



**Truckee Fire Protection District
Measure T
Community Wildfire Prevention Fund
Implementation Plan
2021-2023**

11/16/2021

Measure T Funds Implementation

On September 14, 2021 voters within the Truckee Fire Protection District boundaries, who live in the Truckee and Donner Summit areas, voted overwhelmingly to approve the wildfire prevention Measure T. This Measure is a special property tax that will cost property owners \$179 annually and will create an annual \$3.7 million dollar community wildfire prevention fund that will be required by law to be spent on various fuel reduction and wildfire prevention projects intended to reduce the threat of wildfire in the Truckee and Donner Summit wildland urban interface (WUI) areas. Measure T will sunset in 8 years and will need to go back to voters to continue.

This property tax will first appear on the tax rolls in the 2022/23 fiscal year with the District anticipating receiving the first full year of revenues by June 2023. Since funds will not be available until summer of 2023, the District will borrow money from the existing operations reserve fund to begin implementation summer of 2022.

The District will continue efforts to secure grant funding and matching funds from granting agencies and land managers whenever possible. Generally, the goal of Measure T is to fund new, additional, and faster fuel reduction, and not to pay for already existing and funded programs.

Although the District wants to move quickly to implement the various wildfire prevention programs funded by Measure T, it's important to remember that the fuels problem has been growing for 100 years, and it will take the next 10-20 years and beyond of consistent fuels reduction to make a significant impact. Similar to much of the Sierra, most of the Truckee WUI has not experienced a wildfire, forestry practices have changed, more people have moved to the WUI and climate change is taking its toll, all leading to too much fuel in and around our neighborhoods. With the passing of Measure T, the community has demonstrated their interest in a long-term local solution that will have short term and long-term positive impacts.

Citizens Oversight Committee

The Board of Directors created a Citizens Oversight Committee to review Measure T spending on an annual basis following the annual District financial audit each Fall. The citizens committee will review the previous years' work program and the Measure T related expenses and will report back to the BOD describing to what extent the funds have been spent consistent with the tax measure.

The Board will ask for applications from interested property owners in the Fire District in Summer of 2022. The Board intends to appoint a group of individuals with varied backgrounds to meet, review expenditures, and report back to the Board on a regular basis, starting in Fall of 2022. The Board will send out an announcement for interested people to submit an online application in the summer of 2022 at TruckeeFire.org. It will also be posted on this website.

Low Income Exemption

The Measure has a low-income exemption. People that earn less than 80% of the Median Family Income (MFI), as designated by each County, can apply for an exemption. To see if you meet the exemption go to TruckeeFire.org website and go to the Measure T page for instructions, or call the office at 530-582-7850. If you think you meet the exemption, you can complete the online application. This program will be managed by the District consultant in these matters, SCI Financial consulting.

Contiguous Property Exemption (under Board consideration)

The Board is considering allowing an exemption for smaller or odd shaped properties that are attached to a single-family residence property, and are considered unbuildable. Occasionally, people have acquired these smaller lots in unusual purchase, County border, or access situations. These can put an increased financial burden on the single-family residence property owner that may have 2, 3 or even 4 small, unbuildable lots adjoining their property, each assigned with their own APN. The Board is working with a consultant to understand the extent of the issues and determine if mitigation is necessary.

Wildfire Prevention Projects

The revenues from the Measure are intended to fund programs that reduce the threat and intensity of wildfire in the Truckee and Donner Summit WUI (Wildland Urban Interface) by reducing fuel loads and better preparing the community for wildfire. Projects that reduce fuel are generally in two areas, 1) support of residential defensible space and 2) larger land forestry type projects. Although we will not have the full revenue stream until the 2023 season, the District plans to start work now using operational reserve funds which will be reimbursed when Measure T revenues arrive. It's important to remember that this fire fuels problem has been growing for the last 100 years, and it will likely take the next 10-20 years to make significant progress.

