



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS**  
**COUNCIL AD HOC WILDFIRE COMMITTEE AGENDA**  
**OCTOBER 29, 2020**  
**110 EAST MAIN STREET**  
**LOS GATOS, CA**  
**5:00 PM**

*Marcia Jenson, Vice Mayor*

*Barbara Spector, Council Member*

*Arn Andrews, Assistant Town Manager*

*Matt Morley, Director of Parks and Public Works*

*Brian Glass, Assistant Santa Clara County Fire Chief*

*Rob Stump, Resident*

*Brad Gordon, Resident*

**IMPORTANT NOTICE REGARDING THE OCTOBER 29, 2020**  
**AD HOC WILDFIRE COMMITTEE MEETING**

This meeting is being conducted utilizing teleconferencing and electronic means consistent with State of California Executive Order N-29- 20 dated March 17, 2020, regarding the COVID- 19 pandemic. In accordance with Executive Order N-29- 20, the public may only view the meeting online and not in the Council Chamber.

**PARTICIPATION**

**If you are interested in providing oral comments real-time during the meeting, you must join the Zoom webinar.**

- Join from a PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone or Android device: click this link <https://losgatosca-gov.zoom.us/j/91533191460>. **Passcode: 355792**. You can also type in 91533191460 in the “Join a Meeting” page on the Zoom website at <https://zoom.us/join>.
- Join by Telephone: Dial: 877 336 1829 US Toll-free or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 301 715 8592. Conference code: 986172

During the meeting:

- When the Mayor announces the item for which you wish to speak, click the “raise hand” feature in Zoom. If you are participating by phone on the Zoom app, press \*9 on your telephone keypad to raise your hand. If you are participating by calling in, press #2 on your telephone keypad to raise your hand.
- When called to speak, please limit your comments to three (3) minutes, or such other time as the Mayor may decide, consistent with the time limit for speakers at a Council meeting.

If you are unable to participate in real-time, you may email to [PublicComment@losgatosca.gov](mailto:PublicComment@losgatosca.gov) with the subject line “Public Comment Item # \_\_\_” (insert the item number relevant to your comment) or “Verbal Communications – Non Agenda Item.” Comments will be reviewed and distributed before the meeting if received by 5:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. All comments received will become part of the record. The Mayor has the option to modify this action on items based on comments received.

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**AD HOC WILDFIRE COMMITTEE AGENDA**  
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**REMOTE LOCATION PARTICIPANTS** (*The following Committee Members are listed to permit them to appear electronically or telephonically at the Committee meeting: MAYOR MARCIA JENSEN, VICE MAYOR BARBARA SPECTOR, ASSISTANT TOWN MANGER ARN ANDREWS, DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND PUBLIC WORKS MATT MORLEY, ASSISTANT SANTA CLARA COUNTY FIRE CHIEF, COMMITTEE CHAIR ROB STUMP, COMMITTEE MEMBER BRAD GORDON. All votes during the teleconferencing session will be conducted by roll call vote.*)

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

**ROLL CALL**

**CONSENT ITEMS** (*Items appearing on the Consent Items are considered routine and may be approved by one motion. Any member of the Policy Committee or public may request to have an item removed from the Consent Items for comment and action. A member of the public may request to pull an item from Consent by following the Participation instructions contained on page 2 of this agenda. If an item is pulled, the Chair has the sole discretion to determine when the item will be heard. Unless there are separate discussions and/or actions requested by the Policy Committee, staff, or a member of the public, it is requested that items under the Consent Items be acted on simultaneously.*)

1. Approve the October 21, 2020 Council Ad Hoc Wildfire Committee Minutes.

**VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS** (*Members of the public are welcome to address the Committee on any matter that is not listed on the agenda consistent with the Participation Instructions contained on Page 1 of this agenda. To ensure all agenda items are heard and unless additional time is authorized by the Chair, this portion of the agenda is limited to 30 minutes and no more than three (3) minutes per speaker. In the event additional speakers were not able to be heard during the initial Verbal Communications portion of the agenda, an additional Verbal Communications will be opened prior to adjournment.*)

**OTHER BUSINESS** (*Up to three minutes may be allotted to each speaker on any of the following items consistent with the Participation Instructions contained on Page 1 of this agenda.*)

2. Discussion of Wildfire Goals and Action Items.

**ADJOURNMENT**



**TOWN OF LOS GATOS  
COUNCIL AD HOC WILDFIRE  
COMMITTEE**

MEETING DATE: 10/29/2020

ITEM NO: 1

**DRAFT**

**Minutes of the Council Ad Hoc Wildfire Committee Meeting  
October 21, 2020**

The Council Ad Hoc Wildfire Committee of the Town of Los Gatos conducted a regular meeting on Wednesday, October 21, 2020, at 5:00 p.m.

