## CITY OF TEMECULA AGENDA REPORT

**TO:** City Manager/City Council

**FROM:** Luke Watson, Deputy City Manager

**DATE:** March 11, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Receive Presentation Regarding Local Wildfire Mitigation Efforts in the City and

Provide General Direction Regarding the Same (At the Request of Council Member

Rahn)

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the City Council receive a presentation regarding local wildfire mitigation efforts in the City and provide general direction regarding the same.

**BACKGROUND:** Ensuring the safety and resilience of the City of Temecula against emergencies and wildfires remains a top priority. This memorandum provides an overview of the current initiatives undertaken by the City of Temecula to protect the community. It outlines ongoing preparedness programs, response strategies, hazardous vegetation clearance efforts, public outreach, ongoing legislative tools, and available grant opportunities aimed at strengthening wildfire mitigation and emergency response capabilities. The following sections highlight key measures and proposed next steps to enhance the City's readiness and resilience.

#### **Temecula Fire Department Preparedness and Response**

The City of Temecula via the Temecula Fire Department, Emergency Management, and Fire Prevention divisions have a comprehensive strategy to protect the community during emergencies. Below is a summary of the key measures currently in place:

## Cal Fire Preparedness & Response

- The Fire Department maintains a robust response plan for the City of Temecula.
- Firefighters receive Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) training to enhance response capabilities.
- Access to large ground and air resources through emergency agreements.
- Ongoing fuel reduction efforts in Riverside County lands around Temecula.
- The Forester unit utilizes fuel reduction crews daily.
- CalFire's fuel reduction program is active in Glen Oaks and Lake Skinner.
- Fire prevention efforts ensure new construction meets fire hazard severity zone standards.
- State resource access allows rapid surge capacity during emergencies.

#### **Community Fire Preparedness Programs**

- Ready, Set, Go Program: Educates residents on evacuation preparedness.
- Firewise Temecula: Includes an evacuation checklist and home-hardening guidelines from the CalFire website.
- MySafe Riverside Collaboration: Expanding Firewise programs in all HOAs.
- Establishing a Fire Safe Council: A proposed initiative with a dedicated CalFire Battalion Chief.
- Community Preparedness Backpack Program: Supplies essential emergency resources. This is continuously advertised by the City of Temecula in several places.
- Community Preparedness Outreach & Seminars: Continual public engagement.
- Robust CERT Program: Enhances local volunteer emergency response capabilities.

#### **Emergency Operations & Planning**

- City Employs Full-time Emergency Manager
- Emergency Operations Plan
- Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Extreme Weather Plan
- Power Outage / Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) Plan
- Alert & Warning System
- Debris Removal Plan & Contract
- Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Incident Management Team
- Mass Care Plan & Equipment
- Mass Care & Shelter Team
- Preparedness Grant Programs (SHSP/EMPG)
- Office of Emergency Management (OEM) Website providing robust public information resources.

#### **City of Temecula Forward Planning for Wildfire Mitigation**

#### **Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)**

The City has secured CalFire grant funding for a Community Wildfire Protection Plan covering 177 acres near Temecula, Murrieta, and Pechanga Creeks. This initiative addresses fuel reduction, trespass prevention, native habitat restoration, and home hardening. The CWPP was adopted by the Planning Commission on February 7, 2024, but requires a CEQA analysis for further implementation. See attached map exhibits for details on the area covered by the CWPP.

### Plan Integration for Resilience Scorecard (PIRS)

Collaborations with Cal Poly Pomona and Texas A&M to spatially evaluate city land-use plans and their impact on resilience. The Scorecard will guide policy adjustments to strengthen community preparedness and will be integral in the currently ongoing General Plan update.

### **City Hazardous Vegetation Ordinance**

City of Temecula Ordinance 8.16 "Hazardous Vegetation" requires that every owner or person in control of any real property or interest therein to abate therefrom, and from all private sidewalks and parkways, all hazardous vegetation or other flammable vegetation that constitutes a fire hazard which may endanger or damage neighboring property. The City's Code Enforcement division reviews all properties annually to ensure compliance with this ordinance. Property owners are giving opportunity to abate hazardous vegetation within a reasonable timeframe. If property owners do not abate within the timeframe giving, the City will abate the hazardous vegetation and lien the property for costs incurred.

#### **Legislative & Grant Opportunities Tracking**

State legislative efforts related to vegetation mitigation and wildfire prevention are ongoing. The City is monitoring new bills ahead of the February 21, 2025, introduction deadline. Additionally, the City is tracking the USDA's Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program and other funding sources. See attached exhibits for more details on State bills being tracked and potential grant funding opportunities.

