


REPORT OF THE CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

DATE: March 19, 2025

TO: Honorable Members of the City Council

FROM: Sharon M. Tso 
Chief Legislative Analyst

Council File No. 25-0006-S15
Assignment No. 25-01-0061

SUBJECT: Pacific Palisades Long-Term Recovery Plan

SUMMARY

At its meeting of January 14, 2025, the Council adopted Special Motion 15 (Park – Blumenfield) instructing the Chief Legislative Analyst (CLA) to report in 30 days on Long-Term Recovery Plans implemented in other cities and regions following destructive wildfires, including but not limited to the cities of Santa Rosa, Paradise, and Maui County. The Motion states that the report should examine common themes, challenges, and make recommendations for the creation of a long-term recovery plan for the Pacific Palisades.

Several themes are consistent among the long-term recovery planning in jurisdictions recovering from wildfires. Although the recovery priorities and contexts surrounding the fires in Maui, Santa Rosa, and Paradise differ, the following themes are present in each recovery plan:

1. Establishing dedicated recovery leadership
2. Placing community engagement at the center
3. Aligning with Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF)
4. Prioritizing accessible housing, hazard mitigation, and community resilience
5. Identifying project timelines and implementation phases

The Emergency Management Department (EMD) develops and updates the City's Emergency Operations Plan and accompanying Master Procedures and Annexes. The Recovery Annex to the City's Emergency Operations Plan was updated in October 2020. The Recovery Annex supports the Emergency Operations Plan to facilitate recovery following significant incidents. The Annex is intended to describe overall citywide response functions and capabilities. The Annex tasks the Local Disaster Recovery Manager with leading the development of recovery plans. The Local Disaster Recovery Manager takes on the roles of the Disaster Recovery Coordinator as specified in the FEMA's NDRF¹. The City's Local Disaster Recovery Manager/Disaster Recovery Coordinator is James Featherstone, who previously served as General Manager of EMD and interim Fire Chief at the Los Angeles Fire Department.

¹ This is the first of many instances throughout the report where multiple terms may refer to the same concept depending on the source document. Terminological discrepancies are not limited to the agencies sourcing the document, but also may occur in new editions of the same document. Instances are noted, where applicable, and this report tends toward adopting the current language used by FEMA. EMD has also updated its terminology in most cases to be consistent with FEMA guidance.

This report also includes a brief overview of long-term recovery planning guidance, describes the recovery planning process in other jurisdictions, and examines some commonalities among them. Some of the emergent themes identified in this report—the need to establish recovery leadership and alignment with the FEMA’s NDRF—are already addressed in the Recovery Annex. The Recovery Annex delineates recovery responsibilities and activities into the following Recovery Support Functions in accordance with the NDRF: Community Planning and Capacity Building; Economic; Health and Social Services; Housing; Infrastructure; and Natural and Cultural Resources.

At the February 6, 2025 meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee for LA Recovery, CLA staff provided a verbal update on the findings made pursuant to Special Motion 15. Our Office stated our intention to confirm the status of Recovery Annex implementation. EMD informed our Office that they are proceeding with implementation of the Recovery Annex and are in the process of forming the Long Term Recovery Group and its constitutive elements.

On February 14, 2025, a Motion (CF: 25-0006-S68, Park – Rodriguez) was introduced instructing EMD, the Emergency Operations Organization's Recovery and Reconstruction Division, and the Local Disaster Recovery Manager to report quarterly, in coordination with relevant departments, regarding the implementation of the Recovery Annex for the January 2025 wildfires. The Motion also included instructions to include the CLA and community-based representatives from Council District 11 on the Long-Term Recovery Group (LTRG); and to report on its contracts to assist with recovery efforts.

EMD staff communicated that implementation of the Recovery Annex is underway, including identifying departmental obligations, EMD staff, and consultant support for the LTRG and Recovery Support Groups. At the March 18, 2025 meeting of the Budget and Finance Committee, EMD reported that they have contracted with Hagerty Consulting for planning, response, recovery, mitigation, financial management, operations, and community engagement services. EMD stated that the work conducted under this contract will result in the creation of a Long-Term Recovery Plan.

At the time of the release of this report, the aforementioned Motion (CF: 25-0006-S68) has not yet been adopted by Council. The instructions of that Motion are consistent with the CLA’s position that long-term recovery planning proceed in the manner outlined by the Recovery Annex and be augmented on an as-needed basis through policy direction from the City Council.

RECOMMENDATION

Note and file the report inasmuch as it is provided for informational purposes only.