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 5:02 p.m.**

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Mayor Jensen, Vice Mayor Spector, Assistant Fire Chief Glass, Resident Member Stump, Resident Member Gordon, PPW Director Morley, and Assistant Town Manager Andrews.

Absent: Town Manager Prevetti

**VERBAL COMMUNICATIONS**

None.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

1. Commence Initial Meeting of the Ad Hoc Wildfire Committee Including the Selection of Chair and Vice Chair.

Assistant Manager Andrews requested that nominations for Chair be presented.

**MOTION: Motion by Mayor Jensen to nominate Committee Member Stump as Chair.  
Seconded by Vice Mayor Spector.**

**VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.**

**MOTION: Motion by Chair Stump to nominate Mayor Jensen as Vice Chair. Seconded by Vice Mayor Spector.**

**VOTE: Motion passed unanimously.**

Assistant Manager Andrews requested that the Committee identify an additional meeting date. The Committee agreed to add October 29, 2020.

Assistant Manager Andrews presented the staff report.

PAGE 2 OF 2

SUBJECT: Ad Hoc Wildfire Committee Minutes 10212020

DATE: October 28, 2020

Chair Stump provided the Committee members with a framework for identifying issues and potential goals for the Committee. Committee members discussed various wildfire mitigation measures and the associated community resiliency benefits. Committee members also discussed the importance of identifying measurable metrics of success. The meeting concluded with the Committee asking Chair Stump and Assistant Manager Andrews to develop a draft document for Committee review.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

This is to certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the October 21, 2020 meeting as approved by the Ad Hoc Wildfire Committee.

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Arn Andrews, Assistant Town Manager

# **Town of Los Gatos Ad Hoc Wildfire Committee Report**

**Draft October 29, 2020**



**Town of Los Gatos**  
110 East Main Street  
Los Gatos, CA 95030

**Prepared by**  
Ad Hoc Wildfire Committee

**Coordinated with**  
Santa Clara County Fire Department

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## Committee Introduction and Goals

Los Gatos is listed as a Community at Risk from wildfires on the Federal and/or California Fire Alliance list of Communities at Risk in Santa Clara County. Wildfires occur in the vicinity of Los Gatos and present a significant danger to people and property within the Town. The Town of Los Gatos considers wildfire mitigation to be a top tier priority for the safety of its citizens and an economic imperative.

Recognizing this significant risk, the Los Gatos Town Council convened an Ad Hoc Wildfire Committee to study a broad variety of wildfire mitigation policy and project options to improve the Town's wildfire resiliency. The Committee consisted of Mayor Marcia Jensen, Vice Mayor Barbara Spector, Assistant Fire Chief Brian Glass, Community Member Rob Stump, Community Member Brad Gordon, Assistant Town Manager Arn Andrews, and Parks and Public Works Director Matt Morley. Mr. Stump chaired the Committee.

The Committee's goal was to identify a variety of mitigation strategies that could be implemented in the next one to five years which collectively would reduce wildfire risk and improve community preparedness in response to wildfire. The Committee examined best practices of similar communities within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), lessons learned from recent fires, and other relevant areas of wildfire science. The following report identifies areas for emphasis of future Council wildfire mitigation efforts.

