

# Align the CWPP with Other Plans for Maximum Impact



Aligning the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) with other local plans helps maximize the potential impact of wildfire planning activities. “Plan alignment” entails identifying and reviewing relevant plans that may relate to wildfire topics addressed in a CWPP, connecting this information with other plans to align content, data, goals, and strategies, and reducing conflicts between plans. Plan alignment activities may also include engaging primary contacts associated with other plans to provide additional insights and coordination opportunities. This best practice reduces the need for duplication or unnecessary repetition of content; ensures plans work synergistically as opposed to having conflicting or inconsistent information; and reinforces goals, actions, and strategies across plans to leverage opportunities for funding and advance implementation.

## Plan Alignment Strategies

Strategies to effectively align a CWPP with other plans include:

- **Review other plans during the CWPP development process.** There are multiple plans to consider for review, applicability, and alignment during the development of a CWPP. Plans will vary based on each local jurisdiction and the CWPP’s defined boundaries (i.e. whether the CWPP is for a county or local scale), but typical plans to consider reviewing include:
  - **Local / Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plans** contain an assessment of wildfire hazard, identified values at risk, and mitigation strategies.
  - **Local CWPPs** that are within or adjacent to the CWPP planning area that may contain relevant data, priorities, or other information.



## Best Practice: Plan Alignment

- **General Plan Safety Element** contains goals, policies, and objectives related to addressing wildfire hazard, climate adaptation and resilience, including information on vulnerability, current, and future conditions related to wildfire.
- **Post-Disaster Recovery Plans** guide recovery efforts following wildfire (and other) disasters, and include information on roles, responsibilities, priorities, and other short- and long-term strategies.
- **CAL FIRE Unit Fire Plans** address how each CAL FIRE Unit and Contract County is achieving the goals and objectives of the statewide Strategic Fire Plan through fire and fuels management, fire prevention, collaborative plan development, and other locally coordinated activities.
- **Additional General Plan Elements, including Housing, Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, and Environmental Justice Element(s)**, provide valuable information on a jurisdiction's goals, objectives, and policies related to each of these topics, which can intersect with goals of wildfire hazard planning.
- **Other Master Plans, Community Plans, or Neighborhood Plans** can also reveal local approaches to specific topics (e.g., recreation, resilience) or geographic areas (e.g., districts, mountain communities).
- **Urban Forestry Plans**, such as those supported by CAL FIRE's Urban Forestry Program, support local government initiatives to develop sustainable urban and community forests through urban forest plans. These plans are strongly linked to the vegetation management components of CWPPs, and CAL FIRE provides technical guidance and grant funding opportunities.
- **Wildfire Mitigation Plans**, developed by utility providers, address wildfire risks of the electrical grid and provide important data and information about this type of critical infrastructure that can help inform the CWPP.
- **State and Federal Plans** that are relevant to the CWPP, such as those that provide strategic direction on wildfire mitigation, suppression, and natural resource management activities.
- **Connect with primary contacts for each identified plan.** Contacting departments, agencies, or other entities responsible for plans that have potential connection points with the CWPP (e.g., shared data or content, mutually-beneficial actions), can help quickly identify ways to reduce duplication and align wildfire risk reduction goals. Relevant plan contacts may also be able to share how the other plan is being implemented, the timeframe for anticipated updates, original data sources, or other ways that alignment can occur with the CWPP.
- **Align future plan update cycles.** When possible, align the timing of the next major CWPP update with the timing of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan or General Plan Safety Element update, two planning efforts that are typically updated on regular cycles. This makes it easier to leverage goals, policies, and actions across multiple plans to increase coordination among partners and impact from



implementation activities. This can also ease the time commitments required by stakeholders if they can be engaged in a coordinated approach to plan updates.

### Plan Alignment in Action

Jurisdictions across California are aligning their local CWPP(s) with other plans in multiple ways. One of the key strategies being implemented for CWPP plan alignment is to incorporate the CWPP into the General Plan Safety Element. The Town of Mammoth Lakes took this approach by incorporating its CWPP and Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP) into its General Plan. These linkages are made clear on the [Town's General Plan website](#). Adopting these plans by reference in the General Plan Safety Elements elevates the role of the CWPP (and other plans) to support a comprehensive approach toward wildfire risk reduction.

In addition, the Town of Mammoth Lakes' Public Health and Safety Element (2019) contains information from the draft CWPP (which was not yet finalized at the time) related to wildfire response characteristics, future wildfire risk based on available fuels, and changes associated with climate change. Goals and policies contained in the Town's element establish a clear connection between both planning documents. For example, one of the goals (S.6) is to "Promote community resilience through collaboration on the preparation of the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, Community Wildfire Protection Plan, and adoption of fire safe regulations and fire inspections." Two associated policies to implement this goal include coordinating and participating with the Mammoth

Lakes Fire Protection District (MLFPD) on the preparation of a CWPP and linking land use planning activities to hazard plans and post-disaster recovery. Specific actions also include working with partners to periodically update hazard plans and the Safety Element to incorporate the latest information and data and evaluate progress on actions.