BACKGROUND

Disasters and Ensuing Plans

Santa Rosa (Sonoma County)

The October 2017 Tubbs Fire in Northern California burned parts of Napa, Sonoma and Lake County, and killed at least 22 people, destroyed 5,643 structures, caused \$1.3B in damages, and burned over 36,000 acres. The City of Santa Rosa was most heavily impacted by the fire. The

County of Sonoma released a Recovery and Resiliency Framework in December 2018. The City of Santa Rosa did not generate its own framework or strategic plan, but responded to the Recovery and Resiliency Framework on a joint City/County website. The Sonoma County Recovery and Resiliency Framework was prepared by the County Office of Recovery and Resiliency, which was established in December 2017.

Town of Paradise

The November 2018 Camp Fire in Butte County killed 85 people, destroyed 18,804 structures, caused \$16.7B in damages, and burned over 150,000 acres. The Town of Paradise was largely destroyed on the first day of the Camp Fire, November 8, 2018. Paradise released a Long-Term Community Recovery Plan in 2019, and released a progress update with new priorities in 2022. Paradise's Long Term Community Recovery Plan was conducted by Urban Design Architects as the result of a gift from the Butte Strong Fund.

Maui County

In August 2023, Hawai'i experienced several wildfires, most notably in Lahaina, on the western coast of the island of Maui. The Lahaina fire killed at least 102 people, destroyed 2,200 structures, and caused \$5.5B in damages. The County of Hawai'i released a Lahaina Long-Term Recovery Plan (Lahaina LTRP) in December 2024. Maui County staff reports that FEMA acquired a contractor through its Community Assistance program to develop the Lahaina LTRP with guidance from the Maui County Office of Recovery and Planning Department.

Pacific Palisades

To date, the Palisades Fire, which began on January 7, 2025, has killed at least 12 people, destroyed 6,380 structures, burned over 23,000 acres, and forced evacuation for over 105,000 people. Damage estimates are still outstanding, but preliminary estimates exceed those of the aforementioned fires.

City of Los Angeles Emergency Operations Plan

The Recovery Annex (Annex) supports the City of Los Angeles Emergency Operations Plan to facilitate recovery following significant incidents. The Annex is intended to describe overall citywide response functions and capabilities. The Annex tasks the Local Disaster Recovery Manager (LDRM) with [leading] the development of recovery plans and [ensuring] that they are publicly supported, actionable, and feasible based on available funding and capacity.

The Annex categorizes recovery into three phases: short-term, intermediate, and long-term. The intermediate period is the transition between short and long-term recovery when the Emergency Operations Center begins to move from response-focused activities towards demobilization, while the Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG) is activated. Long-term recovery aims to move the community and government to self-sufficiency, sustainability, and resilience. It includes reconstruction of damaged or destroyed social, economic, natural, and built environments.

The Annex prescribes that a Business Operations Center also be established to strengthen the partnership between the City and the private, education, and faith sectors, and Nongovernmental Organizations during an emergency, and to facilitate communication between the public and

private sectors in all phases of emergency management. During recovery, the Business Operations Center will exchange information with the private sector.

The Annex prescribes that the LTRG consists of a core group of departments, the Disability Access and Function Needs Technical Specialist, and other community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster representatives. Part of the LTRG's responsibilities include ensuring that the recovery plan, programs, and progress are clearly communicated to the public; ensuring that resources and staffing are provided in a timely manner to accomplish actions; and identifying and prioritizing long-term needs and projects according to the goals and priorities of the reconstruction projects identified through community discussion.

The Annex delineates recovery responsibilities and activities into Recovery Support Functions (RSFs) in accordance with FEMA's National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF). EMD currently uses the term "Recovery Support Groups" to reflect that each RSF has its own functional working group, but the terms are largely interchangeable. In both cases, RSF or Recovery Support Group may be used to refer either to the function or the group working on a given set of recovery responsibilities and activities. This report will proceed with using "RSF" for the sake of consistency. In some cases, which are noted, EMD may use updated language in their communications to align with FEMA terminological shifts that have occurred since the adoption of the October 2020 Recovery Annex. The six RSFs are:

- Community Planning and Capacity Building
- Economic
- Health and Social Services
- Housing
- Infrastructure Systems
- Natural and Cultural Resources

The Recovery Annex provides an explanation of the goals of each RSF and some issues for consideration. Attachment 1 to this report includes a chart listing each City department's RSF responsibility areas. The Recovery Annex was approved before the creation of the Community Investment for Families Department, the Youth Development Department, and the Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department. Each RSF will participate in all stages of the recovery process. Some of the issues or considerations highlighted in the Recovery Annex may not directly apply to the development of a long-term recovery plan for Pacific Palisades.

Recovery Support Function #1: Community Planning and Capacity Building

In the December 2024 Third Edition to the NDRF, the Community Planning and Capacity Building RSF was replaced with "Community Assistance". In the NDRF Second Edition (2016), the Community Planning and Capacity Building RSF unifies and coordinates expertise and assistance programs from across the Federal Government as well as nongovernment partners to aid local and tribal governments in building their local capabilities to effectively plan for and manage recovery and engage the whole community in the recovery planning process. The new mission is largely similar—to coordinate assistance and support from across the federal government and nongovernmental partners to help [local governments] effectively plan for and manage their recovery.

