

OJAI VALLEYFINAL MEETING MINUTESMUNICIPALMonday, June 21, 2021 at 7:00 PMADVISORYMeeting via ZOOMCOUNCILOjai Valley, CA

Chair: Chris Cohen, Vice Chair: Joseph Westbury Council Members: Barbara Kennedy, Grace Malloy, Terry Wright

- **1. Call to Order of the Meeting** Executive Officer Clensay called the meeting to order at 7:11 PM.
- 2. Flag Salute
- 3. Roll Call
 - PRESENT: Chair Cohen, Members Kennedy, Malloy, Wright
 - ABSENT: Vice Chair Westbury
 - STAFF: Maruja Clensay, Executive Officer

4. Adoption of the Agenda

Upon call of the roll the vote was as follows:

- AYES: Members Cohen, Kennedy, Malloy, Wright
- NOES: None
- ABSENT: Member Westbury

Motion carries 4-0 with Member Westbury absent.

5. Public Comments by Citizens on matters Not Appearing on the Agenda (Time limit per item – three minutes).

No members of the public desired to speak on matters not appearing on the agenda.

6. City of Ojai Planning Commission Update – N/A as Commissioner was present. Emailed update read into the record during Council Comments at the end of the meeting.

7. Approval of the Meeting Minutes of May 17, 2021

Member Wright made a motion to approve meeting minutes as presented. Member Malloy seconded.

Upon call of the roll the vote was as follows:

- AYES: Members Cohen, Kennedy, Malloy, Wright
- NOES: None
- ABSENT: Member Westbury

Motion carries 4-0 with Member Westbury absent.

8. Approval of Amended OVMAC Meeting Calendar.

a. Revise OVMAC Meeting Calendar to remove August 2021 meeting to be consistent with County decision-maker hearing calendars.

Member Malloy made a motion to amend the schedule and cancel the August 16th meeting. Member Kennedy seconded the motion.

Upon call of the roll the vote was as follows:

AYES: Members Cohen, Kennedy, Malloy, Wright

NOES: None

ABSENT: Member Westbury

Motion carries 4-0 with Member Westbury absent.

9. OVMAC Meeting Location Discussion.

a. Discuss when to host the OVMAC meetings to the Oak View Community Center.

Member Wright made a motion to continue the virtual meetings until further guidance from OSHA for public meetings/gatherings. Member Malloy seconded the motion.

Upon call of the roll the vote was as follows:

AYES: Members Cohen, Kennedy, Malloy, Wright

NOES: None

ABSENT: Member Westbury

Motion carries 4-0 with Member Westbury absent.

Informational Items

10. <u>Project Applicant Presentation</u> for a General Plan Amendment Screening Application Case No. PL-20-0084.

Project Applicant Mr. Jacob Glaze of Kimley-Horn shared an informational presentation to the OVMAC regarding a forthcoming Board of Supervisor's Screening of a General Plan Amendment to amend a Traffic Policy in the Ojai Valley Area Plan involving Certain Parcels along a portion of the State Highway 33 Corridor.

[Applicant's Power Point Presentation attached]

Council Discussion/Comments:

Member Kennedy – Acknowledges the Peak Hour Traffic policies are tough; and would like to see them relaxed to see what can be done for local businesses. It's a large lot and can't imagine it just being an Auto Parts Store. Are there any other plans for the rest of the property?

[Applicant] Mr. Glaze – It's a little over an acre of land, and will be only an Auto Parts Store due to landscaping and parking requirements and related public improvements; some road widening would ultimately be required if the project is approved.

Member Wright – Have questions about prior tenants, with it being a bar, primarily night-time trips, so understand the traffic trips are different. Could the entrance be off the back street? Would that affect the traffic trips? Not sure – but agrees with what Member Kennedy said and would be open to looking at relaxing the traffic policies.

Member Kennedy – What is happening with the residential part of the project? Was it a prior mixed use at some time?

[Applicant] Mr. Glaze – No existing residential on the property; just the bar and office space. Also acknowledged the other point of entry off Old Ventura was looked at, but the traffic impacts remain.

Member Malloy – I just want to be clear with what is expected of us here. Early input to change this strict traffic policy/counts? We hear a lot of concerns regarding traffic in some very small neighborhoods in our community. Is this a sweeping Valley Wide request or just specific to this parcel?

[Applicant] Mr. Glaze - We are looking to do an Ojai Valley Area plan update related to this Traffic Policy as we cannot do spot-zoning. This is the first step of a long process. We are looking for initial feedback which we are going to report back to the County. This request is allowing us to just look at this; a lot of additional analysis will have to happen in order to have this policy ultimately changed. Current applicant/property owner is looking into this exception for their own property, but it would apply to the entire Ojai Valley Area.

Member Kennedy – When was the Ojai Valley Area Plan last updated?

Executive Officer Clensay - The Ojai Valley Area Plan was updated/adopted in 2019/2020 with the General Plan.

Member Kennedy – My concern with the Valley in general and traffic mitigation is that we are trying to open local businesses to get the supplies we need and not have to drive to Ventura. We also have Amazon trucks coming into the Valley every day. We are worried about traffic mitigations for our local businesses, yet you have Amazon Prime and all other carriers coming in a billion times a day, and no one talks about that. I think it is time to have a discussion Valley wide how do we propose to mitigate this type of thing because its not right that they get to grow their corporate business but local businesses can't even get their feet of the ground. As well as the infrastructure requirements that are required, because the infrastructure in Oak View is from the 1930s. I feel you and I know where we are at, and I think it's something we should further discuss. When the General Plan outreach occurred in the Valley, I do not recall a lot of discussion regarding the traffic policy. I'm very open to finding out how we can do something to help the business owners be successful. I want to be open minded about it.

Chair Cohen - That is a good point about making sure we are not shooting ourselves in the foot by counting destination trips to the Ojai Valley, but not counting through-trips that are bypassing those facilities. My initial reaction is what I understand of the proposal is that it appears to be a pretty broad exemption; and if it is a broad exemption, maybe goes farther than I might want to see. The way I understood it, is that if there is any commercial use that is going to occupy a space that was Commercial previously, regardless of the change of commercial use, the type of commercial use, it would not be subject to the trip counting?

[Applicant] Mr. Glaze – In a broad stroke of the paintbrush, yes, but this is something we need to better identify and would come out of future analysis with other jurisdictions and working groups. It will more than likely be modified and be brought back to the OVMAC prior to it being put into place, and provided that studies support it.

Chair Cohen – Got it; so if this is a temperature taking, my temperature is that it sounds like an issue that needs to be addressed because it is preventing revitalization of vacant businesses, but that this initial scope sounds like it could have some unintended consequences if its not tailored or dialed in a bit more, or allowing more discretion from the Planning Commission or whomever. But it sounds like this policy is already causing unintended consequences by not allowing vacant/local businesses to re/develop and turn vacant properties into profitable businesses.

Member Malloy – I agree with both Chris and Barbara in that but somewhere in between those two comments is an elephant in the room that we are seeing in Downtown Ojai, and in Meiners Oaks; Spaces we had seen Mom and Pop businesses owned by local folks, but we are seeing these one-of-many boutiques, restaurants, owned by people who have second homes in L.A. and that keeps upping the rent prices and small Mom and Pops can't get in there anymore. I like the good intentions but we need to be immensely careful so we are serving the communities in the appropriate way, and those impacted neighbors in the appropriate way and we are helping local businesses thrive.

Member Wright – Will this going to be a local business or a commercial business?

[Applicant] Mr. Glaze - I believe the property owner is open to all but has had interest from a National Auto Parts vendor, but as the discussions continue, I think that could be further discussed.

Public Comment:

Stephen Weed – Good on your applicant for raising this issue. It is an issue that affects Oak View and Casitas Springs and other communities. Thanks for bringing it up. My thoughts are that having this sort of limitations strictly on traffic trips alone seems overly restrictive. I'm local to Oak View and know the vicinity pretty well. It's important you stay visible with this because I cannot imagine doing any sort of development in either of these neighborhoods without this kind of adjustments to the Area Plan. I think we need to look at the future of these communities and what we want to be. Thank you.

Chair Cohen - Thank you Mr. Glaze for your informational presentation.

Executive Officer Clensay - The Screening Application is scheduled for July 21, 2021 before the Board of Supervisors for a green light to submit. Once deemed complete, the application will come back before the OVMAC for comments.

11. Fire Safe Council Presentation.

The OVMAC received an informational presentation from Chris Danch, Executive Director, of the Ojai Valley Fire Safe Council, regarding the history of the OV Fire Safe Council and its current efforts related to wildfire risk mitigation strategy, wildfire prevention and preparedness, vegetation management, and collaborative efforts with other county agencies and organizations relating to wildfire safety and education. This is one of two informational sessions. The second session will focus on the OVFSC's Community-Supported Prescribed Grazing Program and Chris will be joined by the grazing program Co-Directors, Cole Bush and Michael Leicht.

[Informational Power Point Attached]

Council Discussion/Comments:

Chair Cohen - Thank you Chris, just to confirm, you are coming back with the Grazing Program presentation?

Chris Danch – Yes that is correct. We are starting with a stakeholder event and reaching out to specific stakeholders to introduce the grazing program, describe our goals and vision, and the scale of the program, and ask for the stakeholders' help in developing the program. We want to understand the needs, the scale, and what we want to have to do, and that will be at our next presentation on July 19, 2021.

Member Malloy – I want to thank you so much for all your work on this. This is so exciting. The breath and depth of the work you have done is so impressive and its so exciting to see, so thank you. As an educator, I want to get this information to more people [seeking local fund source for Ojai Valley Wildfire Safety].

