

# 2023 Firewise Renewal Narrative

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Prepared by

Sun City Texas Firewise Group



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# Sun City Texas Community Association

## Community Description

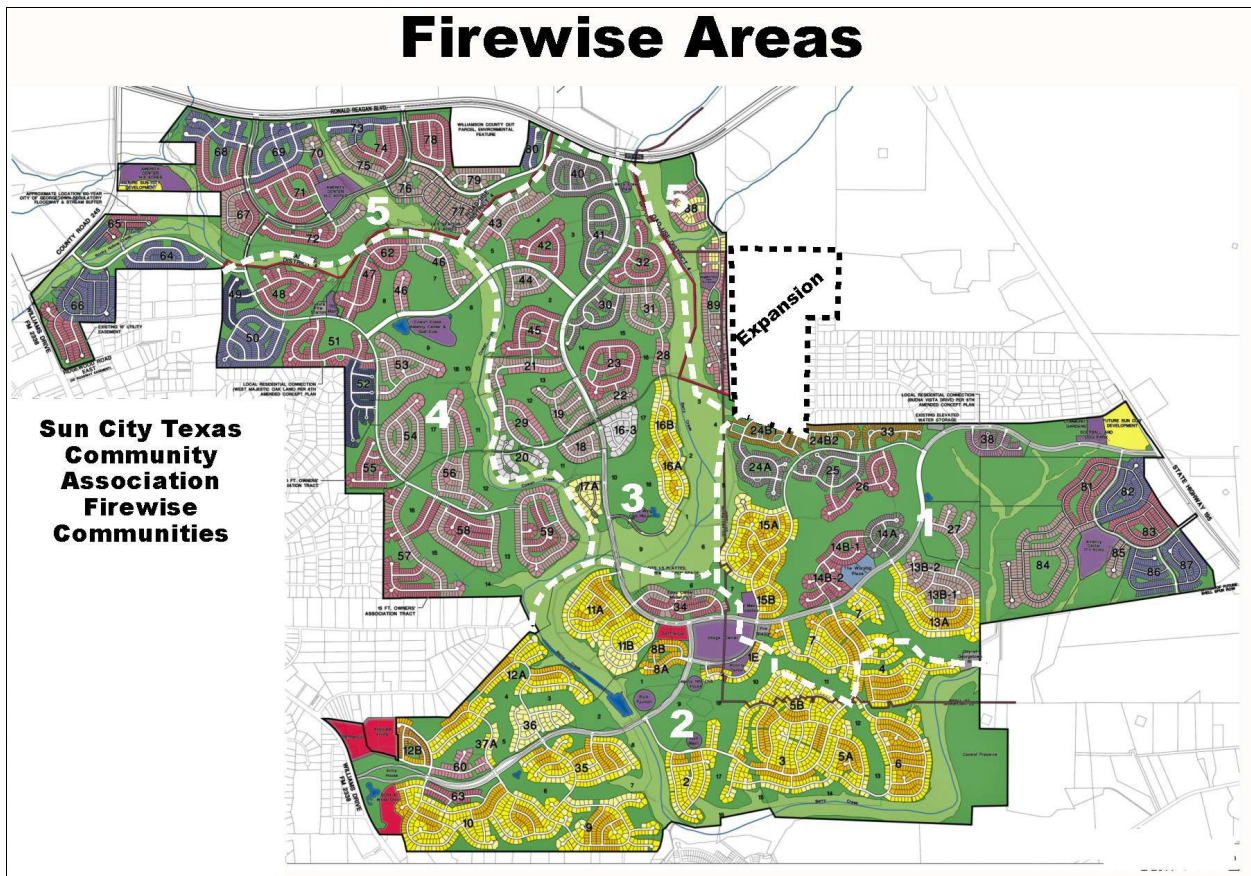
Sun City Texas Community Association is located within the city of Georgetown, Texas, 5.5 miles from Interstate 35 on Williams Drive. Sun City Texas is an urban community with wildland vegetation (a hardwood, juniper, and native grass type) in the open spaces and adjoining properties. Sun City will have approximately 10,500 houses on about 5,200 acres at build out.

