

Ad hoc committee on storm and incident readiness

Purpose:

The City of La Porte is establishing an ad hoc committee to assess and enhance the City's preparedness for storms and other significant incidents. This committee will focus on identifying strategies to protect residents, infrastructure, and resources to ensure the City maintains a strong preparedness posture to plan for, respond to, and recover from emergencies.

Objectives:

The committee will review the following topics with the intent to make suggestions for improvements, implementation and/or modernization.

- Emergency Preparedness Planning
 - Review and make recommendations to update the City's response plans.
 - Identify potential hazards and conduct risk assessments to preparedness measures.
- Public Communication and Education
 - Review existing public awareness campaigns for pre-incident readiness such as evacuation routes, shelter locations, and emergency procedures.
 - Review the utilization of social media and other communications platforms for real-time updates pre, during and post incident.
 - Review engagement with local small businesses to ensure resilience after incidents.
- Resource Allocation and Logistics
 - Review readiness for deployment of emergency supplies and equipment with the purpose of optimizing logistics for efficiency.
 - Review mutual aid agreements with neighboring cities and regions to enhance resource availability.
- Vulnerable Population Support
 - Review plans for vulnerable groups, including seniors, assisted care facilities and home bound individuals.
 - Review outreach programs to ensure these populations are informed and prepared for storms and other incidents.
 - Review any city partnerships with community organizations that provide targeted assistance to vulnerable populations.
- Evacuation and Shelter Planning
 - Review existing facilities for possible use as cooling stations and/or distribution sites pre and post event and ensure these sites are equipped to handle displaced residents.
 - Review/develop transportation plans for vulnerable populations, including the elderly and disabled, to ensure their safety during evacuations.
- First Responder Coordination
 - Review training and drills for police, fire, and EMS.
 - Review communication and coordination protocols among first responders.
 - Review any rapid deployment strategies for emergency services to ensure swift and effective responses.

- Financial Planning and Insurance
 - Review budget for emergency preparedness and recovery efforts, ensuring financial resources are available when needed.
 - Review existing plans to access federal and state disaster relief funds pre/post event.
- Post-Event Recovery and Assessment
 - Review established procedures for debris removal and damage assessment following an incident.
 - Conduct evaluations of the City's response to incidents, identifying lessons learned and areas for improvement.
- Technology and Innovation
 - Review the existence or possibility to utilize data and predictive modeling to anticipate storm impacts and inform preparedness measures.
 - Review existing and new technologies, including AI and GIS systems, to enhance emergency management capabilities.
 - Review existing Emergency Operations Center (EOC) technology and capabilities.

Committee Composition:

Chuck Engelken, Councilperson, Chair
 Bill Bentley, Councilperson
 Mason Peres, resident
 Jeff Suggs, resident
 Sherri Ditrich, resident

Committee Responsibilities:

- Discuss and evaluate the various aspects of storm and event readiness.
- Engage with external experts, community members, and other stakeholders to gather insights and recommendations.
- Compile and analyze data relevant to the City's preparedness for storms and other incidents.
- Develop a comprehensive report outlining the committee's findings, recommendations, and potential next steps.

Timeline and reporting:

- The committee shall endeavor to hold its initial meeting in September and provide updates at a Council meeting every 30-60 days.
- Every effort will be made in this regular reporting rhythm to aid Councilpersons in being prepared as early as possible to consider items related to the committee's work at the 2025 budget retreat.
- The Committee will present Council with a final report, presented by the committee chair, at or before the March 24, 2025, Council meeting, including:
 - A detailed assessment of current storm and incident readiness,
 - Recommendations for enhancing preparedness across the outlined goals,
 - Action plan for implementing the committee's recommendations, and
 - Any dissenting opinions.

Meetings:

- The committee is expected to meet at least monthly and in adherence with the provisions of the Texas Open Meetings Act.
- The committee is expected to identify at least two points in its work where public feedback should be sought and considered, in addition to input received during *Public Comment* at meetings. The committee should work with City team members to best engage the public, considering a variety of outreach methods and seeking response from all stakeholder groups. The material collected will be included in the committee's deliberations and a synopsis of the feedback covered in the reports to the Council.
- Draft meeting minutes will be provided promptly to committee members after each meeting and generally handled as for the Council and Council committees.

Support:

- Committee members will have access to City planning documents, financial reports, and legal advice, as necessary and appropriate.

Legal and Ethical Guidelines:

- The committee will operate within legal parameters and adhere to ethical standards, including:
 - Transparency: Open meetings and accessible records.
 - Conflict of Interest Policies: Members must disclose any potential conflicts of interest.
 - Confidentiality: Sensitive information will be handled with appropriate confidentiality.