



**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY (NOA) OF FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (FINAL EIR) FOR THE OAKLAND VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN (VMP) AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE VMP AND CERTIFICATION OF THE EIR BEFORE THE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE OF THE CITY COUNCIL AND CITY COUNCIL**

**TO: All Interested Parties**

**SUBJECT: Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) for the Oakland Vegetation Management Plan (VMP) and Notice of Public Hearings Before the Public Safety Committee of the City Council and the City Council For Consideration of Certification of the EIR and Approval of the VMP.**

**LEAD AGENCY/PROJECT SPONSOR: The City of Oakland (City)**

**CEQA STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER: 2019110002**

**BACKGROUND:** A DEIR was prepared for the initial Draft VMP and circulated for public review in November 2020. That document is referred to herein as the “prior 2020 DEIR.” In addition to comments received during the prior 2020 DEIR public review period, the Oakland Fire Department (OFD) received additional comments on the VMP from City representatives and the public. Since then, OFD revised the initial Draft VMP further to address this additional feedback. In September, 2023, the City then prepared a Recirculated DEIR to evaluate the environmental impacts of changes made to the Revised Draft VMP since 2020 that were meant to respond to valuable public and City official feedback on the initial Draft VMP and 2020 DEIR.

The main revision in the Revised Draft VMP was to expand the vegetation management areas from 30 feet to 100 feet wide along roadsides in the City’s VHFHSZ, focused on removing or thinning dead and dying trees (not healthy trees) that are present on City-owned property. In addition, some of the maintenance standards were revised to expand vegetation management activities around habitable structures to provide more defensible space around these structures. These updates to the Revised Draft VMP were considered “significant new information” that required recirculation under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to allow for additional public comment.

Once the City received additional public comments on the Recirculated DEIR, the City, through its consultant, began formulating the Final EIR – Response to Comments. The Final EIR responds to

all comments from members of the public and agencies on both the 2020 DEIR and the Recirculated DEIR. This Notice of Availability (NOA) is published to inform the public that the Final EIR is ready for public review and that the EIR is ready for consideration before the Public Safety Committee of the City Council on May 14, 2024 and the City Council on May 21, 2024.

**PROJECT LOCATION:** The areas included within the VMP encompass City-owned parcels and the areas within 30 feet of the edge of roadsides located within the City’s Very High Wildfire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) as designated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), and defined in Section 4904.3 of the Oakland Fire Code (Oakland Municipal Code Chapter 15.12). The VMP area also encompasses the area within 30-100 feet of the edge of roadsides in the City’s VHFHSZ, where dead and dying trees (as determined by a Certified Arborist, Licensed Forester, or Fire Safety Expert) are present on City-owned property and could strike the road if they fell.

Specifically, as shown in Figure 1 (attached), the VMP area includes: 419 City-owned parcels, ranging in size from <0.1 acres to 235 acres and totaling 1,924 acres. Parcels have been divided into the following categories: urban and residential (51.2 acres), canyon areas (188.7 acres), ridgetop areas (130.2 acres), City park lands and open space (1,522.9), other areas (24.5 acres), and medians (6.1 acres). “Other areas” are developed City-owned properties in the VMP area that include fire stations (nos. 6, 7, 21, 25, and 28), City facilities (parking lots, police stations), paved areas, and parks and playgrounds (e.g., Montclair Park). The VMP also includes roadside areas along 308 miles of roadways within the City’s VHFHSZ, which includes surface and arterial streets, State Routes 13 and 24, and Interstate 580. The parks, recreational and open space areas discussed in the VMP are as follows: Beaconsfield Canyon, Garber Park, Dimond Canyon Park, Shepherd Canyon Park, Leona Heights Park, North Oakland Regional Sports Complex, Grizzly Peak Open Space, City Stables, Sheffield Village Open Space, Knowland Park and Arboretum, King Estates Open Space Park, Joaquin Miller Park, Tunnel Road Open Space, Marjorie Saunders Park, and Oak Knoll.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** The City has determined that there are areas within Oakland that are at high risk of wildfire, and that vegetation management/fuels reduction will significantly reduce wildfire risk. The VMP outlines a framework for managing fuel loads and vegetation on City-owned properties and along roadways in the City’s VHFHSZ to reduce the likelihood of a catastrophic wildfire, such as the 1991 Oakland Hills Fire. As described in Section 9 of the VMP, the goal of fuel treatment is to alter the structure, composition, and spacing of retained vegetation to moderate potential fire behavior. Retained vegetation can reduce wind exposure, retain soil and surface fuel moisture, and reduce the potential for soil erosion. Implementation of the VMP would involve thinning, pruning, removal, and otherwise modification of trees and vegetation within the VMP area to reduce the likelihood of a wildfire occurring and to minimize/slow the spread of a wildfire, should one occur. The City has identified the following primary goals to guide preparation of the VMP and its implementation:

- Reduce wildfire hazard on City-owned land and along critical access/egress routes within the City’s designated VHFHSZ;
- Reduce the likelihood of ignitions and extreme fire behavior to enhance public and firefighter safety;
- Implement practices to avoid or minimize impacts to natural resources; and
- Maintain an active role in regional efforts to reduce wildfire hazard in the Oakland hills.