As of October 31, 2023, there are 9,241 homes with an estimated population of 17,096 residents. Sun City Texas is presently one of the largest Firewise Community Home Owners Association in Texas. Sun City Texas currently has 79 of 90 planned neighborhoods each with their own organization.

Sun City has been divided into five communities to meet the current Firewise USA requirements. The Areas are named Sun City Texas CA 1, Sun City Texas CA 2, Sun City Texas CA 3, Sun City Texas CA 4, and Sun City Texas CA 5. The planned and active neighborhoods and current population are in Table 1. Figure 1 shows the boundaries of the five communities.

**Table 1.** Planned and active neighborhoods and current population.

	Area 1	Area 2	Area 3	Area 4	Area 5	total
planned	17	16	21	15	21	90
CA responsible	16	16	21	15	8	78
residents	4,172	4,148	3,373	3,302	1,833	17,096



**Figure 1.** The boundaries of the five Firewise areas.

All residential properties are the responsibility of the individual property owners for

the implementation of the Home Ignition Zone principles. Homeowner education, provided by the Firewise Group, is the key for residents having information concerning the dangers from wildfires and to encourage the management of the space around their residence.

The Sun City Texas Community Association (CA) is responsible for the management of all non-residential property. CA documents define a set of four maintenance levels for management. Included in these levels are federally defined protected areas for karst formations (underground caves) for endangered species. The CA also owns and maintains three golf courses.

Berry Creek and its tributaries, Cowan and Rocky Hollow, originally had hardwood trees with an Ashe juniper (cedar) tree understory in the flood plain. The presence of Ashe juniper (cedar) trees, an invasive native, posed a fire hazard as a ladder fuel and acted as debris accumulation points during periods of creek floods. Shaded fuel breaks have been established in three heavy concentrations that posed a significant wildfire threat. Since a major flooding event that occurred in 2010, the more than 9 miles of flood plains have been cleared of Ashe juniper and willow baccharis. An additional 500 acres of common area have been remediated for wildfire concerns.

### **Sun City Texas Community Association Risk Assessment**

Texas A&M Forest Service conducted the risk assessment on September 14, 2022. It can be accessed online ([click here](#)).

### **The Sun City Texas Firewise Group**

The Sun City Texas Firewise Group is a subcommittee of the Sun City Texas Emergency Management Committee.

The Sun City Texas Firewise Group was started on January 29, 2009 during a meeting with Jan Fulkerson, Texas Forest Service with Sun City residents, Staff, and Georgetown Fire Department.

### **Firewise Group Objectives**

The objectives of the Firewise Group are:

The Firewise Group will help residents understand their role in reducing the potential for embers igniting their homes.

The Firewise Group will maintain Sun City Texas as a Firewise Community in good standing with Firewise USA.

