



MEMORANDUM

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR &
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: SABRINA B. LANDRETH,
City Administrator

SUBJECT: Post 31st Avenue Fire Follow-up

DATE: December 28, 2016

City Administrator

Date

Approval

/s/ **Claudia Cappio****12/28/16**

INFORMATION

This Information Memorandum provides an update on the efforts staff have taken since the 31st Avenue fire on December 2, 2016, as well as information on next steps that are underway to address the longer term impacts of the fire.

Post Disaster Recovery Efforts:

In the days following the fire, the City worked diligently with nonprofit, local, state, and federal partners to secure the site, provide services to the families in need and address questions from the community about the incident. Below is a summary of the key critical actions taken in the Post Disaster Recovery phase.

1. California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) Cost Reporting: The Cal OES has the California Fire Assistance Agreement (CFAA) which is the negotiated reimbursement mechanism for local government fire agency responses through the California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid System. The agreement requires certain documentation to be kept and submitted in order for a local government agency to receive reimbursement funding for expenses in large emergency situations. Oakland Fire Department Emergency Management Services Division staff has been diligently collecting necessary information from other City staff and submitting timely reports to Cal OES on behalf of the City.
2. Small Business Assistance: The City's Economic and Workforce Development Department has been working to identify available financial resources to sustain or rebuild businesses and employment, and develop opportunities for sustainable economic resilience in the geographic area affected by the fire. Post-fire actions have included: conducting damage and needs assessments throughout the recovery; working with the

business community to identify and prioritize needs; offering technical assistance; and identifying emergent needs and gaps for the local businesses affected by the fire.

3. After Action Report: The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has agreed to prepare the After Action Report, which is required for an incident like this fire. The report will analyze the Fire Department's response to the incident. The Fire Department has already begun preparing the information needed for this report.
4. Public Records Act Requests: The City has received many public records requests since the 31st Avenue fire. In order to ensure that these requests are responded to in a timely and consistent manner, the City Administrator's Office assigned a single staff member to be the citywide coordinator for all records requests. The coordinator continues to receive requests and is working with staff in all affected City departments to organize and, in coordination with the Office of the City Attorney, release information in accordance with the Public Records Act. Records are posted on the City's website as they are released. A special email box and a phone line have been set up to facilitate responses to media inquiries as well: warehousefiremedia@oaklandnet.com and 510-457-1615.
5. Victim Support and Counseling: The Alameda County Coroner's Bureau, in coordination with the American Red Cross, set up the Family Assistance Center (FAC) immediately after the fire. The center included many services that the families of the victims would possibly need, including grief counseling and mental health services. The FAC was initially staffed by Alameda County Sheriff's Office. The City of Oakland and Alameda County Behavioral Health Care Services added staff on Saturday December 3rd for the remaining four (4) days the FAC was active. As of December 7th, when the FAC closed, family members and friends requesting mental health services were referred to Alameda County District Behavioral Health Care Services or the American Red Cross. One Hundred and forty-six (146) American Red Cross workers (mostly volunteers) have been working with a multitude of government and community partners to provide comfort and support to people impacted by the fire. In the initial days after the fire, the Red Cross worked to provide immediate mental health support, meals, and snacks to on-scene first responders. Additionally, mental health support, health services, and initial financial assistance were provided to those impacted and their families. This assistance was provided through Red Cross Disaster Relief funds to support emergency lodging, clothing, and travel costs for those displaced and the families of those lost.
6. Donations: This tragedy has impacted the entire region and the Bay Area community has come together to support the families impacted by the fire including through very generous donations. The two major donation receiving entities are the Oakland A's Community Fund and the Gray Area Foundation. At the suggestion of the City of Oakland, the Oakland A's requested the assistance of the American Red Cross to act as a financial pass through to those impacted for the Oakland A's Oakland Fire Relief Fund. To date, \$531,779 has been transferred from this fund and is currently being distributed directly to those impacted. As of December 22nd, the American Red Cross has provided an initial distribution of \$368,000 and is working closely with those displaced and

injured, as well as with the families of the deceased to ensure 100 percent distribution of all remaining funds. American Red Cross caseworkers will continue to check-in with those impacted over the weeks and months to come to ensure they have the resources and support available to them.

7. Status of the Building: Control of the property on 31st Avenue was returned to the owner as of Sunday December 18th. It has been fenced, secured and reinforced structurally. The City is working with the owner's representatives in pursuing further reinforcement so that investigations by various insurance companies and others can continue to occur safely.

Next Steps:

There are a number of actions underway to address the short term and long term issues associated with the 31st Avenue fire. Some of these actions will be completed in the near term and some will take longer as they involve significant policy issues.

Immediate Term:

1. Tenant Protections: The City Administrator's Office is working with the City Attorney's Office to develop a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that will be posted on the City's website. The FAQs will address various questions that have arisen concerning the rights and responsibilities of occupants and owners of spaces like that of the 31st Avenue warehouse and similar spaces.
2. Special Events: The City is creating a coordinated interdepartmental team to address special events. This team will facilitate well-informed decision making to ensure that special events are permitted and safe. This group will also assess staffing needs related to enforcement of special events permits and requirements.
3. Relocation Assistance: The Housing and Community Development Department is coordinating short-term housing for those displaced by the 31st Avenue Warehouse fire. For housing questions, please visit <https://goo.gl/UoGmfv>. More information on housing assistance will be forthcoming through a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) link on the Housing Assistance Center webpage mentioned above.

Longer Term:

1. Fire Safety Task Force. Immediately following the fire, the Mayor created a Fire Safety Task Force. Staffed by City Administrator's Office, assisted by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the Task Force includes City staff as well as outside experts. This Task Force will use the standards created by the NFPA 1730, "Standard on Organization and Deployment of Fire Prevention Inspection and Code Enforcement, Plan Review, Investigation, and Public Education Operations," as well any other specific NFPA recommendations from the NFPA, to conduct a Community Risk Assessment and

a Community Risk Reduction Program. This will be a comprehensive process that will include (but not be limited to) recommendations regarding:

- a. Developing a plan to create more detailed building stock inventories and to prioritize those buildings with the highest risks;
 - b. Determining potential policy changes regarding inspections, enforcement, special event permitting, and zoning vis-a-vis live/work units;
 - c. Examining how departments communicate with each other and how calls for service and other complaints are tracked, including a close look at our Accela, HDL, and Cityworks databases.
2. Artists Task Force: The Mayor's Office Policy Director of Art Spaces is reconvening the Artists Housing and Workspace Working Group of the Oakland Housing Cabinet. The Working Group will continue to solicit input from the artist community on solutions to safety and affordability issues for artist workspace and housing, as well as review and advise on the work of the Fire Safety Task Force.

Other Information:

The City Administrator will continue to provide updates on each of the actions described above and will provide more information with the report to the City Council on February 21, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

Sabrina B. Landreth
City Administrator