Insofar as the City's Recovery Annex is concerned, the Community Planning and Capacity Building RSF involves issues such as:

- The type and extent of damage will impact the different ways in which critical infrastructure can be enhanced, improved, and strengthened.
- Current building and infrastructure standards, as well as potential repair and building options that can be evaluated and reassessed to create safer conditions and improve the City. Additionally, the City will monitor building permits and ensure that appropriate accessible building requirements are met.
- Stakeholders may need to meet regularly to determine existing agreements or partnerships that could be accessed or leveraged.
- Communicating recovery plans early and often to legislators, policymakers, politicians, and the public can increase cooperation and speed recovery. Communications should include information about the status of reconstruction and rebuilding processes and plans.

Recovery Support Function #2: Economic

The Recovery Annex notes that economic recovery is critical following a disaster. This RSF prioritizes continuity of services, sustained housing, business assistance, workforce development, job creation and retention, among others. Departments are responsible for tracking all expenses and ensuring that disaster-related expenditures are easily distinguished from regular, ongoing activities for the sake of State and Federal reimbursement.

Recovery Support Function #3: Health and Social Services

This RSF was renamed "Health, Education, and Human Services" in the Third Edition of the NDRF. Health and social services are to be restored as quickly as possible to meet ongoing and emerging post-disaster community needs. This includes working with the County to protect mental, behavioral, and physical health of the community as well as social recovery activities such as housing assistance, animal services, social services, and community involvement. The Recovery Annex prescribes that the City will establish Local Assistant Centers, which are facilities at which individuals, families, and businesses can access disaster assistance programs and services from a variety of sources. There is a separate Local Assistance Center Annex.

Recovery Support Function #4: Housing

The Annex notes that recovery will be limited if most displaced residents cannot return to their homes. After one year, the rate of return to a community drops to less than 10 percent for those still living outside the community. The economic loss of prolonged displacement, including tax revenue, compounds problems incurred during the recovery process.

Some issues considered under this section include:

- Available permanent housing options
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and FEMA integration into the City's RSF plans
- Options for temporary housing programs and enabling equal access to these programs
- Identifying temporary large group housing options to replace emergency shelters
- Long-term housing reconstruction and relocation strategies
- Systems to expedite inspections and permit reviews to help return residents to homes

Recovery Support Function #5: Infrastructure Systems

Infrastructure systems restoration is one of the top recovery priorities for disaster recovery. Building assessment activity may continue through both short- and long-term recovery phases, which may result in significant demand for plan review, code interpretation, and construction inspection.

The following (and other) issues are highlighted in this section of the Annex:

- The approval process to safely reopen food, restaurant and cold-storage facilities may be streamlined.
- Cooperative agreements with the private sector on supply chains and production facilities will expedite recovery.
- Regional water boards can coordinate to ensure resources are being used to expedite potable water restoration.
- Debris may impact and clog drainage systems.
- Alternative waste management methods may be necessary.
- People with disabilities and others with access functional needs may be more adversely impacted by the loss of critical infrastructure. The speed with which these services are restored can affect the ability of some people to maintain their independence and health and remain safe during the recovery process, particularly with respect to the restoration of power, water, and public access.

Recovery Support Function #6: Natural and Cultural Resources

The City and partner agencies will work jointly to conduct, manage, facilitate, or support activities to address environmental concerns and to preserve and/or rebuild historical sites. The City will also coordinate with the State Historic Preservation Office and State Natural Resources Agencies.

The following issues may impact recovery and will be considered:

- Environmental and historic regulations, especially preservation laws.
- Water supply, water quality, and air quality.
- The trash hierarchy for solid waste management and recycling. Further considerations and plans are discussed in the Debris Management Plan.
- Procedures for hazardous materials identification, demolition, and abatement may need to be developed.
- A regular process for reevaluating impacts and conducting ongoing assessments will mitigate long-term impacts.
- Air quality control may need to be monitored. Many of the resources and systems to do so are in the private sector.

Many departments and agencies may have assignments throughout the recovery phase in addition to normal duties. As operations transition from response to recovery, determination of which staff will have recovery mission assignments will be identified. The Annex prescribes that EMD will outline how operations will transition to the LTRG.

