

Firewise Old Oak Way Action Plan by year
Updated November 2024.

2020 – Year 1

- Education. Send mailers and invitations to neighborhood about formation of Firewise Old Oak Way. Hold formation/formation meeting with Eugenia, Chief Black, Check Page, etc. Educate members of need for Firewise via emails, mailers, and training. Create OldOakWay.info website complete with meeting minutes/videos, slide decks, Firewise material, insurance info, etc. Schedule and hold education meeting on Defensible Space with Eugenia as instructor. Form Steering Committee with subcommittees for Membership, Education, Safety, Evacuation/Recognition and Marketing committees.
- Defensible Space. Encourage Hazardous Ignition Zone (HIZ) inspections, get 6 scheduled. Encourage members to remove fire hazardous trees and branches that are within 30 ft of roofs and structures. Encourage members to apply for dead tree removal subsidies and permit fee forgiveness. Encourage city to allow removal of hazardous trees with self-certification. Support activities of Saratoga Firestorm Task Force, attend meeting, support their recommendations with city officials. Demonstrate water cannon usage, explore use in critical locations. Identify firestorm pathways and locations for stopping fires.
- Road Safety. Work with city for authorization to clear brush within City's roadside easement. Clear brush that blocked the view on the "big curve" at 13478. Clear brush on roadside at 13341. Remove branches over road at 13456 and 13492. Remove pepper tree overhanging street at 13553. Collect road safety inputs from Firewise members. Meet with Saratoga Public Works to develop a plan to implement suggesting supported by public Works.
- Fire Emergency Evacuation. Explore emergency communications options including text based, phone based, sirens, buddy system, etc. Investigate alternative exit routs from our single exit (dead end) street, including discussions with neighbors with joining property. Communicate near term plan in case exit is blocked (assemble in open area on house Family property).
- Membership. Establish web site signup and encourage neighbors to join. Expand membership are to include Chiquita Court where choke point is for fire coming in from open space. Recruit 4 new members on Chiquita Court. Encourage/recruit new members on Old Oak Way, sign up >50% of homes.

2021 – Year 2

- Education. Update and improve website at OldOakWay.info. Improve sign up questionnaire. Add now educational materials to web site. Send email and postal mail to all addresses on the importance of Firewise and inviting them to our annual training meeting. Hold training on Evacuation Planning, Ready, Set, Go, with Brad Hartzell presentation. Add Training video, slides, Firewise materials to web site and promote with members.
- Defensible Space. Work with mayor, city council members and city staff to reinstate the fee forgiveness for removal of fire unsafe trees in the WUI. Encourage tree trimming and tree removal for older trees that are overgrown and are fire unsafe and branches that are over roofs and within 30 ft of structures. Encourage HIZ inspections, get 4 more scheduled.

Encourage and help members with removal process for hazardous trees. Encourage removal of hazardous material in 5 ft and 30 ft zones.

- Road Safety. Trim brush to provide better safety at the exit of Old Oak Way at Pierce Road. Work with neighbors/traffic safety subcommittee and city to get city street safety recommendations implemented. Continue to trim branches that overlap the street or block the views on corners. Continue to remove flammable materials from the city roadside easement. Work with Public Works to improve road signage.
- Fire Emergency Evacuation. Continue negotiations on Garrod Road and Villa Oaks alternative emergency exits. Develop drawings as appropriate. Communicate plan for short term emergency with use of open area and sprinklers in case of blocked exit at Pierce Road and lack of alternative exit plan. Communicate foot path escape to Garrod Road. Conduct Emergency Evacuation training (see Education above).
- Membership. Hold membership driven “Neighborhood Block Party” to promote Firewise membership. Sign up 5 new members. Investigate expanding membership to include homes on Sara Hills, Pierce Road and Quarry Road that are within our fire area neighborhood. Increase membership on Old Oak Way to over 60%.

