



Portland Bureau of Emergency Management

Analysis by Kea Cannon

DIRECTIONS TO DEVELOP (ROUND TWO)

Emergency Response Planning

\$270,082, 2.00 FTE

Direction Language

The Portland Bureau of Emergency Management (PBEM) received a round two Direction to Develop for emergency response planning, requesting the bureau identify the staff and budget required to complete and maintain a full library of emergency response plans.

CBO Analysis

PBEM is requesting 2.0 FTE for a total of \$270,082 in ongoing General Fund resources to add emergency response planners to its Planning & Mitigation program. The bureau estimates that the positions would improve the bureau's performance for the number of emergency response plans kept up to date annually, from 62% in FY 2017-18 to 80% within the first year of adding staff, increasing to 100% in year three. These positions would focus on addressing the growing backlog of plans requiring updates in the first two years, and expand the City's library of emergency response plans in year three and onward. In addition to these bureau plans, the City still needs to develop plans for: fuel and energy/utility restoration, private sector coordination, commodity distribution, volunteer and donation management, and disaster recovery.

As discussed in CBO's analysis of the bureau's FY 2019-20 Requested Budget¹, PBEM has more total FTE and a higher General Fund operating budget than comparable cities, yet has allocated less FTE to Planning & Mitigation. Additionally, the bureau has struggled to keep the existing planning position staffed. Currently, this position is vacant and has been since early December 2018. Over the past five years (from FY 2014-15) this position has experienced turnover and prolonged vacancy². PBEM notes the challenges with turnover are due to the high workload expected of one FTE, and hiring challenges due to the required skills for this position. The bureau notes that with an additional two FTE, the reduced workload burden on the existing employee should help alleviate this issue.

¹ CBO Analysis of PBEM's FY 2019-20 Requested Budget. <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/cbo/article/714548>.

² Vacant nine months in November 2016 through the end of July 2017, and nearly a year vacant: October 2014 thru November 2015.

CBO recognizes that that adding positions to support City emergency response plans will advance the City’s goal of preparing for disasters and creating a more resilient City. However, given the limited availability of General Fund resources, CBO does not recommend funding but that the bureau consider internal realignments to move these planning efforts forward. Please see the Scalability and Trade-Offs section of this analysis for proposed considerations for Council.

