

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY (NOA) OF A RECIRCULATED DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT REPORT (RECIRCULATED DEIR) FOR THE REVISED DRAFT OAKLAND
VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN (REVISED DRAFT VMP) AND NOTICE OF
PUBLIC HEARING ON THE RECIRCULATED DEIR**

TO: All Interested Parties

SUBJECT: Notice of Availability (NOA) of a Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report (Recirculated DEIR) for the Revised Draft Oakland Vegetation Management Plan (Revised Draft VMP) and Notice of Public Hearing on the same.

LEAD AGENCY/PROJECT SPONSOR: The City of Oakland (City)

CEQA STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER: 2019110002

BACKGROUND: A DEIR was prepared for the initial Draft VMP and circulated for public review in November 2020. That document is referred to herein as the “prior 2020 DEIR.” In addition to comments received during the prior 2020 DEIR public review period, the Oakland Fire Department (OFD) received additional comments on the VMP from City representatives and the public. Since then, OFD revised the initial Draft VMP further to address this additional feedback. The City has prepared this Recirculated DEIR to evaluate the environmental impacts of changes made to the Revised Draft VMP since 2020.

The main revision in the Revised Draft VMP is to expand the vegetation management areas from 30 feet to 100 feet wide along roadsides in the City’s VHFHSZ, focused on removing or thinning dead and dying trees (not healthy trees) that are present on City-owned property. In addition, some of the maintenance standards have been revised to expand vegetation management activities around habitable structures to provide more defensible space around these structures. These updates to the Revised Draft VMP are considered “significant new information” that require recirculation under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

PROJECT LOCATION: The areas included within the Revised Draft VMP encompass City-owned parcels and the areas within 30 feet of the edge of roadsides located within the City’s Very High Wildfire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) as designated by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), and defined in Section 4904.3 of the Oakland Fire Code (Oakland Municipal Code Chapter 15.12). The Revised Draft VMP area also encompasses the area within 30-100 feet of the edge of roadsides in the City’s VHFHSZ, where dead and dying trees (as determined by a Certified Arborist, Licensed Forester, or Fire Safety Expert) are present on City-owned property and could strike the road if they fell.

Specifically, as shown in **Figure 1** (attached), the Revised Draft VMP area includes: 419 City-owned parcels, ranging in size from <0.1 acres to 235 acres and totaling 1,924 acres. Parcels have been divided into the following categories: urban and residential (51.2 acres), canyon areas (188.7 acres), ridgetop areas (130.2 acres), City park lands and open space (1,522.9), other areas (24.5 acres), and medians (6.1 acres). “Other areas” are developed City-owned properties in the Revised Draft VMP area that include fire stations (nos. 6, 7, 21, 25, and 28), City facilities (parking lots, police stations), paved areas, and parks and playgrounds (e.g., Montclair Park). The Revised Draft VMP also includes roadside areas along 308 miles of roadways within the City’s VHFHSZ, which includes surface and arterial streets, State Routes 13 and 24, and Interstate 580. The parks, recreational and open space areas discussed in the Revised Draft VMP are as follows: Beaconsfield Canyon, Garber Park, Dimond Canyon Park, Shepherd Canyon Park, Leona Heights Park, North Oakland Regional Sports Complex, Grizzly Peak Open Space, City Stables, Sheffield Village Open Space, Knowland Park and Arboretum, King Estates Open Space Park, Joaquin Miller Park, Tunnel Road Open Space, Marjorie Saunders Park, and Oak Knoll.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The City has determined that there are areas within Oakland that are at high risk of wildfire, and that vegetation management/fuels reduction will significantly reduce wildfire risk. The Revised Draft VMP outlines a framework for managing fuel loads and vegetation on City-owned properties and along roadways in the City’s VHFHSZ to reduce the likelihood of a catastrophic wildfire, such as the 1991 Oakland Hills Fire. As described in Section 9 of the Revised Draft VMP, the goal of fuel treatment is to alter the structure, composition, and spacing of retained vegetation to moderate potential fire behavior. Retained vegetation can reduce wind exposure, retain soil and surface fuel moisture, and reduce the potential for soil erosion. Implementation of the Revised Draft VMP would involve thinning, pruning, removal, and otherwise modification of trees and vegetation within the Revised Draft VMP area to reduce the likelihood of a wildfire occurring and to minimize/slow the spread of a wildfire, should one occur. The City has identified the following primary goals to guide preparation of the Revised Draft VMP and its implementation:

- Reduce wildfire hazard on City-owned land and along critical access/egress routes within the City’s designated VHFHSZ;
- Reduce the likelihood of ignitions and extreme fire behavior to enhance public and firefighter safety;
- Implement practices to avoid or minimize impacts to natural resources; and
- Maintain an active role in regional efforts to reduce wildfire hazard in the Oakland Hills.