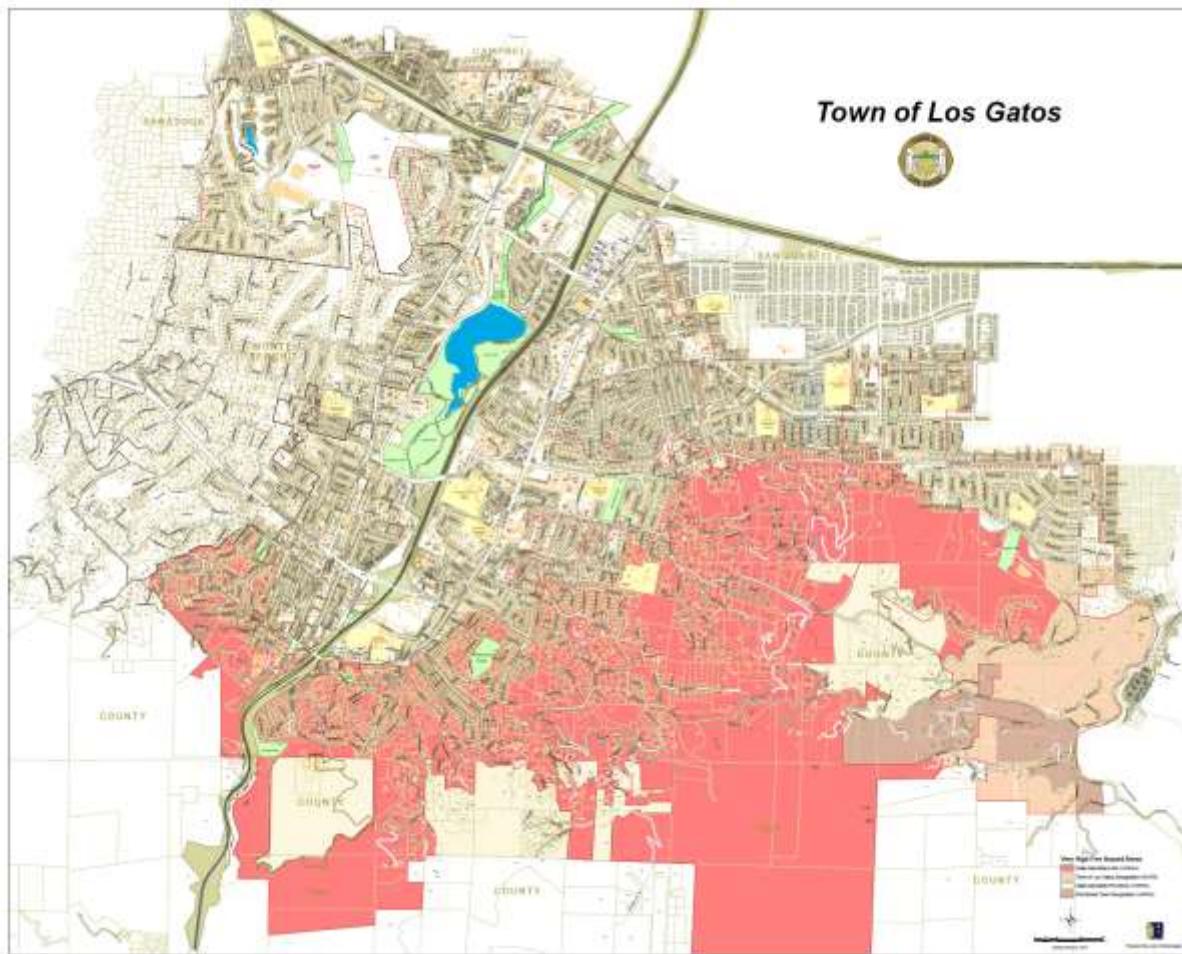
This report describes the Los Gatos WUI and then identifies specific mitigation topics. For each topic, goals, action items, and metrics are identified.

## Los Gatos Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

The Los Gatos WUI planning area includes primarily Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone areas on the southern side of Los Gatos (Exhibit 1). The WUI is composed of both interface and intermix communities and is defined as areas where human habitation and development meet at the edge of, or are inserted in the interior of areas dominated by, wildland fuels (U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Department of Agriculture 2001:752–753).

The WUI creates an environment in which fire can move readily between structural and vegetative fuels, increasing the potential for wildland fire ignitions and the corresponding potential loss of life and property. Approximately a quarter of the Town's total residences are located within the WUI. Of an estimated 2018 Town total of 13,299 residences the WUI contains approximately 3091. In addition, at an estimated 2.2 residents per household the WUI is home to approximately 6,800 residents out of a Town total of 30,250.

