



REPORT to the MAYOR and MEMBERS of the CITY COUNCIL
From the CITY MANAGER

DATE: April 22, 2025

SUBJECT: AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY
OF LA MESA ADOPTING A FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY
ZONES MAP AS REQUIRED BY THE STATE OF
CALIFORNIA

ISSUING DEPARTMENT: Fire

SUMMARY:

Issues:

Pursuant to Government Code Sections 51178 and 51179, Should the City Council approve the introduction and First Reading of an ordinance of the La Mesa Municipal Code to include the March 24, 2025 the State of California (CalFire) updates to the Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map?

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the City Council:

1. Moves to introduce the proposed Ordinance;
2. Directs the City Clerk to read the Ordinance by title only; and
3. Directs the second reading of the Ordinance to be placed on the May 13, 2025, City Council agenda.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no fiscal impact with the adoption of the proposed ordinance. Implementation of the ordinance is absorbed by each affective department's budget through their respective annual work plans.

City's Strategic Goals:

- Maintain a community where residents and visitors feel safe.

Environmental Review:

The proposed ordinance amendment is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5) as it is an organizational or administrative activity of government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

BACKGROUND:

The State of California (CalFire) regularly reviews and updates the Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) maps within local responsibility areas in accordance with Government Code Sections 51178 and 51179. A Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) is a geographic area classified by the State as having a moderate, high, or very high wildfire hazard. CalFire uses the best available science and data to develop and field test a model that serves as the basis of zone assignments. The model evaluates the probability of the area burning and potential fire behavior in the area. Modeling factors include fire history, vegetation, flame length, blowing embers, proximity to wildland, terrain, and weather patterns. The updated FHSZ maps for the local responsibility areas released in March 2025 are inclusive of burn probabilities for wildland areas from 2020 fire data. The La Mesa FHSZ is attached for reference.

The purpose of these designations is to increase life safety and reduce the potential for structure ignitability by reducing fuels (defensible space) and improving construction features that would prevent ignition and ember intrusion, thereby reducing the threat of life or structure loss during a wildfire event. City staff manage fuel reduction by Fire Inspection protocols, and through building permit plan checks of proposed structures adjacent to the FHSZ.

DISCUSSION:

On March 24, 2025, CalFire released an updated FHSZ map for the City of La Mesa. On April 4, 2025, the map was posted on the City's website and, in accordance with California Government Code Section 51178.5, was made available for public review and comment from April 4th, 2025, until May 5th, 2025. Any comments will be brought forward at the May 13th City Council meeting.

Government Code Section 51179 requires a local agency to adopt, by ordinance, these Fire Hazard Severity Zone determinations within 120 days of receiving them from CalFire.

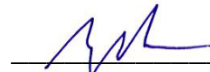
Staff recommend the second reading of the ordinance at the May 13th meeting, at which point the City Council will have an opportunity to approve the final version of the

ordinance. The ordinance would become effective on June 12, 2025, 30 days after adoption.

CONCLUSION:

The State of California (CalFire) regularly reviews and updates the FHSZ maps within local responsibility areas in accordance with Government Code Sections 51178 and 51179. On March 24, 2025, CalFire released an updated FHSZ map for the City of La Mesa. As such, staff recommends that the City Council moves to introduce the proposed Ordinance, directs the City Clerk to read the Ordinance by title only, and directs the second reading of the Ordinance to be placed on the May 13, 2025, City Council Agenda.

Reviewed by:



Greg Humora
City Manager

Respectfully submitted by:



Bent Koch
Fire Chief

Attachments:

Fire Hazard Safety Zone Map
Draft Ordinance