

## **Northstar Fire Department Frequently Asked Questions About Measure U**

### **What area does Northstar Fire Department serve?**

The Northstar Fire Department was established in 1972, and provides wildfire protection, community risk reduction and emergency response services to the Wildfire Prevention Zone of the Northstar Community Services District (NCS D).

The Wildfire Prevention Zone is the portion of NCS D within the unincorporated area of Placer County, encompassing approximately 1,846 acres.

### **What is the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) and how was it developed?**

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is a wildfire planning tool used to reduce or eliminate the loss of life, property and resources caused by a wildfire. Northstar Fire Department's original CWPP was adopted in 2005 and provided a scientific assessment of the wildfire threats in the community and strategies for addressing those threats.

Northstar Fire Department recently collaborated with the community to update the CWPP. The Department worked closely with the general public, major private landowners, local fire agencies, regional government, and the state and federal agencies whose properties or jurisdictions impact this plan. Public meetings were held to communicate this methodology as well as to solicit public input.

The updated CWPP released in May 2021 accounts for the work that has already been done to mitigate wildfire threats and provides an expanded and updated plan on the risks that still need to be addressed to help keep the community safer from wildfire.

### **What are some of the wildfire threats identified in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan?**

The CWPP defines a precise fuels management (also known as vegetation management) program and addresses the concerns of the general public regarding wildfires. The CWPP takes into account the climate, topographical factors and forest conditions, and outlines the high priority needs to reduce the risk of wildfire, including removing dead and diseased trees and clearing dry brush throughout surrounding forests. These materials create serious fire hazards and need to be removed in an environmentally responsible way.

Additionally, as wildfire seasons continue to become more destructive, Northstar needs to continue proactively protecting against wildfire emergencies, including maintaining fire-safe evacuation routes and improving emergency warning systems.

### **How does Northstar Fire Department plan to address the needs identified in the Community Wildfire Protection Plan?**

Since the CWPP's inception, the Northstar Fire Department has treated 1,288 acres of land to significantly decrease the threat from wildfire in and around the Northstar community, but there is still more work that needs to be done.

However, without an additional funding source, Northstar Fire Department does not have the resources to address the wildfire prevention needs outlined in the updated CWPP. That's why on June 28, the Northstar Community Services District Board placed a wildfire prevention parcel tax measure on the November 2 ballot to provide a stable source of local funding for wildfire prevention efforts and ensure that the Northstar Fire Department can fully implement the CWPP.

### **What programs would Measure U support?**

Measure U would provide locally-controlled funding that could:

- Remove dry brush, dead trees and fire hazards, to reduce wildfire risk and promote forest and watershed health
- Provide vegetation management around neighborhoods and critical infrastructure
- Improve evacuation routes
- Maintain and add firebreaks where needed to prevent the spread of wildfire
- Provide homeowners with easy and inexpensive disposal options for pine needles and green waste, including Green Waste Dumpster rental rebates and 5 annual curbside pickups
- Provide matching funds to landowners for fire prevention compliance work

### **How do I know funds from the measure would be used responsibly?**

Measure U includes the following fiscal accountability protections:

- All money raised by the measure would be spent to help lower the risk of wildfire within the Northstar community
- No funds could be taken away by the State
- An independent citizens' oversight committee would ensure funds are spent as promised
- An exemption from the cost of the measure is available for low-income property owners
- No funds could be used to treat new developments
- The measure would automatically expire after 10 years and could not be renewed without voter approval

### **How much does Measure U cost?**

The measure will cost property owners up to \$219 per parcel, per year for 10 years, to provide approximately \$450,000 in annual, local funding for wildfire prevention. Northstar Fire Department expects that this local funding source would enable them to complete the necessary wildfire prevention projects in seven years. At that point the tax rate would likely be lowered to only provide funding for the wildfire prevention maintenance work needed to keep the community safe.

### **How long would Measure U be in place?**

If approved, the measure would automatically expire after 10 years and could not be renewed without voter approval.

### **Will any exemptions be available from the cost of the measure?**

Yes, a low-income property owner exemption is available to ensure that this measure is not a burden to local homeowners on fixed or limited incomes.

### **Can funds from Measure U be used on new developments?**

No. No funds from Measure U can be used for wildfire prevention work on new developments in the Northstar community.

**How will Measure U's matching funds program work?**

Matching funds will be provided to landowners of properties within the 300-foot fuel break areas for eligible fuels reduction compliance projects. After those projects are completed, matching funds will be made available to landowners for fuels reduction maintenance work on those properties.

The District will manage all aspects of any projects receiving matching funds, with 100% of matching funds dedicated to contracted project work.

**What is the 300-foot fuel break area?**

These are areas within 300 feet of priority evacuation routes, developed residential and commercial boundaries, and roads within the Northstar Wildfire Prevention Zone.

Prioritization for fuels reduction and wildfire prevention projects will be given to untreated areas within the 300-foot zone (compliance projects) and the evacuation routes until completed.

**How would Measure U affect insurance costs for residents?**

Measure U would provide dedicated local funding to address the wildfire threats facing Northstar residents and properties. These wildfire prevention projects, which include removing dry brush, dead trees and other fire hazards, and improving evacuation routes would help reduce the risk of wildfire in our area. Reducing the risk of wildfire could help increase the availability of fire insurance in our area.

**What is fuels management?**

Fuels management, or vegetation management, refers to the process of assessing and removing hazardous fuels, such as plants, brush, shrubs and trees to reduce the fire hazard and lessen the impacts of wildfire.

**What are hazardous fuels?**

Hazardous fuels are defined as any kind of living or dead vegetation that is combustible and can feed a wildfire. These include invasive, unnatural, fire-prone, non-native landscapes that carry fire to structures and homes. When vegetation or fuels, accumulate, they allow fires to burn hotter, faster and with greater intensity.

**When will Measure U be on the ballot?**

Measure U will appear on the November 2, 2021 special election ballot.

**Would I be able to vote on the measure?**

All registered voters living within the Northstar Fire Department Wildfire Prevention Zone are eligible to vote on the measure.

**What level of support will this measure need to pass?**

This measure needs to be supported by 66.7% of those who vote on it in order to pass.

**How can I register to vote or learn more about voting?**

You can register to vote at [www.registertovote.ca.gov](http://www.registertovote.ca.gov). To find out more about voting in this election, please contact the Placer County Registrar of Voters at (530) 886-5650.

**How can I find out more?**

To learn more, please contact Northstar Fire Chief Sean Bailey, at (530) 562-1212 Ext. 3 or [SBailey@northstarcsd.org](mailto:SBailey@northstarcsd.org). You can also visit [www.northstarcsd.org/wildfirepreventionmeasure](http://www.northstarcsd.org/wildfirepreventionmeasure) to learn more.