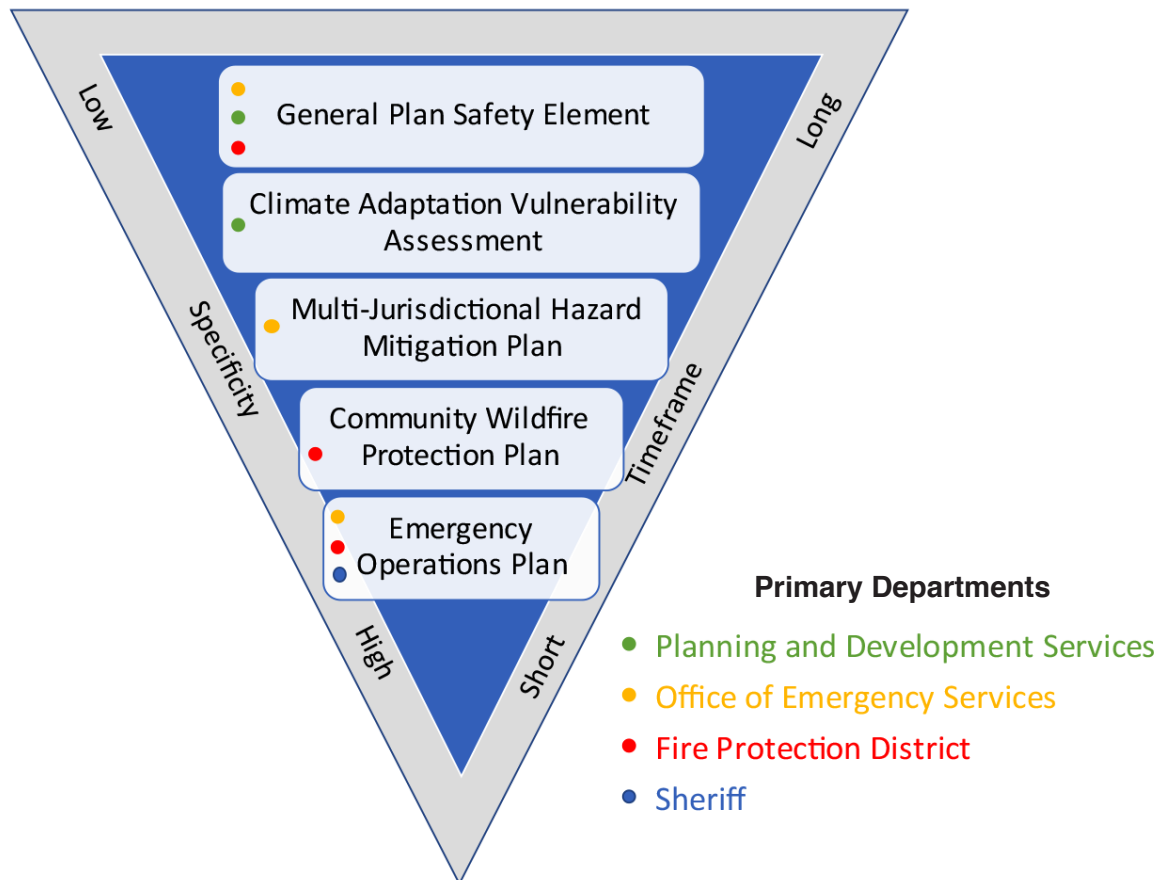
The County of San Diego provides another example of how the County includes information about their CWPP in the General Plan. The [County's Safety Element \(2021\)](#) provides an overview of relevant hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness plans, including locally adopted CWPPs, and describes each plan category in terms of its primary purpose with any notable relationship to the General Plan. Relevant actions include ensuring that community plan updates consider incorporating information on identified existing and new evacuation routes into CWPPs.

With any General Plan Safety Element update, staff from CAL FIRE's [Land Use Planning Program](#) work closely with jurisdictions to provide guidance on Safety Element updates to ensure compliance with [state hazard planning requirements](#). As part of this process, CAL FIRE staff help ensure the Safety Element is aligned with the jurisdiction's other hazard and land use plans, including any applicable CWPPs. "By including the CWPP as a component of the General Plan Safety Element," says Staff Chief Matt Damon, who oversees CAL FIRE's [Land Use Planning program](#), "it helps keep wildfire at the forefront of land use planning decisions that may occur across multiple planning, fire and emergency management, and other departments in the future."



## Best Practice: Plan Alignment

The County of San Diego's General Plan Safety Element includes graphics such as this to provide information about disaster preparedness emergency plans and primary departments responsible for each plan. Image credit: County of San Diego Planning and Development Services.



Jurisdictions also take steps to identify relevant plans in their CWPPs. [Mariposa County's CWPP \(2024\)](#) includes a section on Relevant Plans with a table that lists federal, state, regional, county, and local plans that have a high relevance to content and actions in the County's CWPP. The table identifies each plan's name, date of plan adoption or last update, and plan leads; the table also describes each plan's general purpose and key points in terms of its relevance to the CWPP.