Like most revenue sources, there is not an endless amount of funds; projects are prioritized by the District to achieve the largest return on investment in terms of fire prevention. This is a baseline and preliminary master project list and there will likely be changes to the list as new opportunities become available and costs and benefits change over time. We will work to provide ongoing project status updates on this website throughout the year.

The District will create an annual budget each spring, along with the regular District budget, that will outline expected revenues and expenditures for the next fiscal year (FY).

2022 Season Planned Projects

Project Management

Efficiently and effectively spending the Measure's revenues at a pace and scale that will make an impact in the WUI will require the addition of key staff positions. Although most of the work will ideally be completed by independent contractors, the planning, implementation, and oversight will need to be carried out by a small team of qualified and experienced professionals. The District will recruit and hire a qualified program manager responsible for Measure T activities in 2022. This new position will report to the Fire Chief. Additionally, we will be recruiting and hiring a Registered Professional Forester/WUI expert in 2022 to support forestry projects. Additional staff, consultants, or part-time contract positions may be required in the future, including a CEQA expert, Timber Harvest Planner, and an additional project manager. However, most on-the-ground work ideally will be completed by independent contractors.

Benefit: Measure T funds will be managed by a small, but dedicated and experienced team with support of existing Fire District management and support staff. This team will be located at Station 91 in existing District space.

Green Waste Curbside Pickup

Assisting property owners with their efforts to maintain defensible space is a key objective of the Measure's revenues. Making it easier and less expensive for people to remove these fuels from around their home can reduce the threat and intensity of wildfires in a neighborhood. Limited transportation and disposal options have long been a barrier for people to do more work around their homes. Although properties within the Town limits and some HOAs have various green waste disposal programs such as green bins, occasional chipping and curbside pick-up, we plan to close the gaps with this initiative.

We plan to provide defensible space green waste pick-up in front of residential properties throughout the spring, summer, and fall, each year, in addition to existing programs. The work will go to bid this winter with a contractor(s) in place by next season 2022.

Benefit: Getting material from the residence to the landfill is a barrier for people removing fire fuels from around their home. We anticipate removing 1,000 tons in the first season, growing to 5,000 tons, of defensible space fire fuels from the WUI annually.

Residential Property Defensible Space Inspections and Education

Defensible space inspectors meet, and typically have positive interactions, with property owners and residents to provide education about needed fuel reduction to meet the law (Public Resource Code 4291 and Local Ordinances), and achieve generally accepted wildfire safety standards. They provide feedback on a standardized form and tracking system and are able to follow-up and hold property owners accountable when necessary. Current inspections in the District are triggered by voluntary request, home sales, Short Term Rental Permits, some HOA requests, and construction final inspections. Adding more inspectors will increase the number of inspections and compliance annually, and will allow us to

target specific areas of the community. We are planning to hire four additional seasonal defensible space inspectors for the 2022 season to double the number of annual inspections in the District. These positions will be in place by June 2022.

We are also looking at adding a more robust inspection reporting tool that will provide more information about violations and create an enhanced tracking and communication platform for more effective communication with property owners as well as follow up. We will likely implement the new reporting software summer of 2022.

Benefit: Inspectors provide property inspections, education, and accountability to property owners on work that needs completing in order to meet the Public Resource Code 4291, local Ordinances, and fire safety best practices. The additional inspectors will increase annual inspections to over 4,000. The improved reporting format will enhance property owner follow up and communication.

Larger Land Forestry and Fuels Reduction Projects

Identifying and completing environmentally sensitive fuel reduction on larger pieces of land in and around the District is a priority in the Measure. This work on these lands in the WUI can act as a halo around the community or particular neighborhood in the event of an approaching fire, as well as reduce the fuel load in the community near homes and businesses to reduce a fire's intensity.

The focus on the first year is to update the current Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) because this document will help prioritize and inform this work. The District is in progress of completing about \$3 million in grant funded work in the WUI that will be mostly complete next season allowing for a transition to the next Measure T forestry projects in subsequent years. This year we will hire a full-time Registered Professional Forester/WUI expert, complete the collaborative CWPP with land managers, and begin preparation of priority properties for work in 2023 season. The fuel reduction budget will be \$500,000-1,500,000 annually. This forestry work will be in addition to other land managers forestry projects funded by their agencies or the Community Grant portion of Measure T funds.

Benefit: Reduce fuels on larger pieces of land in and around neighborhoods will reduce fire intensity and make a healthier, more sustainable forest. We plan to treat over 5,000 acres of land in the WUI over the next 10 years.

Community Wildfire Prevention Plan Update (CWPP)

The development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) follows a process and framework that was laid out in the 2004 Healthy Forest Act and is a collaborative process to identify and prioritize wildfire risk in the community. Truckee Fire facilitated the first Truckee CWPP in 2016. With the passing of Measure T, and considering the age of the plan, it is important to update the CWPP. We will retain a consultant and update the CWPP in 2022. The CWPP will capture many of the large land fuel reduction projects in the WUI from participating land managers/property owners. Typically over 20 local land managers and Federal and State firefighting agencies participate in the process.

Benefit: The CWPP will provide the prioritized list of larger lands in the WUI that need forestry and fuel reduction work and is based on generally accepted environmentally and culturally sensitive forestry practices.

Planned Projects for 2023 season and beyond

Although the priority projects are the removal of green waste to support defensible space work, hiring inspectors, and larger land fuel reduction-type projects in the WUI, there are a number of other smaller projects that can make an impact on wildfire prevention. The District currently plans to implement some or all of these projects as quickly as possible. However, each year the costs and benefit will be reevaluated to make sure we are spending money with the best wildfire prevention return on investment.

Residential Dead Tree Fund

Trees often die from drought stress and the bark beetle in the Fire District. These dead trees become a fire hazard to the neighborhood and need to be removed promptly to prevent the spread of the bark beetle that could lead to more tree death and continue to increase the fire problem in the Central and Southern Sierra. We estimate 50-100 trees need to be taken out of residential properties in the District annually, although we are not exactly sure of the number. If the drought gets worse in subsequent years, it may be difficult to fully fund this need in the future.

Benefit: Reduce fire hazard and bark beetle habitat.

Community Fuel Reduction Grants

One way of getting more work done faster, which is one of the Measure's objectives, is asking groups in the community that are experienced in fuel reduction to do more or larger projects with these revenues. We will encourage local land managers, HOAs, and other groups to apply for fuel reduction grants when needed. These groups are often experienced at fuels reduction programs and can implement them with little assistance from the District. The District will look for projects that are providing incremental benefit beyond existing funded programs. We will also provide oversight to support these projects, and to make sure specific goals and objectives are met.

Benefit: We are able to leverage other organizations to get more cost-effective work done in the WUI with oversight from the District, increasing the pace and scale of fuel reduction.

Evacuation Routes and Systems

Keeping key evacuation routes clear of brush, dead trees and ladder fuels is a priority. Each year we will hire a contractor to remove these fuels along the key neighborhood evacuation routes in the Town and County Right of Ways, in collaboration with the Town of Truckee, Nevada County, and Placer County. This area can also support evacuation planning, evacuation notification systems and early fire detection, like Fire Cameras in our WUI.

Benefit: Keeps fire intensity low along key evacuation routes, and better prepare the community for evacuation when needed.

Elderly and Disabled Defensible Space Assistance

Defensible space works best when all the properties are working to reduce fuels in a particular area. Having a few overgrown properties amongst properties that are fire-ready can break up the contiguous low fuel areas of a neighborhood. Inspectors enforce current defensible space laws like PRC 4291 and other Truckee Fire Ordinances. However, sometimes there are understandable financial barriers to people getting their own work done in the required 100 feet surrounding their home. This program will provide defensible space work to those who cannot physically, or financially, get the work done. Qualified properties will be identified, inspectors will work with property owners to identify necessary work, and independent contractors will be hired to complete the required work.