Chris Danch - Now that the State has announced its wildfire funding, and grant programs such as the CAL FIRE Fire Prevention Grant, it's a feeding frenzy. However, of the \$1 Billion dollars budgeted by the State, only about 3% of those funds are available to all of the communities in the State, with all community-based organizations, RCDs and other eligible applicants now competing for this much smaller pool. A lot of communities will never see any funding from the State, regardless of need. You really want to build community resilience._You really want to build community resilience that comes from the bottom up. We need locally funded communities from potential parcel/property taxes. We have a need here that is going to save our community that those agencies cannot control.

Member Wright – That was a great presentation, thank you. Wanted to highlight the Ojai Fourth of July parade will have the sheep and may be a good opportunity to have flyers/brochures to hand out to people.

Chris Danch – Yes, we will be doing that and holding another public event in the Fall to do this educational campaign as well.

Member Kennedy - Question regarding the property tax idea - would that result with two taxes for the same thing?

Chris Danch – That would have to be further analyzed, but I believe we do not have a current State tax program regarding wildfire. That is part of the feasibility aspect of this. We want to avoid any double taxation, but also to lay out a plan to show how the money would be spent here and would require local governance (elected board). We are a bit a-ways from that, but want to start taking a look at it. So far, its been pretty well received and would require more outreach to get a sense of whether the taxation is worth doing.

Member Kennedy – I don't think the general public really knows about the WUI and a lot of public education will be required. As a builder, it's very important to know where the WUI is because it affects how you develop your home.

Chris Danch - Still have a lot of data collection to do so we can use this information for future proposals and grant acquisitions. This can also assist with modeling for insurance purposes. But what people do not understand is how fire travels; its too variable and the wind direction with the ember cast could have decimated this Valley during the Thomas Fire. It's a significant challenge we need to address for building, funding, assessing, etc. but it's something we need to do.

Chair Cohen - Could you explain what the "WUI" is?

Chris Danch - The "Wildland – Urban Interface" – characterized by the native vegetation that you are building adjacent to or within and has certain development requirements. This will go beyond defensible space. We have been in a working group that will look at fire ember cast modeling system to assist with that analysis. During the Thomas Fire, we all came away with the same concerns – communication. We learned about the critical need for real time reliable data related to a wildfire. We need to look at a new public information system that details real time fire location, movement, structures, road closures, needs, etc. We are looking at new and efficient ways to get that information out. Funding is a challenge, but it's a direction we need to move towards.

Chair Cohen - It strikes me that the kind of work that you are doing sounds like it should be required for all communities to do this, but its probably better that it comes from the bottom up. We are able to tailor to specific community needs and not having to adhere to top down instructions. Thank you for taking the initiative to do this.

Chris Danch – Want to say that the Ventura County Fire Protection District works closely with us in a working group. With the Grazing Program for example, they are right there with us. It's critical that that coordination goes on. But this kind of modeling needs to be community driven.

[Second Informational Presentation tentatively scheduled for July 19th OVMAC Meeting]

12. Councilmember Comments

Executive Officer Clensay provided a City of Ojai Planning Commission update from Commissioner Quilici which was read into the record:

On June 2, the Ojai Planning Commission approved a remodel to a single-family residence. We also reviewed and recommended (to the City Council) a list of parcels in the City appropriate for development of lower-income housing against the City's RHNA (Regional Housing Needs Assessment) allocation. On June 16, we reviewed and recommended (to the City Council) a draft Housing Element for the City's General Plan Update.

13. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM

Next OVMAC Meeting will be July 19, 2021 via ZOOM.

GPA SCREENING Case No. PL-20-0084

Ojai Valley Area Plan Traffic Policy

1

OJAI VALLEY MAC MEETING

Discussion

- Current Policy
- GPA Screening
- Reasoning
- Case Example
- Summary
- Questions



2

Policy OV-2.5

The County shall prohibit Area Plan land use designation changes, zone changes, and discretionary development that would individually or cumulatively cause any of the impacts identified in subparagraphs (a) through (c) of Policy OV-22.2 Evaluation of Level of Service (LOS) Impacts based on Land Use Changes, unless feasible mitigation measures are adopted that would ensure that the impact does not occur or unless a project completion schedule and full funding commitment for road improvements are adopted that ensure that the impact will be eliminated within a reasonable period of time. This policy does not apply to city thoroughfares, City-maintained local roads, or Federal or State highways located within the city unless the City of Ojai has formally adopted General Plan policies, ordinances, or a reciprocal agreement with the County respecting development in the city that would affect the LOS of the County thoroughfares, County-maintained local roads, and Federal and State highways located within the unincorporated area of the county, similar to the polic followin ies:

3

Exemption to Policy

- Farmworker Housing Complexes, Affordable Housing development per Article 16 of the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance, and other housing exclusively for lower-income households, where such developments are served by roads that are currently operating at LOS "E" or better.
- Additional dwellings and lots on Cultural Heritage Sites as permitted in the Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance.
- Agriculture and Agricultural Operations as permitted in the Coastal and Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinances, where such developments are served by roads that are currently operating at LOS "E" or better.



