

C. Fire Rebuild Manager

Recommended Action: Provide direction to staff on a potential position to support Fire Rebuild efforts, titled Fire Rebuild Manager or similar.

Staff Contact: Acting City Manager Toney, 456-2489, ext. 224



Council Agenda Report

To: Mayor Stewart and the Honorable Members of the City Council

Prepared by: Joseph D. Toney, Acting City Manager

Reviewed by: Alexis Brown, Acting Assistant City Manager

Date prepared: April 18, 2025

Meeting date: April 28, 2025

Subject: Fire Rebuild Manager

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Provide direction to staff on a potential position to support Fire Rebuild efforts, titled Fire Rebuild Manager or similar.

DISCUSSION: This item will be distributed under separate cover.



Supplemental Council Agenda Report

To: Mayor Stewart and the Honorable Members of the City Council

Prepared by: Joseph D. Toney, Acting City Manager

Reviewed by: Alexis Brown, Acting Assistant City Manager

Date prepared: April 17, 2025 Meeting date: April 28, 2025

Subject: Fire Rebuild Manager

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Provide direction to staff on a potential position to support Fire Rebuild efforts, titled Fire Rebuild Manager or similar.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action. Should direction be given to return with a funded position, additional appropriation will be required.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY: This item was not included in the Adopted FY 2024-25 Strategic Priority Project List, but this has been prioritized due to the declared emergency.

DISCUSSION: At the April 3, 2025, City Council Work Session, the Council directed staff to return with a discussion of a Rebuild Manager for the April 28, 2025, Regular meeting. The Council also requested that community representatives provide a proposal outlining a road map, research, a description of the role, and case studies of other cities. The information provided by the community representatives is attached.

The community proposed position titled "Program Director-Fire Rebuilds," outlines responsibilities such as:

- Serving as the primary liaison between homeowners, city officials, and agencies.
- Reporting directly to the Malibu City Council.
- Operating initially under a three-month term with an evaluation for extension.

The community proposal emphasizes qualifications in construction, project management, and community engagement. It also provided Key Responsibilities, Functions, and examples of other cities and the position titles they used.

In cities operating under a Council-Manager form of government, such as Malibu, staff appointments and organizational structure fall under the purview of the City Manager, not the City Council directly. While the Council sets policy and strategic direction, operational oversight-including staffing decisions – is delegated to the City Manager. A Rebuild Manager would have authority granted by the City Manager and must report directly to the City Manager. A Rebuild Manager would be treated like a department head.

At the federal level, “czar” positions are often appointed by executive branches with a broader authority. At the local level, a Strong-Mayor form of government would function similarly to appoint such a position. However, in a Council-Manager form of government, the Council must coordinate with the City Manager to identify the appropriate structure for the appointment of this type of position.

The City Council has considered this type of position under different titles, such as Rebuild Manager or Liaison. In terms of rebuild and recovery after a disaster or crisis, the role often involves coordinating various recovery efforts, organizing resources, managing logistics, and ensuring that efforts are focused on rebuilding infrastructure including integration with residential lot pre-construction utility requirements, identifying and initiating processes/systems that support accelerated reviews and approvals, and enabling community restoration in a more resilient, sustainable, and efficient manner.

During the February 27, 2025, City Council meeting, staff presented a possible path forward with a radial org chart displaying a potential structure (see attached). The community input received to date appears to be describing a position that is more akin to a Rebuild Liaison who would engage and interface more directly with community groups and stakeholders in an organized fashion to better consolidate and unify areas that need focus or policy decisions of the Council. City Staff have engaged consulting firms to provide Advisory Services. Staff also see a functional manager position as being a city employee who is working with the Rebuild Center team on operational functions and organizational effectiveness. The community proposal describes the role of a liaison serving as a centralized point of contact. A Rebuild Liaison that coordinates amongst the point of contacts for each neighborhood and community group seems like a path that may best support the role of the community requests.

