



AGENDA REPORT

City Council

DATE:	January 21, 2025
TO:	Mayor Martinez and Members of the City Council
FROM:	Councilmember Soheila Bana
Subject:	Request for Richmond Fire, including Emergency Services, Public Works, Police, and City Attorney's Office to present on Wildfire Mitigation and Public Disaster Preparedness
FINANCIAL IMPACT:	There is no immediate fiscal impact. This report aims to gather critical information and clarify successes and opportunities for improvement related to fire prevention and disaster preparedness efforts, including potential updates to the Richmond Municipal Code to inform potential future budget allocations.
PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:	None
STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE:	A request for Richmond Fire-Emergency Services Department, Public Works, and Police Department to provide a comprehensive and transparent update on Richmond's action plan for effective vegetation management, fuel reduction, and maintaining clear emergency access routes to assist in mitigating wildfire threats to further enhance disaster preparedness.
RECOMMENDED ACTION:	DIRECT staff to provide a summary assessment of the City's and community's current preparedness for public disasters, it should briefly highlight key successes, gaps, challenges, and vulnerabilities and offer practical recommendations for resource allocation and actions needed to improve disaster preparedness, mitigation, and emergency response, including updates to the Richmond

	Municipal Code in advance of the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget - Councilmember Soheila Bana (510-620-6743).
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DISCUSSION:

The recent devastation caused by the wildfires in Los Angeles County, which tragically claimed over 10 lives and destroyed thousands of homes, underscores the increasing wildfire threat in our region. Scientific experts warn that Northern California faces similar risks. "The conditions fueling Southern California fires are a perfect storm of dry fuels, warm weather, and high winds, all of those factors are part of Northern California's climatology, too, and they can and will align someday up here again."

Given the regional and State's vulnerability to earthquake and wildfire risks, proactive measures are essential to ensuring public safety. This includes effective vegetation management, fuel reduction, and maintaining clear emergency access routes to mitigate wildfire threats. Consistent weed abatement enforcement on public and private properties and ensuring fire engine accessibility to high-risk areas must be a priority. In addition, to the extent feasible, the associated costs to the City and homeowners.

Additionally, raising community awareness and preparedness through collaboration with community-based organizations is crucial. Residents must understand the significance of Red Flag days and emergency alerts and the importance of taking personal responsibility for prevention, preparedness, and post-disaster recovery efforts.

Finally, California law designates local law enforcement as the authority responsible for managing evacuations during public disasters. Ensuring adequate staffing and comprehensive evacuation preparedness is critical to protecting lives during a wildfire.

In advance of the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget, this report requests that Richmond Fire, including- Emergency Services, Public Works, Police, and City Attorney's Office, provide a comprehensive and transparent update on Richmond's action plan for effective vegetation management, fuel storage and reduction, and maintaining clear emergency access routes to assist in mitigating wildfire threats to further enhance disaster preparedness, and outline areas of the Richmond Municipal Code that may require updates. Given the [increasing threat of catastrophic wildfires](#), it is imperative that the City Council remains well-informed and takes proactive steps to strengthen the City's emergency readiness.