



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO
REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE ISSUED: July 5, 2006

REPORT NO. 06-089

ATTENTION: Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee
Agenda of July 12, 2006

SUBJECT: Wildland Interface Zone

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATIONAL ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CITY COUNCIL.

BACKGROUND

Following the Cedar Fire, the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department reviewed every aspect of our response and preparedness for that disaster, with an eye toward being better prepared for those that might follow. In addition to other issues identified, a pre-fire planning tool for wild fire emergencies in target hazard areas was identified, and it became immediately apparent that this type of tool would greatly enhance staff's ability to more accurately predict and respond to emergencies within our city.

The I-Zone Plan has identified 23 separate target areas where our communities are at extreme risk from fires in the adjacent open space or wild land area. The plan being implemented uses aspects of military programs to conduct risk analysis and assessments of conditions in order to develop a risk matrix. The information, in a digital format, is available to units responding to emergencies through our computer aided dispatch center, which is then transmitted from CAD to the responding vehicle's mobile data computer (MDC). This information includes risk assessment, topographical and roadway maps, as well as helispots for use by Copter One. The information is accessible through "layers" on the vehicle's computer screen so that the user can toggle back and forth between screens, accessing the most useful layer necessary.

In addition, these zones are under constant review, which allows the plan, risk assessment, and/or other concerns to be updated immediately as the situation requires.

DISCUSSION

As we move forward with implementing this program, staff has been researching the ability of adapting our existing pre-fire program to this format so it can be used with target hazards in structures. Keeping plans current and instantly available through the I-Zone will enhance the department's ability to plan for and respond more efficiently to emergencies. When complete, it will also include evacuation plans and routes for use by emergency responders and citizens.

Pre-fire planning allows San Diego Fire-Rescue personnel to better prepare for different types of emergencies in their areas of responsibility. The recommended plan requires a physical inspection of the locations, and greatly increases familiarity when an emergency occurs. This new, technologically driven program will give all responding units the same information that the local fire company may only have been familiar with before. It will enhance the department's ability to predict where problems might arise, as well as provide information about how severe the problem might become. In turn, the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department will be better prepared to respond to emergencies and be in a better position to provide our communities with additional protection.

Tracy Jarman
Fire Chief

Jill Olen
Deputy Chief Operating Officer
Public Safety & Homeland Security