



**CITY OF HEALDSBURG
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA STAFF REPORT**

MEETING DATE: June 17, 2024

SUBJECT: 2024 Utility Wildfire Mitigation Plan for Adoption and Subsequent Filing with the State Wildfire Safety Advisory Board

PREPARED BY: Terry Crowley, Utilities Director

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE(S):

Maintain and Improve Infrastructure and Facilities
Maintain and Enhance Public Health and Safety

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Adopt a Resolution approving the 204 Utility Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) and verifying the WMP's compliance with state codes.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/OUTREACH:

The City's currently adopted and approved Utility Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) is posted on the City's website along with other information regarding wildfire preparedness. This plan includes an outline for community engagement ahead of, during and following weather events that may require the City, for public safety reasons, to turn off power.

BACKGROUND:

The City owns and operates an electric distribution system for the benefit of the community. In doing so, the primary goals of the City's Electric department are safety and reliability. Given California's history of catastrophic wildfires, California's State Public Utility Code requires utilities to prepare wildfire mitigation plans if "the utility's overhead electrical lines and equipment are in an area that has a significant risk of wildfire resulting from those electrical lines and equipment." A portion of Healdsburg's overhead electrical lines and equipment are within California Public Utilities Commission ("CPUC") Tier 2 wildfire threat areas.

In 2019 City staff prepared Healdsburg's first Utility Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP), which was adopted by the City Council and reviewed by a qualified independent evaluator. Per the State's Public Utilities Code, annually the City must update the Utility Wildfire Mitigation Plan ("WMP") and present the WMP to the City Council. The 2024 WMP has been prepared and now needs reviewed and adopted by Healdsburg's City Council.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS:

In compliance with state code, City staff reviewed and updated the 2023 WMP and created the 2024 WMP. As required by law, the WMP considers a range of topics to mitigate the potential threat of wildfires ignited by utility equipment. The areas of consideration are intended to help guide the development of various utility programs, standards, policies, and procedures that when implemented have a measurable effect at lowering the risk of utility caused wildfires. The Plan is iterative by design and the annual updates allow for the incorporation of new and evolving utility best practices.

There are several specific sections required to be considered and/or addressed to mitigate utility caused wildfires. These items include the following:

- A. Wildfire Mitigation Plan Areas of Responsibility
- B. Objective of the Wildfire Mitigation Plan
- C. Overview of Preventative Strategies and Programs
- D. Key Performance Metrics
- E. Previous metrics related to wildfire
- F. Disabling Reclosers & De-Energization
- G. Customer Notification Procedures
- H. Vegetation Management Program
- I. Wildfire Inspection Program
- J. Wildfire Risks
- K. Identification of Areas of Higher Risk
- L. Methodology for Identifying Enterprise-Wide Safety and Wildfire Risks
- M. Process for restoring power after de-energization
- N. Wildfire Process & Procedure

Included with the first WMP, the City developed five metrics to track to measure and evaluated the effectiveness of the WMP. These measures included ignition caused by utility equipment, inspection records and maintenance, vegetation maintenance, overhead equipment failures, and outage response time. The 2024 WMP discusses each metric and actionable measures to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires. The table below summarizes the discussion within the WMP.

METRIC	OUTCOME
1: Ignition Caused by Utility Equip.	No utility-caused ignitions of vegetation were caused by City utility equipment during calendar year 2023.
2: Inspection Records & Maintenance	All inspections were completed prior to July 2023 with priority maintenance being completed within three months of the inspections.
3: Vegetation Maintenance	The City's tree contractor completed, and City staff confirmed clearance of, the annual trimming before June 30, 2023 with a new 12-month contract started on July 1, 2023.
4: Overhead Equipment Failures	No overhead equipment failures, effecting the primary system occurred during calendar year 2023.

5: Outage Response Time	Outage response time (time to first switching operation) ranged from a low of 20-minutes to high of 184-minutes with an average response time of 94-minutes. The wider range and higher average time are the result of one primary level outage occurring after hours. To lower this average pre-staging of qualified electrical workers may be needed.
6: System Reliability Indices	Systemwide reliability indices track the reliability of the City’s electric system and over time can indicate trends in either improving or worsening reliability. As unplanned outages indicate a potential for arcing and therefore the starting of a utility caused wildfire. Reliability indices for past calendar years are included within the WMP.

The 2024 WMP is attached to this staff report as Exhibit A. It includes policies and procedures the City has had in place for many years as well as some new suggestions to be implemented over the coming season. The WMP includes procedures such as blocking of reclosing devices during red-flag warnings, installation and use of fire safe equipment (CAL-FIRE approved), plans to de-energize certain areas of the City’s electric system should the need arise during periods of low humidity and abnormally high winds, and the need to increase the amount of undergrounding within the fire-threat areas.

Completion of the 2024 WMP and adoption during a regularly scheduled public meeting complies with the requirements of the State’s code. On an annual basis the WMP will continue to be reviewed and revised as necessary to improve upon the City’s ability to mitigate the risk of utility caused wildfires. Additionally, if staff determines the need to implement new procedures or methods to reduce the risk of utility caused wildfires those procedures and methods will be implemented prior to the next annual review.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP:

By their nature, uncontrolled wildfires release an immense amount of greenhouse gases (“GHG”) into the atmosphere. The WMP is intended to reduce the risk of wildfires and therefore will have a positive impact upon the environment by lessening the potential of wildfire and associated GHG emissions.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council could choose not to approve the WMP and provide further direction to staff.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No additional budget appropriations are necessary for the recommended actions. Programs and staffing identified within the WMP are already contemplated by the Electric Fund’s approved budget. If new capital improvement project or policies are required, staff will bring those projects and policies back to the City Council at a later date.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) and Title 14, the California Code of Regulations, Section 15378(b) (2), continued administrative actions do not qualify as a “Project”. Therefore, no further CEQA or environmental review is required.

ATTACHMENT(S):

Resolution

2024 Wildfire Mitigation Plan Final Draft