COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

City of Ventura | 2026

CITY OF VENTURA FIRE DEPARTMENT

FireSafe COUNCIL VENTURA REGIONAL

CAL FIRE SINCE 1885

VENTURA COUNTY RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Coastal Conservancy

California Department of Conservation

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PREFACE:

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN?

The Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (HFRA) encourages communities to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) to reduce their wildland fire risk and promote healthier forested ecosystems. Signed into law as a response to the apparent and potentially catastrophic hazards brought about by forest health issues, the HFRA aims at improving forest conditions to protect communities, habitats, and resources. Due to the wide range of resource impacts associated with wildfire, the HFRA places significant importance on improving the review process and implementation of hazardous fuel reduction activities.

A CWPP, as defined in Title I of the HFRA, is a blueprint for preparedness at the neighborhood level. It organizes a community's efforts to plan and protect itself against wildfire, and empowers citizens to move in a cohesive, common direction. This CWPP was developed collaboratively by state, county, and local management agencies. The key goals of the Ventura CWPP are to:

- Align with the County and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) cohesive pre-fire strategy, which includes educating homeowners and building understanding of wildland fire, ensuring defensible space clearing and structure hardening, safeguarding communities through fuels treatment, protecting evacuation corridors, and preparing residents to evacuate when necessary.
- Identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatment.
- Recommend the types and methods of treatment that will protect the community.
- Recommend measures to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.
- Identify other fire prevention and preparation measures that are sensible and effective for this community.

Note: The CWPP is intended to provide guidance, education, and be a mechanism to receive grant funding. This plan will not directly reduce the risk of wildfire in a community. This plan is not to be construed as indicative of project "activity" as defined under the "Community Guide to the California Environmental Quality Act, Chapter Three, Projects Subject to CEQA." Any actual project activities undertaken that meet this definition of project activity and are undertaken by the CWPP participants or agencies listed shall meet local, state, and federal environmental compliance and grant funding requirements.

The work upon which this publication is based was funded in whole or in part through a Regional Fire and Forest Capacity grant awarded by the California Department of Conservation and the State Coastal Conservancy.

SECTION I: CITY OF VENTURA COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

The City of Ventura (officially named San Buenaventura) is in Ventura County, California. The area has a longstanding fire history and has been inhabited by different populations, including the Chumash Native Americans, for at least 10,000 years. In 1782, Mexican missionaries established Mission San Buenaventura. After the American acquisition of California in 1848, the city was formally incorporated in 1866. At that time, Ventura was a growing community of orchards and gardens. An oil boom in the 1920s amongst the Ventura petroleum fields continued the municipality's growth. Today, the city is known for its enduring industries, as well as its history and culture, beaches, mountains, and access to Channel Islands National Park. The City of Ventura is a full-service municipality with its own City Fire Department serving 110,763[1] residents within its 32-square mile limits.

Ventura is a coastal city known for its Mediterranean climate and adjacency to Los Angeles County, the Pacific Ocean, and Los Padres National Forest. Additionally, the city and its surrounding communities have diverse agricultural and working-class communities, which may be more vulnerable to the effects of wildfire. 18.2% of the city population is also identified as 65 years or older[2] - another vulnerable population to fire hazards - and a 2020 Ventura County survey found that the City of Ventura has more than 500 houseless individuals who are residents of the city.[3] Additionally, approximately 20% of homes in the City of Ventura are classified as High or Very High fire hazard severity zones, as classified by CAL FIRE.[4]

This is the first CWPP for the City of Ventura. In the last decade, the area experienced several wildfires, including the Thomas Fire in 2017. During the Thomas Fire, which entered city boundaries and was then the largest wildfire in California history, critical lessons were learned regarding water systems, emergency response strategy, and the city's persistent risk of wildland urban interface ("WUI") fires and urban conflagration. The Thomas Fire was followed by several other significant regional wildfire incidents, including the 2018 Woolsey Fire, 2024 Mountain Fire, and 2025 Palisades & Eaton Fires. These deadly wildfires threatened lives, property, and the health of the Ventura community and its neighbors.

The community overview section provides additional information about Ventura Fire Department, additional CWPP contributors, wildfire initiatives, details on the area's fire history, critical infrastructure & resources, and more. The following project sections (Community Engagement/Education, Structural Hardening, Defensible Space, Fuels Treatments, Evacuation Planning, and Other Mitigation) describe the city's wildfire mitigation efforts by outlining actions that are completed, currently underway, and planned. Together, these sections demonstrate how past investments and ongoing initiatives build toward a coordinated, forward-looking strategy to reduce wildfire risk across the city.

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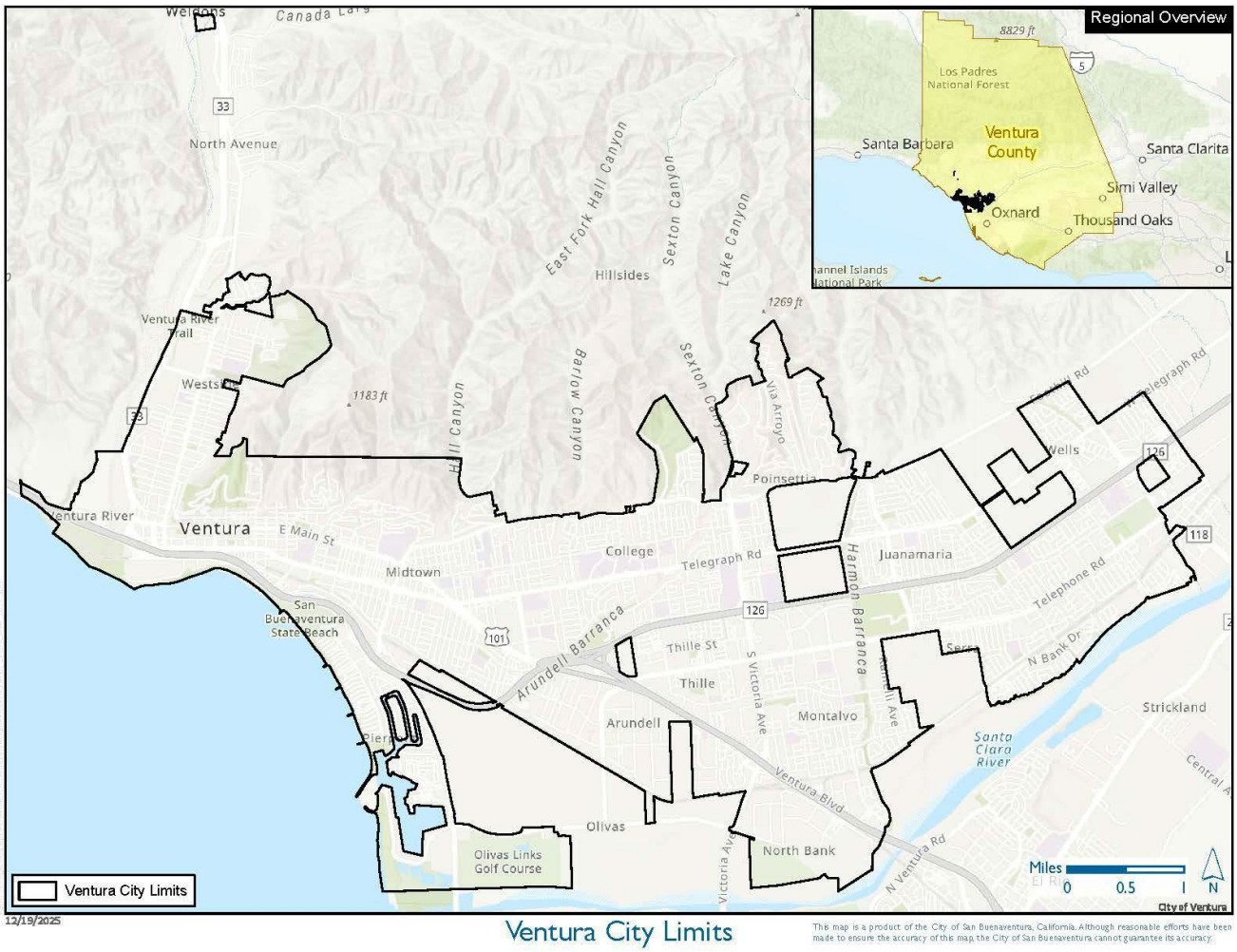
[1] U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: San Buenaventura (Ventura) city, California https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/sanbuenaventuraventuracitycalifornia/

[2] Ibid

[3] Frequently Asked Questions: City of Ventura, California https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/FAQ.aspx

[4] VRFSC Analysis of CAL FIRE Datasets

Figure 1: Ventura City Limits



A. CWPP Collaboration

Severe wildfires pose extreme challenges for emergency responders and highlight the need for the City of Ventura to collectively adapt to changing fire risks. To that end, the U.S. Forest Service and the Federal Government, local and regional agencies, scientific and research communities, and community-based organizations are uniting in efforts to address this growing challenge through adaptive management strategies and a collaborative process.

KEY PARTNERS

The Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council (VRFSC) led the development of this Community Wildfire Protection Plan, with guidance and support from several partners. The development team included representatives from the agencies in the table below.

Organization	Roles/Responsibilities
Ventura Fire Department	Fire Department's efforts, plans, and feedback
Ventura Emergency Services	City emergency resources and evacuation planning
Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council	Facilitator, editor, and author
Ventura Parks and Recreation	Fuel treatments, parks projects and maintenance
City Manager's Office	Municipal engagement and education
City Public Works	Capital projects and maintenance
City Community Development	Community information and initiatives
City Public Information Office	Community Engagement
Environmental Services	Sustainability, resilience and related services

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Ventura Fire Safe Council, along with the Ventura Fire Department and Ventura Public Information Office, offered multiple modes of community engagement for CWPP planning. One opportunity was a community questionnaire to provide feedback and information to city fire specialists regarding resident sentiment and preparedness. Information from these responses is detailed in Appendix B of the CWPP.

Additionally, in-person opportunities were available for the community to engage with CWPP authors and planners. Two different informational workshops were held at city facilities in February of 2026. In addition to information on the CWPP planning process and ongoing initiatives, these workshops provided opportunities for community members to ask questions, provide feedback, and have input in the publishing process of the CWPP.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP SCHEDULE:

Workshop 1: February 18, 2026 @ 6pm – Ventura City Hall Community Meeting Room

501 Poli. St, Room 202. Ventura, CA 93001

Workshop 2: February 26, 2026 @ 6pm – Ventura Fire Headquarters Training Room

1425 Dowell Dr. Ventura, CA 93003

B. Fire Protection Programs

Preparation Programs:

Fire protection and awareness programs for proactive communities are increasingly available through organizations such as the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). As the City of Ventura experiences increased wildfire risk, it is important for communities to participate in mitigation, training, and awareness programs to increase understanding and preparation in advance of emergency events. The following fire protection programs (and their administrators) are active in the City of Ventura and its communities.

Firewise USA®

Firewise USA® is a program administered by the NFPA and co-sponsored by the United States Forest Service with the National Association of State Foresters. The program provides a collaborative framework to help neighbors organize and take action to increase the ignition resistance of their homes and communities. Any community that meets a set of voluntary criteria on an annual basis can retain an "In Good Standing" status and may identify as being a recognized Firewise Community. While the Firewise USA® program has been active since 2002, in recent years it gained traction thanks to the 2020 California Safer from Wildfire Initiative, which qualifies residents located in a recognized Firewise USA® Community for insurance discounts with California Department of Insurance-approved agencies. Firewise applications in California are reviewed by CAL FIRE.

The Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council provides localized support for assisting communities through the process with monthly zoom workshops, 1:1 chats with a Regional Firewise Coordinator, annual in-person networking events, and small-scale funding for recognized communities when available. In 2022, there were only 2 recognized Firewise USA® Communities in Ventura County. As of June 2026, there are currently 3 recognized Firewise USA® Communities in the City of Ventura, and 52 communities across Ventura County.

https://venturafiresafe.org/firewiseusa/

VRFSC Home Wildfire Assessments

Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council offers free home wildfire assessments throughout Ventura County. Interested community members may sign up online or call the office, and a member of VRFSC's Wildfire Safety Staff will visit your home to assess risk and provide recommendations for home hardening. Results are compiled in a private, personalized report.

https://venturafiresafe.org/home-wildfire-assessments/

United Policy Holders

United Policyholders is a non-profit whose mission is to be an information resource for insurance consumers. The organization was started in 1991 following a WUI fire in California, after which residents struggled with serious and unexpected gaps in coverage and claim processes. United Policyholders provides preparedness, recovery, and advocacy programs, and has been selected as an official consumer representative to the National Association of Insurance Commissioners.

Safer from Wildfires

Safer from Wildfires, administered by the California Department of Insurance, gives homeowners actionable steps to improve their property's wildfire resilience. Following these steps can help you save money on your insurance. Every action under Safer from Wildfires will qualify you for an insurance discount. https://www.insurance.ca.gov/01-consumers/200-wrr/Safer-from-Wildfires.cfm

CERT (Community Emergency Response team)

The CERT program educates volunteers about disaster preparedness for the hazards that may impact their area. The program also trains volunteers in basic disaster response skills, including for wildfire safety. CERT offers a consistent, nationwide approach to volunteer training and organization that professional responders can rely on during disaster situations, allowing them to focus on more complex tasks. The City of Ventura conducts CERT training in both English and Spanish. The City Police Department's Emergency Services Manager also leads workshops as part of the free "Ready your Ventura Neighborhood" Program.

Programs For Public Safety:

Red Flag Warnings

A Red Flag Warning means that critical fire weather conditions are either occurring now or imminently. A combination of strong winds, low relative humidity, and warm temperatures can create critical fire conditions.

The National Weather Service provides daily fire weather forecasts in coordination with local fire agencies. The Red Flag Warning Program warns the public and enables firefighting agencies to prepare appropriate resources.

