

Message from the MVNA President

Dear Neighbors,

How do you feel about the City having codes that residents are expected to follow? I've often wondered.

Is monitoring City codes part of why MVNA exists, as well as advocating for change to some codes and enforcement of most? Do codes improve or hinder our lives? I'd like to hear your thoughts.

Should MVNA be involved in pressing the City to enforce codes, when in fact it is our own neighbors who violate them? Should we work together to change codes we don't support, or add codes we need? Have you wondered why Monterey Vista is such a beautiful neighborhood and how we got that way? Are codes vital to maintaining that beauty? Or do codes restrict our individual liberties?

I recently heard a story from a Monterey friend who had neighbors move into the rental next door. The renters were young and light hearted and likable. They were in abundance as well, in order to afford the steep rent. The renters began to park some of their many cars on the front lawn. My friend approached the main lease holder to talk about this; it was a good conversation but not all that easy as the renter started to take issue with my friend who asked him to not park on the front lawn. My friend explained the city code, that in Monterey we can't park vehicles on the front set back and that this code made for a more beautiful city. (Sec 38-23 D.5.b.) Luckily, the renter understood that this code was a reasonable mandate and he understood my friend's request. The cars on the lawn ceased; his wide and long driveway accommodates up to five cars and the street has easy street parking, so all was well.

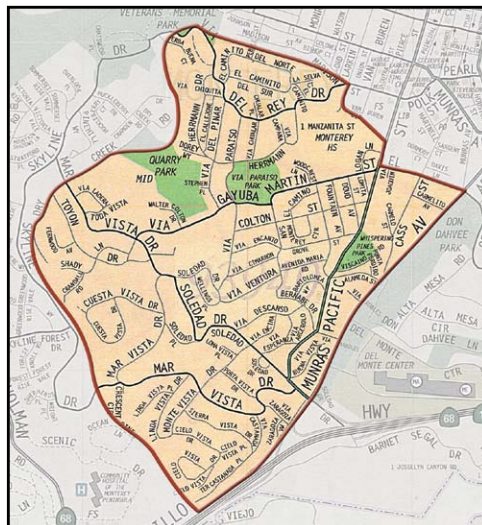
MONTEREY VISTA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

SUMMER 2022 NEWSLETTER



Botta's Pocket Gopher
Thomomys bottae

Interested in controlling gophers without poisons or traps? An owl box draws barn owls into your neighborhood and puts them in charge of your pest control! Learn how to build and set up an owl box for your yard or garden here: <https://www.ucdavis.edu/one-health/how-to-build-an-owl-box>



The Monterey Vista Neighborhood Association (MVNA) is one of fifteen City of Monterey neighborhood associations that represent the residents of Monterey.

Our goal is to preserve and improve the quality and character of our neighborhood areas.

Our services include review and comment on selected city programs, proposed ordinances, and building designs. We provide assistance to members in resolving neighborhood concerns.

Save The Date! • 2022 MVNA BBQ • Sept 17 • 12-3pm



New Location: Veterans Park Picnic Area 2 (South Side of Veterans Dr.)

No person shall conduct or cause to be conducted or permit to be carried on any public dance in the City without having a dance permit issued by the Chief of Police. any such dance permit shall be conspicuously posted at the location where the dance is held. A public dance for the purposes of this Article is a dance to which the public is admitted, with or without a charge.

Another example is the great change led by our previous president, Susan Nine, in banning the use of gas leaf blowers in residential neighborhoods. Yes, the ban means residential neighborhoods transitioned to electric leaf blowers and absorbed the cost of such change, but in exchange

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The Neighborhood and Schools Collaborative

by Elizabeth Jannasch

I know I am not alone when I say that I value the assets this neighborhood has to offer. The tree-lined streets wind through and weave together the landscape where we all live. We enjoy an abundance of parks and spaces for us to walk, bike ride, meet for a game of tennis or bocci ball, choose a book from a “Little Free Library,” or play and picnic with our guests, friends, and children.

