

For Immediate Release

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Santa Clara County FireSafe Council Leads 110,000 Acre West Santa Clara Landscape Resilience Project

The project will achieve streamlined CEQA compliance by preparing a Project-Specific Analysis using the California Vegetation Treatment (CalVTP) Program EIR to advance shovel ready wildfire resilience initiatives. The Saratoga Fire Protection District will be the CEQA Lead Agency for this regional project.

December 10, 2024, Saratoga, CA—The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council (SCCFSC) announced today it has entered into a partnership agreement with the Saratoga Fire Protection District (SFPD) who will serve as the CEQA Lead Agency for the West Santa Clara Landscape Resilience Project. The project will achieve streamlined CEQA compliance by preparing a Project-Specific Analysis using the California Vegetation Treatment (CalVTP) Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

The Santa Clara County Fire Safe Council, in partnership with the Saratoga Fire Protection District and in collaboration with other private and public agency partners, is developing the West Santa Clara Landscape Resilience Project to implement ecologically restorative fuel reduction treatments across more than 110,000 acres in western Santa Clara County. Strategically placed treatments will focus on the Wildland Urban Interface and areas where high fuel loads are impacting the health of ecosystems. Public agency partners with lands in the project area include: Santa Clara County Parks, Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency, Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority, and the cities of Palo Alto, Cupertino, and Gilroy. The project area also includes ~80,000 acres of private lands.

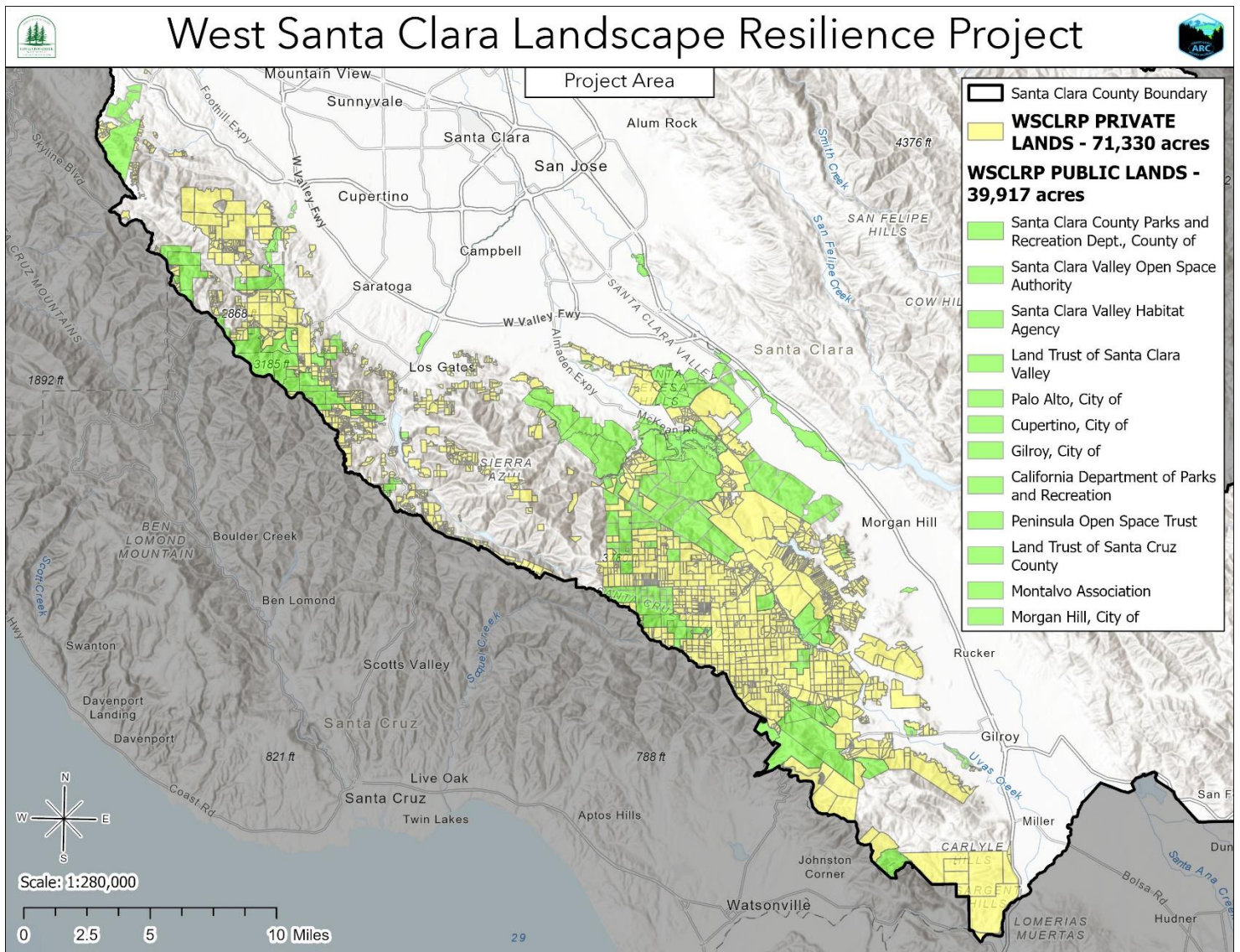
The project will achieve streamlined CEQA compliance by preparing a Project-Specific Analysis using the California Vegetation Treatment (CalVTP) Program EIR. The Saratoga Fire District will be the “Lead Agency,” under CEQA to complete preparation of the Project-specific Analysis. In the role of lead agency, the Saratoga Fire Protection District would enter into a partnership with the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council, who may coordinate implementation of the project. As lead agency, SFPD would approve the PSA, which would be prepared by consultants to the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council who have deep specialized expertise in CEQA and the CalVTP.

Having CEQA compliance at this landscape-scale will build off the work of the Los Gatos Creek Watershed Collaborative and the Santa Clara County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, to bring many more projects to a “shovel-ready” stage and help advance the region’s wildfire resiliency. The West Santa Clara County Landscape Resilience Project would build a legacy of public/private partnerships that plan and implement effective treatments across jurisdictions and for the benefit of many communities throughout Santa Clara County.

According to Seth Schalet, CEO of Santa Clara County FireSafe Council “The creation of the West Santa Clara Landscape Resilience Project, funded through our CAL FIRE Forest Health Grants, is a major step forward for Santa Clara County wildfire preparedness. We have a long-standing partnership with the Saratoga Fire Protection District and are thrilled they have agreed to deepen our partnership through participation as CEQA Lead Agency. We are grateful their Board shares our vision for a safer Santa Clara County.”

Saratoga Fire Commissioner Ernest Kraule stated that, “the Saratoga Fire Protection District is pleased to continue its collaboration with the FireSafe Council. The District believes that a streamlined CEQA compliance process for fuel reduction projects in the Wildland Urban Interface will further wildfire safety throughout the area.”

West Santa Clara Landscape Resilience Project Map:



About Santa Clara County FireSafe Council: As a 501 (c)3 nonprofit with a 20-year history, Santa Clara County FireSafe Council's core mission is to mobilize the people of Santa Clara County to protect their homes, communities, and environment from wildfires. As a trusted partner across the government, fire service, corporate and WUI residential communities, SCCFSC has led some of the most complex hazardous fuel reduction projects in the region. With a board and advisory council that has a deep expertise across the wildfire ecosystem including wildfire and environmental research, academia, emergency management, regional planning, technology products and wildland firefighting leadership, Santa Clara County FireSafe Council is uniquely positioned to lead cross-sector collaborations, government-private partnerships in Silicon Valley, Santa Clara County and beyond. For more information, visit www.sccfiresafe.org

About Saratoga Fire Protection District:

The Saratoga Fire Protection District was organized on February 18, 1924. It is an independent special district with a board of three elected fire commissioners. It provides services to approximately one-half of the City of Saratoga and sections of the unincorporated areas to the south through a contract with Santa Clara County Fire Department. By means of this contract, the Saratoga Fire Protection district is able to provide regional emergency services with local control. The District also leverages its resources by collaborating with the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council. For more information, visit www.saratogafire.org.

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The Los Gatos Creek Watershed Collaborative Forest Health Grant is a collaboration between public and private entities and is a part of California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment. particularly in disadvantaged communities. The Cap-and-Trade program also creates a financial incentive for industries to invest in clean technologies and develop innovative ways to reduce pollution. California Climate Investments projects include affordable housing, renewable energy, public transportation, zero- emission vehicles, environmental restoration, more sustainable agriculture, recycling, and much more. At least 35 percent of these investments are located within and benefiting residents of disadvantaged communities, low-income communities, and low-income households across California. For more information, visit the California Climate Investments website at: www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov.