



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 10/19/2021

ITEM NO: 8

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DATE: October 11, 2021  
TO: Mayor and Town Council  
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager  
SUBJECT: Receive an Update on the Implementation of the Town Council Accepted Ad Hoc Wildfire Committee Report

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Receive an update on the implementation of the Town Council accepted Ad Hoc Wildfire Committee Report.

**BACKGROUND:**

On December 1, 2020, the Town Council accepted the Ad Hoc Wildfire Committee Report (Attachment 1). The report was the culmination of peer reviewed best practices, lessons learned from recent California fires, mitigation characteristics unique to Los Gatos, and significant input from the Santa Clara County Assistant Fire Chief. The report was structured around five primary strategic goals accompanied by relevant action items. The identified goals in the report appear sequentially in their order of initial priority focus. Goal sequencing is not intended to reflect attainment of one goal prior to initiating another but rather a function of prioritizing protection of life followed by property and the environment. It should be noted that goals and many action items are anticipated to often be addressed concurrently. Following are the identified goals of the Committee:

- Emergency Communication
- Emergency Evacuation
- Roadside Fuel Reduction
- Open Space and Residential Land Management
- Emergency Partnerships

**PREPARED BY:** Arn Andrews  
Assistant Town Manager

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Reviewed by: Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Parks and Public Works Director

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BACKGROUND (continued):

In addition to the sequencing of goals, action items were individually ranked into either Priority 1 (within two years) or Priority 2 (within three to five years). The priority ranking of action items is a byproduct of establishing reasonable and attainable actions as opposed to signifying certain action items are less important than others.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Council asked staff to report back in a year and provide an update on the progress of report goals and action items.

DISCUSSION:

Following is a discussion of the identified goals and corresponding progress to date on relevant action items:

GOAL: All residents should receive emergency communications in a timely manner.

ACTION ITEMS	PRIORITY TIMEFRAME
<p>Maximize the use of Nixle/AlertSCC and ensure that existing communication systems are fully utilized.</p> <p>Update - On July 24, 2021, the AlertSCC emergency notification system was utilized to notify preestablished participating residents during a mock evacuation drill. Approximately 50 hillside households and participating volunteers were contacted during the drill.</p>	<p>Priority 1 – within 2 years</p>
<p>Increase resident adoption of Town social media platforms and SCCFD Twitter feed.</p> <p>Update – Since December 2020, staff has significantly increased wildfire mitigation/preparedness messaging on the Town’s social media platforms.</p> <p>Nextdoor: 17 posts with a total impression count of 34,857 Facebook: 26 posts with a total post reach of 4,180 Instagram: 20 posts with a total reach of 9,188</p>	<p>Priority 1 – within 2 years</p>

DISCUSSION (continued):

<p>Explore additional non-cell/internet reliant emergency communication systems (e.g., siren system).</p> <p>Update – The Town is in the early research phase of audible notification options. Particular attention is being given to systems that can clearly announce voice messages at loud volumes as opposed to blasts or other sounds.</p>	<p>Priority 1 – within 2 years</p>
<p>Increase SCCFD Ready, Set, Go Programs in Town</p> <p>Update – Staff routinely cross promotes all Santa Clara County Fire Department (SCCFD) Ready, Set, Go promotional programs on the Town’s social media platforms.</p>	<p>Priority 1 – within 2 years</p>
<p>Explore adding electronic message boards in front of fire stations and possibly police station.</p>	<p>Priority 1 – within 2 years</p>

GOAL: To the greatest extent feasible, create and maintain conditions necessary for efficient and effective evacuations.

ACTION ITEMS	PRIORITY TIMEFRAME
<p>Identify and explore the development of roadside and other Temporary Refuge Areas (TRAs) throughout the WUI.</p>	<p>Priority 1 – within 2 years</p>
<p>Assess and address evacuation feeder routes leading out of the WUI throughout Los Gatos.</p> <p>Update – SCCFD implemented Zonehaven in the Town starting September 2021. The Town is currently segmented into 16 unique zones based on an assessment of roadway infrastructure and number of vehicles per zone. In addition, SCCFD initiated the “Know Your Zone” public outreach and has scheduled resident education webinars through March 2022.</p> <p><a href="https://community.zonehaven.com/?latlon=37.21610629166834,-121.91023023106976&amp;z=12&amp;selected=LGA-E019">https://community.zonehaven.com/?latlon=37.21610629166834,-121.91023023106976&amp;z=12&amp;selected=LGA-E019</a></p>	<p>Priority 1 – within 2 years</p>
<p>Examine elimination of on-street parking where appropriate</p>	<p>Priority 2 – within 3 to 5 years</p>

DISCUSSION (continued):

<p>Implement reflective home address signage throughout the WUI.</p> <p>Update - The Civic Center Hillside Neighborhood resident group (Foster Road area) recently installed reflective signage in that area.</p>	<p>Priority 2 – within 3 to 5 years</p>
<p>Study/identify and develop alternate evacuation routes throughout the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).</p>	<p>Priority 2 – within 3 to 5 years</p>
<p>Identify potential road widening, turnout projects throughout the WUI. Develop a multi-year project to implement needed improvements.</p>	<p>Priority 2 – within 3 to 5 years</p>
<p>Develop plan to practice annually simulated evacuations in WUI neighborhoods.</p> <p>Update - On July 24, 2021, Los Gatos-Monte Sereno Police Department in conjunction with County Fire, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) staged a mock evacuation drill due to wildfire. The drill involved volunteer community members along Tourney Loop, Highland Terrace, and Foster Road. Approximately 50 hillside households joined the drill. The AlertSCC emergency notification system was utilized to notify participating residents of this mock evacuation. All participants were evacuated to the Calvary Church parking lot and debriefed lessons learned from the exercise.</p>	<p>Priority 2 – within 3 to 5 years</p>
<p>Leverage SCCFD Zonehaven GIS platform for the planning/implementation of evacuations.</p> <p>Update – SCCFD implemented Zonehaven in the Town starting September 2021. The Town is currently segmented into 16 unique zones based on an assessment of roadway infrastructure and number of vehicles per zone. In addition, SCCFD initiated the “Know Your Zone” public outreach and has scheduled resident education webinars through March 2022.</p> <p><a href="https://community.zonehaven.com/?latlon=37.21610629166834,-121.91023023106976&amp;z=12&amp;selected=LGA-E019">https://community.zonehaven.com/?latlon=37.21610629166834,-121.91023023106976&amp;z=12&amp;selected=LGA-E019</a></p>	<p>Priority 2 – within 3 to 5 years</p>

