

**TOWN of CORTE MADERA**  
**TOWN RESILIENCE &**  
**FIRE FUEL REDUCTION RESULTS**  
*Building Community Resilience a Neighborhood at a Time*

**CALENDAR YEAR 2019**

**Background:**

In the fall of 2018, the Town sponsored a neighborhood pilot program to document the challenges and successes of a direct-to-neighborhood approach to encourage residents to create defensible space in and around their homes. Deemed successful, the Town expanded the pilot program into a six month, town-wide initiative. The results were impressive and the return on investment unequivocal.

To build on the success of the expanded pilot program, the Town has developed additional initiatives as part of a comprehensive vegetation management program: (1) further increase defensible space around homes and property, (2) improve ingress & egress paths for first responders, (3) improve primary and secondary evacuation routes for residents, (4) rehabilitate the Town's Steps, Lanes & Paths to provide additional access routes for pedestrians, (5) improve vehicular sightlines, and (6) create significant borders on its Wildland Urban Interfaces (WUI) that largely abut wide expanses of public open space.

These initiatives are further described below:

**Neighborhood Chipper Program:** The Town, at no-cost to residents, sponsors green waste chipper days in particularly high-risk fire neighborhoods on a descending priority basis; focusing first and foremost on WUI, Central Marin Fire Department (FD) priority areas, those designated as High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones by CAL FIRE, or Elevated Fire Risk Tier 2 or Tier 3 by Pacific Gas & Electric's Community Wildfire Safety Program. Residents are responsible only for the labor and costs associated with brush removal on their parcels and then stacking the debris at staging sites in neighborhood locations deemed suitable by the Town. The Town's Resilience Coordinator recruits & organizes the neighborhoods, defines the desired scope of work, engages landscape contractors to perform chipping and removal services, and supervises and manages the entire process from beginning to end.

**Chipper Weekends:** In 2019, the Town sponsored 3 chipper weekends in the parking lots of our two elementary schools. Residents were not limited as to the amount of green waste they could take for chipping & removal. This program is particularly attractive to residents in low-lying and more densely populated neighborhoods with smaller volumes of green waste.

**Neighborhood Outreach:** In neighborhoods within the WUI that do not lend themselves to being organized as a large unit (fewer than 20 households), the Town offers smaller neighborhood chipping events. This is to further encourage WUI residents to create defensible space around their homes. The Town Resilience Coordinator goes door-to-door in these high-risk fire neighborhoods to recruit participation. Two such neighborhoods were recruited and completely abated this year and several others are scheduled in 2020.

**Steps, Lanes & Paths:** The Town has 42 steps, lanes and paths (SLPs). In 2019, 14 were cleared of encroaching vegetation and one new foot evacuation route was created.

**Town-owned Properties:** The Town owns several properties; the top four underwent total abatement in 2019. Five additional properties are targeted in 2020.

**Evacuation Route Fuels Reduction Program:** The Town recognizes that street and public right-of-way abatement can be daunting and expensive for a homeowner. The Town offers a one-time abatement, at no cost to the homeowner, to bring our streets into compliance and make our community safer. In 2019, five evacuation routes were abated further increasing defensible space, improving ingress & egress for first responders, and enhancing pedestrian and biker safety. In time, all evacuation routes will be mitigated on a descending FD priority order.

**Court-Ordered & Voluntary Resident Abatements:** The Town's Resilience Coordinator manages court-ordered and voluntary abatements as well as administers a small grant program to underwrite the costs of abatement on behalf of residents who due to infirmity and a lack of financial resources are unable to do so on their own. Seven such abatements occurred in 2019.

### **Summary Preliminary Results:**

Much was learned in our first year of the program and in 2019, changes were made along the way to improve efficiency and effectiveness. As a result, in the last six months of the year, production results were considerably higher despite the challenges of heavy rains and large volumes of traffic that impeded workflow in the month of December.

Estimates:

January 1-June 30	2901.50 cubic yards of green waste removed
July 1-December 31	4140.44 cubic yards of green waste removed
<b>Year-to-date total</b>	<b>7041.94 cubic yards of green waste removed</b>

Prepared and submitted by Marla Jane Orth, MPH, MS, Town Resiliency Coordinator (CMResiliencyearendreport)