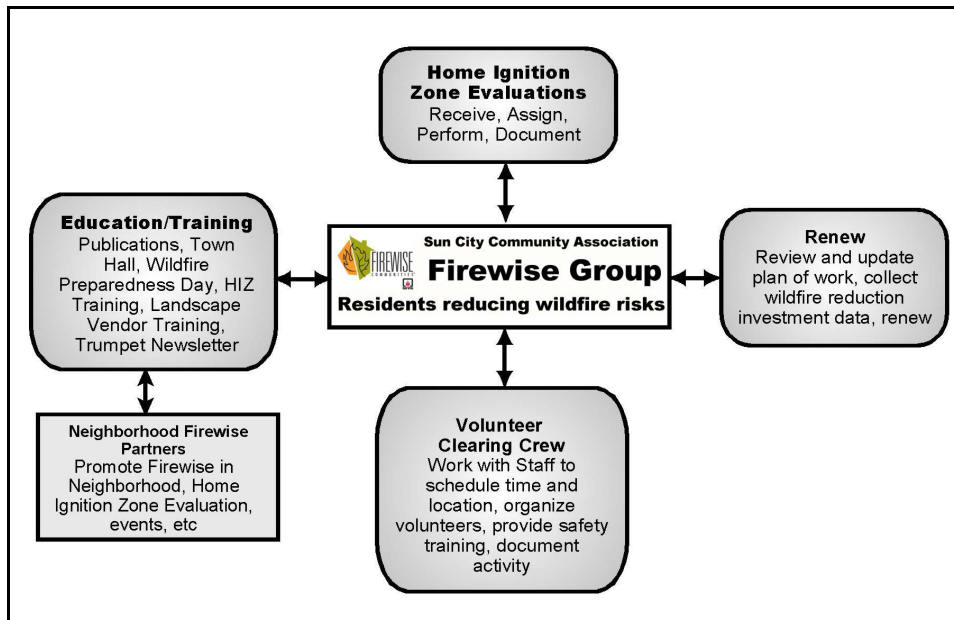
### **Organization**

The Firewise Group has evolved over the years. Within Sun City, the Firewise Group works with the CA Staff, the Property and Grounds Committee, and the Wildlife Management Committee.

An organizational structure has continued to evolve as five Work Groups (Figure 2). Each group has specific tasks as follows:

#### **Education and Training Work Group**

The Education and Training Work Group prepares materials for distribution to homeowners and develops materials for use with neighborhoods, clubs, and other Sun City groups. It prepares materials for internal use. It provides training for Home Ignition Zone Evaluators, Neighborhood Firewise Partners,



**Figure 2.** The organization chart for the Sun City Texas Firewise Group.

and Landscape Vendors.

### **Neighborhood Firewise Partners**

The Neighborhood Firewise Partners is part of the Education and Training Work Group. The Neighborhood Partners are asked to promote the Firewise program in their neighborhoods including Home Ignition Zone Evaluation, events and information.

### **Home Ignition Zone Evaluation Work Group**

Home Ignition Zone Work Group is a group of trained volunteers conducting evaluations of the outside of homeowners house and property to determine the condition of landscaping and the house where embers from a wildfire could ignite a fire. Training is required.

### **Renewal Work Group**

The Renewal Work Group collects the data and information required to apply for the annual renewal. It creates the annual narrative document to provide a record of the progress the Firewise Group makes.

### **Firewise Volunteer Clearing Crew**

The Firewise Volunteer Clearing Crew is a volunteer group that participates in weekly workdays cutting vines and junipers (cedars) in the Level 3 fuel break common areas in coordination with the Common Area & Irrigation Superintendent. Training will be conducted for new volunteers. This is outside work. There will be limited activities in the summer.

### **Sun City Texas Community Association**

Sun City Texas Staff

The Firewise Group also works with the CA Irrigation and Common Area staff on the clearing and maintenance of Level 3 fuel breaks in common areas. Meetings, requested by the staff, with interested residents and Firewise may be

held in a work area to provide the rationale for the work. The CA provides a liaison to the Firewise Group.

#### Property and Grounds Committee (P&G)

The Firewise Group continues to work with P&G. The Firewise Group provides an annual review of progress and proposed clearing activities and provide advice on the management of common areas. P&G provides a liaison to the Firewise Group.

#### Wildlife Management Committee (WMC)

The Firewise Group continues to work with WMC to improve wildlife habitat while meeting the goal of reducing the wildfire potential. Removing the Ashe juniper has changed the habits of the deer and turkey populations. Firewise provides a liaison to the WMC.

### **Partner Groups**

*Texas A&M Forest Service* - This has been an excellent year working with Walter Flocke, Wildland-Urban Interface Coordinator and Kari Hines, Firewise Coordinator, Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS).

*Georgetown Fire Department* - The Firewise Group maintains a working relationship with GFD to promote the development of Firewise Communities within Georgetown.

*Georgetown Emergency Management Coordinator* - The Firewise Group continues to work with the Georgetown Emergency Management Coordinator.

*Williamson County Office of Emergency Management (WilCo OEM)* - The Firewise Group maintains a relationship with WilCo OEM.

*USAA Insurance* - We maintain communications with USAA Insurance to understand their fire insurance premium reduction.

*Firewise USA* - We regularly share information about how we apply Firewise concepts in our urban/suburban area.

### **2023 Accomplishments**

#### **Wildfire Risk Reduction Investment**

Table 1 contains the wildfire risk reduction investment credits contributed for the year. The investment is the value of the volunteer hours and direct costs supporting the Firewise effort.

#### **Firewise Group**

The Firewise Group met 11 times. Over the year the Group contributed equivalent of over 8 weeks maintaining the operational requirements of the group.

#### **Home Ignition Zone Evaluation Work Group**

The Home Ignition Zone Evaluation Zone Work Group was able to conduct 44 evaluations. HIZ contributed the equivalent of over 4 weeks of work.

#### **Community Wildfire Preparedness Day**

Community Wildfire Preparedness Day was not held. Instead, the Firewise Group

**Table 1. 2022 Wildfire Risk Reduction Investment (as of October 31, 2023)**

Item	Summary			Area 1		Area 2		Area 3		Area 4		Area 5	
	units	number	value	number	value	number	value	number	value	number	value	number	value
Volunteers													
Firewise volunteers	hours	961	28,781	147	4,403	271	8,105	186	5,578	166	4,984	191	5,711
Administrative	hours	485	14,526	118	3,545	118	3,524	96	2,866	94	2,806	52	1,558
Neighborhood Partners	hours	62	1,868	8	240	2	60	1	30	32	958	19	580
Events													
Appreciation Day	hours	120	3,594	24	719	21	629	12	359	42	1,258	21	629
Town Hall	hours	148	4,422	37	1,096	36	1,090	30	886	29	868	16	482
Home Ignition Zone Evaluations	hours	176	5,271	32	3,834	32	3,834	48	5,750	36	4,313	28	3,354
Firewise Clearing Crew	hours	885	26,506	147	4,403	249	7,458	207	6,200	141	4,223	141	4,223
Subtotal-Volunteer input		21,068	84,968	513	18,238	729	24,699	580	21,669	540	19,410	468	16,537
Sun City Texas Community Association													
Staff work	dollars		366,650		89,470		88,955		72,330		70,822		39,319
Resident contribution (prorated)		number	value	number	value	number	value	number	value	number	value	number	value
Paid to vendor	paid	1,516	1,998,088	376	495,348	374	492,493	304	400,452	298	392,105	165	217,690
Own care	hours	1,516	5,528,056	376	1,362,001	374	1,365,341	304	1,110,177	298	1,087,035	165	603,502
Subtotal-Resident Contribution			7,526,144		1,857,350		1,857,833		1,510,629		1,479,140		821,192
Total Contribution			7,977,762		1,965,058		1,971,487		1,604,629		1,569,373		877,048



Appreciation Day was held to recognize the Firwise Group volunteers, six commercial contributors, and our cooperators. The contributors are Bartlett Tree Experts, Brightview, Homeyer State Farm Insurance, Rus-sell Glass Co., and TCB Quality Landscaping, Inc. The cooperators are Georgetown Fire Department, Georgetown Emergency Management, and Texas A&M Forest Service. Plans are to hold a Community Wildfire Preparedness/Appreciation Day in 2024.

### **Publications**

Eleven issues of the Firewise Trumpet newsletter were published. It is distributed to community leaders, Firewise volunteers, Neighborhood Firewise Partners, and others. The Firewise Trumpet is available online.

Sun City Texas Firewise Group, Texas A&M Forest Service, and Firewise USA publications continue to be distributed to residents. The publications are also available at all Firewise presentations and events. One page of Firewise information is presented in the Sun City Texas Resource Guide (directory) which is distributed to all residents.

Current local publications for Sun City are:

- Sun City and Firewise Ignition Zones
- Being Firewise Around Your Home
- Firewise Tree Trimming Guidelines
- Understanding Ashe Juniper (Cedar) in Sun City
- Sun City Texas Firewise Plant List
- 2023 Firewise Landscape Service Provider Companies

One publications was updated.

### **Firewise Town Hall**

The Annual Firewise Town Hall was held October 10 with 150 residents attending. The topic was Drought, Embers, and Fifteen Years of Firewise. Presenters included Texas A&M Forest Service, Georgetown Fire Department, Georgetown Emergency Management and Sun City Firewise Group. Sun City Advisory Committees Emergency Management, Citizens on Patrol (COPs), Property and Grounds and Wildlife Management provided residents with information and answered questions.

### **New Residents Orientation**

The Sun City Texas Community Association conducts a quarterly New Residents Orientation to acquaint the newcomers to the many activities offered in Sun City Texas. The Firewise Group participated in three Orientations. Residents are given information about using appropriate landscape plants and landscape maintenance to reduce the hazards. They are also given the opportunity to request a free Home Ignition Zone Evaluation on their home and consider volunteering for Firewise Group functions.

### **Training Program**

#### *Landscape Vendor Companies Training*

The Firewise Group held the annual landscape training session on January 27. The training included 10 companies with 11 individuals. Companies are required to have continuing education every three years to remain on the list.



Currently there are 13 companies who have met the requirements. A list is distributed to residents at events, is in the Vendor Notebooks at the Monitor Desks for residents, and on the Firewise web site. Plans are to hold a Landscape Vendor Companies Training on January 26, 2024.

#### *Home Ignition Zone Evaluator Training*

A training sessions was held October 27 with 3 new Evaluators and 9 Evaluators for Continuing Education attending. Plans are to hold a Home Ignition Zone Evaluator Training on October 26, 2024.

### **Neighborhood Firewise Partners**

The Neighborhood Firewise Partners were created this year. They provided almost 2 weeks of work in their neighborhoods.

### **Firewise Volunteer Clearing Crew**

The Firewise Volunteer Clearing Crew held 22 workdays during the year. Their work was the equivalent to just over 21 weeks. Rain, CA staff availability and weather conditions cancelled some workdays. The Firewise Volunteer Clearing Crew also assisted the CA Landscape Crew in removing down limbs and debris after a severe ice storm earlier in the year, thus reducing fire fuel in our common areas.

### **Other Volunteer Efforts**

Each year the Firewise members prepare materials, develop and update materials, presentations, talk to groups, and other functions. This year they provided the equivalent of over 12 weeks of work.

### **Media Coverage**

Groups, staff, or notices mentioned Firewise in articles published in the monthly *Sun Rays* resident magazine. Additional information items about Firewise and fire dangers were produced for the weekly CA Communicator and NRO (Neighborhood Representatives Organization) Bulletin e-mails. The NRO Bulletin has a link to the Firewise web page and includes articles when requested.

The following were published about the Sun City Firewise Group:

#### *Sun Rays*

Firewise had an article or was mentioned 7 times.

#### *NRO Bulletin*

A link to the Home Ignition Zone Evaluation form is included every issue. Firewise had an article or was mentioned 6 times.

## **Sun City Texas Firewise Group 2024-2026 Plans**

### **2024 Plans**

- Distribute Firewise information to residents at the Wildfire Community Preparedness and/or Appreciation Day, Firewise Town Hall, quarterly New Residents Orientation and other opportunities including the Firewise web page.

- Provide Firewise information at neighborhood, club, and community-wide gatherings as requested.
- Publish and distribute the Firewise Trumpet Newsletter 11 times.
- Education/Training Events
  - " Conduct a Landscape Vendor Training on January 26, 2024.
  - " Hold a Wildfire Community Preparedness/Appreciation Day, May 3, 2024.
  - " Conduct the Firewise Town Hall on October 8, 2024.
  - " Provide training for Home Ignition Zone Evaluators on October 25, 2024.
- Continue the Firewise Volunteer Clearing Crew to assist in maintaining the mowed fuel breaks.
- Plan education events for 2025.
- Develop support and training for Firewise Partners on the 5 Firewise Communities within Sun City Texas.
- Outside cooperation and support
  - " Continue cooperating with the Georgetown Fire Department to develop Firewise Communities within and near Georgetown.
  - " Continue cooperating with Texas A&M Forest Service.
  - " Continue contact with USAA Insurance to understand the Firewise discount.
  - " Continue contact with Firewise USA for continued information.

## **2025 Plans**

- Distribute Firewise information to residents at the Wildfire Community Preparedness Day, Firewise Town Hall, quarterly New Residents Orientation and other opportunities including the Firewise web page.
- Provide Firewise information at neighborhood, club, and community-wide gatherings as requested.
- Prepare and distribute timely articles for the Sun Rays, Communicator, and NRO Bulletin.
- Publish and distribute the Firewise Trumpet Newsletter 11 times.
- Education/Training Events
  - " Conduct a Landscape Vendor Training on January 31, 2025.
  - " Hold a Wildfire Community Preparedness Day/Appreciation Day, May 2, 2025.
  - " Conduct the Firewise Town Hall on October 7, 2025.
  - " Provide training for Home Ignition Zone Evaluators on October 31, 2025.
- Continue the Firewise Volunteer Clearing Crew to assist in maintaining the mowed fuel breaks.

## 2025 Plans

- Distribute Firewise information to residents at the Wildfire Community Preparedness Day, Firewise Town Hall, quarterly New Residents Orientation and other opportunities including the Firewise web page.
- Provide Firewise information at neighborhood, club, and community-wide gatherings as requested.
- Prepare and distribute timely articles for the Sun Rays, Communicator, and NRO Bulletin.
- Publish and distribute the Firewise Trumpet Newsletter 11 times.
- Education/Training Events
  - " Conduct a Landscape Vendor Training on January 31, 2025.
  - " Hold a Wildfire Community Preparedness Day/Appreciation Day, May 2, 2025.
  - " Conduct the Firewise Town Hall on October 7, 2025.
  - " Provide training for Home Ignition Zone Evaluators on October 31, 2025.
- Continue the Firewise Volunteer Clearing Crew to assist in maintaining the mowed fuel breaks.
- Plan education events for 2026.
- Maintain support and training for Firewise Partners on the 5 Firewise Communities within Sun City Texas.
- Outside cooperation and support
  - " Continue cooperating with the Georgetown Fire Department to develop Firewise Communities within and near Georgetown.
  - " Continue cooperating with Texas A&M Forest Service.
  - " Continue contact with USAA Insurance to understand the Firewise discount.
  - " Continue contact with Firewise USA for continued information.

## 2026 Plans

- Distribute Firewise information to residents at the Wildfire Community Preparedness Day, Firewise Town Hall, quarterly New Residents Orientation and other opportunities including the Firewise web page.
- Provide Firewise information at neighborhood, club, and community-wide gatherings as requested.
- Prepare and distribute timely articles for the Sun Rays, Communicator, and NRO Bulletin.
- Publish and distribute the Firewise Trumpet Newsletter 11 times.

- Education/Training Events
  - " Conduct a Landscape Vendor Training on January 30, 2026.
  - " Hold a Wildfire Community Preparedness Day/Appreciation Day, May 1, 2026.
  - " Conduct the Firewise Town Hall on October 6, 2026.
  - " Provide training for Home Ignition Zone Evaluators on October 30, 2026
- Continue the Firewise Volunteer Clearing Crew to assist in maintaining the mowed fuel breaks.
- Plan education events for 2027.
- Maintain support and training for Firewise Partners on the 5 Firewise Communities within Sun City Texas.
- Outside cooperation and support
  - " Continue cooperating with the Georgetown Fire Department to develop Firewise Communities within and near Georgetown.
  - " Continue cooperating with Texas A&M Forest Service.
  - " Continue contact with USAA Insurance to understand the Firewise discount.
  - " Continue contact with Firewise USA for continued information.