

Proposed Ordinance Adopting the Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map for the Rancho Santa Margarita LRA

JUNE 25, 2025

State Requirements

Office of State Fire Marshall (OSFM)

- Required to prepare maps based on consistent statewide criteria and provide recommended maps to local jurisdictions with Local Responsibility Areas (LRAs)

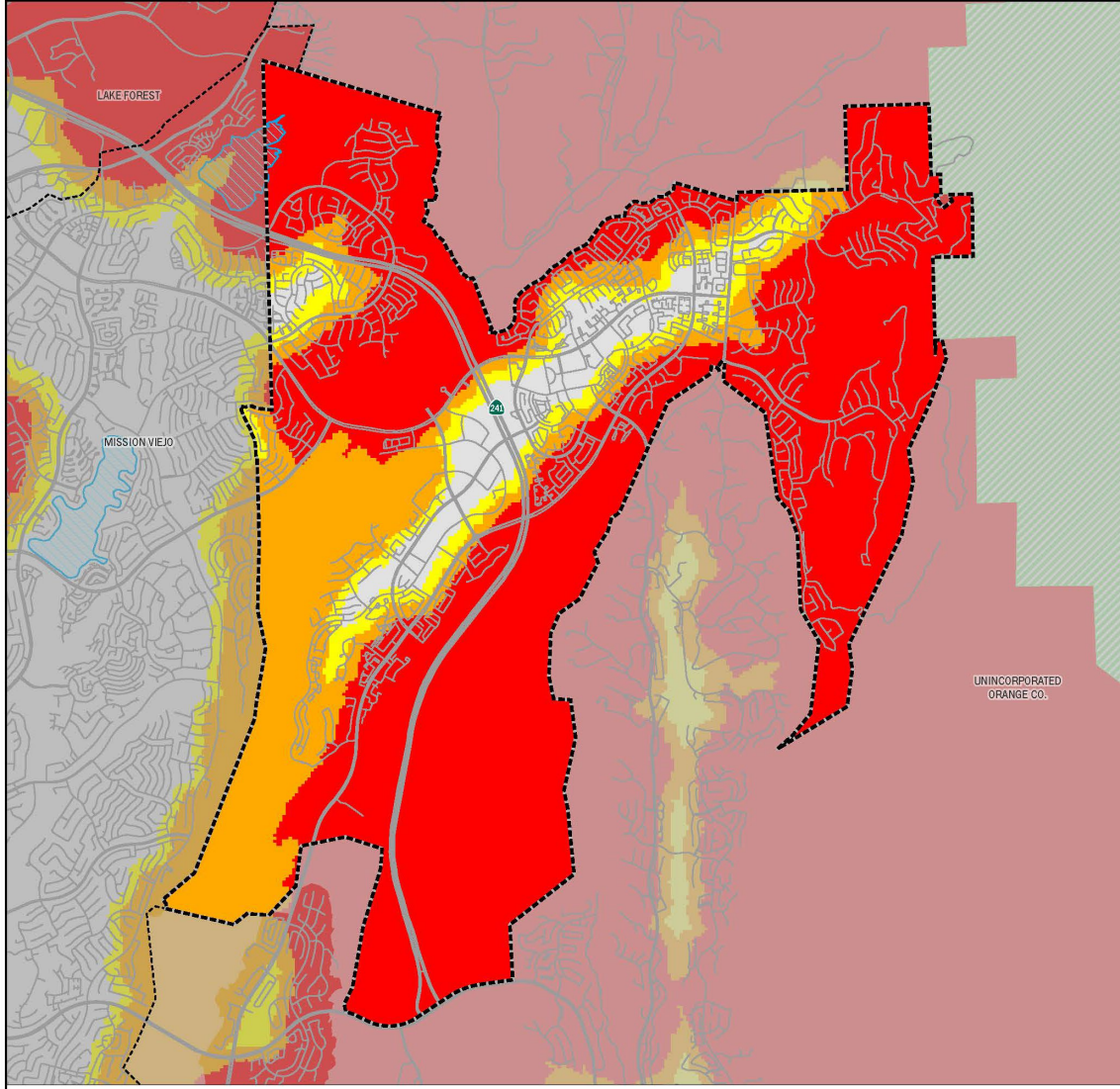
Local Jurisdictions in Southern California

- Received maps on March 24, 2025
- Make recommended map available for public review and comment (30 days)
- Adopt the recommended map by local ordinance (120 days)
- Submit adopted ordinance to OSFM (30 days)



Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones

As Identified by the
State Fire Marshal
March 24, 2025



History

- Maps first created in the 1990s
- No requirement for local adoption
- Included only Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone

Proposed Map – March 24, 2025

- Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (Red)
- High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (Orange)
- Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone (Yellow)
- Approximately 70% of the City

Purpose and Use

	Very High FHSZ	High FHSZ	Moderate FHSZ
Building Standards for new construction and some remodels (CA Building Code Chapter 7A)	✓	✓	
Property Development Standards (such as road widths, water supply, etc.)	✓		
Defensible Space Requirements (GC § 51182)	✓		
Natural Hazard Real Estate Disclosure	✓		
General Plan Safety Element Discussion/Analysis	✓		

