



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:** Fire  
**Department No.:** 031  
**For Agenda Of:** March 5, 2019  
**Placement:** Departmental  
**Estimated Time:** 45 minutes  
**Continued Item:** No  
**If Yes, date from:**  
**Vote Required:** Majority

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**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Department Mark A. Hartwig, Fire Chief (805) 681-5507  
Director(s)  
Contact Info: Steve Oaks, Fire Marshal (805) 681-5554

**SUBJECT:** Adoption of the San Marcos Pass - Eastern Goleta Valley Mountainous  
Communities Community Wildfire Protection Plan

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**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) Consider and adopt, by directing the Chair to sign, the San Marcos Pass – Eastern Goleta Valley Mountainous Communities Community Wildfire Protection Plan;
- b) Determine that adopting the San Marcos Pass – Eastern Goleta Valley Mountainous Communities Community Wildfire Protection Plan is not the approval of a project that is subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and approve the attached proposed Notice of Exemption.

**Summary Text:**

Today the Board will be asked to adopt the San Marcos Pass-Eastern Goleta Valley Mountainous Communities Community Wildfire Protection Plan (SMP-EGV CWPP) that will identify and prioritize high fire hazard risks and recommend best practices to eliminate or mitigate the risks and structural ignitability. We will also be asking the Board to determine that adopting the SMP-EGV CWPP is not the approval of a project subject to environmental review under CEQA since it does not:

- Commit any signing party or anyone to carrying out, funding, or issuing a permit for any specific project;
- Require implementation of any of the recommendations in the SMP-EGV CWPP; or

- Remove any permit requirement, environmental review requirement, or other legal requirement applicable to hazardous fuel reduction activities on either private lands or public lands.

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 (CWPP) 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 CWPP 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 response to community input and the recommendation of the County Fire Department, the CWPP scope was expanded to include the Mountain Communities in the greater San Marcos Pass area. In November 2018, the Development Team completed their final draft of the San Marcos Pass – Eastern Goleta Valley Mountainous Communities CWPP.

The SMP-EGV CWPP will 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.

The SMP-EGV 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 required by the SMP-EGV CWPP, as applicable.

### **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* (Attachment B), which 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, 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.”

**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. The Development Team conducted numerous focused community 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.

The latest publicly released draft version of the CWPP is from November 2018. 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 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.

A Public Meeting was held on February 7, 2019 to present the final draft and elicit feedback and comment. The meeting was held at the Santa Barbara County Planning Commission Hearing Room. The Final Draft SMP-EGV CWPP 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.

**Special Instructions:**

Please provide a copy of the fully executed signature page to Courtney Stockton, Fire Department.

**Attachments:**

- A. San Marcos Pass – Eastern Goleta Valley Mountainous Communities Community Wildfire Protection Plan
- B. Proposed CEQA Notice of Exemption
- C. Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan from the California Fire Safe Council
- D. Community Wildfire Protection Plan Development Process for Santa Barbara County adopted by the Board of Supervisors on August 2, 2011
- E. PowerPoint Presentation

**Authored by:**

Robert Hazard, Deputy Fire Marshal, 805-896-6420

**cc:**

Dennis Bozanich, Deputy County Executive Officer

Mark A. Hartwig, Fire Chief

Dianne Black, Planning and Development Director

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Kevin Elliott, Forest Supervisor, Los Padres National Forest