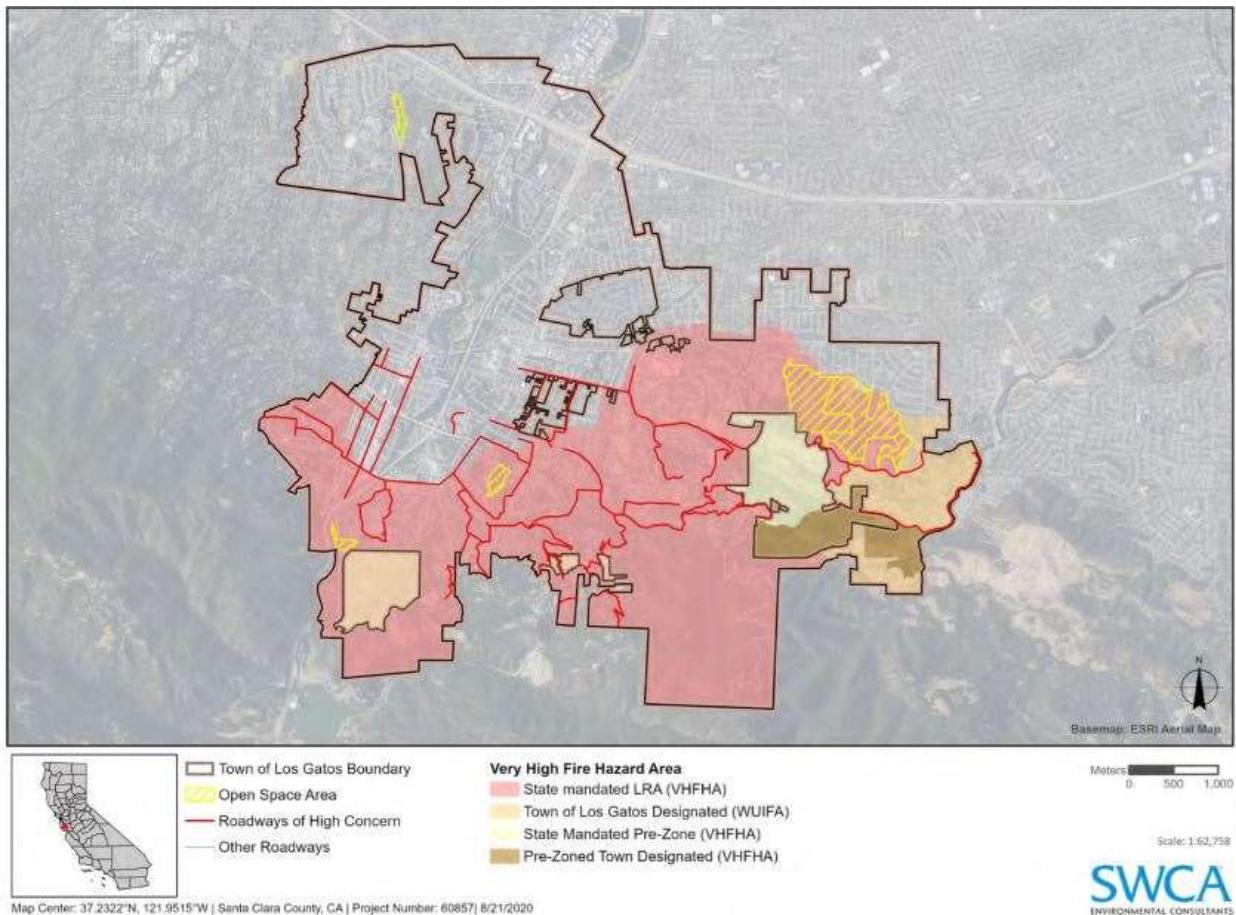
## Exhibit 1



## Roadside Fuel Reduction

Roads are generally maintained to primarily serve the transportation needs of the public; however, roadsides are frequently the site of ignition for wildfires and evacuees may need to use the roadways to leave the area even if the vegetation on both sides of the road is on fire. Routes may also be blocked due to consequences associated with an incident including; fallen trees, spot fires, smoke, intense heat, long flame lengths, downed power lines, or vehicle accidents. Exhibit 2 illustrates 31.09 miles of roadways of highest concern for vegetation management.

## Exhibit 2



### **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:**

- Complete current 11-mile Fuel Reduction project by February 28, 2021.
- 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).
- Identify/map all private roadways in the WUI and work with residents to implement vegetation management for these private properties.

### **METRICS:**

TBD

## Open Space and Residential Land Management

California Public Resources Code (PRC) 4291 mandates 100 feet of defensible space around structures in high fire severity zones. Defensible space means an area around the perimeter of structures in which vegetation, debris, and other types of combustible fuels are treated, cleared, or reduced to slow the rate and intensity of potentially approaching wildfire or fire escaping from structures.

The creation of reasonable and adequate defensible space focuses on measures to modify or breaking up the hazards emanating from the continuity of fire fuels, both horizontal (across the ground) and vertical (from the ground up into the crowns of brush and trees). Fuels that exhibit a large degree of both vertical and horizontal continuity are the most hazardous; in particular when they are on slopes. Thus, mitigation of wildfire hazards within the defensible space perimeter focuses on breaking up the continuity of horizontal and vertical fuels, while also addressing environmental concerns like habitat and erosion protection. In addition to the defensible space requirements around structures in the WUI, the Town and other public/private agencies are stewards of large open spaces and undeveloped parkland.

### **GOAL:**

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

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- Conduct annual defensible space inspections and enforce compliance with state and local fire codes.
  - Develop strong neighborhhod relationships to educate all property owners of their defensible space obligation.
  - Hire/fund a Wildland Fire Specialist to develop relationships with VHFHZ homeowners and drive compliance through education and inspection.
  - Educate/leverage residents about SCCFD Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) inspection program.
  - Explore leveraging Firewise defensible space inspection program.
- Explore SCCFD performing defensible space compliance function through adoption/alignment of Sabta Clara County Ordinance A33 with Town Fire Code.
- Develop private driveway fuel reduction initiative.
- Develop Eucalyptus eradication plan for Town property and a residential removal or make “safer” plan within the WUI.
- Develop prohibition of highly pyrophytic plants for properties within the WUI.

### **METRICS:**

TBD

## Emergency Evacuation

The majority of the Town's WUI neighborhoods are served by Hillside Collector Streets. Hillside collector streets serve properties located in hillside areas, carrying traffic to either arterial streets, collectors, or neighborhood collectors. Many of the hillside collector and local roadways are one-way in and one-way out designs. During wildfire events, the routes emergency responders take to the fire are often the same routes being used by residents who may be attempting to flee from the fire. Due to the critical importance of roads for providing ingress for firefighting apparatuses while simultaneously evacuating the public, certain factors such as width, grade, and turning radius need to be considered. Often roads may be too narrow to accommodate two-way traffic of responders and evacuees simultaneously.

### **GOAL:**

To the greatest extent feasible given physical constraints, create and maintain the conditions for efficient and effective evacuations.

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- Develop roadside and other Temporary Refuge Areas (TRAs) throughout the WUI.
- Assess and address evacuation feeder routes leading out of the WUI throughout Los Gatos.
- Implement reflective home address signage throughout the WUI.
- Study/identify and develop alternate evacuation routes throughout the WUI.
- Identify potential road widening, turnout projects throughout the WUI. Develop a multi-year project to implement needed improvements.
- Develop and practice annually simulated evacuations in WUI neighborhoods.
- Integrate and utilize as much data as possible from SCCFD Zone Haven evacuation system.

### **METRICS:**

TBD

## Emergency Communication

In the event of an emergency, it is an inherent responsibility of local government organizations to keep the public informed about natural, human-caused, and technological disasters. Studies show that people rarely act on a single warning message alone. To be effective, warnings should be delivered in various formats across multiple media platforms. Multiple platforms help to increase the reliability of warning delivery and provide a sense of corroboration that will encourage recipients to take protective actions. In addition, many emergency subscription platforms are opt-in systems which leave non-adopters out of the information loop.

As illustrated in Exhibit 3 many notification systems are dependent on functioning internet and cell service. As evidenced by recent fires neither cell service or internet service are reliable during large scale events, especially if an event coincides with a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS).

### Exhibit 3



### **GOAL:**

All residents should receive emergency communications in a timely manner.

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- Maximize the use of Nixle/AlertSCC and ensure that existing communication systems are fully utilized.
- Explore additional non-cell/internet reliant emergency communication systems e.g. siren system.

### **METRICS:**

TBD

## **Emergency Partnerships**

The nature of wildfire spread requires a regional approach to wildfire mitigation. Following is a partial list of governmental and private entities that are landowners with vegetation management responsibilities within Los Gatos. In addition, several entities also provide the ability to help educate and partner on residential property resilience.

**Santa Clara County Fire District (SCCFD):** Santa Clara County Fire Department is an all-risk fire department and provides fire suppression inclusive of structure and vegetation/wildland fire mitigation, technical rescue operations, emergency medical services (EMS), hazardous materials (HazMat) mitigation, fire prevention, community education and risk reduction services (CERRS), disaster preparedness, community emergency preparedness and service responses.

**Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E):** PG&E provides electricity to the Town of Los Gatos. The Los Gatos area encompasses right-of-way for overhead transmission and distribution lines. The Town collaborates with PG&E to treat vegetation in the WUI along PG&E's electric transmission line right-of-way to increase power reliability and reduce ignition potential and resulting wildland fire hazard.

**Santa Clara County Firesafe Council:** The Town of Los Gatos supports and collaborates with the Santa Clara Firesafe Council. The Firesafe Council is a non-profit organization that provides resources to coordinate public and private landowners in Santa Clara County to reduce the threat of wildfire.

**West Valley Cities of Monte Sereno and Saratoga:** The West Valley cities of Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, and Saratoga share the characteristics of a very high wildfire severity zone (see appendices). Due to the nature of wildfire spread, an incident in one jurisdiction could easily spread to neighboring jurisdictions.

**Mid-Peninsula Open Space District (Midpen):** Midpen is an independent special district that has preserved nearly 65,000 acres of public land and manages 26 open space preserves. In Los Gatos, Midpen manages significant land holdings across the southern border of Town (see Appendices). Wildland fire prevention, preparation and response are part of the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's ongoing land stewardship. Midpen reduces wildland fire severity and risk in our region by managing vegetation in the preserves with a focus on ecological health and wildland fire resilience.

**County Roads, Valley Water, and CalTrans:** These regional governmental partners each have properties/rights-of-way within the Town of Los Gatos or adjacent to the Town. These agencies must meet a shared specification for roadside fuel reduction and support safety in general.

**San Jose Water Company (SJW):** San Jose Water is an investor owned public utility, and is one of the largest urban water systems in the United States. SJW serves over 1 million people in the greater San Jose metropolitan area. San Jose Water maintains critical infrastructure in Town essential to fire suppression and manages watershed lands near Los Gatos.

## **GOAL:**

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

**ACTION ITEMS:**

- Advocate for the continuation and increased coordinated vegetation management among Town partners.
- Ensure timely communications between the Town and these entities regarding activities that may affect another partner's land management.

**METRICS:**

TBD

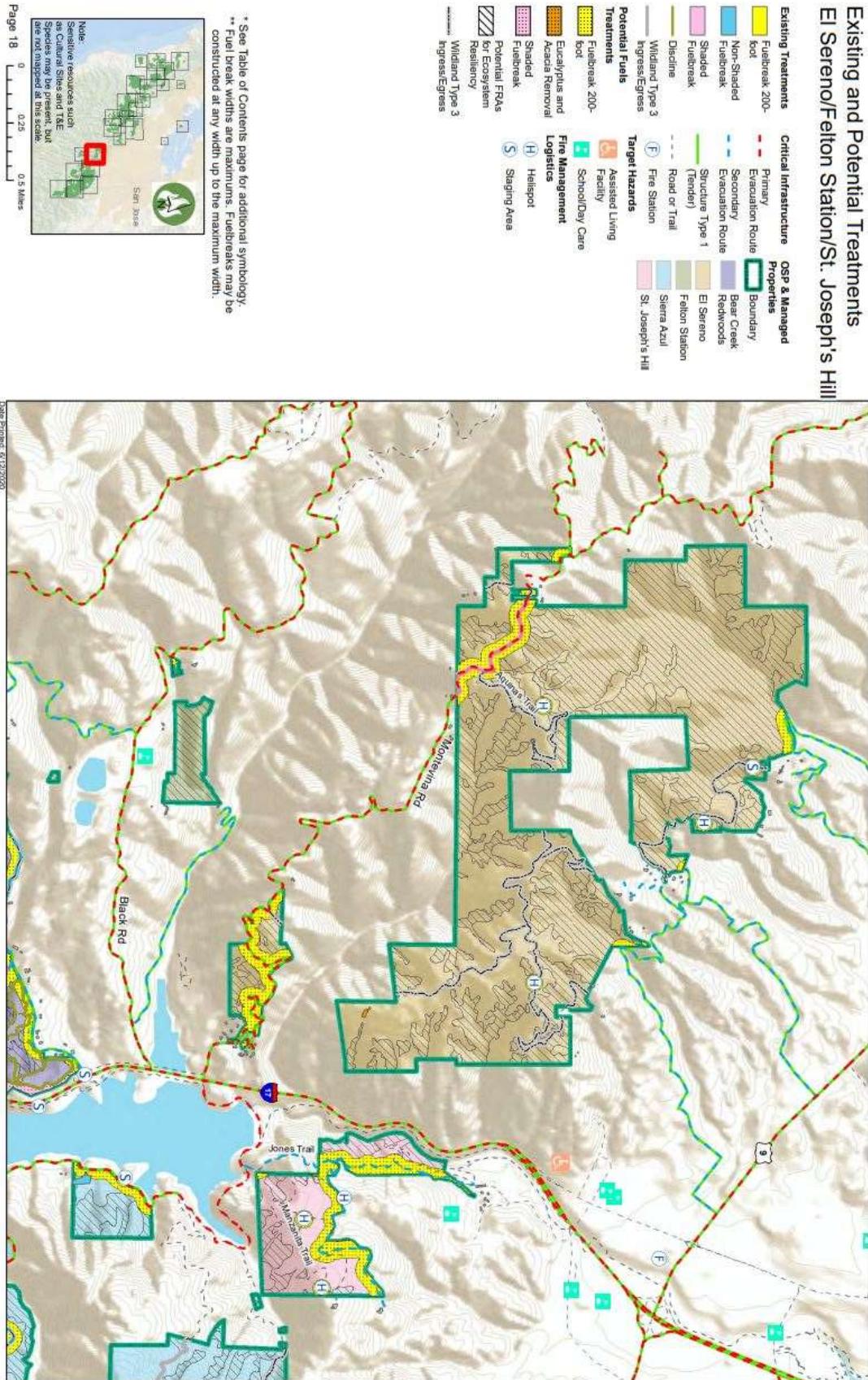
## Additional Action Items

- Advocate for the continuation of homeowners insurance.
- Pursue Firewise status for WUI hillside neighborhoods to satisfy homeowners Insurance requirements.
- Address areas within the hillside that do not have public fire hydrant systems.
- Explore additional funding sources
  - Parcel Tax
  - Assessment Districts

