

Revisiting Leading Ideas from the County and Community

- Staffing; vegetation management lead: This lead would provide central coordination, outreach and education, and leadership of vegetation management initiatives across departments/agencies and in coordination with community partners, such as Sonoma RCD or Fire Safe Sonoma. This lead entity would also be responsible for lobbying and legislative efforts for County vegetation management priorities and applying for related funding.
- Countywide program Environmental Impact Report (EIR): Large-scale vegetation and/or forest management requires a comprehensive review of potential environmental impacts in a number of categories, including biological resources, cultural resources, greenhouse gas emissions and hydrology. A program EIR analyzes the potential impacts of a series of similar vegetation management activities or geographies such that subsequent environmental reviews can be streamlined or avoided. Because a program EIR can take substantial time to complete, it is important to begin this process as soon as feasible.
- Implementation of vegetation management projects in recently burned areas: Taking advantage of terrain that has already been burned affords the opportunity to continue vegetation management of that particular area, including reducing the potential for a severe reburn and ensuring tree regeneration. Minimizing erosion and retaining enough forest structure for wildlife are additional concerns of recently burned areas, which have occurred across County Regional Parks and on Ag + Open Space lands.
- Expansion of County chipping capacity: The County's residential defensible space chipping service is driven by property owner requests for service; staff consistently heard from community stakeholders that they would like to see expanded chipper capacity, as the program is frequently oversubscribed. An additional truck, chipper and associated maintenance would help to expand the program. Additionally, Regional Parks needs a self-propelled tracked chipper to effectively handle tree debris from its parks.
- Funding for youth crews: Sonoma Water, Regional Parks, Transportation & Public Works, and UC Cooperative Extension have hired youth crews to conduct vegetation management through organizations such as Youth Ecology Corps (administered through Human Services Department), Conservation Corps North Bay, and Circuit Rider (Center for Social and Environmental Stewardship). These programs provide paid work experience and a pathway to move into regular jobs at the County or at local companies.
- Outreach and education: Clear, consistent guidance on vegetation management and effective communication of that guidance is cited as a consistent need at the local, community level.
- Vegetation management special needs assessment program: This new program would provide assistance to disabled and elderly property owners for compliance with defensible space requirements.
- Purchase of parcels for green breaks: This forward-looking initiative involves working with willing sellers to purchase parcels suitable for integration in multi-benefit green breaks, a largescale approach to fire mitigation. This is item # NR 2.2.8 in the Recovery and Resiliency Framework.
- Community grants for vegetation management: Community organizations have provided a wide range of suggestions on how they could utilize funding for vegetation management

Attachment 1

related uses, including grant matching, enhancement of educational and vocational training programs, and capacity building (e.g., hiring another forester). This allocation could be specifically dedicated to community organizations.

Additionally, Permit Sonoma is awaiting award notice of their \$50M grant application, “Wildfire Resilient Sonoma County – Adaptation in an Era of Megafires, “ to FEMA’s Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) grant program, which would require a 25%, or \$12.5M, local match.