GPA Screening

• A commercial use designed in conformance with the development standards established in the Ventura County Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance and located on a previously developed, commercially-zoned legal lot.

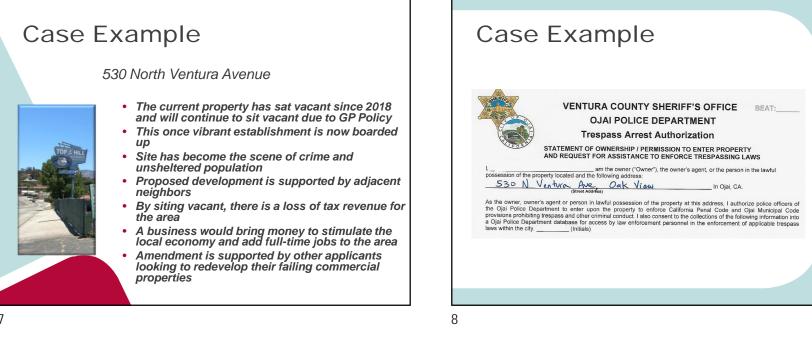


Reasoning

6

- Promotes vacant business to reopen
- Generates tax revenue and provides local jobs
- Promotes local services







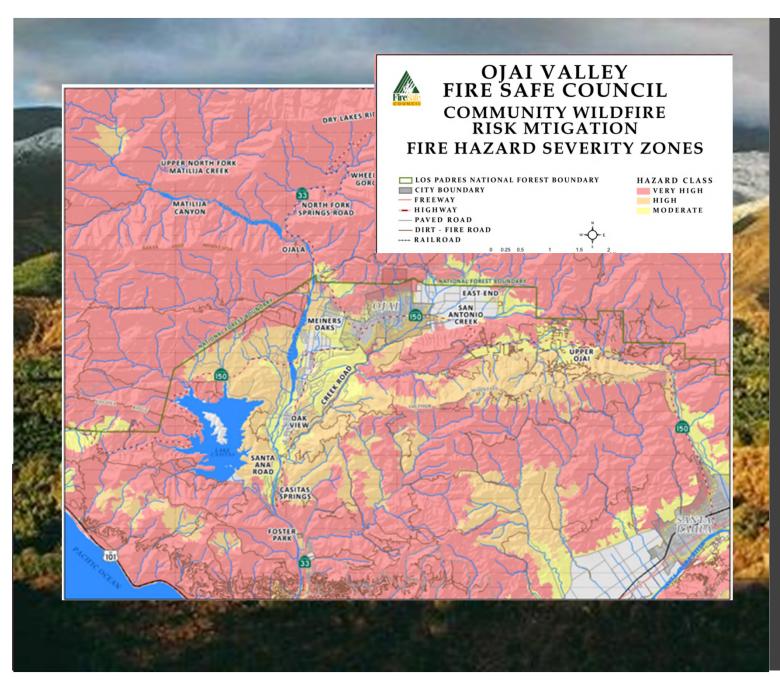


Ojai Valley Fire Safe Council

Community Wildfire Risk Mitigation Strategy

Building Resilient Fire-Adapted Communities

Christopher Danch Executive Director Ojai Valley Fire Safe Council



Ojai Valley & Fire

- 99% Greater Risk from Wildfire
- Surrounded by rugged mountains
- Chaparral-covered canyons
- Steep terrain
- Hot/dry weather and Santa Ana winds
- Very-High and High Fire Hazard Severity Zones
- 89% of building stock pre-2009 (pre-WUI standards)
- Limited evacuation routes
- Communication "dead-zones"
- Vulnerable grid dependency





Ojai Valley Fire Safe Council Founded in 2000 501(c)(3) Nonprofit

Mission

Promote wildfire safety in the Ojai Valley through community driven collaboration, action, and education

- Since 2001 managed 26 federally funded grants totaling over \$1.3 million + \$1.5 million in matching contributions
- Administered communitybased programs and projects
- Online resources
- Local partnerships



Ongoing Work of the Ojai Valley Fire Safe Council

- Vegetation Management
 - Fuels Reduction
- Defensible Space
- Structural Assessments & Hardening
- Public Education for Wildfire Prevention, Safety, and Preparedness
 - Homeowners
 - Schools
 - Landowners
 - Landscapers
 - Agricultural
 - General Public
- Wildfire Safety Fair
- Ventura County CWPP 2010





A Brave New World

Thomas Fire

- 281k acres, 1063 structures destroyed, 2 deaths
- Narrowly escaped the fate of Paradise, CA
- Resident concerns (survey):
 - "Great deal" of concern for wildfires - from 10% to 50% post-Thomas
 - Evacuation, notification, loss of life & property, collective prevention



Reality of Increasing Threat of Wildfire

- Climate change (major cause)
 - Drought
 - Extreme wind events
 - Record low vegetation moisture content
- Wildfire behavior—severe and intense
- Longer wildfire season
- Wildland-Urban-Interface expanding
- Increasing liability, cost, risk
- Insurance coverage becoming unavailable
- Since 1970, wildfires have increased in frequency by 400% across the USA

Our level of community preparedness, capacity and resiliency must adapt to change

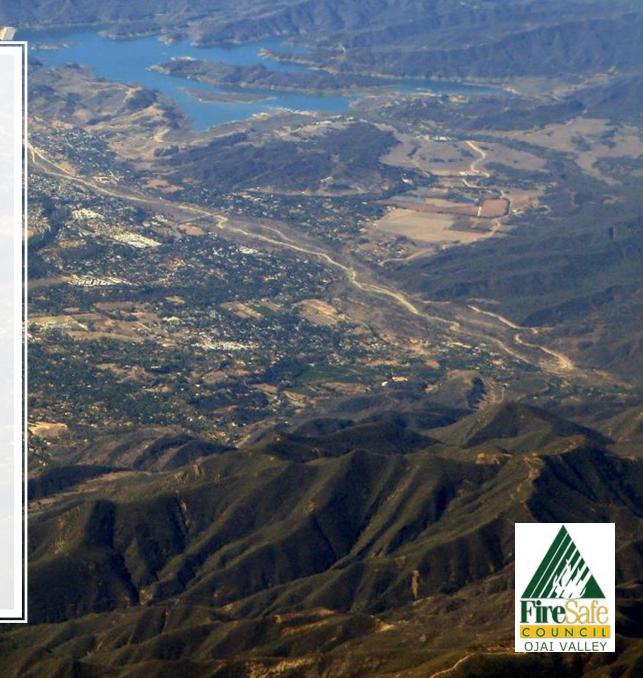


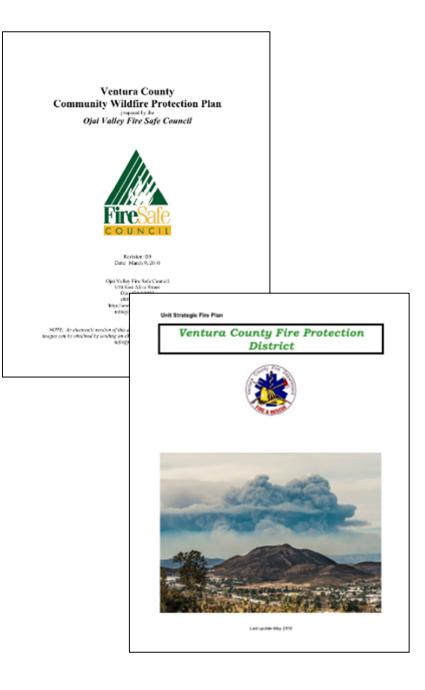
New Initiative

Develop and Implement a comprehensive, sustainable, holistic, community-based, communitydriven Wildfire Risk Mitigation Strategy for the Ojai Valley Area

Initial Step:

Prepare a <u>Road Map</u> for development, funding, and implementation.





Limitations 2021 Unit Strategic Plan 2010 Ventura County CWPP

- Fire-agency focused
- Only three essential elements
- Vegetation management & response focused
- CWPP "Missing" community
- No interconnection to holistic disaster risk needs
 - Evacuation, resident notification, structural hardening, short & long-term recovery services, etc.

Ojai Fire Safe Council's Risk Mitigation Strategy is based on the following:



- Wildfire is inevitable and necessary
- A very small percentage of Wildfires are uncontrollable
- This small percentage causes ≥95% of the loss of life and property
- A community-level response capacity is needed for such catastrophic fires

What is a "Fire-Adapted Community"?

 "A knowledgeable and engaged community in which the awareness and actions of residents regarding infrastructure, buildings, landscaping, and the surrounding ecosystem lessens the need for extensive protection actions and enables the community to safely accept fire as a part of the surrounding landscape."

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group U.S. Forest Service







ROAD MAP 2019: Identifies community values and assessment of current capacities for wildfire risk management

- + Identify Project Priority and Sequencing
- + Stakeholder Analysis and Engagement Strategy
- + Funding Plan
 - Pursue diverse funding sources
 - Look to City/County to support plan
 - Expanded Grant Writing
 - Community Support
 - Green Bond Program
- + Develop Preliminary Action Plans
- + Prepare Operational Plans for Priority Projects
- + Implementation of 1st Year Priority Projects

