to be restored if the unit is replaced. And when reconstruction begins, many of these units, if significantly damaged or destroyed, will be replaced with more profitable, higher priced rental units or for-sale condominiums, shrinking the rental pool and driving up housing costs in the City.

Policies to protect affordability after a disaster are easy to identify but difficult to finance, particularly through the private market. Damaged affordable housing and single-room occupancy hotels should be replaced at as close to a one-to-one basis as possible, using cooperation among

the private market, nonprofit agencies, and local, state or federal government sources to achieve a similar level of affordability as units being replaced. Eviction regulations in the post-disaster period should ensure the disaster is not misused as a way to “cleanse” projects of low-paying tenants. However, we are limited to what we can do locally, so the City should also support any policy changes at the state level that enable more local control over the methods used to stabilize rents post-disaster and long-term.

POLICY 4.14

Utilize emergency exemptions for rebuild projects with limited or no environmental impacts.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) currently allows emergency exemptions for projects which are necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency. In cases where projects are being restored to their pre-disaster state, the sum of their impact has already been reviewed by previous assessments, and thus CEQA enables categorical exemptions for projects reconstructing to standards existing prior to the disaster. The City should ensure these statutes are utilized wherever they make sense to avoid unnecessary delay, while ensuring that new or large-scale projects which may alter the balance of the City receive sufficient review.

POLICY 4.15

Utilize green building practices in rebuilding.

Destroyed buildings and infrastructure will be a consequence of any large-impact earthquake. Salvaging their building material not only aids in the objective of reducing the amount of debris going to a landfill, it supports the rebuilding process. The City should support the establishment of new businesses that can reclaim, warehouse and resell debris for reconstruction. They should also provide incentives, either financial or otherwise, for the use of recycled materials in redevelopment.

One way the City could ensure a market for these recycled materials is to require green building in new development and redevelopment. The City has many green building requirements already in place that should be reconsidered and perhaps revised in light of projected post-earthquake reconstruction needs.

POLICY 4.16

Ensure design character and quality is paramount in consideration of all rebuilding projects.

The City’s attitude toward rebuilding will have to balance two sometimes competing objectives – the need to rebuild quickly, and the desire to maintain and even improve design character. A lesson can be gleaned from the never-executed Burnham Plan, which was developed but then discarded after the 1906 earthquake: the political pressure of property owners to rebuild can overtake other interests, and thus could affect the quality of rebuild architecture and design.

It is important that the next such large-scale rebuilding not follow this same path, and that design be considered hand in hand with haste. The damage of a natural or other disaster may damage many of the neighborhoods and buildings that contribute to the City’s urban design character, and it is imperative that reconstruction be done in a way that will restore and strengthen, not further weaken that character. While many of the preceding policies speak to the need for timeliness in review of reconstruction projects, the policies developed must ensure that design character and quality are not ignored in the urgency of rebuilding. All reconstruction should follow the framework put in place by the post-disaster recovery and reconstruction plan, as well as the urban design standards and residential design guidelines already in place in the City.

POLICY 4.17

Provide adequate interim accommodation for residents and businesses displaced by a major disaster in ways that maintain neighborhood ties and cultural continuity to the extent possible.

While the City’s first priority should be to encourage and enable the retrofit of residential buildings to minimize damage and allow residents to shelter in place following a disaster, the Department of Emergency Management estimates that after a major earthquake, anywhere from 20,000 to 90,000 housing units may be destroyed or substantially damaged (based on projected impact scenarios driven by events on the Hayward and San Andreas earthquake faults, which are believed to present the greatest risk). Many businesses that provide necessary services to residents will also be displaced. Repair and reconstruction will take several years. The Care and Shelter Plan establishes a framework for the provision of emergency shelter for the general population,

but no specific agency is tasked with the responsibility of interim housing, and no department is specifically tasked with finding temporary space for displaced businesses.

The Mayor and the Board should designate a lead agency, to deal with interim housing and business needs. This agency/ agencies should work in collaboration with state and federal agencies providing post-disaster interim housing and related services to ensure that plans consider City goals and to also mediate between these agencies and the affected communities to assure that the interim housing solutions are adequate, convenient and includes necessary businesses and social services. In order to maintain relationships and connections within the community, interim housing and other facilities should prioritize keeping residents in their neighborhoods and near their pre-disaster homes as much as possible.

POLICY 4.18

Repair damaged neighborhoods in a manner that facilitates resident return and maintains neighborhood community quality.

San Francisco neighborhoods have distinct characters, and often have long-term residents, businesses and institutions. Many of its neighborhoods have distinct cultural identities, and provide the bonds of community for their residents. The City, in cooperation with state and federal agencies, and community-based organizations, must manage rebuilding to maintain neighborhood character and identity, and to ensure that new development does not weaken this quality.

As such, plans should provide opportunities for those who lived in the area to return to new or repaired homes and other facilities there. The City should explore methods of providing rights to reoccupancy for tenants that must vacate their unit because of reconstruction, renovation or improvement.

POLICY 4.19
Consider homelessness in the wake of disaster.