In addition to these assets, and unique to our neighborhood, are three schools that share residency within its boundaries. Nestled into the contours of our streets and thoroughfares are Monte Vista Elementary School, Colton Middle School, and Monterey High School. All three schools built in the early to mid 1900’s share a rich educational legacy marking the vision and values of Monterey’s civic leaders to offer quality education for their growing community and youth. History also documents how these schools and the neighborhood have enjoyed close relationships, living side-by-side as neighbors, where the integration of both has been seamless and supportive.

And so, it is in the spirit of continuing this rich history of neighborhood stewardship for our schools that a working group was formed last September

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Message from the MVNA President

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we received cleaner air and a decrease in noise. Should we work to expand this ban to commercial areas as well? Or just wait for 2024 when all 2 stroke gas tools can no longer be sold in CA? Is that 2024 law fast enough or would a broader ban on the use of gas combustion leaf blowers be worth it to the residents? How long can we afford to delay further reductions in our carbon footprint? What is the environmental cost of delaying a full ban on leaf blowers throughout the city?

My last example is a recent decision

by the City Council to overturn the Planning Commission’s enforcement of the City’s 4 foot limitation to front fences. By one vote, this code was overturned in one specific instance and now the appellant’s 6 foot fence legally abuts the sidewalk. I spoke against allowing the exception to the code, as not representing a unique set of circumstances and not the answer to the circumstances argued (those of traffic noise and homeless trespassers). I argued (representing only myself) that six foot fences along the

No person shall play ball, ball and catch, baseball or any other game where any ball or other object is thrown from, to, or at one or another players, or from one place to another, or to or against any object or point or place, upon any of the public streets of the City.

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To comply with state guidelines to prevent the spread of Covid our monthly Monterey Vista Neighborhood Association board meetings are held virtually, usually the first Monday of each month on an online conference application from 6:00 to 8:00pm. You are welcome to attend any of these virtual Board meetings, or to suggest agenda items to share your concerns. Please contact a board member for more information.

Web: montereyvistaneighborhood.org

Email: mvneighborhood@gmail.com

MVNA Officers & Directors	
Jean Rasch (President & NCIP Rep)	625-3200
Charles Martin (Treasurer)	373-0649
Kristin Dotterrer (Secretary & Historian)	262-2301
Hans Jannasch (Membership, NCIP alt)	373-0872
Susan Nine (Past President)	333-6882
Pat Venza	375-8416
Nickie Bach	747-1613
Jeannie Ferrara	236-1111
Marta Kraftzeck	375-2146
Ray Meyers	905-5327
Bruce Zanetta	647-1997

Neighborhood & Community Improvement Program (NCIP) Update

by Hans Jannasch (NCIP Alternate)

With the return of tourists to the Monterey Peninsula comes the beneficial transient occupancy tax (TOT), 16% of which goes to our NCIP program. This has typically amounted to about \$3M per year and is expected to go up to about \$4M/y with the recently increased TOT.

The NCIP program (initially called NIP) was started in 1985 and is unique to Monterey. Anyone can suggest a project, and representatives from all neighborhoods sit on the NCIP Committee that vets and votes to support the projects that benefit residents the most.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting financial hit on the City of Monterey, the City Council cancelled the NCIP program for 2020 and 2021. Furthermore, existing projects that had been funded in previous years and not deemed critical or already begun, were “deappropriated,” thus returning over \$10M to the general fund. This allowed the City to at least partly plug the hole that was created by the lack of tourist income during the pandemic.



Luckily the City Council reestablished NCIP funds in 2022. Due to legal reasons, all “deappropriated” projects have to be considered the same as new projects, and thus NCIP is working on almost 200 projects this year. We are currently going through all the projects, reexamining and updating them as needed. With the available funding, it will take several years to get back to where we were before the pandemic, but by reconsidering all projects together, NCIP plans to prioritize the most pertinent and beneficial projects.

- To learn more about the NCIP program, go to [the City NCIP webpage](#).
- All of the Monterey Neighborhoods are outlined [on this map \(pdf\)](#).
- To suggest a project for consideration, get the Form [here](#).
- To learn more about current projects within Monterey Vista, check out the NCIP tab on the MVNA website.

To see the current list of NCIP projects within MVNA and learn more about each project, go to the [NCIP tab on the MVNA website](#). By clicking on the + sign next to each project will open a more detailed description of the goals and work to be done. Several other Community-wide (CW) projects of interest and those within Veterans Park are also listed.