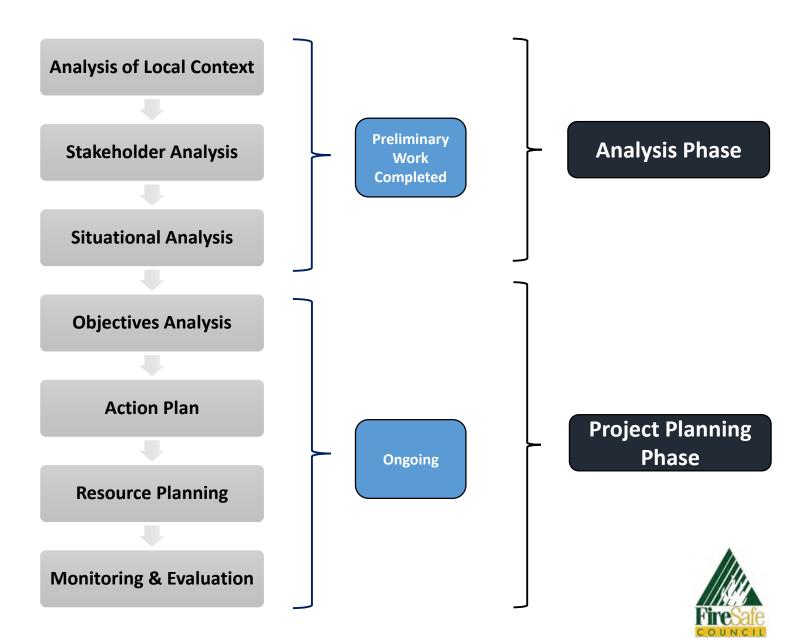


Developing a Strategic Plan for Community WUI Fire Risk Management

Approach rooted in Disaster Risk Reduction & Capacity Building field

*Iterative, non-linear process







Seeking Public Feedback

Identifying

- Values
- Education Programs
- Community Needs
- Areas For Improvement

- Technology Needs
- Further Studies/Analysis
- Prioritizing Action Items
- Experiences/Perceptions

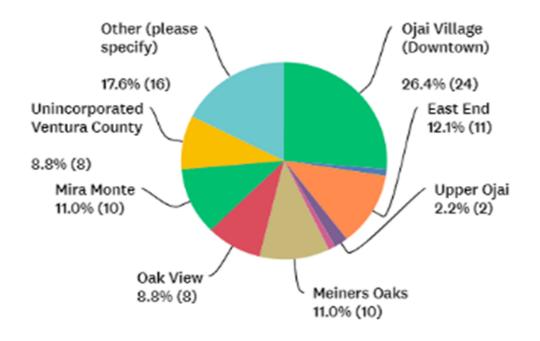


Currently administering online survey for demographics, experiences, risk perceptions, attitudes, concerns, post-Thomas Fire.

