

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
March 4, 2025

City Commission Work Session
Civic Center, Gibson Room 212

Mayor Reeves presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 PM

CITY COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Cory Reeves, Susan Wolff, Joe McKenney, and Rick Tryon. Commissioner Shannon Wilson was excused.

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Greg Doyon; City Attorney David Dennis; Finance Director Melissa Kinzler; Fire Chief Jeremy Jones and Community Risk Reduction Manager Kate Brewer; Police Captain Brian Black; and, Deputy City Clerk Darcy Dea.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

1. EMERGENCY MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE

Great Falls Fire Rescue Community Risk Reduction Manager Kate Brewer reviewed and discussed the following PowerPoint slides:

CENTRAL MONTANA REGIONAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN 2024-2029

Slide | 01

Previous Mitigation Plans Adopted by City Commission

The past two Mitigation Plans adopted by both the City of Great Falls and Cascade County were prepared specifically for Cascade County and incorporated communities within the county

2011	2017
Cascade County Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan	Update to the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan

The 2011 and 2017 Mitigation Plans were funded through County Disaster Emergency Services.
The proposed Central Montana Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan was funded through Montana Disaster Emergency Services.

Slide | 02

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION

March 4, 2025

Montana Hazard Mitigation Planning Regions

Montana Disaster & Emergency Services (MT DES) coordinated the planning process to develop Hazard Mitigation Plans among three regions throughout Montana.

- **Eastern Region**
 - 22 Counties
 - 1 Tribal Reservation
- **Central Region**
 - 13 Counties
 - 3 Tribal Reservations
- **Western Region**
 - 17 Counties
 - 1 Tribal Reservation



Slide | 03

■ BENEFITS

Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMPs) are used to reduce or eliminate long-term risks to people or property from disasters or hazard events.



On average, **each dollar spent** on mitigation **saves society an average of \$6** in avoided future losses in addition to saving lives and preventing injuries.¹



FEMA-approved HMPs are **eligible** for certain federal disaster assistance and hazard mitigation funding. Several include:

- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (**HMGP**)
- Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (**BRIC**)
- Flood Mitigation Assistance (**FMA**)
- Assistance to Firefighters (**AFG**) Notice of Funding states that applicants may receive stronger consideration

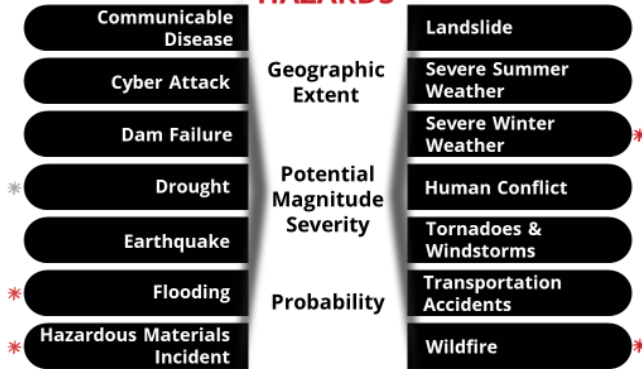


HMPs focus on taking action **BEFORE** a disaster or complex emergency occurs. They give attention towards maintaining community continuity and strengthening partnerships essential for response and recovery.

¹ Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves, 2019 Report by National Institute of Building Sciences & Multihazard Mitigation Council

Slide | 04

CENTRAL MONTANA'S REGIONAL HAZARDS



Slide | 05

GOALS

The Planning Team's goals were defined as broad based policy statements that:

- Represent the desires of the community;
- Encompass all community aspects, public and private;
- Are nonspecific - they refer to the quality (not the quantity) of the outcome;
- Are future-oriented; and
- Are time-independent, (they are not scheduled events).

REDUCE

Reduce impacts to people, property, the environment, and economy from hazards.

PROTECT

Protect community lifelines & critical infrastructure to ensure the continuity of essential services.

INCREASE

Increase public awareness & participation in hazard mitigation.

SUSTAIN

Sustain and enhance jurisdictional capabilities to enact mitigation activities.

INTEGRATE

Integrate hazard mitigation into other plans, processes, and regulations.

PROMOTE

Promote regional cooperation and leverage partnerships in mitigation solutions where possible.

Slide | 06

MITIGATION ACTION PLANING

ACTIONS IN 2017 HMP

Regionally (746)
Cascade County (71)

NEW & CONTINUED ACTIONS

Regionally (752)
Cascade County (80)
City of GF (52)

ACTIONS INCLUDE

- Brief Description
- Hazard(s) Mitigated
- Jurisdictions
- Lead Agency & Partners
- Cost (High, Moderate, Low)
- Potential Funding
- Timeline
- Priority
- Status

BARRIERS (LOCAL, STATE AND NATIONAL)

- Lack of training for planning personnel
- Lack of manpower
- Succession Planning - revolving positions
- Funding limitations
- Disaster fatigue/burnout COVID-19
- Small workforce for increasing frequency, severity and complexity of disasters

Slide | 07

CITY OF GREAT FALLS OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

- Establish Wildland Urban Interface Firefighting training program
- Conduct Severe Weather Risk Awareness through public education & outreach
- Establish & promote platform that allows residents & businesses to provide critical information for responder access during emergencies

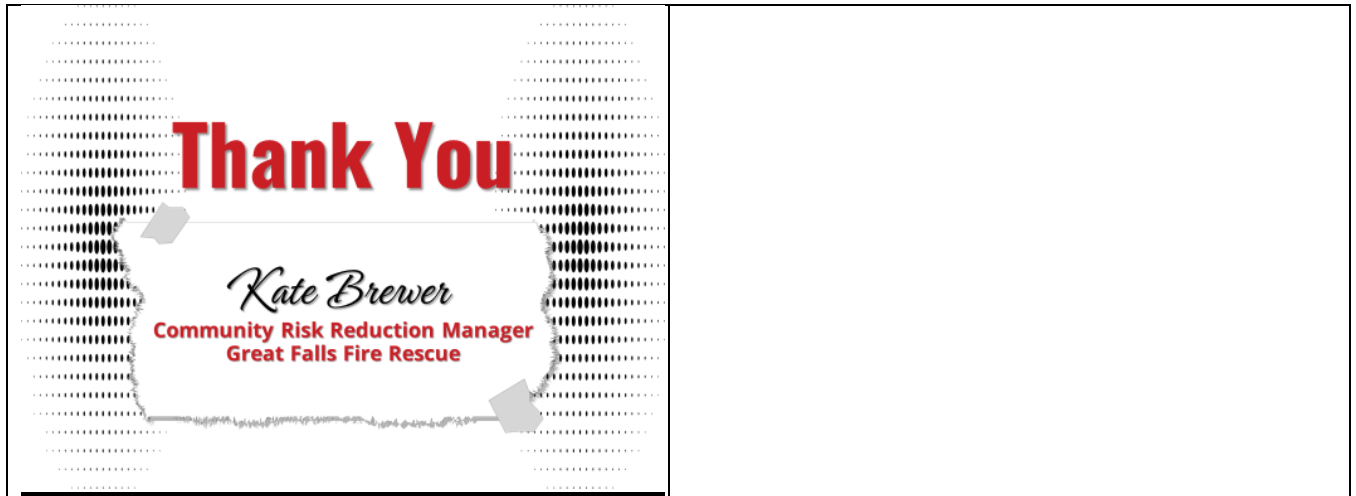
INCORPORATION INTO EXISTING PLANS AND PREPAREDNESS EFFORTS

- Emergency Operations Plans
- Community Wildfire Protection Plans
- Recovery Planning Efforts
- Wildfire Planning Efforts - Wildland Urban Interface
- Training and Exercise plans



Slide | 08

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
March 4, 2025



With regard to the “Central Montana’s Regional Hazards” slide, Mayor Reeves received clarification that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) would consider a protest to be human conflict.

With regard to page 154 of the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan, Commissioner Wolff received clarification that the County would be the coordinating agency for Neihart, Geraldine, Valier and Dodson in the event of a hazard. With regard to page 169, Commissioner Wolff further received clarification that the summary of critical facilities exposure summarized by lifelines referred to how many of those different types of facilities would be impacted.

Commissioner McKenney received clarification that Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grants support hazard mitigation projects and planning initiatives reducing the risk by natural hazards.

Commissioner Tryon received clarification that each grant for federal disaster assistance and hazard mitigation is different with regard to who can apply for them and there is no required funding obligation by the City to meet the goals of the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.

2. CALUMET TAX ABATEMENT TO CASCADE COUNTY

City Manager Greg Doyon explained the City was notified in February that Cascade County received an abatement request from Calumet Montana Refining. The City Commission had asked City Manager Doyon to set up a meeting with the County Commission to review the application knowing the City did not have any authority over it but there would be an impact on the City and taxpayers. City staff attempted to coordinate a special meeting with the County Commission; however, many of their Commissioners were traveling extensively over the next several weeks. The County Commission invited the City Commission to participate by attending the March 5, 2025 Cascade County Commission Work Session and March 11, 2025 Commission Meeting. The County is required to make a decision on three percentages with regard to the abatement request. The City received information from the Montana Department of

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
March 4, 2025

Revenue and the impact to the City with regard to the estimated tax revenue coming in would be as follows:

- 100% incentive = \$226,139
- 90% incentive = \$205,320
- 80% incentive = \$182,508

City Manager Doyon drafted a letter to the Cascade County Commissioners urging them to approve only the minimum 80% abatement because of public safety funding, pending tax protest/financial uncertainty, prior tax abatements for Calumet, infrastructure cost and Calumet/BNSF Rail expansion.

Commissioner Tryon commented that he does not appreciate the County Commission not taking time to discuss this important issue with the City Commission and it is disappointing, unfortunate and disrespectful. He hopes in the future to work more closely with the County Commission because we are all working for the people in the community and county.

Commissioner Wolff explained she would support the 100% incentive if there was a willingness from Calumet to contribute back to the community; however, because Calumet is not supporting the community, she recommended the 80% incentive.

Commissioner McKenney commented that Calumet is the number one property tax payer in the City; however, knowing there could possibly be another public safety levy request in the future, he recommended the 80% incentive.

It was the consensus of the Commission to approve the 80% incentive and send the letter as drafted to the Cascade County Commission.

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL UPCOMING WORK SESSION TOPICS

City Manager Greg Doyon reported that title 5 code changes – business licenses/permits and SIC's and SLIPA projects will be topics for the March 18, 2025 work session. Sanitation and utility rates will be a topic for the April 1, 2025 work session.

Mayor Reeves expressed concern with regard to the City doing yearly rate adjustments. He suggested a three-year sanitation rate adjustment through an agreement.

City Manager Doyon responded that a three-year sanitation rate adjustment could be considered; however, it would be difficult to project all of the variables that go into a rate calculation, such as inflation.

Commissioner McKenney commented that a three-year sanitation rate adjustment might be worth looking into.

Commissioner Wolff requested that the storm water policy and title 15 code changes related to burn permits be moved up from parking lot of the work session topic list.

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSION
March 4, 2025

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Reeves adjourned the informal work session of March 4, 2025 at 6:28 p.m.