

# ***FAIRFAX GENERAL PLAN***

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY ELEMENT**

### **Draft Fire Mitigation Strategies**

#### **Fuel/Vegetation Management & Defensible Space**

1. To assist with implementation and enforcement of defensible space requirements for residential properties, identify basic vegetation types common to the Town of Fairfax and write a prescription for each type on how to manage that vegetation. Standardize and simplify defensible space guidelines and disseminate to public for implementation.
2. Seek geographic and programmatic expansion of fuel management programs in Fairfax through the Marin County Vegetation Management Plan. Activities include, but are not limited to: shaded fuel breaks, road collection and chipping, mechanical fuel reduction equipment, selected harvesting, use of goats or other organic methods of fuel reduction, and selected use of controlled burning. Target areas include, but are not limited to: western interface with Camp Tama Rancho, interface at end of Cascade Canyon, and down ridge to Bolinas-Fairfax Road.
3. Landscape improvements, including plantscaping and/or hardscaping, within defensible space zones shall be exempt from increased property tax assessments.
4. Apply for grants through Fire Safe Marin for model xeriscapes appropriate to the Fairfax community.
5. Establish a Fire Hazard Abatement District to fund reduction in fire risk of existing properties through vegetation management that includes reducing fuel loads, increasing defensible space, constructing and maintaining fuel breaks, and public education.
6. Ensure that fire-preventive vegetation management techniques and practices for creek sides and high-slope areas do not contribute to the landslide and erosion hazard.

## Access/Egress & Response

1. Ensure all dead-end segments of public roads in high hazard areas have at least a “T” intersection turn-around sufficient for Ross Valley Fire Department equipment and mutual aid wildland fire equipment.
2. Develop and enforce a parking plan for the purpose of emergency vehicle access and egress.
3. Require that development in high fire hazard areas provide adequate access roads (with width and vertical clearance that meet the minimum standards of the *Fire Code* or relevant local ordinance), onsite fire protection systems, evacuation signage, and fire breaks.
4. Identify critical fire roads maintained by Marin County or other jurisdictions and ensure access by Ross Valley Fire Department emergency equipment.
5. Periodically inspect fire roads and/or public right-of-way roads to keep them passable for emergency equipment during high fire season, including access/egress and turnaround. Enforce code requirements for privately maintained roads or driveways accessing more than three properties to ensure emergency access and egress.
6. Develop a fire evacuation plan for the highest fire hazard areas, including those areas with limited access/egress, dead-end roads, one-lane roads, and steep canyons. Plan should include potential evacuation routes, design of a warning system, and public education and training.
7. Promote the installation of early warning fire alarm system in Fairfax residences that are connected to fire department communication systems
8. Enforce street signage and street address signage codes to facilitate emergency response.
9. Review fire safety, evacuation, and emergency vehicle access when considering proposals to add secondary units or additional residential units in wildland-urban-interface fire-threatened communities or in areas exposed to high-to-extreme fire threat.
10. Require a reliable source of water for fire suppression as dictated by municipal code for existing and new development through plan review and hydrant fire flow monitoring program.
11. Continue a coordinated approach between the jurisdictions and water supply agencies to identify needed improvements to the water distribution system, initially focusing on areas of highest wildfire hazard. (MMWD/MCFD/RVFD)
12. Identify nearest source of portable water systems that may be used to supplement existing fire suppression water systems.

## Code Development & Enforcement

1. Enforce provisions of the *California Building and Fire Codes* and municipal housing codes that require the installation of smoke detectors and/or fire-extinguishing systems by making installation a condition for the transfer of property, or issuance of an occupancy permit for new construction or substantial remodels.
2. Adopt and/or amend, as needed, updated versions of the *California Building and Fire Codes* so that optimal fire-protection standards are used in construction and renovation projects.
3. Require that new homes or substantial remodels constructed in high fire hazard areas be constructed of fire-resistant building materials required by code, and incorporate fire resistant design features, such as one-hour fire-stop wall assemblies, and one-hour fire-stop boxed eaves with maximum available ember proof roof venting, to increase structural survivability and reduce ignitability.
4. Require fire sprinklers in all new or substantially remodeled housing, regardless of distance from a fire station.
5. Require sprinklers in all mixed-use developments to protect residential uses from fires started in non-residential areas.
6. Compile a list of high-occupancy buildings deemed, due to their age or construction materials, to be particularly susceptible to fire hazards, and determine an expeditious timeline for the fire-safety inspection and installation of fire safety improvements in all such structures.
7. Require the bracing of water heaters and flexible couplings on gas appliances, the bolting of homes to their foundations and strengthening of cripple walls to reduce fire ignitions due to earthquakes for new construction, substantial remodel, and/or at point of sale.
8. Adopt an ordinance to require gas shut-off valves for multi-unit soft story structures to reduce the risk of post-earthquake fire ignitions and fire spread.
9. Conduct periodic fire-safety inspections of all commercial and institutional buildings.
10. Review development proposals to ensure that they incorporate a fire department approved defensible space plan and conduct inspections to ensure it is implemented prior to and maintained throughout construction.