

Agenda Report

December 3, 2012

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council
FROM: Department of Public Works
SUBJECT: UPDATE – NOVEMBER 30/DECEMBER 1, 2011 WINDSTORM AFTER-ACTION REPORT

RECOMMENDATION:

This report is for information only.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Following a major disaster such as the November 30/December 1, 2011 windstorm, the City undertakes an after action assessment to understand how we can improve our response in future events. As part of this process, three community meetings were held where the City Manager presented a summary of windstorm activities and solicited concerns from the audience. The City also established an on-line process from the City website to receive feedback.

On April 16, 2012, City staff presented seven key lessons learned and proposed solutions to the City Council. This report provides an update to this information at the one-year anniversary of the windstorm.

BACKGROUND:

On the evening of November 30, 2011, the City of Pasadena experienced unprecedented hurricane force winds that caused major damage throughout the City. In the aftermath, Pasadena was designated as "ground zero" to the twelve other affected cities and communities. The following report gives an overview of the lessons learned and how they will be addressed.

1. **Ease/Difficulty accessing City services.** Community and staff expressed frustration with the multiple phone numbers provided to report windstorm-related issues. With more than one number, the public did not know what number they should call, resulting in calls to report the same information multiple times.

December 2012 Update: As an interim solution to busy signals customers may experience when calling the City during large power outages, Pasadena Water and Power (PWP) outage phone lines have been rerouted to the Call Center to increase the City's overall simultaneous call handling capacity. Additionally, improved messaging protocols at the PWP Call Center have been implemented to reduce the time callers spend on the line. Further, PWP is evaluating an interactive voice response (IVR) solution to more effectively manage and route high-volume water and power outage calls.

As part of the FY 2013-2017 Capital Improvement Program budget, the City Council approved \$300,000 for the *311 Citizen Request Management* project, which will establish and staff a centralized 311 Call Center. The 311 Call Center will build upon the success of the popular online Citizen Service Center and serve as the primary point of contact for community members seeking information, service and support from the City during both routine and emergency operations. The project workplan includes staffing and launching of the 311 Call Center by June of 2013. Staff will recommend additional appropriations of \$100,000 in FY 2014 and FY 2015 to be used to purchase and install a platform to support expanded operations of the 311 Call Center.

2. **Service request follow-up.** In addition to the issue noted previously, callers were further frustrated by the fact that when they called back to follow up on their initial call there did not seem to be a record of the original call. This resulted in repeated calls for the same issue and a reduction in confidence that the City was aware of and addressing customer issues.

December 2012 Update: Currently, PWP does not have a reliable system in place to track whether a caller has previously reported an outage or the status of the customer's specific issue. Protocols have now been put in place to provide information about known outages including general area of the outages and, when known, the estimated time for service restoration. Implementation of a web-based outage management system, as described in item 3, will provide better outage status information and the ability to accept and track calls in a manner that is transparent to the customer. The extent to which these protocols and systems can be integrated with the planned 311 Call Center has not yet been determined.

Once operational, the 311 Call Center will utilize a single telephone number and serve as the primary point of contact for residents. The 311 Call Center will be staffed by customer service agents trained to handle a wide variety of customer requests and equipped with the tools to record, route, monitor, and manage them effectively. Customers wanting to request services or report a problem without making a phone call will be able to use the existing, online Citizen Service Center which includes a considerable number of online self-service options. These options include the ability to search the Knowledgebase, initiate a service request, or follow-up on the status of an issue previously reported. The Knowledgebase is a searchable database of frequently asked questions (FAQ) about City services. The system currently includes more than 300 individual knowledge solutions developed by all City departments. The

Knowledgebase dynamically manages the FAQ list in a way that causes the most relevant responses to rise to the top on subsequent searches.

In preparation for the launch of the 311 Call Center, staff continues to expand the number of available service request options and Knowledgebase articles available on the online Citizen Service Center.

3. **Accurate power outage notifications:** Two primary complaints expressed on the City's website, Facebook pages, and at community meetings following the windstorm were that the City gave overly optimistic estimates or conversely lacked estimates regarding when power would be restored.

December 2012 Update: Despite improved protocols, PWP's ability to identify the cause of every outage and quickly predict restoration times is not as timely or as accurate as PWP or customers would like. In situations with widespread damage, such as the windstorm, PWP will not be able to accurately predict restoration timelines, until an assessment is completed and the situation has been analyzed. Even then, individual customers may experience longer than expected outages due to localized or private property damage, as was seen during the windstorm and more recently across the northeast due to Hurricane Sandy. However during power outages, once the cause has been identified, an estimated time of restoration can be provided. Additionally, PWP has improved general information provided to the PWP Call Center about known outages. Whenever possible during extended duration or wide-area outages, PWP provides updates on its website and/or social media web sites.

On October 4, 2012, PWP issued an RFP seeking proposals for an Integrated Outage Management and IVR solution. PWP expects to seek City Council authority to award a contract in January 2013, with a goal of system implementation by December 2013. The system is expected to provide improved power outage status information and restoration estimates, if available, that can be communicated to residents/ businesses through various media outlets. The system will also be able to track and confirm customer-specific calls, and be able to call/text-back customers who have reported outages. The system will enhance PWP's ability to schedule restoration crews to impacted locations and may provide information as to when power will be restored to each location.

4. **Communicating with residents without power.** If residents lose power, they may not be able to obtain information via television, internet, radio and/or wireless devices that require power/recharging. During the windstorm, City staff diligently communicated with residents through the City's website and electronic media; however, many residents were not able to receive this information due to the power outages. During a major earthquake we can also expect that a large segment of residents may be without power, consequently many of these customers would not be able to receive critical information being disseminated through the electronic media.

December 2012 Update: A plan has been developed which will utilize City staff to gather and distribute information directly to the affected areas through City Council Field Representatives and the Human Services and Recreation Department's Neighborhood

Connections resources. Outreach activities will be coordinated with the Fire Department and/or Emergency Operation Center (EOC), as appropriate, to leverage community information assets such as the Pasadena Emergency Response Team (PERT) that are discussed further in items 5 and 6 below. Additionally, if phones and internet communications are down, both systems may not work and the City's tiered level of communications will take effect (media, police/fire public address systems, City Disaster Service Workers).

5. **Residents were unprepared for an extended incident.** Disaster preparedness awareness and training has long been a priority for the City, with successful PERT training being held throughout each year. However, the windstorm demonstrated that residents may not be prepared for a disaster of an extended duration.

December 2012 Update: Since the windstorm there has been a significant increase in requests for disaster preparedness presentations. In the past, the Fire Department urged the community to be self-sufficient for up to 72 hours as recommended by FEMA. However, the windstorm demonstrated the need for residents to prepare for a minimum of one week.

The Fire Department implemented a Disaster Advisory Council (DAC). The purpose is DAC is to develop a dedicated group of residents/volunteers trained in PERT and/or a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) who will first help their family and neighbors and then deploy to pre-designated sites throughout the City. The Fire Department is taking an active role in training residents to prepare and respond to disasters. The following steps are being taken to ensure the success of this program:

- Training residents/volunteers to work as "neighbor helping neighbor" learning the assets and resources each one can provide after a disaster. The volunteers will assess damage and gather/disseminate information.
- Staff will work with a core group of these residents/volunteers and amateur radio operators to secure pre-designated sites within each council district to set-up information gathering points and pre-deployed supplies where these trained PERT/CERT volunteers can report. The amateur radio operators assigned to these sites will relay critical details to the EOC when communications are impacted.
- The Fire Department is developing standards to ensure consistency and standardized messaging with other City departments as well as share pre-designated sites to ensure information being disseminated is accurate and consistent across all City Departments/EOC.

Additionally, PWP has employed a broad range of outreach strategies to inform the residents how to prepare for, and help prevent water and power outages. A consolidated and simplified "Emergency and Safety Info" page has been added to the PWP website www.pwpweb.com/emergency. The table below summarizes strategies PWP has completed since the windstorm:

Publication/Activity	Description	Date Completed
<i>Star News/SGVN.com</i>	Long advertorial informing residents what to expect from PWP and how to prepare for emergencies A short advertorial aimed at businesses was also run with the same information	July 2012 - special issue on emergency preparedness
<i>Pasadena In Focus</i>	Top tips for outage emergencies Preparing for rolling blackouts	January/February 2012 November/December 2012 July/August 2012
Water and Power customer bill insert	“When The Next Outage Emergency Strikes, Will You Be Prepared?” Top tips for coping without utilities, plus top safety issues and staying informed	November/December 2012 provided in English and Spanish
Business Workshop Collaboration with Fire, Economic Development, and Chamber of Commerce	Emergency Preparedness and Business Continuity Workshop	October 18, 2012
Earth and Arts Festival 2012	Emergency/Safety Information Booth	April 14, 2012
Press Release	Outage prevention during first summer heat wave urging customers to conserve, protect system infrastructure	August 13, 2012
Facebook	Outage prevention posts (flex alert and energy conservation information)	On-going