The goals, objectives, and recommendations identified in the VMP are based on a combination of evaluating existing field conditions and current vegetation and fire risk conditions at City parcels;

analyzing spatial datasets of environmental and wildfire risk factors in a Geographic Information System (GIS); conducting GIS-based analysis and modeling to identify areas that may be subject to extreme fire behavior; identifying locations within the VMP area that may present increased ignition potential or otherwise contribute to increased fire hazard; and receiving feedback and guidance from many stakeholders through various meetings, site visits, and written comments.

The VMP describes various vegetation management techniques that may be employed depending on site conditions, including hand labor, mechanical processes (e.g., mowing), herbicide use, and grazing.

Appropriate vegetation management techniques to be employed at a specific site would be identified by OFD personnel during annual workplan development. On an annual basis, OFD staff would conduct field assessments of vegetation conditions in the VMP area to guide development of such annual vegetation management work plans. These plans would identify specific treatment types, area or properties to be treated, implementation timing, and other monitoring and tracking needs.

The VMP also identifies best management practices (BMPs) to be implemented during vegetation management activities to reduce or avoid impacts to natural resources present in the VMP area.

**PUBLIC REVIEW:** The City invites comments on the Final EIR prior and up to the upcoming public hearings when the VMP and certification of the EIR will be considered for approval. that

The City prefers that written comments be submitted via email at:  
DEIR-comments@oaklandvegmanagement.org.  
Please reference the VMP and VMP Final EIR in all correspondence.

Comments may also be submitted via mail to the following address:

**Montrose Environmental**  
**Attn: Ken Schwarz, Principal, VMP Final EIR Comments**  
**1 Kaiser Plaza, Suite 340**  
**Oakland, CA 94612**

Comments will also be received at the public meetings to be held as noticed below.

**DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY:** The Final EIR and the VMP are available for review online at:  
[www.oaklandca.gov/projects/oakland-vegetation-management-plan](http://www.oaklandca.gov/projects/oakland-vegetation-management-plan).

The Final EIR is also available for review by the public during normal operating hours at the Oakland Fire Department office at 150 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Suite 3354, Oakland, CA 94612. If assistance accessing documents is needed, including documents incorporated by reference in the Final EIR, please contact the Oakland Fire Department, Fire Prevention Bureau at (510) 238-6353 or by email at [MHunt@oaklandca.gov](mailto:MHunt@oaklandca.gov).

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:** A Final EIR was prepared for the VMP under the requirements of CEQA, pursuant to the Public Resources Code Section 21000 et. seq. The Final EIR analyzes potentially significant environmental impacts in categories such as: Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Geology, Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Global Climate Change, Hydrology and Water Quality, Recreation, and Transportation. The Final EIR identified one significant and

unavoidable environmental impact related to a temporary increase in noise levels that exceed local noise standards due to VMP activities.

The City of Oakland is hereby releasing this Final EIR finding it to be accurate and complete and ready for public review. Members of the public are invited to comment on the Final EIR and the VMP during the following public hearings:

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:**

The City Public Safety Committee of the City Council will conduct a public meeting on certification of the Final EIR and approval of the VMP on **May 14, 2024 at 6:00 PM**.

If the City Public Safety Committee refers the item on to City Council on May 14, 2024, the City Council will conduct a public meeting on certification of the Final EIR and approval of the VMP on **May 21, 2024 at 1:30 PM**.

For more information about how to participate in these meeting, please visit: [City of Oakland - Calendar \(legistar.com\)](https://www.oaklandca.gov/legistar)

As required by CEQA (§21092.5), the Final EIR, including written responses to the comments submitted by public agencies, are being provided to commenting agencies at least 10 days prior to certification, if the City determines that certification is appropriate after public review and comment. For further information, please contact Michael Hunt, at (510) 238-6353 or at [mhunt@oaklandca.gov](mailto:mhunt@oaklandca.gov).

**Date: May 3, 2024**

Edward C Manasse

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**EDWARD MANASSE**  
**City Environmental Review Officer**

**Attachment:**

**Figure 1, Location Map**

**Signature:**   
Edward C Manasse (May 2, 2024 16:48 PDT)

**Email:** emanasse@oaklandca.gov






# VMP FEIR - NOA BPM Trk 5-2-24 (002)

Final Audit Report

2024-05-02

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