

RESOLUTION NO. 20160512-016

WHEREAS, on Labor Day 2011, nine major wildfires, including Steiner Ranch, Spicewood, Leander, Pflugerville as well as the Bastrop Complex fire, raged across central Texas burning 47,000 areas and destroying more than 1800 homes, thus ushering increased awareness of the extreme wildfire risk in and around the City of Austin; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has been rated the 3rd most at-risk residential areas in the nation for wildfire related structure losses in the 2013 Corelogic Wildfire Hazard Risk Report; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Fire Department Wildfire Division was established in 2012 to reduce the risk of wildfire destruction through fuel mitigation and effective wildfire response though enhanced firefighter training; and

WHEREAS, the use of prescribed fire in high risk Wildfire Urban Interface (WUI) areas can be an effective tool for reducing fuels in the most environmental way and provide Fire fighters with important training opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the absolute safest methods of command and control of prescribed fire applications must be employed to ensure zero fire escapes; and

WHEREAS, all Prescribed fires conducted within the City of Austin require AFD permitting and on site AFD resources to ensure all Prescribed fires are coordinated with safety as the highest priority; and

WHEREAS, recent wildfire risk analysis from the Austin Fire Department Wildfire Division indicates 27% of Austin's structures, or over 246,400 structures are at risk from radiant heat and ember exposure; and

WHEREAS, in March 2014, the City Council unanimously approved the adoption of the City's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), a product of extensive stakeholder involvement that provides actionable recommendations to enhance Austin's resiliency to the impacts of wildfire; and

WHEREAS, major stakeholders included Austin Water Utility, Austin Fire, COA Watershed Protection, COA Homeland Security, at least 5 surrounding ESD's, various Travis County Departments, City of Lakeway and Texas A&M Forestry Service; and

WHEREAS, the adopted CWPP is only a starting point in reducing wildfire risk and the CWPP identifies many activities yet to be accomplished to actually realize substantive wildfire risk reduction; and

WHEREAS, one major item the CWPP recommends is the development of Local CWPP's in high risk areas of the City; and

WHEREAS, these Local CWPP's may number in the hundreds, given this enormous scope of work, meaningful performance measures should be created to quantify progress and identify constraints that impede progress; and

WHEREAS, the CWPP recommends that Austin address wildfire risk through appropriately codified planning and regulatory measures that both complement existing land use and development principles, and maximize wildfire resiliency; and

WHEREAS, the International Code Council's WUI Code has been shown to be an effective mechanism for reducing wildfire risk when adopted as a component of comprehensive community wildfire planning; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of a WUI Code has been recommended twice in the last several years by the Public Safety Commission, on June 3rd 2013 and most recently on March 7th 2016; and

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Council establishes the goal of zero wildland fire related fatalities, promote the development of wildland fire defensible strategies, and support incorporation of these strategies within the City's existing regulatory framework to ensure communities and ecosystems are resilient to extreme fire behavior.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

Direct the City Manager, to evaluate the Wildland Urban Interface Code and explore its applicability as a potential mechanism for protecting life, property, and natural resources from the catastrophic effects of wildfire. Report back to Council within 90 days a plan and timeline for Wildland Urban Interface Code adoption. Also, include wildland urban interface risk reduction as a high priority within CodeNEXT and Imagine Austin ongoing project planning.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

The City Manager is directed to ensure that all high risk wildfire urban interface (WUI) areas within the City of Austin be assessed for the need for Local Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP). Where the need of a Local a CWPP is established, the City Manager is directed to plan and implement these CWPP's. The Local CWPP's will include a fuel mitigation plan for fuels both inside and outside the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ), an emergency wildfire urban interface (WUI) response pre-plan, and a citizen emergency WUI evacuation plan. The City Manager is directed to ensure city departments participate in implementing the recommendations in the City of Austin CWPP, and support implementing local level CWPP.


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

Direct the City Manager to provide a progress report every six months to the Public Safety Committee for the following important components of a comprehensive WUI risk reduction plan:

- Number of local CWPP's **completed and implemented** in high risk wildfire urban interface areas.
- Number of Local CWPP's **started** in high risk wildfire urban interface areas **but not completed**. Show percent of progress toward completion for each major plan component.
- Percent of high risk wildfire urban interface areas in which **identification of potential local CWPP planning areas is still ongoing**.
- Number of public presentations and home assessments provided.
- For high risk wildfire urban interface areas, provide the number of fuel mitigation activities, location of activities (identify local CWPP where applicable), type of fuel mitigation activities (mechanical or prescribed fire) and size of areas mitigated.
- Number of wildfire training contact hours by City Employees including AFD firefighters and number of employees receiving training. Break down by classroom hours, hands-on training hours conducted.

ADOPTED: May 12, 2016

ATTEST:



Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk