

Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)

DATE: MARCH 18th, 2026 Q. 1

CHAIR: Amanda Loach

RECORDER: Andrew Preis

MEMBERS PRESENT (*P = Present, O = Online, A=Absent, AE=Absent/excused*)

<u>LEPC Voting Members:</u>		<u>Other Agencies Represented:</u>		<u>Other Attendees:</u>	
Chairperson – Amanda Loach/Civil Defense	P				
Doug Lamkin – Building Owner / Manager	A	Mary Christy – Coastal Surgery	O		
George Vakalis – SERC / Member-at-Large	P	Bonnie Bailey – SOA DOH	O		
Alyssa Farrar – Local Environmental	O	Kari Wiederkehr - OEM	P		
Manch Garhart – First Aid / EMS	O	Anthony Picasso – UAA EM	P		
Ashley Lally - Member at Large	O	Ben Russell - OEM	P		
Lore Olson – Hospitals	O	Kathy Shea - AKDEC	P		
John Huffman – Local Disaster Planning / CERT	P	Austin Coutts – AK Regional Hosp.	O		
Brian Dean – AFD Fire Marshal	P	Jon Glover – AFD Wildfire Div.	O		
Brian Wilson – APD Captain/Law Enforcement	O	Jen Schmidt - UAA	P		
<u>Support Staff:</u>		Stephen Johnson - AHD	O		
Sean MacKenzie-OEM (Kari filled in)	P	Morgan Ashcraft	O		
Andrew Preis-OEM	P	John Werner – JBER EM	P		
<u>Ex-Officio Members (non-voting):</u>		Travis Golay	O		
Aviva Braun - Weather	AE				
<u>Reporting Agencies:</u>					
Community Right to Know (CRTK) - Jean Boyda	O				
State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) – George Vakalis SERC Finance Committee.	P				
Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM) – Kim Barenburg	P				
Alaska Partnership for Infrastructure Protection (APIP) – Hillary Palmer / Benjamin Hartlieb	A				
Joint Medical Emergency Planning Group (JMEPG) – Michael Kubler	AE				
Communications (AWARN/ALMR) Jason Beach	O				
Anchorage Health Department (AHD) – Katherine Stodgell	O				
Community Emergency Response Team (CERT/Citizen Corp), John Huffman, Manch Garhart	O/ P				
Emergency Operations Center, Andrew Preis OEM	P				

Agenda Item	DISCUSSION	RECOMMENDATION/ACTIONS	FOLLOW-UP
AGENDA/ITEM	DISCUSSION	RECOMMENDATION/ACTIONS	FOLLOW-UP (Track, Open, Close)
Call to Order and Introductions	Meeting called to order by Chair Loach – 1:02pm		
Welcome and Roll Call	Welcome & Rollcall – Andrew Preis Committee members present: 8/10 (quorum met)		
Safety Minute	- Avalanche Safety talk, Andy Preis OEM Program Manager.		Notes from the safety minutes will be included in the meeting minutes below.
Consent Agenda- Approval of previous meeting minutes from 9/17/25, 12/10/25	Motion: George Vakalis Second: Brian Dean Result: motion passes to approve both sets of meeting minutes.	When posting approved meeting minutes to the LEPC website, be sure to Post slides from Q4 presentations as a separate post.	Post minutes and slides from Q3 and Q4, 2025.
Consent Agenda- Approval of Agenda for 3/18/26	Motion: Brian Dean Second: George Vakalis Result: motion passes unanimously to approve agenda with suggested amendment.	Amend agenda to include avalanche safety and awareness talk.	
Presentation	- LEPC Strengths and 3-year Improvement Outlook, Amanda Loach OEM Director and LEPC Chairperson - Opening a conversation about what the Anchorage LEPC could be doing additionally to the baseline requirements already being met, in the future. - Requirements have been consistently met for years now, but what is next for the Anchorage LEPC? What additional work, education, planning, etc. can be getting done? - Topics to consider include: - o Key emergency management topics members want to learn about - o Stakeholders or sectors to brief the	<u>NEXT STEPS:</u> - OEM to send out short post-meeting survey before June - Identify priorities through poll/survey feedback - Launch 2-3 short term work groups <u>CALL TO ACTION FOR LEPC MEMBERS:</u> - Start a working group - Provide input in the follow up survey - Suggest training and planning topics - Recommend meeting improvements	Slides from the presentation will be included in the meeting minutes below.