Final voting night for NCIP is on June 23rd. You can support projects by attending and speaking at NCIP meetings or sending letters or emails to NCIP (huerta@monterey.org). Community support is appreciated and important for projects to get approved.

As good as the funding situation sounds, there are two major concerns: inflation effects on projects costs and the current shortage of engineers. The City’s Engineering Department, that manages the costing and construction of NCIP projects, is severely understaffed and thus becoming more of project management office. NCIP has also lost our “designated NCIP engineer,” so that the current NCIP coordinator, Tom Hardy, is working only part-time on NCIP projects. This is forcing more projects to be designed by outside consultants and built by contractors, both of which are rapidly getting more expensive. As a result, many on the NCIP panel are worried that project completion will once again lag well behind project funding, a persistent NCIP problem that we’ve been battling for decades.



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with neighborhood, high school, and school district representation with goals to broaden understanding of the unique roles each play in

supporting students in their educational pursuits, deepen our relationships to serve as reciprocal resources for one another, and create a transparent and interactive communication platform from which to exercise those goals. This group is called the [Neighborhood and Schools Collaborative](#).

Founding members of the collaborative are Beth Wodecki, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary School Education, Thomas Newton, Principal of Monterey High School, Hans Jannasch, Neighborhood Representative and myself, Elizabeth Jannasch, Neighborhood Representative. The mission statement co-created by this group reads:

Participants of this group share a commitment to facilitate direct communication and collaboration among our neighborhood, our schools, the district office, and the school board for the well-being of our collective community.

The Collaborative has established monthly meetings to share ideas, answer questions and address issues of concern. Tom Newton shares a monthly Neighborhood Newsletter previewing school activities and home sporting events which is posted on the MVNA website, and we continue to reach out to district superintendent PK Diffenbaugh and our elected board trustees to join in relevant conversations around issues of mutual interest to neighbors and their schools.



One such issue has been the continued impact of light trespass from LED campus lighting for neighbors living closest to the high school. While the school had changed out incandescent bulbs around campus for the more energy-efficient LED light, the unshielded lights are three times brighter with nightly campus illumination and the flooding of light into homes facing the school until they are shut off at 10:30 pm.

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Message from the MVNA President *Continued from page 2*

sidewalk in question would result in continued traffic noise, the same potential encroachment as a four foot fence, and an ugly city. How would you have voted? Was this one more example of the adage “it’s easier to ask forgiveness than to get permission”?

Perhaps in each newsletter we could include a code and how that code applies to MVN and why the code exists. We could learn together and work together for enforcement or change, as the case may be. Let me know.

-- Jean Rasch, MVNA President

All bingo games shall be open to the public, not just to the members of the nonprofit charitable organization.

Neighbors' requests to address this issue with the district came to the attention of the Collaborative and an evening walk around campus was accomplished March 9th with superintendent PK Diffenbaugh and Amanda Whitmire, board trustee. The meet-up resulted in a district order for campus lights with shielding, reduced height light poles in the campus quad, and the addition of motion detection sensors to light pathways for janitor work, safety, and security in the evening hours.

Most recently we collaborated with Monterey High School to offer neighbors an overview of its programs and a student-led tour of the grounds prior to their annual spring Open House, April 21st. Hosted by principal



Tom Newton, program representatives articulated the goals of the academies and CTE (Career Technical Education) programs the high school offers. The event showcased many of the academic achievements of the students, artwork, music, dance, and theater performances.

The importance of effective communication between our neighborhood, our schools, and MPUSD, has never been more critical for our youth. Even without taking into consideration the stresses imposed on them during this pandemic, our youth are experiencing

far greater challenges in accessing a robust and progressive education. An ever-growing number of students are economically disadvantaged or homeless (nearly 50% of MHS students) and require assistance from their schools for food, supplies, and mental health support to keep their life goals and dreams in sight. The historically common distribution of public sponsored bond monies for school rehabilitation is a luxury of the past, and an unlikely source of funding for our schools in the future.

The Collaborative recognizes the unique, and equally essential roles neighbors, schools and district representatives have in caring for our youth. Neighbors are resources for their school community. The possibilities are endless to incorporate the diverse skill sets of neighbors to enhance the educational experience of students by supporting them to identify their passions and broaden their awareness of career opportunities.

