



Hill Campus: Wildland Vegetative Fuel Management Plan

Online Public Session: Draft EIR

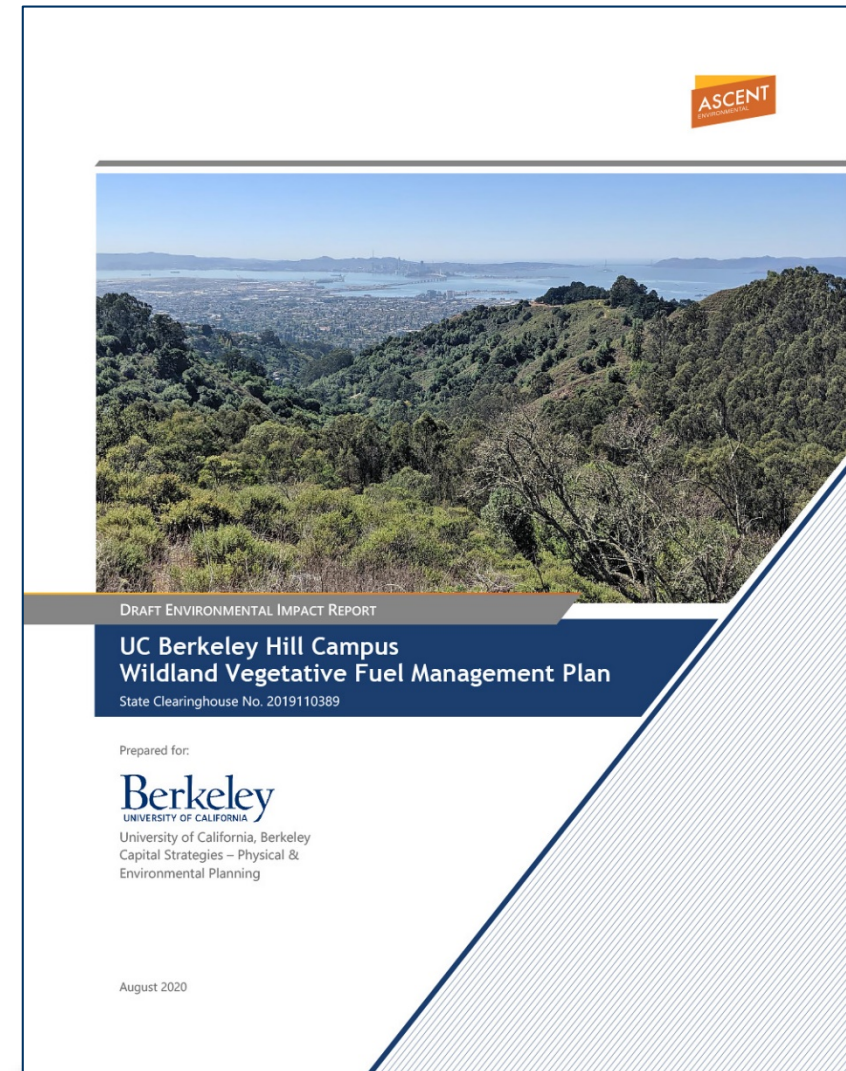
Monday, September 14, 2020

5:30 p.m.

capitalstrategies.berkeley.edu/hill-campus

Online Public Session – September 14, 2020

- Provide information on the proposed Wildland Vegetative Fuel Management Plan
- Provide information on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process for the Wildland Vegetative Fuel Management Plan
 - Content and key conclusions
 - CEQA process and schedule
 - How to submit comments on the Draft EIR



Context for the Wildland Vegetative Fuel Management Plan

- Purpose of proposed Wildland Vegetative Fuel Management Plan is to prescribe vegetation management activities in the Hill Campus to substantially reduce risk to life, property, and natural resources on the UC Berkeley campus, adjacent community, and in the greater East Bay region.
- The Wildland Vegetative Fuel Management Plan is part of a coordinated regional strategy to install and maintain fuel breaks, reduce fire hazard in targeted areas, and provide safe evacuation for the communities of Oakland and Berkeley.
- UC Berkeley's partners in regional strategy:
 - Hills Emergency Forum
 - Diablo FireSafe Council
- UC Berkeley received a CAL FIRE grant to implement portions of the Wildland Vegetative Fuel Management Plan
- UC Berkeley Facilities Services currently manages vegetation to reduce wildfire risk in the Hill Campus. The Wildland Vegetative Fuel Management Plan would expand and standardize vegetation management.

