



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: JUNE 18, 2024**

FROM: RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES **WARDS: ALL**

SUBJECT: APPROVE THE RIVERSIDE PUBLIC UTILITIES 2024 WILDFIRE MITIGATION PLAN PREPARED IN ACCORDANCE WITH CALIFORNIA PUBLIC UTILITIES CODE SECTION 8387 FOR SUBMITTAL TO THE WILDFIRE SAFETY ADVISORY BOARD

ISSUE:

Approve the Riverside Public Utilities 2024 Wildfire Mitigation Plan for submittal to the Wildfire Safety Advisory Board in accordance with California Public Utilities Code Section 8387.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council approve the Riverside Public Utilities 2024 Wildfire Mitigation Plan for submittal to the Wildfire Safety Advisory Board in accordance with California Public Utilities Code Section 8387.

BOARD RECOMMENDATION:

On June 10, 2024, the Board of Public Utilities will make a recommendation to the City Council on the Riverside Public Utilities 2024 Wildfire Mitigation Plan for submittal to the Wildfire Safety Advisory Board in accordance with California Public Utilities Code Section 8387. Given the Board of Public Utilities will consider this item after the publication of this Report, the recommendation will be available at the June 18, 2024, City Council meeting.

BACKGROUND:

The Riverside Public Utilities (RPU) Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP or Plan) is prepared annually to meet the standards set forth in Section 8387 of the Public Utilities Code. On June 26, 2023, the Board of Public Utilities, and on July 18, 2023, the Riverside City Council approved the Riverside Public Utilities 2023 Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP or Plan) for submittal to the Wildfire Safety Advisory Board (WSAB) in accordance with California Public Utilities Code Section 8387. Following City Council approval, the 2023 WMP was submitted to the WSAB.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose and content of RPU's WMP is identified in California Public Utilities Code Section 8287. As such, the WMP is a compliance document. RPU is provided latitude in how it responds and addresses the required contents, but the focus of the plan is very specific and directs electric utilities to describe the actions they are taking to reduce the risk of their electric equipment causing a wildfire. The WMP needs to be specific and only address the required contents to assist the WSAB and members of the public that are reviewing the report for compliance with State code and intent.

While there are many detailed sections that must be included in the WMP, there are essentially six key components:

1. Identify the High Fire Threat Districts (HFTD) in RPU Service Territory
2. Identify RPU electric infrastructure located within the HFTD
3. Assess the fire risk posed by electric infrastructure in HFTD, including environmental conditions such as high wind events or high heat events that may exacerbate fire risk
4. Establish preventative strategies that RPU is taking to reduce fire risk by electric infrastructure in HFTD
5. Implement customer support and communications if de-energization is utilized as a wildfire risk preventative strategy
6. Identify the metrics and processes that RPU will take to evaluate the effectiveness of the preventative strategies

Per the guidelines of the WSAB, utilities are required to conduct a comprehensive revision to the Plan every three years. The comprehensive revision years should include contracting with a qualified independent evaluator with experience in assessing the safe operation of electrical infrastructure to review and assess the comprehensiveness of its wildfire mitigation plan. The independent evaluator shall issue a report that shall be made available on the utility's website and shall present the report at a public meeting of the utility's governing board. RPU completed a comprehensive revision in 2023, which included an independent evaluator review. The 2023 Plan and independent evaluator report is available on RPU's website.

2024 Wildfire Mitigation Plan

RPU's 2024 WMP, updated by RPU's Wildfire Working Group, and with concurrence from the Riverside Fire Department, includes the six key components listed above. It complies with the requirements of Public Utilities Code Section 8387 for publicly owned electric utilities to prepare a wildfire mitigation plan by January 1st, 2020, and update/review the plan annually thereafter. The 2024 Plan was not a comprehensive revision; therefore, an independent evaluator review was not required. The 2024 plan includes only minor, non-substantive changes, as well as updates to metrics, accomplishments, and project statuses.

Submission Deadline

If approved by City Council, the 2024 RPU WMP will be submitted to the WSAB on July 1, 2024.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This item contributes to **Strategic Priority 4 - Environmental Stewardship** and **Strategic Priority 6 - Infrastructure, Mobility and Connectivity** and the following goals:

Goal 4.3 – Implement local and support regional proactive policies and inclusive decision-making processes to deliver environmental justice and ensure that all residents breathe healthy and clean air with the goal of having zero days of unhealthy air quality per the South Coast Air Quality District’s Air Quality Index (AQI).

Goal 4.6 – Implement the requisite measures to achieve citywide carbon neutrality no later than 2040.

Goal 6.2 – Maintain, protect, and improve assets and infrastructure within the City’s built environment to ensure and enhance reliability, resiliency, sustainability, and facilitate connectivity.

This item aligns with each of the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust** – This item addresses strategies to prevent wildfire caused by RPU electrical equipment and articulates a clear communications strategy for our customers in a de-energization event ensuring public safety for the greater public good.
2. **Equity** – This item is utility-wide and identifies measures and strategies to protect the safety and wellbeing of all customers of RPU and many areas of the region.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – This item represents fiscal responsibility by establishing strategies to minimize potential wildfires and the associated financial impacts that RPU and the City could incur.
4. **Innovation** – This item identifies new technology and deployment of a new infrastructure that helps RPU mitigate the risks of its electrical equipment causing a wildfire.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency** – Wildfires are a major source of greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change as well as source of emissions that negatively impact local air quality. This item reduces the potential that a wildfire will occur due to RPU’s electrical equipment and thus reduces the potential release of greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants that negatively affect air quality.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item.

Prepared by:	Daniel Honeyfield, Assistant General Manager/Energy Delivery
Approved by:	David A. Garcia, Interim Utilities General Manager
Certified availability of funds:	Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Approved by:	Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form:	Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. 2024 RPU Wildfire Mitigation Plan
2. Presentation