



## CITY OF GLENDALE, CALIFORNIA REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

### AGENDA ITEM

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Report: Annual Update to Glendale Water and Power's (GWP's) Wildfire Mitigation Plan.

1. Resolution adopting Annual Update to Glendale Water and Power's (GWP's) Wildfire Mitigation Plan.

### COUNCIL ACTION

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**Item Type:** Action Item

**Approved for** June 6, 2023 **calendar**

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The City of Glendale and Glendale Water & Power Department ("GWP") recognize the potential loss of property and human life posed by wildfires is a growing concern. GWP has developed, implemented, and maintained a formal Wildfire Mitigation Plan ("WMP" or "Plan") since 2019, as required by Senate Bill (SB) 901. The objective of GWP's Wildfire Mitigation Plan is to engineer, construct, maintain, and operate the GWP electric transmission and distribution system in a manner intended to minimize the risk of catastrophic wildfire caused by electrical lines and equipment.

GWP's Wildfire Mitigation Plan describes solutions to mitigate the risk of wildfires ignited by its electrical assets. The plan focuses on two elements - ignition and spread - which together lead to a wildfire. GWP's efforts prioritize mitigating electrical assets that could ignite a wildfire in high-wildfire danger service areas of the City of Glendale. The plan aims to reduce the likelihood of ignition by adopting a risk-based methodology to prioritize mitigation of electrical assets and equipment that could ignite a wildfire. It also details various potential solutions, such as enhanced vegetation management practices, expanded asset inspections, fast-acting automatic protection schemes, and more, to reduce the risk of igniting or spreading wildfires. Overall, the plan aims to comply with SB 901 and other related mandates and minimize the risk of igniting and spreading wildfires.

The City's Wildfire Mitigation Committee, comprised of representatives from different City departments, meets quarterly, or as deemed necessary by the Committee, to measure the effectiveness of the program and to discuss additional implementation strategies to further enhance the program's success. The Wildfire Mitigation Plan updates included herein are the result of the evolving strategies the City is implementing to reduce the risk of wildfires within the City of Glendale.

## COUNCIL PRIORITIES

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Infrastructure: GWP's Wildfire Mitigation Plan applies engineering and operational solutions to harden its electric distribution infrastructure and reduce the risk of wildfires.

## RECOMMENDATION

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Adopt the annual update to GWP's Wildfire Mitigation Plan.

## BACKGROUND

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California Senate Bill 102, SB 901, and Assembly Bill (AB) 111 require electric utilities to maintain a formal Wildfire Mitigation Plan ("WMP" or "Plan") that includes the utility's strategies and plans to mitigate against catastrophic wildfires. SB 901 requires publicly owned utilities, including GWP, to (1) prepare such a plan, (2) have the plan reviewed by a qualified independent evaluator to assess comprehensiveness, (3) present the plan in a noticed public meeting, (4) have the plan adopted, and (5) update the plan annually thereafter.

GWP's Plan considers and includes all required and necessary elements of SB 901 including, but not limited to, an accounting of responsibilities of persons responsible for executing the plan, a description of preventive strategies and programs to minimize the risk of its electrical equipment causing catastrophic wildfires, protocols for de-energizing portions of the electrical distribution system, and its plans for vegetation management.

### Highlights from the Plan:

1. The California Public Utility Commission (CPUC) wildfire threat maps were developed by CalFire to assess wildfire threat areas throughout California. 62% of the City of Glendale is within an elevated or extreme wildfire zone.
2. Glendale Fire Department's Vegetation Management Program (VMP) was developed to ensure buildings and structures maintain an adequate defensible space between structures and plans, brush or trees that could catch the structure on fire. Proper application of the VMP reduces the rate and intensity of fires if they were to ignite, which minimizes the risk of catastrophic wildfire spreading within the City.
3. The VMP aims to limit the rate and intensity of the spread, so GWP can focus its efforts on limiting ignitions where the VMP does not reach. This approach means GWP can focus its efforts on 0.47% of the City where GWP's electrical assets exist (versus 62% as identified by the CPUC) to minimize ignition source where a fire would be more likely to spread if it were to ignite.
4. GWP's wildfire mitigation efforts, pursuant to its Plan, will apply the most appropriate engineering and operational solutions depending upon the specific risks in each area: a solution that works well in one area may not be the correct solution elsewhere, so an engineering analysis will be applied to each area to ensure the most effective mitigation measures are applied.