Benefit: Making sure every property is doing fuel reduction creates a contiguous fuel reduction area.

Home Hardening Rebate Program

Even when defensible space work is done well, homes can burn down. This is not usually from a large fire-front moving through a neighborhood, but from the large number of embers blown out front of large wildfires by the wind, landing on wood roofs, in roof vents, under decks, or near siding that can then take hold and burn down the house. Home hardening has proven to reduce these ember fires and includes things like replacing wood roofs, tightening roof and eave vents, and fire resistive construction materials for decks and siding. Although home hardening is one of the more expensive strategies, it can be effective. We will provide some form of partial rebate to spur and assist homeowners to make improvements in this area.

Benefit: Improve a home's ability to withstand wildfire impingement and ember fires.

Green Waste (Biomass) Disposal Solutions

Many of these programs will dramatically increase the amount of green waste heading to the landfill, potentially making implementation of all the fuel reduction programs even more expensive. The challenge is that the costs of green waste disposal are going up and there are fewer ways to dispose of the materials, so we need to look at and support long-term green waste disposal options. The experts believe there is probably not one big answer but instead a number of smaller ones that need to occur. For example, one option is a biomass plant, which is proven technology, that burns the chipped material and turns it to heat or power. We are starting a biomass scoping study with the Town and Airport to understand the extent of the biomass problem after implementation of Measure T projects, as well as the landscape of possible solutions. Measure T funds could be used for the study and financing of capital projects like this that will ultimately reduce the costs of green waste disposal locally.

Benefit: Local solution to part of the biomass problem, reducing costs to remove materials which extends the Measure's revenue for more work, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions from long-distance transportation of material.

Critical Infrastructure Fuels Reduction

In the Fire District there are certain critical infrastructure like the hospital and critical communication infrastructure like cell towers, for example, that need to have ongoing fuel reduction to keep these services operational during a wildfire.

Benefit: Keeps vital services in operation during a wildfire and reduces fuel in the WUI.

Preliminary Budget Summary

Each year the District will develop an annual budget for wildfire prevention that will be approved by the Board in the FY budgeting cycle. Revenues are expected to be about \$3.7 million annually. However, it is unknown how many property owners will apply for the tax exemption. The Board has approved the 2021/22 final budget, as well as the 2021/22 Measure T gap budget which allows for the hiring of personnel, updating of the CWPP and beginning curbside pickup. They have given staff direction to develop the green waste curbside pickup program for 2022, borrowing money from operational reserves.

Revenues and expenses will be tracked separate from regular District revenues to provide a clear and transparent accounting of the year's activity.

(The Board approved detailed budget is attached)

Truckee Fire Protection District
Measure T General Fund
Budget vs Actual
October 31, 2021

	Current Month	Year to Date	Annual Budget	Variance
Revenues				
Taxes	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Interest	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Reserve Transfer	0.00	0.00	618,897.00	(618,897.00)
Total Revenues	0.00	0.00	618,897.00	(618,897.00)
Expenses				
Permanent Salaries	0.00	0.00	130,397.00	(130,397.00)
Temporary Salaries	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Retirement	0.00	0.00	6,000.00	(6,000.00)
Employee Insurance/457 Benefits	0.00	0.00	30,000.00	(30,000.00)
Post Retirement Health Benefits	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
General Insurance	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Maintenance/Lease of Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Maintenance-vehicles	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Maintenance Structures	0.00	0.00	30,000.00	(30,000.00)
Memberships	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Office Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Publications	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Other Professional Srves	0.00	0.00	110,000.00	(110,000.00)
Fuels Contractors	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Training & Travel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fuel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Prevention	0.00	0.00	250,000.00	(250,000.00)
Equipment	0.00	0.00	2,500.00	(2,500.00)
New Vehicle	0.00	0.00	60,000.00	(60,000.00)
Community Wildfire Grants	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Expenses	0.00	0.00	618,897.00	(618,897.00)
Net Income	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00	0.00