

2022

AUBURN FIRE DEPARTMENT 2022 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN



Executive Summary

California experienced the deadliest and most destructive wildfires in its history in 2017 and 2018. The proliferation of new homes in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) magnifies the threat and places substantially more people and property at risk than in preceding decades. The City of Auburn is no exception. The current threat we face is fueled by drought, an unprecedented buildup of dry vegetation and extreme winds. These conditions are exacerbated by the cities proximity to the canyon rim. While fuel treatments such as forest thinning and creation of fire breaks can help reduce fire severity, wind-driven wildfire events that destroy lives and property will likely still occur. The recommendations in this report are only part of the solution. The City of Auburn needs the entire community focused toward protecting lives and property through home hardening, defensible space and other measures.

Planning is essential for the success of any public or private undertaking. Strategic planning is a systematic and continuous process where people make decisions about intended future outcomes, how those outcomes are to be accomplished, and how success is measured and evaluated. The planning process that members and constituents of the Auburn City Fire Department engaged in has served to refresh the organization's commitment to a safe city and safe community. This highly collaborative and participatory work has resulted in the Auburn City Fire Department Wildland Urban Interface - Strategic Plan 2019. The Strategic Plan will now serve as the Auburn City Fire Department decision guide in focusing the organization's material and human resources to the greatest community benefit over the next three to five years.

The members of the Focus Group are to be congratulated for participating and supporting this important effort. It takes organizational and individual leadership to enter into and participate in a strategic planning process. The commitment of Auburn City Fire and the Focus Group members to produce the Plan and drive the work to conclusion is commendable.

As pointed out above, the process does not end with the production of a report or with the simple establishment of goals and objectives. By nature, the Plan must become elemental in the day-to-day operations of the agency. Implementation pulls a plan apart and disseminates it throughout the organization. Each organizational unit and member must function in concert to effectively and efficiently implement the plan. Successful implementation requires constant review and adjustment to assure continued relevance and focus.

The following planning elements were developed based on the input of more than 10 people from inside and outside the agency over a period of five months.

Mission Statement

We are dedicated to fostering the development and safety of our community through prevention, public education, and emergency response with pride and honor.

Shared Values

- *Adaptability*
- *Communication*
- *Integrity*
- *Knowledge*
- *Leadership*
- *Longevity*
- *Professionalism*

Personnel

Our 22 highly skilled professional firefighters, fire engineers, fire officers, chief officers, strive to maintain their Commitment to Excellence, Sustainability, and Innovation. We are an all-risk fire department. Our 3 fire stations provide fire protection and life safety services to

a geographical area of 7.5 square miles which includes residential, commercial, and wildland interface areas. Our fire personnel and our civilian staff play a variety of important roles, including fire and medical response, emergency management and disaster preparedness, training, community risk reduction homeland security, urban search and rescue, and hazardous material response.

Previous Years Objectives

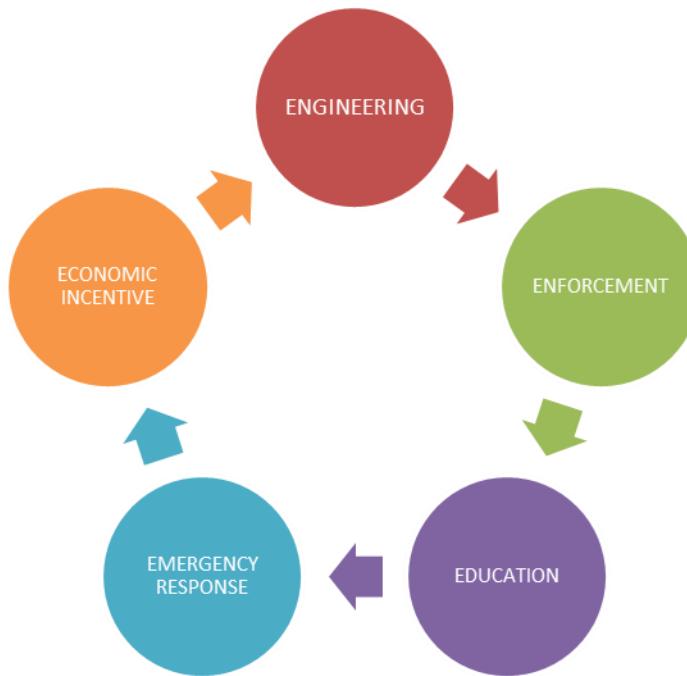
- To evaluate past efforts on the key objectives that were established in 2009, a score of 1-10, with 10 being best, was incorporated for each objective. There has been meaningful progress on the objectives since 2009, but opportunity still exists for continued improvement.

PROGRESS REPORT ON KEY OBJECTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Develop and sustain a portfolio of high-impact, least-cost, stakeholder-driven solutions for reducing wildfire ignitions, risks and losses by creating and sustaining new solutions, eliminating low-impact solutions, and streamlining high-cost solutions. ➤ 2009-2019 Score: 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Coordinate the City Fire Plan, using the key elements identified by CAL FIRE, and support the county with the development/update of their county wide CWPP. ➤ 2009-2019 Score: 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Continue to engage collaborative partners to lead and drive the effort to protect our community from wildfire. AFD's role needs to transition into a support-oriented role, focusing primarily on active participation, facilitation and evaluation of program results. ➤ 2009-2019 Score: 8
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ensure the community understands, accepts responsibility and takes necessary action to mitigate wildfire ignitions and risk, thereby preventing lives and property from being lost or damaged in wildfires. ➤ 2009-2019 Score: 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Develop regularly publicized motivational performance measurements in order to facilitate change in cultural attitudes and implement systematic mitigation of risk. ➤ 2009-2019 Score: 7
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Facilitate change in the local "cultural attitude" about wildfire risks from apathy and unawareness, to alertness and empowerment, through mass marketing and outreach. ➤ 2009-2019 Score: 7

How Fire Department Strategic Planning is Implemented

5 E's of Community Risk Reduction

The 5 E's are Education, Engineering, Enforcement, Economic Incentives, and Emergency Response. These 5 E's form the foundation by which we plan, establish, and measure our CRR activities and programs. Each of them is valuable and essential to a successful program.



Engineering

The City of Auburn has adopted regulations that are more stringent than California's regulations. To engineer effective defensible space into the development process, Pre-Fire Management uses proven vegetation management practices when reviewing and approving all landscaping and fuel modification zone plans. The City of Auburn Fire Department and Planning & Development section ensures that comprehensive pre-emergency planning has been done, and that fire protection measures are engineered into the design of both residential and commercial structures, for both new construction and remodels. Chapter 7-A building requirements are incorporated, as well as Title 24, Title 19, PRC 4290 and PRC 4291, to identify and address potential wildfire hazards, and to help develop mitigation measures that will aid in making the structures more defensible. Chapter R337 of the California Residential Code (CRC) contain standards associated with the construction of buildings in wildfire prone area.

Objectives

We will work together to establish:

- Wildland Urban Interface Inspections
- Structural Ignition Assessment Program
- Fire Resistive Landscape Program

Measures

Year 1

*All staff trained in WUI inspections
Train staff on Structure Ignition Program
Collect data on Home Hardening efforts
Update the Municipal Code with AB38
Implement Community Risk Reduction Program Manager*

Year 2

*Complete WUI Inspections in the designated high-risk areas
Complete all request Structure Ignition Assessment requests
Identify new ways to connect with the community and to educate them on our Fire Resistive Landscape Program*

In Year three we will assess our objectives and measures to identify the strengths and challenges.

Enforcement

remain compliant with existing fire codes.

For existing structures, Auburn City Fire is actively involved in enforcing codes and ordinances and conducts regular inspections to ensure a reasonable degree of fire protection exists in facilities and occupancies, and that they

In terms of enforcing vegetation management guidelines, Auburn City Fire also conducts annual defensible space inspections for homes and structures within the Very High and High Fire Severity Zones to ensure they remain in compliance. The same is true for Fuel Modification Zones and Homeowners Association properties, which are also inspected.

Objectives

We will work together to:

- Property owners, or agencies having jurisdiction, become more aware of hazardous fuels on their respective properties
- Ensure that mechanisms are in place to assist in the removal of hazardous fuels
- Re-establish a prescribed fire program as a mechanism for mitigating risks from wildland fire and for hazardous fuel reduction
- Improve access and egress in key areas

Measures

Year 1

*Proactive effort looking for weeds/fuel's risks
engaging parcel owners on expectations
Ongoing Weed Abatement enforcement
Initiate a Grazing Program to support fuel
reduction efforts of fuels crew work*

Year 2

*Refresh our collaborative effort with Recology
and capture green waste tons per acre for city
projects
Re-establish Prescribed fire program for
maintaining fuels reduction of parcels within
the city limits
Evaluate/Initiate "Pilot" city-wide chipper
program*

In Year three we will assess our objectives and measures to identify the strengths and challenges.

Education Efforts

Auburn City Fire staff participates in ongoing training programs, designed to ensure that they stay current with codes, regulations, current issues and best practices. In addition,

Auburn City Fire champions the "Ready, Set, Go!" message to promote wildfire education and conduct outreach programs. Based on the premise that during a major wildfire, there may not be enough firefighting resources to protect every home, "Ready, Set, Go!" encourages residents to take personal responsibility for preparing their property and family to become part of a solution for the problem of increasing fire losses during wildfires. Special emphasis is focused on ember intrusion and the actions that homeowners can take to lower their risk, such as retrofitting homes with ignition resistive features, and creating defensible space around their property, such as with trimming and regular maintenance, and planting with ignition resistive plants. This is of particular importance for residents in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas, where wildfire survivability relies more heavily on the landowner's personal initiative to take measures to protect his or her own life and property. Additional information regarding the preparation of family emergency plans and kits, contact phone numbers, and evacuation plans are also discussed.

Objectives

We will work together to:

- Encouraging community members participation in fire safe council formation
- Develop/refresh marketing initiatives, education and outreach materials, to obtain intended behavioral change results
- Continued relationship building with local partners and agencies to target and distribute information
- Engage the community to subscribe to county alerting systems

Measures

Year 1

Annual Safety Message Campaign

Fire Ignition Information Videos

Implement an education campaign focused on the benefits of Fire Wise Communities

Year 2

Fire Behavior Map and interactive mapping for inspection status and City owned parcel fuel reduction status

Initiate Fire Corp Volunteer Program

Initiate Fire Watch Volunteer Program

In Year three we will assess our objectives and measures to identify the strengths and challenges.

Emergency Response

The Auburn City Fire Department responds to wildfire incidents. In addition, other City of Auburn departments

such as the Police Department and Public Works Department would also play a vital response role with larger incident of any size or potential. Critical roles for other departments include but not limited to, public notification, evacuation, traffic control, staging of incoming resources, logistical support to fire resources, supporting city facilities, and aftermath mitigation measures.

The Auburn City Fire Department is an "all risk" agency meaning all type of emergencies are handled by trained personnel with the appropriate equipment. The department has wildfire suppression equipment including personal protective equipment and all personnel are trained and certified to the California Incident Command Certification System (CICCS) as required for wildfire. The department participates in the California Master Mutual Aid System where fire personnel gain experience in wildfire suppression activities on large incidents throughout the state.

Objectives

We will work together to:

- Training of personnel for "Move –up" roles and leadership qualifications
- Increase Staffing levels to staff an additional engine with qualified Fire Captain, Engineer, and Firefighter for city fuel reduction work
- Ability to up staff with weather events
- Establish a Mutual Threat Zone Plan with CAL FIRE
- Response Agreement with Placer County Fire Department - Ensuring the closest resource response concept
- Fire Hazard Mapping
- Develop a map of all wildland areas that will illustrate the locations of all assets at risk from wildland fire with fire spread modeling
- Mapping and risk ranking of communities affected by WUI issues develop.

Measures

Year 1

Implement Closest Resource with Partner Agencies

Increase staffing with local weather events as needed

Year 2

Evaluate risk ranking of neighborhoods affected by WUI

Update emergency communications

Year 3

In Year three we will assess our objectives and measures to identify the strengths and challenges.

ECONOMIC INCENTIVES

The economic impact of fire is not obvious until the loss has occurred. The

City of Auburn has an assessed value of over \$2 billion dollars. The average median income equals over \$57,000 per household. The long-term consequences to a community that experiences a major fire are often permanently devastating. The recent Camp Fire illustrated the permanent and devastating impacts to a community.

Fire prevention activities are often the first line of budgetary cuts, and this may actually result in much higher expenditures later if a major fire occurs. Traditionally, fire is experienced locally or regionally, the public continues to assume it will not happen to them. The National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) released a finding that every \$1 invested in disaster mitigation saves society \$6.

While the short-term consequences of fire are local, the larger community will experience the long-term consequences of increased insurance and tax rates. According to Cal OES, since 1979, the California Emergency Fund has expended approximately \$6.95 billion suppressing wildfires in State Responsibility Area (SRA).

Objectives

We will work together to obtain:

- FEMA Grant
- Middle Fork Hydro Electric Project Grant
- CAL FIRE Grant
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant
- Tree Mortality Task Force Grant
- Fire Safe Council Grants

Measures

Year 1

*Advertise discounts offered by insurance carriers for "Fire Wise" communities
Capture data on insurance reductions for "Fire Wise" communities*

Year 2

*Ensure all grant opportunities are explored for feasibility
Capture data on structure survival due to home hardening*

In Year three we will assess our objectives and measures to identify the strengths and challenges.