Our schools have a finger on the pulse of the daily challenges our students experience. With precious little time, our high school leaders are challenged to help them negotiate a forward-leaning education in safe and secure facilities with the tools of education that will prepare them for work and career options upon graduation. In attending a recent school play and walking the campus with students during their open house event, it was encouraging to see and feel the energy and enthusiasm of our youth for the future.



Our unified school district is challenged to provide leadership for all the schools, their administrative staff, and students under their jurisdiction. This, at a time where the demand for essential infrastructure updates face an

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exponential rise in costs to stay ahead of our aging schools. Attending an in-person or virtual board meetings has been informative, increasing my awareness of the issues of concern for all schools in the district.

Statements from MPUSD leadership found on their website speak to a process that connects both neighborhoods and schools by welcoming “community driven solutions for local students...with local control and accountability of provisions to ensure the proper use of funds.” The fourth goal of our elected Board of Trustees states they are charged to, “communicate budget priorities and allocations clearly and transparently to the public and ensure an inclusive budget creation process that engages multiple stakeholders.” These statements of intention recognize the importance of sharing the priorities and projects of our schools with the communities they serve. The Collaborative seeks to deepen our neighborhood engagement in this process with our school and district leadership.

While we might easily count the more visible assets we enjoy in our neighborhood, perhaps more elusive to measure are the less visible assets that we create in this neighborhood where we live. Because how can we measure the value of the stewardship we extend to one another as we meet-and-greet on our daily walks, share news in over-the-fence chats, or lend a hand to a neighbor in need? These assets not only grow a neighborhood but create the culture that defines it.

To that end, preserving the long-standing stewardship our neighborhood has with its three schools has never been more important. The Neighborhood and Schools Collaborative welcomes your questions, issues of concern, ideas, and resources for our schools. That we have always taken an active role and interest in how our schools grow, is a true measure of the care we have for our schools and the youth who attend them. Please send your ideas to my email below.

In addition, the Collaborative invites our school, district, and elected board partners to reach out to neighbors as well, as we move forward together to collaborate in caring “for the well-being of our collective community” and the youth who need us now.

--Elizabeth Jannasch Neighborhood and Schools Collaborative ejannasch@mac.com



WIRELESS & UNDERGROUNDING NEWS

New Fiber Lines in Monterey Vista- Good or Bad News?

By Ray Meyers

Fiber optic cable is simply the fastest, most efficient and safest way to carry data -- communications, Internet broadband, television or any other signal. The physics boils down to the difference between photons (packets of energy) vs electrons (small bits of matter) and copper lines (Ethernet cable or coaxial cable) will never compete with fiber optic cable for the future. In fact, fiber optic cable is so effective, it is also the choice for cell sites to back haul (connect to the Internet), before they forward the cellular traffic over the air by micro-



waves. Problem is that most of us living in the area believe that cellular microwave facilities (as close as 500 feet apart) do not belong anywhere near where people live or work. So, is fiber optic cable itself bad simply because it can also be used by a cell facility? If we discourage fiber optic cable, wouldn't we also be restricting the best technological and safest way to communicate without cellular transmission in the future? Fiber optic cable by itself may not be the enemy, it may be the best alternative to 5G cellular fixed wireless for Internet service in the home.

The City of Monterey is now in the process of writing what we hope to be a strong wireless ordinance to protect us, and many residents are among those from within our community adding their input to the ordinance (see the Monterey Herald story reprinted on page 12 of this newsletter). In addition, momentum may

be swinging to the opposition of cellular sites, as other countries around the world begin to slow and even stop the deployment of 5G microwave cell sites. But, do not confuse fiber optic cable with cellular transmissions – fiber optic should be evaluated on its own merits. In areas where fiber optic cable is available all the way into homes, cell companies are finding their wireless broadband 5G service is less competitive.

On the issue of copper plain old telephone lines (POTS) - ATT has been trying to get rid of these for many years, due to financial reasons. In the future, backup batteries (such as Tesla Powerwall) may be the best strategy to power our whole homes in the event of a power loss, not just our phones and Internet lines.



Citizens: Attend the June 28 Planning Commission Meeting to Advocate for a Contemporary Wireless Communications Ordinance

by Pat Venza and Jeana Jett, MVNA Wireless Subcommittee members

Members of the MVNA who have been involved with the writing of the Wireless Ordinance are not in agreement with what was presented to the Planning Commission on April 26, 2022.

At that meeting the Planning Commission reviewed a four-year-old draft of the Wireless Ordinance. Due to the pandemic the draft is just now coming up for approval. Between the time of the Wireless Subcommittee's final draft and now, the City staff made changes with which we disagree. Over these past four years the FCC and the federal courts have made noteworthy changes that merit our consideration as we seek to create the strongest possible Ordinance. A few residents pointed out these concerns at the April 26th meeting. Additionally, we have been monitoring Carmel-by-the-Sea's encouraging success in developing a very strong contemporary ordinance.



BACKGROUND: The Wireless Subcommittee was setup by the City Council 2017, with the primary directive that the Subcommittee develop the most restrictive wireless ordinance possible. We will keep working with the City staff and the Planning Commission to ensure that ultimately the City Council votes on a strong ordinance.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: Please attend the next Planning Commission Meeting **June 28** at (probably) 7:00 p.m. when the Wireless Ordinance will be discussed. It is important that we residents attend this pivotal meeting.

Think back to the nights that the residents of this neighborhood packed the council chambers because of the threat of 13 cell towers in our neighborhood. It is five years later and this threat is still very

real—and this battle is not over. Without a strong Wireless Ordinance the same companies and even more like them could be back in our front yards with small cell towers every 1,500 feet.

That would be dangerous and ugly.

Below is an article from The Monterey Herald concerning the Wireless Ordinance that is up for approval by the City Planning Commission.

FROM THE MONTEREY HERALD

Monterey to consider wireless ordinance update

By **TESS KENNY** | tkenny@montereyherald.com | PUBLISHED: April 25, 2022

MONTEREY – The Monterey Planning Commission is considering an amendment to the city's code that would allow for more local oversight of small cell wireless service facilities. The proposed ordinance, which is on the Planning Commission agenda for its regular meeting Tuesday night, is an update to existing wireless facility requirements and guidelines with a particular focus on managing small cell infrastructure. The last significant update to the city's code with regards to wireless facilities was in 2016.

Monterey County
The Herald

"Technologies are changing quite a bit now. ... We're trying to get ahead of the large-scale deployment of these (small cell) facilities (that) we're anticipating," said Kimberly Cole, Monterey Community Development Director. "Bigger cities are already seeing the deployment of (facilities) on a comprehensive scale." Unlike larger cell towers – often referred to as "macrocells" – small cell facilities provide service in less expansive, more concentrated networks. And while they can come in a variety of shapes and sizes, the facilities are often placed on existing or replacement utility poles and streetlights in the public right-of-way.

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Monterey to consider wireless ordinance update *Continued from previous page*

These installments are designed to provide service coverage and capacity in areas where traditional macrocells either cannot reach or cannot provide users with broadband-level services, according to city documents. Per a report from the National League of Cities, an advocacy group representing nearly 19,500 cities, towns and villages across the country, small cell technology is “typically deployed to alleviate capacity constraints where crowds gather or to cover targeted areas, including public squares and spaces, downtown pedestrian area, parks, office buildings, campuses, or stadiums and arenas.”

Though Cole said Monterey has not yet seen an uptick in applications to install small cell wireless facilities locally, the city is anticipating a “substantial increase” of the infrastructure “anytime,” she added. The expected shift motivated preemptive action by the city to ensure the installation of wireless facilities in Monterey is a transparent and public process, as well as retain city control over the public right-of-way and local aesthetic standards as new infrastructure is suggested and developed, Cole explained.

Control over these small cell facilities is primarily regulated at the federal level, as determined by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and section 6409 of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012. In effect, what equipment is installed, how equipment is operated and what standards apply to equipment, such as those related to radiofrequency emissions, all fall under the purview of the Federal Communications Commission. Cities can, however, dictate aesthetic standards. Both federal and California laws also preserve local management authority over the public right-of-way.