6. **Insufficient resident registration of NIXLE and PLEAS alerting systems.** The NIXLE alerting system provides text and e-mail emergency information updates from the Pasadena Police Department and other agencies. Individuals can sign up for NIXLE service on the provider’s website www.nixle.com. A link is also available on the City’s website. During the windstorm, NIXLE proved to be an efficient way to quickly disseminate information to residents.

The Pasadena Local Emergency Alert System (PLEAS), the City’s reverse 911 robo-calling system utilized for critical emergency notifications, ensures that emergency and

other urgent messages can be sent to Pasadena residents via text and voice messages. Residents are urged to self-register for emergency alerts at: <http://ww2.cityofpasadena.net/disaster/> and then select the Emergency Notifications PLEAS link. PLEAS will only be used during emergencies and information will only be provided to residents who have registered emergency notifications.

December 2012 Update: Since the windstorm there has been an on-going public education effort to urge residents to sign-up and receive notifications. Currently less than five percent of residents have signed-up for either of these alerting systems. Police Department personnel are promoting NIXLE sign-ups via the tag-lines on outgoing City e-mails. City Council members, Council Field Representatives and Executive Leadership staff are urged to consistently remind residents/ businesses to sign-up for both services. Additionally, the City Public Information Officer has been proactive in including both NIXLE and PLEAS in new releases. The November/December PWP customer utility bill stuffer included information encouraging customers to register for PLEAS. To further encourage registration of both systems, City staff will develop a flyer which will be distributed at public outreach events throughout the community.

The Fire Department will educate the public about the redundancy of communications during emergencies because if phones and internet communications are down, both systems may not work and the City's tiered level of communications will take effect as discussed in item 4. This information is provided as part of the disaster preparedness training courses discussed in item 5.

An assessment has been performed by PWP regarding the use of PLEAS and NIXLE during water and power outages. Protocols to use these alerting systems to provide general information outreach during outages are under consideration. These systems are also being considered as a potential means to call-back customers who have reported water and power outages in the event the IVR/311 Call Center implementation is extended beyond the end of 2013.

- 7. Assistance with private property clean-up.** A number of residents expressed confusion regarding how to properly handle windstorm debris on their property. There was also confusion regarding clean-up of debris on City streets. The City provided residents with written information but due to the media providing residents with conflicting information, residents were not sure what information was correct. Additionally, debris removal maps designed to inform residents which streets had been cleaned were not always accurate, prompting multiple calls to the City. This was compounded by residents disposing of private property waste on City streets that had already been cleared resulting in secondary calls for service. Residents suggested utilizing dumpsters strategically placed throughout residential areas allowing them to dispose of debris from their property because they had no means to haul it to designated disposal sites.

December 2012 Update: The Department of Public Works has implemented enhanced communication methods via media outlets and situation maps posted on the City's

website to reduce confusion over timing and the process of debris removal. As a result of changes implemented over the last year the City is better prepared to respond in the future. Specifically, situation /status maps which were developed during the 2011 windstorm have been continuously improved and updated. These maps will serve as a template for any future events. If power is out, as with the windstorm, Public Works staff would coordinate with the Citywide resources and neighborhoods to help disseminate the information to residents/businesses.

In 2013, the Department of Public Works will develop a FEMA-recommended comprehensive debris management plan as part of the department's overall emergency management plan. Communities with debris management plans are better prepared to restore public services and ensure public health and safety in the aftermath of a disaster, and are better positioned to receive the full level assistance available from FEMA and other participating entities.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

Following the emergency operations plan for the City is consistent with the City Council goal for ensuring public safety. This includes providing effective life safety measures; reducing property loss; and ensuring the rapid reopening of impacted businesses and community services.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This report is for information only.

Respectfully submitted,



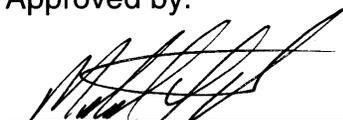
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