#### **Citywide Evacuation Planning & Grant Opportunities**

- USDOT PROTECT Program: Funding for evacuation route resilience.
- WRCOG Emergency Evacuation Network Resilience Study: Evaluates potential evacuation routes and hazards.
- Caltrans Sustainable Transportation Planning (STP) Grant: Potential funding opportunity for additional evacuation planning.

#### **Vegetation Clearing & Fuel Reduction Grants**

- USDA Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program for CWPP development (\$250K) and project implementation (\$10M).
- FEMA's BRIC Program supports infrastructure resilience projects.
- FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program: Funding for mitigation planning and resilience projects.
- Congressional Community Project Funding (Earmark) Request: Awaiting application opening, potentially in March 2025, for fire mitigation projects.

### Communications and Collaboration with Local Governmental Agencies & Stakeholders

**CalTrans:** CalTrans District Director has been invited to meet on site at confluence of Murrieta and Temecula Creeks to examine and request vegetation removal on CalTrans easement under the I-15 freeway. Staff is currently working on scheduling a date for the end of February.

**Riverside County Flood Control District:** City Staff met with RCFCD on 2/4/25. Discussed the need for regular mowing of RCDCD properties withing the City. RCFCD is agreeable to being at the table for anticipated further multi-agency discussions on vegetation removal and management in the Temecula and Murrieta Creek confluence area.

**Rancho California** Water District: City Staff discussed general need for partnership on vegetation clearance and management on all RCWD properties within the City and surrounding areas. RCWD staff was supportive of close collaboration will give engage in clearance efforts wherever possible.

**Pechanga Tribe:** Staff in ongoing communication with Tribe regarding potential vegetation clearance along Pechanga Creek. Upcoming Pechanga Creek site visit with City staff and Pechanga staff. Future conversations regarding Tribe's recent placing of Temecula Creek Inn into the tribal trust as it relates to vegetation in Temecula and Murrieta Creeks.

## **Potential Next Steps & Recommendations**

- Establish multi-agency and stakeholder discussions to identify appropriate hazardous vegetation clearance areas.
- Continue pursuing Fire Risk Reduction Community status with the Board of Foresters (July 1, 2025, application date).
- Further integrate Firewise principles into HOA communities with MySafe Riverside.
- Establish a Fire Safe Council in collaboration with Cal Fire leadership.
- Enhance CWPP implementation efforts with additional grant funding and CEQA review.
- Advance citywide evacuation planning with WRCOG's study and potential grant applications.
- Monitor legislative efforts and apply for state and federal wildfire prevention grants.

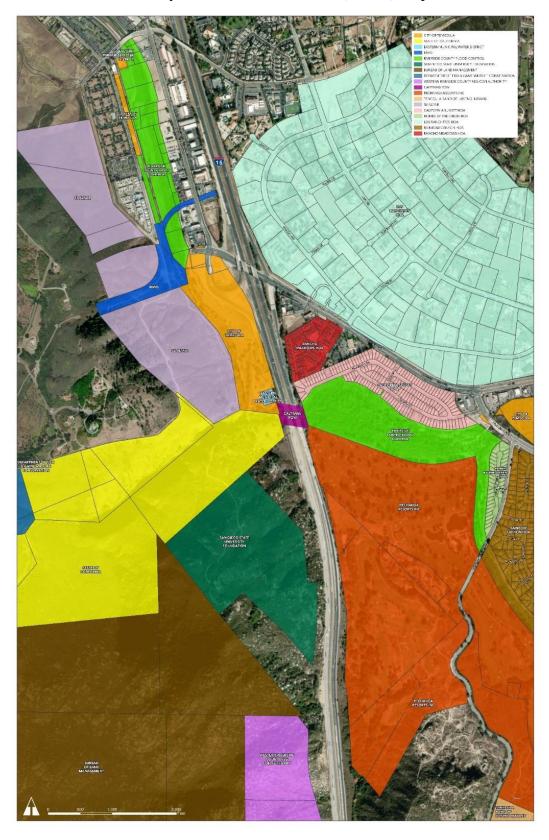
The City of Temecula has made significant progress in emergency preparedness and wildfire mitigation. By integrating these ongoing efforts with state and federal funding opportunities, we will continue to enhance community resilience and public safety. Please let me know if you require further details or specific action items on any of these initiatives.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** At this time there are no proposed fiscal impacts beyond those already budgeted for in the Annual Operating and Capital Improvement Program Budgets.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1. Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Map
- 2. Tracking List of State of California Bills Related to Wildfire
- 3. Fire Mitigation Grant Opportunities

Attachment 1 Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Map





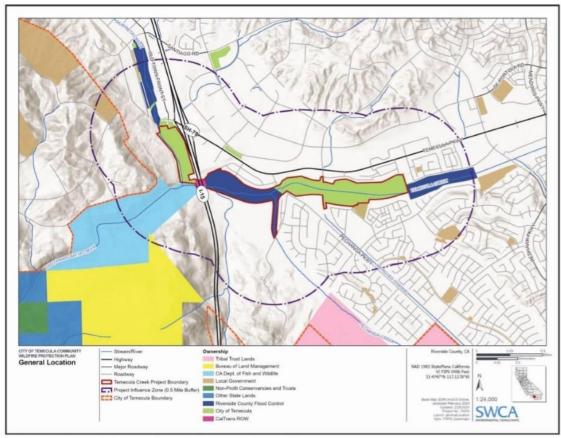


Figure ES.1. Temecula Creek CWPP planning area and ownership.

## Attachment 2: Tracking List of State of California Bills Related to Wildfire



#### Search Results Wednesday, February 05, 2025

#### AB 66 (Tangipa R) Wildfire prevention: vegetation management.

Current law establishes various programs for the prevention and reduction of wildfires. This bill would provide that it is the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation to address wildfires by allowing for more vegetation management within easements.

Cal Cities Position: Pending Primary Lobbyist: Jolena Voorhis Policy Committee : PS

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#### AB 241 (Tangipa R) Wildfire and Vegetation Management Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund.

Current law allows an individual taxpayer to contribute amounts in excess of their personal income tax liability for the support of specified funds and accounts, including, among others, to the Native California Wildlife Rehabilitation Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund. This bill would also allow an individual to designate on their tax return that a specified amount in excess of their tax liability be transferred to the continuously appropriated Wildfire and Vegetation Management Voluntary Tax Contribution Fund, which would be created by this bill.

Cal Cities Position: Watch Primary Lobbyist: Jolena Voorhis Policy Committee : PS

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#### AB 300 (Lackey R) Endangered species: incidental take: wildfire preparedness activities.

The California Endangered Species Act prohibits the taking of an endangered, threatened, or candidate species, except as specified. Under the act, the Department of Fish and Wildlife (department) may authorize the take of listed species by certain entities through permits or memorandums of understanding for specified purposes. Current law requires the State Fire Marshal to identify areas in the state as moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones based on consistent statewide criteria and based on the severity of fire hazard that is expected to prevail in those areas. Current law requires a local agency to designate, by ordinance, moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones in its jurisdiction within 120 days of receiving recommendations from the State Fire Marshal, as provided. This bill would authorize a city, county, city and county, special district, or other local agency to submit to the department a wildfire preparedness plan to conduct wildfire preparedness activities on land designated as a fire hazard severity zone, as defined, that minimizes impacts to wildlife and habitat for candidate, threatened, and endangered species. The bill would require the wildfire preparedness plan to include, among other things, a brief description of the planned wildfire preparedness activities, the approximate dates for the activities, and a description of the candidate, endangered, and threatened species within the plan area. The bill would require the department, if sufficient information is included in the wildfire preparedness plan for the department to determine if an incidental take permit is required, to notify the local agency within 90 days of receipt of the wildfire preparedness plan if an incidental take permit or other permit is needed, or if there are other considerations, exemptions, or streamlined pathways that the wildfire preparedness activities qualify for, including, but not limited to, the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's California Vegetation Treatment Program.

Cal Cities Position: Watch Primary Lobbyist: Melissa Sparks-Kranz Policy Committee : EQ

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#### AB 399 (Boerner D) Coastal resources: coastal development permits: blue carbon demonstration projects.

The California Coastal Act of 1976, among other things, requires anyone wishing to perform or undertake any development in the coastal zone, except as specified, in addition to obtaining any other permit required by law from any local government or from any state, regional, or local agency, to obtain a coastal development permit from the California Coastal Commission or local government, as provided. This bill would authorize the commission to authorize blue carbon demonstration projects, as defined, in order to demonstrate and quantify the carbon sequestration potential of these projects to help inform the state's natural and working lands and climate resilience strategies.

Cal Cities Position: Primary Lobbyist: Policy Committee :

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# Attachement 3: Fire Mitigation Grant Opportunites

Grant Program	Purpose	Deadline/ Funding	(ligible Applicants	Funding Uses
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