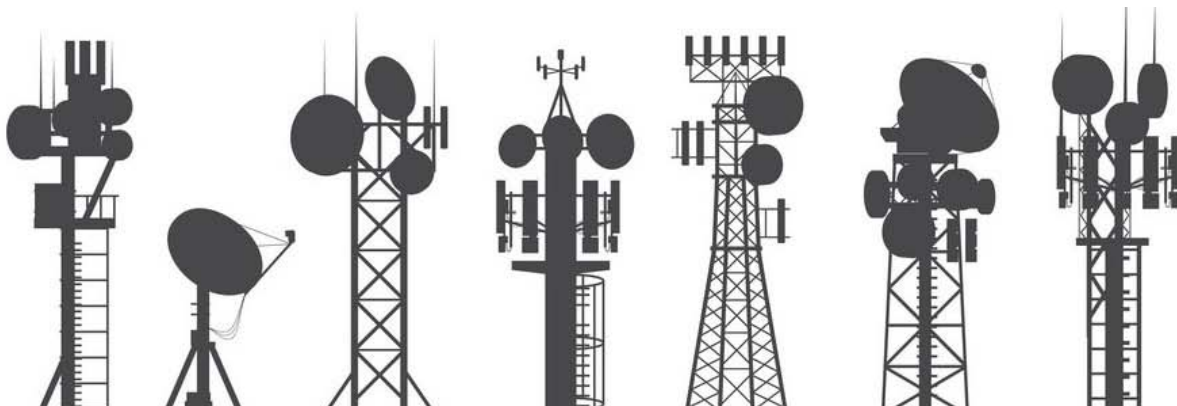
Cole said that the city of Monterey currently upholds “fairly extensive requirements” for the wireless facility permitting process, including a detailed application submittal checklist. While the amended ordinance up before the Planning Commission will continue to require use permits for all non-temporary wireless applications and changes to existing facilities, other updates stand to bolster local oversight. Most notable among the changes, Cole said, are better-defined standards for small cell wireless communications and the public right-of-way.

“We have requirements for the public right-of-way that didn’t use to exist,” she said. Beyond new standards, the updated ordinance also includes additional submittal requirements for facilities located near the Monterey Regional Airport. “Requirements (would become) more extensive,” Cole explained.

If the Planning Commission chooses to recommend the updated ordinance to Monterey City Council Tuesday night, the city council will then hold two public hearings on the new ordinance. Cole said formal adoption of the ordinance could happen as quickly as two months from now or longer depending on how quick decision-makers move forward with the process, which Cole hopes will involve public engagement.

Video of the April 26 Planning Commission meeting may be viewed here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zWNcTN3kB8>



All About Firewise USA Communities

by Jeanne Clark, levendi@att.net

My husband and I served on the Firewise USA Committee that formed in our neighborhood in Nevada City and became certified in Nevada County. We were just a handful of communities then and there are now more than 70 certified FW Communities in Nevada County, with more becoming certified. The communities then formed an umbrella organization to provide county level coordination and advocacy, the Nevada County Firewise Coalition.



FIREWISE USA[®]

Residents reducing wildfire risks

WHY be concerned about fire here in Monterey?

- A large portion of MVNA is located in CalFIRE's Very High Fire Severity Area—the highest risk classification <https://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/>
- Fire Risk is becoming year-round
- Threat to your life, loved ones and property and need to know how to prepare
- Local fire can result in loss of utilities, making it difficult to remain in your home even if fire is elsewhere, especially if you are not prepared
- Increasing costs of insurance and cancellations

Benefits of becoming a Firewise community

- Address our local area's classification as very high fire severity area as defined by [CalFire's maps for High Fire Severity Zones](#). This is the most severe classification. Right now risk is determined by fuels, slope and fire weather (high temps, low humidity, strong winds), not your particular property or what you have done to improve it.



