

NEHRP Responses to the 2019 ACEHR Report Recommendations ON THE STATE OF THE PROGRAM

Recommendation 1

NIST, FEMA, NSF, USGS, and the NEHRP Office, coordinating through the Interagency Coordinating Committee, should ensure that adequate resources are devoted to developing the Strategic Plan required by the Act and should report to ACEHR on progress toward completing the Strategic Plan. ACEHR is committed to providing review comments on drafts of the Strategic Plan, when appropriate, for consideration by the agencies and National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP) Office.

NEHRP Response:

We agree that the Strategic Plan requires updating; that work is underway.

A meeting of the ICC was held on August 7, 2019 to discuss the Program, its progress and immediate plans. The ICC endorsed the goal of updating the Strategic Plan now that the 2018 reauthorization has been signed into law. Furthermore, the agency principals at the meeting agreed to provide the resources necessary to update the Plan. The target is to have the draft Strategic Plan completed for ICC review prior to their next meeting, planned for August 2020.

NIST, as the lead NEHRP agency, is leading the effort to update the existing 2008-2013 NEHRP Strategic Plan. The approach has been to start with the existing Plan and determine whether its structure is still well suited to the Program. The monthly Program Coordination Working Group (PCWG) meetings have each addressed an update to a topic and are progressively getting into the supporting details updates to the Plan. Progress to date includes developing updated Vision and Mission statements as well as Goals. Work on the revised Objectives is continuing.

All four NEHRP agencies have been actively involved with this collaborative effort, with several representatives from each agency engaged in these discussions. The following statement by FEMA summarizes the commitment that all four agencies have made towards the Strategic Plan update: *FEMA is committed to working with NIST on the update to the NEHRP Strategic Plan and we have submitted numerous comments on the draft to date. We will continue to stay engaged with the process and provide additional comments as necessary.*

Progress on this Plan update will be reported at the March 25-26 meeting. The draft Strategic Plan will be ready for ICC review in time for their August 2020 meeting.

Recommendation 2

NIST, FEMA, NSF, and USGS should take ongoing leadership roles in engaging with local, state, and federal agencies and professional organizations to foster consensus on issues related to developing and implementing functional recovery requirements.

NEHRP Response:

We agree with the ACEHR recommendation and are aggressively pursuing a study of recommended functional recovery options to report to Congress.

The NEHRP Reauthorization Act of 2018, signed into law as PL 115-307, requires that FEMA and NIST jointly convene a committee of experts from Federal agencies, nongovernmental organizations, private sector entities, disaster management professional associations, engineering professional associations, and professional construction and homebuilding industry associations, to assess and recommend options for improving the built environment and critical infrastructure to reflect performance goals stated in terms of post-earthquake reoccupancy and functional recovery time. The NEHRP Reauthorization Act also requires NIST and FEMA to submit a report to Congress by June 30, 2020 with their recommendations.

FEMA and NIST are working closely to fulfill the mandate in the legislation by developing a comprehensive procedure that includes two committees: (1) the Project Technical Panel (PTP) that is developing the functional recovery draft report content; and (2) the Project Review Panel (PRP) that provides input to the PTP's written report drafts based on their technical expertise and input from stakeholders (collected via five workshops across the country). The expected timeline for a final draft of the report is April 30, 2020 to allow for internal reviews by the agencies.

All four NEHRP agencies will be exploring further avenues to pursue concerning functional recovery once the report is completed.

Recommendation 3

ACEHR endorses the initiative from the NEHRP Office to structure future ACEHR meetings in a manner that focuses on implementation of the Strategic Plan at a programmatic rather than agency level and recommends that it be implemented as soon as practical.

We agree with this ACEHR recommendation. NIST has moved forward with structuring this meeting to present information to the ACEHR on a programmatic basis. This new format will better identify how reported progress by the NEHRP agencies is linked together under respective Strategic Plan goals and objectives. This will also be a more efficient process for ACEHR to assess Program activities and progress.