

News from: **Oakland Fire Department**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Oakland Fire Department is Preparing a Plan to Reduce Wildfire Risk

Oakland, CA — In an ongoing effort to reduce the threat and devastating effects of wildfires in the Oakland hills, the Oakland Fire Department today announced the development of a Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) and associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR). The attached fact sheet produced by the Department provides more information on the purpose and timing of the effort.

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Since 1923, more than a dozen major wildfires have impacted the Oakland hills, resulting in extensive damage, economic harm and loss of life. The 1991 Oakland Fire resulted in 25 deaths and destroyed more than 3,000 structures. Most of the Oakland hills fall within High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ), as designated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and many areas are characterized by hot and dry fall seasons, high winds, dense flammable vegetation, steep and varied terrain, hill slope development and limited accessibility for emergency responders.

“We are dedicated to actively managing Oakland fire risk,” said Acting Fire Chief Mark Hoffmann. “Wildfires in particular have posed an ongoing and very real threat to our community, and we are committed to protecting the residents, homes, schools and businesses in our urban wildland areas.”

As part of the Plan and EIR, ongoing and future wildfire prevention activities will be carefully considered for more than 1,400 acres of City-owned property and areas along approximately 300 miles of roadway. The Oakland Fire Code includes regulations for privately owned parcels; inspections and other fire prevention activities on private property are not part of this project.

Public review and comment on the scope of the Plan and EIR will occur in early summer 2017, and completion of the draft Plan is expected for public review later this summer. Public meetings will be planned to provide more information. Residents can also [sign-up to receive project updates online](#).

“Community input is vital to this process,” continued Acting Fire Chief Hoffmann. “The public will have an opportunity to review and comment on the Plan and associated environmental review documents at various stages of the project.”

The Oakland Fire Department monitors and maintains vegetation on City-owned lands to reduce the risk of destructive wildfires. Fire prevention programs and services currently include vegetation inspections, periodic vegetation pruning and thinning, free chipping and debris removal, goat grazing, roving fire patrols and public education and outreach.

For more information, please visit the project website at:
www.oaklandnet.com/VegManagement.

About City of Oakland Fire Department

The Oakland Fire Department is committed to providing the highest quality and highest level of courteous and responsive services to the citizens of Oakland. The Department implements comprehensive strategies and training in fire prevention, fire suppression, emergency medical services and all risk mitigation, including: human-caused and natural disasters, emergency preparedness, 9-1-1 services and community-based fire services.

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Reducing Wildfire Risk

The Oakland Fire Department is responsible for citywide fire prevention and vegetation management activities.

The Fire Department monitors and maintains vegetation on City-owned lands to reduce the threat of destructive wildfires. Fire prevention programs and services currently include vegetation inspections, periodic vegetation pruning and thinning, free chipping and debris removal, goat grazing, roving fire patrols, and public education and outreach. Ongoing and future wildfire prevention activities will be carefully considered for the City-owned lots as part of the Plan and EIR.

Background

Since 1923, more than a dozen major wildfires have impacted the Oakland hills, resulting in extensive damage, economic harm, and loss of life. Most notably, the 1991 Oakland/Berkeley firestorm burned over 1,500 acres, destroyed more than 3,000 homes, caused the deaths of 25 people, and injured over 150 people. Most of the Oakland hills fall within High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ), as designated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, where vegetation must be actively managed to reduce the threat and devastating effects of future wildfires. The FHSZs in the Oakland hills include areas described as the Wildland Urban Interface, which are characterized by hot and dry fall seasons, high winds, dense flammable vegetation, steep and varied terrain, hill slope development, and limited accessibility for emergency responders. Microclimates across the Oakland hills create a varied landscape with many different fire risks. The City of Oakland is also designated by California's Office of the State Fire Marshal as a Community at Risk of damage from wildfire.