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	LEPC ○ Short trainings added to meetings (e.g. Red Cross reunification) - Planning: ○ Other plans desired to brief ○ Identify missing or needed plans ○ Special meetings for deeper discussions ○ Potential planning subcommittee ○ Cross-agency plan comparison - Meeting experiences ○ Host meetings at EOC or other local facilities ○ Increase public and required community right to know (CRTK) facility involvement ○ Breakout groups or subcommittees ○ Desired presentations across disaster phases ○ Refreshments or meeting time for participation - YEAR 1: mini trainings, special plan session, launch working groups - YEAR 2: conduct exercise, expand public outreach, explore support options - YEAR 3: cross agency integration, annual performance summary, refresh subcommittees.		
<u>AGENCY REPORTS:</u>			
Community Right to Know Act (CRTK)	Jean Boyda, AFD/CRTK. - Deadline for Tier II reporting was March 1st, and as of today's meeting 408 reports have been submitted		

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	- Past due facilities are being contacted individually to complete their reporting requirements.		
Emergency Plans	Kari Wiederkehr, OEM Program Manager - Presentation on the 2026 Integrated Preparedness Plan - Plan has been completed and submitted to the State - The IPP workshop had great turnout and input.		Slides from the presentation will be included in the meeting minutes below.
State Emergency Response Committee (SERC)	George Vakalis - No meeting since the last one - Still no funding, nothing else to report		
Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS & EM)	Kim B., DHS&EM - Kim used to be the HMGP program lead - Now in the LEPC role at the DHS&EM, and in Logistics at the SEOC		
Alaska Partners for Infrastructure Protection (APIP)	Hillary Palmer, Ben Hartlieb - N/A		
Joint Medical Emergency Planning Group (JMEPG)	Current member: Michael Kubler current chair - In discussions right now to see what the JMEPG will be going forward - Members reporting they like the collaborations, but not sure the JMEPG is the right space. Could be looking at a re-organization of some kind in the future		
Communications: (AWARN/ALMR)	Jason Beach – MOA Comms/Radio Shop - No updates.		
Anchorage Health Department (AHD)	Katherine Stodgell/Renee Aguilar – AHD EP - No report		
Citizen Corps/CERT	John Huffman – UAA Director EHSRM - Continuing to grow the team, added 9 new employees last year - Continue to push courses as able, with state support Manch Garhard – Dep. Chief GFR - CERT POC appointed. Supporting the State with displaced people from the west coast		

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	with a CERT class for western alaska deployment Dean Cox, Eagle River CERT - N/A		
MOA Emergency Operations Center	Andrew Preis – Program Manager, OEM: - N/A		
Ex-Officio member comments	Aviva Braun, NWS - N/A		
Break			
Unfinished Business:	- Anchorage LEPC logos - o First one still incorporates colors for all hazards response - o Second one is more simple with fewer colors - Possibility to have a color version and grey scale version. One to stand out, one to be more subtle - This would be for all official documentation, website, branding, written communications, agenda and meeting minutes, etc - The color version pops, makes someone want to inquire within, be involved - Branding matters! Motion to adopt option 1 with understanding the typos will be corrected, and proofed for grey scale and accessibility. - Moved: Vakalis - Second: Dean - Motion passes	- Suggestion to print the color version to see how it prints in grey scale - MUST FIX TYPOS!!!	- OEM to follow up with UAA rep for further editing and development.
New Business:	- N/A		
Public Comment	- John Werner, JBER EM - o Open house and air show August 7-9. Inviting everyone to attend. August 7 is a Friday for invited guests, general public is the weekend 8,9.		

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	○ Brings in a couple hundred thousand people to the MOA and JBER in one weekend. ○ Lots of ariel demos, parachute demos, parachute teams might be doing jumps during the week leading up to the air show. ○ Comms might start going out to partners as soon as this week. ○ Question about including local medical facilities into the medical response planning phase, and Mr. Werner thinks that local medical will be folded into planning - Bonnie Bailey – AK DOH. ○ Has been working on the Hearnnet radio talk group development, and has been really appreciating the MOA Radio Shop's help with the build out for the MOA departments. ○ Also ready to add APD and UAA in the near future.		
Committee Member Comment	- George Vakalis, suggestion for improving the LEPC and information shared with the group ○ Where hazmat materials are stored, and what information gets shared during response ○ In regards to avalanche hazard, who responds and how ○ In general would improve meetings to have more information related to recent responses, how they went, hazards and how they are responded to in the MOA. - Lore Olson, on hazmat materials. ○ Had previously asked for locations of hazmat, and had to submit a request and provide copy of DL ○ George Vakalis mentioned that all facilities have to have a placard on the outside of the facility. He had		

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	been referring to general parts of town and where materials are stored - Brian Dean on CRTK - o Information is protected, ID required to be shared by requestor. Could do report on MOA's capabilities for response. - Amanda Loach, on the upcoming LEPCA and SERC meetings. - o Will be representing Anchorage LEPC at the upcoming bi-annual meeting in April, intends to bring up the request-for-funding letter in addition to reporting other good works since the last meeting. - o Plans to bring to the LEPCA's and SERC's attention that they are supposed to be funding AND supporting LEPCs in funding and plan reviews. - o Additionally, MOA OEM submitted an AAR for the west coast storm response, and under the impression that the State is supposed to be reviewing AARs as well. Inquiring as to the whereabouts for the State's AAR.		
ADJOURNMENT:	Motion requested to adjourn meeting Motion: George Vakalis Second: Brian Dean Result: motion passes unanimous Meeting adjourned at: 2:14pm Next meeting will be Wednesday JUNE 17th 1pm-3pm Loussac Library Moose Room/MS Teams hybrid		

X

Signed

Date

8/12/2020

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Avalanche Safety Minute
LEPC 3/18/2026

Chugach Avalanche Center: (show website)

- Full name is the Chugach National Forest Avalanche Information Center (CNFAIC)
- Located in Girdwood
- Mission: Increase avalanche awareness in the Turnagain area through advisories and public education.
- Work on avalanche education, safety, avalanche awareness, and critical avalanche observations for back country areas, and produce avalanche advisory products
- Advisory products talk about avalanche dangers and forecasted avalanche conditions in back country areas, get sent to the NWS Anchorage Forecast Office to send on their behalf to their critical partners and stakeholders, like OEM, to share with the public
- POINT OF EMPHASIS: The Av Center forecasts and observes for the back country, and does not have jurisdiction in urban areas. HOWEVER, there are some urban areas in the Turnagain region and the MOA where back country conditions and slides can impact residential areas. Namely these areas include Eagle River along Hiland Road, and Girdwood along the upper sections of Crow Creek Road

When an avalanche danger notification is issued: (show iNWS message)

- The Chugach Avalanche Center puts the message together based on observations and forecasted conditions
- Message gets sent to the Anchorage Forecast Office to send to partners and stakeholders as a “special avalanche bulletin”
- Includes language on what the warning is for, which regions could be impacted, the time frame for the warning, and some recommended preparedness actions

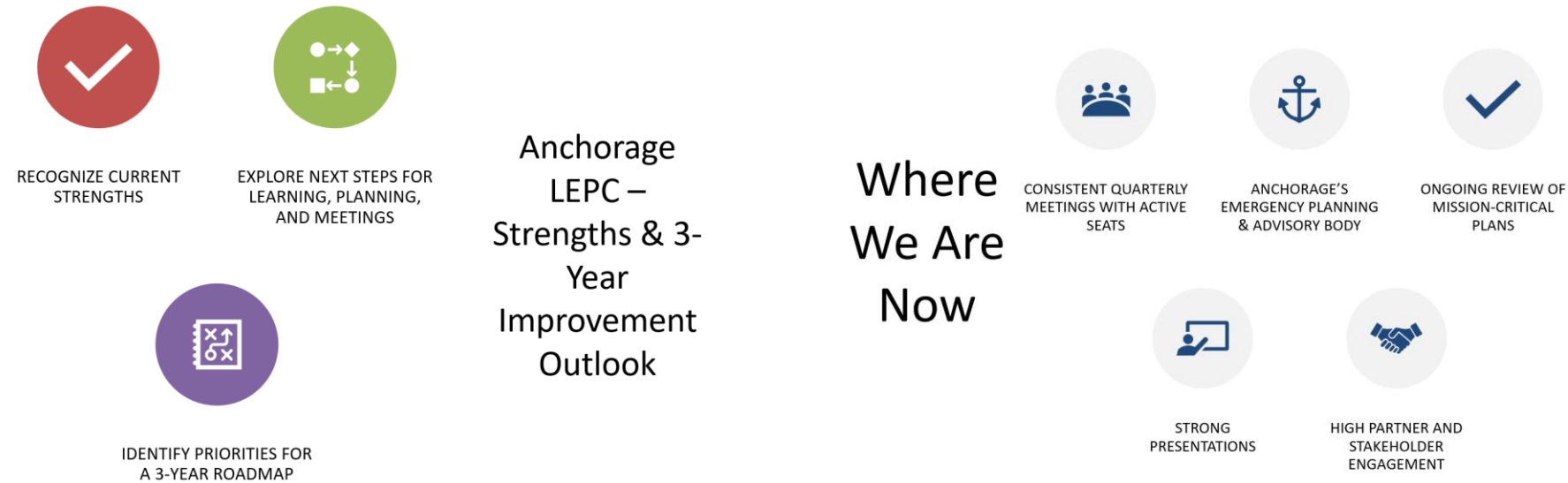
Other notes:

- There is the potential to utilize the Emergency Alert System in the future to help broadcast these avalanche warnings, through the NWS forecast office, but this requires more discussion. Will be discussing more in depth with Aviva Braun next week during a coordination meeting
- Anchorage OEM has been in some other very interesting and engaging discussions about putting together an avalanche response plan
 - o Got some lessons learned from Ketchum Idaho currently going through similar process
 - o Spoke with folks from Alaska Mountain Rescue Group, Chugach Av Center, and other stakeholders about a way forward for avalanche response in the MOA

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- For those interested in going into the back country, www.avalanche.org is a critical website to visit first, for forecasting, training, education, preparedness, etc.

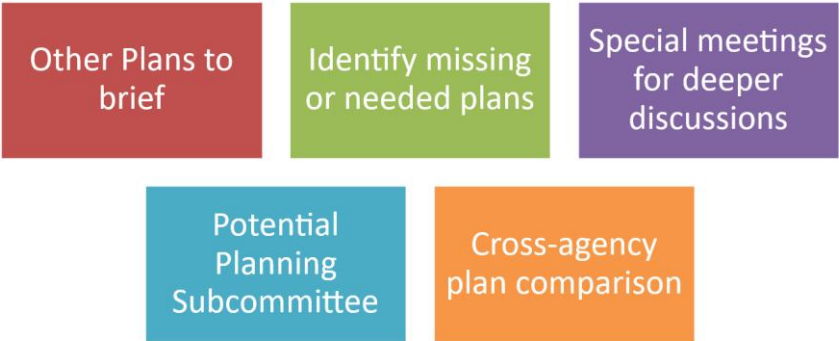
LEPC Strengths and Outlook Presentation Slides:



Discussion Topic Option #1: Education



Discussion Topic #2: Planning



Discussion Topic #3: Meeting Experience

Proposed Near-Term Next Steps

Host meetings at EOC or other local facilities

Increase public and required community right to know (CRTK) facility involvement

Breakout groups or subcommittees

Desired presentations across disaster phases

Refreshments or Meeting Time for participation



Send short post-meeting survey before June



Identify priorities through poll/survey feedback



Launch 2–3 short term working groups

3-Year Roadmap Ideas

Year 1: Mini-trainings, Special Plan session, launch working groups

Year 2: Conduct exercise, expand public outreach, explore support options

Year 3: Cross-agency integration, annual performance summary, refresh subcommittees

Your Voice Matters



Start a working group



Provide input in the follow-up survey



Suggest training and planning topics



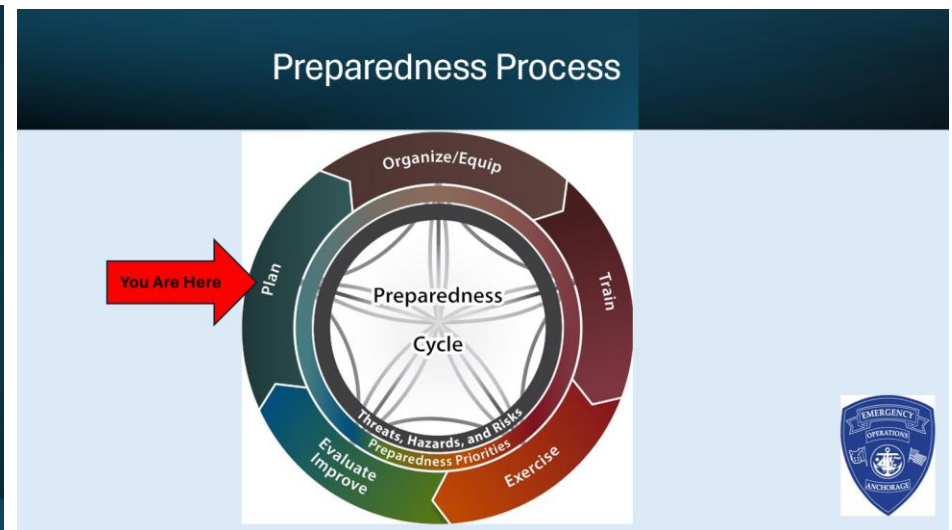
Recommend meeting improvements

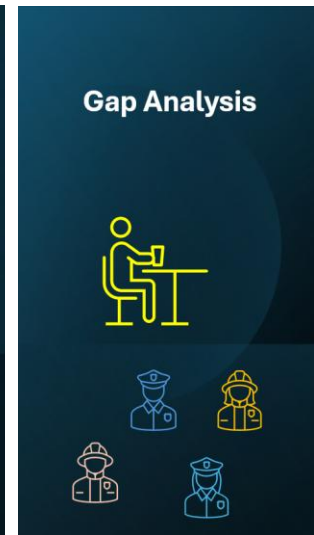
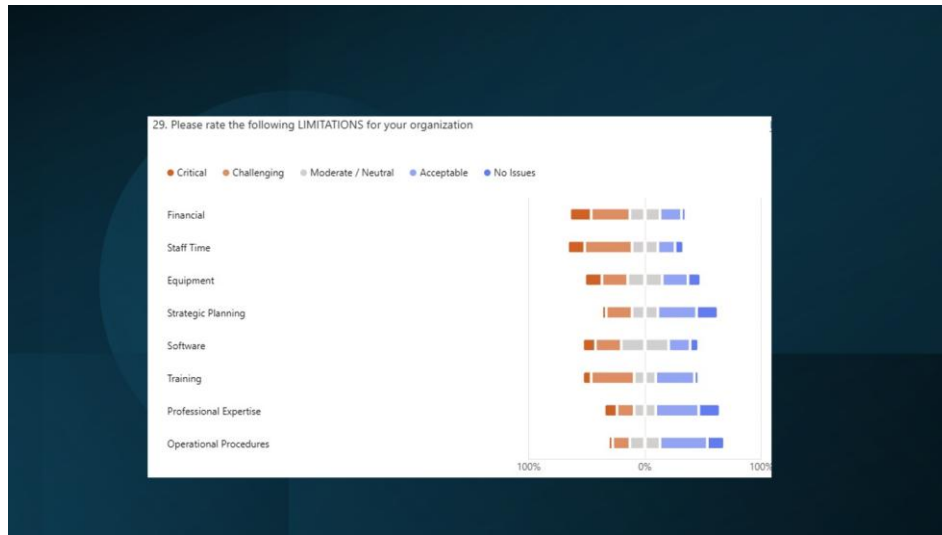
2026 Integrated Preparedness Plan Overview presentation:

2026 Integrated Preparedness Plan Overview

Municipality of Anchorage
Office of Emergency Management
March 17, 2026







Staffing depth and surge capacity

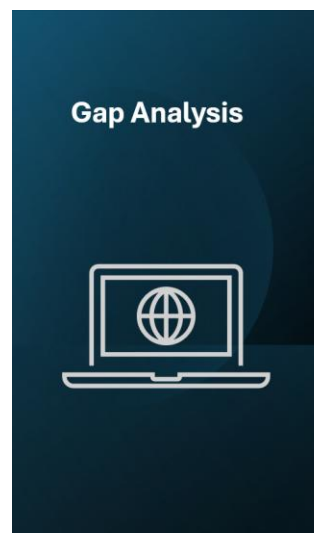
- “Staffing” is the single most common gap: numerous departments—from Fire/EMS and law enforcement to public health, tribal partners, and volunteer auxiliaries—flag limited bench strength and surge capacity (including volunteers) as a constraint. Several agencies explicitly call out needs for **recruitment, retention, volunteer management**, and pre-arranged **recall mechanisms**. This aligns with “**Workforce challenges**” being among the top operational impacts.



Training

Respondents prioritized

- Foundational and position-specific training**
 - (Incident Command System/Joint Information System)
- Executive/leadership capability-building within ICS.**
- Needs include:
 - Event specific: earthquake/severe weather and mass casualty**
 - Communication protocols**
 - Resource/inventory management.**



Operational communications & Emergency Operations Center technology/process

- Multiple agencies highlight
 - network resilience**
 - closed-loop operational communications,**
 - public warning systems,**
 - modern EOC information platforms and**
 - real-time documentation** (rather than paper/whiteboards).
 - Strengthening common tools and procedures (RAVE/IPAWS, WebIAP, COP/Juvare) and clarifying **protocols/contacts** are recurring themes.

Preparedness Priorities

- Build surge-ready staffing/volunteer capacity.
- Deliver an all-hazards training & exercise series aligned to top risks.
- Standardize & strengthen internal emergency operational communications and workflows.
- Plan to standardize & strengthen external emergency operational communications and workflows.
- Standardize & strengthen all external emergency management operational communications and workflows.

2027 Potential Recommendations

- Define capability targets within priority areas
- Document how improvement items feed into specific plan updates
- Build “SMART” objectives into priorities
- Build / Formalize quarterly update workflow
- Consider additional public safety approvals to assist in broader ownership of the process

Feedback Survey

2026 Integrated Preparedness Planning Workshop: FEEDBACK



Please use this QR code or copy and paste the link/address below to provide feedback about today’s presentation.

<https://forms.office.com/g/5AeGDbWqWg>

Kari Wiederkehr
Training & Exercise Coordinator

THANK YOU!



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