



Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area Update

5/12/2026

Fire Department

Jared McDaniel, Assistant Fire Marshal

Background

What is the WUI?

Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area is a geographical area in the City of Santa Rosa at significant risk from wildfires. The WUI is not a place, per se, but a set of conditions that exist in areas of Santa Rosa.

Common conditions include the amount, type, and distribution of vegetation, weather patterns, topography, and intermix with structures.

Historical Context

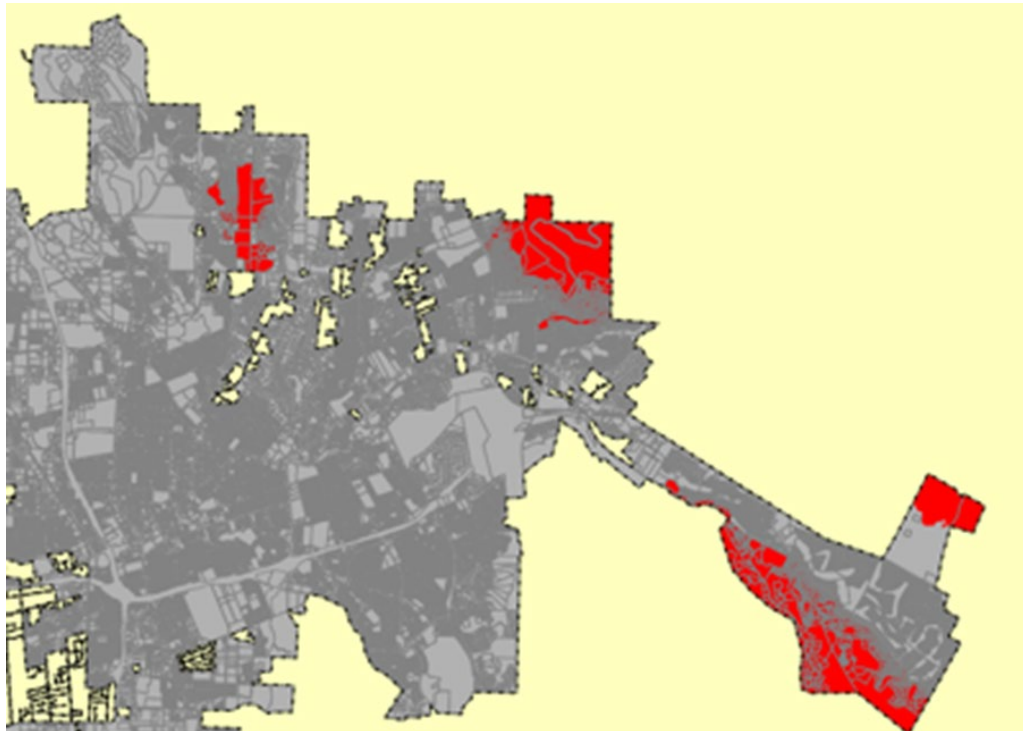
- On February 24, 2009, Council approved an amendment to Chapter 47 Section 18-44.4702.1 of the 2007 California Fire Code (CFC), defining a Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area as well as designating the geographical boundary in the City GIS.
 - Original WUI in Santa Rosa (Local Responsibility Area) had Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones within the City.
- December 2022, CAL FIRE released new State Responsibility Area maps of the Fire Hazard Severity Zones.
 - Changes were made to Moderate, High, and Very High around the City. Using these maps, we were able to anticipate changes in the City.

Historical Context Cont.

- February 2025, CAL FIRE released new Local Responsibility Area (LRA) maps of the Fire Hazard Severity Zones in Santa Rosa.
 - Council adopted High and Very High Fire Hazard Zones as required by law.

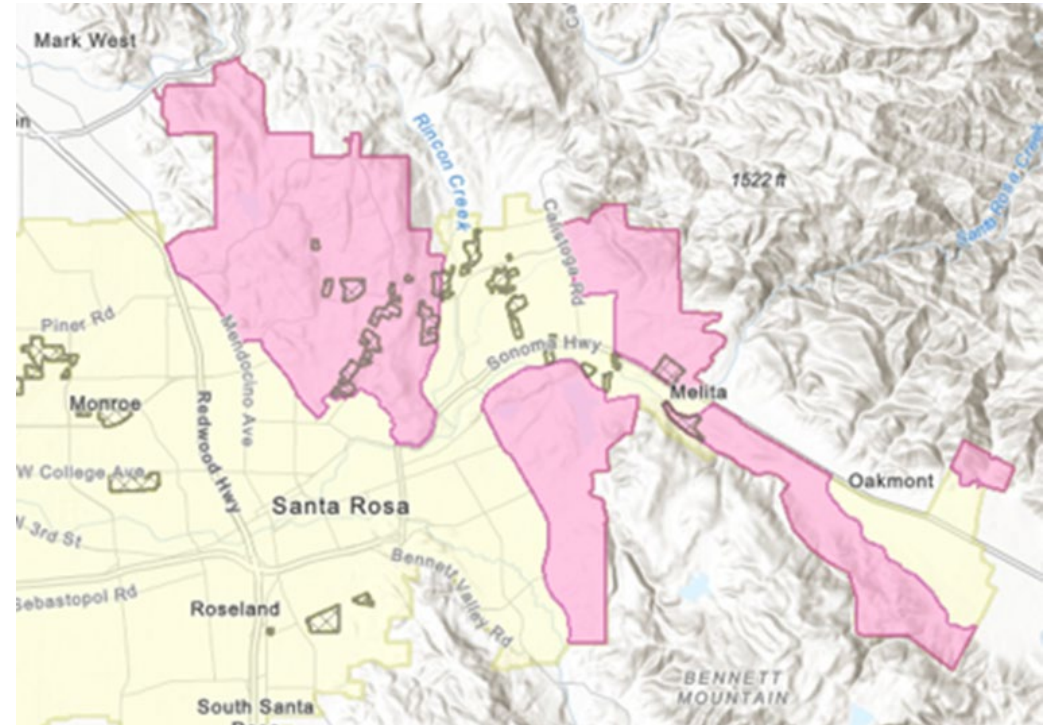
Existing Local WUI Boundary

Original Very High FHSZ in Santa Rosa



5/12/2026

Existing WUI Boundary



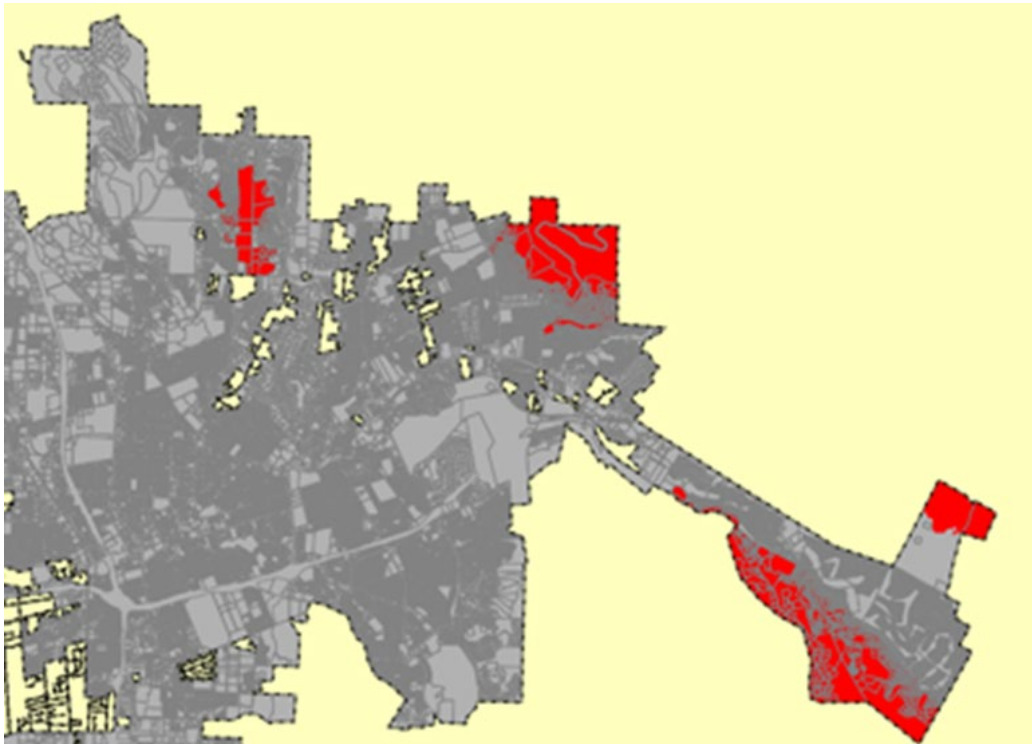
Jared McDaniel

Changes to our Natural and Built Environments since 2009

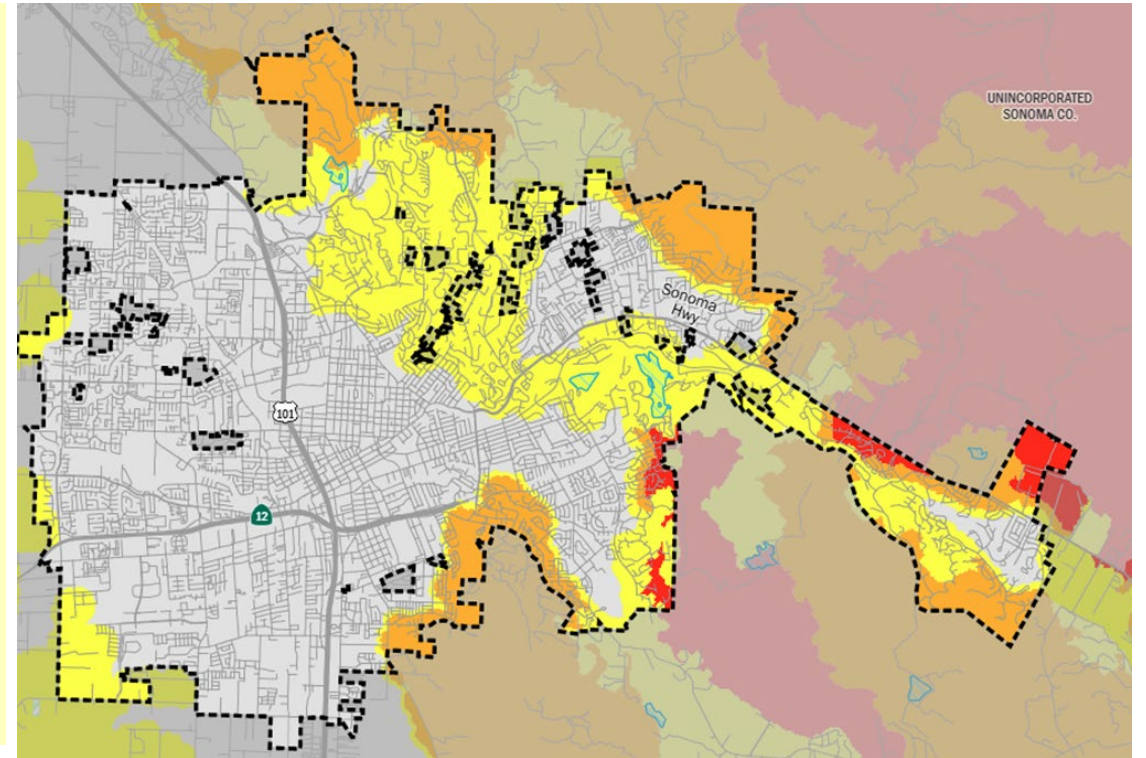
- The City and region has experienced significant fire activity since 2009. Notably, the Tubbs, Nuns, Glass, and Kincadee fires have substantially altered the vegetation and landscape of the area.
 - Areas that were once oak grass woodlands are more hazardous with invasive vegetation, dead and down fuels.
- Large portions of the Fountaingrove neighborhood and to a lesser degree Skyhawk and Oakmont have seen large numbers of homes be rebuilt to meet current WUI Building Code standards (Chapter 7A).

Old Vs. New FHSZ Maps

Original State FHSZ Map in Santa Rosa



New State FHSZ Map in Santa Rosa

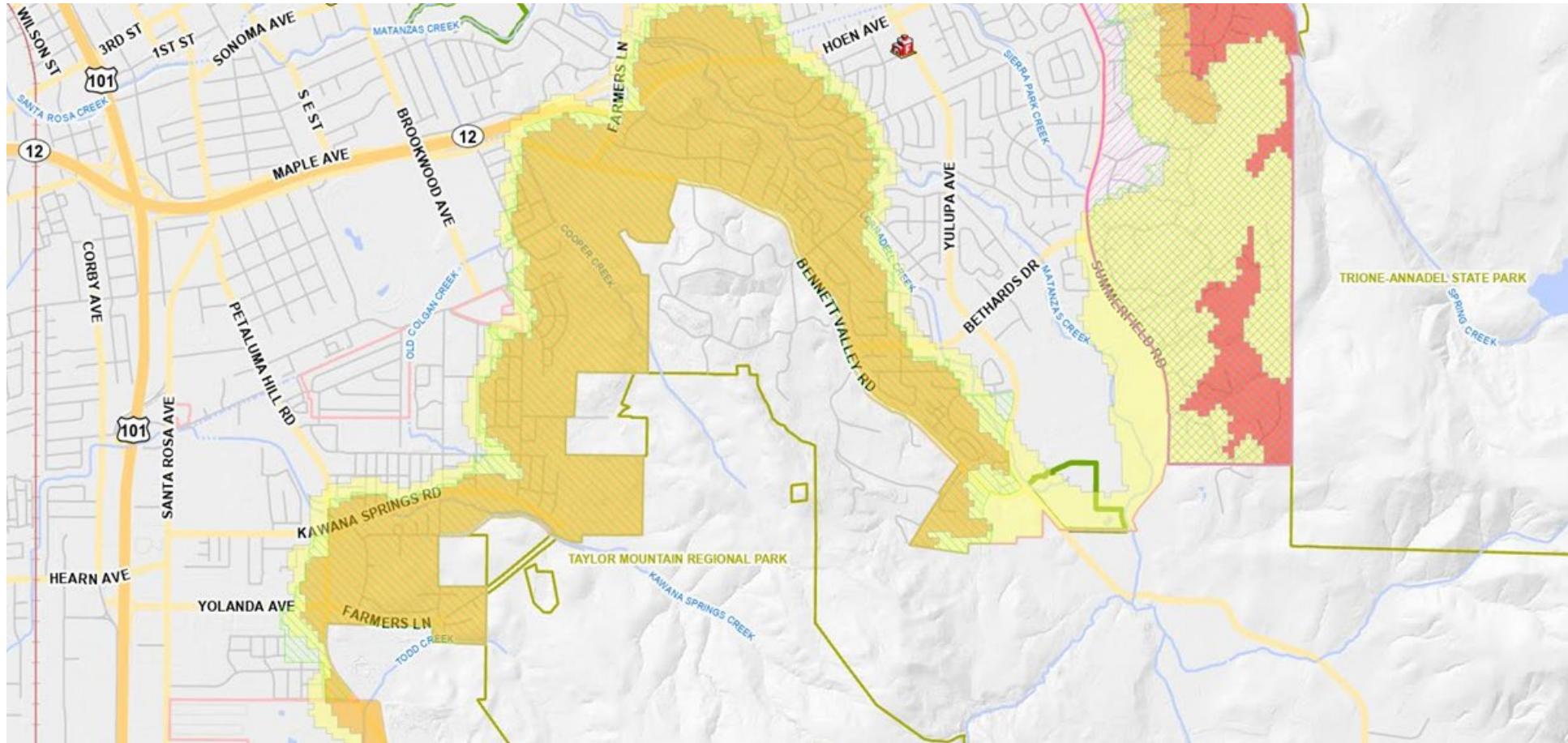


Future Expansion/Contraction of the WUI

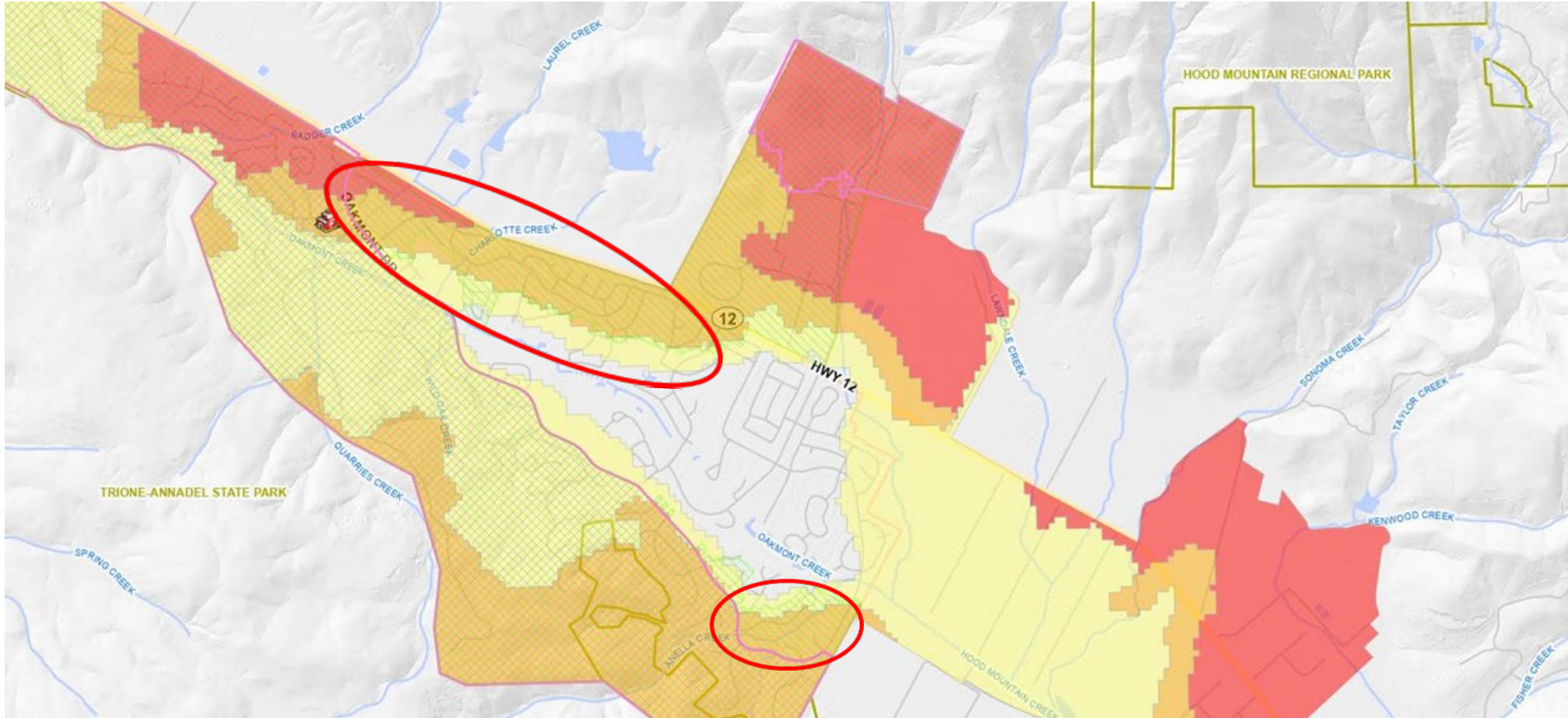
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- Originally based on feedback of the community through the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), the existing Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area for the City was examined.
 - Limited to Coffey Park, which was ultimately not included (supported by new maps)
- Using the most recent CAL FIRE FHSZ LRA maps published in February 2025 as a guide, SRFD was able to precisely redraw our WUI boundary to more accurately reflect the new areas of the City that fell into the High or Very High Severity Zones.
- Contract the WUI in the Bennett Valley and Skyhawk neighborhood areas where they have not been identified by CAL FIRE to be in any FHSZ.

Notable Areas of Expansion



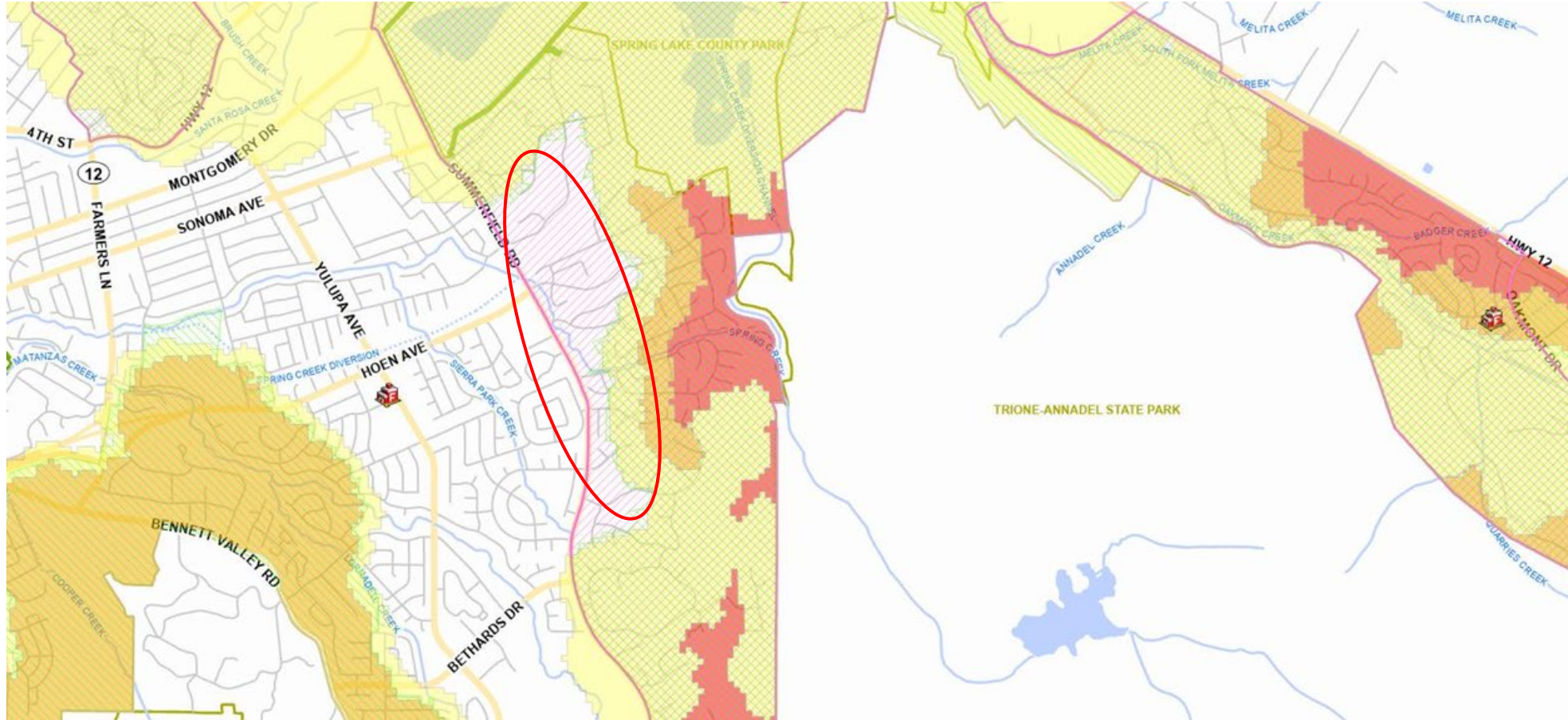
Notable Areas of Expansion



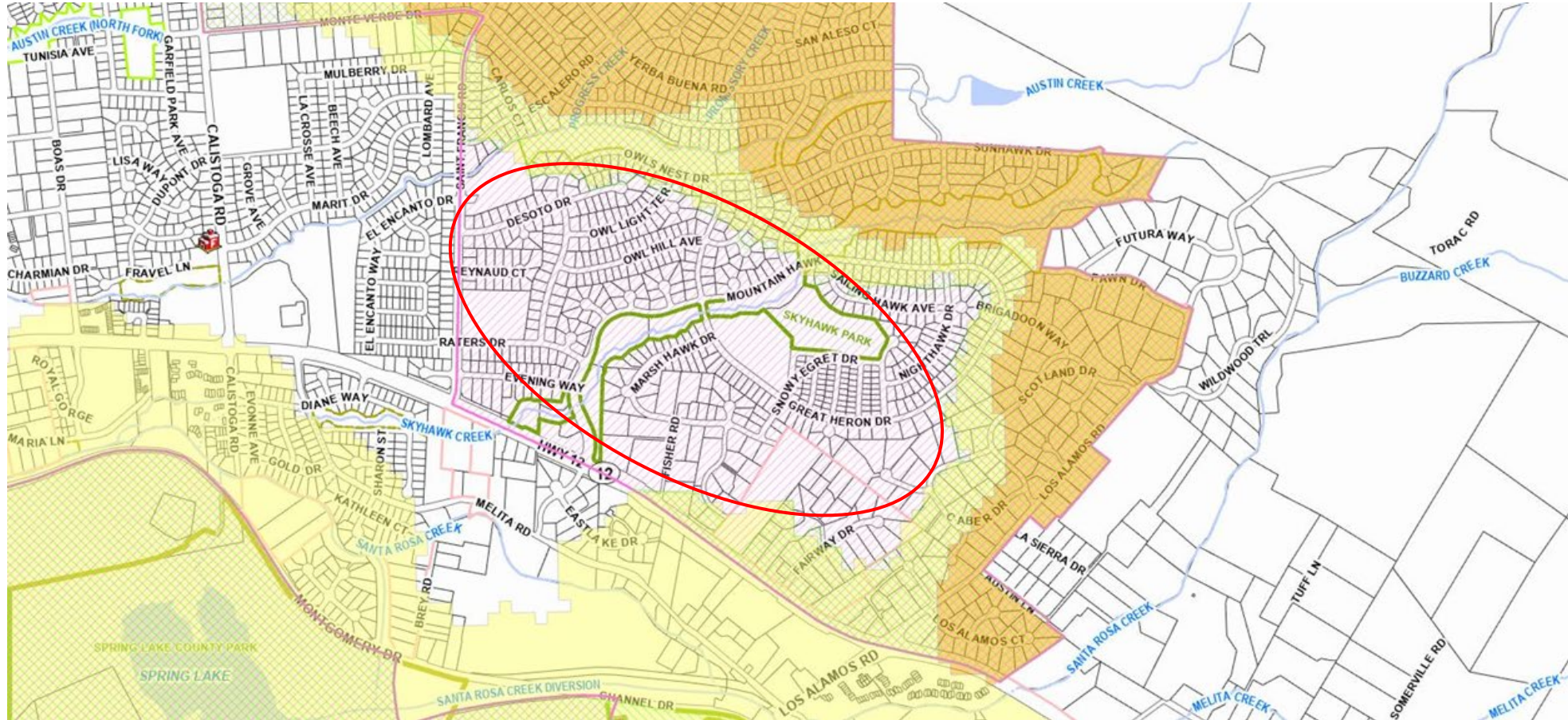
Criteria for Inclusion in WUI

- For individual single-family dwellings/vacant lots: If any portion of the parcel fell within the High or Very High FHSZ, then the parcel was included.
- For single-family dwelling with common open space areas (HOA): If any portion of the common open space fell within the High or Very High FHSZ, then all residential units within the HOA were included.
- For Multi-family dwellings with common open space: If any portion of the common open space fell within the High or Very High FHSZ, then the entire complex was included.

Notable Areas of Contraction

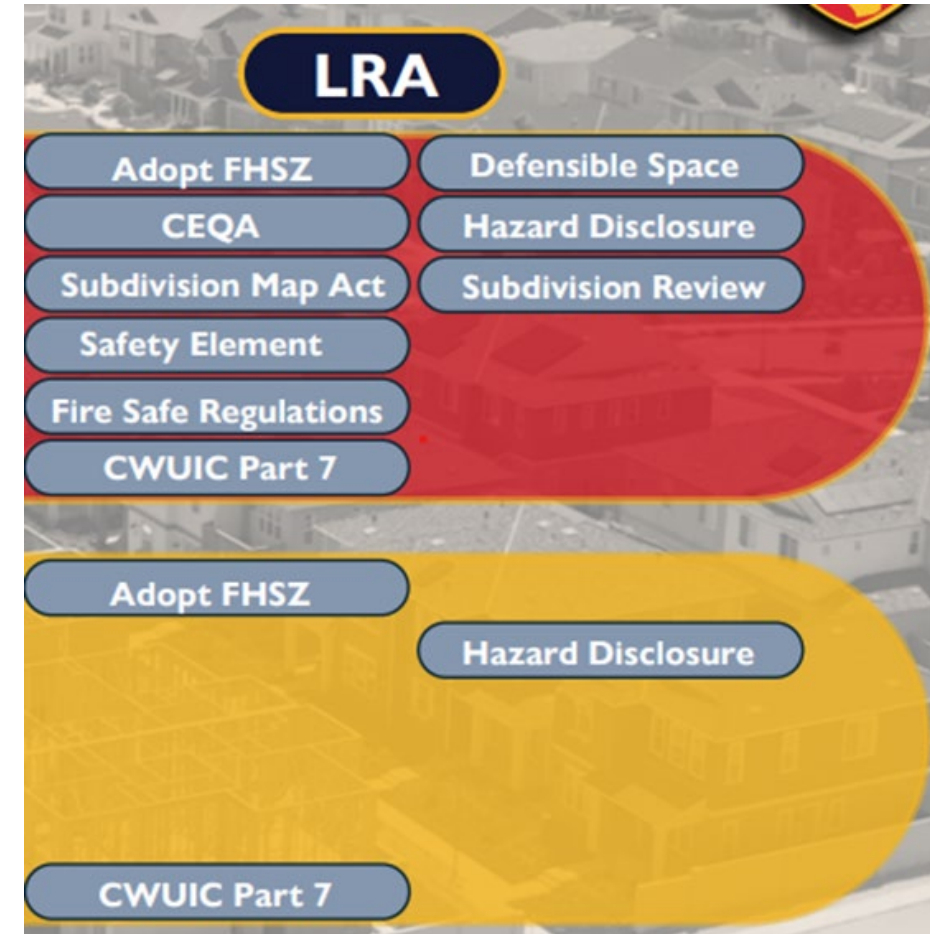


Notable Areas of Contraction



Impacts/Implications

- For those in the High or Very High FHSZs, State law requires:
 - Compliance with Chapter 7A of the California Building Code for new construction.
 - Provide a Hazard Disclosure (AB 38) for real estate transactions.



Impacts/Implications Cont.

- For those properties new to our local WUI fire area, there are two ordinances that now apply:
 - Weed Abatement Ordinance requires property owners to maintain dry grass to 4” in height or less throughout the duration of the declared fire season.
 - Compliance with the Vegetation Management Ordinance. Focused on requiring defensible space on all properties in the City’s WUI fire area. Other aspects of the ordinance address fire damaged dead trees, mulch, and specific hazardous vegetation.
- Approximately 3,893 properties are impacted (3,082 new to WUI, and 811 being removed)

Community Outreach/Feedback

- SRFD hosted two community informational meetings (one in person at Finley Center, and the other via Zoom) to review the proposed changes and answer questions.
 - Between the two meetings, approximately 40 community members attended.
- SRFD printed and mailed 3,893 targeted postcards to property owners being impacted. The postcards also informed owners of the upcoming informational meetings.
- Feedback from the community was overwhelmingly supportive and understanding, with only a handful of residents opposing the proposed changes.

Recommendation

The Fire Department recommends that Council approve the first reading and introduce an ordinance to modify the existing Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area boundary.



Questions?