Vegetation Management Plan Purpose

To reduce wildfire threat, the Oakland Fire Department is preparing a Vegetation Management (Plan) and associated Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for City-owned parcels in Oakland.

Project Location

The Plan will cover more than 1,400 acres of City property plus treatment areas along approximately 300 miles of roadside. Vegetation management activities conducted on these lands currently include goat grazing on nine sites covering approximately 1,300 acres, monitoring and vegetation clearing along approximately 300 miles of road within the High and Very High FHSZs (16.5 square miles), and brush clearance on critical City-owned properties (~332 acres). Of the approximately 300 miles of roadway that may be treated annually, approximately 30 miles are high priority segments that are treated every year. The Plan and EIR will evaluate these and additional vegetation management practices to reduce fire hazard. Several vegetation management techniques will be identified for principal vegetation types and site-specific conditions. Vegetation management approaches will consider potential environmental effects and opportunities to enhance ecological conditions on City-owned sites.

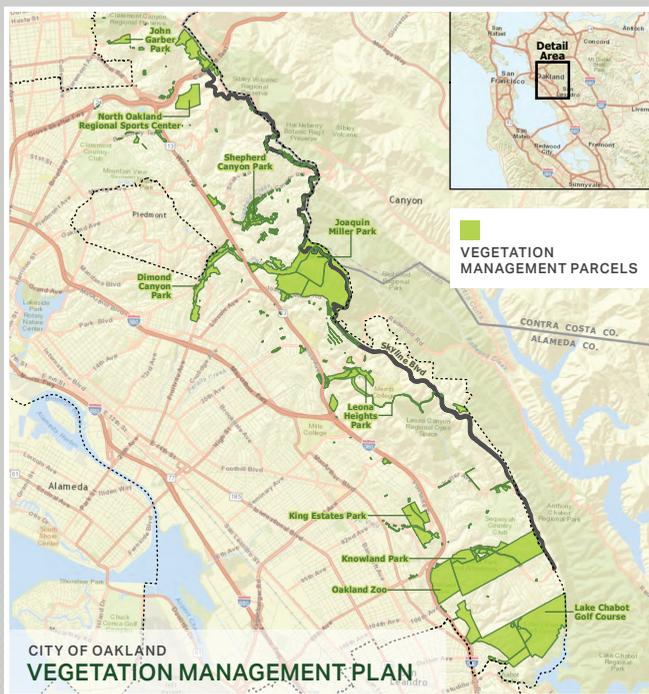


Figure 1
Management Parcels





Consideration of Environmental Effects

The EIR will evaluate the potential effects of the Plan on several resources, including but not limited to:



AESTHETICS



LAND USE AND PLANNING



PUBLIC SERVICES



CULTURAL RESOURCES



RECREATION



BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES



AIR QUALITY



CLIMATE CHANGE AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS



GEOLOGY, SEISMICITY, AND SOILS



HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY



NOISE AND VIBRATION



TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORTATION



UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Schedule and Public Input

The Plan will be drafted to address a 10-year planning horizon. During Plan implementation, adaptive management will allow flexibility to respond to on-the-ground conditions, based on periodic monitoring and field observations. Public input is essential to the development of the Plan and associated EIR. Opportunities for public comment are outlined below. However, additional communication tools will be used to inform and update community members throughout the planning process.

2017									
SPRING		SUMMER		FALL		WINTER			
Stakeholder Briefings/Communication									
Public Workshop									
California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Notice of Preparation									
CEQA Scoping (Public Comment, Scoping Meeting)									
Public Draft Vegetation Management Plan									
Stakeholder Briefings/Communication									
2018					2019				
WI	SP	SU	FA	WI	WI	SP	SU	FA	WI
Administrative Draft EIR									
Stakeholder Briefings/Communication									
Public Draft EIR, Comment Period, CEQA Public Meeting									
Stakeholder Briefings/Communication									
Final EIR & Planning Commission Certification of EIR									
Notice of Determination									