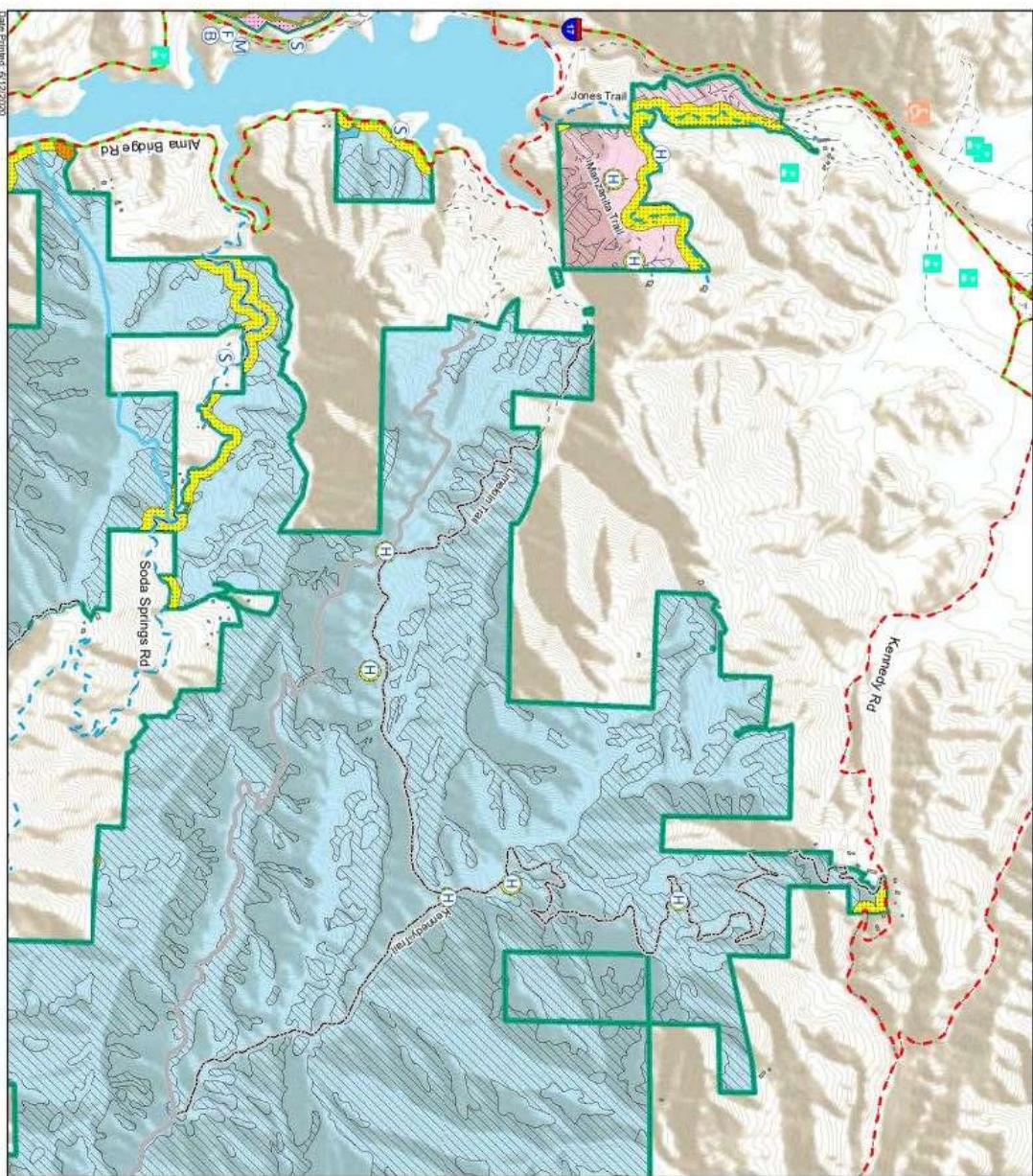
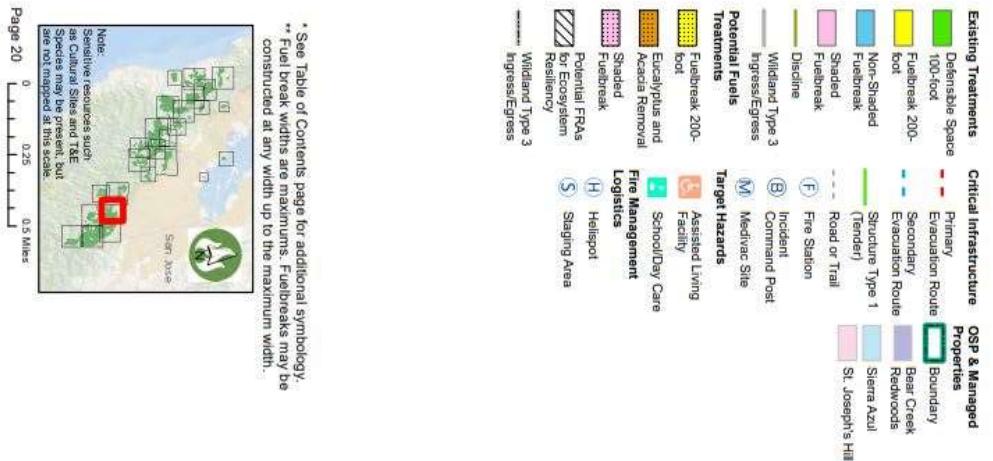
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**APPENDICES**

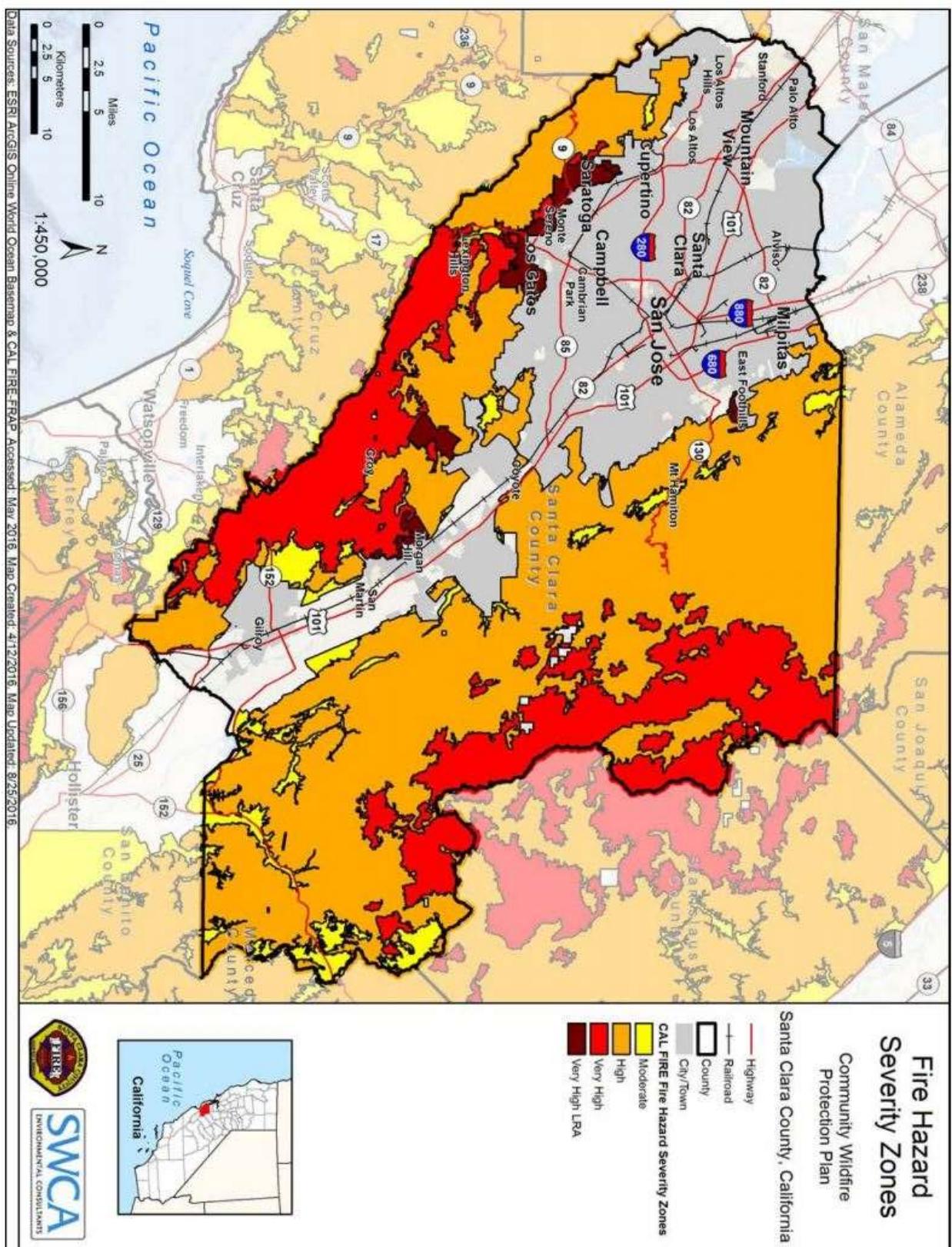
## Existing and Potential Treatments El Sereno/Felton Station/St. Joseph's Hill



## Existing and Potential Treatments Sierra Azul (1 of 5)



Attachment 2



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