



KENSINGTON FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

DATE: February 09, 2022

TO: Board of Directors
Kensington Fire Protection District

RE: **Agenda Item 10**
General Manager's Report

SUBMITTED BY: Bill Hansell, General Manager

Since the January Board meeting, the majority of my time was spent on the final audit work as well as well as focusing on the mid-year financials and the PSB renovation project, as described in other agenda items listed for this meeting. In addition to the weekly business of the district, I also spent time on the following topics of note:

- 1. East Bay Wildfire Prevention and Vegetation Management JPA** – I attended the third formation meeting of the potential JPA on Friday, February 4th. Chief Pigoni and EPC member Peter Guerrero also attended. A very informative presentation by the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority was given, followed by a Q&A session with the participants and the MWPA leadership. Attached is a slide deck of the presentation. Additional info is available on the MWPA website at: <https://www.marinwildfire.org/>

An important note about the MWPA is that it is funded by a 2020 special property tax measure (passed with 70% of the vote), with an average cost of \$200 per home (the charge is based upon the square footage of each home with additional provisions for multi-family buildings and senior/hardship exemptions.) It has a budget of \$19.3M per year for ten years. The meeting facilitator, David Early, emphasized that the JPA discussions to date have assumed there will be no tax funding associated with the effort but the JPA, instead, will be funded by grants (TBD), if approved. Fire professionals in the meeting commented on the many differences between Marin County and Contra Costa County/Alameda County, while most attendees agreed that the efforts covered by the MWPA need to be addressed whether by existing agencies/groups, as noted by the professionals, or by a JPA. Attached are comments by Fire Chief Pigoni on the discussions to date.

The final portion of the meeting consisted of a discussion on forming a sub-committee of (4) elected officials and (4) fire chiefs to go further in depth than the overall group of (40+) participants is able to. The proposal was debated but not resolved as to the exact makeup or representatives. David Early will be reaching out to try to resolve that prior to the next group meeting on Friday, March 4th, 2022.
- 2. Contra Costa Resource Conservation District's Wildfire Regional Priority Plan Meeting #4** – On Wednesday, January 26th, I attended the 4th meeting of the Wildfire RPP, along with Chief Pigoni and President Nagel. There was a broad discussion of efforts to coordinate on wildfire issues, as well as breakout sessions which focused on particular aspects of collaboration and resources. The focus of this work, along with that of the Hills Emergency Forum and other groups, overlaps many of the service gap issues raised by the East Bay Wildfire Prevention JPA discussions. Extensive

information is available on the RPP website at:

<https://alameda-and-contra-costa-county-regional-priority-plan-ccrcd.hub.arcgis.com/>

3. **Grant Writer Activity** – As I explained last month, I am working with the Berkeley Fire Department on the possibility of grant funding for vegetation management in Cerritos Canyon, but do not have any solutions to report at this time.
4. **Investment Options** – Given the lackluster performance of LAIF over the past two years, I am discussing other investment options with the CCC Finance Department. Our options are limited to LAIF, TBills, and US Agencies, all of which have not done well, but I am checking on the current rates and will coordinate any changes with the schedule of our cash needs. That, of course, depends on the schedule of the PSB renovation as determined by the board.



**Changing the Wildfire
Prevention Paradigm**

Why Change the Paradigm? Lessons Learned.

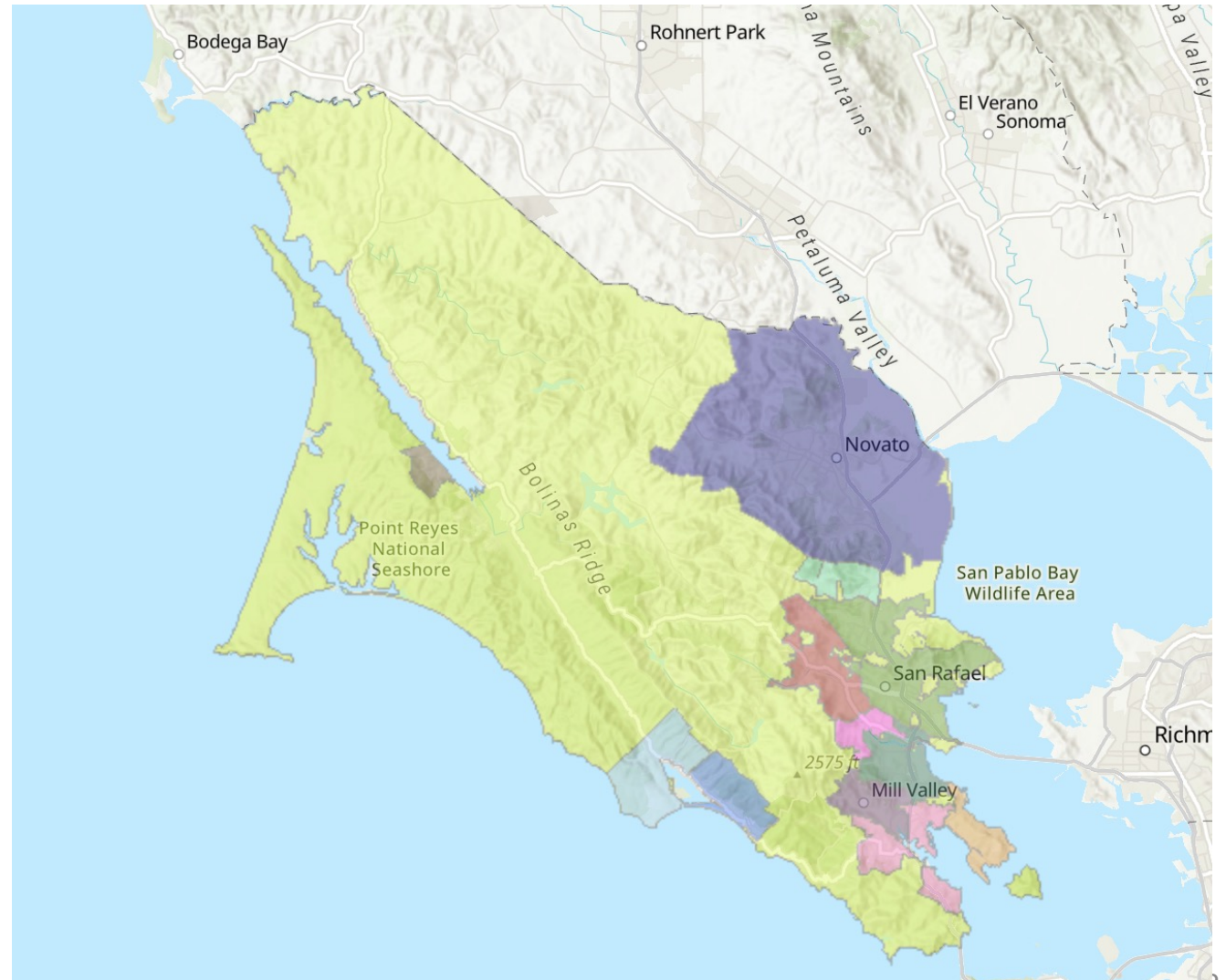


2017 Tubbs Fire, Coffey Park, Santa Rosa, CA
Photo: CC-BY The National Guard

Working Independently



- 19 Independent Fire Agencies responsible for Fire Prevention and Suppression
- Fire knows no jurisdictional boundaries
- Compelling need to address common threats, mutual interests





2018: Lessons Learned from the 2017 North Bay Fire Siege Report
“When fires started October 8th the only thing separating Marin County from their neighbors to the north was simply an ignition source.”



2019: Marin Civil Grand Jury Report on Wildfire Preparedness
“...the creation of a joint powers authority to coordinate a comprehensive, consistent approach to pre-ignition planning.”

