

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Over the course of the past five years the District has created and adapted an organization to provide an increasing number of services to the community. Programs are in place to reduce hazardous fuels and support residents in protecting their homes and families. Collaboration with local agencies and subject matter experts has influenced these offerings, as has the fire science in the LAHCFD CWPP/Annex 4. Examples of accomplishments during the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan are included in the chart below.

Programmatic	Community Outreach	Organizational
Implemented CWPP/Annex 4 with focus on Hazardous Fuel Reduction	Continuously improved District website, including current emergency warnings, alerts	Adapted organizational chart and expanded LAHCFD staff to meet service demands
Developed Addendum to Annex 4, which serves as a guidebook for Community	Outreach for filling of Commission vacancies	Developed electronic records management practices
Partnership with FireSafe Council to expand and manage fuel reduction programs	Conducted community evacuation drill with partner agencies	Participated in Management Audit Process; implemented recommendations
Provided programs for Integrated Hazardous Fuel Reduction i.e. defensible space, property hygiene and community resiliency programs such as brush chipping and debris removal, monthly hazardous fuel drop-off, annual goat grazing	Revitalized Los Altos Hills CERT program including online training in COVID-19 restrictions, updated records, support and participation in Town ECC monthly meetings	Collaborated with local agencies such as Town of Los Altos Hills, City of Los Altos, SCC Central Fire, City of Palo Alto, Mid-Peninsula Open Space, water utilities
Advocated for adoption of higher standards for fire safe building regulations in Town of Los Altos Hills	Increased use of technology and social media channels, production and training videos	Utilize County policies in vendor procurement and County Counsel for legal services
Refreshed ARK emergency container and supplies	Developed methods for direct communication with residents and online connections	Developed job descriptions and conducted compensation analysis

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT)

The exercise of defining current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is common in strategic planning, and provides transparency as an agency develops longer-

term goals. While the District may not control external factors, it can adapt approaches to work in a way that maximizes District strengths and opportunities and also capitalizes on weaknesses and threats to find better solutions. The table below provides a way to visualize how these factors may be used to 1) generate awareness of limiting factors, 2) provide a focus on elements that are within the District's control and may be leveraged in new ways to add value to the regional efforts to foster and support safe communities.

	Helpful	Harmful
I N T E R N A L	<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision-makers are local and accessible Stable funding Adoption of CWPP/Annex 4 and Addendum Dedicated Commission and staff with relevant expertise Engaged community in CERT, amateur radio, volunteerism Relationships with regional organizations District parcel uniquely located for fire protection use 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public's lack of understanding of District's role Lack of administrative facilities Technology: difficult to stay current and expensive Lack of succession plan and lack of staff hours to support increasing program demands and delivery of services
E X T E R N A L	<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target high fire risk areas with mitigation steps Regional partnerships to share resources Public awareness of wildfire threat due to recent CZU fire event Engage community energy and focus for emergency preparedness and readiness More modes of communication and public outreach available 	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasingly severe and unpredictable weather events Budget shortfalls reduce ability of State, County and Local agencies to respond to disasters High amounts of hazardous fire fuels resulting in difficulty to defend LAHCFD from approaching wildfire Population density in wildland urban interface environment Natural disasters Reductions of local decisions Uncertainty of long-term financial stability

GAP ANALYSIS AND CRITICAL ISSUES

We know there remains much work to be done to support a fire-safe community, as witnessed first-hand the destruction of weather-caused wildfire in the Santa Cruz mountains. Based on discussions to date through the strategic planning process and the SWOT analysis, the following are key areas where opportunity exists for District engagement and allocation of assets and resources to meet the District's core mission and to supplement the work being performed by County Central Fire and other regional safety departments.

- Identify the highest risk areas for wildland fire
- Find new and creative uses of District resources and assets in partnership with regional organizations to supplement ongoing improvements to community resilience and safety
- Define parameters for use of District funds and resources
- Expand use of technology and explore opportunities to pilot new tools, software and other types of technology
- Determine how the District can support safer transportation routes given population density and limited access roads

Warmer temperatures and reduced rainfall dry out vegetation; dry fuel presents grave danger in a time when "fire season" is extending for longer periods. As California continues to experience long-term drought patterns and reach new high temperature records, 2020 will far exceed recent annual acres burned. As of October 4, 2020, 2,411,641 acres have burned in the 2020 California wildfire season. The previous five-year average (full calendar years) is 453,627 annual acres burned.¹

While the District does not directly deliver fire suppression and rescue services, a new focus on regional partnerships to combine strengths and assets and work toward common goals is underway.

In April 2019 the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors received a presentation from County Central Fire Chief Bowden on the Wildland Fire Program Workplan. Due to budget shortfalls, most aspects of that program have not been funded. Chief Bowden stated "The individual fire agencies and special districts within the county will need to continue to attempt to collaborate and combine resources where feasible to address the growing wildfire danger within their respective jurisdictions."²

Two studies will be convened to report on regional fire protection for Santa Clara County; 1) a comprehensive review of fire services in the County of Santa Clara initiated by the County Executive Office and, 2) Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Clara County (LAFCO) prioritizing the Countywide Fire Protection Service review over other service reviews.

¹ Cal Fire Statistics and Events <https://fire.ca.gov/stats-events/>.

² Report back on Wildfire Fire Plan dated 10/6/20 to Governing Board of SCCFD from Chief Tony Bowden.

The circumstances described above are not unique to this area; regional partnerships are trending nationally to maximize limited resources. The CPSE (Center for Public Safety Excellence) and ICMA (International City/County Management Association) released a white paper in July 2020 evaluating eight approaches for local government and fire agencies to work together to address service demands in the 21st century.³ One of those eight approaches focuses on creating local strategies to work with a variety of partners to provide services more efficiently in this time of competing priorities and limited resources.

To address the critical issues defined above, the following Goals and Objectives will focus District resources, in partnership with a variety of regional organizations, on meeting the District's mission of protecting life, property and the environment.

³ 21st Century Fire and Emergency Services White Paper, produced through a collaboration of CPSE (Center for Public Safety Excellence) and ICMA (International City/County Management Association).