

BOARD OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

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To: Resource Protection Committee

From: Edith Hannigan, Analyst

Date: April 27, 2016

Re: Safety Element Assessment Revision and Draft Regulatory Text

Government Code § 65302.5 requires counties with State Responsibility Area and cities with Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone to submit their General Plan Safety Elements to the Board for review and comment prior to their adoption or amendment.

To review and evaluate submitted Safety Elements, the CAL FIRE Land Use Planning team and Board staff have utilized a legacy assessment document (attached) that has become, over time, ill-suited to the program's goals and objectives to promote strategic fire hazard planning. The Land Use and Board staff have worked together to develop a revised Safety Element Assessment that is more flexible for reviewers, more clearly communicates fire hazard planning priorities, and encourages stronger connections between strategic fire protection plans. It also provides sample policies, objectives, or implementation measures that may be used to meet the intent of GOV §§ 65302 and 65302.5, so that jurisdictions may use this document in pre-planning and scoping efforts. The assessment contains clearer information about the statutory requirements behind the required information in the Safety Element and the Safety Element review process.

Attached is also draft regulatory language to begin codifying the Safety Element Assessment and review process in regulation. The language is primarily copied from GOV § 65302.5 with a few additions to allow the Board flexibility in review timelines, to provide more information to the public about submission requirements (where to send the safety elements, etc), and to provide definitions for clarity.

Board staff requests the Resource Protection Committee review and provide feedback on the revised Assessment and draft regulatory language so that the full Board may adopt the Assessment and begin the regular rulemaking process in the upcoming months. This may be an ongoing agenda item at RPC meetings as revisions of these documents and a future ISOR, etc, take place.

Attachments:

May 2016 Revised Safety Element Assessment draft
Draft Safety Element Review Procedures regulatory text
Existing Safety Element Assessment – Tier 1, for comparison

General Plan Safety Element Assessment

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection



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Purpose and Background

Upon the next revision of the housing element on or after January 1, 2014, the safety element is required to be reviewed and updated as necessary to address the risk of fire for land classified as state responsibility areas and land classified as very high fire hazard severity zone (GOV § 65302(g)(3)).

The safety element is required to include:

- Fire hazard severity zone maps available from the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.
- Any historical data on wildfires available from local agencies or a reference to where the data can be found.
- Information about wildfire hazard areas that may be available from the United States Geological Survey.
- The general location and distribution of existing and planned uses of land in very high fire hazard severity zones and in state responsibility areas, including structures, roads, utilities, and essential public facilities. The location and distribution of planned uses of land shall not require defensible space compliance measures required by state law or local ordinance to occur on publicly owned lands or open space designations of homeowner associations.
- The local, state, and federal agencies with responsibility for fire protection, including special districts and local offices of emergency services. (GOV § 65302(g)(3)(A))

Based on that information, the safety element shall include goals, policies, and objectives that protect the community from the unreasonable risk of wildfire (GOV § 65302(g)(3)(B)). To carry out those goals, policies, and objectives, feasible implementation measures shall be included in the safety element, which include but are not limited to:

- Avoiding or minimizing the wildfire hazards associated with new uses of land.
- Locating, when feasible, new essential public facilities outside of high fire risk areas, including, but not limited to, hospitals and health care facilities, emergency shelters, emergency command centers, and emergency communications facilities, or identifying construction methods or other methods to minimize damage if these facilities are located in a state responsibility area or very high fire hazard severity zone.
- Designing adequate infrastructure if a new development is located in a state responsibility area or in a very high fire hazard severity zone, including safe access for emergency response vehicles, visible street signs, and water supplies for structural fire suppression.
- Working cooperatively with public agencies with responsibility for fire protection. (GPV § 65302(g)(3)(C)).

The safety element shall also attach or reference any fire safety plans or other documents adopted by the city or county that fulfill the goals and objectives or contains the information required above (GOV § 65302(g)(3)(D)).

There are several reference documents developed by state agencies to assist local jurisdictions in updating their safety elements to include fire wildfire safety. The Fire Hazard Planning General Plan Technical Advice Series from the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, referenced in GOV § 65302 and available at https://www.opr.ca.gov/docs/Final_6.26.15.pdf, provides policy guidance, information resources, and fire hazard planning examples from around California.

The Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) provides two documents for jurisdictions: A Handbook for Fire Planning in the General Plan (available on the Board's website at http://bofdata.fire.ca.gov/board_joint_policies/local_government/) and this Safety Element Assessment (location on Board's website). The Handbook for Fire Planning in the General Plan provides an overview of fire hazard planning and gives guidance on how to incorporate fire hazard planning into a jurisdiction's overall strategic planning, not just the safety element.

The Safety Element Assessment is utilized in the Board's review of safety elements under GOV § 65302.5. At least 90 days prior to the adoption or amendment of their safety element, counties that contain state responsibility area and cities or counties that contain very high fire hazard severity zones shall submit their safety element to the Board (GOV § 65302.5(b)). The Board shall review the safety element and respond to the city or county with its findings regarding the uses of land and policies in state responsibility areas and very high fire hazard severity zones that will protect life, property, and natural resources from unreasonable risks associated with wild land fires, and the methods and strategies for wild land fire risk reduction and prevention within state responsibility areas and very high fire hazard severity zones (GOV § 65302.5(b)(3)). This Assessment provides guidance to local jurisdictions on how the Board will be reviewing and considering the jurisdiction's proposed uses of land in state responsibility areas/very high fire hazard severity zones, and methods and strategies that would be considered sufficient to mitigate the wild land fire risk. The Assessment also includes suggestions for incorporating fire hazard planning into other relevant general plan elements. Wildland fire safety is best accomplished by holistic, strategic fire planning that takes advantage of opportunities to align priorities and implementation measures within and across plans.

The CAL FIRE Land Use Planning team provides expert fire protection assistance to local jurisdictions statewide. The fire captains are available to work with cities and counties to revise their safety elements and enhance their strategic fire protection planning.

Methodology for Review and Recommendations

Utilizing staff from the CAL FIRE Land Use Planning team, the Board has establish a standardized method to review the safety element of general plans. The methodology includes

- 1) reviewing the safety element for the requirements in GOV § 65302(g)(3),
- 2) examining the safety element for inclusion of factors that are important for mitigation of wildfire hazard and risks, and
- 3) making recommendations related to these factors.

The Assessment below contains the evaluation factors for determining if a safety element meets the fire safety requirements outlined in Government Code. It also contains recommended policies, objectives, and implementation measures a city or county may utilize to meet those requirements and reduce the wildland fire risk to their planning area. Once completed, the Assessment should provide clear guidance to a city or county to any areas of deficiency in the safety element as well as specific policies, objectives, and implementation measures the Board recommends adopting in order to mitigate or reduce the wildfire threat. The Assessment can also be used by cities or counties just embarking on a safety element or general plan update as a tool to spark discussion amongst stakeholders.

Safety Element Assessment

Background Information Summary			
Specific background information about fire hazards in each jurisdiction.			
	Yes	No	Comments/Recommendations
Are Fire Hazard Severity Zone Identified? <i>CAL FIRE or Locally Adopted Maps</i>			
Is historical data on wildfires or a reference to where the data can be found included?			
Have general location and distribution of existing and planned uses of land in very high fire hazard severity zones and in state responsibility areas, including structures, roads, utilities, and essential public facilities, been identified?			
Have local, state, and federal agencies with responsibility for fire protection, including special districts and local offices of emergency services, been identified?			
Are other fire protection plans, such as Community Wildfire Protection Plans, Local Hazard Mitigation Plans, CAL FIRE Unit or Contract County Fire Plans, referenced or incorporated into the Safety Element?			

Goals, Policies and Feasible Implementation Measures				
A set of goals, policies and implementation measures based on the above information to protect the community from unreasonable risk of wildfire.				
1. Avoiding or minimizing the wildfire hazards associated with new uses of land.				
	Yes	No	N/A	Comments/Recommendations
Land Use				
Does local ordinance require development standards that meet or exceed 14 CCR § 1270 and 14 CCR § 1299 for VHFHSZ and/or SRA?				
Are there goals and policies to avoid or minimize new residential development in fire hazard areas?				
Has fire safe design been incorporated into future development requirements?				
Are there plans or actions identified to mitigate existing non-conforming development to contemporary fire safe standards, in terms of road standards and vegetative hazard?				
Are new essential public facilities located outside high fire risk areas, when feasible?				

Does the plan include policies to evaluate re-development after a large fire?				
Fuel Modification				
Are fire protection plans required for new development in high hazard areas?				
Is fuel modification around homes and subdivisions required for new development in SRA or VHFHSZ?				
Does the plan address long term maintenance of fire hazard reduction projects, including community fire breaks and private road and public road clearance?				
Access				
Is there adequate access (ingress, egress) to new development in high fire hazard/wildland open space areas?				
Are minimum standards for evacuation of residential areas in very high fire hazard zones defined?				
If areas exist with inadequate access/evacuation routes, are they identified? Are mitigation measures or improvement plans identified? (Wallingford example – taking away parking and turning into fire lanes)				
Are there policies or programs promoting public outreach about defensible space or evacuation routes? Are there specific plans to reach at-risk populations?				
Fire Protection				
Does the plan identify future water supply for fire suppression needs?				
Does new development have adequate fire protection?				
2. Develop adequate infrastructure if a new development is located in SRA or VHFHSZ.				
	Yes	No	N/A	Comments/Recommendations
Does the plan identify adequate infrastructure for new development related to:				
Water supply and fire flow?				
Location of anticipated water supply?				
Maintenance and long-term integrity of water supplies?				
Evacuation and emergency vehicle access?				
Fuel modification and defensible space?				
Vegetation clearance maintenance on public and private roads?				

Visible home and street addressing and signage?				
Are community/area fire breaks identified in the plan? Is there a discussion of how those fire breaks will be maintained?				
3. Working cooperatively with public agencies responsible for fire protection.				
	Yes	No	N/A	Comments/Recommendations
Is there a map or description of existing emergency service facilities and areas lacking service, specifically noting any areas in SRA or VHFHSZ's?				
Does the plan include an assessment and projection of future emergency service needs?				
Is the adequacy of emergency service training described?				
Does the plan outline inter-agency preparedness coordination and mutual aid multi-agency agreements?				

<p>Safety Element Recommendations Specific policies, objectives, or implementation measures to meet the intent of GOV §§ 65302 and 65302.5.</p>
<p>A. Maps, Plans and Historical Information</p>
<p>1. Include or reference CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps or locally adopted wildfire hazard zones.</p>
<p>2. Include or reference the location of historical information on wildfires in the planning area.</p>
<p>3. Include a map or description of the location of existing and planned land uses in SRA and VHFHZs, particularly habitable structures, roads, utilities, and essential public facilities.</p>
<p>4. Identify or reference a fire plan that is relevant to the geographic scope of the general plan, including the Unit/Contract County Fire Plan, Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, and any applicable Community Wildfire Protection Plans.</p>
<p>5. Align the goals, policies, objectives, and implementation measures for fire hazard mitigation in the safety element with those in existing fire plans, or make plans to update fire plans to match the safety element.</p>
<p>6. Create a fire plan for the planning area.</p>
<p>B. Land Use</p>
<p>1. Develop fire safe development codes used as standards for fire protection for new development in State Responsibility Area or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones that meet or exceed the statewide minimums in 14 CCR § 1270 et seq.</p>
<p>2. Adopt and have certified by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection local ordinances which meet or exceed the minimum statewide standards in 14 CCR § 1270 et seq.</p>
<p>3. Identify existing development that do not meet or exceed 14 CCR § 1270 or certified local ordinances.</p>
<p>4. Develop mitigation measures for existing development that does not meet or exceed 14 CCR § 1270 or certified local ordinances or identify a policy to do so.</p>
<p>C. Fuel Modification</p>
<p>1. Identify and maps existing structures that do not conform to contemporary fire standards for building materials, perimeter access, and vegetation clearance in SRA or VHFHZs.</p>
<p>2. Identify plans and actions for existing habitable structures and neighborhoods to be improved or mitigated to meet current fire safety standards for access, water flow, signing, and vegetation clearance.</p>
<p>3. Develop a policy to communicate vegetation clearance requirements to seasonal, absent, or vacation rental owners.</p>
<p>4. Identify a policy for the ongoing maintenance of vegetation clearance on public and private roads.</p>
<p>5. Include fuel breaks in the layout/siting of subdivisions.</p>
<p>6. Identify a policy for the ongoing maintenance of existing or proposed fuel breaks.</p>
<p>D. Access</p>
<p>1. Develop a policy that approval of parcel maps and tentative maps in SRA or VHFHZ is conditional based on meeting the regulations adopted pursuant to PRC § 4290 and 4291, particularly those regarding road standards for ingress, egress, and fire equipment access (GOV § 66474.02).</p>
<p>2. Develop a policy that development will be prioritized in areas with an adequate road network and associated infrastructure.</p>
<p>3. Identify road networks in SRA or VHFHZ that do not meet 14 CCR § 1270 or certified local ordinance and develop a policy to examine possible mitigations.</p>
<p>4. Identify multi-family housing, group homes, or other community housing in SRA or VHFHZ and develop a policy to create evacuation or shelter in place plans.</p>

5. Include a policy to develop pre-plans for fire risk areas that address civilian evacuation and to effectively communicate those plans.

E. Fire Protection

1. Develop a policy that development will be prioritized in areas with adequate water supply infrastructure.
2. Plan for the ongoing maintenance and long-term integrity of planned and existing water supply infrastructure.
3. Map existing emergency service facilities and note any areas lacking service, especially in SRA or VHFHZ.
4. Project future emergency service needs for the planned land uses.
5. Include information about emergency service trainings or standards and plans to meet or maintain them.
6. Include information about inter-agency preparedness coordination or mutual aid agreements.

Fire Hazard Planning in Other Elements of the General Plan

When updating the General Plan, here are some ways to incorporate fire hazard planning into other elements.

Land Use Element

1. Goals and policies include mitigation of fire hazard for future development or limit development in fire hazard zones.
2. Disclose wildland urban-interface hazards, including Fire Hazard Severity Zones, and/or other vulnerable areas as determined by CAL FIRE or local fire agency.
3. Describe or map any Firewise Communities or other fire safe communities as determined by the National Fire Protection Association, Fire Safe Council, or other organization.
4. Design and locate new development to provide adequate infrastructure for the safe ingress of emergency response vehicles and simultaneously allow citizen egress during emergencies.

Housing Element

1. Incorporation of current fire safe building codes.
2. Identify and mitigate substandard fire safe housing and neighborhoods relative to fire hazard area.
3. Consider diverse occupancies and their effects on wildfire protection (group housing, seasonal populations, transit-dependent, etc).

Open Space and Conservation Elements

1. Identify critical natural resource values relative to fire hazard areas.
2. Include resource management activities to enhance protection of open space and natural resource values.
3. Integrate open space into fire safety planning and effectiveness.
4. Mitigation for unique pest, disease and other forest health issues leading to hazardous situations.

Circulation Element

1. Provide adequate access to high hazard wildland/open space areas.
2. Develop standards for evacuation of residential areas in high hazard areas.
3. Incorporate a policy that provides for a fuel reduction maintenance program along roadways.

