

DATE: December 16, 2025
SUBJECT: Attachment 1: Los Gatos Wildfire Risk Mitigation Cost Breakdown
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This attachment provides text summaries of program options and planning level cost ranges for a wildfire risk mitigation program. All amounts are approximate, rounded, and intended for order-of-magnitude planning, not for contracting or grant applications. Costs are expressed in current-year dollars and should be refined with detailed scopes and updated bids before implementation.

Roadside Vegetation Management (priority WUI routes)

- **Priority:** High
- **Tier:** Foundational / Intermediate / Comprehensive
- **Annual cost range:** ≈ **\$350,000–\$500,000** (steady-state, not including big backlog projects)
- **One-time cost:** \$600,000–\$700,000 for initial, heavier treatments on untreated priority segments
- **Admin / staffing:** Multi-year contracts, environmental compliance, coordination with property owners.
- **Basis:** Annual costs represent recurring maintenance on priority WUI evacuation routes once backlog work is completed (e.g., a 4–6 year cycle with lighter annual/biannual “touch-up” on the most constrained segments). Town Wildfire Advisory Group estimate of **\$75,000/mile** for ~5.2 miles ≈ **\$390,000/year** on a 6-year cycle; Montecito’s Roadside Hazard Abatement + Tag and Trim ≈ **\$95,000/year** for 13 miles (lower per-mile costs on less constrained roads).

Weed Abatement and Defensible Space Inspections (Town share)

- **Priority:** High
- **Tier:** Foundational / Intermediate / Comprehensive
- **Annual cost range:** **\$95,000–\$175,000**
- **One-time cost:** N/A
- **Admin / staffing:** Inspection coordination, complaint response, data management, legal support
- **Basis:** Montecito’s annual defensible-space/weed inspections for ~4,200 parcels; Truckee’s defensible space team funded within a ~\$3.8M/year wildfire program; These funds would supplement County Fire’s inspection/enforcement with Town admin capacity. Range includes the County Weed Abatement program fee currently billed to the Town (≈ \$20,338/year) plus incremental Town staffing and overhead to coordinate inspections, respond to complaints, support enforcement, and align Town codes with State defensible space requirements.

Open Space and Park Fuel Treatments (Town-owned lands)

- **Priority:** High
- **Tier:** Intermediate / Comprehensive
- **Annual cost range:** **\$150,000–\$300,000** (maintenance); plus periodic capital for backlog reduction
- **One-time cost:** **\$100,000–\$200,000** for planning/CEQA, unit mapping, prescriptions
- **Admin / staffing:** Technical oversight, contract/CEQA management, monitoring
- **Per-acre logic & basis:**
 - Truckee fuels projects: **\$2,900–\$4,800/acre** (Sierra Meadows, Armstrong Tract, Royal Gorge, community grants).
 - Tyrolian Village Fire Smart pilot & BurnBot: **~\$2,500–\$2,800/acre** in steep WUI.
 - Montecito FTN maintenance: **25 acres at \$90,000 (~\$3,600/acre)**; herbivory: **50 acres at \$65,000 (~\$1,300/acre)**.
 - For Los Gatos: assume **initial treatments at ~\$2,500–\$4,000/acre** and **maintenance at ~\$1,000–\$1,500/acre**. The \$150k–\$300k annual band equates to maintaining/treating on the order of ~75–150 acres/year, which aligns with the scale of Town-owned risk areas identified in prior analyses.

Home Hardening and Defensible Space Grants

- **Priority:** High
- **Tier:** Intermediate / Comprehensive
- **Annual cost range:** **\$150,000–\$400,000**
- **One-time cost:** N/A
- **Admin / staffing:** ≈ 0.25–0.5 FTE (or equivalent contract) for application, inspection, and grant management
- **Basis:** Town Wildfire Advisory Group recommendation of **~\$100,000/year** for vulnerable homeowners; Montecito Home Hardening Assistance ≈ **\$50,000/year for 10–15 homes**; Truckee's **\$550,000/year** Community Wildfire Prevention Grants program.

