



COUNCIL AGENDA: 3/26/24  
FILE: 24-74752  
ITEM: 2.8

# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Raymond Riordan

**SUBJECT: TERMINATION OF THE  
PROCLAMATION OF THE  
EXISTENCE OF A LOCAL  
EMERGENCY DUE TO STORMS**

**DATE:** March 8, 2024

Approved

Date

3/13/24

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Adopt a resolution terminating the Director of Emergency Services' February 3, 2024, Proclamation of the Existence of a Local Emergency for the public safety threat of high water flows and flooding due to the extreme storms in January and February, 2024.

## **SUMMARY AND OUTCOME**

Pursuant to the San José Municipal Code and the California Government Code, the City Manager, as the Director of Emergency Services, proclaimed the existence of a local emergency due to the threat of high-water flows, potential for drowning, flooding beyond the banks of the waterways in the city, and high winds that could topple trees. This proclamation was ratified by the City Council on February 6, 2024. The Government Code also requires the termination of a Local Emergency when the threat no longer exists.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City established an Incident Management Team on Wednesday, January 31, 2024, in anticipation of flooding from multiple significant atmospheric rivers predicted through the weekend. The multiple storms would produce heavy rains and cause inflows into waterways throughout the city that could result in high stream flows and potential flooding affecting San José. The Incident Management Team was established in response to the National Weather Service Flood Watch and High Wind Warning for the San Francisco Bay Area.

As the National Weather Service predictions grew more alarming, meteorologists identified that the confidence in the potential and type of flooding was higher, which indicates the greater potential of flood, particularly along the Guadalupe River. Because the identified arrival of the

storms was early morning (2 a.m. to 6 a.m.), actions to alert residents needed to occur on Saturday evening.

National Weather Service forecasted two to three inches of rain on the valley floor in San José, from Saturday, February 3, 2024 through Monday, February 5, 2024, and more significant amounts at high elevations, which would result in run-off into the valley, exacerbating flood conditions. The intensity of the storm required more explicit action to alert the public, ensure shelter support, and identify logistics required to support the public.

National Weather Service forecasted a high wind warning in effect throughout the county with southerly winds of 35 to 40 miles per hour with gusts up to 60 miles per hour in valley locations in the greater Bay Area and Central Coast. The winds would create an additional risk of falling trees which can damage homes, cause additional flooding, and pose a real threat to life. Power outages would result from the high sustained winds as well.

### **Incident Management Team and Emergency Operations Center**

Based on worsening conditions, the City increased its response readiness on Saturday, February 3, 2024, by staffing the Emergency Operations Center at 5 p.m. to monitor the conditions and fully activate the Joint Emergency Action Plan with Santa Clara Valley Water District. Field staff deployed by the Department of Public Works and the Department of Transportation provided direct observation of the rising water levels and potential for flooding along the waterways, particularly along the Guadalupe River which was forecast to flood. In consultation with the department directors in the Emergency Operations Center and phone conferences with National Weather Service and Santa Clara Valley Water District, and with evidence by the increasing flood threat, the Director of Emergency Services (City Manager) or designee signed a proclamation of a Local Emergency just before 9 p.m. The action included an evacuation order in areas of concern along the Guadalupe River in order to protect the lives of people living or occupying those areas.

The core responsibility of the Incident Management Team is to protect lives, protect property, protect the environment, communicate as a team and with our partners, and coordinate response within the City and among our many partners while maintaining a focus as one team, acting with compassion in action, and communicating openly, honestly, and directly.

Notification of the pending emergency occurred prior to initiating the Incident Management Team. Communication to the unhoused residents was provided to the encampments along all waterways starting on Monday, January 29, 2024. The Housing Department led the effort to provide notifications to encampments in person. Law enforcement deployed the Long-Range Acoustical Devices with digital recordings in three languages: English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The initial contact and information encouraged the unhoused to move to higher ground and away from the water with the incoming storms. On January 31, 2024, the overnight warming location at Roosevelt Community Center was expanded to accommodate more people and Tully Library expanded its hours. Capacity was adjusted from 60 residents to 90 at Roosevelt. As the weather conditions continued to intensify, on February 3, 2024, additional efforts to notify encampments

and the housed residents near the Guadalupe River were required. In addition to the personal contact and use of the Long-Range Acoustical Devices, door-to-door delivery of the notices were initiated. The City conducted a news briefing, the first Flash Report (out of three) was initiated, and social media broadcasts occurred. Additional shelter options were created at Camden Community Center with the assistance of the American Red Cross with a capacity of up to 100 persons and 20 pets. Fortunately, the need for the shelter at Camden was not required. Expanding the overnight warming location at Roosevelt provided services for up to 73 people and two pets.

A second storm from February 16 through February 20, 2024 required the activation of the Incident Management Team to prepare for potential evacuations. Notices to the encampments took place on Friday and Saturday of the Presidents Day holiday. The Roosevelt overnight warming location was expanded to a capacity of 60 on Sunday night into Monday morning, serving 33 residents and no pets.

No additional significant storms occurred since. With the change in the forecasts and no additional impacts from the storms expected, the threat is no longer present, thus requiring this termination.

## **ANALYSIS**

The authority to Proclaim the Existence of a Local Emergency in San José is vested in the City Council, or in an emergent situation, the Director of Emergency Services (City Manager), or a designated alternate. In this case, the Emergency Operations Center Director, as designated by the City Manager, signed a Proclamation of the Existence of a Local Emergency on February 3, 2024. Pursuant to Title 8, Chapter 8.08 Part 2 Section 8.08.210 of the San José Municipal Code and the California Government Code, Section 8630, a Proclamation of the Existence of a Local Emergency was ratified by the City Council on February 6, 2024 as prescribed by the San José Municipal Code, within seven days. The Government Code and San José Municipal Code also require the City Council to terminate the emergency when the threat no longer exists. As the weather continues to improve, the threat no longer exists.

## **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

Neither the Governor of the State of California nor the President of the United States declared an emergency in Santa Clara County which includes the City of San José. There is no follow up with the Federal Emergency Management Agency or the California Office of Emergency Services.

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## **COORDINATION**

The report was prepared in coordination with the City Attorney's Office, the City Manager's Budget Office, and Parks Recreation, and Neighborhood Services.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Council Agenda website for the March 26, 2024 City Council meeting.

## **COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT**

No commission recommendation or input is associated with this section.

## **CEQA**

Statutory Exempt, Section 15269(c), Emergency Projects undertaken for specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency.

## **PUBLIC SUBSIDY REPORTING**

This item does not include a public subsidy as defined in section 53083 or 53083.1 of the California Government Code or the City's Open Government Resolution.

/s/

RAYMOND RIORDAN

Director, City Manager's Office of  
Emergency Management

For questions, please contact Raymond Riordan, Director of the City Manager's Office of Emergency Management, at [ray.riordan@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:ray.riordan@sanjoseca.gov) or (408) 794-7055.