Key Recommendations

- Form a Joint Powers Authority
 - No single agency exists to coordinate fire prevention efforts
 - Need to integrate county-wide prevention and risk reduction work
 - Need an ongoing source of funding

The New Paradigm: A Fire-Adapted Community

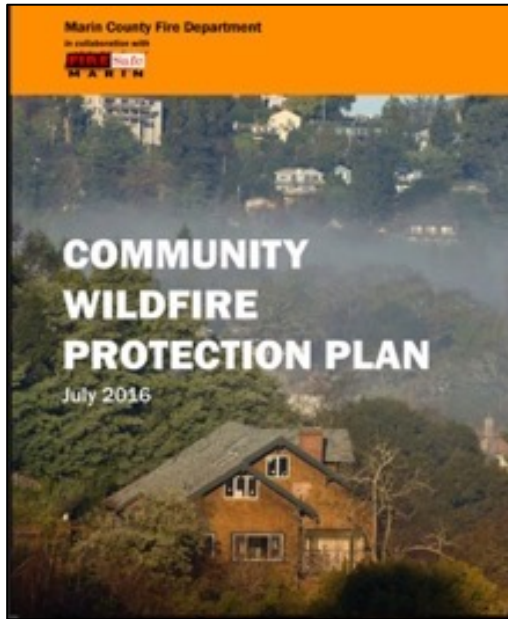


“a knowledgeable and engaged community in which the awareness and actions of residents regarding infrastructure, buildings, landscaping, and the surrounding ecosystem lessens the need for extensive protection actions and enables the community to safely accept fire as a part of the surrounding landscape.”



- U.S. Forest Service

Dominant Paradigm	New Paradigm
“War on fire”	“Work with the flow” of natural processes
Wildfire is destructive	Wildfire is a necessary natural process
Control wildfire on the landscape	Learn to live with fire on fire-adapted landscapes
Prevent and suppress fires	Create fire-resilient human and natural communities
The problem is that wildfires are escaping our control.	The problem is that always suppressing natural wildfire is creating an unsustainable buildup of fuels which results in dangerous “unnatural fire.”
The solution is to apply existing procedures and technologies more strongly to bring fires under control.	The solution is to develop a more holistic approach to fire management where local communities, adjacent property owners, and governments work together to co-manage fire risk.



2016: Community Wildfire Protection Plan

“This document provides a framework for future collaboration that can be used to identify, prioritize, implement, and monitor hazard reduction activities throughout the county.”

- **Code Adoptions**
- **Fire Hazard Severity Maps**
- **Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) ordinances**

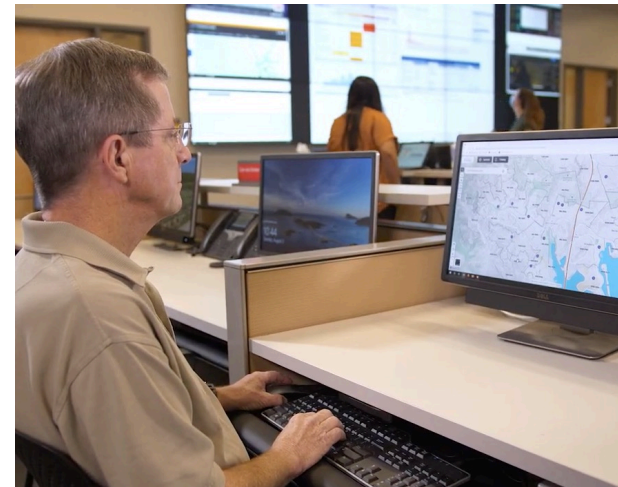


**FIRE
SAFE
MARIN**

Adapting to Wildfire

- One of the nation's first Fire Safe Councils
- Public outreach and education, Firewise communities
- Trusted non-profit
- Existing relationships with relevant agencies

Public Safety Community





What are you already doing
in your communities?

What are your existing relationships
in your communities?



- Which agencies will be members of the JPA?
- Which non-members need to be consulted?
- What about the agencies that opt out?

- City Managers and Fire Chiefs built the format of the JPA and language
- Elected official oversight
- Standing for subject-matter experts
- Visits (times 2) to each board and council



The Process: Campaign & Election



- Civic leaders and Fire Chiefs campaigned Cities/Town Councils/Fire Districts for formation of a JPA
- JPA to be funded by **\$0.10/square foot parcel tax**
- **17 of 19 agencies** agreed to join
- **Measure C** – Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority received 70.8% voters' support in March 2020

