



**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

**Submitted on:**  
**(COB Stamp)**

**Department Name:** Fire  
**Department No.:** 031  
**Agenda Date:** June 3, 2025  
**Placement:** Departmental Agenda  
**Estimated Time:** 30 Minutes  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Department Director(s): Mark Hartwig, Fire Chief/Fire Warden  
Contact: Fred Tan, Fire Marshal  
**SUBJECT:** Adoption of the Santa Barbara Foothill Community Wildfire Protection Plan and  
Receive and File the Santa Barbara Foothill Community Transportation Study

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**County Counsel Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Other Concurrence:**

As to form: Choose an item.

**Auditor-Controller Concurrence**

As to form: Yes

**Recommended Actions:**

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Consider and adopt, by directing the Chair to sign, the Santa Barbara Foothill Community Wildfire Protection Plan (Attachment A); and
- b) If adopted, direct the Chair to sign the resolution (Attachment B) as required by the California Department of Housing and Community Development as a required deliverable of the Community Development Block Grant – Mitigation Program; and
- c) Receive and file the associated Santa Barbara Foothill Community Transportation Study, inserted as Appendix C to the Santa Barbara Foothill Community Wildfire Protection Plan; and
- d) Determine that the above action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), because pursuant to section 15378(b)(5) the recommended action consists of organizational, administrative, or fiscal activities of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

**Summary Text:**

Today the Board will be asked to adopt the Santa Barbara Foothill Community Wildfire Protection Plan (SBF CWPP) that identifies and prioritizes high fire hazard risks and recommends best practices to eliminate or mitigate these risks and structural ignitability. Additionally, as part of the project an associated Transportation Study (SBF TS) was conducted for the area and we ask the Board to receive and file the associated SBF TS, inserted as Appendix C within the SBF CWPP. Lastly, we are requesting the Board determine the adoption of the SBF CWPP and that receiving and filing the SBF TS does not constitute the approval of any project subject to environmental review under CEQA.

### **Discussion:**

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 CWPP or have taken other proactive measures to encourage willing property owners to reduce fire risk on private property.

In August of 2011, the Board adopted the Mission Canyon Community Wildfire Protection Plan (MC CWPP). The MC CWPP was the first community wildfire protection plan adopted within the County. The adopted document was a community effort, carefully drafted by local leaders and stakeholders to:

- “Identify potential areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments, increase the community’s understanding of living in a fire-adapted ecosystem, and improve its ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from wildland fires; and
- Recommend best practices fuel reduction treatments to protect lives and reduce structural ignitability of property, and recommend best practices to improve the fire resilience of the landscape while protecting other ecological, social, and economic values, [and]
- Identify, improve and protect critical evacuation routes.”

The 2011 MC CWPP was an impactful document for the community in regards to community education, identification of community level hazards, recognition of evacuation challenges, guided individual defensible space and home hardening activities. In addition, the document lead to fuel reduction activities by the Santa Barbara County Fire Department compliant with CEQA. The subsequent fuel reduction activities and posted CEQA documentation were implemented and developed in separate actions.

While the 2011 MC CWPP remains an important document locally, the community and the Fire Department recognized the need for the document to be updated and geographically expanded. The Mission Canyon community also recognized it had an evacuation challenge and determined the development of an associated transportation study to expand upon the single page section within the MC CWPP would be beneficial information for the community and local government stakeholders.

In August of 2021, an opportunity to update the MC CWPP presented itself when the California Department of Housing and Urban Development (HCD) announced that the County of Santa Barbara's Community Wildfire Protection Plan was eligible for \$280,000 in Community Development Block Grant – Mitigation Program (CDBG MIT-PPS) funding. After the successful application to this grant opportunity, the County executed an Authorizing Resolution and approved the Fire Chief to sign a Standard Agreement with HCD on August 23, 2022. In a subsequent Board action, the Board

approved an agreement between the Fire Department and Dudek to develop the SBF CWPP and approved Fehr and Peers as a subcontractor to Dudek to develop the SBF TS.

This SBF CWPP and SBF TS were developed by the Santa Barbara County Fire Department (SBC Fire) for the Foothill Communities with input and direction from stakeholders, agency representatives, and community members to geographically expand and update all elements of the MC CWPP. The resulting SBF CWPP continues to serve as a fire protection planning document that presents the communities' physical characteristics, wildfire hazard, assets at risk from wildfire, wildfire risk reduction approaches, vegetation/fuel management projects, and goals and action items intended to reduce wildfire risk in the Plan Area.

The goal of this SBF CWPP renews the original intent of the MC CWPP to protect lives, property, assets, and Plan Area resources threatened by wildland fire while increasing the 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. The SBF TS included as Appendix C in the SBF CWPP is intended to be an additional resource document and provides recommendations for the community and local stakeholders with no required actions.

The SBF CWPP makes 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, treatment of structural ignitability, or anything recommended by the SBF CWPP, as applicable. The SBF TS is a receive and file element with no required actions or identified treatments requiring CEQA or NEPA compliance.

### **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.

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

1. Convene the CWPP Development Team
2. Development Team reaches out to Federal and State agencies
3. Development Team engages interested parties
4. Establish a base map and boundary area for the CWPP
5. Develop a community risk assessment
6. Recommend hazard reduction priorities and measures to reduce structure ignitability
7. Develop draft plan
8. 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, SBC Fire, Planning and Development and other interested departments. The second group, the Development Team, is charged with drafting 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.*

### **Santa Barbara Foothill CWPP and Transportation Study: Development Process and Content Elements**

Community area residents formed an initial steering committee in October of 2023 to explore options for updating and expanding this CWPP for the Santa Barbara Foothills. The Santa Barbara County Fire Department, through the Santa Barbara County Community Services Department (CSD), applied for an HCD grant through the CDBG MIT-PPS program. Grant funding was awarded to the Santa Barbara County Fire Safe Department in the amount of \$280,000 and a consultant selected (Dudek) to assist with plan development. A project kickoff meeting including the CWPP Development Team, the County Working Group and the consultants was held on August 23, 2023. The SBF CWPP Development Team comprised of local community members, agency representatives, Fire Safe Council staff, and the consultant project team was formed in October of 2023.

Between December 2023 and June 2024, the Development Team and the consultant worked on collecting fire risk data and other information. On May 15, 2024 and May 22, 2024, the Santa Barbara County Fire Department hosted community workshops to kick off the planning process. The meetings were well attended by community members and local stakeholders. At these meetings, individuals were provided with an overview of CWPPs and transportation studies; and, were asked to provide input and community priorities.

In October of 2024, Dudek and Fehr and Peers produced the first of several early drafts of the SBF CWPP and SBF TS. The Development Team conducted numerous focused meetings to engage residents in the plan development. The Development Team also met with both agency and non-governmental organizations stakeholders for both feedback and to ensure a balanced approach to the plan strategies.

A public meeting was held on February 27, 2025 to present a draft SBF CWPP and SBF TS, to elicit feedback and comment. Public feedback and comments were implemented into this draft and the result is the final draft presented to the Board today. This latest publicly released draft version of the SBF CWPP and SBF TS is from April 2025. At this time, the County Working Group has determined that the Development Team has completed all of the steps in the County's Development Process policy. A review by the Planning and Development Department representative on the Working Group determined that since the draft SBF CWPP and SBF TS are structured as informative documents rather than a commitment to the SBF CWPP's and SBF TS's recommendations, that approval of the SBF CWPP, and receiving and filing the SBF TS, are not projects subject to CEQA review.

The Final Draft SBF CWPP and SBF TS as presented today to the Board has considered all comments and feedback to date and contains several recent edits and additions based on that input.

**Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:**

None.

**Staffing Impacts:**

None.

**Special Instructions:**

Upon Board approval and execution, the Clerk is asked to please return a copy of the resolution (Attachment B) and a copy of the fully executed signature page (page 141) from the Santa Barbara Foothill CWPP document (Attachment A) to the Fire Department, attention: Fred Tan.

**Attachments:**

**Attachment A** – Santa Barbara Foothill Community Wildfire Protection Plan

**Attachment B** – Resolution

**Attachment C** – CEQA Notice of Exemption

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

**Attachment E** – PowerPoint Presentation

**Contact Information:**

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