

## **AVALANCHE AND MASS-WASTING POSITION – 1996**

The safety of lives and property are the goals of the avalanche and mass wasting position of the League of Women Voters Juneau. The League believes that hazard zoning should be a permanent part of local planning.

The League believes studies requested and received by the CBJ from avalanche, mass-wasting and debris experts are a valuable baseline for information and decision making. These studies include those done by Swanston, Hart and LaChapelle in 1967 and 1968, as well as the two major studies in 1972 and 1992 by Frutiger, Mears, Fesler, and Fredston.

The League urges regulators and the public to recognize the range of hazards presented by snow avalanches and mass-wasting mudslides and prohibit building in geologically unsafe areas.

The League encourages the use of a full public process in efforts to implement the following items and consider additional methods to ensure the safest possible use of properties impacted by potential avalanche and mass-wasting in the borough.

The League believes the City and Borough of Juneau has a responsibility to:

1. Educate the public about local geophysical hazards (avalanche and mass-wasting) on an ongoing basis;
2. Regulate use and building in the hazard areas;
3. Notify those who might buy, lease or rent in a severe hazard area;
4. Prevent or reduce existing hazard danger to private or City-owned lands and properties;
5. Explore the possibility of rectification as a tool for addressing existing situations of homes currently located in severe hazard geophysical areas.

### **Amplification**

1. Educating the public should include:
  - a. Determining clear and coordinated boundaries of the severe and moderate hazard avalanche and mass-wasting areas as noted in the 1972 and 1992 studies. Indicate on all CBJ land use planning maps clear designation of severe and moderate geophysical hazards.
  - b. Making available to the general public the studies commissioned by the CBJ.
  - c. Making greater use of the city-commissioned studies.
  - d. Updating the building codes to include hazard specifications.
2. Regulating use and building in the hazard areas should include:
  - a. Regulating building and additions.
  - b. Regulating building on steep slopes.
  - c. Regulating building in run-out zones of gullies.
  - d. Creating engineering design standards for structures within hazard areas
  - e. Stamping all affected building permit plans and subdivision plats within the severe and moderate avalanche and mass-wasting zones with the appropriate hazard designation (“Avalanche Zone” or “Debris Slide Zone”)
3. Notifying those who might buy, lease or rent in severe hazard areas should include:

- a. Each real estate agent/salesperson/broker/private party must provide, upon first inquiry and prior to viewing, written notice of severe hazard.
  - b. Requiring severe hazard notice on deeds.
  - c. Requiring owners or person responsible to provide renter/tenant/subtenant/leaser with written notice of severe hazard zone.
  - d. Posting signs in the public right-of-way to reasonably identify boundaries of severe hazard zone.
4. Preventing or reducing existing hazard to private or City-owned severe hazard lands and properties should include:
  - a. Preventing clear cuts uphill.
  - b. Selling no CBJ land in severe hazard areas.
  - c. Ensuring rescue planning, training and coordination.
  - d. Alerting the public to conditions of severe hazard for snow avalanches and mass-wasting mudslides with Public Service Announcements (PSAs), weather reports, etc.
5. Discussing rectification of existing situations of homes currently located in severe geophysical hazard areas should include full and open public process for consideration of any methods proposed.