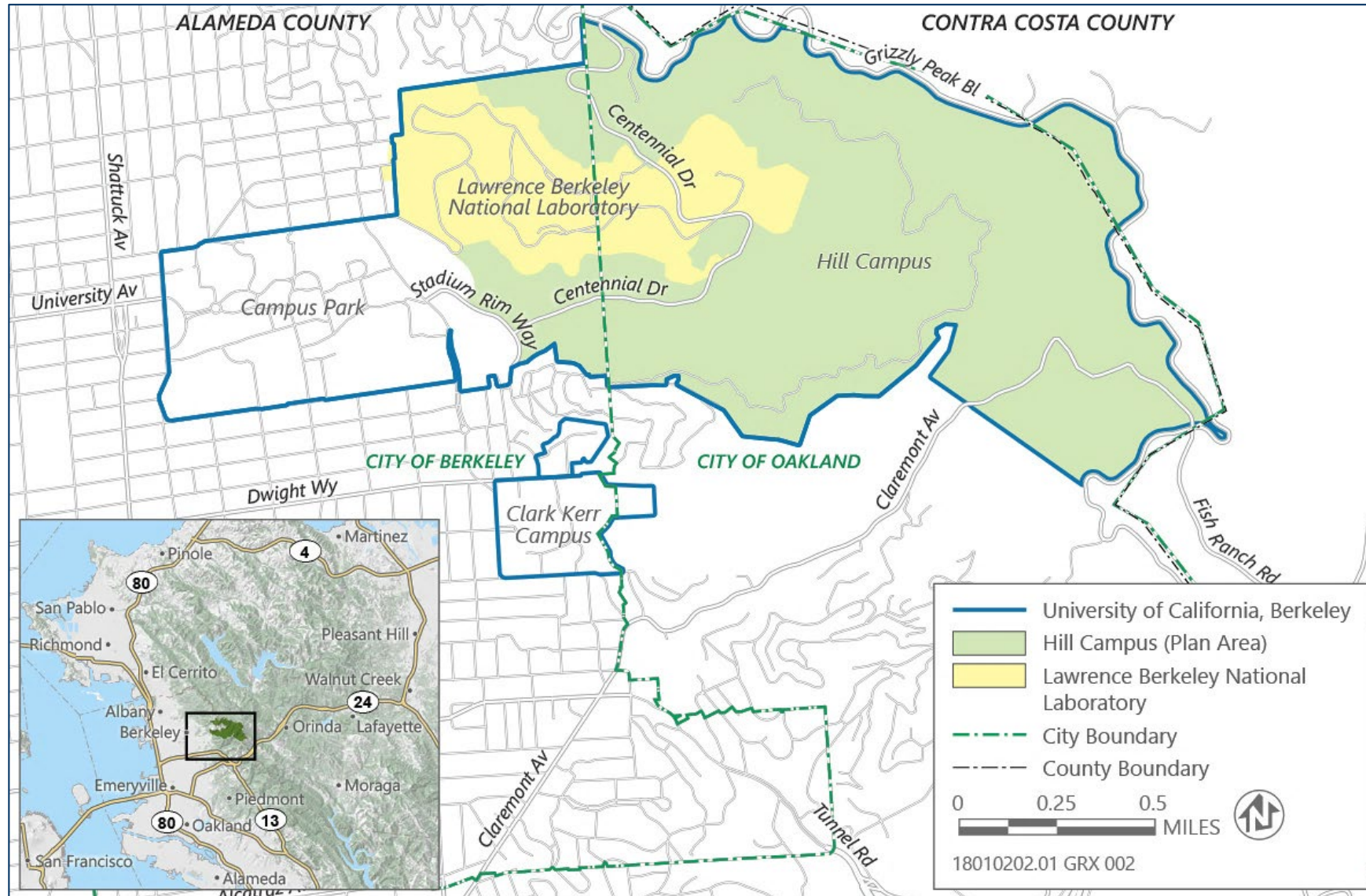


Plan Area: Hill Campus

UC Berkeley proposes to implement the Wildland Vegetative Fuel Management Plan for the Hill Campus (Plan Area), a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone with history of wildfire and conditions conducive to future catastrophic wildfire.

- Regional fire history:
 - SCU Complex Fires (2020)
 - Grizzly Fire (2017)
 - Oakland Tunnel Fire (1991)
 - East Bay fires (1923 to 1998)
- Hot and dry summers, topography, flammable vegetation, dense urban development, limited fire-fighting access, and Diablo winds, all increase the risk of wildfires.
- Climate scientists predict that California will continue to experience larger and more frequent wildfires.