The goals, objectives, and recommendations identified in the Revised Draft VMP are based on a combination of evaluating existing field conditions and current vegetation and fire risk conditions at City parcels; analyzing spatial datasets of environmental and wildfire risk factors in a Geographic Information System (GIS); conducting GIS-based analysis and modeling to identify areas that may be subject to extreme fire behavior; identifying locations within the Revised Draft VMP area that may present increased ignition potential or otherwise contribute to increased fire hazard; and receiving feedback and guidance from many stakeholders through various meetings, site visits, and written comments.

The Revised Draft VMP describes various vegetation management techniques that may be employed depending on site conditions, including hand labor, mechanical processes (e.g., mowing), herbicide use, and grazing.

Appropriate vegetation management techniques to be employed at a specific site would be identified by OFD personnel during annual workplan development. On an annual basis, OFD staff would conduct field assessments of vegetation conditions in the Revised Draft VMP area to guide development of such annual vegetation management work plans. These plans would identify specific treatment types, area or properties to be treated, implementation timing, and other monitoring and tracking needs.

The Revised Draft VMP also identifies best management practices (BMPs) to be implemented during vegetation management activities to reduce or avoid impacts to natural resources present in the Revised Draft VMP area.

PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD: The City invites comments on the Recirculated DEIR during a 45-day comment period that begins on September 20, 2023 and ends on November 4, 2023 at 5:00 PM.

The City prefers that written comments be submitted via email at:

DEIR-comments@oaklandvegmanagement.org. Please reference **Revised Draft VMP Recirculated DEIR Comments** in all correspondence.

Comments may also be submitted via mail to the following address:

Montrose Environmental
Attn: Ken Schwarz, Principal, Revised Draft VMP Recirculated DEIR
Comments
1 Kaiser Plaza, Suite 340
Oakland, CA 94612

Comments will also be received at the public meetings to be held as noticed below. Written comments submitted via e-mail and mail can be provided no later than **November 4, 2023 at 5:00 PM.**

DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY: The Recirculated DEIR and the Revised Draft VMP are available for review online at:

www.oaklandca.gov/projects/oakland-vegetation-management-plan.

The Recirculated DEIR is also available for review by the public during normal operating hours at the Oakland Fire Department office at 150 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza, Suite 3354, Oakland, CA 94612. If assistance accessing documents is needed, including documents incorporated by reference in the Recirculated Draft EIR, please contact the Oakland Fire Department, Fire Prevention Bureau at (510) 238-6353 or by email at MHunt@oaklandca.gov.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

The City Planning Commission will conduct a public meeting on the Recirculated DEIR for the Revised Draft VMP on **November 1, 2023 at 3:00 PM.**

For more information about how to participate in this meeting, please visit:
<https://www.oaklandca.gov/boards-commissions/planning-commission>

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW: A Recirculated DEIR was prepared for the Revised Draft VMP under the requirements of CEQA, pursuant to the Public Resources Code Section 21000 *et. seq.* The Recirculated DEIR analyzes potentially significant environmental impacts in the following categories: Aesthetics, Air Quality, Biological Resources, Geology, Greenhouse Gas Emissions/Global Climate Change, Hydrology and Water Quality, Recreation, and Transportation. Sections where the revisions to the Draft VMP did not affect the analysis in the prior 2020 DEIR have not been recirculated. The prior 2020 DEIR identified one significant and unavoidable environmental impact related to a temporary increase in noise levels that exceed local noise standards due to Revised Draft VMP activities.

The City of Oakland is hereby releasing this Recirculated DEIR finding it to be accurate and complete and ready for public review. Members of the public are invited to comment on the Recirculated DEIR and the Revised VMP. There is no fee for commenting, and all comments received will be considered by the City prior to preparing a final EIR and making a decision on the project. Comments on the Recirculated DEIR should focus on the revisions to the Revised Draft VMP and their environmental review in the Recirculated DEIR. Comments should focus on sufficiency of the Recirculated DEIR in discussing possible impacts on the physical environment of the updates to the Revised Draft VMP, ways in which potential adverse effects might be minimized, and alternatives to the project in light of the Recirculated DEIR's purpose to provide useful and accurate information about such factors.

Following the close of the public review period for the Recirculated DEIR, the City will prepare a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), incorporating and responding to (a) comments received during the circulation period for the prior 2020 DEIR, and (b) comments received during the recirculation period on the Recirculated DEIR., for consideration by the Planning Commission, at a date for which notice shall be

provided in the future. As required by CEQA (§21092.5), the FEIR, including written responses to the comments submitted by public agencies, will be provided to commenting agencies at least 10 days prior to certification, if the City determines that certification is appropriate after public review and comment. For further information, please contact Michael Hunt, at (510) 238-6353 or at mhunt@oaklandca.gov.

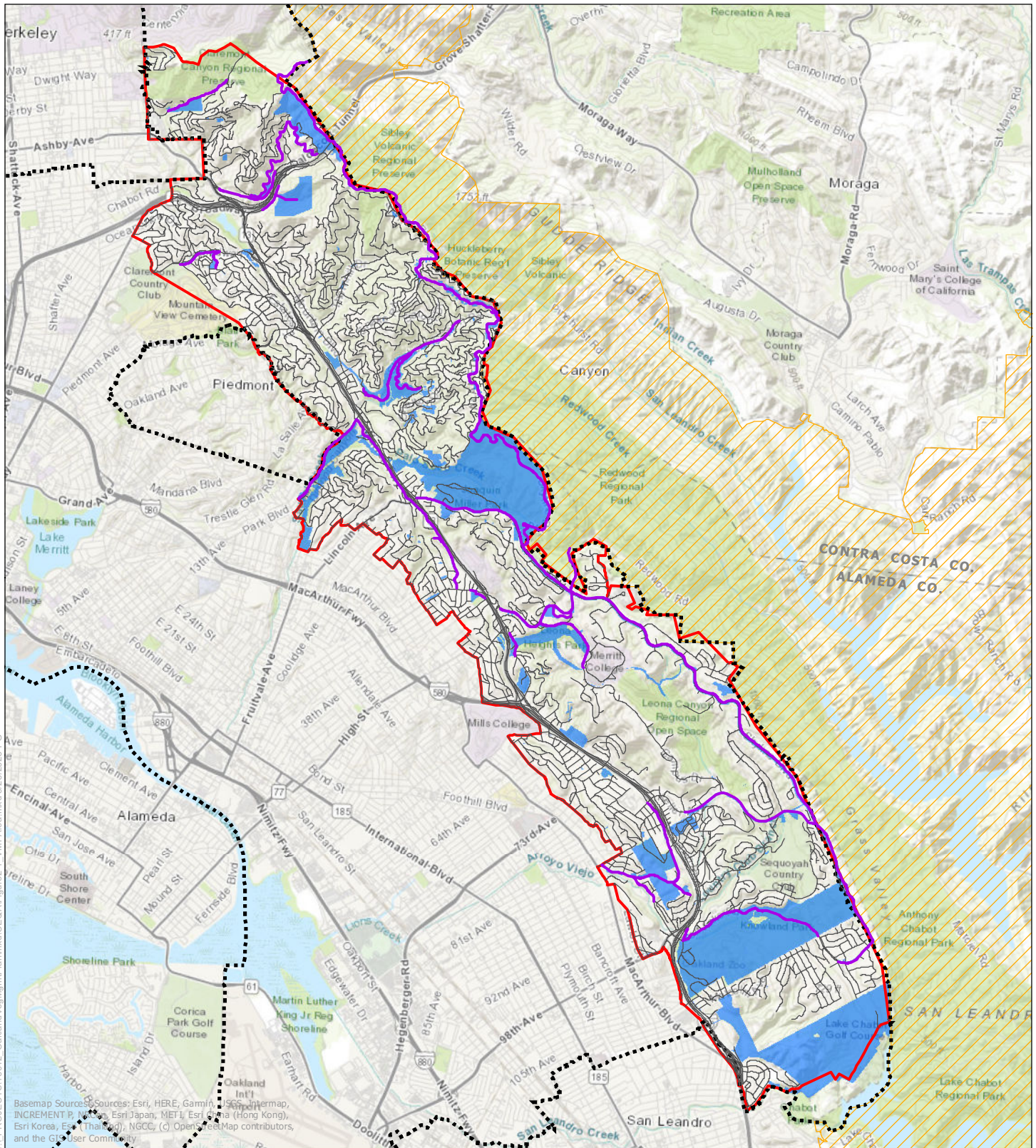
September 18, 2023


Edward Manasse (Sep 19, 2023 15:23 PDT)

EDWARD MANASSE
City of Oakland
Environmental Review Officer

Attachment:

Figure 1, Location Map



TL PROJECTS\16042 - OaklandVegMgmtPlan\mxd\CEA\Figure2-1_VMPArea.mxd 6/23/2023 8:00

Basemap Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, Intermap, INCREMENT P, NOAA, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri Korea, Esri (Thailand), NGCC, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Figure 1.
Revised Draft Vegetation Management Plan Area



Sources: City of Oakland 2017; CAL FIRE 2019




OVMP_RecirculatedDEIR_NOA_091823_v2

Final Audit Report


2023-09-19

Created:	2023-09-18
By:	Robin Hunter (robin@horizonh2o.com)
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