1 Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

2 "Safety Element Review Procedures"

3 Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (14 CCR), Division 1.5,

4 Chapter 7, Article 6

5 Adopt

6 Article 6 General Plan Safety Element Review

7 § 1210.0 Definitions

8 § 1210.1 Safety Element Submission

9 § 1210.2 Safety Element Review Procedures

10 § 1210.3 Safety Element Review Response

11
12 1210.0 Definitions

13 "Board" refers to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.

14 "CAL FIRE" or "the Department" means the California Department of Forestry
15 and Fire Protection.

16 "Director" means the director of the California Department of Forestry and
17 Fire Protection or his or her designee.

18 "General Plan Safety Element" means the safety element as defined in
19 Government Code § 65302(g).

20 "State Responsibility Area" or "SRA" means those areas defined in Public
21 Resources Code § 4102 and delineated pursuant to Public Resources Code §§
22 4125-4128. These lands are shown on digital maps maintained by the
23 Department at its Sacramento Headquarters and may be viewed there or in low
24 resolution at the Department's website: <http://www.bof.fire.ca.gov/sra>
25 viewer/.

1 "Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone" or "VHFHSZ" means an area designated
2 by the director pursuant to Government Code § 51178 that is not a state
3 responsibility area. These lands are shown on digital maps maintained by the
4 Department at its Sacramento Headquarters and may be viewed there or in low
5 resolution at the Department's website:
6 [http://www.fire.ca.gov/fire_prevention/fire_prevention_wildland_zones_maps.](http://www.fire.ca.gov/fire_prevention/fire_prevention_wildland_zones_maps)

7 Note: Authority Cited: Section 65302.5, Government Code; Section 4111,
8 Public Resources Code. Reference: Sections 65302, 65302.5, Government Code;
9 Sections 4102, 4112, 4113, 4114, 4740 and 4741, Public Resources Code.

10
11 **1210.1 Safety Element Submission**

12 (a) The draft element of or draft amendment to the safety element of a
13 county or a city's general plan shall be submitted to the State Board of
14 Forestry and Fire Protection and to every local agency that provides fire
15 protection to territory in the city or county at least 90 days prior to
16 either of the following:

17 (1) The adoption or amendment to the safety element of its general
18 plan for each county that contains state responsibility areas.

19 (2) The adoption or amendment to the safety element of its general
20 plan for each city or county that contains a very high fire hazard severity
21 zone as defined pursuant to subdivision (i) of Section 51177.

22 (3) Language about whether LHMP adoption/amendment counts?

23 (b) The draft element of or draft amendment to the safety element may be
24 mailed to Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, Safety Element Review, PO
25 Box 944246, Sacramento, CA 94244-2460 or it may be emailed to the staff

1 person indicated on the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's Local

2 Government webpage:

3 http://bofdata.fire.ca.gov/board_joint_policies/local_government/.

4 Note: Authority Cited: Section 65302.5, Government Code; Section 4111,

5 Public Resources Code. Reference: Sections 65302, 65302.5, Government Code;

6 Sections 4102, 4112, 4113, 4114, 4740 and 4741, Public Resources Code.

7
8 **1210.2 Safety Element Review Procedures**

9 (a) The State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection shall, and a local
10 agency may, review the draft or an existing safety element and recommend
11 changes to the planning agency within 60 days of its receipt, or within a
12 mutually agreeable timeline between the planning agency and the Board,
13 regarding both of the following:

14 (1) Uses of land and policies in state responsibility areas and very
15 high fire hazard severity zones that will protect life, property, and
16 natural resources from unreasonable risks associated with wild land fires.

17 (2) Methods and strategies for wild land fire risk reduction and
18 prevention within state responsibility areas and very high fire hazard
19 severity zones.

20 (b) The Board may utilize CAL FIRE land use planning staff as technical
21 experts in the review of submitted safety elements.

22 (c) Safety elements shall be evaluated based on the criteria established in
23 the Safety Element Assessment, adopted by the Board on XX. This Assessment
24 shall also contain recommended goals, policies, objectives, and

25

1 implementation measures to assist jurisdictions with their fire hazard
2 planning efforts.

3 Note: Authority Cited: Section 65302.5, Government Code; Section 4111,
4 Public Resources Code. Reference: Sections 65302, 65302.5, Government Code;
5 Sections 4102, 4112, 4113, 4114, 4740 and 4741, Public Resources Code.

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7 **1210.3 Safety Element Review Response**

8 (a) Prior to the adoption of its draft element or draft amendment, the board
9 of supervisors of the county or the city council of a city shall consider
10 the recommendations, if any, made by the State Board of Forestry and Fire
11 Protection and any local agency that provides fire protection to territory
12 in the city or county.

13 (b) If the board of supervisors or city council determines not to accept all
14 or some of the recommendations, if any, made by the State Board of Forestry
15 and Fire Protection or local agency, the board of supervisors or city
16 council shall communicate in writing to the State Board of Forestry and Fire
17 Protection or the local agency, its reasons for not accepting the
18 recommendations to the postal or email address stated in § 1210.1(b).

19 (c) If the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's or local agency's
20 recommendations are not available within the time limits required by §
21 1210.2(a), the board of supervisors or city council may act without those
22 recommendations. The board of supervisors or city council shall take the
23 recommendations into consideration the next time it considers amendments to
24 the safety element.

1 Note: Authority Cited: Section 65302.5, Government Code; Section 4111,
2 Public Resources Code. Reference: Sections 65302, 65302.5, Government Code;
3 Sections 4102, 4112, 4113, 4114, 4740 and 4741, Public Resources Code.

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[NAME OF AGENCY]

[NAME OF REVIEWING UNIT]

**General Plan Safety Element
Assessment
Tier 1**

[DATE]

**Board of Forestry and Fire
Protection**



Contents

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Tier 1 List of Recommendations

Purpose and Background: The State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) is required to review and make recommendations for the safety element of general plan updates in accordance with Government Code (GC) 65302.5. The review and recommendations apply to those general plans with State Responsibility Area (SRA) (Public Resources Code (PRC) 4125) or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Local Responsibility Area (VHFHSZ LRA) (GC 51177(i), PRC 4125).

The statutory requirements for the Board review and recommendations pursuant to GC 65302.5 (a)(1) and (2), and (b) are as follows:

- *“The draft elements...to the fire safety element of a county’s or a city’s general plan...shall be submitted to the Board at least 90 days prior to... the adoption or amendment to the safety element of its general plan [for each county or city with SRA or VHFHSZ].”*
- *“The Board shall... review the draft or an existing safety element and report its written recommendations to the planning agency within 60 days of its receipt of the draft or existing safety element....”*
- *“Prior to adoption of the draft element..., the Board of Supervisors... shall consider the recommendations made by the Board... If the Board of Supervisors...determines not to accept all or some of the recommendations..., the Board of Supervisors... shall communicate in writing to the Board its reasons for not accepting the recommendations.”*

Methodology for Review and Recommendations: The Board established a standardized method to review the safety element of general plans. The methodology includes 1) examining the safety element for inclusion of factors that are important for mitigation of wildfire hazard and risks, and 2) making recommendations related to these factors. The evaluation factors and recommendations below were developed using CAL FIRE technical documents and input from local fire departments.

Enclosed is the most expansive set of recommendations suggested by the Board, known as a Tier 1 Assessment. These recommendations are directed at communities that include:

- Overall high population densities; or
- High proportion of SRA or 20% or more of a city’s acreage is VHFHSZ LRA; or
- Population centers in or adjacent to VHFHSZ SRA, if there is no designated VHFHSZ LRA in the county; or
- Within the context of neighboring jurisdictions, the location of VHFHSZ in the jurisdiction creates an overall picture of contiguous fuels that threaten population or economic centers.

As local fuels, boundaries, populations, and other variables change throughout time, Board staff have the discretion to re-assign a jurisdiction into a lower or higher assessment tier. Staff will consider:

- Variations in population and population density; or
- Changes in proportion of land designated VHFHSZ (lower or higher); or
- Firefighting capabilities (paid, volunteer, equipment, etc) and contract changes; or

- Past planning efforts and involvement of organizations such as local Fire Safe Councils and new initiatives or efforts that have emerged over time; or
- Changes to the context of VHFHSZ within the region – does the VHFHSZ in a jurisdiction combine with neighboring fuels to create a continual pattern of very high fire risk in a way that it hadn't previously?

A full list of communities to be evaluated under Tier 1 are listed below.

Counties (alphabetical)

Alameda	Glenn	Monterey	San Diego	Solano
Alpine	Humboldt	Napa	San Joaquin	Sonoma
Amador	Kern	Nevada	San Luis Obispo	Stanislaus
Butte	Lake	Orange	San Mateo	Tehama
Calaveras	Lassen	Placer	Santa Barbara	Trinity
Alameda	Los Angeles	Plumas	Santa Clara	Tulare
Alpine	Madera	Riverside	Santa Cruz	Tuolumne
Contra Costa	Marin	Sacramento	Shasta	Ventura
Del Norte	Mariposa	San Benito	Sierra	Yolo
El Dorado	Mendocino	San Bernardino	Siskiyou	Yuba
Fresno				

Cities (alphabetical by county)

