



City Council Agenda Report

Meeting Date: May 13, 2025

Prepared By: Jon Maginot

Approved By: Gabe Engeland

Subject: Fire Hazard Severity Zone Ordinance

COUNCIL PRIORITY AREA

- ☒ Public Safety
- ☐ Business Communities
- ☐ Circulation Safety and Efficiency
- ☐ Environmental Sustainability
- ☐ Housing
- ☒ General Government

RECOMMENDATION

Introduce and waive further reading of an ordinance to designate Fire Hazard Severity Zones

FISCAL IMPACT

Not Applicable.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Not Applicable.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

Not Applicable.

BACKGROUND

California Government Code 51178 requires the State Fire Marshal to identify moderate, high and very high fire hazard severity zones within the State. These zones are determined based upon a number of criteria including, but not limited to, fuel loading, fire weather and other factors that are a major cause of wildfire spread. The State Fire Marshal distributes maps to local agencies identifying those areas of the agency that have been identified as fire hazard severity zones. Within 120 days of receiving a map, a local agency must adopt an ordinance designating moderate, high and very high fire hazard severity zones within its jurisdiction. The State Fire Marshal created an updated map for Los Altos on February 24, 2025.

DISCUSSION

The updated Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) map for Los Altos identifies a small portion of Los Altos as either High or Moderate fire hazard. The City may identify additional portions of the

City as falling within a FHSZ, however, City staff and staff from Santa Clara County Fire Department do not recommend adding any additional portions of Los Altos.

The adoption of the FHSZ map should have little to no impact on residents of Los Altos. Because no properties are located in a Very High Hazard Zone, there are no additional requirements for properties at this time. The City of Los Altos could choose in the future to adopt additional requirements for any property identified in a FHSZ such as providing for defensible space or requiring certain building materials for new construction, but staff is not recommending any of these measures at this time.

More information regarding Fire Hazard Severity Zones can be found on the CalFire website <https://fire-hazard-severity-zones-rollout-calfire-forestry.hub.arcgis.com/>.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Ordinance No. 2025-xx