Plan Area: Hill Campus



An aerial photograph of a densely forested hillside. In the background, a city is visible, followed by a large body of water (likely San Francisco Bay) and distant mountains under a clear sky. The foreground is dominated by green trees and shrubs.

Proposed Project

Hill Campus: Wildland Vegetative Fuel Management Plan

Proposed Project

- Various vegetation treatment activities would be used to implement different vegetation treatment types throughout the Plan Area.
- Nine **Identified Treatment Projects** proposed in specific locations, designed using proposed treatment types and activities.

Proposed Treatment Types

- **Evacuation Support:** Roadside treatments along emergency evacuation routes in Plan Area, focused on treating vegetation prone to torching and blocking access as well as improving visibility during evacuation.
- **Fuel Breaks:** Strategically-located linear strips where vegetation has been treated to aid in the containment of a fire and reduce the likelihood of crown fire transition.
- **Fire Hazard Reduction:** Focused on reducing hazardous fire conditions and fire brand distribution in the Plan Area to help promote landscape resiliency and improve native habitat.
- **Temporary Refuge Areas:** Provide temporary refuge from wildfire for evacuees and firefighters and would be typically sited near the intersections of roads and fire trails.

Proposed Treatment Activities



**Prescribed
Burning**



**Manual
Vegetation
Treatment**



**Mechanical
Vegetation
Treatment**

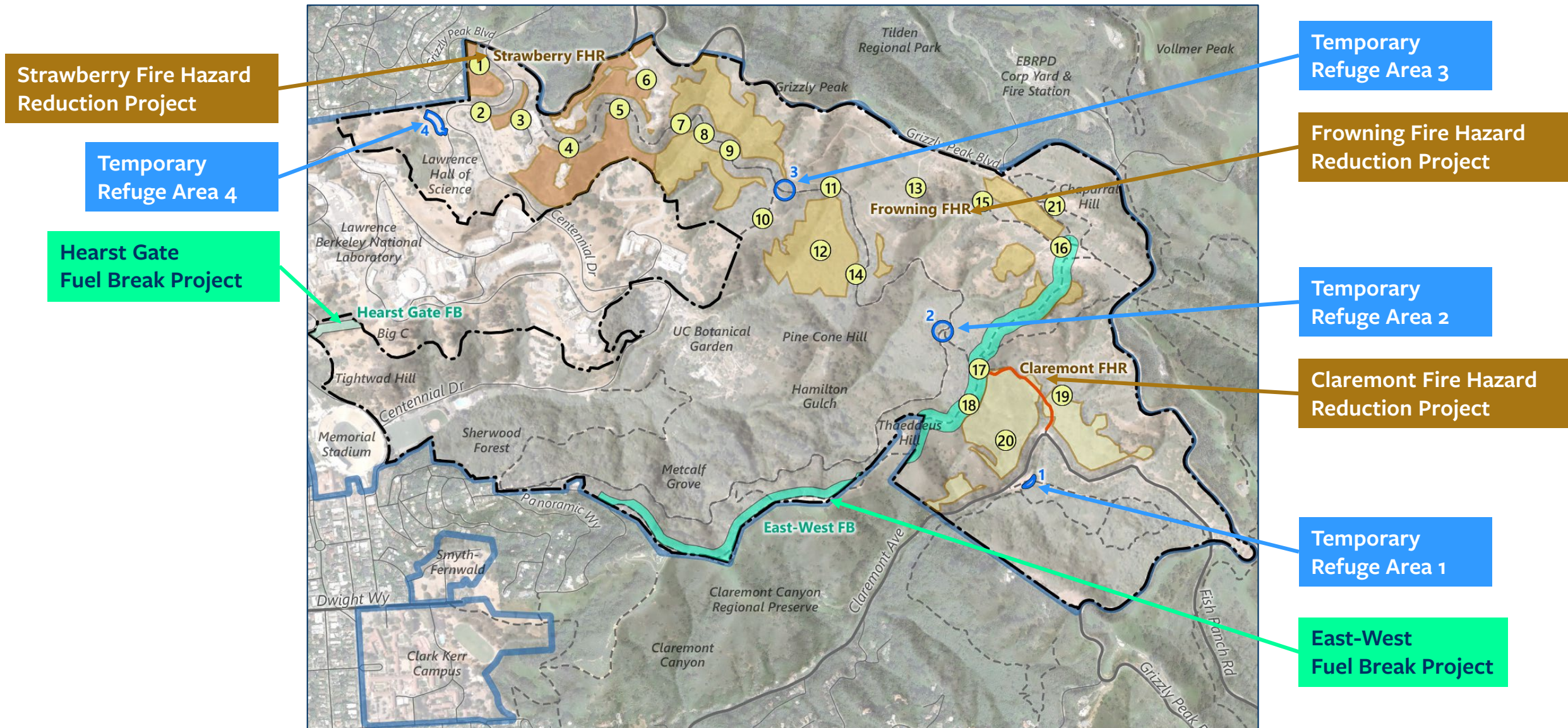


**Prescribed
Herbivory**



**Targeted Ground
Application of
Herbicides**

Proposed Project: Identified Treatment Projects



The background of the slide is a semi-transparent image of the California State Flag. The flag features a red star in the upper left corner, a grizzly bear in the center, and the words "CALIFORNIA REPUBLIC" at the bottom. The flag is set against a blue sky background.

CEQA

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is the State's primary environmental protection law.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

- CEQA requires public agencies such as UC Berkeley to:
 - Consider and disclose to the public and decision-makers the potential, significant environmental effects of its proposed activities; and
 - Avoid or reduce the significant environmental effects of these actions to the extent feasible through imposition of mitigation measures or alternatives.
- Purpose of an EIR:
 - Required by CEQA for a proposed project that may result in a significant impact on the environment
 - Identifies potential environmental impacts of a proposed project
 - Identifies mitigation measures to minimize significant impacts
 - Identifies alternatives to avoid or substantially lessen any significant project impacts

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

- This Draft EIR functions as both a program EIR and a project EIR:
 - Evaluates the Identified Treatment Projects at a project level
 - The university intends to implement these following certification of the EIR without additional environmental documentation
 - Evaluates long-term implementation of the vegetation treatment types and activities throughout the Plan Area at a program level
 - As the university develops later treatment projects, it will complete a checklist to determine whether the project is “within the scope” of the WVFMP EIR