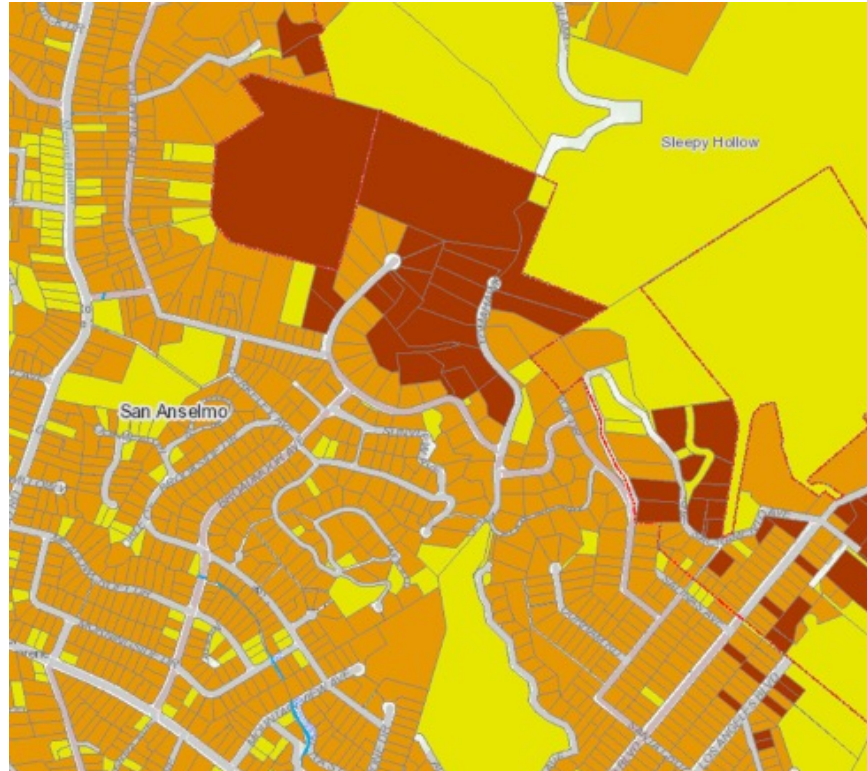


Marin County Measure C		
Result	Votes	Percentage
✔ Yes	75,638	70.80%
No	31,200	29.20%

Setting Up the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority



KQED: "This California Neighborhood Was Built to Survive a Wildfire. And It Worked."
2007 Witch Fire, Crosby Neighborhood, Rancho Santa Fe
Photo: Don Bartletti, Los Angeles Times via Getty Images



Marin County CWPP: Provides county-wide framework for MWPA's annual work plans and investments—updated annually.

- **LIDAR data:** funded by a 2019 federal grant
- Conducted a **Fire Risk Assessment for every parcel and home** in Marin
- Identifies **critical hazards & investments needed to reduce risks**



The Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority leads the development of fire adapted communities using sound scientific, financial, programmatic, ecological practices, vegetation management, community education, evacuation and warning systems with the support of its member and partner agencies.

Land Managers

Manage landscapes for lowered fuel loads, lower fire intensity and ecological resiliency to fire.

Marin Residents

Modify homes to be more fire resistant. Be prepared and subscribe to alerts.

Civic Leaders

Develop laws and policies in support of fire prevention, preparedness and risk reduction.

First Responders

Craft fire prevention, preparedness, and emergency response plans. Educate community.

Developers & Business Owners

Don't build in high-risk areas. Build with fire-resistant materials.



Leading the Development of a Fire-Adapted Marin



Reduce Wildfire Fuels

Vegetation Management and Local Wildfire Prevention Mitigation



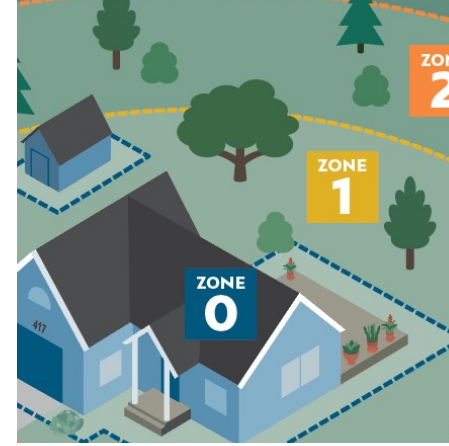
Improve Evacuation Systems

Wildfire Detection, Alert, and Evacuation Program Improvements



Reduce Risks to Homes

Defensible Space Evaluations (1/3 annually) and Home Hardening



Educate the Public

Public outreach and education about fire prevention, preparedness, and risk reduction



