



**MEMORANDUM REPORT**

**Meeting Date:** November 19, 2019

**TO:** Board of Commissioners of the Los Altos Hills County Fire District

**FROM:** Hazardous Fuel Reduction Subcommittee: George Tyson (chair), Duffy Price, with help from D. Gluhan, V. Bebee, and J. Logan

**SUBJECT:** Hazardous Fuel Reduction Programs

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Seek consensus and potential prioritization of a number of existing and potential hazardous fuel reduction projects

**BACKGROUND**

The Hazardous Fuel Reduction subcommittee met on 30Oct2019, with attendance by Tyson, Price, Gluhan, Bebee, and Logan, with a discussion of a number of Hazardous Fuel Reduction ongoing and potential projects as follows:

**Hazardous Tree Removal Program**

- We have two hazardous tree removal contracts underway, Bay Area Tree Specialists for Areas 1-3 and McClenahan’s for Areas 4-6, as previously approved by the Commission. Both programs are underway with more details to be presented verbally
- Information to residents has been updated on our website and consistent messaging is being delivered – that these efforts are focused on hazardous fuel reduction and that homeowners are responsible for maintaining their properties and are encouraged to mitigate vegetation hazards.
- A new tree removal program is being rolled out by the Saratoga Fire Protection District that has some interesting features. Residents arrange for tree removal themselves and, having provided required documentation, are eligible to have some of their costs refunded by that District. We are investigating this further, as such a program has the potential to incentivize residents to remove qualified trees and combining this with their other defensible space efforts, while shifting administrative oversight for LAHCFD

**Brush Chipping Program**

- Ongoing operation of this program is reported separately during this meeting. One highlight is that chipping has been suspended during red flag warnings and PG&E Public Safety Power Shutoff and thus has placed the program behind normal schedules
- A further extension of the existing program (with S.P. McClenahan) is proposed to ensure continuity while improvements are being developed. This extension will be used to validate a brush costing model, implement a survey component, and further strengthen the ultimately-planned competitively bid future process. This new process is expected to be more transparent to users, easier to submit requests, and may feature multiple contract awardees.

**Brush Chipping Pilot Program with FireSafe Council:** prepared by J. Logan

- Under the terms of the Service Agreement with FireSafe Council, a project manager is provided for hazardous fuel reduction services that includes the brush chipping program
- A meeting with the project manager was held to discuss a pilot program to develop a process that will assess cubic yards and location of the residents' brush piles and determine the amount of chipping material for a solicitation of bids from vendors. From this assessment, the bid for services can be developed. In addition, a list of qualified bidders can be determined.
- The pilot program is modeled after brush chipping programs where bids are based on quantity of debris and location of brush piles. The pilot program is now in the planning phase.
- The pilot program will run concurrently with the existing brush chipping program.
- The assessment of the data collected, and the effectiveness of the pilot program will be presented in a report to the Board of Commissioners in early 2020.
- The intention of the pilot program is to update the current brush chipping program and provide necessary component that include the quantity of the brush to be removed for a solicitation for bids.

**Other Fuel Reduction Potential Projects and Approaches**

Continued outreach to and partnership with other organizations (including Fire Safe Council, MidPen, etc) and consideration of the adopted LAHCFD-CWPP for our District have resulted in the following ideas for discussion:

- Fire Roads – extend LAHCFD efforts to improve and maintain hazardous fuel reduction
- Shaded Fuel Break along Page Mill Rd – in concert with Palo Alto, who has already accomplished this on their side of the road
- Coordination with neighborhood groups and committees – to undertake systematic fuel removal encompassing several properties at once and creating extensive areas of reduced fuel load. This can also be linked to other defensible space and property hygiene efforts undertaken by residents
- Church and other properties having potential as evacuation assembly sites – consider hazardous tree removal to ensure resilience of such sites