

## Alta Town Council

### Staff Report



**To:** Town Council

**From:** Chris Cawley, Assistant Town Administrator

**Re:** Community Wildfire Protection Plan, State requirements for local participation in wildfire preparedness and mitigation

**Date:** April 5, 2019

**Attachments:** Alta CWPP

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#### **Background:**

In 2017, the State of Utah adopted Utah's Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy (the Strategy), created pursuant to legislation allowing the state to provide financial assistance to local governments in suppressing and recovering from catastrophic wildfires, pending a local government entering into an agreement with the State for the local government to meet an annual financial Participation Match (PM). The Town entered into such an agreement in 2017, and annually, the town must commit to a PM of \$1437. This can be met through actions that support *prevention, preparedness, and mitigation* of wildfires in Alta. The PM can be met in-kind, and in previous years, our membership in Unified Fire Authority (UFA) and our commitment to develop a Community Wildfire Preparedness Plan (CWPP) have been accepted as the substance of our PM.

#### **Alta's Community Wildfire Protection Plan:**

Our CWPP is based on a template provided by the State Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands (FFSL) for communities in Urban-Wildland Interface areas to convene community stakeholders and partner agencies to evaluate wildfire risks and plan to address those risks. It was developed by staff in close partnership with staff from FFSL and UFA, and a community meeting held in October of 2018 to kick-off the CWPP development process was attended by Alta residents, and by representatives from numerous other agencies including the US Forest Service.

*PART I: COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION* contains information about developed property in Alta, community stakeholders, and utilities. *PART II: RISK ASSESSMENT* contains information about financial values at risk in Alta, the history of wildfire in Alta, environmental factors that affect wildfire risk, and the results of the Utah Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal (UWRAP), a technical assessment of environmental values and wildfire history in similar environments which provides a somewhat coarse, but

rigorously analyzed description of wildfire risk in Alta. This assessment is part of what is used to determine Alta's PM. PART III: RISK REDUCTION GOALS is the most important element of the document; it is where staff has identified a series of projects that can be undertaken to meet Alta's PM in partnership with various partner agencies, community groups, and local neighborhoods and businesses.

The CWPP is not actually a part of the State requirement for local governments to participate in wildfire risk mitigation, and it does not necessarily need to be completed to any specific standard. It does not need to be formally approved by the town council, but it should be acknowledged by the community and promoted as a foundation for Alta's local wildfire readiness posture, and ideally, the mayor should sign the document to signify the town's cooperation in development of the plan. And, it will need to be approved by FFSL, but it has been developed in close partnership with FFSL and our liason with FFSL for this project has indicated it is likely to be approved as written.

### **Town Council Action**

No formal action is required of the Alta Town Council with regard to the CWPP. The projects identified in Part III largely do not entail any direct expenses beyond staff time. The town council is free to recommend changes to the plan, recommend additional projects, and/or take a voice vote to support the CWPP as written.