https:/www.surveymonkey.com/r/OjaiValleyWildfire

Sampling of Preliminary Survey Results

Responses by Area



Ranking of Values to Protect

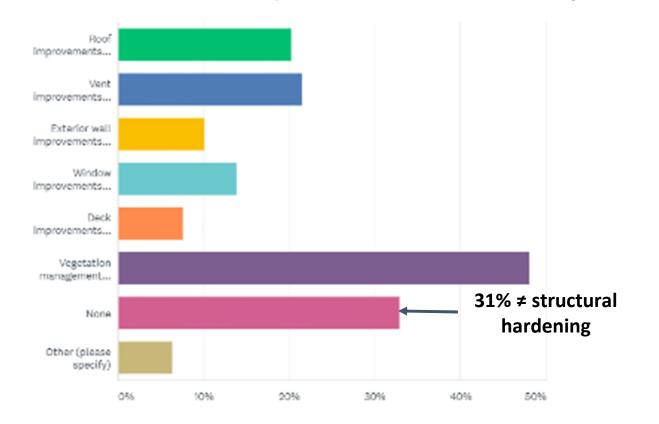


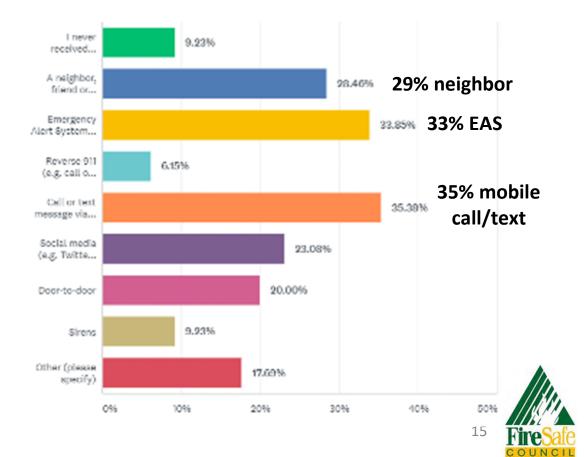


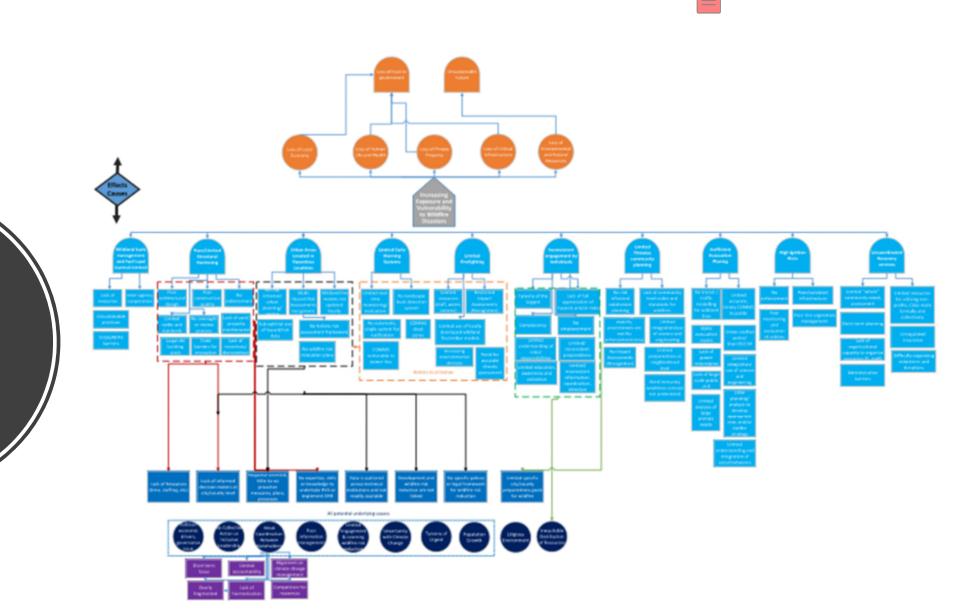
N=160 households, ~500 people

Sampling of Preliminary Survey Results cont.

"The follow-up recovery at the government level was horrible. If it weren't for the local non-profits, the community would have fallen apart."







Preliminary Project Development





Goals for Wildfire Risk Mitigation

Empower Prepare and empower our community to mitigate wildlan	
Protect	Protect values
Leverage	Leverage existing capacities
Build	Build citizen and "whole" community capacities
Develop	Develop a "culture of resiliency"
Become	Become a truly "fire-adapted" community



Road Map Working Group: Concerns

Emergency Communications to Public	Evacuation Improvements	Loss of power to critical facilities
Vulnerable Populations	Improved Emergency Planning	Increased community capacity and resiliency • Expanded volunteer support and engagement

Road Map: Priority Projects Identified

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- Community-Supported Grazing Program
- 2010 Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Update
- Ojai Valley CWPP
- Fine-Scale Risk Mapping & Dashboard
- Wildfire Evacuation Vulnerability Assessment
- Structural Hardening
 - Training
 - Initial Targeted Assessments
 - Data collection & management
- Improving Public Emergency Communications
 - NSF Grant-Volunteer Geospatial Information & Crowdsourced Data
- Community Microgrid for Critical Facilities
- Assessment of Critical Water Infrastructure for First Responders
- Assessment of Critical Agricultural Wetted Zones
- Property Insurance (WRAP)

Building Partnerships

- National/State/Local government, civil society, non-profits (137 identified)
- Strategic plan for roles and responsibilities

Examples:

- VCFPD
- City of Ojai
- Los Padres NF
- Ventura County Resource Conservation District
- The C.R.E.W.
- Ojai Valley Land Conservancy
- Local schools
- Private Industry Partners

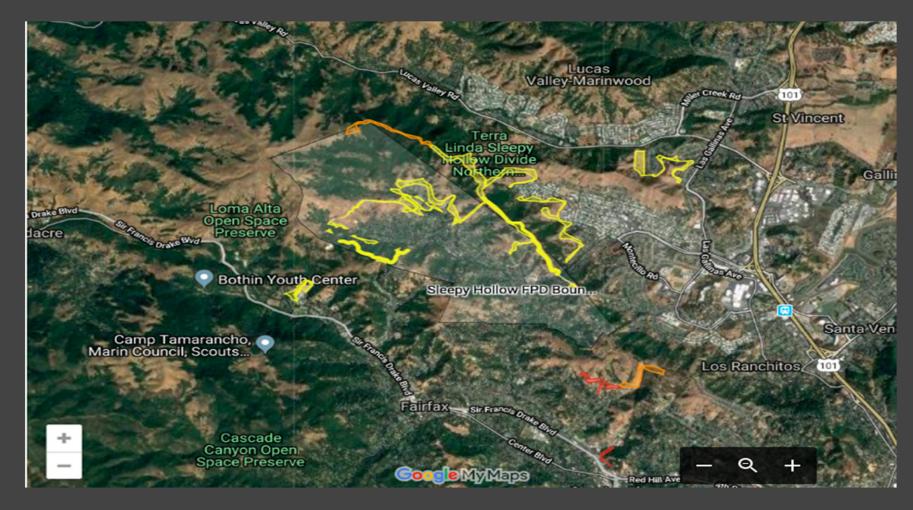




20

Ojai Valley Community-Supported Prescribed Grazing Program

Modeled After Successful Program in Northern California by Marin Fire Safe Council





Ojai Valley Prescribed Grazing for Wildfire Safety





- Ecologically-sound vegetation management
- Increased WUI resilience
- Prescribed Grazing For Optimum Plant, Shrub, and Tree Control
- Reduced CO2 emissions!
- Increased carbon sequestration
- New Industries = New Ojai Jobs!