Provide Grants to Residents

Grants to modify homes and partnerships to collaborate and augment funds

MWPA: Organizational Structure



- A **Joint Powers Agreement** clearly defines the JPA's authorities to operate, act and invest in wildfire prevention activities
- Operated "**From the Ground Up**"
- All sub committees' actions are defined by written **Bylaws**
- All actions and investments are **monitored by a Citizens' Oversight Committee**
- We are now one year old

MWPA: Geographic Zones



17 agencies with different level of work backlog, resources available, community support



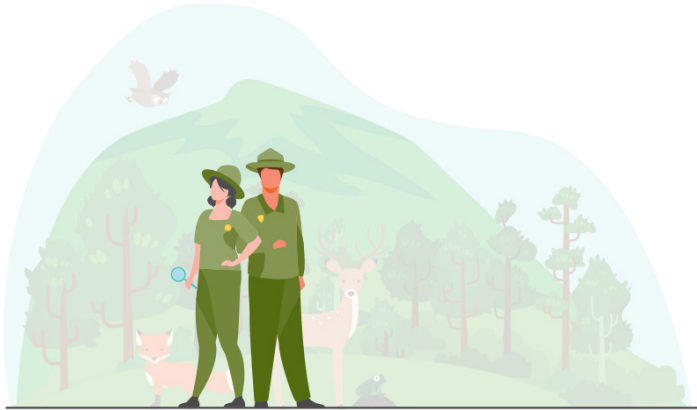
JPA Operational Boundaries: 5 Geographic Zones



Program Area	% of funds
JPA Core: Cross-Jurisdictional Projects Wildfire Detection & Evacuation Program Improvements, Veg Management/Fire Hazard Reduction, Grants Management, Public Education (Fire Safe Marin)	60%
Defensible Space Evaluations and Home Hardening (agencies can administer)	20%
Community-Level Wildfire Prevention Mitigation Local jurisdiction fire prevention issues with no funding. Enhanced fire patrols for problem areas, additional fire hazard reduction work, evac route parking issues	20%

2020-2030: **10-year term**
~\$20 MM revenue per year

Year 1: Creating the
framework for MWPA while
implementing work on the
ground



Land Managers



Homeowners



**Citizens & Orgs
Concerned about Cost
and Transparency**

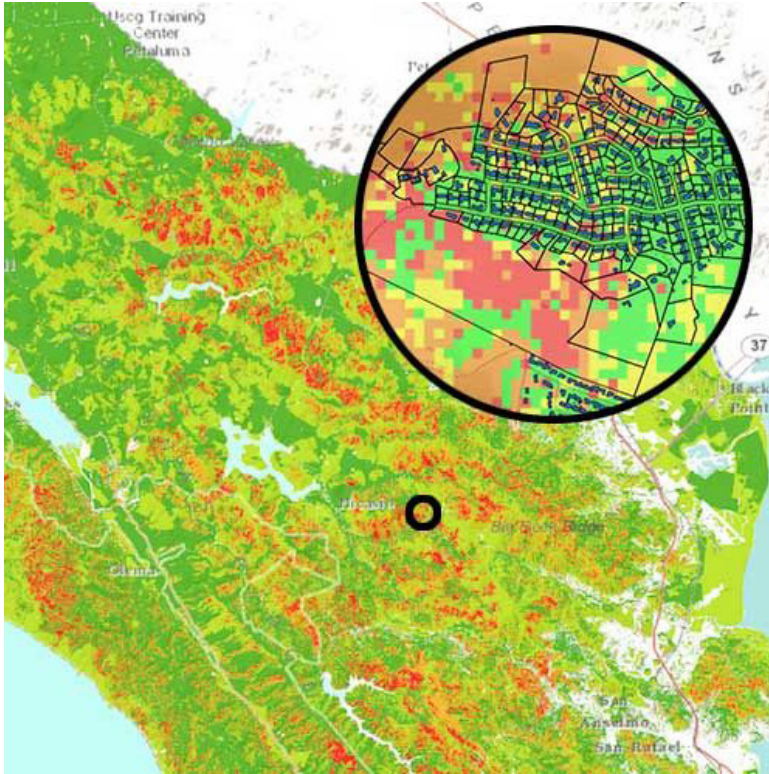


**Ecologically-Sound
Practices Partnership**

Advise About:

- Wildland Vegetation
- Carbon Management
- Defensible Space

Emphasizing importance of individual homes in preventing disaster



Parcel-level data



Harden Homes



Defensible Space

Grants to help low-income residents and those with access and functional needs to get it done

Local Fire Prevention/Mitigation Projects





 WEBINAR

EVACUATIONS & WARNINGS: HOW TO SURVIVE A WILDFIRE

Tuesday, August 25 @ 6pm

It's Time to Prepare!



**PREPARE FOR WILDFIRE
COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS**

MARIN COUNTY

**FIRE Safe
MARIN**  MARIN WILDFIRE
PREVENTION AUTHORITY



TUNE IN TO FIRE SAFE MARIN'S NEW SHOW!

WILDFIRE WATCH



EPISODES AVAILABLE ON
YOUTUBE | CHANNEL 30 | FIRESAFEMARIN.ORG | FACEBOOK

Evacuation Route Clearing



BEFORE



AFTER



Zonehaven



US-CA-XMR-COR-E007
NORMAL

Evacuation Pre Plan

Population 937 1,561
Vehicles 628 1,256
Area 377 acres
Structures 723

GENERAL INFO EVACUATION DETAILS

Summary Edit
Chapman Park

Description Edit
This zone is located to the South of Tamalpais Drive and Meadowsweet Drive, and East of Camino Alto and Corte Madera Avenue.

Special Considerations Edit
No Data Available

Jurisdictional Responsibilities Edit
Central Marin Fire Department
Central Marin PD

Zone Approval Status Edit
Published

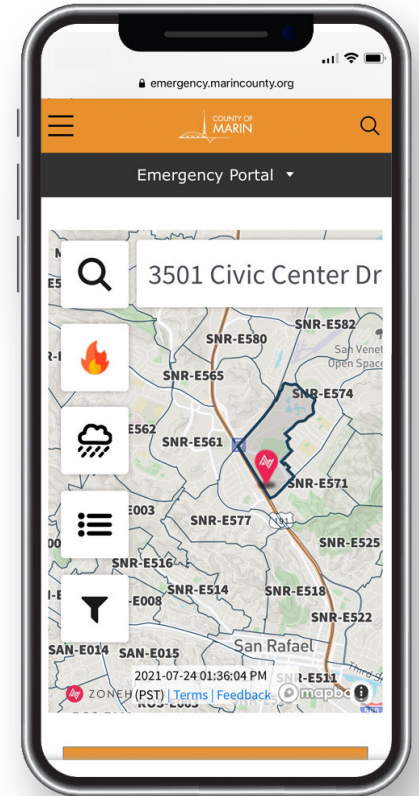




Photo: Alan Dep, Marin Independent Journal
Lassen Fire, September 2021, San Rafael, California

- Ingress/egress risk assessment
- App development: Fire risk analysis to help prioritize projects
- Roadway terrain and condition
- Traffic patterns
- Number of cars
- Pinch points
- Sync traffic preemption devices (i.e. green lights in a certain direction)
- Demographics of community (such as access and functional needs)

Goat Grazing



Shaded Fuel Breaks





Thank You

Mark Brown, Executive Officer
Anne Crealock, Planning & Program Mgr
Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority

www.marinwildfire.org

415-539-6972

East Bay Wildfire Prevention JPA

From: **Michael Pigoni** <MPigoni@ci.el-cerrito.ca.us>
Date: Fri, Feb 4, 2022 at 9:04 AM
Subject: East Bay Wildfire Prevention JPA
To: Bill Hansell <bhansell@kensingtonfire.org>

Good morning, Bill,

I am sure that you are looking forward to meeting #3 this afternoon to create the East Bay Wildfire Prevention JPA, I thought I would share the thoughts and concerns that the County Chiefs have on this effort and the reason that they are not supporting these efforts as a group at this point. These are based on the 10 talking points or goals that the consultants and Jon Kaufman listed as the benefits for creating the JPA. Please feel free to share these with Larry or as you see fit.

