

NOTICE OF EIR PREPARATION
PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE
COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

Date: July 3, 2020

TO: State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Community Members and Interested Parties

PROJECT TITLE: City of Santa Barbara Community Wildfire Protection Plan

LEAD AGENCY:
City of Santa Barbara
Public Safety – Fire
925 Chapala Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

PROJECT CONTACT:
Amber Anderson, Wildland Fire Specialist
(805) 564-5720//cwpp@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

PROJECT LOCATION:
City of Santa Barbara

PURPOSE OF THIS NOTICE OF PREPARATION

The City of Santa Barbara as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act has prepared this notice of preparation (NOP) to inform agencies and interested parties that a program EIR will be prepared for the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The purpose of a NOP is to provide sufficient information about the project and its potential environmental impacts; to allow agencies and interested parties the opportunity to provide a meaningful response related to the scope and content of the Program EIR; and consider mitigation measures and alternatives that should be addressed (California Code of Regulations Section 15082[b]). Additional details about the project’s potential effects are included in the attached Initial Study.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The City of Santa Barbara Fire Department (SBFD) is proposing to implement a comprehensive, coordinated Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) to protect lives, property, and natural resources threatened by wildland fire. The proposed CWPP updates the City’s 2004 Wildland Fire Plan consistent with the federal Healthy Forests Restoration Act passed in 2003 and subsequent guidance booklet “Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan; A Handbook for Wildland-Urban Interface Communities,” issued in 2004, accounting for changes in the City of Santa Barbara’s (City’s) fire environment and work completed under that 2004 Wildland Fire Plan. While not a

governing document requiring action, a CWPP is a strategic plan that outlines a series of policies and action items that are intended to guide implementation of the CWPP. The policies and actions focus on codes and standards, funding, fire rehabilitation, evacuation, fire protection, vegetation/fuels management, and public education. Action items identify tasks to be implemented by the SBF, and other responsible City departments, to achieve the stated goal of protecting lives, property, and natural resources threatened by wildland fire. The CWPP process is intended to provide the community a forum for identifying values at risk from wildfire, which may include people, property, natural resources, cultural values, economic interests, and infrastructure. The identification of these values at risk by the community strongly influences the potential wildfire hazard mitigation projects identified in the proposed CWPP.

The proposed CWPP includes various goals, policies, and actions that represent a compilation of existing and newly proposed policies and actions related to codes and standards, funding, fire rehabilitation, evacuation, fire protection, vegetation/fuels management, and public education. Current activities conducted by the SBF under the 2004 Wildland Fire Plan were analyzed in the Final Program Environmental Impact Report for the 2004 Wildland Fire Plan (City of Santa Barbara 2004) and are incorporated herein by reference. This description only addresses new proposed policies and/or actions that could result in impacts to the environment, which include the following categories:

- Proposed modifications to the High Fire Hazard Area
- Proposed modifications to the Vegetation Management Areas
 - Defensible space
 - Roadside clearing
 - City Vegetation Management Units (VMUs)
 - Community Fuels Treatment Network (CFTN)
- Proposed modifications to the Vegetation Management Methods
- Communication Facility Maintenance

The proposed CWPP also includes several other policies and actions that would not involve any physical impacts to the environment, including public education, interagency coordination, acquisition of funding, data gathering and management, acquisition of firefighting and communications equipment, and evacuation planning.

The City has prepared an Initial Study and determined that the CWPP could have significant environmental impacts and therefore an environmental impact report shall be prepared. The Initial Study is included as Attachment A of this NOP. Impacts could occur in the following resource areas:

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetics | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture and Forestry Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Energy |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Geology and Soils | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazards & Hazardous Materials | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hydrology/Water Quality |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land Use/Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Population/Housing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Services | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Cultural Resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities and Service Systems |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wildfire | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Findings of Significance | |

ALTERNATIVES TO BE EVALUATED IN THE EIR In accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR Section 15126.6), the Program EIR will describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project that are capable of meeting most of the projects' objectives and that would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project. The EIR will also identify any alternatives that were considered but rejected by the lead agency as infeasible and briefly explain the reasons why. The EIR will provide an analysis of the No Project Alternative and will also identify the environmentally superior alternative.

DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

Due to COVID 19 shelter-in-place restrictions, all documents are available online at the City's project website: <https://cwpp.santabarbaraca.gov/>

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: July 3, 2020 to August 3, 2020.

The City of Santa Barbara encourages the public to provide written comment on this and other projects. Comments on the Initial Study must be submitted by **Monday August 3, 2020 at 4:30 p.m.**

Please send your comments to:

Amber Anderson City of Santa Barbara, Public Health - Fire
P.O. Box 1990, Santa Barbara, CA 93102-1990

or send them electronically to cwpp@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

NOTICE OF SCOPING MEETING:

Pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21083.9 and California Code of Regulations, Title 14 (“CEQA Guidelines”) Section 15082, the Lead Agency will conduct a scoping meeting for the purpose of soliciting oral and written comments from interested parties requesting notice, responsible agencies, agencies with jurisdiction by law, trustee agencies, and involved federal agencies, as to the appropriate scope and content of the EIR.

SCOPING MEETING:

Date: July 16, 2020

Time: 1:00 pm

Location: Most City Board and Commission meetings are being facilitated through telecommunications to avoid close personal contact during the COVID-19 crisis. Please refer to the current Board/Commission meeting agenda for further information on how to participate, or contact the Board/Commission secretary for further assistance.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to gain access to, comment at, or participate in this meeting, **please contact Amber Anderson at (805) 564-5720.** If possible, notification at least 48 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements in most cases.