



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: CEO
Department No.: 012
For Agenda Of: October 2, 2018
Placement: Departmental
Estimated Time: 30 minutes
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Department Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
Director(s)
Contact Info: Dennis Bozanich, Deputy County Executive Officer

SUBJECT: Update on the Eastern Goleta Valley Community Wildfire Protection Plan

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: N/A

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors (Board):

- a) Receive a report on the status of the development and future actions needed for consideration and approval by the Board of the San Marcos Pass – Eastern Goleta Valley Mountainous Communities Community Wildfire Protection Plan;
- b) Provide direction to staff as needed; and
- c) Determine, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines 15378(b)(5), that the above actions are not a project subject to CEQA review because they are administrative activities that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

Today's Board agenda item is to provide your Board with an update on the status of the San Marcos Pass – Eastern Goleta Valley Mountainous Communities Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). This update was requested at the August 14, 2018 Board Meeting.

In 2015, the Board adopted the Eastern Goleta Valley Community Plan, which at Action FIRE-EGV-1B states that "The County shall encourage and support the development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan for at risk communities of the Eastern Goleta Valley in compliance with the Community Wildfire Protection Plan Development Process for Santa Barbara County, adopted on August 2, 2011.

CWPPs are nationally recognized tools for local residents to identify and prioritize fire hazard reduction strategies and preparing local residents for wildland fires. For hazardous fuel reduction projects on non-Federal land, the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 provides a Federal funding priority for communities that have adopted a CCWPP or have taken other proactive measures to encourage willing property owners to reduce fire risk on private property. The County identified a community based Development Team to work with a contract consultant in February 2017 for the Eastern Goleta Valley CWPP. In April 2018, the Development Team completed their latest draft of the San Marcos Pass – Eastern Goleta Valley Mountainous Communities CWPP.

Background:

Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs)

The purpose of the CWPP is to identify fire hazard reduction strategies that are in balance with sustainable ecological management and fiscal resources, and to enhance fire preparedness for local residents. Fire hazard reduction strategies include identifying and prioritizing areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments, recommending current best practices as to the types and methods of fuel treatments, and recommending measures to reduce structure ignitability.

In 2004, the California Fire Safe Council published a guidance document titled, *Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan* and in 2008 published a Community Guide that identifies how to implement the statutory minimum requirements for a CWPP:

- **Collaboration** – Local, state and federal agencies and other interested parties, must collaboratively develop a CWPP;
- **Prioritized Fuel Reduction** – A CWPP must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend types and methods of treatments that will protect communities and infrastructure; and
- **Treatment of Structural Ignitability** – A CWPP must recommend measures that property owners can take to reduce the ignitability of structures.

The guidance document also includes a recommended eight-step CWPP development planning process. (Attachment A)

On August 2, 2011, the Board adopted a policy document titled, *Recommended Community Wildfire Protection Plan Development Process for Santa Barbara County*. That County's CWPP Development Process (Attachment B) identifies eight steps and identifies specific localized stakeholders and considerations. The eight steps are:

- Convene the CWPP Development Team
- Development Team reaches out to Federal and State agencies
- Development Team engages interested parties
- Establish a base map and boundary area for the CWPP
- Develop a community risk assessment
- Recommend hazard reduction priorities and measures to reduce structure ignitability
- Develop draft plan
- Finalize and submit CWPP draft

The Board's policy identifies two groups of individuals to facilitate CWPPs. The CWPP Working Group made up of County staff from the CEO, Fire, Planning and Development and other interested departments. The Second Group is called the Development Team. Their role is actually to assemble the CWPP. The staff report for the 2011 Board policy states:

“The local community priorities are established through the process of developing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan. CWPPs are developed as through a collaborative process that identifies and assesses fire risks and identifies and recommends best practices for eliminating or mitigating fire risks and structural ignitability. . . CWPPs may help to increase awareness of the possible ecological consequences of wildland fuel management practices, so that individual fuel reduction projects avoid or minimize harm to the environment where feasible.

Implementation of any recommended “best practice” or recommended hazardous fuel reduction within a particular CWPP might be modified, or not implemented at all, depending on a number of factors, including: environmental review; permit actions; and the availability of funding. Within any particular CWPP, County could make clear that any necessary environmental review required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and/or National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) shall be completed prior to commencement of any recommended hazardous fuel reduction.”

San Marcos Pass–Eastern Goleta Valley Mountainous Communities CWPP: Development Process and Content Elements

A Request for Proposals was released by County Fire in July 2016 seeking a consultant to prepare a CWPP for the Eastern Goleta Valley Mountainous Area. A contract was signed with Geo Elements, LLC in late October 2016. A project kick off meeting including the County Working Group and the consultant was held in early November.

On January 26, 2017, the Fire Department hosted a community meeting to kick off the planning process. Slightly over 100 individuals attended. At the meeting, individuals were provided with an overview of CWPPs and were asked to consider joining the CWPP Development Team. The eleven members of the Development Team were selected shortly after the community meeting.

Between February 2017 and January 2018, the Development Team and the consultant worked on collecting fire risk data and other information and in September 2017 produced the first of several early drafts of the CWPP. Early in the drafting process (as early as March 2017), there were concerns raised by some members of the Development Team about the representation of environmental issues in the Development Team process. Members of the County Working Group met with individuals voicing those concerns multiple times. Those concerns were provided back to leaders of the Development Team. In January 2018, representatives from Los Padres Forest Watch and Urban Creeks Council resigned from the Development Team due to concerns about the draft document and their inability to have their suggested changes included in the drafts. Invitations to rejoin the Development Team were extended and discussions continued through this past summer.

The latest draft version of the CWPP is from April 2018. At this time, the County Working Group believes that the Development Team has completed most of the steps in the County's Development Process policy. As noted previously, it is arguable whether the Development Team completed the engagement process with interested parties after the multiple attempts to overcome the differences between the Development Team and representatives from Forest Watch and Urban Creeks Council. An initial review by the Planning and Development Department representative on the Working Group determined that since the draft CWPP is structured as an informative document rather than a commitment to the draft CWPP's recommendations,

that approval of the CWPP would not be a project subject to CEQA review. There are a few other clarifying edits provided by Planning and Development staff. A representative from the Fire Department has indicated they are making those minor edits.

Next Steps for San Marcos Pass – Eastern Goleta Valley Mountainous Communities CWPP

Staff is intending to request the Development Team take the following actions to complete the process:

- Complete the edits recommended by the County’s Working Group;
- As requested by the representatives that resigned, remove the individual names and organizations from CWPP; and
- By October 30, 2018, provide CEO staff with a copy of the Final CWPP for docketing for a later Board Meeting.

Performance Measure:

NA

Contract Renewals and Performance Outcomes:

NA

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

Budgeted: No **Fiscal Analysis:**

<u>Funding Sources</u>	<u>Current FY Cost:</u>	<u>Annualized On-going Cost:</u>	<u>Total One-Time Project Cost</u>
General Fund			
State			
Federal			
Fees			
Other:			
Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

Narrative:

Key Contract Risks:

NA

Staffing Impacts:

Legal Positions:

FTEs:

Special Instructions:

NA

Attachments:

Attachment A – Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan from the California Fire Safe Council

Attachment B – Community Wildfire Protection Plan Development Process for Santa Barbara County adopted by the Board of Supervisors on August 2, 2011

Authored by: Dennis Bozanich, Deputy County Executive Officer, 805-568-3400

cc:

Chief Eric Peterson, Fire Chief

Dianne Black, Planning and Development Director