

Priority Goal 2: Improve Community Resilience to Wildfires

Wildfire resilience is crucial for San Diego due to the escalating threat posed by extreme dry conditions, increasing vegetation, and frequent Santa Ana winds. Climate change is further intensifying wildfire risks, resulting in longer and increasingly unpredictable fire seasons. The RAB selected wildfire resilience to align with its mission of enhancing public safety and protecting vulnerable communities. Wildfires impact multiple sectors—housing, energy, public health, air, water, and infrastructure—requiring cross-sector collaboration. By addressing this urgent issue, the RAB positions itself as a key convener for solutions that strengthen community resilience in the face of increasing wildfire risks.

Objective	Action	Implementation Approach (New)
Identify and prioritize cross cutting topics relevant to understanding the immediate, near-, and long-term risk of wildfire to San Diego’s residents, businesses, natural resources, biodiversity, and infrastructure	Topic areas may encompass public outreach, emergency response, cultural burning, environmental justice considerations, brush management, air quality and public health impacts, wildland-urban interface, (planning to protect vulnerable populations) and risk to the electric grid and built infrastructure.	Fact Finding and Presentations
	Invite presentations from City departments and other governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, academia, Tribal Nations, impacted communities, and other key stakeholders. City entities may include: Fire-Rescue Department, Office of Emergency Services, Parks & Recreation Department, Economic Development Department, and Public Utilities Department. The RAB will incorporate these presentations into its regular meeting agenda.	Fact Finding and Presentations
Evaluate existing policies, programs, plans, resources, and research	Identify and review City and non-City research, plans, and policies most relevant to determining the scope of, and addressing, wildfire risk and impacts.	Fact Finding and Presentations
	Pinpoint key strengths, resources, gaps, redundancies, and weaknesses in existing City and inter-agency policies, plans, programs, and outreach strategies.	Deliberation and Additional Research

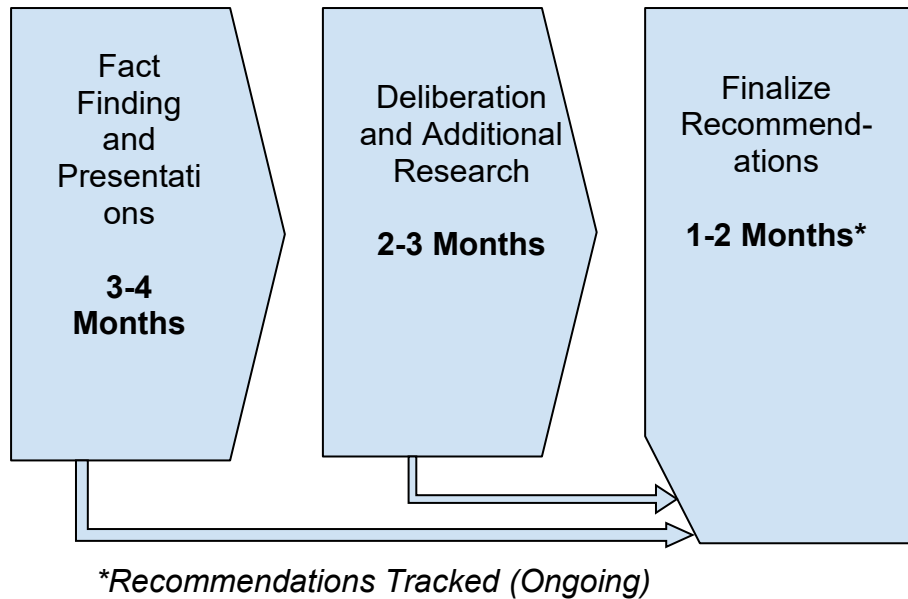
Priority Goal 2: Improve Community Resilience to Wildfires

Objective	Action	Implementation Approach (New)
	Determine feasible solutions to identified gaps and weaknesses, and options for leveraging existing strengths and resources.	Deliberation and Additional Research
Advise City leadership on needed improvements	Adopt and present to [Environment Committee] a report and set of recommendations to improve San Diego's resiliency to wildfires.	Format for Decision Making and Recommendation

The **Implementation Approach** lays out steps that the RAB can take to address this complicated topic.

- The first two objectives are implemented by:
 - *Fact Finding and Presentations*: 3-4 months of research, presentations, community workshops/online surveys to reach out to interested parties and stakeholders.
 - *Deliberation and Additional Research*: 2-3 months of additional research and discussions, as determined by the full Resiliency Advisory Board.
- The third objective requires a *Format for Decision Making and Recommendation* by deciding at an ongoing point during each presentation and discussion:
 - Is enough information present to develop and/or refer recommendations to the final report?
 - Are additional questions, presentations, and/or guests needed?









Priority Goal 2: Improve Community Resilience to Wildfires



The Wildfire Ad-Hoc Subcommittee recommends the use of a quadrant approach as a tool and structured framework to show the various participants in the process of keeping the City safe from wildfire risks. The Quadrant Approach spotlights responsibilities across sectors. We suggest this approach for two reasons: 1) during Fact Finding and Presentations, to facilitate clear understanding of present roles and responsibilities. 2) to also enable the Board to consider respective strengths, weaknesses and gaps, leading to potential recommendations. Each quadrant includes preliminary categories of key stakeholders.

Quadrant Approach to Wildfire Resilience	
<p> Disaster Prevention & Policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoning & planning Climate adaptation <p>Key agencies involved: San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) CAL FIRE County Fire Tribal Governments</p>	<p> Emergency Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency alerts Fire agencies <input type="checkbox"/> Rapid response Suppression efforts <p>Key agencies involved: San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD) CAL FIRE County Fire</p>

Priority Goal 2: Improve Community Resilience to Wildfires

<p> Community Preparedness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Public education  Evacuation drills  Grassroots engagement <p>Key groups involved: San Diego Fire Department Fire Safe Councils Homeowners' Associations (HOAs) Neighborhood groups & environmental organizations CERT NGOs Schools</p>	<p> Private Sector Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">  Funding incentives  Infrastructure safety  Insurance access <p>Key partners: San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) Insurance companies Technology firms</p>
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Recommendations of Options for Fact Finding and Presentations Phase (3-4 Months)

Recognizing the limited timeframe of the committee, that any approach or focus could be taken and result in significant time. In order to help potentially focus the topic, these are options proposed by the Wildfire Ad-Hoc Subcommittee fitting into the approach established.

The full Resiliency Advisory Board could agree, add, modify, or re-prioritize options. Given the complexity and timeframe, it could be best to start with one area and re-visit other options at a later time.

Regulation Framework: General Plan Safety Element Update.

(Requested at February meeting, planned for March and April meetings)

City's current status and overview of updates required to Safety Element of the General Plan for Senate Bill (SB) 99 (2019), Assembly Bill (AB) 747 (2019), and AB 1409 (2021).

Regulation Framework: Implementing State Wildfire Resilience Mandates

Governor Newsom's executive order on wildfire resilience and local implementation ensuring San Diego aligns with evolving state mandates.

The **Resiliency Advisory Board (RAB)** will provide input on policy and implementation to the **City of San Diego (City)** in aligning local wildfire resilience efforts with evolving state mandates. Key focus areas include:

- **Wildfire Safety Zone Mapping & Risk Assessment:** Reviewing **CalFire's updated Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) maps** and their impact on land use, emergency planning, and insurance availability.
- **Zone 0 Defensible Space Implementation (AB 3074):** Monitoring **CalFire's**

Priority Goal 2: Improve Community Resilience to Wildfires

forthcoming guidelines for enforcing **Zone 0 defensible space (a 5-ft ember-resistant buffer around structures)** and evaluating opportunities to support property owner compliance, education, and potential incentive programs.

- **Homeowner Preparedness & Insurance Impacts:** Supporting **San Diego Fire-Rescue Department's (SDFD) new Home Risk Assessment Program (launching July 1, 2025)**, which will provide residents with **personalized defensible space inspections** and guidance on **fire hardening and insurance considerations**.
- **Community Education & Stakeholder Engagement:** Collaborating with local Fire Safe Councils and homeowner associations on **AB 3074 educational sessions**, highlighting **insurance industry trends, wildfire mitigation measures, and personal risk assessments**.

Optional Speakers if more information is needed:

- **San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD)** – Home Risk Assessments, defensible space guidance.
- **CalFire** – Wildfire hazard mapping, AB 3074 implementation.
- **City of San Diego Planning Department** – Land use, zoning, and General Plan Safety Element updates.
- **Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation** – Statewide wildfire resilience policy and local adaptation strategies.

Infrastructure and Built Environment: Energy & Grid Resilience

The City depends heavily on the resilience of its electrical grid to protect, defend and restore areas facing wildfire risk. State-mandated utility wildfire mitigation efforts provide a framework within which to examine the breadth of these efforts, and a springboard for discussion of what future electrical system resilience might look like. Background materials will be provided in advance of RAB presentations on such topics as:

- State-mandated Wildfire Mitigation Planning, present and future;
- Alternative approaches to [ensuring community grid resilience](#), especially in communities near the wildfire-urban interface and grid-edge;

Potential speakers:

- [California Wildfire Safety Advisory Board](#), Chair Jessica Block, Asst Director, WIFIRE Lab, UCSD
- Wildfire mitigation experts from [CA Office of Energy Infrastructure Safety](#)
- Technical experts on community energy resilience: Clean Coalition; Protect Our Communities Foundation; Center for Community Energy; Lorenzo Kristov; Clean Coalition, others.

Priority Goal 2: Improve Community Resilience to Wildfires

Natural Landscape Management

- Review of current practices of brush management within the region, including the city's brush management contract(s)
- Review of regulations impacting brush management, such as: the Multiple Species Conservation Program, Endangered Species Act (Federal and California).
- [California tribe enters first-of-its-kind agreement with the state to practice cultural burns](#)
 - Related program underway in San Diego County: Climate Science Alliance
 - [Indigenous Fire, Forestry, and Fuels Crew](#).
- [Climate Conversations: Urban Fires](#) (see linked resources, and scroll down for the recording)

Potential speakers: Community Forest Advisory Board, City's Multiple Species Conservation Program staff, Technical Experts or other governmental organizations (Federal, State, Tribal, County)

Community Outreach Program

Build upon information learned and develop an outreach program that focus on the interaction between the Climate Equity Index with Very-High Fire Areas in the maps released in March 2025. <https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/prbr210715a-item201b.pdf>

Program would need to be developed further and resourced from The Resilience Advisory Board or Staff. Approach could include:

Outreach to community groups, fire safe councils, Homeowners Associations, and other interested groups to identify concerns, needs, and areas of further study or connection for the Committee.

Community Workshops/Off-site Special Meeting: Hold targeted sessions in vulnerable communities to gather firsthand experiences and concerns.

Online Surveys and Feedback Platforms: Provide accessible channels for public input.

Focus Groups: Organize smaller, targeted groups to dive deeper into specific issues (e.g., evacuation planning, air quality concerns).