- Be proactive: get ahead of fire dangers, receive advice to harden your landscape, use Firewise plants, be prepared for emergencies and know evacuation routes.
- Get insurance discounts from about 20 insurers and avoid cancellations, such as those that have occurred in Skyline Forest, parts of Carmel and Carmel Valley.
- Use Neighborhood Association as one central vetted

place for residents to get reliable information and materials on prevention, protection etc

- Identify and tackle neighbor problem areas together, such as overgrown vegetation in parks, on hill-sides, in an organized fashion with preplanning, etc.
- Receive landscape level evaluation by fire department and other fire professionals regarding problems and opportunities in our MVNA area.
- Excellent state and local resources, from brochures to plant lists, etc. Ready to use now.
- Learn about grants/funds that are available from the county, state or federal government for bigger projects or to assist those in need to make improvements.
- Leverage our efforts with other FW communities that share common interests, such as underground utilities or clean up of an area overlapping FW communities.

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Firewise USA Communities *Continued from previous page*

Who are the players?

Your neighborhood association, City and County fire departments, CalFIRE, local Foresters, representatives of other pertinent government entities, FireSafe Council local and national, Firewise USA Communities local and national.

What is a Firewise Community and what do they do?

- Organize at a neighborhood level, usually using existing neighborhood association



- Receive information about fire and how to prepare/prevent it
- Identify needs and develop a framework for action based on your neighborhood's ideas that is updated annually
- Work with local fire professionals to develop a plan for certification
- Receive signage and other publicity upon certification
- Access to funding and assistance, often awarded with preference to Firewise communities
- Receive Insurance discounts

from a growing number of California carriers (our personal discount was \$240/year)

- Use fire prevention work as another form of neighborhood building, to leverage related projects (such as undergrounding powerlines and proactive PGE tree removal) and for fire readiness
- Get piece of mind for being READY

We had a nearby fire. Our neighbors just one mile away were evacuated. We were ready when we received our evacuation warning and were out of our home in about 15 minutes.

How to become a Firewise USA Community

- Form a board/committee of residents or other stakeholders
- Create an account, submit an application to your state Firewise USA liaison
- Study materials from the website
- Obtain a wildfire risk assessment from the Fire Department
- Host a minimum of one educational outreach event/activity each year
- Develop a multi year action plan, with help from fire professionals in your community, outlining risk reduction priorities and follow through

** As of January 26, 2022 there are 13 Firewise USA® Communities in Monterey County!

What does a Firewise community have to do to maintain its certification?

- Update your plan each year with fire authorities
- Complete your goals

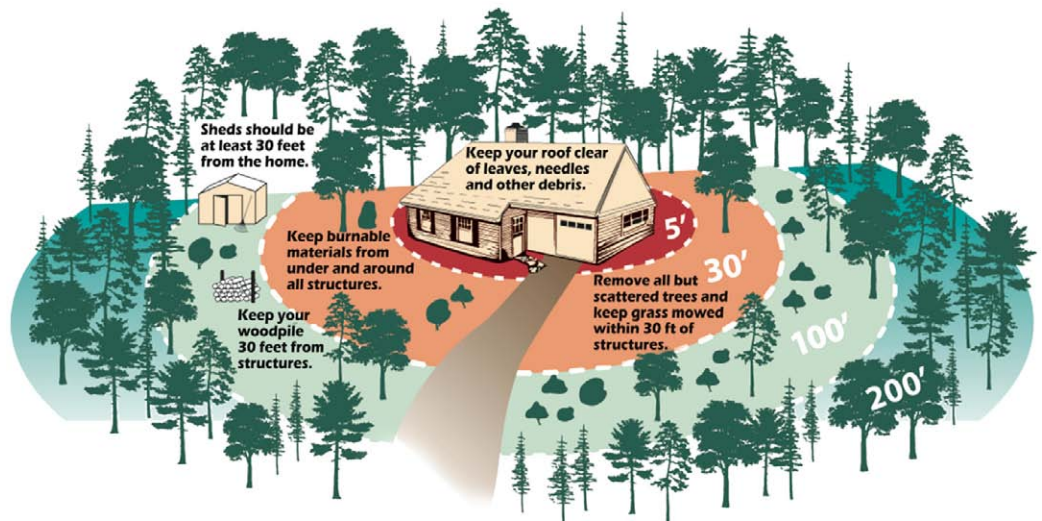
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Firewise USA Communities *Continued from previous page*

- Complete annual filings about your plan and progress achieved
- Hold annual education day
- Meet the annual minimum wildfire risk investment: Invest a minimum of \$27.20 per residence annually in Firewise projects in your home or neighborhood. This is NOT a fee or membership. The hours worked by volunteers on clearing roadsides, creating defensible space have a dollar value. Investments in home hardening, vegetation mitigation, equipment or labor purchase or rentals, etc. that have a dollar value that you can track and count toward the requirement.
- Provide written documentation of neighbor improvements, both individual and landscape level, by filing a straightforward, short form with Firewise USA.