Alameda	Los Angeles con't	Napa	Riverside con't	San Mateo
Oakland	Glendale	Calistoga	Lake Elsinore	Hillsborough
Butte	Glendora	Nevada	Murrieta	San Carlos
Paradise	Hidden Hills	Calistoga	San Bernardino	Woodside
Contra Costa	Irwindale	Grass Valley	Big Bear Lake	Santa Barbara
El Cerrito	La Canada Flintridge	Nevada City	Colton	Santa Barbara
Lafayette	La Habra Heights	Truckee	Grand Terrace	Santa Clara
Orinda	La Verne	Orange	Highland	Los Gatos
Richmond	Los Angeles	Aliso Viejo	Loma Linda	Monte Sereno
El Dorado	Malibu	Anaheim	Rancho Cucamonga	Saratoga
Placerville	Monrovia	Brea	Redlands	Shasta
South Lake Tahoe	Palmdale	Laguna Beach	San Bernardino	Redding
Lake	Palos Verdes Estates	Laguna Niguel	Yucaipa	Shasta Lake
Clearlake	Pasadena	Lake Forest	San Diego	Siskiyou
Los Angeles	Rancho Palos Verdes	Newport Beach	Encinitas	Dunsmuir
Agoura Hills	Rolling Hills	Rancho Santa Margarita	Escondido	Fort Jones
Avalon	Rolling Hills Estates	San Clemente	Poway	Mount Shasta
Azusa	San Dimas	Yorba Linda	San Diego	Weed
Beverly Hills	Santa Clarita	Placer	San Marcos	Tuolumne
Bradbury	Sierra Madre	Colfax	Santee	Sonoma
Burbank	Westlake Village	Plumas	San Luis Obispo	Ventura
Calabasas	Whittier	Portola	Atascadero	Moorpark
Claremont	Marin	Riverside	Pismo Beach	Ojai
Diamond Bar	Mill Valley	Banning	San Mateo	Simi Valley
Duarte	Monterey	Beaumont	Belmont	Thousand Oaks
	Carmel	Calimesa	Half Moon Bay	

Review Process and Timeline

The county/local jurisdiction and CAL FIRE Land Use Planning staff will receive and review technical guidance documents, the Board assessment, and relevant information from CAL FIRE and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research.



The county or local jurisdiction will work closely with CAL FIRE Land Use Planning staff during the development of the general plan and the safety element in particular.



At least 90 days prior to the adoption or amendment of the General Plan: The county or local jurisdiction will submit the safety element to the Board of Forestry & Fire Protection for review. Jurisdictions are encouraged to send safety elements to the Board prior to the 90 day statutory requirement for greater collaboration.



No more than 60 days later: The Board will consider staff recommendations and approve as-is or with changes at the next Board meeting. This deadline may be modified upon mutual agreement between Board staff and local jurisdictions.

Tier 1 General Plan Safety Element Recommendations

Please click on the appropriate box to “check” whether the plan satisfies each point. Standard recommendations are included in the checklist but please highlight or add additional comments as necessary.

1.0 Wildfire Protection Planning

1.1 General Plan references and incorporates County or Unit Fire Plan. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Identify, reference or create (if necessary) a fire plan for the geographic scope of the General Plan. General Plan should incorporate the general concepts and standards from any county fire plan, fire protection agency (federal or state) fire plan, and local hazard mitigation plan. Identify or reference the local Unit Fire Plan and, if applicable, the Community Wildfire Prevention Plan.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Ensure fire plans incorporated by reference into the contain evaluations of fire hazards, assessment of assets at risk, prioritization of hazard mitigation actions, and implementation and monitoring components.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Additional Wildfire Protection Planning Recommendations:

2.0 Land Use Planning:

2.1 Goals and policies include mitigation of fire hazard for future development. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies for specific ordinances addressing evacuation and emergency vehicle access; water supplies and fire flow; fuel modification for defensible space; and home addressing and signing.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Specify the local ordinances, code sections, or regulations addressing the above standards, particularly any ordinances that address right-of-way, easement, and other reasonable offsite and onsite improvements for a division of land which qualifies for a Parcel Map rather than a Tentative/Final Map under the Subdivision Map Act.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Develop fire safe development codes used as standards for fire protection for new development in State Responsibility Area (SRA) within the entity’s jurisdiction that meet or exceed statewide standards in Title14 California Code of Regulations Section 1270 et seq.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Adopt, and have certified by the BOF, local fire safe ordinances which meet or exceed standards in 14 CCR § 1270 for State Responsibility Area.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Consider mitigation of previously developed areas that do not meet Title 14 California Code of Regulations Section 1270 et seq. or equivalent local ordinance.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

- 2.2 Disclose wildland urban interface hazards, including Fire Hazard Severity Zone designations and other vulnerable areas as determined by CAL FIRE or fire prevention organizations. Describe or map any Firewise Communities or other firesafe communities as determined by the National Fire Protection Association, Fire Safe Council, or other organizations. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Specify whether the entity has a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) designation pursuant GC 51175 and include a map of the zones that clearly indicates any area designated VHFHSZ.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Adopt CAL FIRE recommended Fire Hazard Severity Zones including model ordinances developed by the Office of the State Fire Marshal for establishing VHFHSZ areas.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Discuss and/or include local fire hazard maps.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

- 2.3 The design and location of new development provides for adequate infrastructure for the safe ingress of emergency response vehicles and simultaneously allows civilian egress during an emergency: Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Develop a policy that approval of parcel maps and tentative maps is conditional based on meeting regulations adopted pursuant to §4290 and 4291 of the Public Resources Code, particularly those regarding road standards for ingress, egress, and fire equipment access.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Develop pre-plans for fire prone areas that address civilian evacuations to temporary safety locations.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

- 2.4 When approving parcel maps and use permits, consideration is given to providing adequate water supply infrastructure that meets zoning and fire protection needs. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Develop a policy that approval of parcel maps is conditional based on

meeting zoning requirements and fire safe development codes.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Additional Land Use Planning Recommendations:
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3.0 Housing/Structures and Neighborhoods:

3.1 Incorporation of current fire safe building codes. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Adopt building codes for new development in State Responsibility Areas or incorporated areas with VHFHSZ that are based on those established by the Office of the State Fire Marshal in Title 19 and Title 24 CCR, referred to as the “Wildland Urban Interface Building Codes.”