CBO Recommendation: \$0 ongoing | 0.00 FTE

Disaster Resilience

\$294,208, 2.00 FTE

Direction Language

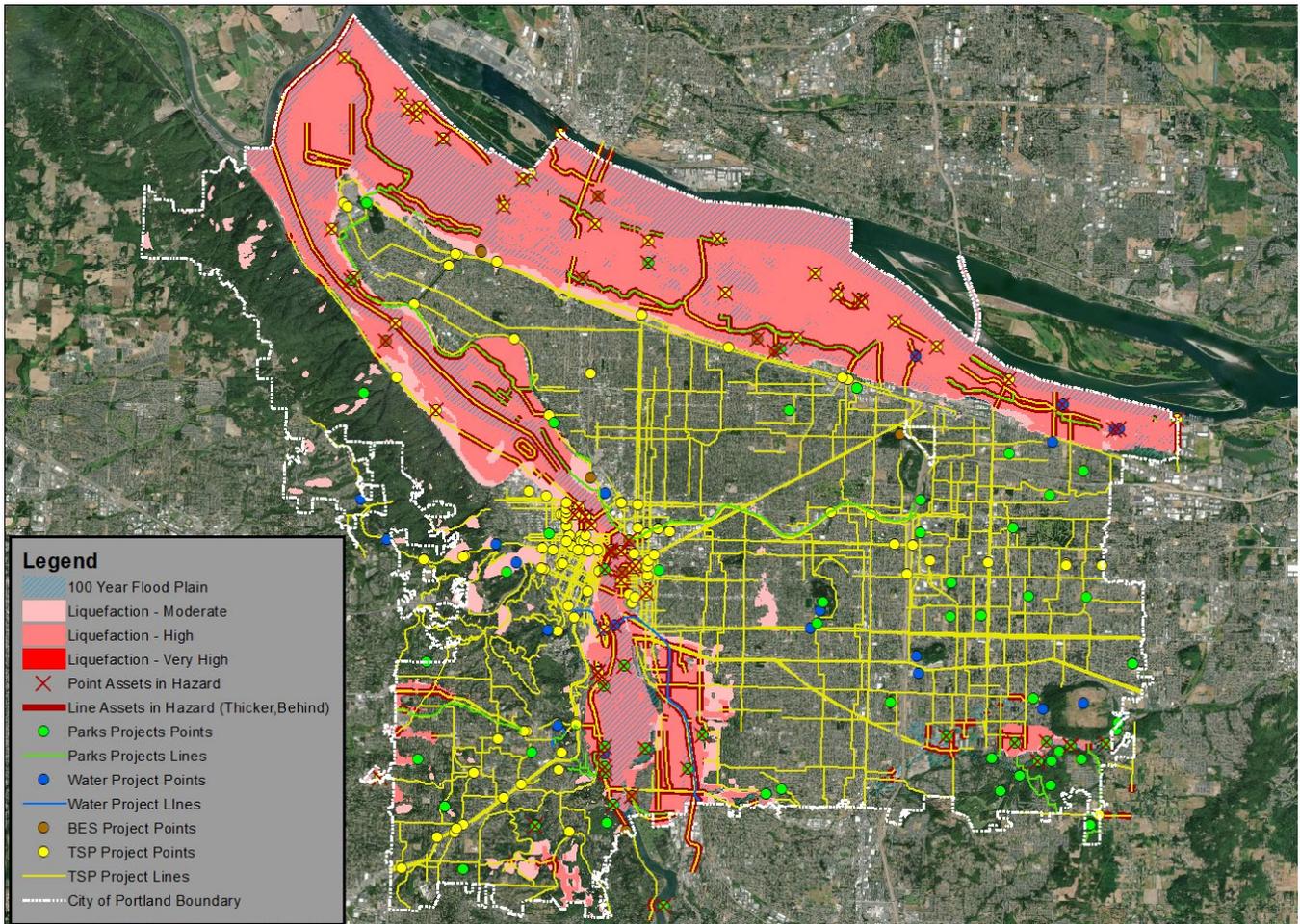
PBEM received a round two Direction to Develop for disaster resiliency planning to mitigate disaster risk citywide. The Direction solicits a funding proposal for disaster resiliency (hereto referred as “resiliency”) planning that will assist Council in identifying at-risk areas, and citywide policy options and initiatives to address these risks.

CBO Analysis

PBEM is requesting 2.0 FTE for a total of \$294,208 in ongoing General Fund resources to address citywide resiliency initiatives, needs, and further policy work. The bureau proposes these positions work collaboratively with City bureaus on resilient infrastructure investments and risk reduction strategies, resiliency planning, and help the City to define resiliency and identify a suite of citywide resiliency performance measures.

The bureau notes that the City has invested \$677.6 million in capital projects related to adding, rehabilitating, and/or maintaining infrastructure in Portland for FY 2018-19. The City’s 2035 plan includes investment in downtown and central eastside. Much of this investment occurs in floodplains and on liquefiable soils (see GIS map, top of next page³), but this is because the City Central and most of City owned assets are located within a hazardous zone along low-lying waterfront. This is compounded by building code standards that will render buildings and infrastructure unusable post-earthquake, resulting in a City less prepared to recover quickly from a natural hazard event. Furthermore, with climate change, Portland is beginning to experience high-reoccurrence interval events such as flooding and wildfires. The bureau identifies these FTE as being a great investment in assisting mitigate these risks.

³ City Budget Office GIS map compilation of 100-year flood and soil liquefaction hazards with planned projects from the Portland Comprehensive Plan for the Bureau of Environmental Services, Portland Parks & Recreation, Bureau of Transportation, and Water bureau from GIS layers available within the Enterprise GIS Hub.



