

Grove Street Fire Safe Council

2023-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN



FOR THE COMMUNITIES LOCATED ALONG THE GROVE STREET
CORRIDOR IN THE WEST SONOMA HILLS

Organizational Background

The Grove Street Fire Safe Council is a community volunteer-based organization founded in August of 2019, self-elected from the Grove Street emergency preparedness committee, which covers an area located on the southeast flank of Sonoma Mountain, in the Sonoma Valley, that consists of around 301 homes, three businesses (not including the homeowners' associations, recreational centers and mutual water companies), extensive agricultural or vineyard land and open space on 2,954 parceled acres.

In April of 2020, the GSFSC formalized itself as a non-profit, providing wildland fire protection education and outreach, reducing wildfire risk, and helping the community prepare for wildfire. The GSFSC is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors, and each serving four-year term.

In sum, the entire GSFSC area comprises a total of 366 mostly developed parcels cover 2954 acres of predominantly wildland intermix on a one way in one way out road and are at high risk of wildfire due to numerous factors including fuels build up, most houses are built in the wildland, narrow winding roads, and homeowners who are not fully aware of the risks nor prepared to meet them.

Strategic Planning

For many successful organizations, the community's voice drives its operations and charts the course for its future. The GSFSC seeks to gather the input from their community and utilize the needs and expectations of its community in the development and improvement of its organization. The strategic planning process for this document utilized the communities input to help chart the course for the councils' future.

A strategic plan is a living document that provides short-term direction, documents goals and objectives, and optimizes the use of resources. Through this document, it provides an understanding of where the organization is going, how everyone involved can work towards the common purpose, and how accomplishments can be measured.

It's important to recognize the accomplishments this organization has been able to achieve so far and document that success. The GSFSC accomplished the following:

- Development of a community wildfire protection plan
- Performed an evacuation drill with collaboration from Sonoma County Dept. of Emergency Management, law enforcement and fire agencies
- Organized community chipper services
- Developed and distributed an emergency preparedness booklet
- Identified properties with hazardous vegetation
- Purchased and installed Fire Danger signs along Grove Street
- Purchased and installed address signs
- Received grant funding for fuels reduction along Grove Street
- Performed home assessments and educated property owners

Community Group Findings

Since the GSFSC is a community based organization, the council wanted to recognize the importance of their community's satisfaction with the input they might offer the council. Thus, the council distributed an online survey in 2022 to the community to provide feedback on the services provided by the council. Community members were asked to prioritize programs and services provided by the council. Additionally, input was gathered around the community's expectations and positive and other comments about the council. This feedback provided a process to ensure the council was in alignment for the future in developing its mission statement and goals for improvement in the planning process.

Community Priorities

In order to provide the best services to its community, the feedback survey was analyzed to understand what the community considers to be their priorities. The results were as follows:

Programs

Updates on emergency information	34
Roadside fuel reduction	31
Evacuation/egress planning	29
Hazardous fuels reduction (parcels)	28
Home assessments/hardening	23
Public education/outreach	21
Chipper services	21
Fuel breaks (shaded/easements/trails)	16

Organization Group Findings

The GSFSC stakeholder work session served to discuss the organization as a whole, focusing on the council's mission, core programs, and support services. Additionally, focus was given to identify the organization's strengths, weakness, service gaps, and critical issues. The work session involved the following participants from the GSFSC:

David Duncan

Nancy Sheppard

Brady Mullin

Robert Shokes

Nancy Kirwan

Mark Hannon

Harold Marsh



Mission

The mission statement describes the purpose of your organization's existence. The work group met to revisit the existing mission statement and a whole new mission was created and accepted by the entire group:

The Grove Street Fire Safe Council is a volunteer organization dedicated to promoting wildfire risk reduction, and helping the community to prepare for wildfire.

Core Programs

It is important to understand an organization's core programs which are the main benefits received by the community when services are provided to them. Through a facilitated brainstorming session, the council's stakeholders agreed upon the core programs that they would provide to the community while taking into account the feedback survey results.



SWOT Analysis

Through a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats), an organization identifies its positive and negative aspects. The analysis also provides an opportunity to identify areas in which it can improve and those that pose a danger. Stakeholders participated in a brain storming activity to record this data which provided further guidance toward identifying potential development of future goals.



Strategic Initiatives

Based upon the captured information discussed during the work session, the following key initiatives were identified:

Education

Risk Reduction

Preparedness

Organizational Development

Goals and Objectives

To achieve the mission of the GSFSC, goals and objectives must be established to provide a clear direction for the organization and address the community's concerns. These will direct the organization to its desired future. Leadership should review the progress of these throughout the year.

Goal 1- Develop an education plan to address the needs of the community.

Tasks

- *Analyze and revise current communications plan*
- *Plan and schedule public reach out events*
- *Analyze the need to update evacuation planning resources*
- *Promote home assessments*
- *Improve the public information announcement education*

Goal 2- Enhance the comprehensive risk reduction activities.

Tasks

- *Support SVFD/County chipper services program*
- *Plan and schedule the Grove Street corridor fuel reduction project*
- *Execute/Analyze the home assessment program*
- *Continue focus on the hazardous properties program*
- *Evaluate and develop fuel break strategy with the collaboration external stakeholders*
- *Evaluate opportunities for prescribed burns or managed grazing*
- *Support and continue shaded fuel breaks along trails/easements*

- *Continue to collaborative with external stakeholders on risk reduction projects*

Goal 3- Pursue preparedness efforts to enhance service to the community.

Tasks

- *Evaluate the need to perform another evacuation drill*
- *Execute the communications plan*
- *Increase home assessments*
- *Promote external media resources to receive accurate and timely information*
- *Reach out to other community groups and stakeholders for opportunities to improve communication and relationships*

Goal 4- Develop a workforce plan that improves staffing, recruitment, retention, and succession planning.

Tasks

- *Develop a communications team*
- *Develop a process for outsourcing grant writing*
- *Develop a guideline for external communications*
- *Survey new recruits to determine areas of interest*
- *Develop a plan to guide support volunteers*
- *Identify support services staffing needs*
- *Develop a process for succession planning*
- *Seek internal and external training opportunities for skills development*
- *Review staffing needs annually*

Community Feedback

- Keep doing what you are doing
- Amazing council- continue as is
- Thank you for providing safety to the residents
- You are doing a great job- Thank You

