

Richmond Community Wildfire Protection Plan Summary Working Session #1 – May 22, 2019

1. **Introductions.** Thirty-six stakeholders, partner agencies and City staff were invited to attend the first working session for the Richmond Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Five invitees attended.

- Fire Marshal Dave Gibson, El Cerrito/ Kensington Fire
- Fire Marshal Eric Govan, Richmond Fire
- Cheryl Miller, Diablo Fire Safe Council (DFSC)
- Deputy Chief Emon Usher, Richmond fire
- Lina Velasco, Richmond Planning Department

Participants discussed moving forward to develop the plan and provide opportunities for input for those who cannot attend working sessions in person. The presentation used during the meeting will be posted on the City website.

2. What is a CWPP & Why Should City of Richmond Have One

Cheryl Miller, Executive Coordinator, DFSC provided an overview of the existing county-wide Contra Costa County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) that will serve as an umbrella for the development of an Annex for the City of Richmond (similar to the Annex to the Contra Costa County Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.)

A CWPP is a written document, mutually agreed upon by local, state and federal representatives and stakeholders, that identifies how a community will reduce its risks from wildland fire. Community Wildfire Protection Plans are authorized and defined in Title I of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA), passed by Congress November 21, 2003 and signed into law December 3, 2003. The HFRA established unprecedented incentives for communities to take lead roles in community wildfire protection.

Importance of a Richmond CWPP: Sixteen years after the legislation, CWPPs continue to shape wildfire prevention and fuel reduction as they are critical for Federal and State grant funding. Since 2009 DFSC and partners in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties have been awarded over \$2.5 million of grant funds and \$2.5 million of community match for activities identified in CWPPs.

Reasons for developing a Richmond Annex to the Contra Costa Countywide CWPP include:

- Grant funding opportunities at the Federal and State levels.
- Coordination with neighboring jurisdictions and land managing agencies.
- Identification of community wildfire concerns and potential solutions.
- Background for future code updates to incorporate wildfire safety into retrofit, infill and new development within the City.

Ms. Miller provided an overview of the Contra Costa countywide plan's Table of Contents that offers a model for the Richmond CWPP:

1. County Information – overview of area and identification of stakeholders
2. Fire hazard and risk in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)
3. Recommended Action Plan
4. Prioritized fuel reduction treatments
5. Treatment of structural ignitability
6. Sustaining the plan
7. Signature page
8. Appendix

Requirements and signators. In order to be Federally recognized the CWPP must be signed by three entities:

1. The applicable local government - Richmond City Council
2. The local fire department(s) – Richmond Fire Chief (neighboring jurisdictions also may sign letters of support)
3. The state entity responsible for forest management – CAL FIRE.

There are three minimum requirements that also must be met:

1. **Collaboration:** The CWPP must be collaboratively developed by local and state government representatives, in consultation with federal agencies and other interested parties. (Note there are no federal agencies with jurisdiction in the Richmond CWPP area.)
2. **Prioritized Fuel Reduction:** A CWPP must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatment that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure.
3. **Treatment of Structural Ignitability:** A CWPP must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area.

Planning Process and Time Frame. An “Overview” (attached) was provided to the group that identified the process, timeframe, future working sessions’ key outcomes, results and deliverables. Collaborative working sessions are planned for each step.

- Step 1: Kickoff, Convene Decision-makers, Involve Federal Agencies, Engage Interested Parties
- Step 2: Review Existing CWPP and Projects and Priorities Update
- Step 3: Action Plan Update and Assessment Strategy
- Step 4: Plan Review and Adoption

3. Role of Existing Contra Costa Countywide CWPP

Ms. Miller highlighted the contents of the Contra Costa countywide plan. The countywide plan is currently being updated with scheduled adoption before the end of 2019. Annexes have been prepared for El Cerrito - Kensington and the Clayton – Morgan Territory areas.

Overview of the countywide CWPP. The group reviewed the countywide plan and generally agreed many elements make sense for City of Richmond’s CWPP. Further refinements can be made throughout the planning process. Initial elements include the scope and purpose of the plan, as well as and values at risk in Richmond:

Scope of the Richmond CWPP

1. Describes the fire environment.
2. Identifies values at risk as defined by the stakeholders.
3. Provides maps that show high fire hazard areas, as defined by State and local authorities.
4. Establishes the rationale for prioritization of fuel management projects and treatment methods, as well as outlines principles for selection of projects when funding is available.
5. Describes measures communities and homeowners can take to reduce the ignitability of structures.
6. Identifies sources for Best Management Practices for fuel reduction treatments included in the plan.
7. Identifies federal, state and local resources (fire, wildlife, regulatory agencies, etc.)