Ready, Set, Go!

Ready, Set, Go! (RSG) is an award-winning, national wildfire action planning program that guides residents through proper preparations for a wildfire event. The program details the important steps that should be taken to develop defensible space, conduct home hardening, and create a plan for emergency evacuation. RSG also educates audiences how to stay up to date on the latest news and information about a fire and receive local emergency notifications.

VC Emergency.com &VC Alert and Emergency information hotline

(Ventura County Office of Emergency Services' Systems)

Ventura County Sheriff's Emergency Services operates a coordinated suite of public information and notification tools designed to keep residents informed before, during, and after emergencies. VCEmergency.com serves as the County's primary incident information website, providing real time updates on active incidents, including evacuation areas, road closures, shelter locations, and public safety messaging. The site functions as a single, trusted source of information during emergencies and is updated continuously as conditions change.

VC Alert is the County's official emergency notification system and is used to deliver time sensitive, life safety messages directly to residents by phone, text, email, and wireless emergency alerts.

Notifications are issued using verified information and are targeted to specific geographic areas to ensure the public receives clear and relevant instructions. In addition, the Ventura County Incident Information Line provides a staffed phone line where residents can speak directly with trained personnel to obtain current information, ask questions, and receive guidance during incidents. The information line is activated only during incidents of significance and can be reached by calling **805-465-6650**. All three resources are operated by the Sheriff's Emergency Services in partnership with local cities and collectively support a unified, countywide approach to public safety communications in service of all Ventura County residents.

Public Safety Power Shutoffs

High winds can cause trees or debris to damage electric lines and cause wildfires. As a result, your electric utility company may need to turn off power during severe weather. This is called a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS). PSPS events are one of the ways utility companies better ensure the safety of the public. Multiple factors are at play before deciding to turn off power. The City of Ventura does not make the decision to turn off power.

211 PSPS Care Coordination aims to connect with electric-dependent community members and households with access and function needs before, during, and after a PSPS.

211now.com/public-safety-power-shutoff-outreach-info/

Watch Duty

Watch Duty is a free, non-profit mobile app and website that provides real-time wildfire data and information to the public. The platform utilizes volunteer information officers, including retired dispatchers, who monitor radio transmissions from firefighting agencies and other first responders. Watch Duty disseminates information on wildfire incidents to the public in an interactive web map, with fire perimeters, evacuation zones and other relevant updates. Users may select to receive alerts from the app when a new fire starts in their selected county(s).

Farmworker Wildfire Smoke Alert System

Launched in 2021, the Farmworker Wildfire Smoke Alert System is designed to protect farmworkers from the health impacts from wildfire smoke by notifying them when air quality reaches dangerous levels.

Participants can receive English or Spanish versions of the alerts. The Spanish alerts feature Spanish text and audio messages in Mixteco and Zapoteco. To sign up for the English version, text SMOKE to 855-522-0034. To sign up for the Spanish version, text HUMO to 855-522-0034. https://www.vcapcd.org/farmworker-wildfire-smoke-alert/

C. Environment and Fire History

Climate and Weather

Ventura is characterized by a sunny, Mediterranean climate that typically features cool, wet winters and warm, dry summers. There are several distinct climate regions surrounding the city. The city's coastal region and Oxnard Plain generally have maritime climates that are cooler and wetter than the rest of the region. Meanwhile, the Conejo and Simi Valleys have similar climates to the San Fernando Valley and inland areas of neighboring Los Angeles County: lower humidities and warmer temperatures, with more pronounced seasonal Santa Ana winds. To the north of the city, the mountainous portion of Ventura experiences more extreme weather patterns with higher temperatures in the summer and significantly cooler, wetter winter months. Some portions of these mountains – the Topa Topa mountains within the Los Padres National Forest - receive moderate snowfall in the winter months.

Despite its maritime climate, Ventura County experienced pronounced drought over the past decade, even with multiple years of considerable winter rains. The result of these conditions causes the vegetation to exhibit critically low moisture levels and reduces the soil's capability to absorb water when it rains. Because of these recent conditions, fuel beds in the area (see "Fuel Beds" section below) are now categorized by native and drought-stressed Chaparral, Coastal Sage-Scrub, and Oak Woodlands, as well as fast growing and invasive weeds/grasses that "cure" following months of seasonal dryness.

Santa Ana Winds

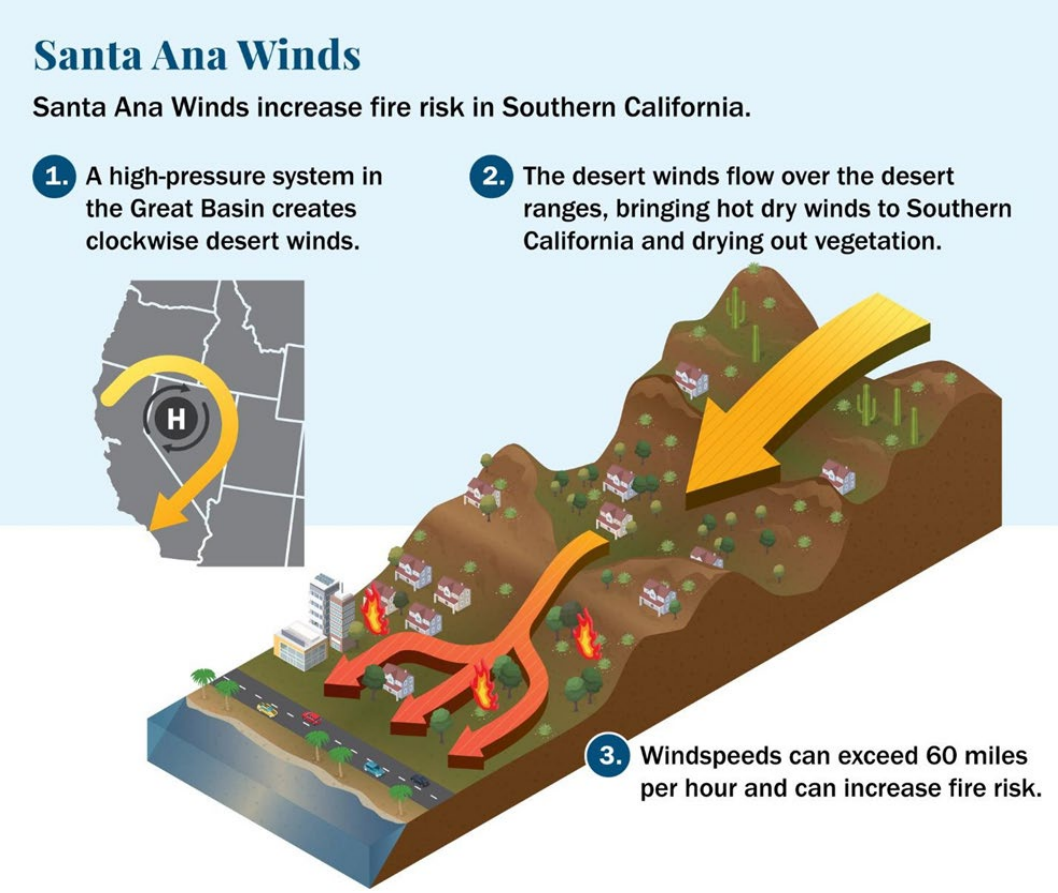
Santa Ana winds, illustrated in Figure 2, contribute to the high rate of spread for wildfires in Ventura. These winds originate during the fall from a high-pressure system in the hot, dry interior desert to the northeast of Ventura, usually the Great Basin. Warm air flows from the high-pressure inland areas towards lower pressure near the coast, funneling through mountain passes and drying even more as it descends. When Santa Ana winds arrive in Ventura County, the dry air and warm wind combine to dry plant communities during a period of the year when vegetation already has low moisture content. Receptive fuels during Santa Ana winds are a critical concern for fire managers.

Another particularly dangerous consequence of Santa Ana winds is increased fire behavior, especially spotting. Fire spotting is a phenomenon that occurs when embers from a fire are lifted into the air and carried away from the main fire. These embers can travel for miles in high winds,[5] igniting new fires outside the fire perimeter. Fire spotting is a common cause of wildfire spread and can pose a serious threat to structures and communities located in the path of an advancing wildfire.

Santa Ana winds were the driving force behind the spread of the largest fires in Ventura's recent history, including the Thomas Fire. Santa Ana winds also disrupt utility lines, starting incidents during already dangerous fire weather conditions.

[5] COMBUSTION SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY 2024, VOL. 196, NO. 14, 2356–2379
Pickett, B. M., C. Isackson, R. Wunder, T. H. Fletcher, B. W. Butler, and D. R. Weise. 2010.
Pacific Southwest Research Station – UDSA Forest Service
https://www.fs.usda.gov/psw/publications/weise/psw_2022_weise004_borujerdi.pdf

Figure 2: Santa Ana Winds



TOPOGRAPHY

Ventura is located northwest of Los Angeles on the California coast. The western portion of the city stretches north along the Ventura River, which is characterized by a narrow, steep valley. North of the city, communities extend up steep slopes into the Ventura foothills, while the eastern part of the city is on the relatively flat alluvial Oxnard plain. The city also extends east to the beginning of the Santa Clara River Valley, bounded by the historic community of Saticoy. Ventura is within a seismically active region that features several fault systems.

Several barrancas (steep-walled ravines or gullies primarily formed by stormwater) extend across the city, starting in the foothills and running to the Santa Clara River. These narrow canyons are laden with heavy brush and trees, often posing access issues for emergency personnel. Barrancas can channel wind and ember cast during a fire, increasing fire behavior. This phenomenon greatly enhanced the Thomas Fire activity that destroyed several barranca-adjacent communities in 2017.

The Ventura Fire Department has several initiatives to reduce the hazard posed by barrancas within the city, as further detailed in the 'Fuels Treatment' section. A significant challenge to the implementation of these initiatives is the multi-ownership profiles of several barrancas, including areas owned by Southern California Edison, the Ventura County Flood Control District, and other private entities. One priority project for VFD is to collaborate with these entities for future fuel reduction work in city barrancas.

The following barrancas are at least partially within Ventura's city limits: Kalorama Barranca, Sanjon Barranca, Brown Barranca, Barlow Barranca, Prince (Hall Canyon) Barranca, Reservoir Barranca, Arundell Barranca, Harmon Barranca, Clark Barranca, Sudden Barranca, and Franklin Barranca.

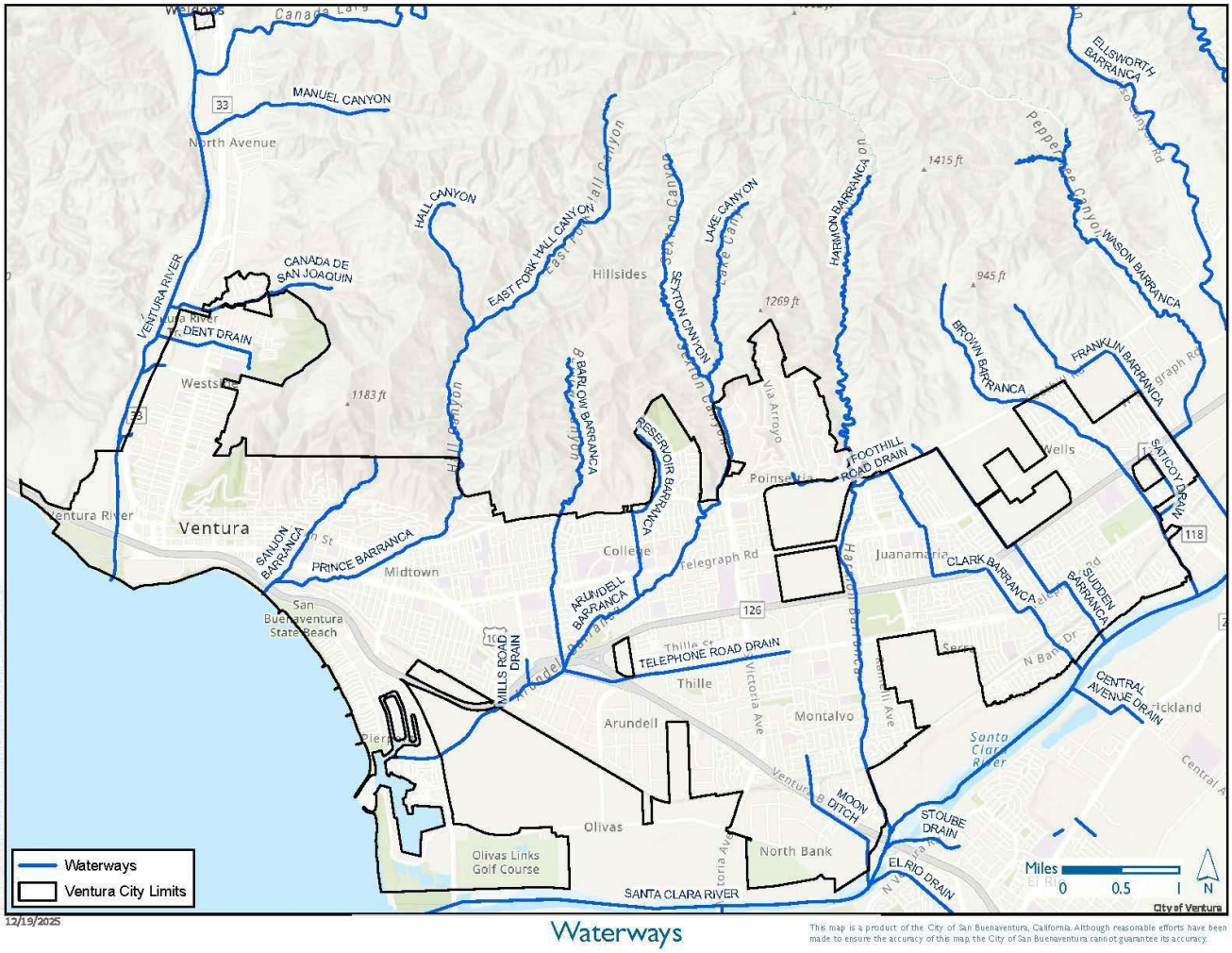
The City of Ventura is in three watersheds: the Ventura River watershed, the Ventura Coastal watershed, and the Santa Clara River watershed.