2022 - Year 3

- Education. The focus of our 2022 education training will be on fuel reduction and Defensible Space. Include evacuation update and possible Schedule training session, publicize it via email to neighborhood. Add education materials to OldOakWay.info. Send email to members on 5 ft Zone 1 and on tree safety. Incorporate Neighborhood Watch integration into our training program.
- Defensible Space. Emphasize/Focus on 1) Zone 1 removal of all flammable materials from 5 feet around the home and 2) fire safe trees. Many homes in our neighborhood were built 60-70 years ago and 1) vegetation has grown against the homes causing a fire brand risk and 2) trees have grown over and against the homes. With the city’s renewed focus on fire safety in the WUI and encouraging fire safe tree trimming and the removal of dead and fire prone trees, Zone 1 and tree fire safety will be our focus for 2022. Reduce fuel load in area along creek between House Family Vineyards and 12906 and 12885 Chiquita Court.
- Road Safety. Continue to work to trim vegetation near the road to increase visibility and remove fuel, especially on the curves at 13385 to 13456 and 13358 to 13492 to improve road fire and traffic safety. Work with city on improved signage and street repair at 13341, 13385 and 13553. Ensure installation of Firewise signs in prominent positions.
- Fire Emergency Evacuation. Advance the negotiations with the Garrod Family to provide an emergency exit at the top of Old Oak Way. Work with city and Garrod Family to get permission to improve the unpaved exit route. If Garrod route cannot be agreed to, pursue alternative emergency exit onto Villa Oaks. Continue to publicize the current “Shelter in Place” plan on the House Family Vineyards property, Utilize the existing trails for foot level evacuation if ever needed.
- Membership. Expand membership area at southern end near the creek, add 5 new homes to our Firewise area with 3 new members. Enroll two members between 13463 and 13519.

Hold a 2022 Block Party where we invite all homes in our Firewise Community with the focus being to get more homes to sign up and to encourage them to create Defensible Space and fire safe tree management.

2023 – Year 4

- Education. Continue our education focus on Defensible Space and Evacuation, explore possible “evacuation fire drill”. Encourage HIZ inspections. Schedule training session, publicize it via email to neighborhood. Update OldOakWay.info web site with new training materials and meeting minutes.
- Defensible Space. Continue 2022 focus on fuel reeducation, Defensible Space and HIZ inspections. This will be a multiple year effort as we have “mature” trees and landscaping since many of our homes were built 30-60 years ago. The steep hills in our neighborhood together with the close proximity to Open Space makes it even more important that we remove fuel and trim our trees where needed for fire safety.
- Road Safety. In late 2021 the city made several road safety improvements (Surface and curb improvements, double yellow lines, raised orange reflectors, etc. and plan to make additional improvements). Neighbors made further improvements (site line improvements, driveway and curve mirrors, etc.). During 2022 we need to evaluate those improvements and identify, with neighborhood suggestions, further safety improvements. We will also work toward neighborhood agreement on safety mirror improvements near the bottom of Old Oak Way and implement where agreement exists.
- Fire Emergency Evacuation. With only one exit from Old Oak Way, we need to be prepared for emergency exit independent of the location of any fire (bottom, middle or top of OOW). We will continue the work of 2022 to insure we are prepared for whatever comes our way. Explore use of What’s App User Group for emergency notification.
- Membership. Continue to grow our membership by recruiting additional members in our Firewise area and consider expansion to cover additional adjacent homes depending on interest. Hold a 2023 Block Party inviting all homes in our Firewise Community with the focus being to get more homes to sign up and to encourage them to create Defensible Space and fire safe tree management.

2024 - Year 5

- Education. Plan and conduct Spring training event. Invite all members of our expanded Firewise Neighborhood. Exhibit posters encouraging Defensible Space, HIZ Inspections, “What is Firewise?”, Sign up instructions, etc. Hold formal training session on a topic to be selected by our Steering Committee.
- Defensible Space. It is time to revisit the areas cleaned along our streets in 2020 and remove vegetation regrowth. Clear growth away from the streets to improve emergency access. Focus on “the big curve” area to improve visibility and fire safety. Clear growth to make exist

from Old Oak Way safer by increasing visibility. Continue to encourage vegetation removal near homes and on steep slopes.

- Road Safety. Working with the Saratoga City Public Works, significant progress was made in 2023. Closely spaced reflectors were added to the center of Old Oak Way in the curves (which is most of the road), three “Hidden Driveway” signs were added. By observation, traffic has slowed. In 2024 we will continue to monitor traffic calming efforts and investigate further improvements. Identify traffic safety issues and explore improvements on streets added to our Firewise Neighborhood.
- Fire Emergency Evacuation. During 2023 a new poster showing our emergency evacuation plan in the event that Old Oak Way is blocked. This plan requires parking in a fire safe location at the top end of our street and walking a short distance if needed for additional safety. During 2023 a plan was created for emergency vehicle exit from the top of the hill. During 2024 we will further work with the City of Saratoga to get the required permissions to complete the design. Completion of the emergency evacuation route is targeted for late 2024 or early 2025.
- Membership. In 2023 we again expanded our target area to include homes on Sarahills Drive, Vaquero Road, and Pierce Road. These are areas which naturally lie in our fire risk zone. In 2024 we will formally add them to our Firewise area and continue membership recruitment. Near the end of the summer, we will again hold a Neighborhood Block Party where we will focus on new member recruitment and continuing education for our members and potential members. Emphasize membership recruitment in additions along Vaquero and Sarahills.