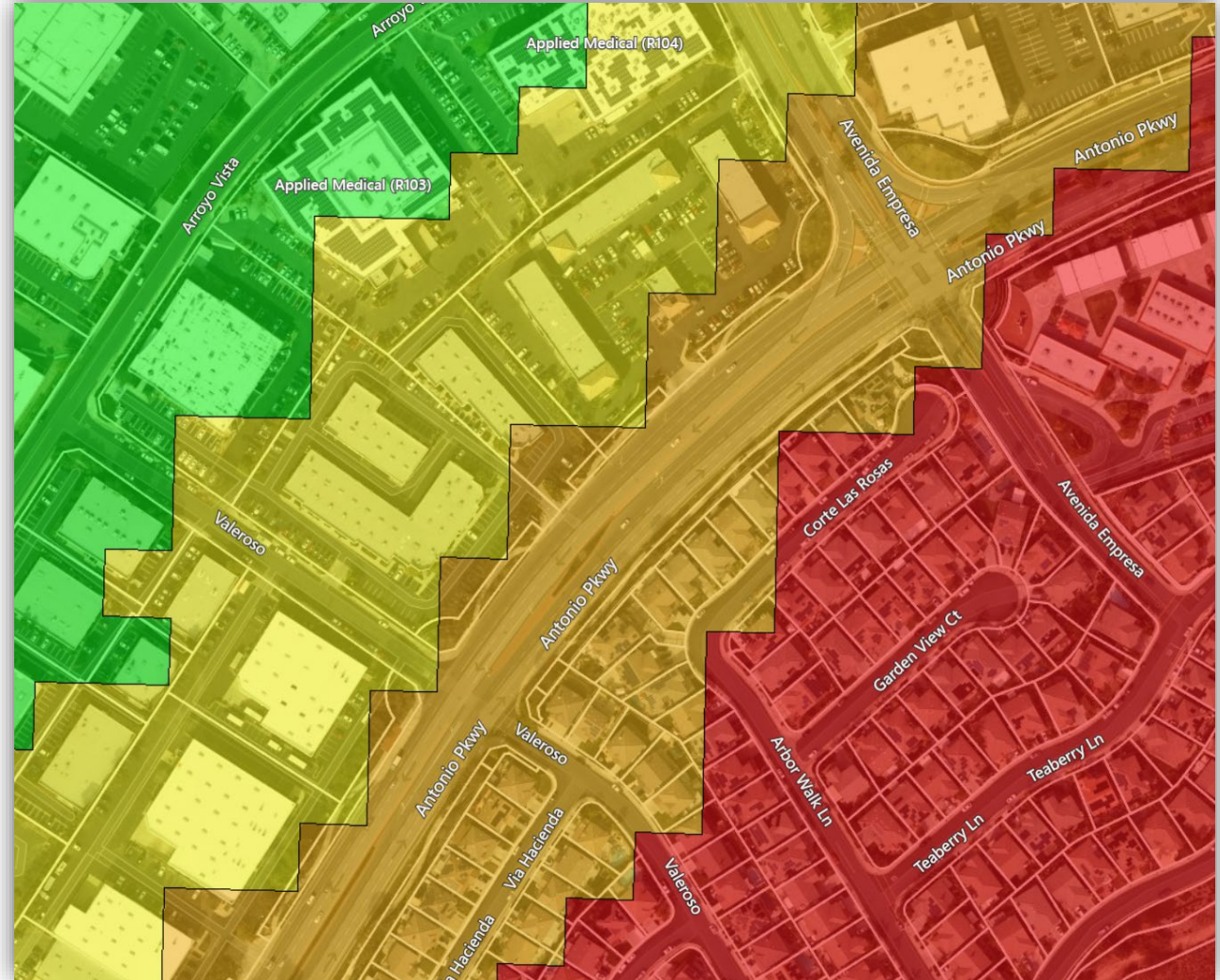
Wildfire Preparedness

- Annual Fire Safety and Preparedness Community Meeting
- Community Emergency Preparedness Team (CERT)
- Encourage the community to subscribe to Alert OC
- Publicize OCFA Home Assessment Program
- Publicize Evacuation Zones
- Update Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) every five years
- Maintain defensible space by clearing vegetation on City-owned property
- Working on update to Emergency Operations Plan
- Applying for listing on State's Fire Risk Reduction Community List
- Collaborate with Orange County Emergency Operations Center

Proposed Clarification

“In the event that a parcel is subject to more than one Fire Hazard Severity Zone on the map entitled City of Rancho Santa Margarita Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones, the more strict designation shall apply to the entire parcel. In order to effectively administer fire protection within the border areas between differing Fire Hazard Severity Zones, it is necessary that, when a parcel is subject to more than one Fire Hazard Severity Zone, the requirements that apply to the more strict designation on that parcel shall be administered and enforced for the entire parcel.”

- Local agency may only increase the level of fire hazard severity, and may not decrease recommended severity designation(s)
- Boundaries between the three FHSZs do not always respect property lines, leaving some properties with two applicable designations



Recommended Action

Introduce for first reading, read by title only, and waive any further reading of an Ordinance entitled:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, CALIFORNIA, DESIGNATING FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES WITHIN THE CITY OF RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY AREA (LRA) AS DETERMINED BY THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION, OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL, PURSUANT TO GOVERNMENT CODE SECTION 51175 ET SEQ

If approved, second reading and adoption will be scheduled for July 9, 2025