In the Ventura Coastal watershed, the Sanjon, Kalorama, Hall Canyon/Prince, and Arundell Barrancas discharge into the Pacific Ocean and cross through the city. The Barlow, Harmon, and Brown Barrancas along Ventura's eastside also cross the Hillside, College Area, and Eastside Communities before draining into the Santa Clara River.

The Brown and Arundell barrancas are identified as being priority areas for targeted fuel reduction projects, with project work already having taken place for certain sections: In the past 4 years, the Ventura Fire Department has contracted with the CAL FIRE San Luis Unit hand crews for fuel reduction work in Brown Barranca, Arundell Barranca, and the Ventura River Watershed.

Figure 3 details relevant waterways to the City of Ventura, including the barrancas mentioned above.

Figure 3: Ventura Waterways



Waterways

Vegetation, Wildlife and Landcover

Vegetation and wildlife in Ventura are limited in relation to other planning areas, as development within city boundaries has altered the native landscape. As such, fuel loads of concern for wildfire safety are mostly located near the edge of the city or in connected barrancas.

Regardless, the diverse topography and climate of the Ventura area result in a range of vegetation communities and habitats. Considering this, the Ventura Fire Department utilizes a consulting biologist to assess environmental values and comply with all permitting requirements when removing species for fuel reduction.

Ventura's location along the California coast supports a mosaic of plant communities despite extensive urbanization. Prominent vegetation types within and adjacent to the planning area include coastal sage scrub, chaparral, riparian corridors, and remnant oak woodland, particularly along barrancas and undeveloped slopes. These habitats support a range of native wildlife species adapted to fragmented urban environments, including birds, small mammals, reptiles, and invertebrates, and provide important movement corridors between the coast and inland open space areas.

Overall, inconsistent management of city-adjacent lands resulted in an invasive-dominant plant cover and increased risk of wildland fires impacting neighboring city parcels. One prominent and invasive species, Arundo Donax, thrives in drainages and barrancas and is highly flammable. Non-native eucalyptus trees are also highly flammable, and removing these trees is a common priority for fire managers. However, eucalyptus trees are also hospitable to wintering, migratory monarch butterflies – a species that is increasingly endangered. For eucalyptus treatments and other project consideration, Ventura Fire continues to consult local biologists and scientific experts about best practices to consider both ecosystem health and wildfire mitigation.

Fuel Beds

Fuel beds are considered relatively homogenous units in the landscape, representing distinct environments that determine potential fire behavior and effects. There are ten identified fuel beds in Ventura County, and two fuel beds that border city limits. Each fuel bed is analyzed based on its topography, vegetation types, fire history, and assets at risk. The entire Casitas, Ojai, and Ventura Fuel Bed burned during the Thomas Fire.

The City of Ventura is partially within the Ventura Fuel Bed. The Ventura Fuel Bed is bordered on the south by city development, on the north by the Ojai Valley, on the east by Highway 150, and on the west by Highway 33. The dominant vegetation in the fuel bed consists of oak woodland, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and grassland. Recently, due to many years of drought, this fuel bed has experienced enhanced oak tree mortality. While fuel bed consideration within the city is minimal, the greatest areas of risk in the Ventura Fuel Bed is in the interface area that separates the City of Ventura from the Ventura County jurisdictional areas. More discussion regarding this interface is in the 'Surface Fuel Types' section below.

Figure 4: Ventura County Fuel Beds

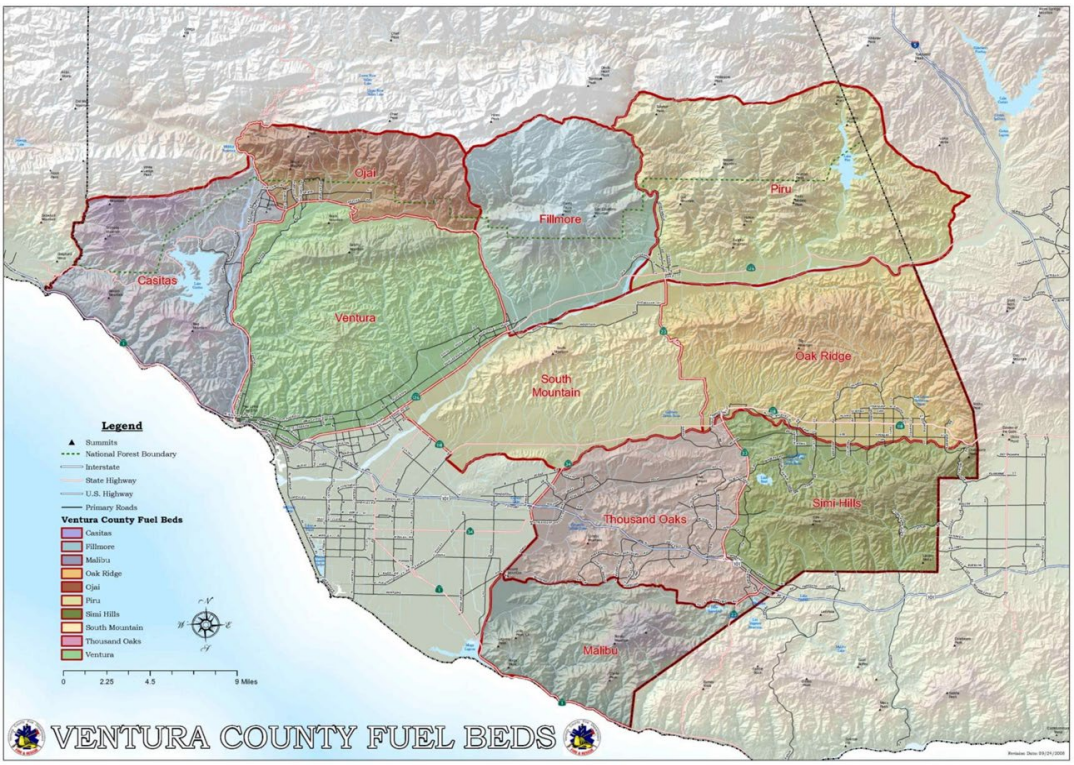
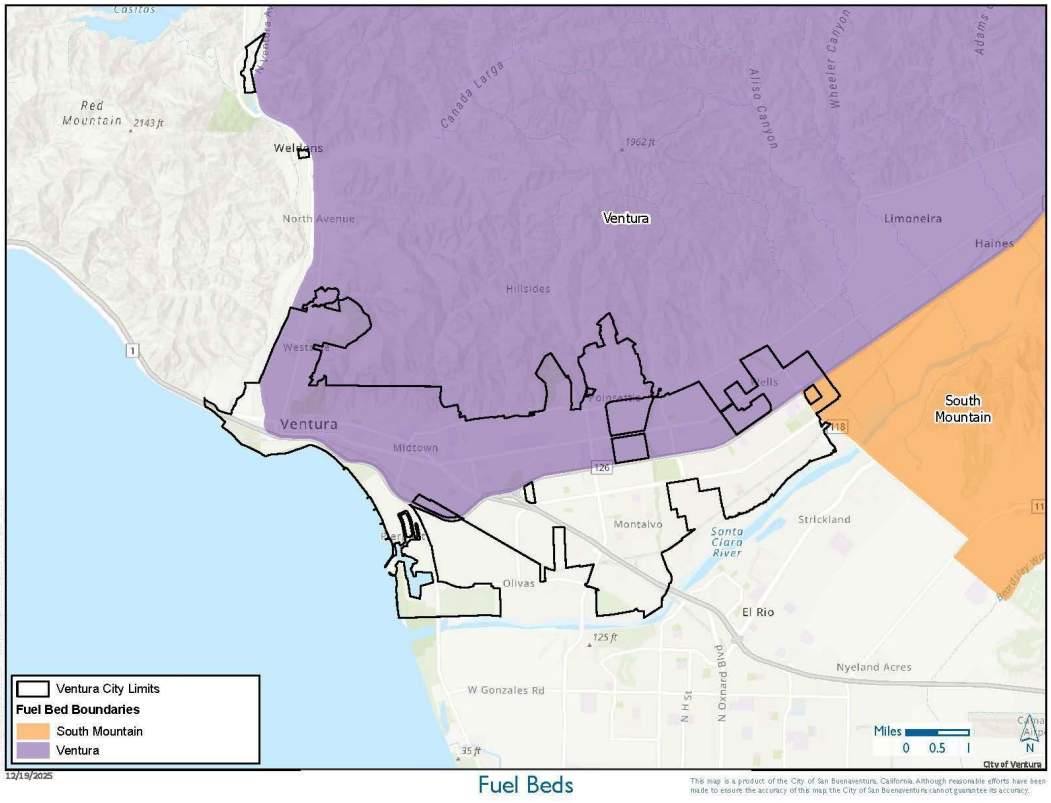


Figure 5: City-Adjacent Fuel Beds



Surface Fuel Types

Knowledge of existing vegetation is vital in determining how to manage hazards posed by fuel loads. Land managers must be aware of fuel characteristics to understand how they may react to an ignition source or wildfire event.

Fire behavior fuel models are developed as guidance for a fuel type's ability to carry fire. The most current of these models is the Scott and Burgan Standard Fire Behavior Fuel Model (2005). This 13 standardized fuel code model is widely used to represent fuel accumulation, fuel chemistry, crown and understory fuel structure, and community development or aging. Each value represents a defined range of fuel loading amongst surface fuel components (live or dead), size classes, and fuel types.[6]

While conventional fire behavior models treat 'Urban' landscapes as fuel limited, quick-moving urban conflagrations from wildfire are becoming increasingly common - especially in Southern California. Additionally, ember cast from miles outside of city boundaries due to Santa Ana winds must be considered. As such, landcover metrics for the CWPP planning area are calculated below with a 1.5-mile buffer outside of Ventura city limits. Fuel modeling is dynamic, as vegetation changes throughout the year. However, fuel type categorization should be considered for vegetation during the height of fire season.

Table 1: Landcover Type for Fire Modeling with 1.5-mile buffer from city limits

Cover Type	% of Landscape	Model Code
Urban	35%	Urban
Shrubland/Chaparral	34%	FBFM 5
Invasives/grasses	15%	FBFM 2
Agriculture	8%	Agriculture
Closed Canopy Woodland, little undergrowth	5%	FBFM 8
Barren	2%	Barren
Closed Canopy Woodland, moderate undergrowth	1%	FBFM 9
Other Grassland	1%	FBFM 4

In addition to this fuel classification, Ventura Fire Department's Fire Prevention teams classify fuel characteristics and hazard profiles for specific areas of risk. The result of this work is an internal deliverable that identifies priority areas in the city while considering fuel loading, along with a confluence of other variables. The Ventura Fire Department's Fire Prevention team actively collaborates with other local agencies to classify fuel loads for areas of concern in and around the city.

[6] LANDFIRE Fire Behavior Fuel Model 13 Attribute Data Dictionary Attribute https://landfire.gov/sites/default/files/DataDictionary/LF2023/LF23_F13ADD_240.pdf

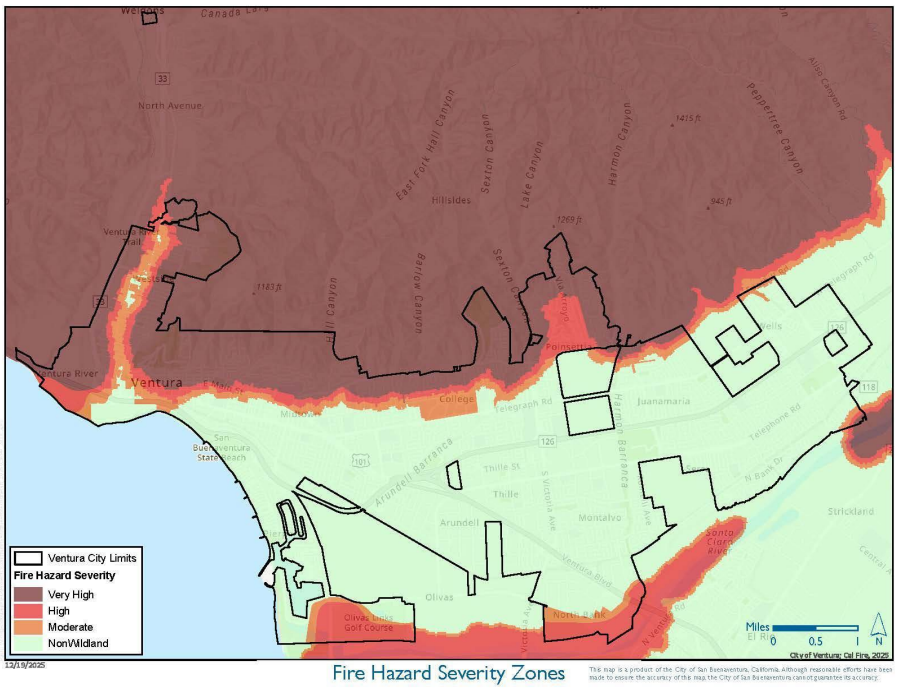
Fire Hazard Severity Zones

Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZs) are areas designated by CAL FIRE to show the potential level of wildfire risk based on factors like vegetation, topography, and weather. These zones help identify where wildfires are most likely to start and spread rapidly. FHSZs are classified as Moderate, High, or Very High severity. These zones guide local agency decision making and were updated by CAL FIRE in 2025.

Adopted by City Council with minimal revisions in July of 2025, an updated Fire Hazard Severity Zone map for Ventura classifies over 4,600 acres as Moderate, High, or Very High fire hazard areas. The classifications are based on factors such as historical fire patterns, vegetation, terrain, fuel sources, local weather, and community input.

The City of Ventura operates a GIS portal to view local FHSZs and find out if your home is in a relevant area. To learn more and view the maps, go to https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/FHRP.

Figure 6: City Fire Hazard Severity Zones



CEQA required in the Fire Hazard Severity Zones

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is California's statewide environmental review law that requires state and local government agencies to inform decision makers and the public about the potential environmental impacts of proposed projects and to reduce those environmental impacts to the extent feasible. The California Natural Resources Agency, with assistance from the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, completed a comprehensive update to the CEQA Guidelines in 2018. As part of this update, and pursuant to Senate Bill 1241, wildfire was added to the list of environmental topics that should be analyzed in the Environmental Checklist, which is contained in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. Wildfire hazards, associated risks, and other wildfire-related impacts must now be analyzed during the CEQA process for state-approved projects located in or near SRA, or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the LRA.

WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE (WUI)

The **Wildland Urban Interface** (WUI) is the area where human development meets wildland vegetation, and it is typically characterized by a mix of residential, commercial, and natural land uses. CAL FIRE uses a combination of housing density, FHSZ, and vegetation lifeform criteria for WUI designations within their Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP).

The WUI is particularly vulnerable to wildfire because it combines human-built structures with combustible vegetation and other wildfire fuels. The concept of the WUI is not new, although more often, extreme climate events are driving wildfire through the WUI and into areas not necessarily representative of WUI. This has led to a need for more public outreach and education for residents to learn about defensible space and home hardening strategies.

<u>Wildland Urban Interface Criteria:</u>

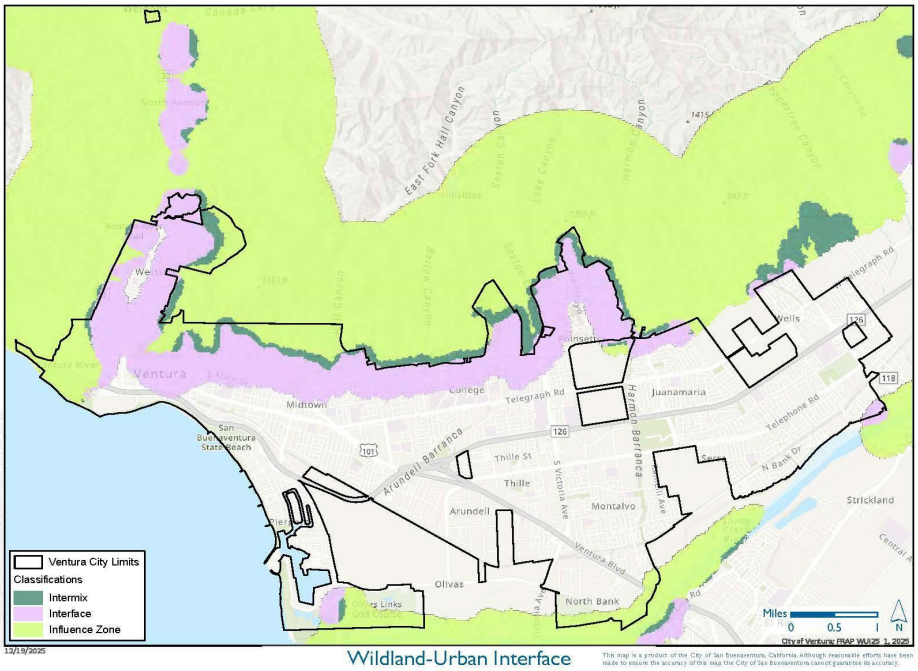
- Ranges from more than one house per acre to one house per 20 acres
- In Moderate, High, or Very High FHSZ
- Not dominated by wildland vegetation (herbaceous, hardwood, conifer, shrub)

Wildland Urban Intermix is a similar term commonly used interchangeably with Wildland Urban Interface, although it is typically represented by areas with much higher vegetation density amongst built infrastructure.

Wildfire Influence Zone includes wildfire susceptible vegetation up to 1.5 miles from interface and intermix designated areas and essentially serves as a buffer to the previous designations.

Lands within these designated areas require attention to reduce wildfire hazard. The Wildland Urban Interface around Ventura is shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: City Wildland Urban Interface



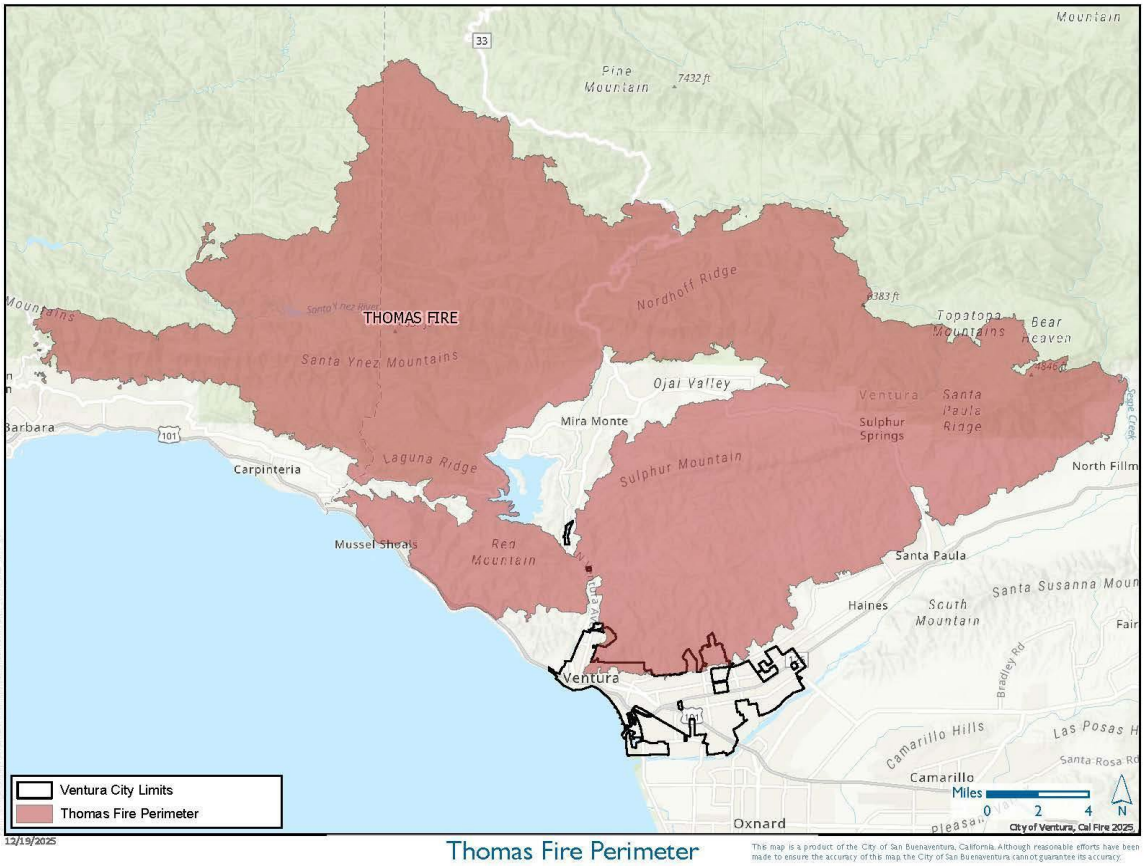
Wildland-Urban Interface

Fire History

Significant wildfires have been documented in Ventura far back as the 1800s. Some of these fires were once among the largest in California's history, though ongoing megafires in the state continue to exceed historical numbers. In recent history, the city and its suburbs experienced the Foothill Fire (1970), Poli Fire (1996), Simi Fire (2003), and the School Canyon Fire (2005).

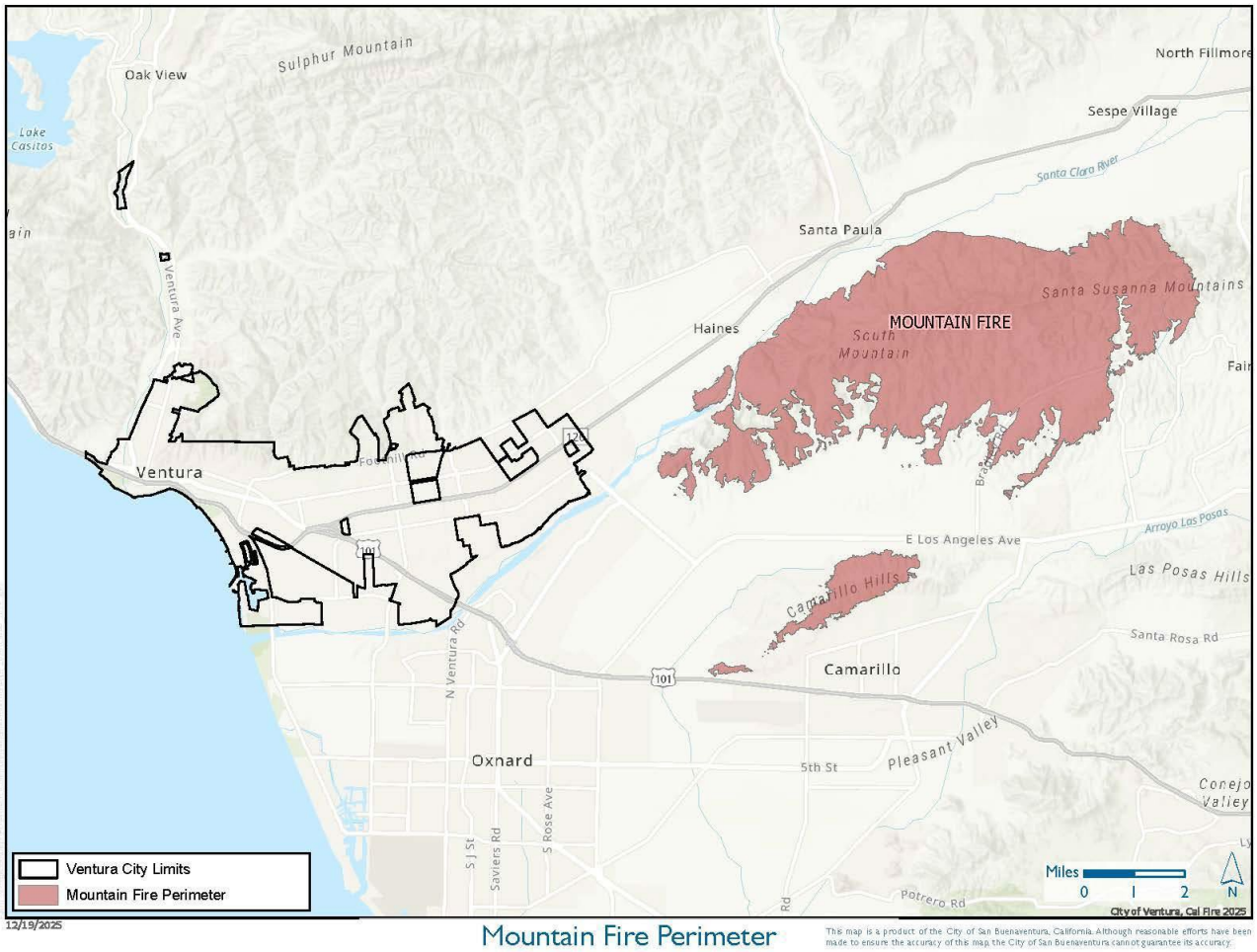
On December 4, 2017, the Thomas Fire started just north of Santa Paula. A second fire ignited nearly thirty minutes later, approximately four miles to the north in Upper Ojai at the top of Koenigstein Road. The fires soon merged and grew rapidly. In all, the fire burned for more than a month, consuming 281,893 acres within Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, destroying 1,063 structures and damaging an additional 280. The Thomas Fire's rates of spread (up to one acre per second) are attributed to hurricane-force Santa Ana winds combined with record heat, very low relative humidity, dry vegetation in soil moistures well below the critical levels, and significant accumulation of dead and decaying woody debris. Fuel loads were attributed to the extended drought cycle and lack of recent fire activity in the area. Most of the chaparral burned in the fire is considered to have been stand replacing, meaning it will potentially require 10+ years for a return to pre-fire conditions. Declared an environmental disaster, the Thomas Fire moved at record speed and caused immediate damage in the city of Ventura, destroying over 500 structures. A map of the Thomas Fire perimeter is below in Figure 8.

Figure 8: Thomas Fire Perimeter



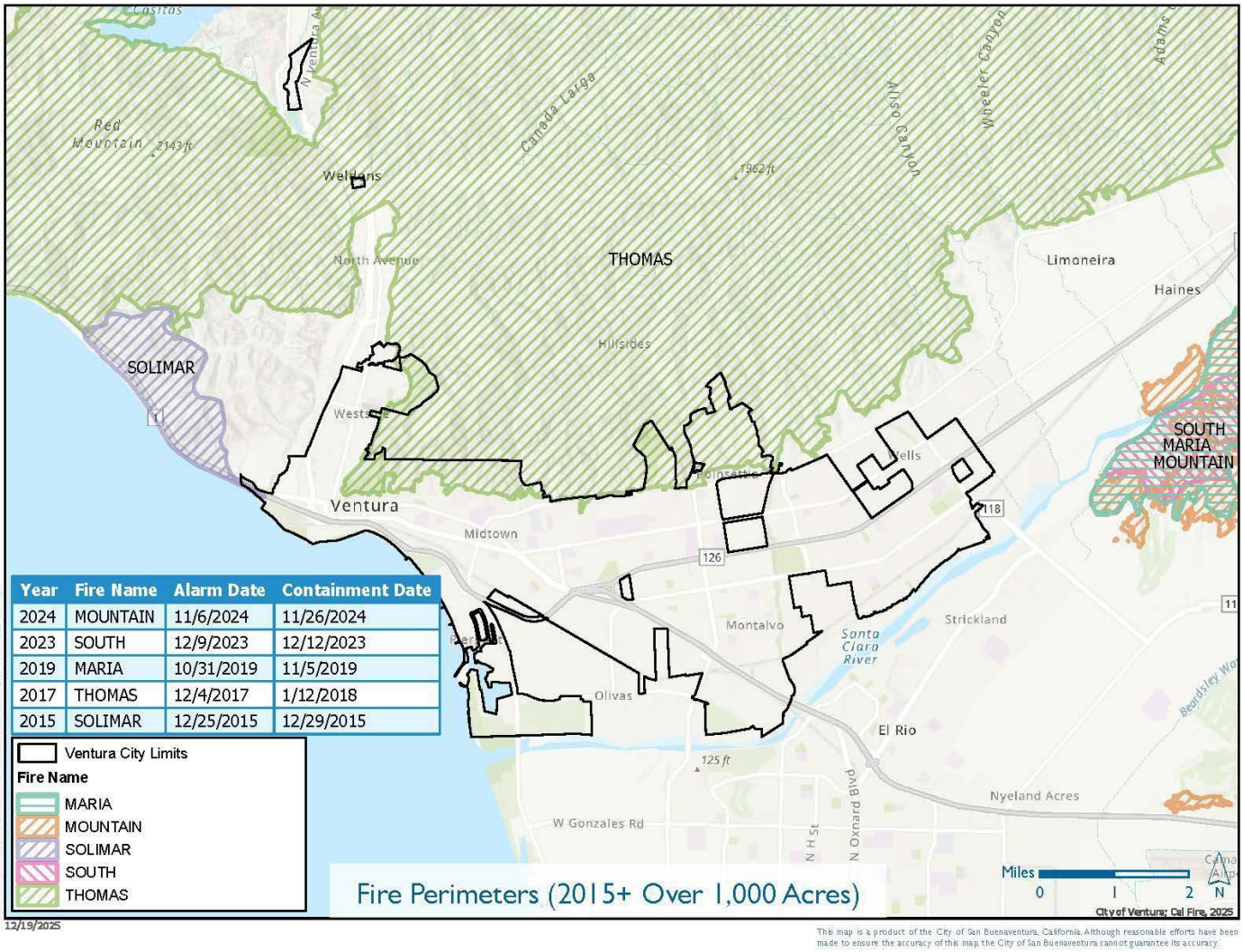
On November 6, 2024, the Mountain Fire began in an area to the north of Somis. Like the Thomas Fire, Santa Ana winds (some of the most extreme to hit Southern California in years) exacerbated fire behavior and quickly spotted embers up to 2 miles from the fire's front. This extreme fire behavior once again brought wildfire to the city's doorstep. While the city was not impacted by the Mountain Fire, the incident came within a mile of the city and threatened its infrastructure. This event further illustrated how Santa Ana wind events can dramatically enhance a fire's rate of spread. A map of the Mountain Fire perimeter is below in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Mountain Fire Perimeter



The effects of fire in any planning area are regional and do not observe jurisdictional boundaries. Thus, wildfire events like the Thomas Fire and Mountain Fire highlight the borderless relevance of fire impacts on the City of Ventura and its residents. A map with perimeters of fires greater than 1,000 acres occurring since 2015 near the city is shown below in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Recent Fire Perimeters



Year	Fire Name	Alarm Date	Containment Date
2024	MOUNTAIN	11/6/2024	11/26/2024
2023	SOUTH	12/9/2023	12/12/2023
2019	MARIA	10/31/2019	11/5/2019
2017	THOMAS	12/4/2017	1/12/2018
2015	SOLIMAR	12/25/2015	12/29/2015

This map is a product of the City of San Buenaventura, California. Although reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this map, the City of San Buenaventura cannot guarantee its accuracy.

D. Infrastructure

Ventura maintains a well-developed infrastructure network managed through Public Works and the Transportation Division. The city continues to invest in its infrastructure, including solar canopies at major municipal facilities and the construction of a new fire station (Station 7) in 2026. Ventura is also modernizing its telecommunications systems through a recently adopted Broadband Master Plan, which includes plans for a redundant citywide fiber loop designed to keep critical services online during emergencies. The city's general planning framework emphasizes infrastructure resilience, including efforts to underground utilities in higher-risk wildfire areas to reduce ignition potential.[7]

Lastly, although not entirely within city limits, nearby energy-production sites such as the Ventura Oil Field necessitate special consideration in the broader regional infrastructure context of fire hazard preparedness and planning.

Economy

Because Ventura's economic strength depends on locally based commercial activity, essential services, and tourism, severe wildfires or regional fire-related disruptions could have significant economic impacts. Overall, the city's economy is diversified, anchored by several sectors including export-based industries, tourism and hospitality, and a broad range of retail and services. Tourism, in particular, is a major economic driver as Ventura's coastal setting, cultural attractions, and historic downtown draw both day-visitors and overnight guests. Healthcare, education, professional services, and social assistance also make up substantial portions of the city's employment base.

The city's employers represent a wide and varied set of industries, and the top ten employers represent about one-third of Ventura's workforce. The largest employment sectors in the city represent government and health care, contributing to a more stable workforce with relatively lower levels of unemployment.

Water Systems

The City of Ventura's water systems play a critical role in supporting everyday public health, emergency response, and community resilience. These systems include a network of wells, treatment facilities, storage reservoirs, and distribution infrastructure that together provide reliable service under normal and elevated demand conditions. While Ventura Water maintains robust capabilities to support firefighting needs, it is important to recognize that no urban water system is designed or equipped to sustain the extraordinary demands of an urban conflagration-scale wildfire, if such an event occurs.

The City of Ventura released its updated Water Master Plan in March of 2023, detailing service connections, water districts, and supply flows.[8] Ventura Water is also currently updating its urban water management plan. City water services approximately 32,000 service connections, providing to residential, commercial, industrial and irrigation customers, including fire protection users. There are presently six distinct water sources supplying water to the city's water system.

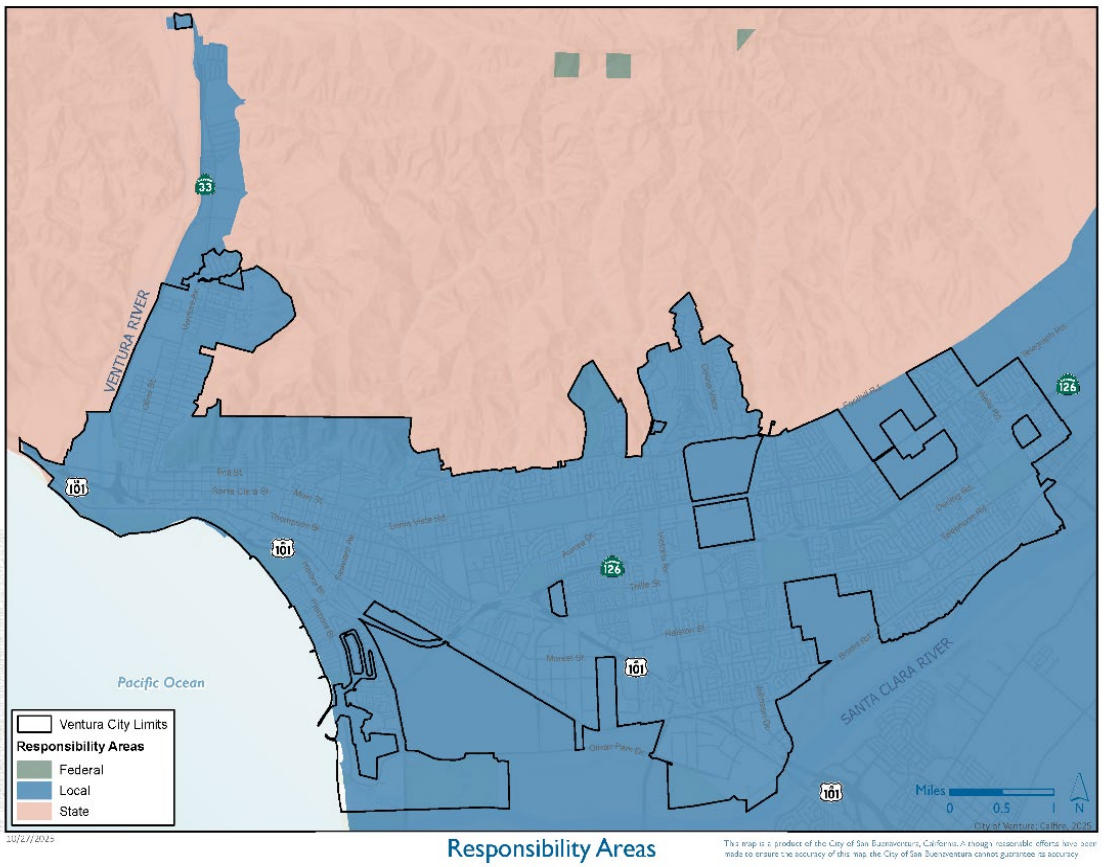
[7] General Plan – City of Ventura
https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/485/General-Plan

[8] 2023 Comprehensive Water Resources Report - City of Ventura
https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/35716/2023-Water-Master-Plan

FIREFIGHTING RESOURCES

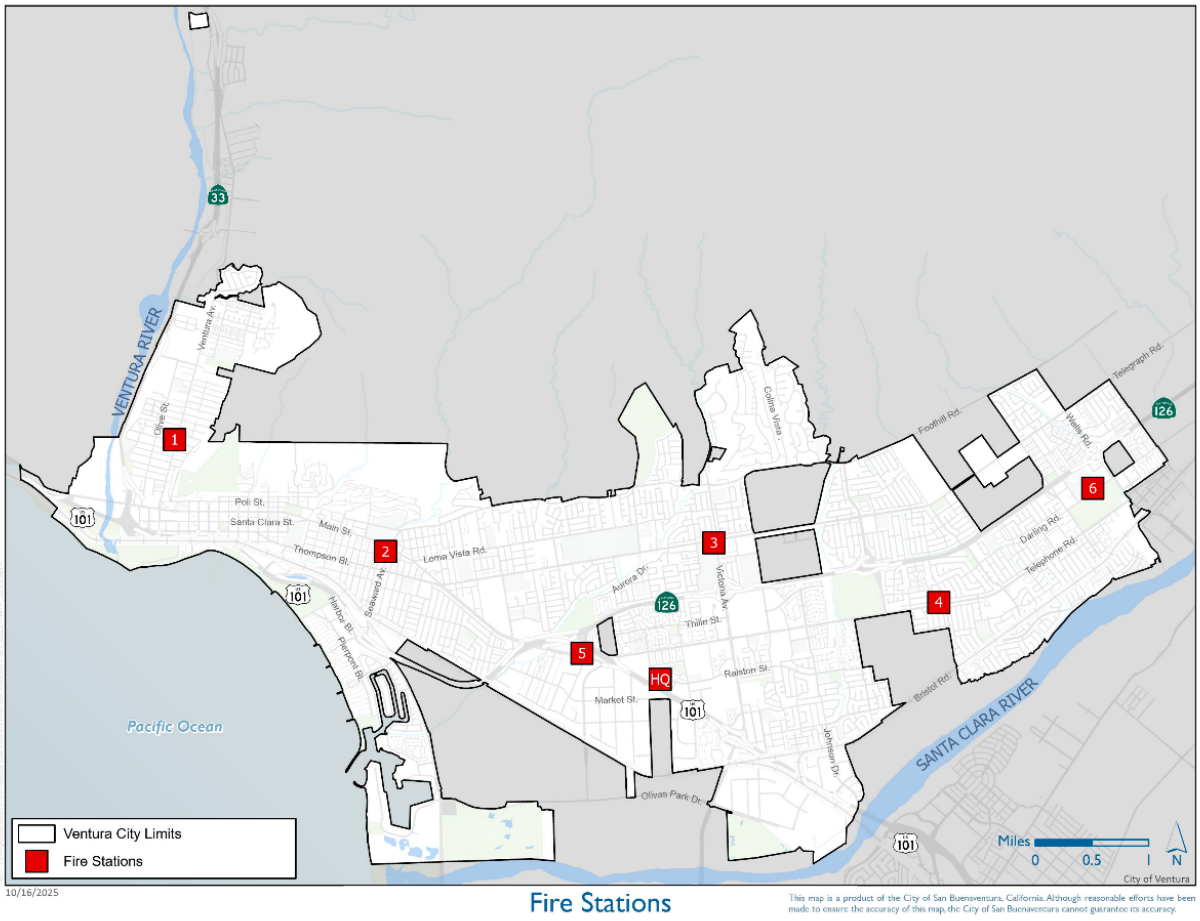
Wildfire responsibility in and around Ventura is divided among three jurisdictions: State Responsibility Area (SRA), Local Responsibility Area (LRA), and Federal Responsibility Area (FRA). The SRA, overseen by Ventura County Fire Department (as a contractor of CAL FIRE), includes lands where the state has primary responsibility for wildland fire protection. The LRA covers incorporated city areas and developed lands where local government agencies—such as the Ventura Fire Department—hold primary authority. The FRA encompasses federal lands, where federal agencies like the U.S. Forest Service manage response. Because Ventura County sits at the intersection of these three jurisdictions, multiple agencies share regional interest and responsibility for fire planning, coordination, and response.

Figure 11: Responsibility areas around Ventura



The Ventura Fire Department Operations Division comprises six fire stations (with station 7 slated for opening in 2026) and strives to maintain an average response time of five minutes to emergencies within the City. Emergency calls may consist of brush fires, structure fires, automobile accidents, and life-threatening medical emergencies.

