

Appendix E

Toolkit for Local-Level CWPPs

Toolkit for Developing Local-Level Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs)

Austin-Travis County CWPP

June 2014

Austin-Travis County CWPP

Toolkit for Local-Level CWPPS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Austin-Travis County CWPP has been developed as a regional plan and supports the development and implementation of local, site-specific CWPPs by providing a regional overview of the wildfire risk environment within Travis County. All communities are encouraged to use the Austin-Travis County CWPP as an overall guide to evaluate their risk of wildland fire and as a source for tools and practices they can use to address those risks. One example of those tools within the Austin-Travis County CWPP that local planners will find useful is Appendix C, which contains the Planning Unit Exhibits.

The elements included in this Community Wildfire Protection Plan Development Tool Kit provide local planners with aids to support their CWPP development efforts. The guidance is specific to the resources and requirements planners will encounter in Travis County, and communities at risk in Travis County that have not already developed a CWPP can utilize this guide to organize their efforts. Those communities which may have already developed a CWPP are encouraged to use this guide to organize their CWPP review and revision efforts.

1.1 WHAT IS A CWPP?

Community Wildfire Protection Plans were authorized and defined in 2003 in Title I of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA). The minimum requirements for a CWPP as described in the HFRA are:

- ✓ **Collaboration:** A CWPP must be collaboratively developed by local and state government representatives, in consultation with federal agencies and other interested parties;
- ✓ **Prioritized Fuel Reduction:** A CWPP must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatment that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure; and
- ✓ **Treatment of Structural Ignitability:** A CWPP must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed in the plan.

1.2 LOCAL-LEVEL CWPPS

Communities and neighborhoods are encouraged to create a CWPP specific to their community's level of wildfire risk and mitigation needs. The size and character of the area for which wildfire planning can occur is not defined in the federal legislation. Examples of communities that may want to prepare a CWPP include:

- A group of homes and other structures with basic infrastructure and services, such as utilities and collectively maintained transportation routes (HFRA 2003);
- An individual neighborhood;

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- A larger geographic area with common wildfire concerns;
- An incorporated community; and/or
- A group of adjacent emergency services districts facing similar wildfire suppression issues.

Defining a planning area for your CWPP will be the initial component of developing a CWPP. A planning area may include some or all of the examples listed above as well as other entities. You are encouraged to consult with your local fire department and/or Emergency Service District when delineating the boundary of your planning area.

Your CWPP should be a “living” document tailored to meet the needs of your community. Its message should reflect the values of your community so that residents and leadership are engaged in the on-going planning, implementation, and revision of the wildfire protection process. The plan development process should result in a written structure that will guide activities, set expectations, support implementation, and provide for the review and revision of the plan as tasks are accomplished and mitigation needs change.

By developing a CWPP, a community can:

- Develop strategies for reducing risks in the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ);
- Identify the preferred fuels reduction treatments to be used;
- Identify fuels management strategies to enhance fire protection on a property and adjoining properties;
- Define criteria for prioritizing at-risk areas and recommended actions;
- Determine its own strategies for reducing risk to the community, natural resources and watersheds; and
- Determine fire suppression resources and needs.

1.3 TOOL KIT CONTENTS

This Tool Kit is presented as an aid in developing a local-level CWPP and is not intended to be an exhaustive package, nor are communities required to follow the process or template provided. All elements in this document are intended as examples to guide the local process.

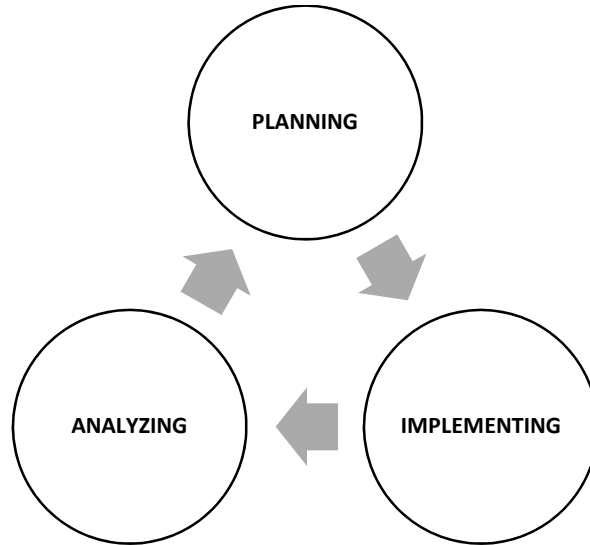
Included in this CWPP Development Tool Kit are:

- ❖ Suggested steps for developing a CWPP
- ❖ Suggested CWPP development schedule
- ❖ Contact information for additional agencies
- ❖ Additional wildfire preparedness resources
- ❖ Instructions to access the Austin-Travis County CWPP database
- ❖ Instructions to access the Texas A&M Forest Service database
- ❖ CWPP instructions and template

2.0 CWPP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The steps described in this document represent one recognized means of achieving a final product; however, the process is flexible and planning leadership should feel comfortable adjusting it to meet their community's specific needs.

Developing and utilizing a CWPP should ultimately be considered a cyclical process involving planning, implementing, and analyzing, as illustrated in the graphic below. A scheduled evaluation of mitigation strategies and risk assessments will be the driving force behind the cycle.



2.1 SUGGESTED STEPS FOR DEVELOPING A CWPP

The following steps are one suggested methodology to follow when developing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Steps 1 through 3 fall under the category of Planning, Steps 4 through 6 are categorized as Analyzing, while Steps 7 through 9 fall under Implementing.

Prior to initiating Step 1, the boundary of the CWPP planning area should be well defined to facilitate the identification of a lead planning team. Your local fire department, Emergency Service District, and/or Texas Forest Service representatives can assist you in this process. Other resources might include your city or county planning department, city council members or county commissioners, and/or your homeowners' association.

The plan development process is flexible and planning leadership should feel comfortable in adjusting the process to meet their specific community needs, while still ensuring that HFRA requirements are met.

STEP 1: Convene Decision Makers

The initial step in the CWPP development process is forming a lead planning team that will have responsibility for developing the CWPP. This core decision-making team should, at a minimum, include:

- ✓ Your local leadership (such as your home owners' organization);
- ✓ Your city officials or their representatives (individuals with the authority to make decisions for the entity they represent);
- ✓ For un-incorporated communities, a representative from Travis County;
- ✓ Representatives from the local fire departments and/or emergency service districts; and
- ✓ A Texas A&M Forest Service Wildland Urban Interface Specialist.

The primary role of this planning team is to direct the CWPP development process and ensure the completion of an approved plan. Additional responsibilities include:

- Maintaining a regular schedule of team meetings;
- Ensuring the involvement of stakeholders;
- Convening meetings with the public;
- Convening meetings with appropriate technical expertise;
- Writing, or causing to be written, the CWPP document itself;
- Securing the document's review by appropriate parties;
- Obtaining signatures on the Certificate of Agreement;
- Publishing and distributing the completed document; and
- Partnering with appropriate community entities to secure plan implementation.

STEP 2: Involve Other Relevant Agencies

If they are not already included in the lead planning team, local government departments, natural resource management entities, and independent utility districts may add technical expertise at this step in the process. Because of their on-the-ground experience, mapping capabilities, and knowledge of resource planning, these additional agencies could be key partners to support the lead planning team. In some areas, they may also have significant responsibility for implementing the priorities established in the resulting CWPP.

Local government departments and homeowner's associations can also provide insight into community rules and regulations that must be adhered to when planning and implementing mitigation strategies (Steps 6 & 7).

A COMPLETE LIST OF SUGGESTED AGENCIES AND DEPARTMENTS IS LOCATED IN SECTION 3.1 OF THIS TOOLKIT.

** The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) is the only currently active Federal land management agency in Travis County and has management responsibility for the Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge (BCNWR). HFRA does not require USFWS to be a signatory on the final approved CWPP, but participation from USFWS will provide valuable expertise if the planning area is near the BCNWR.**

STEP 3: Engage Interested Parties

The success of a CWPP also hinges on effectively involving a broad range of local stakeholders, particularly when the planning area includes organized and active neighborhood associations, environment- or recreation-related not-for-profit organizations, or other groups that display a concern for the environment and/or a commitment to fuels management for fire protection.

Such key constituencies may include:

- Homeowner, Property Owner, or Neighborhood Associations and their elected board members;
- The property management firm, if it is active; and
- Residents of the community;
- Environmental/recreational organizations;
- Schools/universities; and/or
- Local Chambers of Commerce.

A COMPLETE LIST OF SUGGESTED ORGANIZATIONS IS LOCATED IN SECTION 3.1 OF THIS TOOLKIT.

STEP 4: Establish a Community Base Map

The lead planning team and key partners should develop one or more base maps of the planning area to be included in the CWPP. These maps will provide a visual baseline of information which community members can use to determine recommendations for protection and risk reduction priorities. These maps may be generated by using the Austin-Travis County CWPP database or the Texas A&M Forest Service database.

Suggested elements the map(s) should identify are topography, roadways, housing developments, areas of historic wildfire occurrence, severity of wildfire losses, industrial sites, utilities, evacuation routes, types of vegetation/fuel, inhabited areas at potential risk to wildfire, and/or the areas of Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) within the community.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACCESSING THE AUSTIN-TRAVIS COUNTY CWPP AND TEXAS A&M FOREST SERVICE DATABASES CAN BE FOUND IN SECTIONS 3.3 AND 3.4 OF THIS TOOLKIT.

STEP 5: Develop a Community Risk Assessment

The risk assessment will examine wildland fire hazards for the geography included in the CWPP. The Austin-Travis County CWPP has an extensive GIS risk-assessment database, and Texas A&M Forest Service has an online risk assessment portal. The fire professionals and/or WUI specialists identified in **STEP 1** will provide essential support and information for the assessment, including general ground truthing of GIS information.

The assessment will be crucial to understanding the risk of potential loss of life, property, and natural resources in a wildfire, and should:

- Identify wildfire risks, hazards, fire protection capability, structural vulnerability and values to be protected;
- Identify the Wildland Urban Interface within the planning area; and
- Identify and allow prioritization of areas in which to conduct mitigation activities.

Criteria that may be used in the risk assessment includes means of access, vegetation, building construction and materials, available fire protections, and placement of gas and electric utilities.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACCESSING THE AUSTIN-TRAVIS COUNTY CWPP AND TEXAS A&M FOREST SERVICE DATABASES CAN BE FOUND IN SECTIONS 3.3 AND 3.4 OF THIS TOOLKIT.

STEP 6: Establish Mitigation Priorities and Recommendations

With the community risk assessment and base map completed, the lead planning group can make decisions regarding fuel mitigation projects and actions to reduce structural ignitability. The planning group may also identify additional priorities (not required by HFRA) such as improving community emergency preparedness and fire response capabilities and increasing public awareness.

****All decisions must take into account city, county, and HOA rules and regulations.**

Recommendations included in the final CWPP should clearly indicate whether priority projects primarily serve to protect the community and its essential infrastructure or are geared toward reducing risks to the other community values.

STEP 7: Develop an Action Plan

To encourage successful implementation of the CWPP, core team members and key community partners should identify and document projects and actions based on the priorities that have been recognized in **STEP 6**. Suggested steps in the Action Plan process include:

- Developing implementation strategies and recommendations;
- Identifying the roles and responsibilities of the organizations that will be responsible for each activity;
- Identifying and documenting the expected results;
- Budgeting and identifying tasks that may need funding; and
- Determining timetables for carrying out priority projects.

**All decisions must take into account city, county, and HOA rules and regulations.

STEP 8: Establish a Process for Evaluation, Review, and Revision

Without a means of evaluating progress and revising objectives, the CWPP may never achieve its identified goals. An evaluation process should include:

- An identified group with specific responsibility to monitor the CWPP implementation activities;
- Regularly scheduled meetings to review implementation progress and impact; and
- A schedule for periodically reviewing and revising the CWPP based on implementation progress and changing vegetation and fire risk conditions.

STEP 9: Finalize the Community Wildfire Protection Plan

In this plan development step, the lead planning team mutually agrees on:

- Fuels treatment priorities;
- Preferred treatment methods;
- Structural ignitibility recommendations;
- An implementation strategy; and
- A process for evaluation, review and revision.

The final CWPP should also include appropriate signatures for the Declaration of Agreement and a strategy for communicating the plan's contents to the community as a whole, key land management partners, and agencies and departments with implementation responsibility.

The lead planning group should always remember that the CWPP development process is flexible and that they have the freedom to adjust the progression as necessary to meet their specific community needs while ensuring that the HFRA requirements, stated in Section 1.1, are met.

2.2 SUGGESTED CWPP DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

There are no rules regarding the length of time it may take to complete the CWPP. Community resources and the intensity of community involvement will determine the length of the process. The following schedule is merely an example of how the process might occur.



3.0 CWPP DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

3.1 CONTACT INFORMATION FOR AGENCIES

The suggested agencies and departments listed below can each provide information to help the local community develop their CWPP. Some will also be capable of providing some level of leadership or direct support to the process at the request of the planning committee.

Fire departments, the Travis County Fire Marshal, and Travis County Office of Emergency Management can provide information regarding emergency response, law enforcement, and fire response capabilities, response times, staffing, and response volume.

Utility and energy-related agencies will have critical infrastructure locations, maps, and other data a local plan might require. Water utilities and watershed protection departments can help to define water sources and provide guidance on protecting water resources before and after a fire. Departments dealing with transportation, public works, or roads and bridges may need to be included in the planning process if fire access or evacuation issues are being addressed.

Departments dealing with parks and historical sites can provide details regarding locations, size, and environmental, historical, or cultural significance of the entities within their responsibility. Especially focused entities, such as the Colorado River Corridor Plan group may not need to be involved, if the community is outside the geography defined by the river corridor.

Many of these departments will have access to maps and mapping capabilities which may be useful in the community-level planning process.

Examples of some “Decision Makers,” as discussed in Section 2.1 Step 1:

- Travis County (<http://www.co.travis.tx.us/>)
- City of Austin (www.austintexas.gov)
- Travis County Emergency Services (http://www.co.travis.tx.us/emergency_services/)
- Travis County Fire Marshal’s Office (http://www.co.travis.tx.us/fire_marshall/)
- City of Austin Fire Department (<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/fire>)

Examples of “Other Relevant Agencies,” discussed in Section 2.1 Step 2:

- Travis County Colorado River Corridor Plan (<http://www.co.travis.tx.us/tnr/crcp/>)
- Travis County Conservation Easements (http://www.co.travis.tx.us/tnr/conservation_easement_program/)
- Travis County Public Works (<http://www.co.travis.tx.us/tnr/publicworks/>)
- Travis County Road Maintenance (<http://www.co.travis.tx.us/tnr/roads/>)
- Travis County Transportation and Natural Resources (<http://www.co.travis.tx.us/tnr/>)

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- Travis County Water Quality (http://www.co.travis.tx.us/tnr/stormwater_management_program/)Austin Energy (<http://www.austinenergy.com/>)
- City of Austin Homeland Security and Emergency Management (<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/homeland-security-and-emergency-management>)
- City of Austin Public Works (<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/public-works>)
- City of Austin Transportation (<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/transportation>)
- City of Austin Water Utility (<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/water>)
- City of Austin Watershed Protection (<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/watershed-protection>)
- City of Austin Wildland Conservation Division (<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/wildland-conservation-division>)
- Pedernales Electric Cooperative (<http://www.pec.coop/>)
- There are several Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs) and Water Control and Improvement Districts (WCIDs) in Travis County. The planning team should contact the organization(s) that have jurisdiction(s) within their planning area.

Examples of “Interested Parties,” discussed in Section 2.1 Step 3:

- Travis County Historical Commission (http://www.co.travis.tx.us/historical_commission/)
- Travis County Parks Department (<https://parks.traviscountytexas.gov/>)
- City of Austin Parks and Recreation (<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/parks-and-recreation>)
- City of Austin Historic Preservation (<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/historic-preservation>)
- City of Austin Sustainability Department (<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/sustainability>)
- Barton Springs/Edwards Aquifer Conservation District (<http://www.bseacd.org/>)
- Capital Area Council of Governments (<http://www.capcog.org/>)
- Capitol Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (<http://www.campotexas.org/about.php>)
- Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center (<http://www.wildflower.org/>)
- Lower Colorado River Authority Community Development Services (<http://www.lcra.org/community/ecodev/index.html>)
- Travis Audubon Society (<http://travisaudubon.org/>)

