



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS
COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT**

MEETING DATE: 10/15/2019

ITEM NO: 7

DATE: October 9, 2019
TO: Mayor and Town Council
FROM: Laurel Prevetti, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Accept Wildland Urban Interface Evacuation Assessment Report

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept Wildland Urban Interface Evacuation Assessment Report.

BACKGROUND:

Los Gatos is identified as a Community at Risk from wildfires on the Federal and the California Fire Alliance list of Communities at Risk in Santa Clara County. The Los Gatos Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) planning area includes primarily Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone areas on the southern side of Los Gatos. The WUI area is best described as an area that transitions from a natural condition (wildland) to human settlements. Homes and other development in the WUI are at risk of catastrophic wildfire due to the presence of vegetation that could fuel a wildfire. The WUI encompasses a wide variety of terrain, ranging from flat topography at the edge of the valley floor to densely wooded hillsides. While the sharp contrast between the valley floor and the hillsides is what makes the Town so picturesque, it also creates an extremely difficult operational area in the event of a wildfire.

The intent of the Wildland Urban Interface Evacuation Assessment is to create a common point of reference for Town residents, public safety officials, Town Council and staff, and other regional emergency preparedness partners. The Assessment will help inform future regulatory recommendations, advance the wildfire preparedness education of our hillside residents, inform fuel reduction priorities, facilitate grant opportunities, and provide a baseline for the ultimate development of an evacuation plan.

PREPARED BY: Arn Andrews
Assistant Town Manager

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

PAGE 2 OF 2

SUBJECT: Accept Wildland Urban Interface Evacuation Assessment

DATE: October 10, 2019

DISCUSSION:

Safe and proper evacuation of people (residents, workers, and visitors), pets, and livestock is often a very critical component of WUI fires. Confusing hillside road networks, narrow roads that could inhibit two-way traffic, and dead-end roads all contribute to the complexities faced by the public and responders during WUI fires. In addition, WUI fires often require immediate “No Notice” evacuations, meaning little or no warning time exists between fire origin and the need for evacuation. The situational awareness associated with the Wildland Urban Interface Evacuation Assessment will help illustrate the critical shared responsibility of successful wildfire mitigation and response. The Assessment reaffirmed the critical importance of enhanced vegetation management along major ingress/egress road networks and Town-owned open spaces, and the maintenance of defensible space around residences and other buildings.

CONCLUSION:

The Assessment will help inform future regulatory recommendations, advance the wildfire preparedness education of our hillside residents, inform fuel reduction priorities, facilitate grant opportunities, and provide a baseline for future Town emergency preparedness and response activities.

COORDINATION:

This report has been coordinated with the County Office of Emergency Management, County Fire, Town Attorney, Director of Parks and Public Works, Chief of Police, and other Town Offices.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact with this item.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

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

Attachment:

1. Wildland Urban Interface Evacuation Assessment