



CITY of CALABASAS

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

DATE: JULY 11, 2024

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND COUNCILMEMBERS

**FROM: MICHAEL DYER, PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS DIRECTOR**

SUBJECT: FIREWISE USA® COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN

MEETING DATE: AUGUST 14, 2024

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the report on the Firewise USA® campaign and adopt Resolution No. 2024-1920 approving a budget amendment to fund the creation of a FIREWISE website, promote community outreach and create a specialized data management system for FIREWISE compliance.

BACKGROUND:

The Firewise USA® recognition program is administered by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and is intended to serve as a resource for city, county, state, federal agencies, tribes, organizations, fire departments and communities that work toward a common goal to reduce loss of life, property, and resources to wildland fire.

The Firewise USA® program emphasizes community/neighborhood responsibility in planning the design of a safe community, as well as an effective emergency

response and individual responsibility for safer home construction and design, landscaping, and maintenance.

The Firewise USA® recognition program was designed to help people learn about wildfire and how they can make their homes and neighborhoods safer. It's based on research that shows how to prepare homes to withstand embers and prevent flames or surface fire from igniting the home and its immediate surroundings, by working in an area known as the home ignition zone (HIZ). This is the home and everything around it within 100 feet.

In many neighborhoods, home ignition zones often overlap onto adjacent properties—meaning that homes are closer than 100 feet to one another. This makes the conditions of neighboring homes and vegetation a part of the wildfire threat. It's extremely important that neighbors work collaboratively with each other—and talk with each other—to reduce their shared risk.

Scientific research has proven that when adequately prepared, a house has a better chance to withstand a wildfire without the intervention of fire suppression services. And when firefighters do make a stand to save a home, Firewise USA® Communities provide a safer working environment to help make a nearly impossible job possible.

Firewise USA® is a voluntary recognition program that provides a framework to help neighbors get organized, find direction, and take action to increase the ignition resistance of their homes and communities from wildfire.

Firewise USA® Communities raise awareness, organize at the community level, coordinate work parties, and take action to create fire-adapted communities through the implementation of defensible space standards.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

The City of Calabasas along with Emergency Preparedness in Calabasas - A Firesafe Council (EPIC-FSC) are partnering along with CAL FIRE and the Los Angeles County Fire Department to help Calabasas communities in understanding Firewise USA® and how to become a Firewise community. City staff and EPIC members are available to present to the communities in person information about the Firewise program and the benefits of joining the program and can assist with providing free defensible space evaluations and Community Wide Risk Assessments.

One time grant funding will be utilized to fund a consultant to develop a Calabasas/EPIC Firewise USA® website, create social media outreach including newsletters, as well as training and data management to ensure Firewise compliance. After initial startup, the consultant will continue to assist the city and EPIC in training, outreach and data management for all interested Calabasas communities that are seeking Firewise USA® status or are already registered with Firewise USA®.

FISCAL IMPACT/SOURCE OF FUNDING:

One time grant funding of \$57,680 for a four-year consultant agreement taken out of the SMMC Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy grant account 46-222-6500-00. General Fund monies will not be used and therefore the project and associated budget amendment will not impact the General Fund balance approved by Council in the 2024-2025 fiscal year budget.

REQUESTED ACTION:

Receive the report on Firewise USA® and adopt the budget amendment resolution attached.

ATTACHMENTS:

A. Budget Amendment Resolution 2024-1920