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) Guidance

In July 2024, the CalOES Recovery Support Function Division updated its Post-Disaster Long-Term Recovery Plan Guide (Guide) to support swift recovery planning after a disaster. The CalOES RSFs are consistent with the aforementioned FEMA RSFs. The State and Federal Coordinating Agencies corresponding to each RSF are noted below:

Recovery Support Function	State Agency	Federal Agency
Community Planning and Capacity Building	Governor's Office of Planning and Research	Federal Emergency Management Agency
Economic	Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development	Department of Commerce
Health and Social Services	California Health and Human Services Agency	Department of Health and Human Services
Housing	Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency	Department of Housing and Urban Development
Infrastructure Systems	Governor's Office of Emergency Services	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Natural and Cultural Resources	California Natural Resources Agency	Department of Interior

The Guide notes that jurisdictions may augment local capacity through State or Federal planning support, regional planning organizations, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, the California Strategic Growth Council, or consultants. CalOES identifies eight planning activities that staff may decide to augment with outside resources:

- Resource/Funding Identification
- Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination
- Community Resilience Planning
- Data Management and Analysis
- Monitoring and Evaluating
- Documentation and reporting
- Training and Capacity Building
- Lessons Learned and Best Practices

The Guide includes a summary of common plan elements, including: Acknowledgements; Introduction, Purpose, and Scope; Situation Overview; Community Engagement, including the identification of impacts and recovery needs corresponding to the six RSFs; Recovery Projects List, including descriptions, timelines, estimated costs, action items; and Implementation and Maintenance, including roles and responsibilities, and plan monitoring.

Community engagement is central to the success of long-term recovery. CalOES notes that residents, businesses, and community organizations should be engaged early and often in the recovery process to ensure community buy-in. Each of the recovery plans discussed in this report began with significant community involvement. CalOES provides surveys, focus

groups/listening sessions, visioning sessions, and town hall meetings as examples of community engagement opportunities.

CalOES recommends compiling a list of disaster impacts that roughly correspond to the RSFs. This will help inform the development of a community Recovery Needs Assessment to help identify opportunities for recovery projects. The CalOES guidance provides a series of questions for each RSF to collect data to inform recovery planning, which are included in Attachment 2.

Long-Term Recovery Plans in Other Regions

Maui County

The Lahaina LTRP was released in December 2024, roughly 15 months after the Lahaina Fire. As previously stated, the Lahaina LTRP was developed by FEMA's Community Assistance RSF contractor, with input from the County of Maui Office of Recovery and Planning Department. The County of Maui established the Office of Recovery in December 2023 to coordinate recovery efforts and manage the involvement of various levels of government and nongovernmental organizations.

The Lahaina LTRP includes a community overview; wildlife impacts on the community; purpose; recovery planning process; community engagement; recovery principles; priority projects split into short-term, mid-term, and long-term; next steps; and appendices. The Lahaina LTRP was preceded by a November 2023 Maui County Wildfires Initial Recovery Needs Assessment and a Maui County Recovery Framework. Maui County notes that the Lahaina LTRP is different from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery Action Plan insofar as the the Lahaina LTRP is intended to create a framework to guide the post-disaster planning process and activities amongst local, State, and federal partners, while the CDBG Disaster Recovery Action plan is focused on identifying funding gaps and unmet funding needs for projects to restore housing, infrastructure, and the economy.

The Maui County Recovery Framework provided seven guiding principles that informed the Lahaina LTRP: community led, government supported; individuals and family; leadership and local primacy; engaged partnerships and inclusiveness; unity of effort; safety, resilience, and sustainability; and psychological and emotional recovery. These were eventually used to inform the Lahaina LTRP priority principles: prioritizing repopulation; protecting historic and cultural resources; honoring community; hazard mitigation and response; and rebuilding with resilience. The Recovery Framework, like the City's Recovery Annex, is modeled after the NDRF RSFs. The RSFs were implemented in Maui County in October 2023. Going forward, Maui County plans to replace RSFs with working groups to implement the priority projects identified in the document.

A Lahaina Community Engagement Summary report that details Maui County's approach to community engagement for the Lahaina LTRP is publicly available. According to that report, 3,833 Lahaina residents and stakeholders participated in 11 different community engagement activities and events from September 2023 to July 2024. Maui County notes that online engagement opportunities were important to reach survivors who relocated off of the island. The report explains that qualitative data was collected through a Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities (SWO) survey, and quantitative data was collected through collating the frequency

of key topics and themes highlighted and documented during the events. The report notes that, while frequency is quantified, it may not necessarily correspond to the value placed on a topic.

Town of Paradise

The Town of Paradise's Long-Term Community Recovery Plan (Paradise LTRP) was released in June 2019, roughly nine months after the Camp Fire. As previously stated, the Town of Paradise received planning consulting work from Urban Design Associates for the Paradise LTRP. In 2022, the Town released an updated plan reflecting progress and new priorities.

The Paradise LTRP includes an overview of the disaster; community engagement; letters of support; a recovery plan overview, including vision, goals, and projects; an overview of recovery projects grouped by goals (Make Paradise Safer, Rebuild Paradise's Range of Housing and Welcome Residents Home, Rebuild Paradise's Economy, Make Paradise Better, Make Paradise Greener); project descriptions grouped by lead (Town or Partners); and appendices focused on community engagement, including results of the SWO analysis, a dot exercise where stakeholders could indicate project preference, and survey results.

The Town of Paradise reports that its development of the Paradise LTRP included four steps:

1. Relieving Pressure - Helping residents understand how to rebuild their homes. The Town created a pamphlet, "Rebuilding and Adapting My Home," which included information on fire zones, steps in the rebuilding process, an overview of California's Wildland-Urban Interface requirements, defensible space rules, an overview of manufactured housing, adaptation guidelines for homes that survived, an outline of the broader planning process, and a list of resources.
2. Listening - The Town started with a SWO Analysis and followed with resident and stakeholder listening sessions, which were then followed up by consultant reports to the community with the consultant's understanding of the community feedback, vision, and goals.
3. Testing - Continued stakeholder and community engagement by communicating project proposals grouped into one of the five aforementioned goals, which were developed during the "Listening" phase. These were made available through public meetings, online surveys, and Facebook Live recordings. Residents and stakeholders identified projects they did or did not support to communicate project preference.
4. Deciding - After the 14-week public engagement process, the Paradise LTRP was developed and released with a series of actionable and implementable recovery projects to guide the recovery process.

The Paradise community feedback process included seven listening sessions and community meetings to solicit feedback and input from residents that would guide the development of the Community Vision, Community goals, and the Recovery Projects. Community engagement for the Paradise LTRP began in February 2019 with the SWO analysis, roughly three months after the fire. Paradise's SWO process included both verbal responses and an exercise where residents placed dots on a map of Paradise to indicate strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. These meetings were also attended by FEMA, CalOES, and county government representatives. The Town hosted three Open House meetings staffed by CalOES, FEMA, economic development specialists, school representatives, utility providers, and affordable housing providers to answer

resident questions. The Planning team began hosting community workshops in April. In the first of these, residents could review the information collected in the previous meetings. At the next April meeting, residents were presented with recovery project boards and allowed to provide feedback using dots to indicate agreement or disagreement with projects. Based on this feedback, updated project proposals were presented at two Town Council meetings before being finalized for the Paradise LTRP, which was released in June 2019.

The 2022 update to the Paradise LTRP features a list of the original projects and their status, either as completed, in progress, superseded by other projects, or retired due to irrelevance. It also includes new project proposals to achieve the community's vision.

The 2022 update includes an appendix with community feedback, primarily (82%) from residents, previous residents planning to return, or future residents. Respondents were asked to rate their view on rebuilding and the pace of rebuilding out of 10, to which they responded 5.8 and 5.5 respectively. The appendix also includes 36 projects submitted by the Town for CDBG Disaster Recovery funding in the following categories: Evacuation Routes; Missing Road Segment; Interconnect Path System; Sustainable Stormwater and Drainage; Education Program; Long Dead-End Streets; Walkable Downtown; Fuels Management Plan; Updated Rebuilding Codes/Standards; Emergency Notification; Planning and Zoning; Standing Burnt Tree Removal; and Sewer System.

Santa Rosa/Sonoma County

While the City of Santa Rosa did not generate its own framework or strategic plan, it did provide feedback and responses to the Sonoma County Recovery and Resiliency Framework (RRF) through a jointly managed City/County website. The City of Santa Rosa does maintain dashboards with funding and completion status for FEMA Public Assistance Projects with Approved Costs to Repair/Recover, Resilient City Recovery Maps, and Resilient City Recovery Reporting, but there is not a single, unified document that is analogous to the LTRPs for the County of Maui or Town of Paradise. The first of these dashboards includes a list of funding requests by FEMA categorization (debris removal; emergency protective measures; roads and bridges; water control facilities; buildings and equipment; utilities; parks, recreational facilities, and other items; and direct administrative costs). The Resilient City Recovery Maps feature parcel-level data on the permit status, progress of structure rebuild, the total dwelling units at each parcel, and zoning information. The Resilient City Recovery Reporting Dashboard provides a quantitative overview of this same information.

The Sonoma County RRF states that it is not “a detailed plan with steps for implementation,” but it contains some elements of the other LTRPs, and guidance that can be beneficial for the creation of an LTRP. The RRF includes a description of the Sonoma Complex Fires; County and Community Response; an overview of the framework; community engagement; strategic areas of recovery and resiliency; next steps; and appendices with potential actions, community impact data, and a guide to online recovery and resiliency framework documents. The RRF was developed by the Sonoma County Office of Recovery and Resiliency (ORR). The ORR was established in December 2017, roughly two months after the wildfires. In 2020 the ORR was transitioned to be part of the Policy, Grants, and Special Projects division. Former ORR staff reported in a communication that the RRF was prepared by five analysts and a Deputy County

Administrator with assistance from a consultant who assisted New Orleans with preparation of a recovery plan after Hurricane Katrina. The former ORR staff reiterated the central importance of community involvement in recovery planning.