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

3.2 Identification and actions for substandard fire safe housing and neighborhoods relative to fire hazard area. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Identify and map existing housing structures that do not conform to contemporary fire standards in terms of building materials, perimeter access, and vegetative hazards in VHFHSZ or SRA by fire hazard zone designation.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Identify plans and actions to improve substandard housing structures and neighborhoods. Plans and actions should include structural rehabilitation, occupancy reduction, demolition, reconstruction, neighborhood –wide fuels hazard reduction projects, community education, and other community based solutions.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Identify plans and actions for existing residential structures and neighborhoods, and particularly substandard residential structures and neighborhoods, to be improved to meet current fire safe ordinances pertaining to access, water flow, signing, and vegetation clearing.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

3.3 Consideration of diverse occupancies and their effects on wildfire protection.

Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Ensure risks to uniquely occupied structures, such as seasonally occupied homes, multiple dwelling structures, or other structures with unique occupancy characteristics, are considered for appropriate and unique wildfire protection needs.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

3.4 Fire engineering features for structures in VHFHSZ. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Ensure new development proposals contain specific fire protection plans, actions, and codes for fire engineering features for structures in VHFHSZ. Examples include codes requiring automatic sprinklers in VHFHSZ.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Additional Housing/Structures and Neighborhoods Recommendations:

4.0 Conservation and Open Space:

4.1 Identification of critical natural resource values relative to fire hazard areas. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Identify critical natural resources and other “open space” values within the geographic scope of the General Plan.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

4.2 Inclusion of resource management activities to enhance protection of open space and natural resource values. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Develop plans and action items for vegetation management that provides fire damage mitigation and protection of open space values. Plans should address protection of natural resource financial values, establishment of fire resilient natural resources, protection of watershed qualities, and protection of endangered species habitats. Actions should consider prescribed burning, fuel breaks, and vegetation thinning and removal

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies for reducing the wildland fire hazards within the entity’s boundaries, especially on vacant residential lots and greenbelts and, with the relevant partners, on adjacent private wildlands or federal lands with fire hazards that threaten the entity’s jurisdiction.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

4.3 Integration of open space into fire safety effectiveness. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies for incorporating systematic fire protection improvements for open space. Specifics policies should address facilitation of safe fire suppression tactics, standards for adequate access for firefighting, fire mitigation planning with agencies/private landowners managing open space adjacent to the GP area, water sources for fire suppression, and other fire prevention and suppression needs.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

4.4 Urban forestry plans relative to fire protection. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Ensure residential areas have appropriate fire resistant landscapes and discontinuous vegetation adjacent to open space or wildland areas.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Evaluate and resolve existing laws and local ordinances which conflict with fire protection requirements. Examples include conflicts with vegetation hazard reduction ordinances and listed species habitat protection requirements.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

4.5 Mitigation for unique pest, disease and other forest health issues leading to hazardous situations. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies that address unique pest, disease, exotic species and other forest health issues in open space areas for purposes of reducing fire hazard and supporting ecological integrity.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Additional Conservation and Open Space Recommendations:

5.0 Circulation and Access:

5.1 Adequate access to high hazard wildland/open space areas. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies for adequate access in Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones that meet or exceed standards in Title 14 CCR 1270 for lands with no structures, and maintain conditions of access in a suitable fashion for suppression access or public evacuation.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

5.2 Standards for evacuation of residential areas in high hazard areas. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Goals and policies should be established to delineate residential evacuation routes and evacuation plans in high or very high fire hazard residential areas.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

5.3 Incorporate a policy that provides for a fuel maintenance program along roadways in the agency having jurisdiction. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Develop an adaptive vegetation management plan that considers fuels, topography, weather (prevailing winds and wind event specific to the area), fire ignitions and

fire history.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

- 5.4 Adequacy of existing and future transportation system to incorporate fire infrastructure elements. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies for proposed and existing transportation systems to facilitate fire infrastructure elements such as turnouts, helispots and safety zones.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Additional Circulation and Access Recommendations:

6.0 Defensible Space

- 6.1 Develop geographic specific fire risk reduction mitigation measures using fuel modification. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Include policies and recommendations that incorporate fire safe buffers and greenbelts as part of the development planning. Ensure that land uses designated near very fire hazard severity zones are compatible with wildland fire protection strategies/capabilities.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

- 6.2 Fuel modification around homes. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Establish ordinances in SRA or VHFHSZ for vegetation fire hazard reduction around structures that meet or exceed the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's Defensible Space Guidelines for SRA and the Very High Fire Hazard severity zones, including vacant lots.

See http://www.bof.fire.ca.gov/pdfs/Copyof4291finalguidelines9_29_06.pdf

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Reduce fuel around communities and subdivisions, considering fuels, topography, weather (prevailing winds and wind event specific to the area), fire ignitions and fire history.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

- 6.3 Fire suppression defense zones. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies that create wildfire defense zones for emergency services, including fuel breaks or other staging areas where WUI firefighting tactics could be most effectively deployed.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Additional Defensible Space Recommendations:

7.0 Emergency Services:

7.1 Map/describe existing emergency service facilities and areas lacking services, specifically noting any areas in SRA or VHFHSZs. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Include descriptions of emergency services including available equipment, personnel, and maps of facility locations.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Initiate studies and analyses to identify appropriate staffing levels and equipment needs commensurate with the current and projected emergency response environment.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

7.2 Assessment and projection of future emergency service needs. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Ensure new development includes appropriate facilities, equipment, personnel and capacity to assist and support wildfire suppression emergency service needs. Future emergency service needs should be:

- Established consistent with state or national standards.
- Developed based on criteria for determining suppression resource allocation that includes elements such as identified values and assets at risk, ignition density, vegetation type and condition, as well as local weather and topography.
- Local Agency Formation municipal services reviews for evaluating level of service, response times, equipment condition levels and other relevant emergency service information.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

7.3 Adequacy of training. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies for emergency service training that meets or exceeds state or national standards.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

7.4 Inter-fire service coordination preparedness/mutual aid and multi-jurisdictional fire service agreements. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Adopt the Standardized Emergency Management System for responding to large scale disasters requiring a multi-agency response. Ensure and review mutual aid/automatic aid and other cooperative agreements with adjoining emergency service providers.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Additional Emergency Services Recommendations:

8.0 Post Fire Safety, Recovery and Maintenance:

The post fire recommendations address an opportunity for the community and landowners to re-evaluate land uses and practices that affect future wildfire hazards and risk. They also provide for immediate post-fire life and safety considerations to mitigate potential losses to life, human assets and critical natural resources.

8.1 Evaluation of redevelopment. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: In High and Very hazardous areas, ensure redevelopment utilizes state of the art fire resistant building and development standards to improve past ‘substandard’ fire safe conditions.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

8.2 Long term maintenance of fire hazard reduction mitigation projects. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Provide polices and goals for maintenance of the post-fire-recovery projects, activities, or infrastructure.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

8.3 Reevaluate hazardous conditions and provide for future fire safe conditions. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Incorporate goals and policies that provide for reassessment of fire hazards following wildfire events. Adjust fire prevention and suppression needs for both short and long term fire protection.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Develop burn area recovery plans that incorporate strategic fire safe measures developed during the fire suppression, such as access roads, fire lines, safety zones, and fuelbreaks, and helispots.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

8.4 Post fire life and safety assessments. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Develop frameworks for rapid post-fire assessment and project implementation to minimize flooding, protect water quality, limit sediment flows and reduce other risks on all land ownerships impacted by wildland fire.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Identity flood and landslide vulnerability areas related to post wildfire conditions.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies that address the intersection of flood /landslide/post fire burn areas into long term public safety protection plans. These should include treatment assessment of fire related flood risk to life, methods to control storm runoff in burn areas, revegetation of burn areas, and drainage crossing maintenance.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Encourage rapid post-fire assessment, as appropriate, and project implementation to minimize flooding, protect water quality, limit sediment flows and reduce other risks on all land ownerships impacted by wildland fire.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

8.5 Restore sustainable landscapes and restore functioning ecosystems. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Develop burn area recovery plans, evaluation processes and implementation actions that encourage tree and biomass salvage, reforestation activities, create resilient and sustainable landscapes, and restore functioning ecosystems.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

8.6 Incorporate wildlife habitat/endangered species considerations. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies for consideration of wildlife habitat/endangered species into long term fire area recovery and protection plans, including environmental protection agreements such as natural community conservation plans.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

8.7 Native species reintroduction. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Incorporate native species habitat needs as part of long term fire protection and fire restoration plans.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Additional Post Fire Safety, Recovery and Maintenance Recommendations:

9.0 Terrorist and homeland security impacts on wildfire protection:

These recommendations are included to address fire protection needs related to terrorist acts or other homeland security preparedness and response actions. Both preparedness and incident response can adversely impact fire protection. Adverse effects include substantially decreasing emergency resources' availability, responsiveness and effectiveness by diverting resources, interrupting communications, or restricting emergency access.

9.1 Emergency response barriers. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Identify goals and policies that address vital access routes that if removed would prevent fire fighter access (bridges, dams, etc.). Develop an alternative emergency access plan for these areas.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

9.2 Prioritizing asset protection from fire when faced with a lack of suppression forces.

Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Identify and prioritize protection needs for assets at risk in the absence of response forces.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Recommendation: Establish fire defense strategies (such as fire ignition resistant areas) that provide adequate fire protection without dependency on fire resources (both air and ground) and could serve as safety zones for the public or emergency support personnel.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

9.3 Communication channels during incidents. Yes Partial No

Recommendation: Establish goals and policies consistent with the Governor's Blue Ribbon Fire Commission of 2005 for communications and interoperability. Example goals and policies should address fire personnel capability to communicate effectively across multiple frequency bands and update and expansion of current handheld and mobile radios used on major mutual aid incidents.

Priority: High Medium Low N/A

Additional Terrorist and Homeland Security Recommendations:

Additional Recommendations: