



VENTURA COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

March 30, 2023



AGENDA

- Definitions
- Background
- Update - 2022 Draft FHSZ Map
- Hazard vs Risk
- Recent Legislative Changes
- FAQ
- Questions?



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DEFINITIONS



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STATE RESPONSIBILITY AREA (SRA)

- SRA is a legal term defining the area where the state has financial responsibility for wildland fire protection and prevention.
- Incorporated cities and federal ownership are not included.
- Within the SRA, CAL FIRE is responsible for fire prevention and suppression. There are more than 31 million acres in SRA, with an estimated 1.7 million people and 800,000 existing homes.



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LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY AREA (LRA)

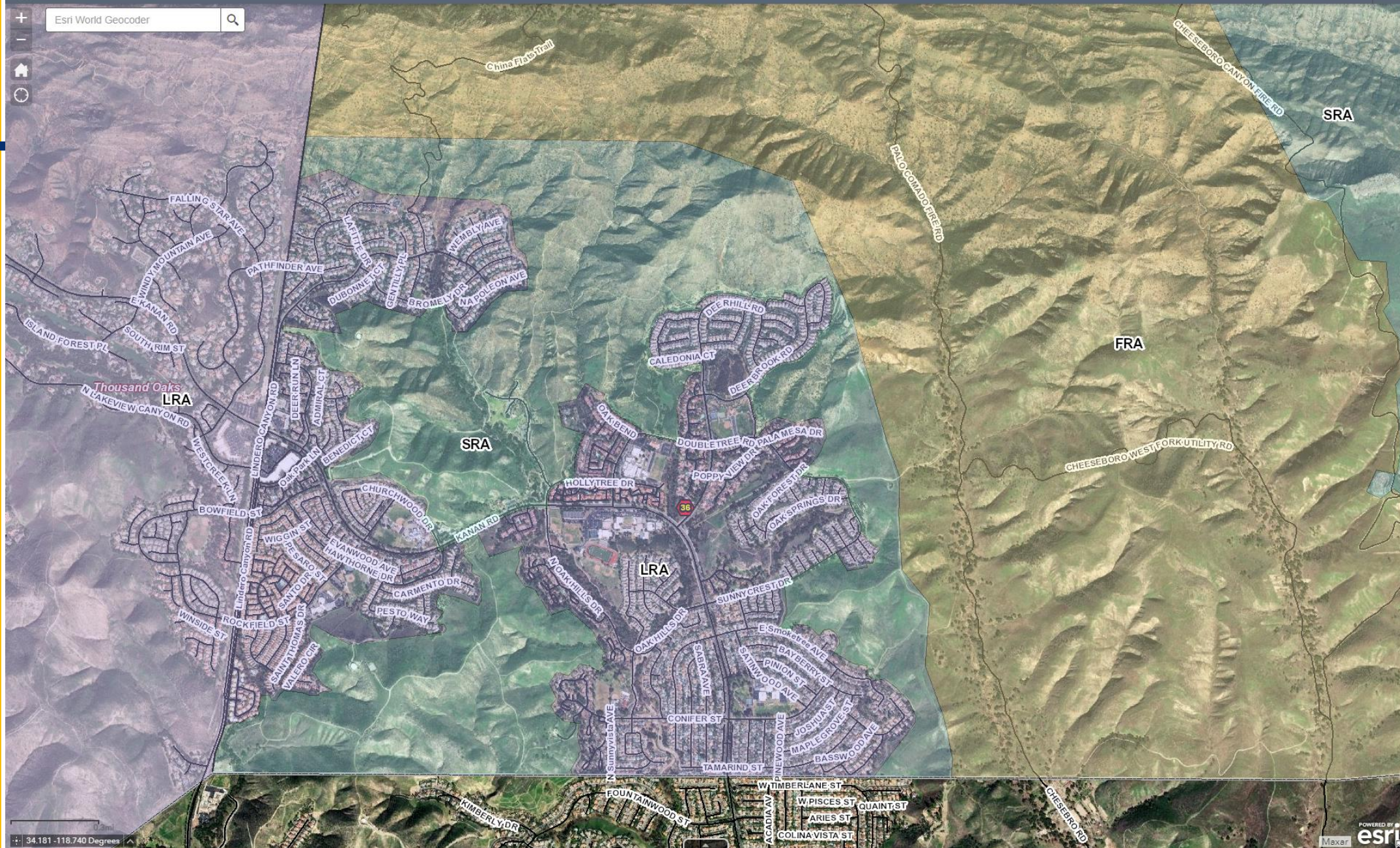
- LRA are incorporated cities, urban regions, agriculture lands, and portions of the desert where the local government is responsible for wildfire protection.
- This is typically provided by city fire departments, fire protection districts, counties, and by CAL FIRE under contract.



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FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONE (FHSZ)

- The State Fire Marshal is required by law (PRC 4202) to map areas of significant fire hazard based on fuel, terrain, weather, and other relevant factors, including areas where winds have been identified by the department as a major cause of wildfire spread.
- Fire Hazard Severity Zones fall into the following classifications:
 - Moderate
 - High
 - Very High



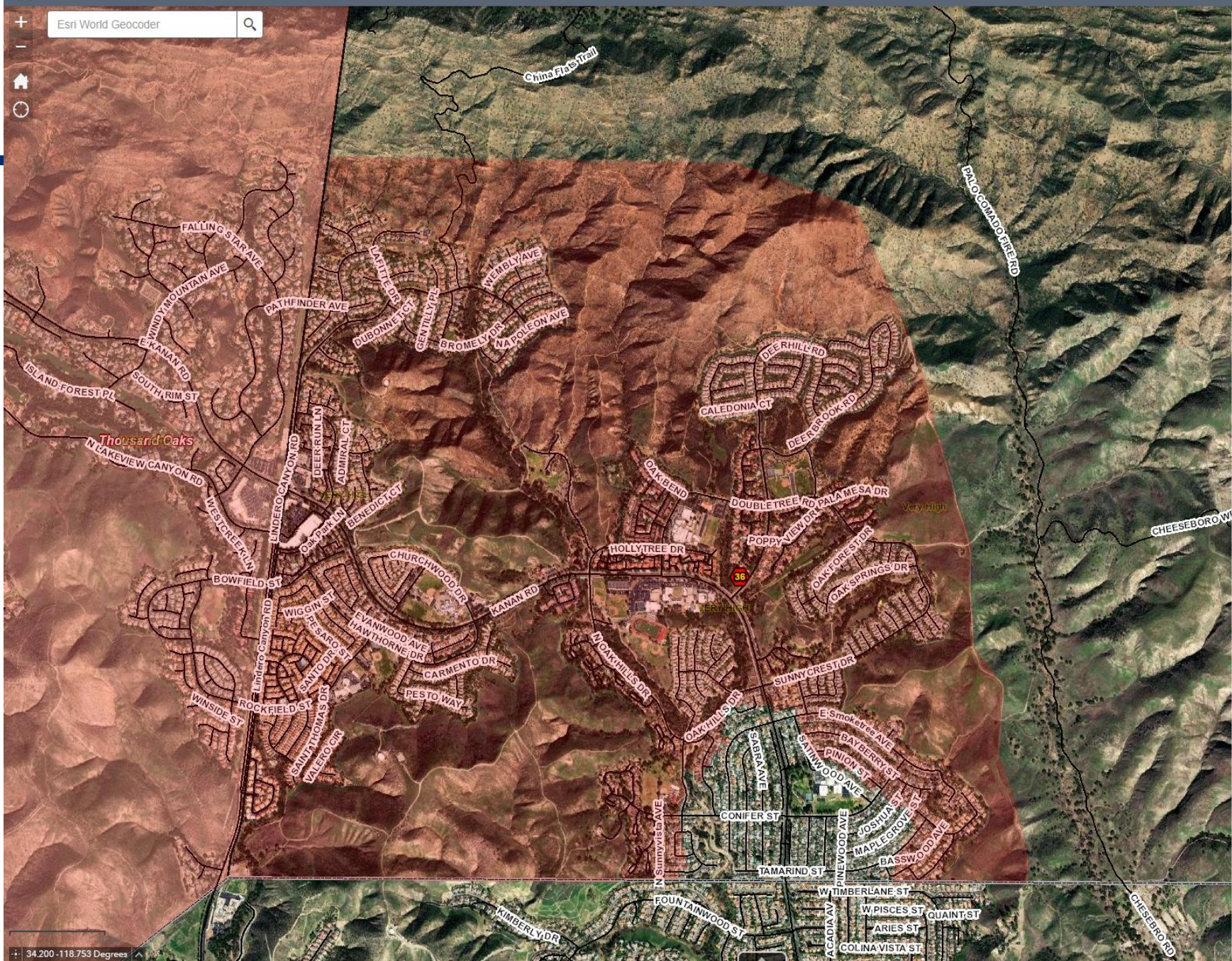
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FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONE (FHSZ)

- All areas in SRA are zoned, including non-wildland areas and waterbodies.
- Currently, in LRA only the very high fire hazard severity zone is mapped. The new updated LRA maps scheduled to release Summer or Fall of 2023 will include all three (3) zones. (Required by State Law)



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- Layer List
- Operational layers
- ☐ SRA_DPA1061
 - ☐ FHSZ_Local OLD DRAFT
 - ☒ FHSZ_FRAPReplica_FireGISTest04_1061
 - ☒ StationsAbove64K_1061
 - ☒ StreetsForWeb1061
 - ☐ AdministrationBoundariesReplica
 - ☒ CountyBoundary1061
 - ☒ FHRPParcels1061
 - ☒ ParcelApnAddress1061
 - ☐ ParcelApn1061
 - ☐ ParcelAddress1061
 - ☒ ParcelBoundary1061
 - ☒ VenturaCountyCities1061



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BACKGROUND



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HISTORY OF FHSZ MAPS

- In 2007 the State Fire Marshal identified areas in the state as moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones based on consistent statewide criteria and based on the severity of fire hazard that is expected to prevail in those areas.



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HISTORY OF FHSZ MAPS

- In 2010 very high fire hazard severity zone map in LRA was completed.



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HISTORY OF FHSZ MAPS

- In 2012 another major legislative change (SB 1241) was passed that addressed the long view to wildfire planning.
- It aimed at protecting people, properties, and environment against unnecessary hazard associated with wildfire for new and existing developments.
- It required cities and counties to address fire risk in SRA and very high LRA in safety element of their general plans upon the next revision of the housing element.



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UPDATE – 2022 DRAFT FHSZ MAP



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2022 DRAFT FHSZ SRA MAP

- The hazard map has been updated to more accurately reflect the zones in California that are susceptible to wildfire.
- This current revision only updates areas in California's unincorporated, rural areas where wildfires tend to be frequent.



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2022 DRAFT FHSZ SRA MAP

- Over the past few years, CAL FIRE has been building the new model.
- The latest technologies were used in the mapping. It includes new factors such as land use changes, recent fire history, and new significant wind event data.



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2022 DRAFT FHSZ SRA MAP

Ventura	Very High	High	Moderate	All SRA
11/21/2022 FHSZ Acres	340,936	12,493	1,908	355,337
FHSZ Acres as % of SRA	95.9%	3.5%	0.5%	
FHSZ % Difference as Compared to 2007	20.5%	-11.4%	-9.0%	
SRA Acres Difference as Compared to 2007				4,285
SRA % Change as Compared to 2007				1.2%



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2022 DRAFT FHSZ SRA MAP

- <https://calfire-forestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=fd937aba2b044c3484a642ae03c35677>



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2022 DRAFT FHSZ SRA MAP

- As part of the adoption process of the map, CAL FIRE invites public comment on the proposed map between December 16, 2022, and April 4, 2023.
- CAL FIRE will host a public comment hearing in all 56 counties that have SRA to receive public comment.
- Ventura County public hearing was on January 18, 2023.
- The public may submit written comment through email at FHSZcomments@fire.ca.gov.



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2022 DRAFT FHSZ SRA MAP

- To determine the FHSZ of a property, the public can easily search an address using a new FHSZ Viewer at osfm.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ.
- For information about FHSZs, visit the program's website at osfm.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ. The public can also call an automated hotline at (916) 633-7655.



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LRA FHSZ MAPS UPDATE

- The Local Responsibility Area Map Process will happen after the State Regulated Area process has been completed, which is estimated to occur in Summer or Fall of 2023.
- The new LRA map will include all three (3) zones, same as SRA.



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HAZARD VS RISK



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KEY POINT TO REMEMBER

- The FHSZ map evaluates “hazard,” not “risk”.
- “Hazard” is based on the physical conditions that create a likelihood and expected fire behavior over a 30 to 50-year period without considering mitigation measures such as home hardening, recent wildfire, or fuel reduction efforts.
- “Risk” is the potential damage a fire can do to the area under existing conditions, accounting for any modifications such as fuel reduction projects, defensible space, and ignition resistant building construction.



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RECENT LEGISLATIVE CHANGES



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RECENT LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

- SB 901 – State Min. Fire Safe Regulations in Very High LRA. (Effective July 1, 2021). Updated Regs Eff 4-1-2023
- AB 2911 - Review of Subdivisions in SRA and Very High LRA.
- AB 38 – Real State Disclosure and D-Space Inspections in High and Very High. (Effective July 1, 2021)
- SB 63 – Adds Moderate and High in LRA
 - Chapter 7A in High
 - OSFM & HCD to consider Chapter 7A in Moderate



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RECENT LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

- State ADU Laws and County Ordinance: Changes in state law are happening each year and any local ordinance must be updated to comply. VC-RMA ADU Ordinance update currently in process.
- SB 9 (2020) regarding ministerial lots splits to allow for more ADU. Not applicable in High and Very High FHSZ or areas with public health and safety issues per SB 9.
- VCBC: Requires additions to comply with CBC Chapter 7A requirements.
- Requires retrofit on existing non-chapter 7A buildings. 10% cost.



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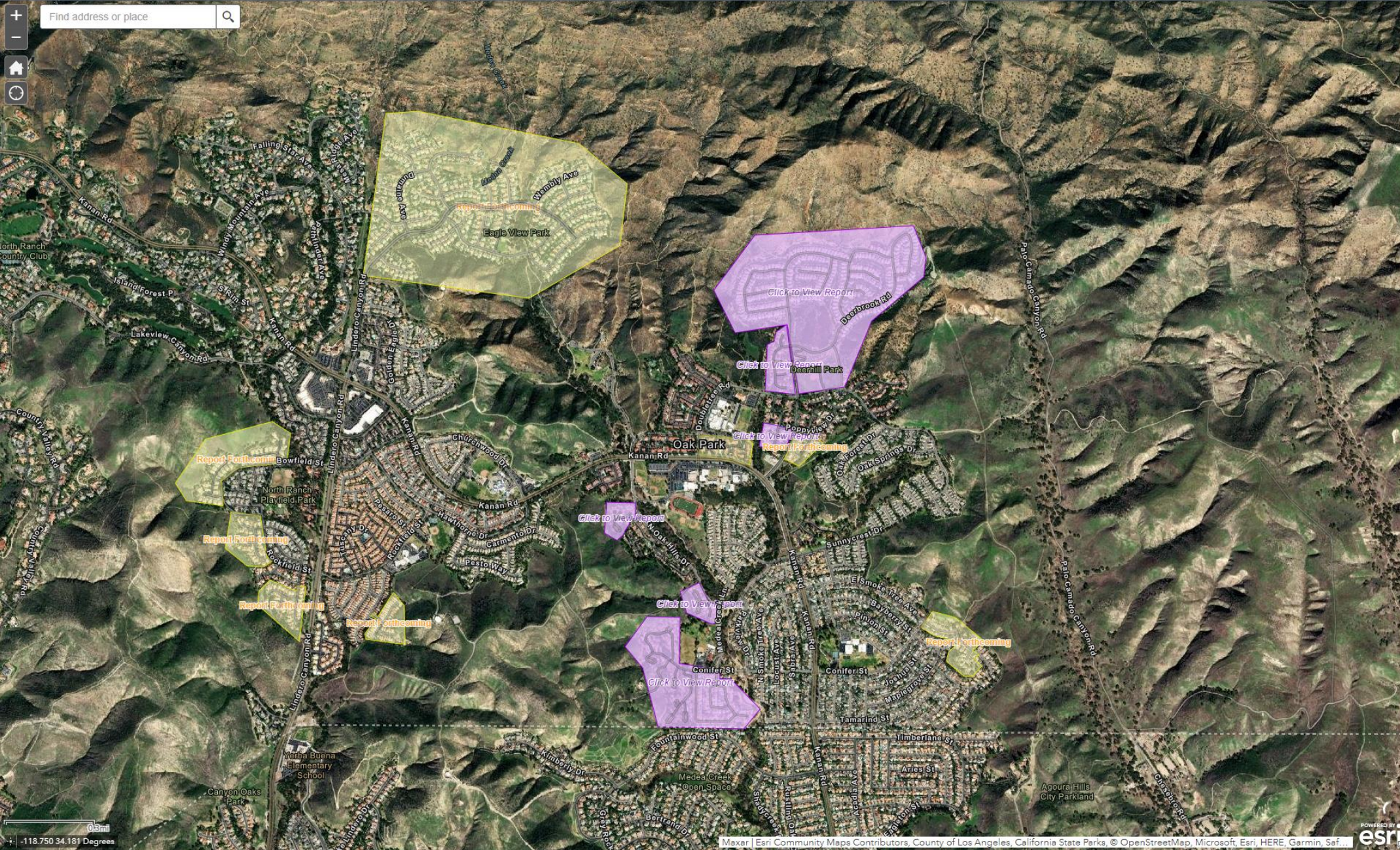
RECENT LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

- AB 3074 - Created an ember-resistance zone (Zone 0) within 5 feet of the structure, including any attached deck.
- Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to provide guidance document on or before 1/1/2023 to consider the elimination of materials in Zone 0 that would likely be ignited by embers. Note: BOF Zone 0 Regulations are delayed and expected out for review late 2023.



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Find address or place



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RECENT LEGISLATIVE CHANGES



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EMBER RESISTANCE ZONE – ZONE 0

- The State requirements shall not take effect for new structures until the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection updates the regulations.
- The State requirements shall take effect for existing structures one year after the effective date for the new structures.
- Currently Governor's office is reviewing the guidance document for financial impact.
- Estimated timeline: 1/1/2024 for new structures and 1/1/2025 for existing structures.



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EMBER RESISTANCE ZONE – ZONE 0

- Ventura County Fire Dept implemented a Zone 0 in April 2019 for new landscape before State Law was changed in 2020. VCFD Ordinance 32 and Standard 515.
- VCFD started formal review of landscape plans in Oct 2021. VCFD Guideline 416
- VCFD addressing combustible fencing in Zone 0 for new construction starting Jan 1 2023.
- VCFD Addressing Accessory Buildings in the 0-50 foot zone. These are not ADUs



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EMBER RESISTANCE ZONE – ZONE 0



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EMBER RESISTANCE ZONE – ZONE 0



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EMBER RESISTANCE ZONE – ZONE 0



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EMBER RESISTANCE ZONE – ZONE 0



Example of what needs to be removed.



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ZONE 0 PUBLIC SURVEY

- Your input is needed!

CAL FIRE is partnering with the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to develop a new 0–5-foot defensible space zone for wildfire resilience.

We're asking California residents and business owners to help inform cost estimates for the implementation of these new science-driven defensible space standards.

Please complete the 5–10-minute survey below, closing Wednesday, April 5.

https://bit.ly/BOF_Zone_Zero_Survey



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FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION PROGRAM

DEFENSIBLE SPACE STANDARDS



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FIRE HAZRD REDUCTION PROGRAM

- The Ventura County Fire Protection District has had a Fire Hazard Reduction Program since the late 60's. Also known as (Weed Abatement).
- Prior County and Fire District Ordinances start in 1929 requiring brush clearance from buildings.
- It was designed to prevent the loss of life and property.
- The Fire Hazard Reduction Program is the Districts single largest most important fire prevention program.
- The program has been a model for numerous agencies around the nation.



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FIRE HAZRD REDUCTION PROGRAM

- The goal is to educate and partner with property owners to have them complete the required clearance work without having to abate the parcel.
- This is accomplished by Increase public awareness through education/communication.
- The Fire Hazard reduction Program was put to the ultimate test in the 1993, 2003, 2017, 2018 and 2019 FIRESTORMS. Saving countless lives and homes.



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FIRE HAZRD REDUCTION PROGRAM

- CRC: Corresponding changes to match changes in 7A.
- CFC: Chapter 49 WUI Requirements expanded to address:
 - Definitions,
 - Fire protection plans,
 - Fuel and vegetation plans,
 - Defensible space,
 - Fire Safe Development regs, and
- References to required reviews for Subdivision surveys and safety elements.



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FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION PROGRAM

100-Foot Clearance From All Structures In A Nutshell

- All fuels and vegetation within the 0 to 100-foot zone is subject to defensible space laws and regulations. This includes combustible materials, ornamental plants, cultivated landscape plants, native plants, trees, shrubs, grasses, weeds, and wildland vegetation.
- State Law added the word “Spaced” to how vegetation shall be maintained.
- Not all vegetation is removed. Some native plants can remain if they are properly spaced and trimmed. Any dead grasses, shrubs, weeds, and vegetation shall be removed.
- Combustible grasses are cut to 3” in height.
- With the live root system left in place fire hazard is eliminated and erosion factors remain unchanged.
- VCFD Ord 32 and Standard 515 have detailed requirements for each Zone within the 100-Foot.



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FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION PROGRAM

- Trees shall have any dead branches removed, including dead palm fronds.
- Trees limbed up 6 feet above the ground. More if shrubs underneath trees.
- Trees shall have a minimum 3-foot clearance above any roof and 3 feet to sides and below any eave or roof projection.
- Roofs are free of any leaves, needles, or other vegetation. This includes rain gutters, but we do not climb to inspect them.
- Trees shall have a minimum 10-foot vertical and horizontal clearance from any chimneys or stovepipe.
- Mulch and wood chips are prohibited within 5 feet of any building. (VCFD Ordinance)



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DEFENSIBLE SPACE STANDARDS

- VCFD Standard 515 was developed and issued in April 2019. It was updated Feb 2022 to better clarify the requirements in the 100-foot zone from buildings. Updated again Jan 2023.
- It incorporates State Laws and local requirements for how to install and maintain the defensible space within each zone.
- There are retro-fit provisions that can apply to existing properties. Review is done on a case-by-case basis.



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FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION PROGRAM

DEFENSIBLE SPACE IN USE

Removing or reducing volatile vegetation within 100 feet of all structures.
Providing a safe working space for fire suppression forces.
(Defensible Space)



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FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION PROGRAM

DEFENSIBLE SPACE IN USE



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FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION PROGRAM

DEFENSIBLE SPACE IN USE



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FIRE HAZARD REDUCTION PROGRAM

TYPICAL YEARLY TIMELINE

- April 20: Notices To Abate Fire Hazard are mailed to approx. 18850 property owners
- June 1: Deadline for clearing fire hazard from property
- June 1-30: Stations conduct property inspections.
- Properties not in compliance are subject to abatement by Fire District Contractor. The FHRP Unit coordinates this after attempting contact with property owners.
- Contractor fees and Fire District Admin fee (currently \$1633 for 2023) are placed on property tax bill



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OAK PARK MAC UPDATE

- Current existing wildland fire hardening regulations (some State & County-approved regs. have been around since 2014, even earlier, but a lot of people are unaware of these).
- New wildland fire prevention regulations that were approved and went into force starting January 1, 2023
- Regulations currently being discussed by his State Committee and what those regs. Might mean to Oak Park residents and businesses.
- What the VCFD would like Oak Park residents and businesses to consider doing now in order to be better prepared for the upcoming wildland fire period.
- What the VCFD considers to be 'best practices' for wildland fire hardening
- Removal of trees, possibly even oaks, if the trunk is within 5 feet of a structure.
- Trimming of tree branches/limbs and shrubs that are within 5 feet of a structure, as well as anything within 3-5 feet that is above a roofline.
- Prohibiting the installation of new & removal of existing artificial turf in what they call State Zone 0 (i.e., within 5-10 feet of a structure) regulations starting in 2024.
- Prohibiting the placement of wood chips/mulch beyond 5 feet of a structure (current regs. since 2014 do not allow wood chips/mulch within 5 feet of a structure).



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FAQ



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FAQ?

What are the uses of Fire Hazard Severity Zones?

- Answer: The zones are used for several purposes including to designate areas where wildland urban interface building codes (California Building Code (CBC), Chapter 7A) are required.
- They can be a factor in real estate disclosure.
- And local governments may consider them in their general plan.



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FAQ?

Does the revised SRA FHSZ map change requirements for homes or properties?

Answer: No. The same requirements will remain regardless of whether a particular area is reclassified or not.



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FAQ?

Will the new fire hazard severity zones affect my ability to get or maintain insurance?

Answer: Insurance companies use risk models, which differ from hazard models.

Commissioner Lara's regulation requires insurance companies to provide discounts to consumers under the Safer from Wildfires framework created by the California Department of Insurance in partnership with state emergency preparedness agencies.



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FAQ?

How are the new Fire Hazard Severity Zones impacting development?

Answer: Many of the changes expanding fire hazard severity zones in local responsibility areas (LRA) have been supported by the building industry. CAL FIRE works closely with the building industry when setting various building codes and defensible space requirements, so we are working together to not affect development itself but to make sure development matches the hazards of that area.



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FAQ?

Does the designation of Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the Local Responsibility Area trigger the 100-foot clearance requirement?

Answer: Yes, unless a local government has passed a more stringent requirement, the 100-foot defensible space clearance applies.

VCFD has a more stringent requirements. Therefore, the updated map does not affect VCFD 100-foot clearance requirements.



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WUI UPDATE OVERVIEW

Resources are available at

VCFD.org & VCFHRP.org

Contact Info

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QUESTIONS?



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