CITY OF RENO

Memorandum

DATE: October 30, 2025

TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Jackie Bryant, City Manager

FROM: David Cochran, Fire Chief

DEPT: Reno Fire Department

SUBJECT: FY23 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) – Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) / Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Progress Update

This memo serves to provide an update to the City Council on the progress made on the City of Reno's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), which is being developed under the FY 2023 Fire Prevention and Safety (FP&S) Grant awarded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This plan is a critical step toward reducing wildfire risks, improving interagency coordination, and increasing community preparedness and resilience.

Background

On September 25, 2024, the City Council formally accepted the FY 2023 FP&S Grant award from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), FEMA, in the amount of $244,054.94. These funds were granted to the Reno Fire Department (RFD) to conduct a city-wide wildfire risk assessment and to develop an updated Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). A 5% in-kind match, totaling $12,202.75, was committed by the City as a requirement of the grant.

On December 11, 2024, the Council awarded a contract for CWPP development to SWCA Environmental Consultants, a firm experienced in environmental planning and wildfire mitigation. The 2026 CWPP will serve as an update to the City's original 2005 CWPP, aligning with current wildfire science, risk conditions, and best practices in fire-adapted community planning.

Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Overview

The CWPP is a product of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003, which empowers local communities to engage directly with state and federal agencies in wildfire mitigation planning.

CWPPs play a crucial role in determining where and how fuels reduction projects are prioritized and provide a foundation for seeking federal and state mitigation funding.

The 2026 CWPP will:

- Assess and map wildfire risks to communities and infrastructure within the City of Reno.
- Define Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) zones — areas where human development meets or intermixes with wildland vegetation.
- Recommend strategic fuel treatments, emergency preparedness actions, and community outreach initiatives.
- Provide homeowners and neighborhoods with specific strategies to reduce structural ignitability.
- Support integrated fire management planning across municipal, tribal, state, and federal jurisdictions.

Progress to Date

Core Team Engagement

- In January 2025, RFD initiated monthly coordination meetings with SWCA to guide the CWPP's development.
- On March 12, 2025, RFD and SWCA hosted the first Core Team meeting with multi-agency stakeholders. Attendees included representatives from:
    - City of Reno Fire Department
    - Nevada Division of Forestry
    - U.S. Forest Service
    - Living With Fire Program
    - Fire Adapted Nevada
    - NV Energy
    - Truckee Meadows Fire and Rescue
    - Truckee Meadows Water Authority
    - City of Sparks Fire Department
    - Washoe County Emergency Management
    - Washoe County School District
    - Nevada Land Trust
    - Reno-Sparks Indian Colony
    - One Truckee River

This cross-sector Core Team is essential for ensuring coordination across jurisdictions and for integrating scientific data with local knowledge. During this meeting, the team worked to:

- Identify areas of concern and priorities for fire risk mitigation.
- Develop a shared vision for wildfire protection and response.
- Lay the groundwork for community engagement and data sharing.

On September 25, 2025, RFD and SWCA hosted the Second Core Team Meeting with Stakeholders. During the second meeting the team worked to:

- Provide input on the completed first draft of the CWPP.
- Develop strategies for public engagement.
- Plan for continued involvement between all Core Team agencies.

Risk Assessment Methodology

Using guidance from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1144, SWCA conducted on-the-ground risk assessments in early May. These assessments evaluate wildland fire ignition hazards around structures and inform community-level risk scoring.

- A total of 15 communities have been delineated in these assessments.
- Communities were defined using fire station service areas, zoning types, proximity to wildland fuels, and built environment characteristics.
- This approach ensures that risk scores are representative and not skewed by highly urban or highly rural outliers within a community.

Public Engagement

Public engagement has been a key component of the CWPP process. Community input has helped shape priorities, identify local concerns, and ensure that the strategies developed are grounded in the needs and values of those who live and work in the area. This collaborative approach strengthens community ownership and supports more effective wildfire risk reduction.

- Spring, 2025 Public Engagement Survey launched citywide.
    - Residents were invited to provide input on perceived wildfire risks, preparedness needs, and values at risk such as schools, natural areas, and critical infrastructure.

On May 29, 2025, RFD and SWCA hosted the First Public Meeting held at City Council Chambers from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

- Community members learned about the CWPP process, shared input, and reviewed preliminary findings.

Upcoming Milestones and Public Engagement

- **Fall 2025:**
    - The CWPP public review period is scheduled from November 3, 2025, through December 3, 2025.
    - RFD and SWCA will host a public webinar which will be live on November 19, 2025 at 7:00pm
    - A final Core Team meeting will be held to incorporate public and stakeholder feedback.

- **January 2026:**
    - Final 2026 City of Reno CWPP will be published and posted to the City's website.