Mariposa County's plan alignment activities are further described in the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation [Wildfire Resilience Plan Alignment Guide](#)—part of their

Plan Alignment Toolkit. The Mariposa County case study shows how different plans, including the County's CWPP, Recreation and Resiliency Master Plan, Mariposa Creek Parkway Master Plan, and others align to support topics including land use planning, traditional ecological knowledge, wildfire resilience and adaptation, parks and recreation planning, and forest health.

Finally, CWPPs can be fully integrated with other plans. Many jurisdictions choose to adopt their CWPP as an annex or addendum to their Local or Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP). As mentioned above, the Town of Mammoth Lakes adopted their CWPP as an annex to their County's





MJHMP, a strategy that supports further alignment between the two plans and can help to leverage future funding for implementation.

Butte County took the approach of adopting a combined CAL FIRE Unit Fire Plan and CWPP, which is fully integrated as a single plan. This approach worked well for a couple of reasons. First, the relationship between CAL FIRE and the County goes back to 1931, so there is a long shared history and strong relationships that helped foster the collaboration. Second, the CAL FIRE Butte Unit encompasses just Butte County, whereas many CAL FIRE units cover several counties. “While this approach may not be feasible for everyone, we had the benefit of that collaboration to help us merge our two plans and achieve shared goals for wildfire risk reduction,” says Spencer Mallinger, a Pre-Fire Engineer for CAL FIRE’s Butte Unit. Other benefits of this approach include expanding the number of partners who are engaged in the combined plan and aligning community goals with state goals for wildfire risk reduction.



*Partners in the CWPP process meet to discuss wildfire mitigation in Butte County's WUI. Photo credit: Calli-Jane West, Butte County Fire Safe Council.*

As noted, however, there may be some key differences between plans. When integrating plans, these differences should be acknowledged prior to the planning process to ensure all CWPP requirements are met. For example, development of Unit Fire Plans traditionally does not incorporate the same level of robust public engagement as CWPPs or necessarily include other topics that residents care about (e.g., wildlife habitat, health impacts). For more information on Unit Fire Plans and CWPPs, see the resources below.

### Additional Tips for Success

- Incorporate plan alignment strategies early on in the process. The sooner relevant plans are identified and reviewed, the easier it is to shape CWPP content to align with or leverage existing content, plan goals, and coordinate with other plan stakeholders.
- Distribute the final CWPP to key partners. Once the CWPP is final, distribute the plan to key partners and request that the new CWPP be referenced in other documents as they undergo revisions or updates.
- Create an infographic, such as the example by San Diego County, or other visual materials to help communicate the relationships across plans. This can be especially helpful when sharing information with the public or others that may be less familiar with multiple plans. See additional resources under the Plan Alignment Toolkit for visual examples.



### Key Resources

#### Plan Alignment Toolkit

The Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation has a [Plan Alignment Toolkit](#) that offers a suite of collaboration tools for local government staff and decision-makers, tribes and tribal-serving organizations, community members and non-profits, regional entities, and others. The toolkit includes:

- An online [interactive component](#) to filter different plans and hazards and receive customized alignment guidance.
- An online and downloadable [Wildfire Resilience Plan Alignment Guide](#), including a list of relevant plans and legislation to consider for alignment, a detailed case study on Mariposa County's approach to plan alignment, and an example strategy for the timing of plan updates.
- Additional [tips and best practices](#) on building an alignment team, integrating and aligning public engagement, advancing equity and environmental justice, and more.

#### Fire Hazard Planning Technical Advisory and WUI Planning Guide

The Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation offers [two technical guidance documents](#) on planning for wildfire which include detailed information on the General Plan Safety Element and other plans: [Fire Hazard Planning Technical Advisory](#) and [Wildland-Urban Interface Planning Guide](#). Together, these resources provide information and guidance on the General Plan Safety Element requirements, descriptions on relevant fire and land use plans for the WUI, examples and best practices for WUI planning, and more.

#### CAL FIRE Unit Fire Plans

CAL FIRE's Pre-Fire Planning program supports CWPPs, CAL FIRE Unit Fire Plans, the current CAL FIRE Strategic Fire Plan, and federally registered Communities at Risk. Their [program website](#) includes links to each CAL FIRE Unit Fire Plan.

#### American Planning Association's Planning the Wildland-Urban Interface

[Planning the Wildland-Urban Interface](#) is a free downloadable publication available for anyone interested in learning more about the WUI, wildfire hazard and risk concepts, WUI planning tools, and more. Chapter 5 focuses on a holistic WUI planning framework for building consistency between locally and regionally applicable plans and policies.

#### CAL FIRE Urban and Community Forestry

[CAL FIRE'S Urban and Community Forestry Program](#) provides resources for developing and maintaining sustainable urban forests in California, including grants, programs, and technical assistance.

**Interested in more CWPP best practices and guidance? Explore the entire CWPP Toolkit [here](#).**



### About the California CWPP Toolkit

The California CWPP Toolkit was co-developed by CAL FIRE’s Community Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Division, Community Wildfire Planning Center, Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network, and California Fire Safe Council.

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