



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 08/05/2025

ITEM NO: 14

DATE: July 24, 2025  
TO: Mayor and Town Council  
FROM: Chris Constantin, Town Manager  
SUBJECT: **Authorize the Submission of Wildfire Planning and Mitigation Grant Applications to CAL FIRE, FEMA, and the California Fire Safe Council**

RECOMMENDATION: Authorize the Submission of Wildfire Planning and Mitigation Grant Applications to CAL FIRE, FEMA, and the California Fire Safe Council.

FISCAL IMPACT:

If these grants were awarded, the Town could receive up to \$1,750,000 in grant funding to support wildfire planning and mitigation efforts. If awarded, the total local match commitment from the Town is anticipated to be between \$462,500 and \$612,500. Match requirements will be funded from the \$1 million Emergency Management allocation. No budget amendment is required at this time. Currently, there is approximately \$878,558 remaining from the initial \$1 million Emergency Management allocation. If the full \$612,500 match requirements are realized, \$266,058 of the \$1 million Emergency Management allocation would remain.

The below table outlines the various grant applications under consideration:

<u>Project</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>	<u>Grant Request</u>	<u>Town Match</u>	<u>Match Source</u>
Evacuation Plan (CAL FIRE)	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$0	N/A
VMP Update (CAL FIRE)	\$150,000–\$250,000	\$150,000–\$250,000	\$0	N/A
VMP Update (USDA CWDG)	\$250,000	\$250,000	\$62,500	Emergency Management Allocation

PREPARED BY: Chris Todd  
Emergency Manager

Reviewed by: Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Finance Director

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VMP Update (CFSC Alternate Plan)	\$150,000–\$250,000	up to \$100,000	up to \$150,000	Emergency Management Allocation
Outdoor Warning Siren	\$1,600,000	\$1,200,000	\$400,000	Emergency Management Allocation

STRATEGIC PRIORITY:

These proposed grant allocations align with the Core Goal of Public Safety and the strategic priority related to furthering the Town’s emergency preparedness, resiliency, and response capabilities, particularly in the area of wildfire risk.

BACKGROUND:

The Town of Los Gatos continues to address significant wildfire risk across its Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) neighborhoods. Several efforts are currently underway or being prepared to better identify community vulnerabilities, enhance emergency operations, and secure external funding to reduce long-term fire hazards.

In 2020, the Town adopted a Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) to support defensible space and roadside fuel reduction. Since that time, conditions have continued to evolve, including changes in community exposure, evacuation planning requirements under state law, and grant eligibility thresholds. Separately, while many Town neighborhoods are already enrolled in digital alerting platforms, there remains a critical need for redundant, audible emergency warning.

In March 2025, the Town submitted an application to the USDA’s Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program (CWDG) seeking \$250,000 to support an updated Vegetation Management Program. While that application is pending, the current grants represent additional and alternative opportunities to fund foundational planning work and to ensure readiness regardless of federal award outcomes.

These proposed grant applications will support foundational planning and communication initiatives designed to reduce life safety risk and maintain the Town’s eligibility for future implementation-phase vegetation mitigation grants.

DISCUSSION:

The Town is preparing multiple grant applications in support of three high-priority wildfire preparedness projects: development of a comprehensive evacuation plan supported by traffic

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simulation modeling; a full update to the Town's Vegetation Management Plan; and installation of an outdoor emergency warning system. Each application targets a specific project need while aligning with broader emergency management objectives and state compliance requirements.

#### Town-Wide Evacuation Plan with Simulation-Based Modeling

This project will develop a detailed wildfire evacuation plan, including travel demand modeling, simulation-based zone clearance analyses, and phased evacuation strategies. The plan will be designed in alignment with SB 99, SB 1241, and AB 747, and structured for integration with the Town's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

In anticipation of conducting this work, the Town issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for this project in June that closed on July 29, 2025. Proposals are currently under evaluation. This project is estimated to cost \$300,000. If authorized by Council, a grant application will be submitted to CAL FIRE's Wildfire Prevention Grant Program for the full estimated amount, which does not require a local match for planning projects.

#### Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) Update

The Town's existing VMP is due for revision to reflect updated vegetation conditions, public feedback, and emerging regulatory guidance. The revised plan will improve coordination across departments, support prioritization of mitigation activities by the Parks and Public Works Department, and ensure continued grant eligibility.

The estimated planning cost for this effort is between \$150,000 and \$250,000, depending on consultant scope and the need for environmental documentation. This project will be submitted to the CAL FIRE Wildfire Prevention Grant Program. No local match is required.

An alternative funding request for up to \$100,000 will also be submitted under the upcoming California Fire Safe Council SFC Grant Program. If awarded, it may fully or partially fund the VMP update in lieu of CAL FIRE or USDA funding. Match requirements could be up to \$150,000.

As noted, a related application to the USDA Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) was submitted in March 2025 and remains pending. That application, if awarded, would fund a broader Vegetation Management Program that includes the updated VMP. If funded, it would serve as an alternative to the CAL FIRE and CFSC proposals.

#### Outdoor Emergency Warning System

The proposed project includes installation of a high-decibel, siren-based outdoor emergency warning system focused on WUI neighborhoods with evacuation vulnerability. The system will serve as a redundant method of alerting alongside AlertSCC, Genasys Protect, and other digital notification tools.

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The estimated total project cost is \$1,600,000. The Town will submit a grant application to the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program requesting \$1,200,000 in federal funding (75%). The required 25% local match would be \$400,000.

CONCLUSION:

Approval of these recommendations will enable the Town to pursue approximately \$1.7 million in grant funding to advance critical wildfire preparedness initiatives. These efforts will modernize the Town's evacuation planning and vegetation risk prioritization, and address longstanding needs related to real-time emergency alerting.

If awarded, staff will return to Council to accept the grants, confirm project scope, and approve contract agreements as required.

COORDINATION:

This effort is being coordinated by the Emergency Management Program and has been reviewed with the Town Manager's Office and Parks and Public Works Department.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

This is not a project defined under CEQA, and no further action is required.