DISCUSSION (continued):

GOAL: Vegetation along primary hillside roadways should be maintained to achieve a clearance of 20 feet horizontally and 13 feet six inches vertically above roadways, as well as clearance of non-fire-resistant vegetation within 10 feet of the roads.

ACTION ITEMS	PRIORITY TIMEFRAME
<p>Complete current 11-mile Fuel Reduction project by February 28, 2021.</p> <p>Update - In November 2020, the Town initiated the project with \$500,000 in Town funding to complete 6.5 miles of the highest priority project roadways. Council allocated an additional \$500,000 for FY 2021/22 toward the remaining highest priority project roadways to begin December 2021.</p> <p>In addition, staff secured \$750,000 in federal earmark funding toward furtherance of the project.</p>	<p>Priority 1 – within 2 years</p>
<p>Develop a plan to ensure that the 31.09 miles of highest roadway concern identified in Exhibit 2 achieve a 6-year management cycle (5 miles per year).</p>	<p>Priority 1 – within 2 years</p>
<p>Identify/map all private roadways in the WUI.</p>	<p>Priority 1 – within 2 years</p>
<p>Work with residents to educate and implement vegetation management practices for these private properties.</p> <p>Update – Staff successfully secured \$2.0 million in State funding to implement a pilot defensible space Wildland Fire Specialist Program to be implemented and overseen by SCCFD.</p> <p>In addition, staff developed a dedicated Town webpage to wildfire education “Be Wildfire Ready”.</p> <p><a href="https://www.losgatosca.gov/2581/Be-Wildfire-Ready">https://www.losgatosca.gov/2581/Be-Wildfire-Ready</a></p>	<p>Priority 2 – within 3 to 5 years</p>

DISCUSSION (continued):

GOAL: Ensure that all public and private property owners are maintaining the mandated defensible spaces.

ACTION ITEMS	PRIORITY TIMEFRAME
<p>Conduct annual defensible space inspections and enforce compliance with state and local fire codes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop strong neighborhood relationships to educate all property owners of their defensible space obligation.</li> <li>• Partner on a pilot Wildland Fire Specialist program to develop relationships with Very High Fire Hazard Zone homeowners and drive compliance through education and inspection.</li> <li>• Educate residents about Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) inspection program.</li> <li>• Explore region partnership with SCCFD fuels crews (once developed) and defensible space inspectors.</li> </ul> <p>Update – Staff successfully secured \$2.0 million in State funding to implement a pilot defensible space Wildland Fire Specialist Program to be implemented and overseen by SCCFD.</p> <p>In addition, staff developed a dedicated Town webpage to wildfire education “Be Wildfire Ready”.</p> <p><a href="https://www.losgatosca.gov/2581/Be-Wildfire-Ready">https://www.losgatosca.gov/2581/Be-Wildfire-Ready</a></p>	<p>Priority 1 – within 2 years</p> <p>Priority 1 – within 2 years</p> <p>Priority 1 – within 2 years</p> <p>Priority 2 – within 3 to 5 years</p>
<p>Explore SCCFD performing defensible space citation function.</p>	<p>Priority 2 – within 3 to 5 years</p>
<p>Develop private driveway fuel reduction initiative</p>	<p>Priority 2 – within 3 to 5 years</p>
<p>Develop Eucalyptus eradication plan for Town property within the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI).</p>	<p>Priority 1 – within 2 years</p>
<p>Develop incentive program (cost share) for residential Eucalyptus removal possibly utilizing tree replacement fund.</p>	<p>Priority 2 – within 3 to 5 years</p>

DISCUSSION (continued):

Develop policy for prohibition of highly flammable plants for new construction within the WUI.	Priority 1 – within 2 years
Develop Community chipping program	Priority 2 – within 3 to 5 years

GOAL: Ensure all regional partners are implementing consistent land management practices to reduce wildfire risk on their properties and right-of ways.

ACTION ITEMS	PRIORITY TIMEFRAME
<p>Work with neighboring cities of Monte Sereno and Saratoga to coordinate mitigation efforts and jointly advocate for the continuation and increased vegetation management among Town partners.</p> <p>Update - Staff successfully secured \$2.0 million in State funding to implement a pilot defensible space Wildland Fire Specialist Program to be implemented and overseen by SCCFD.</p>	Priority 1 – within 2 years
Ensure timely communications between the Town and these entities regarding activities that may affect another partner’s land management.	Priority 1 – within 2 years
Explore regional projects outlined in CWPP for possible grant funding.	Priority 2 – within 3 to 5 years

CONCLUSION:

Receive the Town Council adopted Ad Hoc Wildfire Committee Report update and provide any additional direction to staff.

COORDINATION:

This staff report has been coordinated with the Town Manager, Town Attorney, and Parks and Public Works Director.

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SUBJECT: Ad Hoc Wildfire Committee Report Implementation

DATE: October 11, 2021

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

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

Attachment:

1. Ad Hoc Wildfire Committee Report