

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: PAUL LOWENTHAL, FIRE MARSHAL – FIRE DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN, A WILDFIRE ANNEX TO THE LOCAL HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

AGENDA ACTION: REPORT

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Fire Department that the Council, by motion, accept the second annual report for the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, a Wildfire Annex to the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan in compliance with the Healthy Forests Restoration Act.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2016 the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) was updated to assess and develop a response to the City's vulnerability to natural hazards such as earthquake, flood, wildfire and drought. This item will update the LHMP by developing a Wildfire Annex to the existing plan and creating a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

Following the fires of October 2017, the City prepared an application through a competitive grant process reviewed by the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to perform an update to the LHMP. The focus of the application was to develop a CWPP that will become an annex to the Wildfire section of the current LHMP. The grant was approved in the amount of \$200,000, and split 75% Federal share and 25% City share, in which the City costs are slated to be covered through staff time dedicated to the development of the CWPP. The grant was awarded in June of 2018.

On April 2, 2019, City Council approved a Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with Geo Elements, LLC for the development of a Wildfire Annex to the existing LHMP and the creation and development of a CWPP in compliance with the Healthy Forests Restoration Act.

This item relates to City Council 2022 Goal and Priorities 3, 4, 5 and 6 as the CWPP is intended to help Santa Rosa prepare to respond to future wildfire threats. Wildfires have had significant impacts on housing. The CWPP will work to mitigate risk and help with short- and long-term fiscal stability and economic resiliency. The CWPP takes into account the needs associated with climate change and is a public safety priority. Ensuring the CWPP targets our diverse community is critical.

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Last year, the Fire Department reported that activities were initiated on approximately 36 actionable items and that seven items had been completed. Through the second year, it was discovered that several items require additional work and/or maintenance to keep the activities current and/or relevant.

BACKGROUND

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires that State and local governments develop and adopt a LHMP to be eligible to receive federal grants pertaining to disaster preparedness.

In December 2017, an application to develop a CWPP intended to be an annex to the LHMP, specific to the Wildfire section of the currently adopted plan was developed. The application was reviewed by State and Federal officials and funding was awarded in June 2018. In December 2018, the RFP process was opened to solicit applicants to provide proposals for the development of the CWPP. Geo Elements, LLC was selected based on their prior fire service experience in developing CWPP's, Wildland Fire Behavior Analysis, Community Wildfire Hazard Risk Assessments, Wildland Fire and Fuels Mitigation Strategy Development, Development of Cooperative Fire Protection Agreements at the State and local levels, Fire Management Planning, Fire Behavior Modeling GIS – Geospatial Analysis and Cartography and the cost to provide services. Geo Elements, LLC has provided projects for the communities of Montecito Fire Protection District, CA; Goleta Valley/San Marcos Pass Mountain Communities, Santa Barbara County, CA; California State Office, Bureau of Land Management, Dunsmuir, CA; City of La Verne, CA; City of Goleta; Santa Monica Mountain Communities, plus numerous other Federal, State and local projects.

On August 25, 2020, City Council accepted and approved the Community Wildfire Protection Plan as presented. The plan serves as a five-year road map to work to mitigate the risk of wildfires through the course of nine objectives and 46 actionable items.

The first of five annual CWPP reports was provided in August 2021. The second annual report was delayed until January 2022 to allow for the new City Council to be seated.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On January 10, 2017, the Council adopted the City's current LHMP.

On August 25, 2020, Council accepted and approved the Community Wildfire Protection Plan by resolution.

On September 28, 2021. Council accepted and approved the first annual Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

ANALYSIS

The Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 requires that State and local governments develop and adopt a LHMP to be eligible to receive Federal grants pertaining to disaster preparedness.

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The updated LHMP assesses and responds to the City's vulnerability to natural hazards such as earthquake, flood, fire and drought.

FISCAL IMPACT

With the adoption of the LHMP, the City is eligible to apply for additional funding through Federal mitigation grant programs as well as to receive post-disaster recovery funding from the State of California should a disaster occur.

Departments may also seek to fund specific mitigation actions through future budget processes.

On April 27, 2021, City Council approved \$5.25M from Pacific Gas and Electric 2017 Wildfire Settlement Funds for a five-year vegetation management program. \$250K of the funds are to be set aside for the development of an updated CWPP. A CWPP must be updated after five years.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)3, because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment and therefore is not subject to CEQA.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – 2022 Annual Report
- Attachment 2 – Community Wildfire Protection Plan

CONTACT

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