- The proposed “project” under CEQA:
 - The near-term implementation of the Identified Treatment Projects and the longer-term implementation of treatment types and activities in later treatment projects

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Topics addressed in the Draft EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air quality
- Biological resources
- Cultural resources
- Geology and soils
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Hazards and hazardous materials
- Hydrology and water quality
- Noise
- Recreation
- Population and housing
- Tribal cultural resources
- Wildfire

Please refer to the Initial Study for analysis of resource topics that were not addressed in the Draft EIR, which is available online: capitalstrategies.berkeley.edu/hill-campus

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Draft EIR significant and unavoidable impacts:

- **Aesthetics and Visual Resources**
 - Long-term, substantial degradation of a scenic vista or visual character or quality of public views
- **Air Quality**
 - Short-term exposure of people to toxic air contaminants and odors from prescribed burning
- **Archaeological, Historical, and Tribal Cultural Resources**
 - Potential substantial adverse change in the significance of a Tribal Cultural Resource, pending the completion of ongoing tribal consultation
- **Noise**
 - Temporary exposure of residences near manual, mechanical, and prescribed burning treatment activities to a substantial increase in noise levels that exceed local standards

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

Draft EIR alternatives:

- Alternatives evaluated in the Draft EIR
 - No project alternative
 - Alternative A: McBride Plan alternative
 - Alternative B: Reduced treatment alternative
- Environmentally superior alternative
 - Alternative B, which would use only manual treatment activities, would reduce impacts to almost every environmental topic and avoid the significant and unavoidable impacts to air quality from prescribed burning
 - However, Alternative B would not be as effective as the Wildland Vegetative Fuel Management Plan in reducing wildfire risk

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

- Notice of Preparation (NOP) was released: **November 20, 2019**
- Scoping Session was held: **December 2, 2019**
- NOP review period concluded: **December 20, 2019**
- Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) was released: **August 14, 2020**
- Online Public Session: **September 14, 2020** ← **TODAY**
- Draft EIR review period will conclude: **October 5, 2020**
- Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) to be released: **March 2021 (anticipated)**
- EIR certification and Wildland Vegetative Fuel Management Plan approval to be considered: **March 2021 (anticipated)**



Draft EIR Comments: Wildland Vegetative Fuel Management Plan

Tonight, we will read public comments received via email by 1:00 p.m. today.

Draft EIR Comments: How to Submit

- Comments must be received by 5:00 p.m. on October 5, 2020
- Please email written comments to: **planning@berkeley.edu**
 - Use the subject: “Draft EIR Comments: WVFMP”
- You may also mail your comments to:

UC Berkeley, Physical & Environmental Planning

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