Figure 12: Ventura Fire Department Stations



***Station 1**: 717 N. Ventura Ave*

***Station 2**: 41 S. Seaward Ave*

***Station 3**: 5838 Telegraph Rd*

***Station 4**: 8303 Telephone Rd*

***Station 5**: 4225 E. Main St*

***Station 6**: 10797 Darling Rd*

The standard emergency response unit for the Ventura Fire Department is the Paramedic Engine Company. Each company consists of a Captain, Engineer, and Firefighter-Paramedic.

- Captain: supervises and directs all emergency operations
- Engineer: responsible for the safe operation of the apparatus and all equipment on board
- Firefighter-Paramedic: completes firefighting tasks as directed by the Captain and provides advanced life support measures

Ventura County Fire Protection District Wildland Support Resources – As the County's CAL FIRE Contractor, the Ventura County Fire Department's Wildland Unit provides hand crew and bulldozer resources in the construction of fire control lines during wildfire suppression activities in the SRA. When not engaged with fighting fire, the unit also assists city fire in constructing and maintaining fire breaks and fire roads, performing fuel management, and carrying out other mitigation and prevention tasks. The Department also operates the Ventura County Aviation Unit, which is a combined unit with the Ventura County Fire Protection District and Ventura County Sheriff Office. The unit provides public safety aviation services for fire and rescue incidents. Ventura County's Aviation Unit has 8 helicopters available for fire department missions.

Fire Hazard Reduction Program

Fire prevention efforts are most successful when community members and firefighters work together on defensible space and resiliency. The Ventura Fire Department requests that property owners join forces to protect lives and property from potential wildfires through participation in the annual Fire Hazard Reduction Program, or FHRP.

The goal of the Ventura Fire Department's FHRP is to protect life and property by removing flammable brush, reducing vegetation density, and creating adequate defensible space. This improves public safety and the Department's ability to protect your property in the event of a fire. In accordance with the City of Ventura's Fire Code, all City of Ventura property owners whose properties are in a Very High or High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, are required to perform fire hazard reduction brush management by June 1.

If abatement is completed, no further action will be necessary. If a fire hazard is found, the property owner will be notified. Property owners with questions regarding clearance requirements for their property can contact the Fire Prevention Team by email at fhrp@cityofventura.ca.gov or by calling 805-658-4717. Additional guidelines may be found on the city's FHRP page:

https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/FHRP

D. Probability of Future Risk

In the past, county fires burning more than 1,000 acres occurred about every one to three years. The extent of future events will depend on specific conditions at the time of the fire.

Ventura County Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Risk Assessment

The Ventura County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan includes a risk assessment which includes jurisdiction-specific natural hazard event history, hazard risk ranking, and jurisdictionally specific vulnerabilities. Table 5 shows a local ranking for all hazards of concern for which the Hazard Mitigation Plan provides complete risk assessments. The ranking process involves an assessment of the likelihood of occurrence for each hazard, along with its potential impacts on people, property, and the economy. Mitigation actions in the Hazard Mitigation Plan primarily target hazards with high and medium rankings. This ranking was developed specifically with the City of Ventura as the planning area. More specific Hazard Risk Rankings were developed for each jurisdictional annex within the county.

Table 5 Hazard Risk Ranking[9]

Rank	Hazard	Risk Ranking Score	Risk Category
1	Landslide	33	High
2	Earthquake	32	Medium
3	Severe Storm	24	Medium
4	Severe Weather	24	Medium
5	Flooding	18	Medium
6	Wildfire	18	Medium
7	Dam Failure	12	Low
8	Sea Level Rise	12	Low
9	Tsunami	10	Low
10	Drought	9	Low

[9] Ventura County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan – 2022
https://vcportal.ventura.org/OES/2022-03-01_VenturaHMP_Vol2_PublicReviewDraft-compressed.pdf

SECTION II: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION

Understanding wildfire risk is a key building block in preventing the loss of property and life. This section discusses efforts to build awareness, starting with the individual.

A. PRIORITIES

Ventura Fire Department's Fire Prevention Division is responsible for developing and implementing programs and policies that prevent or reduce the magnitude of emergency occurrences, such as loss of property and life, personal injury or environmental damage. Program and policy effectiveness rely on resident awareness and motivation to act, underscoring the importance of community engagement and education. Ventura Fire Department partners with mission-oriented organizations and public agencies to extend their reach. This includes the grassroots, community-led organization, Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council (VRFSC), which provides myriad outreach and engagement opportunities to the public. VRFSC educates the public, fosters collaboration, and works to prepare the city in advance of wildfire events.

Approach: Equity, Consistency, and Impact

The City of Ventura is home to a diverse population, with 26% of the population speaking a language other than English.[10] Ventura Fire strives to foster a more inclusive community through initiatives like multi-lingual communications materials, annual outreach initiatives, and consistent messaging around wildfire safety in Ventura. Consistency of messaging is critical to achieve long-term goals because residents need clarity regarding what is being asked of them. To this end, Ventura Fire refers residents to reputable resources which align with local, county, and state messaging. Additionally, Ventura Fire and mission-oriented partner organizations prioritize education that makes an impact by sharing personalized, relevant, accurate, and memorable information.

Topics: Home Hardening and Defensible Space

As discussed in the following sections, home hardening (structural hardening) and defensible space are effective strategies/tactics for increasing the resilience of homes, even if firefighters are unable to physically defend specific homes. Education on home hardening and defensible space is critically important for community members that are often unfamiliar with the purpose and steps required to implement the practices on their own homes. It is a priority to provide information and interpretation on these topics to empower residents to take proactive measures to protect their homes and properties.

[10] City of Ventura Community Profile – 2021
https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/26372/2021-03-16_Item-3_Community-Profile-031121-Draft

B. Completed and / or ongoing Projects

- **Ventura Fire Department Fire Hazard Reduction Program**: This program requires property owners in High and Very High hazard zones to complete brush management by June 1 each year, as outlined in the City's Fire Code. Removing hazardous vegetation improves firefighter and public safety while increasing the ability to defend homes during a wildfire. https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/FHRP

- **Translation Services:** To create a more inclusive community, materials and meetings are to be presented in multiple languages. Translation services are utilized so that plans and updates can be shared equitably throughout Ventura.

- **Ventura City Emergency Services' Annual Outreach**: The City Emergency Services' annual outreach plan includes a press release, printed mailers to 6,500 property owners, printed reminder postcards to those same property owners, consistent social media and email marketing messaging, website content, billboard ads, posters printed and shared in the downtown area, community council presentations, video production, and print brochures. Additionally, beginning in 2021, all materials available are in English and Spanish. Translation costs were paid for through the City's Communications Team.

- **Fire Prevention Week:** Fire Prevention Week is celebrated throughout North America every October and is the oldest U.S. public health observance on record. For more than 100 years, Fire Prevention Week has worked to educate people about the risk of home fires and ways to minimize them.

- **Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council Outreach Events:** VRFSC maintains an active presence at community events to provide information and increase public safety/preparedness for wildfire events. VRFSC provides informational handouts for the public and an email list sign-up sheet for the public to receive project and workshop information. Outreach includes hosting booths at community events such as county fairs, block parties, farmer's markets, etc. Each year at the Ventura County Fair, Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council provides a wildfire safety exhibit and a featured presentation on "Fire Safety Day".

- **Home Hardening & Defensible Space Workshops**: Educational workshops, provided by VRFSC, VFD, and other partners, are critical for explaining wildfire resilience concepts to community members and creating actionable steps which empower residents to take proactive measures to protect their homes and properties.

- **Home Ignition Zone Assessments:** The Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council and Ventura County Wildfire Collaborative partners provide free, educational Home Ignition Zone Assessments to residents throughout Ventura County, assisting them by identifying specific structural and landscaping vulnerabilities that could potentially threaten their homes during a wildfire and recommending mitigation measures to harden their homes against ember intrusion. https://venturafiresafe.org/home-wildfire-assessments/

C. Future Projects

- Continue to educate the public about the potential hazard of barrancas within the city
    - Expand barranca closures during red flag warnings

- Conduct outreach and education related to securing landowner agreements to clear barrancas throughout the city

- Conduct outreach and education related to securing landowner agreements to clear backyard vegetation adjacent to Grant Park.

D. CWPP Community Engagement and Public Input

Overview

Community engagement is a critical component of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan process. Input from residents, stakeholders, and partner agencies helps ensure that the plan reflects local priorities, increases public awareness, and supports implementation of wildfire risk reduction strategies.

To inform the City of Ventura CWPP, the Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council, in partnership with the Ventura Fire Department and the City's Public Information Office, conducted a multi-faceted outreach effort. This effort included a public questionnaire and in-person workshops designed to gather community input on wildfire risk, preparedness, and potential project opportunities.

Outreach Methods

Method	**Description**	**Participation**
Community Questionnaire	Distributed via email (including Firewise Communities and VRFSC newsletter), agency websites, and social media platforms	100+ responses
Community Workshop #1	Ventura City Hall – February 18, 2026	~30 attendees
Community Workshop #2	Ventura Fire Department Headquarters – February 26, 2026	~30 attendees
Partner/Agency Coordination	Ventura Fire Department and CWPP Technical Advisory Group	~15 representatives

Workshop Format

Two public workshops were conducted to gather input on wildfire risk reduction strategies. Each workshop included presentations from Ventura Fire Chief Kris McDonald and Fire Marshal Brett Reed, as well as participation from members of the CWPP Technical Advisory Group.

Following presentations, participants rotated through topic-based stations corresponding to key CWPP categories:

- Fuels Reduction
- Defensible Space
- Community Engagement
- Evacuation and Access
- Structural Hardening

- Other Priorities

At each station, participants provided project ideas, identified local concerns, and shared knowledge of wildfire risks and community needs. While workshop attendance was moderate, participants were engaged and provided detailed and constructive input across all topic areas.

Key Themes from Community Input

Community input from the questionnaire and workshops was reviewed and consolidated into key themes. Common priorities identified by participants included:

- **Community Engagement:** Interest in expanding wildfire education programs in elementary and middle schools, along with ongoing annual outreach efforts such as mailers and public information campaigns
- **Evacuation Planning:** Increased interest in distribution of, and education about, the City's detailed emergency evacuation plans
- **Fuels Treatment:** Strong support for expanding fuels reduction efforts, particularly in and around the WUI
- **Defensible Space:** Emphasis on increasing the prevalence of defensible space, including enhanced requirements and maintenance in high-risk areas such as barrancas
- **Structural Hardening:** Interest in programs that reduce financial and logistical barriers to home hardening, including incentives and assistance programs

These themes reflect a community interest in both individual property-level mitigation measures and broader, community-scale wildfire risk reduction strategies.

Integration of Public Input

Community input played an important role in shaping the CWPP project list. Suggestions gathered through the questionnaire and workshops were compiled and evaluated by the Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council, Ventura Fire Department, and CWPP Technical Advisory Group.

Ideas were assessed based on:

- Feasibility and cost-effectiveness
- Alignment with CAL FIRE's CWPP goals and wildfire risk reduction priorities
- Consistency with agency roles and authorities
- Potential to reduce wildfire risk at both parcel and community scales

Selected concepts were incorporated into project recommendations. A summary of community generated ideas is included in Appendix B.

Summary

The outreach process demonstrated productive community engagement and provided valuable insight into local priorities related to wildfire risk reduction. While participation levels varied, the input received—combined with agency expertise—helped inform a CWPP that is both community-informed and actionable.

SECTION III: STRUCTURAL HARDENING

Long before a wildfire event, there are numerous steps that residents can take to protect their homes and other structures. This section describes some of those efforts.

A. PRIORITIES

The fire department will not always be available to protect homes or structures during a WUI fire or urban conflagration. With thousands of structures in High or Very High fire hazard severity zones, there is often not enough fire personnel or equipment to defend each structure or value. In extreme wildfire environments such as Santa Ana wind events, it is sometimes impossible to make an effective defensive stand against a fire. Thus, structures and values must be hardened to more effectively withstand wildfire conditions such as ember cast or excessive radiant heat.

HOMEOWNER MEASURES TO REDUCE STRUCTURE IGNITABILITY

Research indicates the potential for structure ignitions during wildfires depend on a structure's construction and characteristics of fuel sources within zero to 100 feet of a home. Fuel sources within the first 30 feet adjacent to a home are the most important. The term structural hardening means that a home is less-vulnerable to burning embers and heat from fire. Fire hardened structures enhance protection at a structure's most-vulnerable areas using proven building materials and/or techniques to resist ignition.

In order to ensure proper structural hardening for future construction on homes the following actions can be taken throughout the fire severity zones within Ventura city. More information on these actions is available at https://venturafiresafe.org/homehardening/

ROOFS

Los Angeles and Ventura counties prohibit all wood roofs in Very High fire hazard severity zones. All new roofs need to be Class A construction materials, with non-Combustible coverings like tile, metal, or concrete with proper underlayment and ceiling below. Openings in roofing materials, such as the open ends of barrel tiles, should be plugged to prevent ember entry and debris accumulation. Regardless of the type of roof, keep it free of birds' nests, fallen leaves, needles and branches.

EAVES

Residents should be vigilant about keeping all flammable materials at least 10 feet away from the home. Minimize any potential heat or flame that can work its way up a wall and get trapped under the eaves. The under-eave area of a house is often overlooked when addressing vulnerabilities that can cause damage or loss during a wildfire. Neglecting this structural component increases susceptibility to heat from flames, which can become trapped, allowing fire to spread through attic vents and into the attic. Embers lodged in gaps between blocking and joists can result in ignition and fire entry into the attic. Homeowners should utilize Soffit-Eave Construction, which encloses the underside of sloped or flat-roof overhangs, and is best for homes in High or Very High fire hazard zones. With open eaves, use a sealant (such as caulking) to cover gaps, or enclose the underside of the roof overhangs.

VENTS

Ventilated attic spaces have openings in two locations. Inlet air comes from vents located in the under-eave area at the edge of the roof. Exiting air leaves through vents located on the roof or at the gable ends of your home. If your home is built over a crawl space, you will typically have vents on each face of your home to provide cross-ventilation. Experiments demonstrate that regardless of whether a vent has an inlet or outlet function, when wind blows against its face, it is an inlet vent. Therefore, any vented opening on your home should be prepared to resist the entry of embers.

Windblown embers can enter attics and crawl spaces through vents. Installing the recommended mesh screening and eliminating storage is critical to reducing building ignition during a wildfire. For (under-eave) inlet vents, opt for a soffit eave design. IBHS research demonstrates that gable end vents and other vent openings are vulnerable to wind-blown embers when the face of the vent is perpendicular to the wind flow, while embers are less likely to pass through vents with a face that is parallel to the wind flow. Therefore, soffit-eave construction is preferred to open eaves. For outlet vents, opt for a ridge that is rated to resist wind driven rain. These vents have an external baffle at the vent inlet and have been approved for use by the California Office of the State Fire Marshal. Turbine vents also help keep embers out, but you should attach a piece of 1/8-inch mesh to the bottom of the roof sheathing at the opening of the vent.

EXTERIOR WALLS AND SIDING

Siding can be vulnerable for two reasons. First, if ignited, combustible siding can provide a path for flames to reach other vulnerable components of your home, such as a window or the under-eave area. Second, if penetrated, a horizontal or vertical lap joint will provide access for flames to enter the structure. Homeowners with combustible siding should incorporate a noncombustible or low-combustible zone next to your home to reduce the vulnerability of your siding. Replacing existing siding can be expensive, and there are some less-expensive options such as the use of metal flashing. Paying careful attention to the vegetation management in the area immediately adjacent to your home will enhance the siding’s protection regardless of the material.

WINDOWS, SKYLIGHTS, DOORS

Heat from a wildfire can cause windows to break even before the home is on fire. This allows embers to enter and start fires inside the home. Single-paned and large windows are particularly vulnerable. If possible, homeowners should install dual-paned windows with one pane of tempered glass to reduce the chance of breakage in a fire. Homeowners can also install either plastic-clad fiberglass or metal screening to reduce radiant heat exposure to the glass and protect against ember entry, but neither will protect against flames. Overall, know local conditions and consider limiting the size and number of windows that face large areas of vegetation or the direction a wildfire would most likely be coming from.

BALCONIES AND DECKS

Attached balconies and decks can potentially spread fire to the house when ignited. Combustible material should not be stored beneath decks. Routinely remove debris that accumulates between deck board gaps and debris that can accumulate at the intersection between the deck and the house. If the deck is a non-fire-retardant treated softwood deck, consider removing and replacing deck boards within a few feet of the house. When building new decks, select deck boards that comply with the California

Building Code Requirements. If using wood joists, cover the top and part of the sides with a foil-faced bitumen tape product.

RAIN GUTTERS

Many checklists suggest replacing vinyl gutters with metal gutters. Debris in any gutter will be readily ignited by embers, and the best solution is to minimize the accumulation of debris in the gutter. Homeowners should remove tree branches that overhang a roof and remove any dead vegetation, including branches, within the home's defensible space. Homeowners should also clean gutters and roof areas where debris collects and make it a part of an annual summer fire season preparedness measure. Inspect the roof edge to determine if a metal drip edge is installed or included as part of your gutter. Some metal gutters have an integral flashing piece that serves the function of a stand-alone drip edge. If a drip edge is not present, install one. This feature will minimize the entry of embers into a soffit-eave construction by blocking the small gap that can exist between the edge of the roof sheathing and the top of the fascia.

RETROFITTING A STRUCTURE

While it is easier to construct a new structure to a fire hardened standard, it is also possible to improve an existing structure's resistance to wildfire. Hardening structure features are mandatory for new construction, yet these same suggestions apply for remodeling or improving a home's fire safety. The three most effective locations to target for structural hardening are roofs, vents and decks. Retrofitting a structure with ignition-resistant materials in these three areas and rigorously maintaining defensible space will significantly enhance a structure's protection.

B. Completed and / or ongoing Projects

- Ongoing initiatives to encourage annual and seasonal clearing around residential structures
- Wildfire-related and other code enforcement building inspections for new construction in the city
- Ongoing code enforcement/reporting of dangerous fire hazards. These reports are investigated by both Code Enforcement and the Fire Department to be cleared/mitigated where appropriate.

C. Future Projects

- Enact a home hardening retrofit assistance program to encourage and help residents harden their homes against ember intrusion.
    - Create an incentive program through reimbursement/funding assistance, or tax incentives
- Harden Ventura Parks Department facilities like the Westpark Community Center, Ventura Avenue Adult Center, and Ventura Aquatic Center
- Harden the structure and enact wildfire-resilient and code-compliant landscaping at Ventura Fire Department's Station 1

SECTION IV: DEFENSIBLE SPACE

Creating a buffer between buildings and the grass, trees, shrubs, and other wildland areas surrounding it are essential to improving survivability. This section looks at efforts to build this key layer of protection.

A. PRIORITIES

Defensible space, coupled with home hardening, is essential in improving a structure's resilience to wildfire. Defensible space is the buffer between a structure and its surrounding fuels. This space helps slow or stop the spread of wildfire, helping protect homes from catching fire from flame contact or radiant heat. Proper defensible space also provides firefighters with a safe area to work from and to defend your home.

Communities protect life and property by removing flammable brush, reducing vegetation density, and creating adequate defensible space. This reduction increases firefighter and public safety and improves the Department's ability to protect your property in the event of a fire. VFD encourages communities to maintain a high standard of mitigation work around structures in all areas, regardless of severity zones.

B. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

- **Fire Hazard Reduction Program (FHRP):** In accordance with Appendix Q of the City of Ventura's Fire Code, all City of Ventura property owners whose properties are in a Very High or High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, are required to perform fire hazard reduction brush clearance by June 1. The Ventura Fire Department conducts defensible space inspections and other state mandated inspections. If abatement has been completed no further action will be necessary. If a fire hazard is found, the property owner will be notified.

- City of Ventura and Ventura County Fire Department enforce FHRP standards including clearing and reducing hazardous vegetation to 100 feet from a structure.
    - *More information on the FHRP may be found in the "Firefighting Resources" section at the end of the Ventura Community Overview.*

- Free Residential Brush Clearance: Non-profit organizations, including the C.R.E.W. and Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council, offer application-based residential brush clearance. These no-cost services are provided throughout Ventura County and the City of Ventura as funding permits.

C. FUTURE PROJECTS

- Seek grants for the Ventura Fire Department to reduce the standing fuel hazard of palm trees in residential neighborhoods that border city limits/natural vegetation areas.

- Conduct study on Fire Department's ability to enforce policy/standard regarding species separation at property lines, potentially supporting such actions with low-cost disposal affordances; including pruning back for 8-10 ft minimum distances from all tree components to any other combustible fuel.

- Conduct study on Fire Department's ability to enforce policy/standard regarding vertical clearance on all vegetation to ensure the clearance of dead vegetation.

- Identify opportunities for increasing the Fire Department's headcount of FHRP inspectors.

- Create and maintain strategic fuel breaks in identified threat zones in alignment of fire risks based on topography, fuel models, and fire history.
    - Besides averting potential ground and aerial ignition sources, stronger anchor points for suppression tactics will emerge.

- Continue collaboration with Ventura County Fire to enhance and maintain ridgeline fuel breaks in the State Responsibility Area around the city.

- Expand roadside fuel reduction work along established evacuation routes
    - Expand fuel reduction work and maintenance along Foothill Road
    - Expand fuel reduction work and maintenance on roads through Grant Park

- Institute defensible space guidelines to match CAL FIRE's parameters:
    - For topography of 20-40 percent slope- increase defensible space buffers to 150 ft.
    - For topography of 40+ percent - increase defensible space buffers to 200–300 ft based on various characteristics of the particular land mass.

- Identify and expand fire protection ordinances for threat areas outside of published Fire Hazard Severity Zones.
    - (example: Barrancas less than 100 ft from structures)

- Target other specific community-wide defensible space increases (beyond 100 feet)

- Continue outreach and collaboration with communities adjacent to city parks/properties, wildland, or other large parcels

- Consider expanding defensible space regulations to be 350 feet from Ventura Parks Department structures

- Quarterly or semi-annual meetings with task force/ work group to assess priorities and goals

SECTION V: FUELS TREATMENT

Fuels are combustible materials such as grass, leaves, plants, shrubs, and trees that feed flames. This section describes efforts to treat and manage these materials in the community.

A. PRIORITIES

Fuels treatments manage vegetation at a broad scale to reduce wildfire intensity; slow fire spread and establish effective defensible space. Strategic reduction of hazardous fuels can improve firefighter access, reduce ember cast, and lessen the risk of extreme fire behavior during wind-driven events. When implemented in coordination with defensible space and home hardening, fuel reduction helps protect communities by increasing the effectiveness of suppression efforts and reducing risk to life, property, and critical infrastructure. CAL FIRE's website provides helpful information on Fuels Treatments, including existing methods and treatment data.

B. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

- All new tree plantings in the Ventura Hills above Foothill Rd. are subject to the County/City Prohibited Plant List due to wildfire concerns.
- Large-scale fuel breaks along the city WUI are maintained by large landowners in the area (i.e. R.A. Atmore & Sons).
- Ventura Fire continues to contract with regional CAL FIRE hand crews to do vegetation and fuel management work in specific areas.
- Clark Barranca's confluence with the Santa Clara River has been treated for Arundo removal, with continued maintenance required.
- Ventura Fire maintains an internal database of city-owned and easement-affected properties in the High or Very High FHSZ
- Removal of Arundo in the Ventura River Watershed is planned through state-funding programs awarded to Ventura County Resource Conservation District and other regional non-profits.

C. Future Projects

- Continued Arundo removal from the Santa Clara River and its adjacent lands
- Continued Arundo removal from the Ventura River and its adjacent lands
- Collaborate with different landowners and entities to expedite fuels work in and around barrancas
    - Secure landowner agreements to do work on the barranca between the Colina Vista and Clearpoint neighborhoods.
    - Increase understory clearance in Harmon barranca between Bristol and Foothill Road
- Sustain other fuels management work at significant infrastructure and watershed points to provide appropriate defensible space areas.
- Continue collaboration for cooperative removal, disposal and continued maintenance of hazardous fuels in private properties on an ongoing basis.
- Minimize roadside fuels at ingress/egress points and emergency roads established for first responders
    - Consider Hilltop Drive, Arroyo Verde Park Road, Foothill Road, and Cedar Street, among other potential locations
- Identify and reduce risks created by potential aerial fuels (i.e. unseparated Tree Crowns, dead palm fronds, overgrown species like bamboo, etc.)
- Apply for other fuel reduction grant funding pursuant to the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, where support for private &/or public lands is deemed appropriate

SECTION VI: EVACUATION PLANNING

Identifying key corridors in and out of a community – as well as temporary safe refuge areas – is essential to being prepared for evacuation. This section provides an overview of wildfire-related information from the City of Ventura's Emergency Evacuation plan.

A. OVERVIEW

Evacuation planning is a dynamic process that must account for local geography, infrastructure constraints, population distribution, and hazard-specific risk. Recognizing these factors, the Ventura Police Department and the City's Emergency Services Division collaborated with Ventura Fire Department, Ventura County Office of Emergency Services, other City departments, outside consultants, and community members to develop the City of Ventura Emergency Evacuation Plan, which was adopted by the Ventura City Council in July 2024.

Readers are encouraged to visit the city's emergency evacuation page:
https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/2562/Emergency-Evacuation-Plan

B. DETAILS

The following details briefly summarize the City's Emergency Evacuation Plan:

Citywide evacuation modeling and wildfire risk analysis indicate that historical fire spread and areas of highest fire intensity are most likely to occur from the north. As a result, the northwestern and northern WUI areas of the city are considered to be at the greatest wildfire evacuation risk. In a major wildfire scenario, it is estimated that approximately 13 percent of the City's population could be impacted, potentially requiring the evacuation of up to 15,000 residents.

Ventura's evacuation capacity is influenced by its coastal location and limited roadway connectivity, particularly in beach and harbor areas. Major arterial routes that would serve as primary evacuation corridors include Thompson Boulevard, Santa Clara Street, Main Street, Telegraph Road, Loma Vista Road, Victoria Avenue, and Day Road. Harbor Boulevard provides north–south access along the coastline; however, eastbound evacuation from beach areas is constrained to a limited number of connectors, including Olivas Park Drive, Seaward Avenue, Sanjon Road, California Street, and Figueroa Street. These constraints underscore the importance of early evacuation messaging, phased evacuations, and corridor management during wildfire incidents.

The Ventura Police Department's Emergency Evacuation Plan establishes designated evacuation corridors, identifies potential choke points, and provides operational guidance for law enforcement and emergency managers during large-scale evacuations. The plan emphasizes coordination with fire agencies, real-time traffic management, and clear public communication to support safe and orderly evacuations under rapidly changing conditions.

For the purposes of this Community Wildfire Protection Plan, evacuation planning is treated as a critical component of wildfire risk mitigation, particularly for WUI neighborhoods with limited ingress and egress. A complete set of evacuation corridor maps and detailed operational guidance from the City of Ventura Emergency Evacuation Plan can be found on the city's emergency evacuation webpage:

https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/2562/Emergency-Evacuation-Plan

For up to date information on wildfire evacuation information, residents should consult the Ventura County Office of Emergency Services resources, including VCEmergency.com, VCAlert, and the Ventura County Incident Information Line: **805-465-6650.** More information on these resources can be found in the 'Fire Protection Programs' section.