Chipping and Green Waste Support

- **Priority:** High
- **Tier:** Primarily Intermediate / Comprehensive (small Foundational pilot possible)
- **Annual cost range:** **\$250,000–\$500,000**
- **One-time cost:** N/A
- **Admin / staffing:** Program design, vendor management, scheduling, customer service, outreach
- **Basis:** Truckee's Measure T Green Waste budget ranges from about \$685,000 to \$760,000 per year for curbside pick-up, dumpster rebates, and Firewise dumpsters, serving roughly 4,700 WUI parcels and additional residents. Montecito's Neighborhood Chipping Program is about \$130,000/year in a much smaller community. Los Gatos has on the order of 3,100–3,400 WUI homes, so a scaled program focused on those high-risk neighborhoods is reasonably in the \$250,000–\$500,000 range depending on service level (number of annual collection windows, capacity for curbside pick-up vs. centralized dumpsters, and level of outreach).

Firewise / Fire Smart Outreach

- **Priority:** High
- **Tier:** Foundational / Intermediate / Comprehensive
- **Annual cost range:** \$50,000–\$100,000
- **One-time cost:** N/A
- **Admin / staffing:** ≈ 0.25–0.5 FTE (or equivalent contract) plus materials and events
- **Basis:** Montecito home-hardening and outreach budgets (~\$50k+/yr); Truckee's prevention/outreach allocations within Measure T; Town Wildfire Advisory Group emphasis on Firewise and preparedness education.

Town-wide education & preparedness campaigns

- **Priority:** High
- **Tier:** Intermediate / Comprehensive
- **Annual cost range:** \$25,000–\$75,000
- **One-time cost:** N/A
- **Basis:** Truckee and Montecito community wildfire communications.

Town-Wide Evacuation Modeling and Plan (planning only)

- **Priority:** High
- **Tier:** Foundational / Intermediate / Comprehensive
- **Annual cost range:** Minimal (beyond periodic updates/exercises)
- **One-time cost:** ≈ \$200,000–\$300,000 (no additional funding needed for this item)
- **Basis:** Currently scoped at ~\$300,000 as a planning ceiling for modeling and plan development. Grant application pending. HMGP comparables show similar scales for detailed wildfire/evacuation planning.

Evacuation Route Physical Improvements (Capital)

- **Priority:** High (long-term)
- **Tier:** Comprehensive
- **Capital range:** ≈ \$10 million over 5–10+ years (capital)
- **Basis:** Prior Town analysis and Wildfire Advisory Group work identified a conceptual package of evacuation-route improvements (e.g., shoulder work, limited widening, turnouts, signage, and parking restrictions) on the order of \$10 million over time (approximately \$1 million in early projects and another ~\$9 million in later phases). These amounts are placeholders used solely for long-range planning.
- **Notes & Assumptions:** This is capital, not program operating cost, and actual scope, sequencing, and cost will be determined only after completion of the Town-wide evacuation modeling and plan. The modeling effort is expected to identify specific bottlenecks, priority corridors, and recommended treatments; any capital projects that emerge will be brought back through the Town's normal CIP and budget process with refined engineering estimates. Until that work is complete, the \$10 million figure should be treated as a high-level planning benchmark, not a commitment.

Outdoor Warning System (Sirens)

- **Priority:** High
- **Tier:** Intermediate / Comprehensive
- **Annual cost range:** \$40,000–\$60,000 (O&M)
- **One-time cost:** ≈ \$1.5–\$1.7 million for ~8 siren sites
- **Basis:** Town's HMGP subapplication for 8 siren locations (~\$1.63M total). Malibu and other HMGP siren feasibility/implementation projects show similar per-site and annual maintenance costs. Grant application pending.

Staff Training

- **Priority:** High
- **Tier:** Foundational / Intermediate / Comprehensive
- **Annual cost range:** \$75,000–\$150,000
- **One-time cost:** N/A
- **Basis:** Emergency Management Accreditation Program aligned programs typically budget at least 0.5–1.0 FTE plus training and exercise funds. This range covers one major exercise every 1–2 years, annual ICS/EOC training, VEOCI config, and backfill; consistent with the Town's EOP implementation and regional coordination commitments.

