

WUI VEGETATION CODE WORKGROUP

SPECIAL MEETING

AUGUST 20, 2025

5:30 PM

Fire Department Division of Training Classroom – 997 Cedar Street

Fire Chief's Representative- Asst. Chief Colin Arnold

Assistant Chief David Winnacker
Richard Illgen
George Perez-Velez

Eric Weaver
Margit Roos-Collins

Note: Assistant Chief Winnacker will be attending remotely from outside the city due to a prior commitment. This location is compliant with the requirements of the Brown Act for teleconferencing, and is located at 3018 Russell Rd., Quantico, VA 22134.

AGENDA

Preliminary Matters

Call to Order

Approval of the Agenda: N/A

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Matters

AGENDA MATTERS *All Regular agenda matters are for discussion and possible action.*

- 1. Action:** **Member Introductions**
Written Materials: Preliminary Agenda
Presentation:

2. Action: Timeline, Scope, Purpose, Goals and Ground Rules

Written Materials: Preliminary Agenda
Presentation:
Action:

3. Action: Priority Setting & Meeting Schedule

Written Materials: Preliminary Agenda
Presentation:

WORK GROUP REPORTS

Adjournment

This meeting will be conducted in accordance with the Brown Act, Government Code Section 54953. Any member of the public may attend this meeting. Questions regarding this matter may be addressed to the Wildland Urban Interface Division of the Berkeley Fire Department, wildfire@berkeleyca.gov 510-981-5620.

Communications to Berkeley boards, commissions or committees are public record and will become part of the City's electronic records, which are accessible through the City's website. Please note: E-mail addresses, names, addresses, and other contact information are not required but, if included in any communication to a City board, commission, or committee, will become part of the public record. If you do not want your e-mail address or any other contact information to be made public, you may deliver communications via U.S. Postal Service or in person to the secretary of the relevant board, commission, or committee. If you do not want your contact information included in the public record, please do not include that information in your communication. Please contact the secretary to the relevant board, commission, or committee for further information.

Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at Berkeley Fire Department located at 2100 Martin Luther King Jr. Way Berkeley, CA.

COMMUNICATION ACCESS INFORMATION:

This meeting is being held in a wheelchair-accessible location. To request a disability-related accommodation(s) to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact the Disability Services specialist at 981-6418 (V) or 981-6347 (TDD) at least three business days before the meeting date. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting.

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I hereby certify that the agenda for this regular/special meeting of the Berkeley City's Disaster and Fire Safety Commission was posted at the front of the Division of Training, 997 Cedar Street, as well as on the City's website, three days prior to the scheduled Commission meeting.

**SECRETARY SIGNATURE**



City of Berkeley WUI Vegetation Code Workgroup  
Meeting #1 Preliminary Agenda  
August 20th, 2025 at 997 Cedar St.

1. Introductions and goals

The workgroup was established at the City Council's direction to:

Review the vegetation management portion of the Fire Code to ensure that it is clear, reflects unique local conditions, and incorporates the best available fire science (inclusive of any more conservative code adopted by the California Board of Forestry).

2. Timeline and next steps

The workgroup is to:

Return with additional amendments to the City Council before December, 31, 2025 as part of the Fire Department's Triennial Fire Code Update Process. This will be achieved through meetings that are tentatively scheduled for Wednesdays at 9AM. In order to meet the mandate of returning to council before December 31<sup>st</sup>, recommendations need to be submitted to the fire chief no later than October 23<sup>rd</sup> to meet the final council meeting on December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

3. Scope and Limitations

The workgroup is charged with reviewing vegetation management portions of the fire code and the fire code does not extend beyond the city limits. As such, the workgroup should limit its discussions to items subject to the fire code. Of note, the city council's actions on 6/17 amended the fire code and will take effect 1 January 2026. Any changes to this code will likely take effect following the 1<sup>st</sup> January meeting of the city council, unless otherwise directed by council.

4. Purpose

This should be a round table where we collectively discuss the purpose of the group

- Facilitate implementation of requirements
- Reduce uncertainty amongst residents
- Identify AMMRs

5. Goals

- a. Clarify areas of uncertainty with the existing requirements
  - i. Tree removal
  - ii. Single specimen species
  - iii. Zone 1 requirements
  - iv. Zone 2 requirements
  - v. Decks
  - vi. Fences
- b. Clarify AMMR process
  - i. Review AMMR process and purpose

1. 1.11.2.4 Request for Alternate Means of Protection

*Requests for approval to use an alternative material, assembly or materials, equipment, method of construction, method of installation of equipment or means of protection shall be made in writing to the enforcing agency by the owner or the owner's authorized representative and shall be accompanied by a full statement of the conditions. Sufficient evidence or proof shall be submitted to substantiate any claim that may be made regarding its conformance. The enforcing agency may require tests and the submission of a test report from an approved testing organization as set forth in California Code of Regulations, Title 19, to substantiate the equivalency of the proposed alternative means of protection.*

2. Cal. Code Regs. Tit. 19, § 213 - Approved Testing Organization State Regulations

*(a) Qualifications. It shall be incumbent upon persons, firms, corporations, or associations desiring approval as a testing organization to corporations, or associations desiring approval as a testing organization to initiate a request and present to the State Fire Marshal evidence of their qualifications which in the judgement of the State Fire Marshal is sufficient to grant approval. For the purposes of this article, an approved testing organization shall mean any person, firm, corporation, or association which conforms to all of the following:*

*(1) Equipped or has access to facilities which are equipped to perform tests in accordance with the required test procedures.*

*(2) Organizations which employ personnel who are qualified for testing. Evidence of such qualifications may include persons who are registered engineers in an appropriate discipline.*

*(3) Approved by the State Fire Marshal.*

ii. Share an example from a non-wildfire AMMR that was approved by the Building Official

iii. Work as a group to identify AMMRs that will be approved and mechanism to share approved AMMRs

c. Clarify modification process and network effect to achieve the same practical effect to include extended time to comply

d. Identify unique local conditions

e. Introduce science that suggests alternative approaches may have the same practical effect

6. Ground rules

Establish :

i. Science (follows the scientific method)

1. Objective observation characterized by measurement and data

2. Experiment and/or observation as benchmarks for testing hypotheses
  3. Repeatability
  4. Falsifiability
  5. Verification and testing: critical exposure to scrutiny, peer review and assessment
- ii. Opinion (does not meet the characteristics listed above)
  - iii. Observation and anecdotes
- Establish deadlines for submission of material and method

7. Priority setting

From the list of goals

8. Meeting cadence and scheduling

9. Adjourn

Related actions we should report on that are outside the scope of this committee:

1. Semi annual updates to council on regional efforts
2. Removal of misdemeanor language