



# WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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CM/ACM \_\_\_\_\_  
Finance \_\_\_\_\_  
DA \_\_\_\_\_  
Risk Mgt N/A  
HR N/A  
Comptroller \_\_\_\_\_

## STAFF REPORT

**BOARD MEETING DATE: September 12, 2017**

**DATE:** August 20, 2017

**TO:** Board of County Commissioners

**FROM:** Dwayne Smith, P.E., Division Director, Engineering and Capital Projects  
Community Services Department, 328-2043, [desmith@washoecounty.us](mailto:desmith@washoecounty.us)

**THROUGH:** Dave Solaro, Arch., P.E., Director  
Community Services Department, 328-3624, [dsolaro@washoecounty.us](mailto:dsolaro@washoecounty.us)

**SUBJECT:** Update on the 2017 North Valleys Flood Incident and possible direction to staff to: 1) Affirm the continued flood response activities related to the 2017 January and February floods; 2) Develop a flood response plan for North Valleys closed hydro-basins; 3) Develop a flood mitigation plan for North Valleys closed hydro-basins; 4) Pursue the application process for a Federal Emergency Management Agency Hazard Mitigation Grant, for the possible purchase of specific residences located within the Swan Lake floodplain that were impacted by the 2017 presidentially declared February flood. (All Commission Districts.)

### SUMMARY

Washoe County, through its Community Services Department continues to manage the ongoing 2017 North Valley Flood incident including maintaining the existing temporary flood barriers and associated storm water pumps, as well as preparing for the upcoming 2017/18 winter and spring precipitation season. Washoe County currently expends approximately \$70,000 per month maintaining the temporary flood protection measures and has spent over \$4 million through June 2017 in response to this year's record setting flood events.

Using the information and experiences developed in response to the two presidentially declared regional floods of 2017, staff is developing the framework for a small closed-basin flood response plan that will be used for Swan Lake, Silver Lake and White Lake hydro basins. The development of a specific flood response plan for each closed-basin will provide decision makers, emergency responders and the community with an understanding of what actions to take based on a set of measurable criteria and associated thresholds. The development of this proposed flood response plan is estimated to cost approximately \$75,000 and requires participation of area professionals and municipalities.

The two presidentially declared regional floods of 2017 have resulted in many questions, concerns, and requests by those involved to initiate a project to stop the current flooding and eliminate the potential for future flooding. While there can be no certainty given to eliminate the potential for floods, comprehensive understanding of many factors including needs, options, risk, probability, costs and funding sources, can be used to develop a strategy to

**AGENDA ITEM # \_\_\_\_\_**

reduce future flood risk and associated impacts. A comprehensive closed-basin flood mitigation plan could be used to identify, analyze and provide recommendations that could be used by residents and municipalities and other stakeholders to address future floods within the North Valleys small closed hydro-basins. The development of a plan would require contracting with technical professionals, conducting multiple meetings with stakeholders, residents, and municipalities, ultimately to provide possible recommendations to the municipalities for their consideration. It is anticipated a comprehensive planning process would take approximately one year and cost between \$450,000 and \$600,000 to develop a regionally accepted closed hydro-basin flood mitigation plan for the North Valleys.

To address the longer term impacts and possible ways to mitigate future flood response in certain areas, staff has been in discussions with the State of Nevada Department of Public Safety regarding a hazard mitigation grant program (HMGP). This FEMA funded grant is part of FEMA's Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program and available to communities that have a FEMA approved Hazard Mitigation Plan in place and are in good standing with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). In concept, this grant could be used to acquire homes that are located within the area impacted by the 2017 presidentially declared February flood. The grant covers 75% of the costs. The grant would allow for the acquisition and demolition or relocation of residential structures to a site outside of the FEMA flood plain and the underlying property would then be converted to a deed-restricted open space. Purchase of any home would be voluntary and would require the homeowner to agree to the terms of the program. Assessment of the home value is based on the pre-disaster condition and would require an appraisal. Based on the target funding allocation, an initial 10 potential residences have been identified and staff shall affirm with property owners their desire to participate in the grant program. Grant applications are due to the State of Nevada in February 2018. Absent another funding source, the 25% match requirement is anticipated to be covered through a combination of Washoe County staff time, resources, and the potential use of Washoe County owned property, specifically vacant property located within the Heppner residential development in Lemmon Valley.

Strategic Objective supported by this item: Safe, secure and healthy communities

### **PREVIOUS ACTION**

March 14, 2017 – The Board of County Commissioners (Board) ratified a Declaration of a State of Emergency by the Washoe County Manager on February 23, 2017, and received an update on the related emergency operations for the North Valleys flood response.

March 21, 2017 – Washoe County staff provided an update to the Board on emergency operations related to the February 23, 2017 Declaration of State of Emergency and received approval of actions taken by the County Manager pursuant to emergency powers related to the current state of emergency.

March 28, 2017 – Washoe County staff provided an update to the Board on emergency operations related to the February 23, 2017 Declaration of State of Emergency and received approval of actions taken by the County Manager pursuant to emergency powers related to the current state of emergency.

April 25, 2017 – The Board directed staff to return with a District Attorney opinion regarding the possible methods for gifting general fund money for building permits related to Lemmon Valley Flood.

May 9, 2017 - The Board received an update on the North Valleys flood incident operation.

May 23, 2017 – The Board approved gifting general funds to cover the cost of County building permit fees for specific assessor's parcel numbers affected by Swan Lake (and the immediate vicinity) flooding when demonstrated that individual insurance carriers will not cover the cost of County building permit fees.

June 27, 2017 – The Board approved the use of General Fund Contingency funding and the approval of budget appropriation transfers to cover the County's expenses related to the January and February 2017 flood events.

## **BACKGROUND**

Washoe County, through its Community Services Department continues to manage the ongoing North Valley Flood 2017 incident including maintaining the temporary flood barriers and associated storm water pumps as well as preparing for the upcoming 2017/18 winter and spring precipitation season. Washoe County currently expends approximately \$70,000 per month maintaining the temporary flood protection measures and has spent over \$4 million through June 2017 in response to this year's record setting flood events.

Using the information and experiences developed in response to the two presidentially declared regional floods of 2017, staff is developing the framework for a closed-basin flood response plan that will be used for Swan Lake, Silver Lake and White Lake hydro-basins. Unlike the Truckee River corridor, a site-specific flood response plan for these small closed hydro basins does not exist. The development of a specific flood response plans for each closed-basin will provide decision makers, emergency responders and the community with an understanding of what actions to take based on a set of measurable criteria and associated thresholds. The development of this proposed flood response plan is estimated to cost approximately \$75,000 and requires participation of area professionals and municipalities.

The two presidentially declared regional floods of 2017 have resulted in many questions, concerns, and requests by those involved to initiate a project to stop the current flooding and eliminate the potential for future flooding. Without a comprehensive understanding of many factors including need, options, risk, probability, costs and funding sources, initiation of a project or mitigation effort is not possible. A comprehensive flood mitigation plan could be used to identify, analyze and provide recommendations that could be used by residents and municipalities and other stakeholders to address future floods within the North Valleys small closed hydro basins. Using recommendations provided by FEMA and others, it is anticipated that a flood mitigation plan would require contracting with technical professionals, conducting multiple meetings with stakeholders, residents, and municipalities ultimately to provide possible recommendations to the municipalities for their consideration. It is anticipated a comprehensive planning process would take one year and cost between \$450,000 and \$600,000 to develop a flood mitigation plan for the North Valleys closed hydro-basins.

To address the longer term impacts and possible ways to mitigate future flood response in certain areas, staff was informed of a hazard mitigation grant program (HMGP) that provides FEMA funding through the Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) program. In concept, this grant, administrated by the Nevada Department of Public Safety, could be potentially used to acquire homes that are located within the area impacted by the 2017 presidentially declared floods. The grant covers 75% of the costs. If selected, a FMA project grant would allow for the acquisition and demolition or relocation of residential structures to a site outside of the

FEMA flood plain and the underlying property would then be converted to a deed-restricted open space. This approach results in the future avoidance of flood mitigation for those properties. FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds generally become available following a declared disaster which is the basis to initiate the grant. FEMA's target allocation to Nevada under the FMA program is based on the national percentage of NFIP policies present in the State. The State may apply for funding up to or exceeding its target allocation however there are no guarantees that funding above the target allocation would be made available. Purchase of any home would be voluntary and would require the homeowner to agree to the terms of the program. Based on the target funding allocation, staff has identified 10 potential residences and will affirm with the owners regarding their desire to participate in the grant program. Grant applications are due to the State of Nevada in February 2018.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Depending on the recommendations directed by the Board, the following is an estimate of the costs associated with each item:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Fund Source</b>	<b>Fiscal Year 17 Costs through June 30, 2017</b>	<b>Estimated Future Costs through June 30, 2018</b>
2017 Flood Response (North Valleys)	Stabilization Fund and Utility 566	\$4,500,000	\$840,000
North Valleys Flood Response Plan	-	-	Approximately \$75,000
North Valley Closed Hydro- Basin Flood Mitigation Plan	TBD*	-	\$450,000 to \$600,000
Federal Emergency Management Agency Hazard Mitigation Grant – Home Acquisition	Anticipated staff time, material, available property	-	25% match, up to \$500,000

\* To be determined; possible sources may be CIP, above-base, etc. considering funding availability and prioritization within County budgets.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended the Board of County Commissioners direct staff to implement with or without modifications any or all of the possible following recommendations: 1) Affirm the continued flood response activities related to the 2017 January and February floods; 2) Develop a flood response plan for North Valleys closed hydro-basins; 3) Develop a flood mitigation plan for North Valleys closed hydro-basins; 4) Pursue the application process for a Federal Emergency Management Agency Hazard Mitigation Grant, for the possible purchase of specific residences located within the Swan Lake floodplain that were impacted by the 2017 presidentially declared February flood.

**POSSIBLE MOTION**

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be: "Move to direct staff to do any or all of the following:

- 1) Affirm the continued flood response activities related to the 2017 January and February floods;
- 2) Develop a flood response plan for North Valleys closed hydro-basins;
- 3) Develop a flood mitigation plan for North Valleys closed hydro-basins;
- 4) Pursue the application process for a Federal Emergency Management Agency Hazard Mitigation Grant, for the possible purchase of specific residences located within the Swan Lake floodplain that were impacted by the 2017 presidentially declared February flood."