Homelessness, and the risk of becoming homeless, are epidemics already in the Bay Area, and an earthquake will exacerbate housing issues for these populations. The Loma Prieta earthquake damaged homeless shelters and a number of the single-room-occupancy hotels that were an important source of housing for the very poor.

Prior to a disaster the City should inventory and document its pre-existing stock of homeless shelters, single-room-occupancy hotels and transitional living facilities. The City must ensure its post-disaster plans consider major social issues such as homelessness. With many properties destroyed or uninhabitable, it will be even more difficult for this challenged population to find suitable housing after an earthquake. Transition to long-term shelter will be needed for those already homeless, requiring long-term aid and greater assistance than is typically required by disaster victims.

POLICY 4.20
Ensure sufficient workforce housing during reconstruction.

Lack of housing can have a severe impact on economic recovery. If the labor pool has nowhere to live, they are unable to work. Limited housing opportunities, particularly at the lower end of the income spectrum, can curtail the available labor pool for construction during rebuilding, and the absence of permanent housing once businesses have come back online may cause local employees to seek work elsewhere.

The City should partner with business community in restoring workforce housing for the community after a disaster. The most useful assistance local businesses can provide may be financial contributions, whether they are at-large contributions coordinated by the City or direct subsidies offered to their own workers. Some possible methods include the development of employer-directed community land trusts or rental deposit and down payment grants for displaced workers.

Economic Recovery

POLICY 4.21
Have an economic recovery strategy in place before the disaster strikes.

An earthquake or other disaster can have a major impact on the economic landscape of the City. Previous earthquakes have resulted in dramatic losses in office space and subsequent relocation of businesses; in drops in tourism, which is one of San Francisco’s major industries; and disproportionate impacts on small businesses, who have fewer resources with which to recover.

The City should ensure an economic recovery strategy is in place to foster business resumption, and even growth, after a disaster.

In the wake of a disaster, many local businesses, particularly small businesses, will struggle to resume activity. They may have lost assets, necessary facilities or equipment, access to employees and even their customer base. While the City’s own taxed financial resources will limit direct financial assistance from City funds, there are many other things it can do to support businesses.

The City can encourage loan and grant funding from non-government sources, and further affected businesses’ ability to secure loans from local banks or unions by offering government guarantees on loans. Tax incentives, including temporary payroll tax exclusion, sales tax exemption and tax write-offs on replaced business equipment and furniture, and property tax abatements, should be explored to encourage re-investment and growth of businesses.

The economic recovery strategy should prioritize the elements of the City necessary to support business activity, such as the restoration of transit and regional roadways; utilities and services available to the business community, and housing availability for the workforce. The City should work with the business community to develop this strategy, and solicit wide advice on how to facilitate business revitalization. The strategy may include recommendations to hasten the resumption of business such as loans, funding for workplace building repair, and financial assistance. Updates to the City’s Economic Strategy, created by OEWD, should include plans for economic recovery in case of a disaster

POLICY 4.22

Explore expansion of the City’s disaster relief programs.

The City of San Francisco provides financial relief to property owners through tax programs including disaster relief on property taxes, and participation in the state’s Section 69.3 property tax disaster relief program which enables former residents who move to other counties to maintain their previous level of property taxation prior to the disaster.

The City should review other forms of tax relief to affected residents and business owners, including reductions on other fees and taxes. A temporary moratorium on payroll taxes may be one way to get business back up and running directly after a disaster. In the wake of their 2000 earthquake, Napa Valley’s ordinance provided a month-long extension of a number of taxes and fees, including sales taxes; reduced property tax assessment and deferral of property taxes on damaged property, and refunds on taxes paid for unmarketable goods.

Educating citizens about the lack of access to funds in the event of a disaster is critical. The Office of the Treasurer and Tax Collector should be involved in working with financial institutions and educating the public on how to access private funds during a time when typical procedures will not be possible.

POLICY 4.23

Ensure effective use of public emergency funds and expenditures, and recovery of those expenditures.

The Controller’s Office is responsible for tracking expenditures account for the cost of responding to, and recovering from, the disaster. This includes tracking, recording, and reporting on all payments made in response to the emergency, including personnel working during the emergency, outside contractor work, and expenses such as supplies, materials, equipment and vehicle inventory records.

It is important that the tasks that are authorized are relevant and necessary, and that their completion is well-documented by the Controller’s Office and its supporting agencies. This documentation will be critical in submitting disaster reimbursement claims to the State and Federal government, and ensuring support funding is received.

POLICY 4.24

Foster access to capital for individuals, families and businesses.

The Treasurer’s Office should work with financial institutions to prepare for the period immediately following a disaster, encouraging them to allow customers access to money and removing restrictions that might foster this access, such as high fees early withdrawal penalties, restrictions on check cashing and cash limits at ATMs. The Treasurer’s Office should also assist banks and other financial institutions if they need to relocate because of damage, by facilitating the permitting process locally, and doing what it can to allow the opening and closing of branches without the usual paperwork required by financial regulators at the federal level.