2.0

SAFETY ELEMENT

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Introduction

The quality of life in Avenal is directly impacted by the sense of security of its residents and businesses. In order to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for residents, it is important to address the issues of crime, violence, and other human caused hazards, and to prepare a response to uncontrollable natural hazards. The Safety Element establishes objectives and policies and standards to ensure that there is an adequate, coordinated and expedient response to public safety concerns.

Purpose of the Safety Element

The purpose of the Safety Element is to identify and address those features or characteristics existing in or near Avenal that represent a potential hazard to the community's citizens, sites, structures, public facilities and infrastructure. The Safety Element establishes policies to minimize the danger to residents, workers and visitors, while identifying actions needed to manage crisis situations such as earthquakes, fires and flooding. The Element also focuses on preventing criminal activity and violence before they occur. Additionally, the Safety Element contains specific policies to regulate existing and proposed development in hazard-prone areas.

Scope and Content of the Safety Element

The Safety Element satisfies the requirements of state planning law and is a mandated component of the General Plan. Government Code section 65302 (g) sets forth a list of hazards that the Element must cover, if they pertain to conditions in the City. These hazards are:

- Seismically induced conditions including ground shaking, surface rupture, ground failure, tsunami and seiche;
- Slope instability leading to mudslides and landslides;
- Subsidence and other geologic hazards;
- Flooding;
- Wildland and urban fires; and
- Evacuation routes.

The Safety Element contains four sections: the Introduction; Purpose of the Safety Element; Scope and Content of the Safety Element; and Objectives, Policies and Standards. In the Objectives, Policies and Standards section, major issues pertaining to hazardous conditions and safety are identified and related policies established. The policies serve as guidelines for reducing the risks associated with humans, including criminal activity and natural hazards. The policies also serve to direct and maximize community emergency preparedness.

2.1 Emergency Planning

Objectives

A. Reduce the potential for loss of life and property resulting from natural and manmade hazards to a minimum.

B. Coordinate responses in the event of a local or regional natural or manmade disaster.

Policies and Standards

1. The City will maintain its emergency preparedness, including evacuation procedures, to address potential natural and manmade hazards. These procedures shall be developed in coordination with Kings County's emergency operations plans.

2. All new buildings shall conform to state standards set forth in the Dangerous Building Code contained in the most current edition of the Uniform Building Code.

3. The City shall coordinate fire protection services with Kings County and neighboring communities, including consideration of mutual aid and instant aid agreements.

4. The City shall maintain and establish a network of streets that permits emergency vehicle access to any individual property that is no more than one minute from designated Arterial, Collector or Minor Collector roadways.

2.2 Fire Protection

Objective

A. An effective and well-trained Fire Department that will protect the community from fire dangers.

Policies and Standards

1. The City's fire service response goal for the urbanized area shall be five minutes from "tone-out" to arrival on scene.

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1. The City's fire service response goal for the urbanized area shall be five minutes from "tone-out" to arrival on scene.

2. The City shall maintain a reliable water supply system that meets the fire protection needs of the community.

3. The City shall enforce the municipal code as it pertains to the abatement of fire hazards related to existing buildings, structures, and weed control.

4. The City shall support local, state and federal programs designed to inform and educate the public concerning fire prevention and suppression.

5. The City will coordinate with Kings County in the provision of fire protection services to ensure the maximum level of protection for all residences, commercial establishments and industries within the planning area.

6. The City will encourage installation of fire safety devices in all residences and require such installation at the time of original construction, remodeling or expansion.

7. The City will establish five minutes or two miles travel distance as the maximum response time or travel distance from the nearest fire station. Outside of this response range, built-in fire protection systems (i.e. sprinklers) shall be required in all new buildings excluding single-family units.

8. The City will encourage the community to become involved in promoting state and federal fire protection programs in school and civic functions.

2.3 Flooding

Objective

A. Protect the lives and property of residents from the hazards of flooding.

Policies and Standards

1. Consistent with Federal standards, the City shall implement FEMA regulations and design guidelines to address 100-year flood events, and require adequate storm drainage facilities to prevent flooding within the community.

2. Through site plan review, development shall be prevented from occurring in natural drainage channels.

2.4 Public Safety

Standard Objective

A. Adopt and implement safety standards for varying hazards and enforce the Kings County Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Policies and Standards

1. Environmental Impact Reports should be required on all projects with potentially significant hazardous impacts as defined in the California Environmental Quality Act.

2. It is the policy of the City to require that water supply systems be related to the size and configuration of land developments. Standards as set forth in the current subdivision ordinance shall be maintained and improved as necessary.

3. Development proposals shall take into consideration required fire standards, particularly in regard to critical facilities.

4. It is the policy of the City to maintain adequate street width and connectivity in the circulation system to enable prompt response and emergency access.

5. The street network shall be designed so that it does not pose undue hazards due to excessive vehicle speeds, excessive through traffic in residential neighborhoods or street design that is in substantial excess of future projected traffic volumes.

6. Existing traffic conflicts should be resolved, including connectivity between neighborhoods, access to industrial areas and critical intersections.

7. Reduce vulnerability of water distribution system. Continue to search for funding to replace the 12-inch main line which is at least 38 years old. Engineer and replace existing valves at tank sites with earthquake valves to protect the water supply. Continue to monitor both the existing lines and document critical areas.

8. Develop a program/system for supporting vulnerable populations during emergency events. Develop a task force to identify those that are vulnerable and their needs; document and list before any emergencies occur. Develop a plan to identify "safe" housing location(s) and plan a safe route to those locations.

9. Establish a loss reduction program for unreinforced masonry (URM) buildings in compliance with the California URM Law of 1986. Seek approval from the City Council for developing and implementing a loss reduction program to comply with the URM Law. Inventory existing URM buildings in the city. Develop a loss reduction program, such as one of the types described in the 2006 Status of the Unreinforced Masonry Building Report. This may include letters to owners of URM buildings, signage on the front of URM buildings notifying the public of the earthquake hazard, or other types of measures. The city will report its program and future progress to the California Seismic Safety Commission.