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- The Nature Conservancy in Texas (<http://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/texas/index.htm>)
- Central Texas Master Gardeners (<http://tcmastergardeners.org/>)
- Capital Area Master Naturalists (<http://txmn.org/capital/>)
- Austin Parks Foundation (<http://www.austinparks.org>)
- Central Texas Trail Tamers (<http://www.trailtamers.org>)
- Texas Department of Agriculture (<http://www.texasagriculture.gov>)
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us>)
- Lakeway Friends of Parks (<http://lakewayfop.org/>)
- Austin Ridge Riders (<http://www.austinridgeriders.com>)
- Austin Community College (<http://www.austincc.edu>)
- Concordia University (<http://www.concordia.edu>)
- Huston-Tillotson University (<http://htu.edu/>)
- St. Edward's University (<http://www.stedwards.edu>)
- University of Texas (<http://www.utexas.edu>)
- Austin Chamber (<http://www.austinchamber.com>)
- Greater Austin Hispanic Chamber (<http://www.gahcc.org/>)
- Lake Travis Chamber (<http://www.laketravischamber.com/>)
- Lago Vista & Jonestown Area Chamber(<http://www.lagovista.org/>)
- Manor Chamber (<http://www.manorchamberofcommerce.com/>)
- Pflugerville Chamber (<http://www.pfchamber.com/>)
- Westlake Chamber (<http://www.westlakechamber.com/>)

This list provides a starting point and is by no means exhaustive. Obtaining input from groups with diverse interests will help to ensure that the final document reflects the highest priorities of the community. There is no requirement that all, or any, of these groups be invited to participate in the plan development process; however, inclusion may prevent conflict at a later date, and the insights brought to the process from interested parties can improve the end results.

3.2 ADDITIONAL WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES

The following websites and agencies may also provide additional resources for wildfire preparedness that can be incorporated into your CWPP and/or information on other programs.

- Texas A&M Forest Service (www.texasfirewise.org) provides a wealth of wildfire preparedness resources including a CWPP Development Guide.
- Fire Adapted Communities (www.fireadapted.org/) contains information on becoming a Fire Adapted Community.
- Texas Emerging Communities (www.texasemergingcommunities.org/) provides information on community planning, including wildfire protection strategies.
- Ready, Set, Go! (www.wildlandfirersg.org/) contains information on participating in the Ready, Set, Go! Program managed by the International Association of Fire Chiefs. A Travis County-specific version of the Ready, Set, Go! Program, including a Spanish version, are also available (http://www.co.travis.tx.us/fire_marshall/prevention/wildfire_preparedness.asp).
- Firewise Communities (www.firewise.org/) contains information on becoming a Firewise Community.
- US Fire Administration (www.usfa.fema.gov/citizens/home_fire_prev/wildfire/) contains information on wildfire safety and preparedness.
- American Red Cross (www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/wildfire) contains information on wildfire response and preparedness.
- Prepared.ly (<http://www.prepared.ly/>) is an online and mobile application that uses the power of social media to promote wildfire preparedness.
- National Interagency Fire Center (www.nifc.gov/) contains a wealth of fire information including prevention and education.
- National Fire Protection Agency (www.nfpa.org/) contains a wealth of fire information including prevention and education.
- Prescribed Burn Alliance of Texas (<http://pbatexas.org/>) provides information on prescribed fire management.
- GoodFires (<http://www.goodfires.org/>) provides information on prescribed fire management and fire ecology.
- City of Austin (www.austintexas.gov/WildfireEnviroBMPs) provides a public education document entitled “Environmental Best Management Practices for Wildfire Risk Reduction and Recovery.” (A copy of this document is located in **Appendix D** on page D-15.)

3.3 ACCESSING THE AUSTIN-TRAVIS COUNTY CWPP DATABASE

Information on how to gain access to the Austin-Travis County CWPP Geodatabase can be obtained by contacting your local department:

It should be noted that Austin-Travis County CWPP Geodatabase was developed for use with ESRI's ArcGIS version 10.1. Users of the geodatabase must have ArcGIS for Desktop software to fully utilize the information contained in the database. System requirements and software pricing are identified at the ESRI website: <http://www.esri.com/software/arcgis/arcgis-for-desktop>.

3.4 ACCESSING THE TEXAS A&M FOREST SERVICE DATABASE

Texas A&M Forest Service has developed a web-based application, known as Texas Wildfire Risk Assessment Portal or TxWRAP, that may be accessed to develop maps and wildfire risk assessments. This database can be accessed by creating an account on <http://www.texaswildfirerisk.com/> and following the instructions provided online to retrieve relevant data.

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4.0 CWPP INSTRUCTIONS AND TEMPLATE

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING YOUR COMMUNITY- SPECIFIC CWPP

The following outline gives instructions and suggestions for completing each section of the attached CWPP template. This template is not intended to be rigid – you are encouraged to edit its contents to best fit the need of your community – and should be used in conjunction with the Austin-Travis County CWPP. **NOTE: “Community,” as used throughout these instructions and the CWPP template, refers to the group or groups collaborating on this effort.**

General information has been provided in every section of the CWPP template. By making the edits shown in **RED** on the template, and described below, you are meeting the minimum requirements to modify this document for your community.

You may also choose to further customize this template for your community based on the suggestions shown in **BLUE**. These additions are purely optional but offer the chance to tailor the CWPP to the needs of your community. If you choose not to complete the sections in **BLUE**, simply select and delete them.

*The **PURPLE** text boxes below may*

- *Contain contact information;*
- *Point to additional sources for maps/data that may be helpful in completing the CWPP;*
- *Advise you to consult your local fire department/emergency service district representative(s) for further information; and/or*
- *Direct you to your community’s Planning Unit Exhibit when writing certain sections of the CWPP*

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COVER PAGE

- A cover page template has been provided. Enter the date that your CWPP was approved and the name and/or location of your community.
- OPTIONAL: You may also wish to add a photograph or a logo that represents your community.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- A brief introduction on the history and intent of CWPPs has been included for you.
- OPTIONAL: You may also wish to include a brief discussion of the history of your community-specific CWPP.

1.1 STATEMENT OF INTENT

- A statement of intent has been provided for you.
- OPTIONAL: You may also add an additional statement specific to the intent of your community.

1.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- A list of goals and objectives that reflect the Austin-Travis County CWPP have been included for you. Please enter the geographic location of your CWPP in the space provided.
- OPTIONAL: You may also wish to include a brief discussion of the history of your community-specific CWPP.

1.3 COLLABORATION

- This section should illustrate the collaborative efforts that went into making your CWPP. Blank tables have been provided for you to list the planning group behind your CWPP.

This section is a requirement of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act.

- Please enter the contact information for each member of your planning group. (This list should include, but is not limited to, community representatives, local government representatives, local fire department/emergency services district representatives, and a Texas Forest Service WUI Representative.) You may add or delete these tables as needed.

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- An overview of the CWPP planning process has also been included.
- **OPTIONAL:** You may also wish to include a more detailed discussion of your community's planning process. This discussion may include a list of meetings and the key points discussed at each, your community's priorities and values, and any efforts to involve the public within your community.

2.0 COMMUNITY PROFILE

- This section should cover the characteristics of your community that make it unique. A general description of a community profile and its purpose has been provided.
- **OPTIONAL:** You may wish to add a description of your community including, but not limited to, neighborhoods and home owners associations within your planning community and the authority that such entities have to enforce planning and zoning codes.
- **Please complete the information in the table provided.**

The approximate size and latitude/longitude of your community may be generated from Google Earth, Google Maps, ArcMap, or any other mapping software.

- **OPTIONAL:** You may also include a map showing the location of your community.

You may use Google Earth, Google Maps, ArcMap, or TxWRAP to develop a location map of your community.

2.1 GENERAL LANDSCAPE

- **Please choose the text box that most accurately describes the area of Travis County that your community is in – east or west. Descriptions of the landscape, vegetation, and topography for each are provided. Delete the extraneous text box and format the text accordingly.**
- A brief description of the water resources in Travis County is provided.
- **OPTIONAL:** You may wish to provide additional descriptions about the water resources and topography in and within close proximity to your community. Think about any factors

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such as especially steep hillsides or areas with a limited water supply that may reduce a fire department's ability to respond.

You may use aerial images from Google Earth or GIS maps to identify existing water sources. Additionally, TxWRAP's website can provide additional information on landscape characteristics.

Additionally, you may wish to consult your local fire department or

2.2 CLIMATE & VEGETATION

- This section should give a brief overview of the weather patterns for your community. A brief discussion of the climate in Central Texas is included.
- OPTIONAL: You may wish to include additional climate data.

You may use the National Weather Service (weather.gov) or the National Climatic Data Center (ncdc.noaa.gov) to access additional climate data.

- This section should also provide information on the type(s) of vegetation within your planning area. Refer to Section 2.2.2 of the Austin-Travis County CWPP for extensive information.
- **Please provide a brief description on the type(s) of vegetation within your planning area.**

2.3 SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS

- The information in this section will be dependent on your community's unique geographic location. **In consultation with your Planning Unit Exhibit, choose any of the text boxes that may be applicable to your community.**

Consult your community's Planning Unit Exhibit to see what sensitive environments have been identified in your area.

Please contact the City of Austin Wildland Conservation Division (<https://www.austintexas.gov/department/wildland-conservation-division>) if your planning area contains part of the Balcones Canyonlands

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- **OPTIONAL:** You may also wish to add descriptions of any conservation areas or open spaces within or near your community. Examples include, but are not limited to, City of Austin and Travis County parks and greenbelts, McKinney Falls State Park, Balcones Canyonlands National Wildlife Refuge.

You may access Austin City Parks (<http://austintexas.gov/department/city-parks>), Travis County Parks (<https://parks.traviscountytx.gov/>), Texas Parks and Wildlife (<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/>), or US Fish and Wildlife Service (http://www.fws.gov/refuge/balcones_canyonlands/) to find additional

2.4 POPULATION & LAND USE

- This section should include the approximate population of your plan area as well as a description of any population growth or patterns of land use and development.

You may find the Texas State Data Center (<http://txsdc.utsa.edu/>) and/or the US Census Bureau (<https://www.census.gov/>) helpful in filling out this section.

Additionally, you can access information about population density and WUI residents through the TxWRAP database.

Information on land use can be gathered through the City of Austin's

2.5 FACILITIES OF CONCERN/INTEREST

- This section should identify schools, medical facilities, nursing homes, etc. within your planning area. A brief overview has been provided for you.
- **Please enter the name of each facility and discuss its proximity to wildland fuels, sheltering potential or need for evacuation.**

A Texas school locator can be downloaded at tea.state.tx.us

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- **OPTIONAL:** You may also wish to add a brief inventory of the types of structures (residential, commercial, government) within your community and an approximate number of each.

A brief inventory of the structures in your community could be gathered from aerial imagery, such as Google Earth.

You may also contact the Travis County Historical Commission (http://www.co.travis.tx.us/historical_commission/) or the City of Austin Historic Preservation Department

2.6 TRANSPORTATION & UTILITIES

- This section should discuss major utilities and transportation-related entities within your planning area. A brief introduction has been included.
- **Please enter the name of each utility and discuss any possible hazards and/or possibilities for partnerships in reducing wildland fuels associated with each entity.**

You may find the following agencies helpful in gathering this data:

Railroad Commission of Texas (<http://www.rrc.state.tx.us/>)

Texas Department of Transportation (<http://www.txdot.gov/>)

Travis County (<http://www.co.travis.tx.us>)

2.7 FIRE RESPONSE CAPABILITIES

- This section should identify fire departments within your planning area in as much detail as possible (number of firefighters, equipment available, etc.). A brief introduction has been provided.
- **Please enter the name of each fire department/emergency service district serving your community. You are encourage to provide as much information as possible (ie, contact information, location, available equipment).**

APPENDIX E

Information on Emergency Service Districts that serve your planning area can be found on your Planning Unit Exhibit

3.0 FIRE ENVIRONMENT

- This section should identify fire departments within your planning area in as much detail as possible (number of firefighters, equipment available, etc.). A brief introduction has been provided.
- **Please enter the risk level for your community as identified on the Planning Unit Exhibit.**
- **OPTIONAL:** You may add a further explanation of various levels of risk within your community or a map that can be generated by the Austin-Travis County CWPP Database.

Your Planning Unit Exhibit will contain some information to help you complete this section.

You are also encouraged to consult with your local fire department/ESD or WUI Specialist when completing this section.

3.1 FIRE OCCURRENCE

- This section should identify historical fire occurrences within your planning area as well as a discussion of the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) within your planning area. A brief introduction has been provided.
- **Please enter information specific to your community.**

You are also encouraged to consult with your local fire department/ESD or WUI Specialist when completing this section.

3.2 FIRE BEHAVIOR

- A discussion on fire behavior in Central Texas has been provided.

APPENDIX E

- **OPTIONAL:** You may also wish to describe the types and quantities of fuel (homes, vegetation) within your community.

You are also encouraged to consult with your local fire department/ESD or WUI Specialist when completing this section.

4.0 MITIGATION STRATEGIES

- A brief overview of mitigation strategies has been provided.
- **OPTIONAL:** You may also wish to discuss how your planning group intends to educate the public about wildfire protection.

4.1 PRIORITIZED FUEL REDUCTION

- A brief overview of fuel reduction has been provided.
- A table containing an example from the Texas A&M Forest Service “Community Wildfire Protection Plan Guide” has been provided for you. **Please complete this table in consultation with your selected fire professional(s).**

This section is a requirement of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act.

You are also encouraged to consult with your local fire department/ESD or WUI Specialist when completing this section.

4.2 TREATMENT OF STRUCTURAL IGNITABILITY

- A brief overview of defensible space and treatment of structural ignitability has been provided.
- **Please choose the applicable text box(es) in consultation with your selected fire professional(s) and add any additional treatments that your community plans to implement. All actions must be in compliance with local laws and regulations.**

This section is a requirement of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act.

You are also encouraged to consult with your local fire department/ESD or WUI Specialist when completing this section.

5.0 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

- A brief overview of the process to adopt and implement the plan has been provided.
- Please provide the names of your key stakeholder and/or agencies who will be signing your CWPP.
- A discussion about updating the CWPP has been provided. It is recommended that a CWPP is reviewed on a cycle (ie, every 2 years) to reassess the risks within the community and to develop new priorities for mitigation.
- Please enter the time cycle that your community plans to use.

6.0 DECLARATION OF AGREEMENT/CONCURRENCEIMPLEMENTATION

- A page has been provided where you can show the support that your CWPP has garnered. Signers may include city officials, home owners association presidents, fire chiefs, and/or Texas A&M Forest Service WUI Specialists.

OPTIONAL: Depending on the size, scope and audience of your CWPP, you may wish to include an appendix with additional items. Suggested contents may include the following:

- Additional maps
- Contact Lists for local organizations, schools, utilities, medical facilities, etc.
- Glossary of the acronyms and terms used throughout the CWPP
- Template for an Action Plan – **one has been provided for you**
- Minutes/outline from any public meetings

5.0 COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

Approved [Click here to enter date](#)

For

[Click here to enter community name/location](#)

[Click here to enter community name/location](#)

Travis County, Texas

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) were authorized and defined in 2003 in Title I of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA).

This plan was prepared following the requirements for a CWPP, as described in the HFRA.

1. **Collaboration:** The CWPP was collaboratively developed by government representatives and fire professionals, in consultation with other interested parties.
2. **Prioritized Fuel Reduction:** The CWPP identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommends the types and methods of treatment.
3. **Treatment of Structural Ignitability:** The CWPP recommends measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.

[Enter a discussion on the history/development of your CWPP.](#)

1.1 Statement of Intent

The intent of a CWPP is to reduce the risk of wildfire in order to promote ecosystem health, to reduce structural losses, and to provide for the safety of residents and firefighters during wildfires. [Enter a statement of intent specific to the scope of this plan for your community.](#)

1.2 Goals and Objectives

This CWPP is an action plan as well as a living document and depends upon people and partnerships to succeed. Specific goals of this document are to:

- Provide for the safety of residents and emergency personnel;
- Protect homes, businesses, and other infrastructure from wildfire;
- Promote and maintain healthy ecosystems and natural resources;
- Educate citizens about wildfire preparedness and prevention;
- [Enter additional goals specific to your community here.](#)

In order to achieve the goals identified above, this CWPP contains several objectives including, but not limited to:

- Facilitating improved risk assessments with localized fire behavior models;
- Identifying areas to improve community preparedness for wildfire;

- Developing wildfire mitigation strategies for the diverse ecological conditions in **enter your geographic region here** in support of fuel reduction projects;
- Facilitating reduction of structural ignitability;
- [Enter additional objectives for your community here.](#)

1.3 Collaboration

This Community Wildfire Protection Plan is a collaborative effort between the following entities. The representatives below comprise the core decision-making team responsible for this report and that mutually agrees on the plan’s contents.

COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE(S)

Name	
Address	
Telephone Number(s)	
Email	

Name	
Address	
Telephone Number(s)	
Email	

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE(S)

Name	
Address	
Telephone Number(s)	
Email	

Name	
Address	
Telephone Number(s)	
Email	

LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE(S)

Name	
Address	

Telephone Number(s)	
Email	

Name	
Address	
Telephone Number(s)	
Email	

TEXAS FOREST SERVICE WUI REPRESENTATIVE

Name	
Address	
Telephone Number(s)	
Email	

The process for developing this CWPP was comprised of three major phases. The first phase consisted of reaching out to all of the applicable jurisdictions, stakeholder groups and the public in order to gather input on community concerns and values. The second phase consisted of utilizing available tools to assess wildfire risk in **enter the name of your community or geographic region here**. The final phase involved establishing priorities and action plans and establishing a process for the evaluation, review, and revision of this plan.

[Enter any additional information relevant to the planning process for your community, including efforts to involve the public.](#)

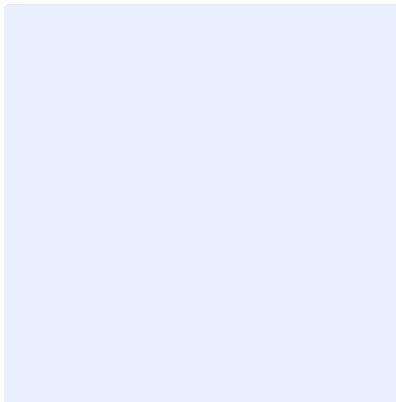
2.0 COMMUNITY PROFILE

Understanding the landscape, where people live, and where they are likely to live in the future are critical components of a CWPP. This information provides the basis for understanding how local wildfire behaves, where the greatest risks to life and property are currently located and where future wildfire risk reduction efforts, such as home hardening, may need to be focused.

Enter a specific description of your planning community.

Enter name of your community here. LOCATION	
County	Travis County, Texas
Size	Enter the approximate size of your community.
Approximate Latitude/Longitude	Enter the approximate latitude/longitude of your community.
Plan Area Boundaries	Enter identifiable boundaries of your community such as major roadways.
Additional Landmarks	Enter identifiable landmarks within your community such as universities or government offices.

Figure 1: Location Map



2.1 General Landscape

The following paragraphs in red describe landscape conditions in east and west Travis County. Please identify which of these descriptions best suits your community and change that text to black. You may also choose to create a custom description of your community using parts of the data provided or information received from other sources. Delete this instruction box when complete.

Eastern Travis County is located within the Blackland Prairie which is characterized by gently rolling hills and plains with elevations ranging from approximately 362 to 860 feet. This region of Travis County is composed of primarily of grasslands and croplands with corridors of riparian woodlands along river and stream and pockets of eastern red cedar woodlands. Much of the Blackland Prairie within Travis County is cropland. The topography in Travis County is variable, ranging from flat to Western Travis County is located within the Edwards Plateau which is characterized by hilly and rugged topography with elevations ranging from approximately 860 to 1,423 feet. This region of the County is composed primarily of Ashe juniper and oak woodlands. Historically, the Edwards Plateau part of the County has been more important for livestock grazing than crop production. The topography in Travis County is variable, ranging from flat to steep slopes. Across the western half of the County, slopes range from 0% to as steep as 70%; however, most of the western half of the County consists of slopes ranging from 5% to 20%.

Primary water resources within Travis County include the Colorado River, Lake Travis, Lake Austin, Lady Bird Lake, and Decker Lake. Lake Travis is the largest lake in the County and is a major producer of electricity.

[Enter additional landscape information for your community.](#)

2.2 Climate & Vegetation

Drought is a major climatic issue in Central Texas. Rainfall is typically distributed evenly throughout the year; however, several months of drought tend to occur on a 5- to 7-year cycle broken by excessive rains that may cause severe flooding. These excessive rainfall events typically occur in late spring and fall and encourage the growth of foliage which, in turn, becomes wildfire fuel during the periods of drought. [Enter additional climate information for your community.](#)

[Please enter a brief description of the type\(s\) of vegetation in and around your community.](#)

2.3 Sensitive Environments

The following sensitive environments are known to exist in or in close proximity to the area which this CWPP encompasses.

The Edwards Aquifer is one of the most valuable water resources in the central Texas area as it provides water for municipal, industrial, and agricultural uses. The Aquifer covers 4,350 square miles in parts of 11 counties, including over 1100 square miles within Travis County, and has historically acted as a reliable source of water during periods of severe drought. Soil disturbing activities within the Edwards Aquifer Contributing or Recharge Zones are regulated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Wildfire within an area containing the Edwards Aquifer would have a negative impact on water quality due to excessive loss of vegetation.

The Balcones Canyonlands Preserve covers approximately 30,000 acres within Travis County and serves to protect eight endangered species, including the golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo, as well as 27 other at-risk species. Wildfire within the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve would result in loss of critical habitat for these federally-protected species.

Enter additional information about sensitive environments in and around your community.

2.4 Population & Land Use

Enter your community's population, growth, and land use information here.

2.5 Facilities of Concern/Interest

Facilities of concern and/or interest include any location that may be used as shelters or staging areas during an incident, schools and associated facilities that would need to be evacuated during an incident, and/or buildings of historical significance. The following facilities exist within the planning area for this Community Wildfire Protection Plan:

- Enter facility name/info here
- Enter facility name/info here
- Enter facility name/info here
- Enter facility name/info here

Enter additional information about structures within your community.

2.6 Transportation & Utilities

Utilities are generally defined as resources that are essential for the functioning of a society and economy. These resources commonly include: roads, airports, bridges, power plants, water/wastewater treatment plants, utility lines (electric, water, phone, cable, gas, etc.), water supply (lakes, rivers, dams) and communications facilities. The following utilities exist within the planning area for this CWPP:

- Enter facility name/info here
- Enter facility name/info here
- Enter facility name/info here
- Enter facility name/info here

2.7 Fire Response Capabilities

Wildfire response within Travis County is primarily handled by the City of Austin Fire Department and 13 Emergency Service Districts (ESDs). Under extreme wildfire conditions, the number of homes threatened can challenge even the best equipped and staffed fire departments. This necessitates individual wildfire preparedness, planning and mitigation.

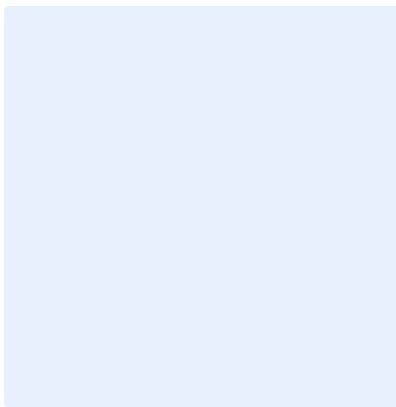
- Enter fire department name/info here
- Enter fire department name/info here
- Enter fire department name/info here
- Enter fire department name/info here

3.0 FIRE ENVIRONMENT

Wildland fires in the U.S. have been increasing in size and severity since regular records have been kept. Understanding central Texas fire ecology, historical and current fire occurrence of central Texas, and the factors that influence fire behavior on the landscape provide a basis for determining a community's wildfire risk and identifying and implementing effective wildfire prevention and mitigation strategies.

The Austin-Travis County CWPP has classified this planning area as having **high/medium/low** wildfire risk. This risk assessment was based on weather conditions, fuel quantities and types, Wildland Urban Interface, and structural ignitability. [Add further explanation of risk levels within your planning area.](#)

Figure 2. Community Risk Map



3.1 Fire Occurrence

Drought conditions, extreme weather conditions such as high winds, human error, and human carelessness are known factors in past wildfires throughout Central Texas. [Enter description of historical fires within or close to your planning area here.](#)

An important component of the present-day fire environment is the wildland-urban interface (WUI). The wildland-urban interface occurs in areas where urban and suburban development abuts wildland vegetation and presents a challenge in wildfire protection and preparation efforts. [Enter description of WUI within your planning area here.](#)

3.2 Fire Behavior

Understanding how wildfires behave is critical in determining potential risk, setting priorities, and identifying appropriate mitigation treatments. Wildfires can occur when all three of the following conditions are met: the presence of fuel (such as vegetation and homes), suitable weather conditions (such as low humidity), and an ignition source (such as a cigarette or lightning). These conditions are interrelated and affect each other.

Weather is critical to predicting fire behavior and is also the most extreme variable. Fire behavior in Central Texas is recognized to be wind and fuel driven, and continuing drought conditions increase the risk for extreme fire seasons.

[Add further explanation of fuel types within your planning area.](#)

4.0 MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Wildfire mitigation is the implementation of various precautionary measures that work to minimize the destructive effects of wildfire. Some measures focus on altering the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) to reduce the amount of fuels available, while other strategies concentrate on treating structures to improve their ability to withstand a wildfire.

[Add discussion on educating members of your community about wildfire protection.](#)

4.1 Prioritized Fuel Reduction

When guided by conservation-based principles, fuel-hazard reduction can facilitate long-term positive environmental outcomes and assist in the process of restoring health to the woodlands, scrublands, grasslands, and watersheds while providing for community wildfire resilience. Fuels reduction can be achieved through a variety of methods including mechanical treatment, chemical treatment, prescribed fire, and grazing.

PROJECT LOCATION	PRIMARY THREAT/RISK	RECOMMENDED ACTION/MITIGATION
Smith Hill	The community is located next to Huntsville park lands composed of pine forests that transition to blackland prairie with numerous eastern red cedars.	Fuels reduction around perimeter of the community in the form of a shaded fuel break and exploration of the reintroduction of prescribed burning on the remaining park land.

4.2 Treatment of Structural Ignitability

Any home located within the Wildland Urban Interface may be at risk in the event of a wildfire. Home design, construction materials, and immediate surroundings all contribute to the ease with which a home will ignite during a wildfire. Treatment of structural ignitability by homeowners in collaboration with fire professionals can help to reduce this risk. Additionally, maintaining “defensible space,” the area immediately surrounding a structure, is critical to a structure’s survival during a wildfire.

Maintaining at least 30 feet of nonburnable area around a structure is the minimum recommendation for the defensible space zone. Defensible space mitigation projects should take into consideration the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) which extends in a 200-foot radius around a home. Placement of vegetation, lawn care, and use of fire-resistant materials are all key components of mitigating the HIZ.

Several sections of a structure are vulnerable to a wildfire; however, there are precautions that homeowners and planners can take to reduce this vulnerability. “Hardening a home” is a phrase used to describe the use of non-combustible building materials and the maintenance of a debris-free area around the structure.

Enter discussion on advocating for and implementing measures to treat structural ignitability.

5.0 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

This Community Wildfire Protection Plan will be adopted by **enter the names of your key stakeholders** and acknowledged by the Texas A&M Forest Service in order to meet Healthy Forest Restoration Act requirements. The effectiveness of this CWPP is contingent upon the proper implementation of the recommendations presented in Section 4. Proper implementation will require the delegation of tasks to specific people and/or agencies who will collaborate to develop action plans for each identified project.

This Community Wildfire Protection Plan is a living document and will be reviewed every **enter the time cycle that your community will use** by the key stakeholders identified in Section 1. During these review periods, the risks identified in the CWPP will be reassessed and new prioritized actions will be identified.

6.0 DECLARATION OF AGREEMENT/CONCURRENCE

The following partners in the development of this Community Wildfire Protection Plan have reviewed and mutually agree on its contents:

Signature

Date

Name, Title, Agency/Organization

Signature

Date

Name, Title, Agency/Organization

Signature

Date

Name, Title, Agency/Organization

Signature

Date

Name, Title, Agency/Organization

APPENDICES