Purpose of the Richmond CWPP

1. Increased collaborative planning and cooperative actions that will build useful relationships between communities and agencies.
2. Reduction of hazardous fuels in the WUI.
3. Creation and maintenance for defensible space for structures and properties.
4. Reduction of structural ignitability hazards.

5. Planning of evacuation protocols and drills.

Values at Risk in the City of Richmond are divided into 5 factors to address the potential for fire to occur, what to protect and protection capabilities.

1. Potential for fire to occur (fire history, fire weather, communities at risk)
2. Fuel hazards
3. What to protect (homes, businesses and critical infrastructure)
4. Other values
5. Local Preparedness and firefighting capabilities.

Additional highlights of the existing countywide plan and input on how they related to the City of Richmond

- In 2001 in association with the National Fire Plan, 25 cities in Contra Costa County were identified in the Federal Register as “[Communities at Risk](#)” recognizing the risk from wildfire. Both Richmond and East Richmond were included on the list. It is important to be on this list as many grant programs give funding priority to these communities.
- The 2008 CAL FIRE Assessment maps identify the eastern portions of Richmond hills as very high fire severity. City of Richmond very high fire hazard severity zone designations expand those areas to include: Point Pinole, Point Molate, Point Richmond and Miller Knox (attached map). Partner agencies, East Bay Regional Park District, East Bay Municipal Utilities District and adjoining cities, also recognize these and adjacent areas as very high fire severity zones. Richmond Planning and GIS can assist with demographic information on the various Richmond communities.
- Additional values at risk (things to protect) expand beyond homes, businesses, and infrastructure (manmade elements) to include: natural resources, significant recreation values, scenic areas, and areas of historical, cultural or economic value. Natural resources include not only the EBRPD and city parklands, but also locations such as eucalyptus groves that serve as critical monarch butterfly habitat. Historic resources can be found in several areas of the City within the high fire areas (e.g. Point Richmond and Pt. Molate). The CWPP will be consistent with other City of Richmond plans including the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, Safety Element, Smart Cities and others. It will identify environmental and other resource protections that balance wildfire safety with environmental quality.
- Information on local preparedness and firefighting capability including: community preparedness, evacuation planning, safety zones, fire & water mutual aide agreements and response capability. Richmond can coordinate with Contra Costa County and adjacent cities (e.g. Berkeley, El Cerrito and Orinda) who are working with their police and fire departments to develop evacuation strategies and further refine them through drills and public information campaigns.
- Strategies to reduce the risk of wildfire. The countywide plan identifies 10 strategies that will be discussed and refined during the July planning session.
 1. Collaborative partners
 2. Risk of ignitions
 3. Fire weather
 4. Community at risk hazards
 5. Defensible space programs
 6. Structure survivability
 7. New & infill development
 8. Fuel management on public & large scale private lands
 9. Protect facilities & infrastructure
 10. Local preparedness & firefighter capability
- Also highlighted are the six countywide priorities for programs, practices and funding. These will be discussed further during the planning process as Richmond develops their own priorities:
 1. Regionally specific educational programs and materials.

2. Evacuation planning.
 3. Balancing fuel load management with biological resource protection.
 4. Developing fuel management plans + geographically based projects.
 5. Treatment of structural ignitability - Education and training on structure retrofit.
 6. Access and egress improvements by reducing road restrictions.
- Eight criteria are used to select recommended priorities in the countywide plan that also will be discussed further during the planning process:
 1. Protects life, property and infrastructure
 2. Reduces risk of fire spreading
 3. Creates detailed implementation plan
 4. Involves stakeholders at all levels,
 5. Demonstrates the capacity manage
 6. Covered in an agency adopted environmental document.
 7. Improves response, control & evacuation.
 8. Removes of invasive plants of known high flammability

4. Richmond Community Base Map

The map of the Richmond's very high fire hazard severity zones (attached) was reviewed. It was recommended to consider two additional areas for inclusion due to fuel load and potential for fire spread and difficulty of containment:

- UC Berkeley Forest Products Lab
- Port of Richmond

Richmond Fire shared aerial (drone) footage of the very high fire hazard areas to show the general fuel conditions and density of home and businesses throughout the City.

5. Next Steps

The next working session will provide an overview of new information and discuss potential fuel reduction projects and preventions strategies and recommendations to reduce structure ignitability. It is scheduled for

Wednesday July 31, 2019
1:00 – 3:00 PM
Richmond City Hall, Basement meeting room
440 Civic Center Plaza