There are some limited resiliency efforts across the City, however this is siloed and fragmented through varying degrees of financial and staff time investment. PBEM participates in the Disaster Recovery and Resiliency Action Group (DRRAG) and attends the City’s Capital Asset Management Group (CAMG) meetings to help ensure the conversation around resilient infrastructure continues. Additionally, the City has a Sustainability Officer and many planning and asset management positions work on resiliency efforts within their respective bureaus. Lastly, the Bureau of Environmental Services and the Portland Water Bureau have completed resiliency plans.

Despite these efforts, most City bureaus do not have resiliency plans and efforts are secondary to primary work responsibilities, and there is a lack of available resources to invest in resiliency needs.

These two FTE would focus on addressing the Citywide resiliency needs and continue the bureau’s work on Unreinforced Masonry Buildings (URMs) in partnership with other City bureaus. Specifically, these positions would formalize DRRAG in City Code, create a policy level resiliency group, continue to work with CAMG, and identify and begin tracking data on Citywide resiliency measures. The goal of these positions is to draft and implement changes to existing policies, and create new policies that increase the City’s resiliency to natural hazards. Many other large US Cities have resiliency officers, planners, and/or policymakers.⁴ Portland currently does not have any classifications for either resiliency planning and/or specifically disaster resiliency planning. PBEM has received verbal support from infrastructure bureaus for these positions.

⁴ 100 Resilient Cities website. Frequently Asked Questions, #3, list of cities. <https://www.100resilientcities.org/faq/>.

CBO notes the lack of available ongoing General Fund resources for FY 2019-20, and the importance of this request. Please see the Scalability and Trade-Offs section of this analysis for considerations for Council.

CBO Recommendation: \$0 ongoing | 0.00 FTE

Scalability and Trade-offs for Council's Consideration

Reallocating Existing FTE

CBO and PBEM discussed possible reallocation of existing FTE to meet the needs of these two decision packages. In FY 2017-18 the bureau and Council added additional resources (\$350,605) and 2.0 FTE for the Neighborhood Emergency Team (NET) program (now within Community Programs) to address a growing backlog of volunteers and addressing racial equity priorities within the NET program. A reduction of FTE to this program risks undoing the progress the bureau has made in increasing diversity of NET volunteers, the volunteer backlog, and community outreach to vulnerable populations.

The Emergency Operations and Administration & Support programs maintain the functionality of the bureau and ensure the Emergency Coordination Center (ECC) is operationally ready for emergency response. Reallocating FTE from either of these areas would result in decreased operational ability.

Should Council decide this work is important, the bureau could reallocate 1.0 FTE from Community Programs to address either decision package request. This would be the least impactful to bureau operations, but would come at the cost of community outreach and progress to equity considerations.

Scalability of Total FTE Requests

PBEM notes while it would greatly utilize these four positions, the positions represent PBEM's long term vision for the bureau. Should Council need to scale this request, the bureau highlights at minimum 1.0 FTE for emergency response planning is its priority. Ideally, one FTE from each decision package would allow the bureau to meet minimum service level demands, address workload backlog, and help the bureau grow.

Reprioritizing Grant Funds for Limited Term FTE

Lastly, PBEM has identified approximately \$100,000 from Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) and from external materials and services that could be reallocated for a limited term position. However, CBO notes this is not a stable revenue source and cautions bureaus against funding ongoing work with one-time resources. The bureau notes that reallocating these funds would result in less services such as the participation in Map Your Neighborhood community efforts, and emergency management community survey work through DHM research, however PBEM believes the bureau would get more value from funding a staff member than from these types of contracted projects.

Summary

The work proposed in these two decision packages is important, meets citywide resiliency goals, and would assist City bureaus meet financial policy around maintaining and protecting the City's infrastructure, support long-term goals, and support the City's equity goals. CBO and the bureau agree that the priority is the need for an additional FTE within Planning & Mitigation for emergency response planning needs. Should Council be unable to identify funding for this need, the bureau will look to restructure positions and FTE allocations across its program areas once a permanent Director is selected (to be determined in the Spring of 2019).