Should the Council wish to pursue additional positions, the format could be under three scenarios: City Employee, Consultant, or Volunteer. If an additional employee is to be added to the City Budget, staff will need to return with a position description and updated Authorized Position and Salary resolution. Any format will require a vetting process to

ensure the right background and fit of the person filling the role. Any additional positions must still adhere to the Council-Manager form of government and work closely with the City Manager and City team.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Community Proposal: Summary MRTF – Program Director Fire Rebuilds
2. Radial Org Chart

Position Title: Program Director - Fire Rebuilds

Location: City of Malibu, California

Reports To: Malibu City Council

Term: 3-Month (Subject to Evaluation)

Position Summary

The Program Director - Fire Rebuilds will oversee all aspects of the fire rebuilding process following devastating wildfires. This pivotal role will report directly to the Malibu City Council and work in close partnership with the City's Planning & Building leadership. The Program Director will serve as the primary liaison between homeowners, city officials, and relevant agencies, ensuring a streamlined, transparent, and community-focused reconstruction effort. This position is initially structured as a three-month assignment, with performance and need assessed at the term's conclusion for potential extension.

The ideal candidate will bring extensive experience in residential construction, project management, and community engagement, with a proven ability to navigate complex regulatory environments and foster collaboration among diverse stakeholders. This role is critical to expediting recovery efforts, restoring neighborhoods, and enhancing the quality of life for Malibu residents.

Key Responsibilities

- **Homeowner Engagement:** Establish and lead dedicated core team of residents, architectural/engineering teams to assess needs, identify challenges, and develop tailored solutions for expediting reconstruction.
- **City Rebuild Team Leadership:** Establish and lead a dedicated core team of staff focused exclusively on fire rebuild efforts, ensuring efficient coordination and execution of tasks.
- **Prioritization and Planning:** Based on above, identify the list of most pressing priorities that are affecting the rebuild process.
- **Community Adjudication:** Form and oversee two-member adjudication panels in fire-affected neighborhoods to address specific community concerns and resolve disputes efficiently.

- **Agency Coordination:** Partner with local, state, and federal agencies to streamline permitting processes, eliminate administrative bottlenecks, and secure expedited approvals.
- **Legal and Precedent Utilization:** Leverage relevant legal precedents and best practices to support rebuilding efforts and ensure compliance with all regulations.
- **Transparency and Communication:** Establish and maintain clear metrics, milestones, and an active web and social media presence to keep the community informed of progress and updates.
- **Reporting:** Provide regular updates and detailed reports to the Malibu City Council on rebuild progress, challenges, and proposed solutions.

How the Role Will Function

- **Workshops:** The Program Director will organize multiple workshops, bringing together City staff, experts, residents, and SMEs (e.g., architects, engineers) to tackle pressing rebuild issues. For example, a workshop on “Streamlining Permitting process” might result in a standardized checklist adopted citywide, reducing approval times. Outcomes will be documented and shared publicly.
- **City Council Engagement:** When disputes arise—such as interpretation of Building Codes, the Program Director will draft concise proposals and submit them to the City Council for a vote. This ensures that unresolved issues are escalated efficiently rather than stalling progress.
- **Dashboard Oversight:** The Program Director will maintain an online dashboard updated weekly, featuring metrics like “Average Days to Permit Approval” or “Number of Homes Under Construction.” This tool will serve as both a community resource and an internal accountability mechanism.
- **Bottleneck Resolution:** Using data from the dashboard and feedback from homeowners, the Program Director will pinpoint delays (e.g., a backlog in environmental reviews) and propose actionable fixes, such as temporary staffing increases or agency liaisons, reporting outcomes to the Council monthly.
- **Resource Management:** In partnership with the City Manager, the Program Director will assess staffing needs (e.g., hiring additional permit reviewers) and oversee training on rebuild-specific processes. Resources will be allocated dynamically based on project volume and priority areas.

Qualifications

- **Experience:** Significant experience in single-family residential (SFR) construction, with a strong preference for candidates who have led large-scale projects or organizations, ideally within large companies or similar high-stakes environments.
- **Leadership:** Demonstrated ability to manage teams, coordinate multi-stakeholder initiatives, and drive results under tight deadlines.
- **Community Engagement:** Proven track record of working effectively with homeowners, community groups, and government agencies to achieve shared goals.
- **Regulatory Knowledge:** Familiarity with California building codes, fire recovery regulations, and permitting processes; experience navigating legal precedents is a plus.
- **Communication:** Exceptional verbal and written communication skills, with the ability to distill complex information into clear, actionable insights for diverse audiences.
- **Problem-Solving:** Pragmatic and innovative approach to addressing construction and administrative challenges in a post-disaster context.
- **Education:** Bachelor's degree in construction management, engineering, architecture, urban planning, or a related field preferred; equivalent professional experience will be considered.

Precedents and Success Models

While the specific appointment of a resident to a city-led fire rebuild oversight role is rare, there are notable precedents in California and the U.S. where community members or specialized directors have successfully driven post-disaster recovery efforts:

- **Santa Rosa, California (Post-2017 Tubbs Fire):** Following the destructive Tubbs Fire, Santa Rosa appointed a *Recovery and Resilience Coordinator*, a role filled by a local expert with deep ties to the community. This position oversaw rebuilding efforts, coordinated with homeowners and agencies, and expedited over 3,000 residential rebuild permits within two years. The model's success stemmed from its

community-centric approach and streamlined permitting, reducing rebuild timelines by an estimated 30% compared to pre-existing processes.

- **Paradise, California (Post-2018 Camp Fire):** Paradise created a *Rebuild Paradise Program*, led by a director with extensive construction experience, who worked closely with the Town Council and residents. This initiative facilitated the reconstruction of over 1,500 homes by 2023, leveraging resident input and agency partnerships. The program's success was attributed to its focus on transparency (e.g., public dashboards) and dedicated staff, which mirrors the proposed Malibu role.
- **Boulder, Colorado (Post-2021 Marshall Fire):** Boulder County appointed a *Fire Recovery Manager*, a resident with a background in project management, to oversee rebuilding efforts. This position reported to county officials and successfully expedited the reconstruction of over 500 homes within 18 months, thanks to proactive homeowner engagement and inter-agency collaboration.

These examples demonstrate that appointing a resident or expert with relevant experience to a dedicated rebuild oversight role can significantly accelerate recovery, enhance community trust, and optimize resource use—a model Malibu can emulate with the proposed Program Director position.

Compensation and Benefits

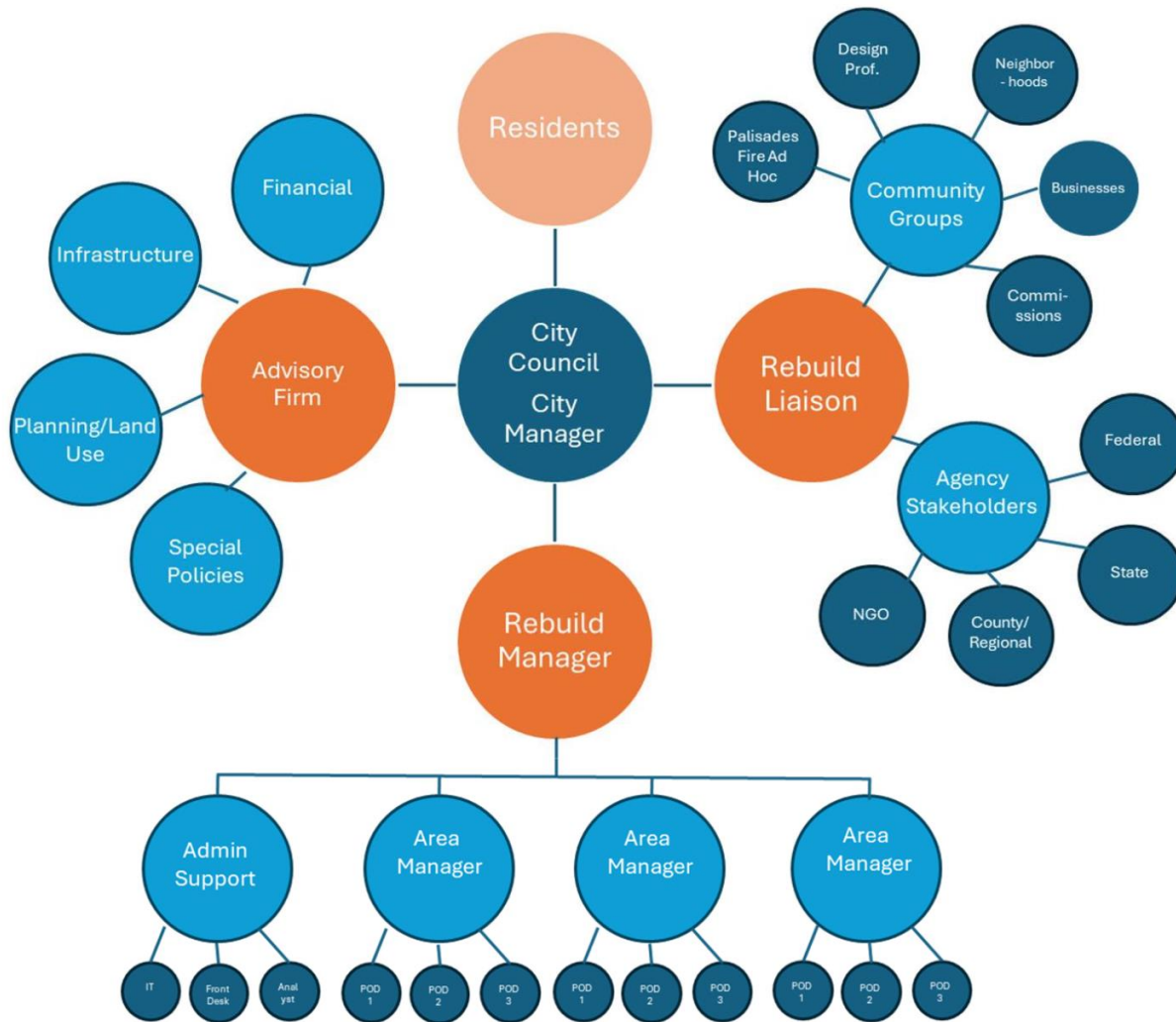
Option 1: Consultant Hire

- **Compensation:** The Program Director will be hired as an independent consultant at a competitive rate commensurate with experience and aligned with senior municipal management or disaster recovery consultant roles in California.
- **Contract Terms:** A formal consultancy agreement will outline deliverables, timelines, and payment schedules, with the option for extension beyond six months contingent on performance and ongoing rebuild needs.

Option 2: Gratis Ventis (Voluntary Service)

- **Compensation:** The Program Director will serve *gratis ventis* (without monetary compensation), elected by the Malibu City Council as a community-driven appointee dedicated to the public good. This option is designed for candidates motivated by civic duty and a desire to directly contribute to Malibu's recovery.

- **Privileges and Authority:** In lieu of salary, the Program Director will receive:
 - Full access to City staff and facilities to support rebuild efforts, including office space, administrative support, and technological resources (e.g., software for dashboards, communication tools).
 - Authority to call and agendize items for City Council votes, ensuring the ability to escalate unresolved issues (e.g., policy disputes, resource needs) for timely resolution.
 - Direct collaboration with the City Manager and Planning & Building leadership to allocate staff and resources to the rebuild team.
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POD = Staff + Consultants
 PL, B&S, PW, Geo, Bio, Coastal, Env.
 Health, Fire & W29.

PATH FORWARD