

MARIN COUNTY EVACUATION RISK ASSESSMENT STUDY OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

Why?

California has experienced a growing number of wildfires involving extreme weather, wind conditions, and fuel (vegetation) loads that can overwhelm community preparedness and evacuation plans. The Evacuation Ingress/Egress Planning Tool Project Study was undertaken to understand and address the risks associated with evacuation routes in Marin County. This information will help agencies identify actions and/or projects that can be implemented to reduce risks associated with evacuation.

LESSONS LEARNED

What was learned?

A state-of-the-science review and subsequent evacuation risk assessment was conducted to understand the causes of civilian fatalities during wildfire evacuations and the associated risk factors. The findings reinforce a central tenet of wildfire emergency response: in most cases, evacuation is the safest option for residents even if the roadways used for evacuation are impacted by nearby fire or smoke. Most civilian fatalities happen when people try to flee an area threatened by wildfire without enough time to arrive at a safe location. Studies show some people are hesitant or unable to evacuate, leaving them vulnerable.

Wildfire Evacuation Sequence

- 1 | Immediate identification of wildfire threat & ongoing understanding of the fire's behavior
- 2 | Timely & successful dissemination of evacuation alerts & communications
- 3 | Timely & organized departure of residents & the public
- 4 | Safe & efficient evacuation along roadways
- 5 | Arrival at designated or pre-determined safe spaces unharmed

NEAR-TERM BENEFITS

What is being done now?

MWPA and partner agencies are using the data generated by the Study to generate near-term community benefits as follows.



Finalize network of countywide evacuation routes



Prioritize fuel reduction efforts along evacuation routes



Expand communication and alert systems



Identify local shelter facilities for hardening



Identify traffic management priorities for evacuation bottlenecks



Identify parking restrictions for narrow streets during high hazard days



Identify additional evacuation shelters to supplement existing shelters



Leverage MWPA funds: Submit grant applications for infrastructure improvements

LONG-TERM BENEFITS

What are the next steps?

To become more resilient to wildfires, MWPA and partner agencies plan to implement supply, demand, and communication strategies to make evacuations safer and more efficient. This will include capital projects, agency programs, and planning efforts. Many of the supply and communication strategies will require grant funding that MWPA and partner agencies are actively pursuing to implement.