The RRF draws on the FEMA NDRF. The Framework combines two of the RSFs as strategic areas—Community Preparedness and Infrastructure. The RRF includes the following core principles: social equity, pre-disaster recovery planning, leadership and local primacy, engaged partnerships, timeliness and flexibility, resilience and sustainability, unity of effort, and psychological and emotional recovery.

The ORR reports that its primary strategies for gathering community input included: County Board of Supervisors workshops; community groups and stakeholder meetings; recovery planning community meetings; an online survey; and input collected by email and through other community surveys. Each strategic area—Housing; Natural Resources and Economic Development; Community Preparedness and Infrastructure; and Safety Net Services—had its own Recovery Workshop. The County also hosted seven community meetings to share a draft of the RRF, two of which were conducted in Spanish. There were also online and in-person surveys, and an email address was established to field community input.

The section of the RRF covering Strategic Areas includes background; challenges and opportunities; community input related to that area; goals; proposed actions and timelines associated with the goals; and completed actions associated with the goals. The action items are not, in most cases, fully fleshed out projects, but provide direction for accomplishing the goals set out for each Strategic Area.

The RRF also includes a Next Steps section covering funding and implementation approaches, including approval, planning, coordination, data tracking, performance indicators, progress reporting, and updating the framework.

Common Themes

Several themes are consistent among the long-term recovery planning in jurisdictions recovering from wildfires. Although the recovery priorities and contexts surrounding the fires in Maui, Santa Rosa, and Paradise differ, the following themes are present in each recovery plan:

1. Establishing dedicated recovery leadership
2. Placing community engagement at the center
3. Aligning with FEMA's NDRF
4. Prioritizing accessible housing, hazard mitigation, and community resilience
5. Identifying project timelines and implementation phases

Recovery Leadership

The Counties of Maui and Sonoma both established offices following destructive wildfires—the Maui County Office of Recovery and the Sonoma County Office of Recovery and Resiliency. The Town of Paradise did not establish a dedicated Office, but utilized its resources and leveraged the expertise of Urban Design Associates and experts in numerous fields.

The City of Los Angeles Emergency Operations Plan Recovery Annex provides for the establishment of a LTRG formed by the Local Disaster Recovery Manager. The Annex states that the LTRG will consist of a core group of departments, the Disabilities Access and Functional Needs Technical Specialist, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, non-governmental organizations, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster agency representatives, and other agencies based on the nature of the incident. The LTRG should serve as the City's dedicated recovery leadership.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is placed at the center of all phases of the long-term recovery planning process. Each jurisdiction's community engagement strategy began with an SWO analysis to help identify community needs as a result of the disaster. This process is consistent with CalOES and FEMA guidance on long-term recovery planning. The data gathered from the SWO analyses were typically distilled into themes, visions, or goals to which each prospective project would be connected. In each case, jurisdictions sought community engagement through a host of methods aimed at faithfully capturing priorities of the entire community, rather than a subsection of it. Community engagement is consistent throughout the creation of these LTRPs; those developing the plans would often recapitulate their understanding of the community's position on matters during the process to ensure common understanding. Each LTRP also includes plans for community follow-up during and after project implementation. In some cases, this includes updates to the plans; in others, it involves status reporting.

It is imperative that the City's recovery planning feature a comprehensive community engagement strategy that adequately captures the goals of the community, sourced from an accurate sample of the community. The LTRG organization chart that EMD shared with this Office includes several Public Information Officers and Public Relations Specialists. Additional information on the exact nature of the community outreach that will be conducted to inform the forthcoming LTRP is needed.

Alignment with the National Disaster Recovery Framework

Both Maui County's Recovery Framework and Sonoma County's Recovery and Resiliency Framework are explicitly modeled after FEMA's NDRF. The Town of Paradise's LTRP does not clearly reference the NDRF, but the guiding categories (Welcoming, Safer, Stronger, Better, and Greener) contain elements that are consistent with the RSFs in the NDRF.

The City's Recovery Annex is explicitly based on FEMA's NDRF. As stated above, a new Third Edition of the NDRF has been issued since the adoption of the City's Recovery Annex, but the RSFs are still largely similar ("Community Planning and Capacity Building" was changed to "Community Assistance" and "Health and Social Services" was changed to "Health, Education, and Social Services." It does not appear that anything present in the new edition of the NDRF is neglected by the Recovery Annex. It would be prudent to update departmental responsibilities in the Recovery Annex to reflect the obligations of the newer departments, especially those branched off from the Housing and Community Investment Department and Economic Development Department, i.e. the Community Investments for Families Department and Youth Development Department; and identify the Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department's responsibilities.