Program Staffing

- **Priority:** High
- **Tier:** Foundational / Intermediate / Comprehensive
- **Annual cost range:** \$100,000–\$200,000
- **One-time cost:** N/A
- **Basis:** Peer communities dedicate explicit staff capacity to wildfire mitigation program administration. Truckee Fire Protection District has created a Wildfire Prevention Division that includes a Wildfire Prevention Manager and four support staff. Montecito Fire Protection District's Vegetation Management and Wildfire Prevention work is similarly managed by a small prevention team that includes specialist roles focused on vegetation management and community wildfire preparedness. For Los Gatos, this range is intended to represent roughly one mid- to senior-level FTE (or an equivalent blend of staff time) dedicated to wildfire program coordination in addition to the existing Emergency Manager role. Duties would include vendor and contract management, coordination with any Fire Safe Council partners, grant management, data tracking, reporting, and cross-departmental coordination.

Contracted Program Support (e.g., Fire Safe Council)

- **Priority:** High
- **Tier:** Intermediate / Comprehensive
- **Annual cost range:** \$150,000–\$300,000
- **One-time cost:** N/A
- **Basis:** California Fire Safe Councils commonly manage bundled services—chipping, defensible-space assessments, neighborhood grants, and block-contractor coordination—under low- to mid-six-figure annual contracts in similar WUI communities. For example, Sonoma

County's Wildfire Adapted programs invested roughly \$2.35 million (Part 1) and \$0.37 million (Part 2) in outreach, assessments, regulatory compliance, and planning, with about \$120,000 in dedicated grant-management staffing, implying a management/admin share on the order of 5–10% of total project costs. For a Los Gatos wildfire-mitigation program with total annual spending in the \$1.5–\$3.0M range, a \$150,000–\$300,000/year contract for a Fire Safe Council or similar partner keeps combined internal + external administration in a reasonable band (roughly 15–20% of program cost), while still allowing delivery of chipping logistics, inspection scheduling, outreach, and neighborhood-grant support.

Community Grants / Neighborhood Projects

- **Priority:** Medium–High
- **Tier:** Comprehensive
- **Annual cost range:** **\$250,000–\$750,000**
- **One-time cost:** N/A
- **Basis:** Truckee's Community Wildfire Prevention Grants budget is **\$550,000/year**, funding neighborhood-scale fuel reduction and Firewise projects. Montecito invests targeted funds in hazard tree removal and defensible space projects that strengthen its fuel-treatment network.

Urban Forest Tree Work (12-Year Cycle Implementation)

- **Priority:** Medium-High
- **Tier:** Intermediate / Comprehensive
- **Planning-level cost range:** **≈ \$425,000–\$450,000 per year**
- **Basis:** Initial estimated costs for fully funding Town tree work; Details pending updated Urban Forest Management Plan.

Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) Update

- **Priority:** High
- **Tier:** Foundational / Intermediate / Comprehensive
- **Annual cost range:** **\$50,000–\$100,000** (implementation support, monitoring, adaptive management)
- **One-time cost:** **~\$300,000–\$325,000** (plan update, CEQA, mapping)
- **Basis:** The one-time cost reflects the total project budget in the Town's USDA Community Wildfire Defense Grant application: \$250,000 in federal funds plus a \$62,500 local match, for a total of \$312,500 to develop a comprehensive Vegetation Management Program (VMP) and update the 2021 Vegetation Management Plan. The annual range covers ongoing implementation support after the update (e.g., monitoring, adaptive management, coordination with open-space and roadside fuel treatments, and regular updates to treatment priorities).

Advanced Wildfire Risk Modeling and Analytics

- **Priority:** Medium
- **Tier:** Intermediate / Comprehensive
- **Annual cost range:** **\$15,000–\$40,000** (incremental to existing GIS agreements)

- **One-time cost:** Up to ~\$50,000–\$75,000 if a dedicated modeling platform or additional lidar/imagery processing is procured
- **Basis:** Advanced tools (e.g., parcel-level ember exposure, structure-level risk scores, or dynamic treatment optimization) can be layered on top of State/County datasets and the Town’s evacuation modeling work, rather than funded as a stand-alone modeling effort. Because Los Gatos is already investing in simulation-based evacuation modeling and VMP planning, any additional wildfire-specific analytics are assumed to be incremental and scoped narrowly

