

ADOPTION OF FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES MAP & ORDINANCE

Public Hearing
June 12, 2025



PALM DESERT



THE HISTORY OF FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES

- Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps arose from major destructive fires, prompting the recognition of these areas and strategies to reduce wildfire risks.
- Legislative response led to mandated mapping across California under the California Public Resources Code 4201–4204, encompassing all State Responsibility Areas (SRA).



WHAT ARE FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES?

THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL IS MANDATED TO CLASSIFY LANDS WITHIN STATE RESPONSIBILITY AREAS INTO FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES (FHSZ). FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES FALL INTO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CLASSIFICATIONS:

MODERATE

HIGH

VERY HIGH

The California laws that require Fire Hazard Severity Zones include California Public Resources Code 4201–4204, California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 1280 and California Government Code 51175–89.

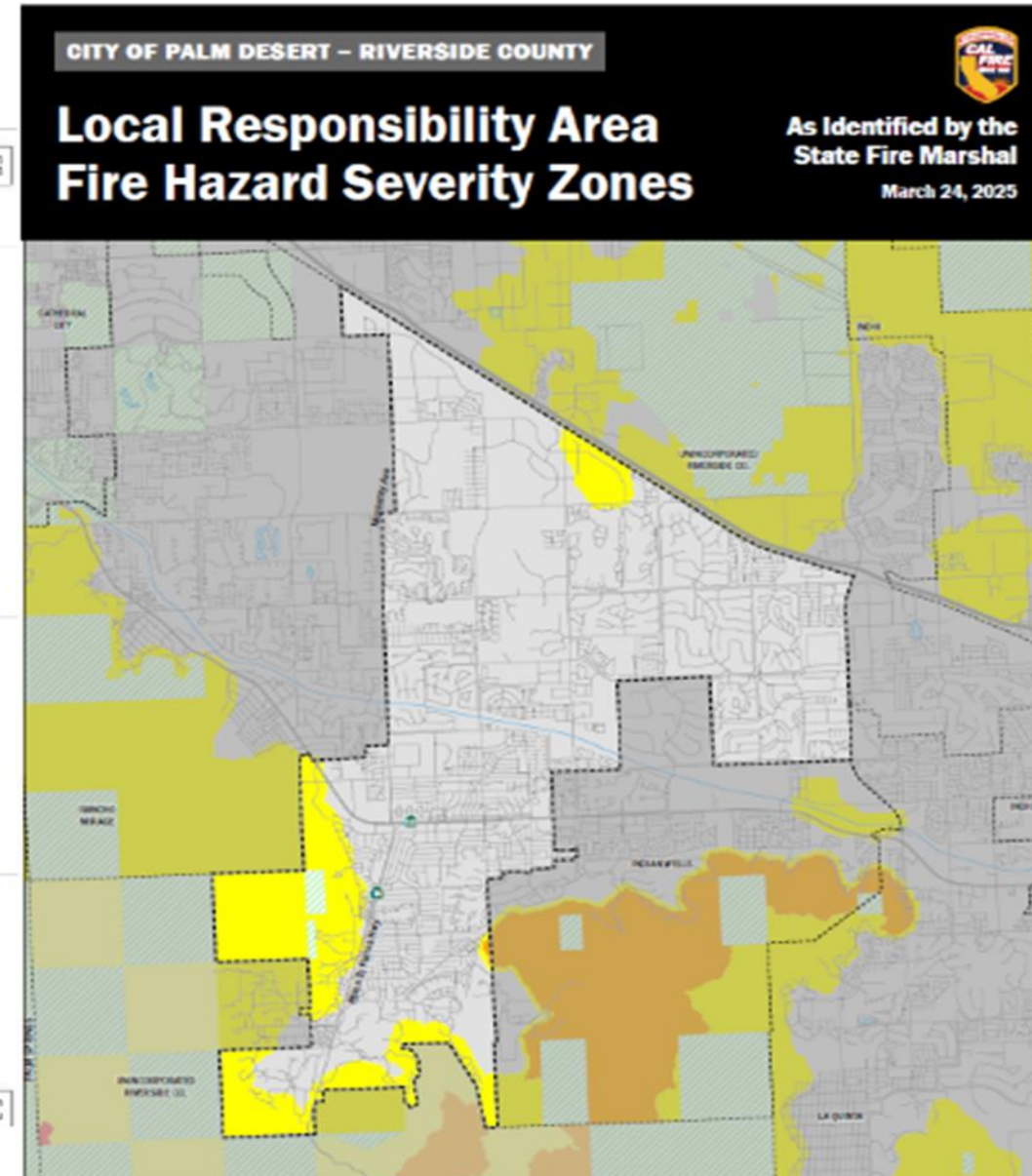
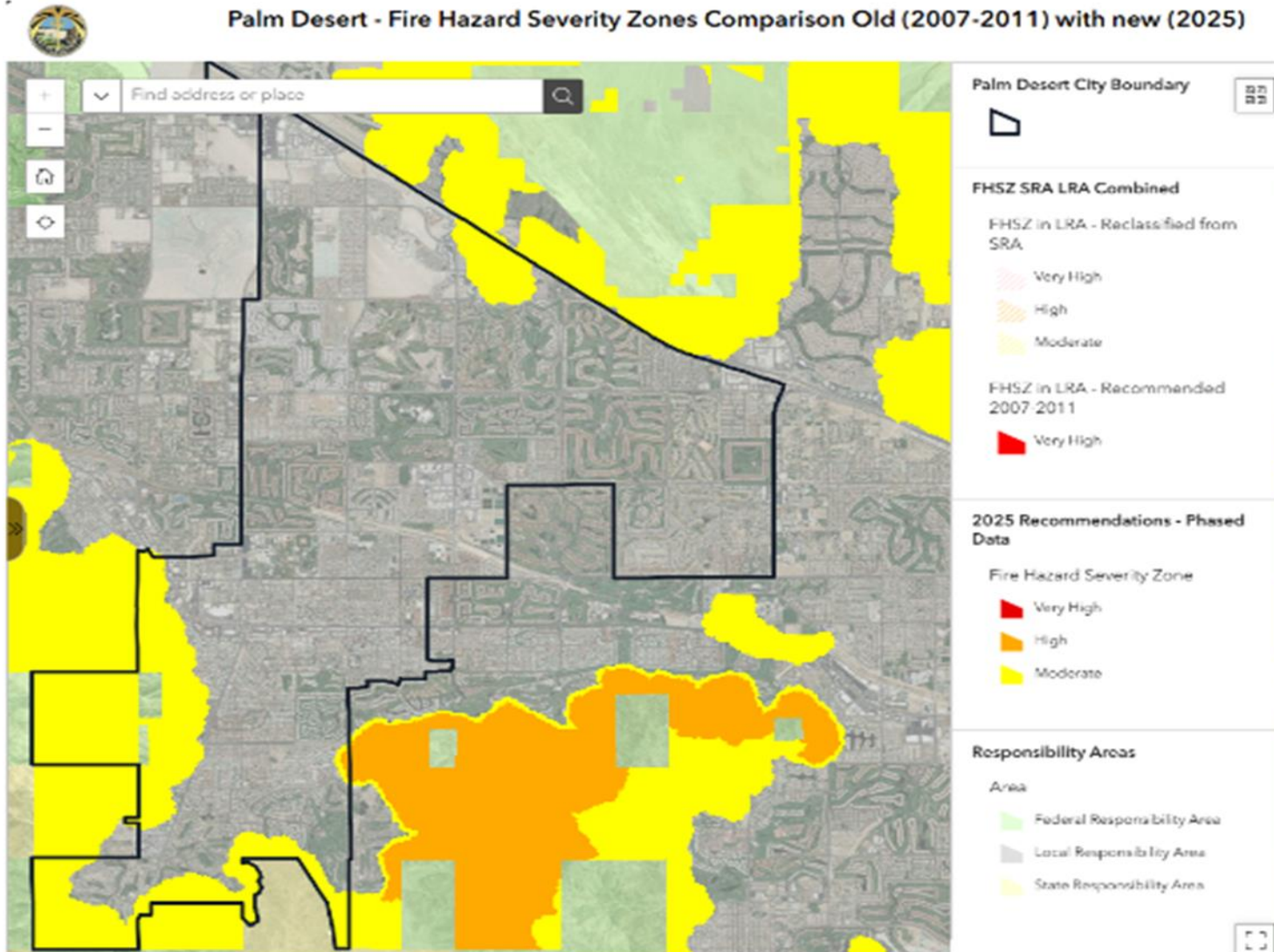
LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY AREA (LRA) – 2025 FHSZ UPDATES

ON MARCH 24, 2025, OSFM ISSUED THE 2025 RECOMMENDED LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY AREA (LRA) FHSZ MAPS FOR RIVERSIDE COUNTY

THESE UPDATES PROVIDE A MORE PRECISE ASSESSMENT OF WILDFIRE RISKS USING MODERN CLIMATE DATA AND ADVANCED FIRE MODELING.

THEY IMPACT LOCAL RESPONSIBILITY AREAS INFLUENCING FIRE PREVENTION MEASURES INCLUDING DEFENSIBLE SPACE, BUILDING CODES AND REAL ESTATE DISCLSOSURE REQUIREMENTS

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PALM DESERT ?



LRA 2025 FHSZ MAP CHANGES

Government code section 51179(b)(3):

- Local agencies **shall not** decrease the FHSZ level recommended by Office of State Fire Marshal
- Local agencies may add to or increase the recommended FHSZ level, but Riverside County Fire Department is not proposing any additions or increases during this adoption process

Per state law (AB211), the Riverside County Fire Department and the local jurisdictions must make the maps available for public viewing within 30 days of receipt. Additionally, the county/city must adopt the OSFM–recommended LRA FHSZ maps by ordinance, within 120 days of their release.

Examples of State Minimum Requirements



	SRA	LRA
VERY HIGH	<div>Adopt FHSZ</div> <div>CEQA</div> <div>Subdivision Map Act</div> <div>Safety Element</div> <div>Fire Safe Regulations</div> <div>Chapter 7A</div>	<div>Defensible Space</div> <div>Hazard Disclosure</div> <div>Subdivision Review</div> <div>Adopt FHSZ</div> <div>CEQA</div> <div>Subdivision Map Act</div> <div>Safety Element</div> <div>Fire Safe Regulations</div> <div>Chapter 7A</div>
HIGH	<div>Adopt FHSZ</div> <div>CEQA</div> <div>Subdivision Map Act</div> <div>Safety Element</div> <div>Fire Safe Regulations</div> <div>Chapter 7A</div>	<div>Defensible Space</div> <div>Hazard Disclosure</div> <div>Subdivision Review</div> <div>Adopt FHSZ</div> <div>Hazard Disclosure</div> <div>Chapter 7A* Effective January 1, 2026</div>
MODERATE	<div>Adopt FHSZ</div> <div>CEQA</div> <div>Subdivision Map</div> <div>Safety Element</div> <div>Fire Safe Regulations</div> <div>Chapter 7A</div>	<div>Defensible Space</div> <div>Subdivision Review</div> <div>Adopt FHSZ</div>

IMPACT TO PALM DESERT RESIDENTS

Homeowners in **Very High** FHSZ must:

- Maintain 100 feet of defensible space around structures.
- Comply with home hardening requirements to reduce ignition risks.
- Ensure new construction and renovations adhere to Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) building codes
- Disclose FHSZ designation when selling property

Homeowners in **High** FHSZ must:

- Comply with home hardening requirements to reduce ignition risks.
- Ensure new construction and renovations adhere to Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) building codes
- Disclose FHSZ designation when selling property

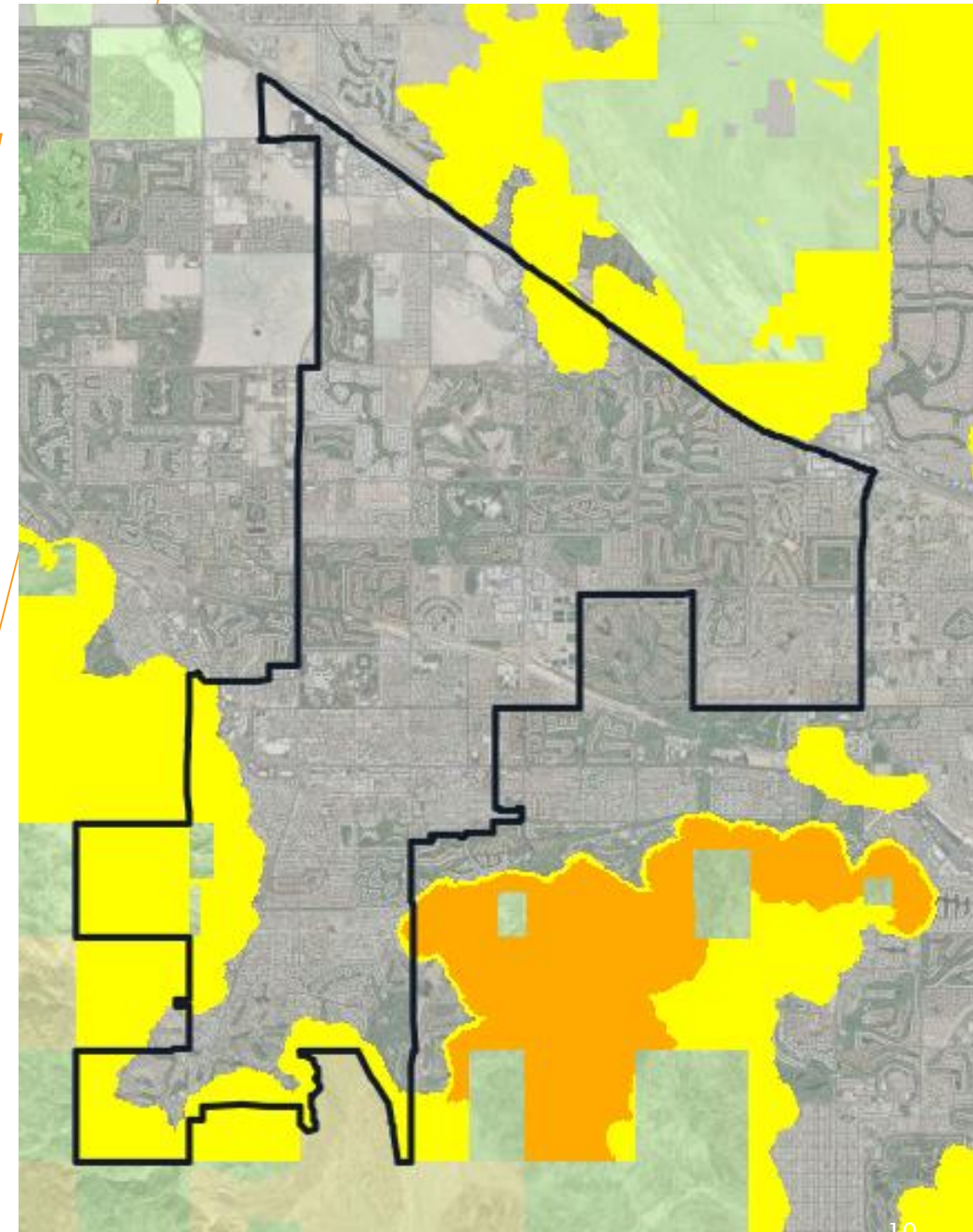
Palm Desert FHSZ

HOW WILL THIS EFFECT MY INSURANCE ?

- CAL FIRE's maps are intended to drive local planning decisions, not insurance decisions. Under Commissioner Lara's new regulation finalized in October 2022, insurance companies must provide discounts for wildfire safety actions such as community mitigation and home-hardening, which CAL FIRE's maps do not assess. In addition, insurance companies are already using risk analysis tools and models that go beyond CAL FIRE's proposed maps in determining what properties they will underwrite.
- Commissioner Lara's new wildfire safety regulation will help increase access to insurance by promoting wildfire safety across the state. Reducing wildfire risks throughout the state is the primary way we can make insurance more available and affordable, and our regulation is a major step towards that goal. CAL FIRE's maps support that goal through improving public education about hazard and the need for safety preparation.

RECOMMENDATION

- Approve and adopt the updated Fire Hazard Severity Zone map dated March 24, 2025.
- Adopt Ordinance No. [2025-XXX] as required by Government Code §51178.
- Promote fire safety, building code compliance, and public awareness.



THANK YOU

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