5. Per SB 901, a third-party independent evaluator is needed every three years for the comprehensive review of the Plan. This year, staff updated this Plan comprehensively and contracted with Guidehouse Consulting, Inc., to review and assess the comprehensiveness of the Plan and incorporated the recommendations from the assessments in finalizing the Plan. The Guidehouse report confirms that GWP's Plan meets all regulatory requirements.
6. On April 12, 2023, the City's Wildfire Mitigation Committee Members, comprised of representatives from different City departments, had a meeting and prepared the 2023 annual update to the plan for City Council review and adoption.

## **ANALYSIS**

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The 2023 annual update to the Wildfire Mitigation Plan includes projects completed to mitigate the risk of wildfire, general statistics about GWP's service territory, and updates to the following sections:

### Objectives

- Program objective details and considerations including trends associated with global warming and climate change.
- Implementation of infrared and LIDAR imaging for the inspection of power facilities and vegetation management.
- Additional power line clearance tree trimming measures to clear vegetation from the communication level to the top of the pole.
- Outline strategies to engineer, construct, and operate the electric transmission and distribution system in a manner to minimize the risk of catastrophic wildfire caused by electrical lines and equipment.
- Improving the resiliency of GWP's energy generation and delivery infrastructure.

### Preventive Strategies and Programs

- Enhanced vegetation management practices.
- Expanded asset inspections.
- Fast-acting automatic protection schemes.
- Use of non-wood poles; Conduct advanced (radiographic) pole inspections.
- Increased wind loading calculation for poles in threat areas to increase integrity.
- Wider spacing on cross-arms; Modified construction standards in the Fire Treat Zone.
- Stronger, composite material cross arms. Cross-arms made of stronger, composite material.

### Operational Practices

- GWP prioritizes its capital investments in system hardening, operations, and maintenance (O&M) of the equipment. Ongoing inspection programs are in place to identify the facilities that are due for replacement.
- The plan to increase generation reliability by implementing more distributed generation by installing photovoltaic panels and battery storage on city-owned properties.

## STAKEHOLDERS/OUTREACH

Not applicable.

## FISCAL IMPACT

The proposed Wildfire Mitigation Plan has a fiscal impact on GWP Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget for FY 2023-24. Funding is available in the Electric Depreciation Fund to cover an anticipated \$50,000 in expenditures for the system hardening in FY 2023-2024. In addition, operational funds are allocated for the inspection program and tree trimming to increase the reliability.

Funds for the proposed plan have been included in the proposed budget for FY 2023-24 in the following account and amount:

Requesting Appropriation		
Amount	Account String	Funding Source
\$ 50,000	GL: 53300-5830-GWP-0020 PL: GWP00653AA	Electric Depreciation Fund
\$2,800,000	GL: 43110-5820-GWP-4660 Tree Trimming Contract #C106241A	Electric Revenue Fund
\$1,000,000	GL: 43110-5830-GWP-0020 PL: GWP00643AA	Electric Depreciation Fund

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This item is considered a ministerial activity and is not a project for the purposes of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and therefore, not subject to CEQA review.

## CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

Not applicable.

## ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1: Adopt the herein presented updated Wildfire Mitigation Plan, hereinafter known, and referred to as GWP's Wildfire Mitigation Plan - Updated 2023.

Alternative 2: Not authorize the requested action herein which will place the City in violation of SB 901.

Alternative 3: Consider any other alternative not proposed by staff.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

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**Prepared by:**

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**Approved by:**

Roubik R. Golanian, P.E., City Manager

## **EXHIBITS / ATTACHMENTS**

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Exhibit 1: Wildfire Mitigation Plan – Updated June 2023

Exhibit 2: Guidehouse Consulting, Inc.'s Evaluation