Housing Access, Hazard Mitigation, and Community Resilience

Each LTRP prioritizes the construction of affordable (or attainable) housing. Housing affordability is the most significant community priority in nearly every instance. Post-disaster housing shortages can lead to escalated rents and property costs, and rebuilding can become prohibitively expensive. Housing availability and accessibility is one of the most significant roadblocks to repopulating impacted areas. Hazard mitigation and community resilience are also central priorities in each LTRP. Communities want housing to be attainable, but also want it to be protected to the extent possible from future disaster. The LTRPs include projects that focus on hazard mitigation, improved emergency notification systems, and adopting stronger building codes.

The Palisades Fire destroyed many types of housing, including significant stocks of affordable housing. At the January 22, 2025 meeting of the Housing and Homelessness Committee, the General Manager of the Housing Department reported that preliminary data showed that at least 56 Rental Stabilization Ordinance properties containing 751 units were destroyed in the Palisades Fire. The City's Recovery Annex notes that the rate of return drops below 10 percent of those still living outside of a community one year after being displaced. The Housing RSF of the Recovery Annex covers responsibilities and obligations related to housing, including an assessment of available permanent housing options, integration with other agencies, identifying temporary housing solutions, expedited permitting, and more. As noted above, the Recovery Annex should be updated to clarify departmental roles in cases where the former Housing and Community Investment Department was identified as a lead.

Project Timelines and Implementation

Projects identified in the LTRPs are always organized by either priority or implementation timeline. Projects should be organized with project descriptions, timelines, estimated costs, action items, roles and responsibilities, and monitoring. The projects should be guided by emergent themes from the community engagement process.

Challenges

Some of the main challenges include: lack of existing recovery planning; difficulties with community engagement; limited internal resources; and, ensuring long-term resilience while meeting immediate needs.

Lack of Existing Recovery Planning

In some cases, recovery efforts are slowed down by a lack of existing recovery planning or the need to establish a new, centralized recovery body. EMD's work on the Recovery Annex gives the City an important head start on its recovery efforts by eliminating the need for establishing a new recovery framework post-disaster.

Community Engagement Difficulties

Some notable difficulties with community engagement include: inability to obtain community consensus on goals or opportunities; failure to secure community buy-in on projects to address community needs or concerns; and, difficulties collecting feedback from all sections of the community. In a review of the participatory recovery planning by the City of Galveston after

Hurricane Ike, Dr. Sarah Hamideh identified the following challenges: an overly large recovery committee; a compressed deadline that negated the possibility of careful reflection; physical displacement [as a barrier to providing input] and a history of distrust that limited the involvement of marginalized and socially vulnerable residents; and, limited involvement from planners, technical experts, and decision makers which undermined deliberation over conflicting ideas. These challenges again highlight the importance of a robust community engagement strategy.

Limited Internal Resources

Disaster recovery planning is a monumental effort that requires coordination among many agencies across multiple layers of government. For the City of Los Angeles, departmental obligations are identified in the Recovery Annex. EMD reports that Hagerty Consulting is providing planning, response, recovery, mitigation, financial management, operations, community engagement. It is important to ensure that recovery responsibilities are efficiently distributed and not duplicated. At best, duplication of responsibilities will result in redundancies; at worst this can result in conflicts or inconsistencies that erode public trust and undermine recovery efforts. The City should make use of the significant work devoted to the creation of its Emergency Operations Plan and accompanying Annexes, which have carefully laid out departmental roles and responsibilities. EMD should clarify how it is working with outside agencies involved in the recovery.

Long-Term Resilience and Immediate Needs

As stated above, the likelihood that a displaced person returns to a community goes down the longer that person remains displaced. It is important to take the immediate actions necessary to enable community members to return home. The need to rebuild quickly can, at times, be at odds with the desire to rebuild resiliently. As part of the considerations in the Housing RSF, the City should ensure that community members receive guidance on safe, resilient housing practices. The Town of Paradise, for example, prepared a pamphlet “Rebuilding and Adapting My Home,” which included information on fire zones, steps in the rebuilding process, an overview of California’s Wildland-Urban Interface Requirements, defensible space rules, overview of manufactured housing, adaptation guidelines for surviving homes, an outline of the broader planning process, and a list of resources. Swift rebuilding does not have to be in opposition to resilient rebuilding, provided the City works to educate the public.