Stakeholder Convening June 25, 2021

OJAI VALLEY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL PRESENTS

THE COMMUNITY SUPPORTED GRAZING PROGRAM

FOR FIRE SAFETY AND ECOLOGICAL STEWARDSHIP

PLEASE JOIN US FOR A DEMONSTRATION AND INTRODUCTION TO



THE OVFSC FLAGSHIP GRAZING PROGRAM

JUNE 25TH, 2021

OJAI RETREAT * 160 BESANT ROAD

HOSTED BY THE CSGP TEAM

CHRIS DANCH - DIRECTOR OF THE OJAI VALLEY FIRE SAFE COUNCIL COLE BUSH - CSGP PROGRAM DIRECTOR, FOUNDER OF SHEPHERDESS LAND AND LIVESTOCK CO. LLC MICHAEL LEICHT - CSGP COMMUNITY OUTREACH DIRECTOR, FOUNDER OF VENTURA BRUSH GOATS LLC

* LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED *

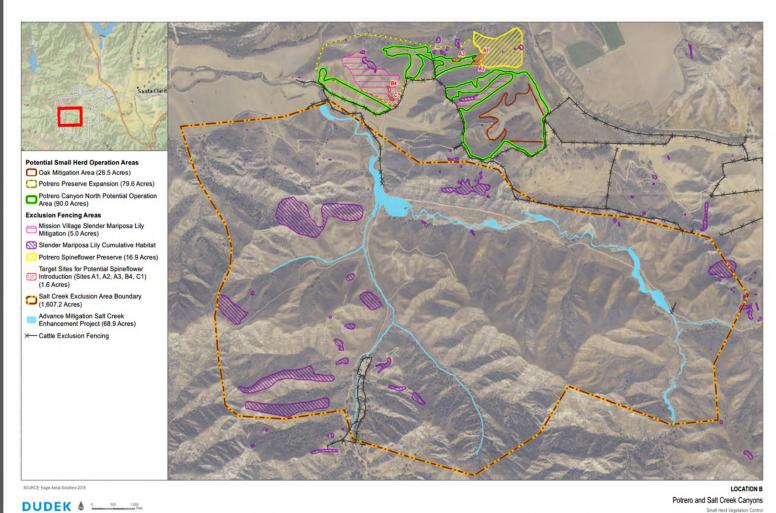






- Demonstration/ Pilot Sites
- Mapping
- Landowner
 Agreements
- Prepare Prescriptions 2022
- Launch Fundraising
 Campaign
- Public Education

NEXT STEPS



What is required to realize the Road Map? Purposeful, communityfocused, community-driven, holistic, inclusive, and longterm planning and funding

Consistent Baseline Funding apart from Grants and Donations Why Consistent Baseline Funding?

- Historically the OVFSC has functioned primarily with grants with no direct community support
- Such grants are becoming underfunded and highly competitive with more losers than winners
- Grants are project-specific, intermittent, uncertain, short-term
- Often require "shovel-ready" project and have match requirements

Baseline Funding Possibilities

- Measure C
 - A portion to be dedicated to Wildfire Safety
- Parcel Tax
 - Follow Marin County's lead
 - WUI Ordinance
 - Formed Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (by JPA)
 - Special ballot for Parcel Tax (passed by over 73% approval)
 - Allows up to \$0.10 per sq. ft. for 10 years
 - Community Oversight
 - No Unfunded Liabilities
 - 10% Administrative Cap



PROJECT FUNDING: Beyond Grants

GREEN BONDS

Working with:

Green Bonds-California State Treasurer California

Infrastructure & Economic Development Bank (IBank) California Pollution Control Financing Authority Green Bond Funding Concept

- Green Bonds for community-level for resiliency
- Utilize Fire Safe Councils
- Aggregate community projects into single bond offering
- Use of Stimulus Funds (e.g., Climate Catalyst Fund) to create "bond worthy" projects
- Ibank has expressed interest in the concept and requested Stimulus Fund proposal
- Stimulus Funds suspended with Covid shutdown and resulting State budget deficit



For More Information

Ojai Valley Fire Safe Council Christopher Danch Executive Director/Grants Manager

- Tel: 805-646-7307
- Cell: 805-640-5407
- Email: <u>chris@firesafeojai.org</u>
- <u>www.firesafeojai.org</u> (New!)