




TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Tony Bowden, Fire Chief 

SUBJECT: Response to Question from Supervisorial District One

Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors:

The Santa Clara County Central Fire Protection District received a question from the Office of Vice President Mike Wasserman, and I am sharing my response with all members of the Board of Supervisors. The question received was as follows:

*“How would funding in Los Altos Hills be utilized if Los Altos Hills and Central Fire annexed?”*

First and foremost, it is important to recognize that if the Board of Supervisors were to annex the Los Altos Hills County Fire District into the Central Fire District, the Board would retain all approval authority on how funding is utilized by the Fire District. In reading the question, I believe what is being asked is how I believe the funding would be utilized.

Currently, there is a lot of fuel reduction work to be done in Los Altos Hills and it would be of primary importance to ensure that funding generated within Los Altos Hills is utilized to reduce the wildfire threat and increase the operational capabilities within the Los Altos Hills community. This could be accomplished in several ways, such as working with the Palo Alto Fire Department to jointly staff the fire station in Foothills Park. This station is positioned to serve both Palo Alto and the Los Altos Hills residents in the high hazard area. Unfortunately, this fire station has been sitting vacant for several years.

Additionally, funding could be allocated to create a hazardous vegetation/ fuels mitigation program in Los Altos Hills that would utilize seasonal firefighters to perform hazardous fuel reduction within the Hills. This would be in alignment with a regional wildfire program. Seasonal fuel crew programs have been very successful, such as in Marin County. A comprehensive fuels program in Los Altos Hills would greatly increase the operational capability within the Los Altos Hills community and provide a dedicated team to build fuel breaks, clear fire roads, and work with residents and the Town on dual purpose projects such as the Los Altos Hills Pathway Program.

Lastly, given the stability of Central Fire District's funding, if Central and Los Altos Hills were the only two districts annexed, then it is reasonable to assume that the majority of funding generated within Los Altos Hills would be utilized in or adjacent to Los Altos Hills.



**MEMORANDUM**  
September 28, 2020

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c: Jeffrey V. Smith, County Executive  
James R. Williams, County Counsel  
Miguel Márquez, Chief Operating Officer  
Megan Doyle, Clerk of the Board  
Chiefs of Staff