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Attachments: Attachment 1 - Recovery Annex Departmental Recovery Support Functions

Attachment 2 - CalOES Recovery Support Function Data Collection Question List

Attachment 3 - Initialisms Glossary

Recovery Annex Departmental Recovery Support Functions

Department	Community Planning and Capacity Building	Economic	Health and Social Services	Housing	Infrastructure	Natural and Cultural Resources
Aging	x	x	x	x		
Airports		x			x	x
Animal Services		x	x			
Building and Safety	x	x		x	x	x
Chief Legislative Analyst	x	x		x	x	x
City Administrative Officer		x	x			
City Attorney	x	x	x	x		x
City Clerk	x					
City Planning	x	x	x	x	x	x
Disability	x		x	x	x	x
Economic and Workforce Development		x				
El Pueblo		x		x	x	x
Emergency Management	x	x	x		x	x
Finance		x				
Fire	x	x	x	x	x	x
General Services	x	x	x	x	x	x
Harbor	x	x	x	x	x	x

Attachment 1

[illegible]

CalOES RSF-based Questions for Data Collection

RSF 1: Community Planning and Capacity Building

- Does your jurisdiction have [the] following plans and when were they last updated?
 - Local Disaster Recovery Framework
 - Long-Term Recovery Plan
 - Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
 - Emergency Operations Plan
 - General Plan - Land Use, Housing, and Safety Elements
 - Climate Adaptation Plan
 - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
 - Energy Action Plan
 - Community Wildfire Protection Plan
 - Local Coastal Program/Plan
- Will this long-term recovery plan align with existing plans?
- Will the General Plan need to be amended to address temporary housing, debris removal, or equipment staging needs.
- Does your jurisdiction need training on any of the following subjects: FEMA Programs; California Disaster Assistance Act; SBA Disaster Loans; USDA Disaster Programs; Long-Term Disaster Recovery; Disaster Recovery Processes and Procedures
- Has your jurisdiction identified lead and supporting agencies and are they aware of their responsibilities?
- Has your jurisdiction identified existing gaps in personnel capacity and identified ways to close those gaps following a disaster?
 - How many personnel can your jurisdiction dedicate to recovery?
 - How many planners are on staff and how many hours per week can they dedicate to recovery planning?
 - What support is available from the state and federal government or other sources to close capacity grants?

RSF 2: Economic

- How many businesses were impacted by the disaster? Were they closed, relocated, or open on altered hours?
- How many employees were laid off due to the disaster?
- What are the insured and uninsured loss amounts?
- What factors are keeping businesses closed?
- How many businesses applied for an SBA disaster loan?
- Were any business support organizations affected by the disaster?
- Was an SBA Business Recovery Center opened? Which organizations were present and what issues did they report?
- Does your jurisdiction have a local/regional economic development strategy? If so, how will this disaster affect that strategy?
- Are businesses aware of continuity planning and/or do they have continuity plans with alternatives to continue their business operations after disasters?

RSF 3: Health and Social Services

- How many hospitals, schools, institutes of higher learning, foodbanks, and health facilities were impacted by the disaster?
- Will any facilities face long-term closure?
- Have any critical health services been disrupted?

- What is the status of children and youth in the impacted area including students that have been displaced and the availability of childcare?
- Was the community able to access the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program? If so, how many families participated?
- What is the status of public health and social services agencies?
- How was the unhoused population impacted by the event?

RSF 4: Housing

- How many homes were damaged by the disaster? Owner-occupied, rental, or multi-family?
- What was the pre-disaster condition of housing in the jurisdiction?
- What is the age of current housing stock?
- How many homes are currently available?
- What is the median home price compared with median income?
- Are there any critical infrastructure systems affecting the availability of housing?
- Have emergency housing programs been activated? If so, what do they provide?

RSF 5: Infrastructure

- How did the disaster impact infrastructure in the jurisdiction?
- Who owns the following systems within the jurisdiction:
 - Electrical
 - Telecommunications
 - Water treatment
 - Natural gas
- What are in-progress and planned public works projects within the jurisdiction that have been impacted?
- What are the current mitigation projects in development to protect infrastructure systems?
- What are the historic climate factors (subsidence, coastal erosion, etc.) affecting infrastructure systems?

RSF 6: Natural and Cultural Resources

- Were any parks, wildlife management areas, watersheds, or recreational green spaces damaged by the disaster? If so, how has the damage affected the community?
- Were any museums, libraries, or areas of cultural significance damaged by the disaster? If so, how has the damage affected the community?
- Were any endangered species or habitats impacted? Are there ongoing [efforts] to rehabilitate an endangered species or habitat within the impacted area?
- Were any historic buildings impacted? Are there historic zones or special building codes for historic buildings?
- Were tribal lands or sites impacted? Who will be key partners for repairs?
- How will the community process downed or burned trees?
- Are any long-term closures anticipated?

Initialism	Definition
CalOES	California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CLA	Chief Legislative Analyst
EMD	Emergency Management Department
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
LTRG	Long Term Recovery Group
LTRP	Long Term Recovery Plan
NDRF	National Disaster Recovery Framework
ORR	[County of Santa Rosa] Office of Recovery and Resiliency
RRF	[County of Santa Rosa] Recovery Resiliency Framework
RSF	Recovery Support Function
SWO	Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities