Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District

Strategic Plan

2010

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District has developed this strategic plan to guide the district over the next five years. The strategic planning process provided an opportunity for our Directors to clarify the District's mission, vision and expectations. The document should be viewed as a first step towards improving fire safety and emergency preparedness in our District. The plan shall be reviewed and updated anually to assure currency and allow for adaptation to changing circumstances. Further it should be understood that the specific action steps, costs, timelines and implementation priorities of the objectives stated in this plan shall be developed at a later date fy the responsible parties. The Sleepy Hollow Fire District has a proud history of ensuring that our community is provided with first rate fire emergency medical and emergency preparedness services delievered by a highly trained and professional staff of career and volunteer firefighers. The District looks forward to an even greater future as a result of this planning effort.

Frank Berto
President

MISSION

The mission of the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District is to safeguard our community through the delivery of professional, efficient and effective services protecting life, property and the environment.

VISION

It is our vision to be the leading Fire District in delivering the highest quaility and cost effective prevention, education and emergency response services.

DEMOGRAPHICS

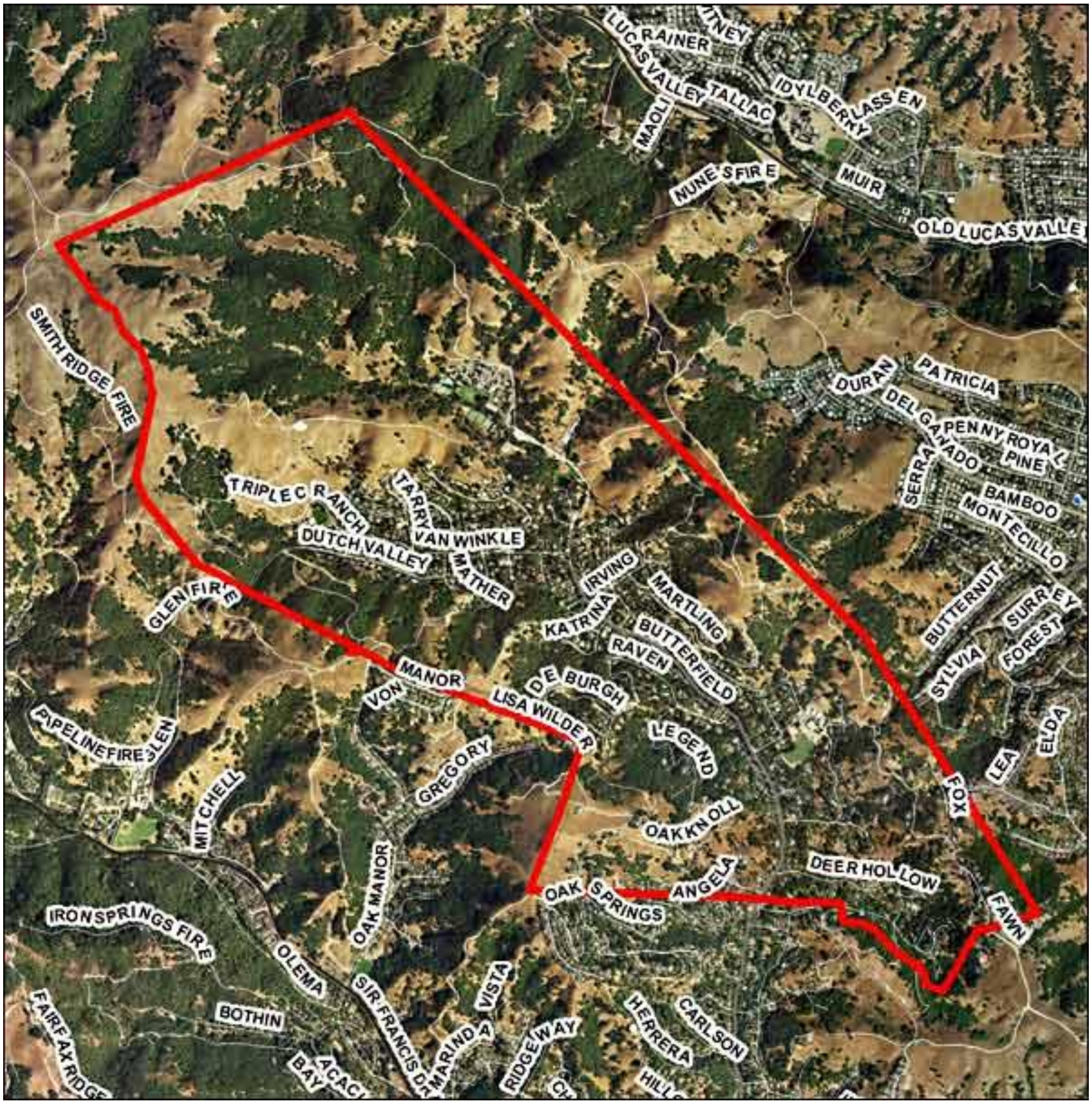
The following information about the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District is proficed to hlp put the strategic plan into context.   It provides a framework to help illustrate the size and scope of services provided to the District.

Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District

Number of Households
Sleepy Hollow: 790
The Alameda: 80

2010 Budget
$1,044,357

Sleepy Hollow Map



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The following 5 initiatives are the foundation of the strategic plan.

1. Develop and implement fire safety projects that reduce the fuel supply and potential for conflagration in Sleepy Hollow

2. Analyze and improve the fire fighting water supply system in Sleepy Hollow including expansion of storage capacity, fire mains and auxilliary water supplies.

3. Enhance the Fire Department training program by expanding opportunities for members to participate in outside training programs offered by the National Fire Academy and state and local fire training programs.

4. Improve overall emergency preparedness through assessment and infrastructure improvements at critical evacuation and staging sites, implementation of citizen preparedness programs, and development of local emergency preparedness plans.

5. Ensure the District's sustainability through prudent fiscal management, development of new revenue programs such as grants, and maintenance of an adequate reserve.

INITIATIVE 1

Develop and implement fire safety projects that reduce the fuel supply and potential for conflagration in Sleepy Hollow

Description of Initiative:

The community of Sleepy Hollow exists in an wildland-urban interface zone defined as the area where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland. The wildland-urban interface zone creates an environment in which fire can move readily between structural and vegetation fuels. Its expansion has increased the likelihood that wildfires will threaten structures and people.

Firesafe Marin, a non-profit organization dedicated to reducing wildland Fire hazard and improving Fire-safety awareness in Marin recommends creating a base around your home that will give firefighters a fighting chance against fire. It means clearing all dry grass, brush and dead leaves at least 30 feet from your home, and at least 150 feet if you're on a hill. It is the goal of the Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District to ensure that all homes in the distict are in compliance with Firesafe Marin's recommendations for creating a fire safe environment and reducing the risk of conflagration.

The District intends to hire personnel to assess the district's risk for conflagration including evaluation of unsafe accumulation of vegetation, flammable building materials, and accumulation of combustible materials. The District plans to explore the creation of limited matching funds to assist homeowners in the removal of major hazards. The District will also sponsor an annual Chipper Program similar to a program in Novator which provides curbside pickup for vegetation which is not eligible for removal by Marin Sanitary as part of its regular sevice.

INITIATIVE 1

OBJECTIVES

	Objective	Responsible Person
1.1	Conduct a fire safety survey of the households in the Distrct to determine the level of risk	TBD
1.2	Develop and implement a program to provide matching funds as an incentive for homeo to correct major fire hazards	TBD
1.3	Develop an annual Chipper Program that provides curbside pickup of flammable vegetation that has been removed and neatly stacked by hom	TBD

INITIATIVE 2

Analyze and improve the fire fighting water supply system in Sleepy Hollow including expansion of storage capacity, fire mains and auxilliary water supplies.

Description of Initiative:

Water for firefighting in Sleepy Hollow is primarily available through the Marin Municipa Water District domestic supply system. Under this system, tanks at high elevations provide a limited storage capacity and the necessary pressure for water to be delivered through supply mains that feed hydrants as well as homes. In the past, the District worked with MMWD and homeowners in the Fawn Drive area to improve delivery capcacity by increasing the size of water mains in the area. The District has also funded installation of addtitional fire hyrdants to increase fire fighting efficiency. Based on lessons learned from these projects, the District intends to hire a consultant to conduct a complete assessment of our firefighting water supply capability. When the assessment and recommendations for improvements are complete, the District will work with stakeholders such as MMWD and homeowners to develop partnerships for the funding of improvements.

The District has also funded innovative projects to create auxilliary water supplies for firefighting. The primary program involves purchasing portable fire pumps that utilize the water in swimming pools for firefighting. These fire umps are strategically deployed throughout the District and homeowners are provided hands on training by the members of the RVFD. The District also funded improvements to both firefighting water supplies and drinking water at the Brookside School Upper Campus, a critical evacuation site and staging area in the community. The District will continue to support and expand these auxilliary water supply systems.

INITIATIVE 2

OBJECTIVES

	OBJECTIVE	Responsible Person
2.1	Hire outside consultant to assess current fire fighting water supply system and make recommendations for system improvements	TBD
2.2	Develop funding partnerships with Marin Municipal Water District and impacted homeowners to pay for improvements	TBD
2.3	Expand the auxilliary water supply system by purchasing additional fire pumps or other auxilliary systems and providing continued training for homeowners	TBD

INITIATIVE 3

Enhance the Fire Department training program by expanding opportunities for members to participate in outside training programs offered by the National Fire Academy and state and local fire training programs.

Description of Initiative:

The Ross Valley Fire Department has done an excellent job in providing first rate training for its members. The District intends to work with the Chief of Department to provide additional training support for firefighters and paramedics. Training is expensive, particularly if it is only available off site. In order for members to attend it is often necessary to backfill their positions to ensure that services are provided in their absence.

The District would like to make more readily available to members training opportunities through the National Fire Academy in Emmittsburg Pennsylvania, the Office of the State Fire Marshal, and Regional Fire and EMS Training academies. To do this, the District intends to work with the Chief of Department to provide funding for tuition, transportation and lodging, and/or backfill when necessary. The program will create an annual fund, initially $50,000 to be made available for training. This program will have the added benefit of improving emergency service for residents in San Anselmo and Fairfax.

INITIATIVE 3

OBJECTIVES

	OBJECTIVE	Responsible Person
3.1	Create $50,000 annual fund to pay eligible expenses including tuition, transportation, perdiem, and backfill for attendance at national, state and locally sponsored training programs as authorized by the Chief of Department	TBD

INITIATIVE 4

Improve overall emergency preparedness through assessment and infrastructure improvements at critical evacuation and staging sites, implementation of citizen preparedness programs, and development of local emergency preparedness plans.

Description of Initiative:

The mission of the modern fire service has been expanded in recent years to include the provision of emergency medical services and a vareity of functions under the broad category of emergency preparedness. Our community has several important sites that would be utilized for evacuation and/or staging of emergency resources in the event of a major disaster such as a large wildfire or earthquake. The Sleepy Hollow Clubhouse is an ideal evacuation site due to its central location, ease of access and indoor facilities. The Brookside Upper Campus, San Domenico School and the Sleepy Hollow Presbyterian Church are also potential evacuation and staging sites for similar reasons. The District intends to asses the infrastructure and facilities at each of these sites to determine if improvements should be made to enhance capabilities for use in emergencies.

Citizen preparedness programs have become an important component of emergency preparedness. Experience in natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, earthquakes in Japan, Chile and Haiti, and wildfires in the Oakland Hills and Southern California has shown that emergency service providers are initially overwhelmed by the magnitude of the disaster and that in catastrophic events, government assistance may not arrive for days. When citizens are prepared to be self supporting for a period of 3-5 days, public safety personnel are freed up to attend to the most emergent events and hardships for citizens are greatly reduced. The District will continue to support the delivery of citizen preparedness programs like Get Ready Marin for our homeowners and willl explore working with the Sleepy Hollow Homeowners Association to consider developmemnt of neighborhood response teams.

INITIATIVE 4

OBJECTIVES

	OBJECTIVE	Responsible Person
4.1	Hire consultant to conduct assessment of District's critical evacuation and staging sites and make recommendations to improve emergency preparedness capability.	TBD
4.2	Provide emergency preparedness training opportunities for residents including possible development of neighborhood response teams in cooperation with the Homeowners Association.	TBD
4.3	Hire consultant to develop comprehensive emergency preparedness plan for the District consistent with county and local preparedness plans.	TBD

INITIATIVE 5

Ensure the District's sustainability through prudent fiscal management, development of new revenue programs such as grants, and maintenance of an adequate reserve.

Description of Initiative:

The Sleepy Hollow Fire Protection District was created by resolution of the Marin County Board of Supervisors in 1949. From its inception, the District has contracted for fire protection, first with San Anselmo and later with the Ross Valley Fire Joint Powers Authority. Occasionally issues have arisen with the terms and implementation of the contract on the part of both San Anselmo and Sleepy Hollow. It is very significant that this contract can be unilaterally cancelled with limited notice creating an unstable financial situation for the SHFPD. Due to this instability, the District has reluctanly felt it necessary to maintain sufficient reserves to provide fire protection services through its own fire department should that become necessary. The District will continue to work agressively to develop a permanent and fiscally prudent agreeement for providing services to our homeowners.

Each year, the District is audited by an outside party and its financial status and fiscal management policies are reviewed and recommendations created for improvements when necessary. The District has always adopted these recommendations and will continue to do so. The District will also ensure that there is a diversity of opinion on its financial policies by periodically utilizing new outside auditors thus maintaining fresh perspective.

The vast majority of the District's revenue comes from property taxes. As we have seen, recent financial problems at the State level as well as a depressed real estate market can have a negative impact on our income. Since it is not possible to accurately forecast all economic eventualities, it is important for the District to maintain a healthy reserve to ensure that its operational expenses can be met even if there is a negative revenue impact. It is thus prudent both to maintain a reserve fund equal to one year's operating expenses and to agressively explore additional revenue sources such as grants.

INITIATIVE 5

OBJECTIVES

	OBJECTIVE	Responsible Person
5.1	Create long term agreement for providing firefighting and paramedic services for the District that is sustainable based on current and projected revenue stream.	TBD
5.2	Continue to implement all recommendations in the annual audit for improving fiscal accountability and management.	TBD
5.3	Maintain a prudent fiscal reserve equal to one year's operational expenses.	TBD

5.4	Agressively seek additional non tax revenues such as grants.	TBD