- 1. Coordinated Regional Vegetation Management and Firebreaks** (Technically “fuel breaks”): Individual fire agencies are best suited to carry out such planning through existing structures such as the Hills Emergency Forum and County Chiefs that are tailored to the local needs. Creating a new layer of governance will not solve anything. Further, the fuel breaks the JPA group envisions are almost exclusively on East Bay Regional Park property which would best be addressed via enforcement by existing fire agencies and fire department to fire department coordination.
- 2. Grant Procurement:** It is unclear to the County Chiefs how a new agency with no staff and no budget will be better suited to apply for grants. The success of agencies without a budget or staff applying for and executing large grants is not good and typically will require the hiring of (many) consultants and endless handholding from Cal Fire.
- 3. Coordination of Planning Processes and Documents:** The JPA would not have the legal authority to adopt codes and the political realities each agency faces makes it highly unlikely they would have the votes to adopt these global codes, thus we end up with a new organization which exists to develop model codes with no authority or means of enforcing.
- 4. Consistent Regional Data Collection and Analysis:** It is unclear where the expertise will come from to provide analysis of the fire threat within each of the agency’s jurisdictions. County Chiefs take issue with their assertion that the local fire agencies lack an understanding of where the fire threat exists in their area.
- 5. Comprehensive and Regionally Targeted Education and Information for Private Property Owners:** Cal Fire provides excellent defensible space and home hardening resources on-line and in print. Most agencies also have their own material and public education programs in place along with their vegetation management program. It is not clear what region-specific materials are needed and even how these documents would materially differ from the Cal Fire examples. Defensible space is defensible space.

6. **Regionally Consistent Ordinances for Local Adoption:** As with #3 above, the political reality of what elected officials will vote for varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction and the proposed JPA is unlikely to produce proposals which are progressive. A far more pragmatic goal is for the County Chiefs to hold a fire code update meeting to review proposed local ordinances as they work through the 2023 adoption code cycle this year.

7. **Enforcement:** Enforcement is limited to the fire code official or their designee. In Contra Costa County, that is the municipal fire departments and the Fire Protection Districts. The County Chiefs see no benefit in having a JPA coordinate local enforcement activities. As with the grant applications, there is no means proposed for the staff/funding for this function.

8. **Subsidies and Grants for Activities on Private Land:** The Diablo FireSafe Council has been carrying out this function for years. The proposed JPA would be creating a competing entity.

9. **Sharing of Technology and Assets:** There is no value in creating a new entity to encourage fire agencies to share resources. The fire service is already accustomed to sharing resources/equipment when needed. This is already a functioning system for all parties and a long track record of success that does not need another group to control... "do not try and fix what is not broken".

10. **Negotiation of Reduced-Price Services:** This is a pipe dream. Fuel mitigation in the Bay Area is expensive and buying more of the service does not reduce the unit cost. We have seen this is the vegetation abatement projects we do every year.

The County Chiefs feel these efforts are being spear headed by Oakland Hills (Claremont Canyon) residents that have struggle (as have we) to get fuel breaks on land owned by East Bay Rgional Parks. Their efforts suggest a JPA will secure a constant funding stream, yet no one has identified a potential funding source. It is believed that in the absence of any funding, each City/District/County will be asked to fund the hiring of staff to then pursue grants.

Furthermore, these efforts (not the JPA) seems similar to the Regional Priority Plans (RPPs) that are coming out of the Alameda and Contra Costa County Resource Conservation District armed with CCI money from the Coastal Conservancy, which is tied to the Department of Conservation, and are adding yet another layer for "planning" not project implementation.

Personally, I feel that we would be better served by using our existing organizations and authority to increase fire safety in our region as well as increase efforts to procure grants. Chase is also going to be an asset for this with his knowledge and contacts with Cal Fire players to assist in fire prevention. Kensington's biggest hurdle is that most of areas that need attention are private property or owned by other districts.

Respectfully,

Michael Pigoni
Fire Chief
El Cerrito / Kensington Fire Department
(510) 812-4503