Examples of resources to review:

- Monterey County's Fire website: <https://www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/administrative-office/office-of-emergency-services/ready-monterey-county/hazard-ready/wildfire>
- Firesafe Council of Monterey: <https://www.firesafemonterey.org>
- California FireSafe Council: <https://cafiresafecouncil.org/resources/fire-safe-councils/>
- Firewise Communities: <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA>
- Nevada County: A robust county website in a high fire risk area:
<https://www.mynevadacounty.com/2707/ReadyNevadaCounty>
- Nevada County Coalition of Firewise Communities – an umbrella group:
<https://www.nccoalitionfwc.com/>
- YubaNet: Please look at an incredible local resource in Nevada County, YubaNet. They cover everything, including real time updates about all incidents, including fire. YubaNet's developer has been involved with the Firewise communities and created a 12 week series outlining many aspects of getting ready for fire at <https://yubanet.com/series/>



Examples:

- Go bags for all
- Woodstoves, chimneys, roofs, gutters and screens
- Spring cleaning
- Your way out and emergency plan
- Make a list of what you need to take with you
- How to leave your home ready when you are gone

Gardening in the Hood *By Susan Nine*

I am an avid gardener. Throughout the Monterey Vista Neighborhood, we co-exist within the natural ecosystem which includes many harmless, vegan, and fun to watch wildlife, including deer, gophers, moles (not Vegan), squirrels, snails, slugs, birds and so called “insect pests”. Gardeners have the choice of waging war on or enjoying local wildlife.

I have chosen the latter. This frees me from the use of environmentally harmful chemicals, the need to kill or trap harmless creatures whose only “crime” is the need to eat, reproduce and survive. Live and let live. This has required a combination of strategies, including fully fencing my yard from deer, using gopher root cages and planting varieties that these critters avoid altogether. There are many such plants from which to choose. I do buy ladybugs that can wipe out a colony of aphids in nothing flat. So I am excited about discovering a new strategy for avoiding plant loss to burrowing creatures that would otherwise require root cages, which I find an expensive nuisance to use, especially for edibles and annuals - **PLANTING BAGS!**

I ordered ten of these 15 gallon bags on Amazon, with strong handles for moving them easily, for less than three dollars each. They come in sizes from one to 35 gallons, as well as potato growing bags with flaps for root harvesting. I can lift the full 15 gallon size by myself but larger than that would probably require two people. The photo shows my lettuce growing beautifully in them. Here are some of the perks of using them:

1. Being black, they keep roots warm, which tomatoes and other plants like.
2. They drain but require no holes that can leak soil
3. Their shape does not restrict roots as much as pots.



Lettuce in a 15 gallon bag



4. The handles make them far easier to move than pots that size with soil.
5. They are far less expensive than pots
6. They have the benefits of raised beds without the cost, trouble and permanence.
7. They are reusable.
8. Somehow, they are attractive, or at least inconspicuous, especially after the plants “fill in”.
9. They are gopher proof, and seem to prevent or discourage insects from getting to plants.
10. They also come in “marry” bags that have removable bottoms for transplanting without root damage.
11. When not in use they fold flat and take up little space.

Additional Recommendations:

1. Amend your potting mix with perlite to lighten the mix and promote drainage
2. Plants with deep roots like root vegetables, and some herbs might prefer potato bags that are taller. These are about a foot high which is great for most plants
3. The brand I ordered on Amazon is Gardzen, but there are many others. Costco is selling 15 gallon bags in quantities of two, but at least twice the per bag price of Amazon Prime, but you could buy those first to see if you like them before ordering more. I use different sizes as needed. Try them out!

P.S. If you have never gone on a UC Master Gardeners Tour, they are fabulous. This year’s is in Santa Cruz in June. Here is a link for more info:

<https://mbmg.ucanr.edu>

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