

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: SCOTT WESTROPE, DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF  
FIRE DEPARTMENT  
ANNA MCAULIFFE, RESEARCH AND PROGRAM  
COORDINATOR  
SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE CITY-WIDE AFTER-ACTION REPORT –  
OCTOBER 2017 WILDFIRES

AGENDA ACTION: NO ACTION REQUIRED

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Fire Department that the Council hold a Study Session to provide an opportunity for Council to receive and review the City-Wide After-Action Report addressing the City's response to the October 2017 Northern California Wildfires. This item is provided for Council's information only and no immediate action is requested.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This independent After-Action Report was commissioned by the City of Santa Rosa to review the events and actions around the October 2017 Wildfires that directly affected the community and neighboring areas. The focus of this report highlights the response to the Tubbs and other fires, which created unprecedented devastation in Santa Rosa on October 8-9, 2017, and continuing until October 31, 2017.

The objectives of this report include:

- telling the story of the immediate response by City employees and departments in the subsequent days and weeks;
- developing a better understanding of those events and actions;
- identifying the strengths and areas for improvement of general disaster response efforts; and
- identifying ways in which the City of Santa Rosa can improve resiliency in the face of wildfires.

The City Manager and Council are making this report public to both the people of Santa Rosa as well as other jurisdictions, so that they may better understand the City's

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response to the incident and engage in the opportunities to create a more resilient Santa Rosa.

The report presents 23 findings and 54 related recommendations for improvements based on research, interviews, best practices, Federal and State guidelines, and local realizations based on firsthand experience with the fires. While not all recommendations can be immediately implemented, the report recommends the City consider each one in earnest and develop implementation priorities and strategies based on the availability of funding and other resources. Finally, these fires do not respect municipal boundaries. Although this report is focused on Santa Rosa, the report recommends potential regional approaches to some of the ongoing challenges including vegetation management. Furthermore, the report also acknowledges the substantial actions taken by Sonoma County since the incident as well.

### BACKGROUND

After-Action Reports are used extensively in all disciplines of emergency management to examine an entity's response to small- or large-scale incidents and build performance enhancement measures based on the results identified in the report.

The Fire Department, at the direction of the City Manager, sought to complete a comprehensive After-Action Report (AAR) analyzing the City of Santa Rosa's response to the 2017 Northern California Wildfires.

Witt O'Brien's, LLC was selected through a competitive RFP process and was awarded a professional services agreement at the June 19, 2018, Council meeting.

### PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On June 19, 2018, the City Council awarded a Professional Services Agreement to Witt O'Brien's, LLC of Washington, DC to prepare a City-Wide After-Action Report to examine the City of Santa Rosa's response to the 2017 Northern California Wildfires.

### ANALYSIS

This independent after-action report provides a holistic third-party view of the City's preparation, mitigation, response, and recovery to the events of October 2017. The report identifies areas that were deemed successful and others that would benefit from improvement. The end result of this report is a list of findings and recommendations that will guide the Council and staff into being better prepared, and ultimately resilient, in the future.

This After-Action Report will serve as a guidebook for the City to enhance preparedness and emergency management for all hazards that the community faces. It is based on legal requirements, ordinance, statutes, and industry standards. This report should be viewed as a tool by which to base strategies, decision making, prioritization, and fiscal

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impacts now and in the future.

FISCAL IMPACT

Fiscal impacts of this report will be determined by the Council's direction based on current economic conditions and City Council Goals.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – City-Wide After-Action Report

CONTACT

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