Additionally, Ventura County OES issues the following guidance for evacuation preparedness:

Advanced planning is a critical component of personal preparedness. It is essential that residents, including those with access or functional needs, take an active role in planning and preparedness, including identifying the support networks, transportation options, and evacuation plans most applicable to their unique circumstances that they will enact well in advance of an incident.

Residents should make plans to ensure they can safely leave their residence when conditions deteriorate and do not rely on assistance from public safety personnel. While law enforcement and fire personnel will do everything within their power to assist residents who may require help evacuating when conditions allow, it is not realistic or responsible to assume they have the duty, resources, or capacity to evacuate every resident from their home during an emergency. Community safety depends on shared responsibility, as the scale and speed of most emergencies will exceed available public safety resources.

SECTION VII: OTHER MITIGATION & PREPAREDNESS PROJECTS

There are countless ways that communities can act to protect themselves ahead of wildfires. This section details additional past, current and future efforts underway that were not previously mentioned.

A. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

- Ventura Water installed backup generators at key water system facilities—such as pump stations and treatment infrastructure—to ensure continued water delivery during power outages caused by wildfires or other emergencies. These generators help maintain water supply and pressure for public safety needs, including firefighting and essential domestic use, when the electrical grid is compromised.

B. FUTURE PROJECTS

- California Assembly Bill 367 (AB 367) requires water suppliers in Ventura County that serve more than 20 homes in High or Very High fire hazard severity zones to have backup energy sources that can quickly provide power to wells and pumps and sustain water delivery for at least 24 hours during power outages, with specific activation timeframes and capabilities outlined for the backup systems. The law also includes annual inspections of critical infrastructure, planning and coordination with emergency services, and reporting requirements after major fire events to improve resiliency of water systems during wildfire-related outages.

SECTION VIII: SIGNATURES

This plan must be approved by the following key parties: the local Fire Safe Council president, the chief of the primary responding fire agency and chair of the CWPP review committee. This section includes these signoffs.

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan, as developed for the City of Ventura:

- Was collaboratively developed and meets the intent of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) in emphasizing the need for agencies to work collaboratively with communities in developing hazardous fuel reduction projects, and places priority on treatment areas identified by communities themselves in a CWPP. Interested parties and federal land management agencies in the vicinity of this CWPP have been consulted.
- Identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommends the types and methods of treatment that will protect areas within this CWPP.
- Recommends measures to reduce ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.
- Is intended for use as a planning and assessment tool only, utilizing a compilation of community issues/goals and projected fire mitigation strategies. The CWPP is not to be construed as indicative of project "activity" as defined under the "Community Guide to the California Environmental Quality Act, Chapter Three, Projects Subject to CEQA." Per the Community Guide, Section 3.1.1, "CEQA only applies to public agency decisions to approve, or actions to carry out, a discretionary project." Any actual project activities meeting this definition of project activity and undertaken by the CWPP participants or agencies listed shall meet with local, state, and federal environmental compliance requirements.
- Assists and encourages compliance with current county and state fire code standards.

X Kris McDonald (Jul 31, 2026 09:54:09 PDT)

Kris McDonald
Ventura Fire Department Chief

31/07/2026

Date

X Bill Ayub
Bill Ayub (Aug 2, 2026 13:47:49 MDT)

Bill Ayub
Ventura City Manager

02/08/2026

Date

X Michael LaPlant

Mike Laplant
President, Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council

31/07/2026

Date

The San Luis Obispo CAL FIRE Unit Chief has final signing authority on CWPPs in Ventura County. The signature below attests that the standards listed in the section above and the content of this Community Wildfire Protection Plan are proposed to be met and mutually accepted.

X John Owens (Jul 31, 2026 10:49:58 PDT)

John Owens
Unit Chief, CAL FIRE San Luis Obispo

31/07/2026

Date

SECTION IX: APPENDICES

This section includes important additional information that complements other portions of the plan.

APPENDIX A: TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This CWPP was developed for the community of Ventura, through a series of community meetings. The Fire Safe Council and Agency members who contributed to the document include the following:

Agency Representatives

Brett Reed, City Fire Marshal

Emily Ayala, Senior Communications Specialist, City of Ventura Police and Fire Departments

Technical Advisory Group Representatives

Evert (Evie) Vermeer, Wildfire Planning Specialist & CWPP Author (VRFSC)

Maruja Clensay, Assistant Director of Community Development

Mack Douglass, Emergency Services Manager

Don Taylor, Systems Analyst II (Information Technology)

Marcus Klatt, Business Intelligence Supervisor (Information Technology)

Mary Joyce Ivers, Deputy Public Works Director

Peter Shellenbarger, Environmental Services Supervisor

Heather Melton, Parks Division Manager

Luis Martinez, Fire Prevention Supervisor

David Endaya, Fire Chief (since retired)

Meetings Log:

5/23/25: Initial Technical Advisory Group background meeting. Primary tasks included a background presentation, scoping of work requirements, and assigning responsibilities.

9/12/25: Follow up and CWPP check-in meeting. Primary tasks included presenting initial CWPP draft materials, conducting reviews, aggregating feedback, and scheduling individual meetings.

The technical advisory group process included several other individual meetings with advisory group members, including approximately ten with Brett Reed, Luis Martinez, and Emily Ayala.

Appendix B: Community Outreach and Input Summary

This appendix provides supporting detail for the community engagement process described in Section D of the CWPP Community Engagement and Public Input. It includes the community questionnaire, summary statistics, and a consolidated overview of workshop input.

Information is presented as summarized themes and representative examples rather than an exhaustive list of all responses received.

Overview of Outreach:

Community outreach was conducted to support development of this Community Wildfire Protection Plan and to ensure that community perspectives were incorporated into the planning process. Outreach efforts included a public questionnaire, in-person workshops, and coordination with partner agencies and stakeholders. Feedback gathered through these efforts helped identify community priorities related to wildfire preparedness, evacuation planning, fuels reduction, defensible space, and structural hardening. This appendix provides supporting detail on the outreach process, questionnaire results, and consolidated summaries of community input received during CWPP development.

Workshops:

A. Workshop Description

Two public workshops were held in February 2026 to provide information on the CWPP process and gather community input. Workshops included presentations from Ventura Fire Chief Kris McDonald and Fire Marshal Brett Reed, as well as participation from the CWPP Technical Advisory Group.

Following presentations, participants engaged in facilitated discussions organized by CWPP topic area, including fuels reduction, defensible space, community engagement, evacuation planning, and structural hardening. Participants provided input on local concerns and potential project ideas.

Approximately 30 participants attended each workshop. While attendance was moderate, participants were engaged and provided detailed and constructive input.

B. Workshop Schedule

Workshop	Date & Time	Location
Workshop 1	February 18, 2026 @ 6:00 PM	Ventura City Hall – Community Meeting Room, 501 Poli Street
Workshop 2	February 26, 2026 @ 6:00 PM	Ventura Fire Headquarters – Training Room, 1425 Dowell Drive

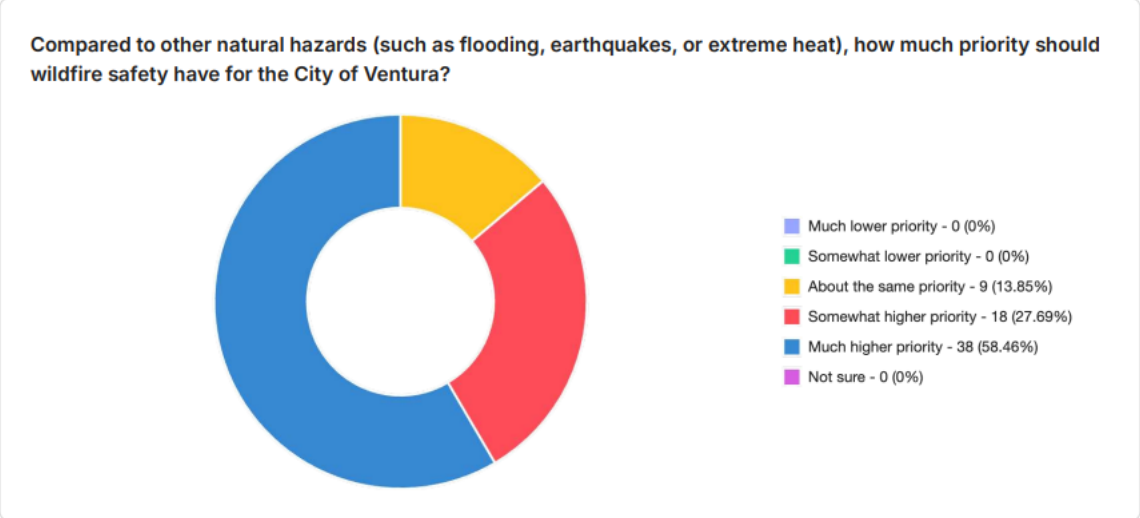
C. Consolidated Workshop Input

Input collected during workshops was reviewed and grouped into thematic categories consistent with CWPP project areas. Representative examples are provided to illustrate the types of suggestions received.

Category	Summary of Input	Representative Examples
Community Engagement	Interest in expanding education and outreach efforts	School-based programs; annual mailers and awareness campaigns
Evacuation Planning	Need for improved awareness of evacuation procedures	Increased distribution of evacuation plans; public education efforts
Fuels Treatment	Strong support for expanded vegetation management	Fuels reduction in WUI and high-risk areas
Defensible Space	Focus on improving defensible space in high-risk locations	Increased maintenance and requirements near barrancas
Structural Hardening	Interest in reducing barriers to home hardening	Incentive or assistance programs for retrofits

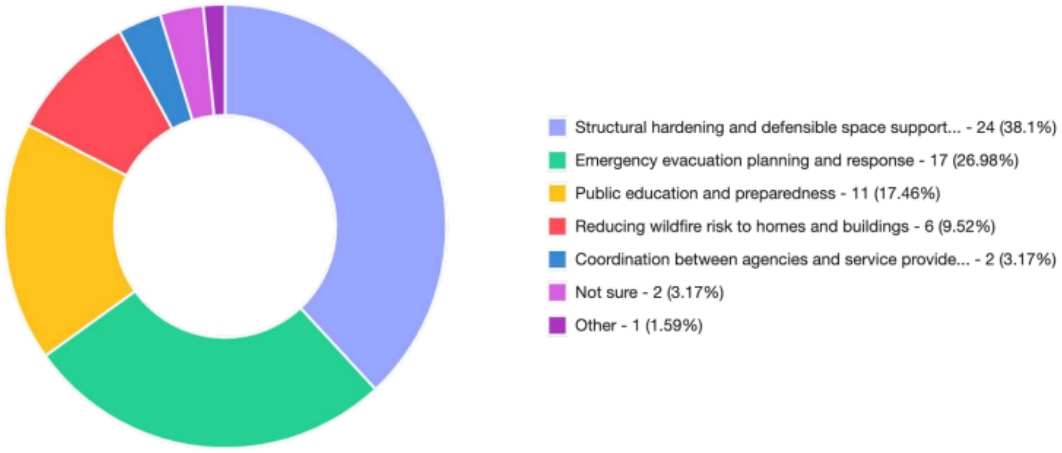
Community Questionnaire:

Closed Questions and Responses:

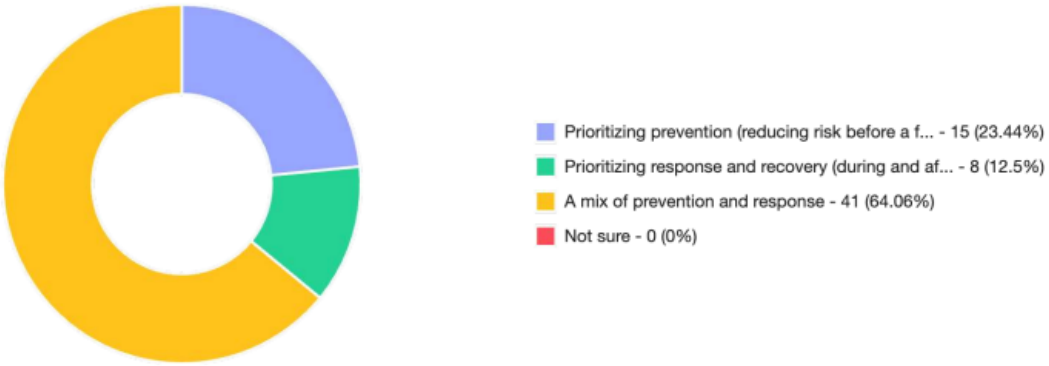


Have you or your household ever been impacted by a wildfire (evacuation, smoke impacts, property damage, etc.)?

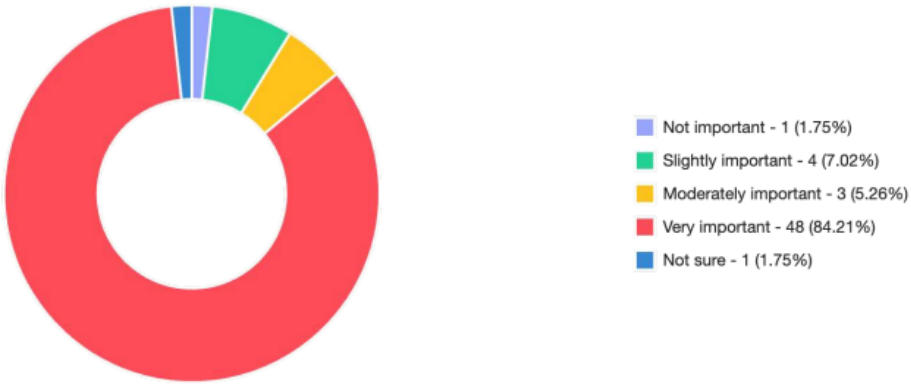
If resources are limited, which one of the following areas should receive the greatest emphasis to improve wildfire safety in Ventura?



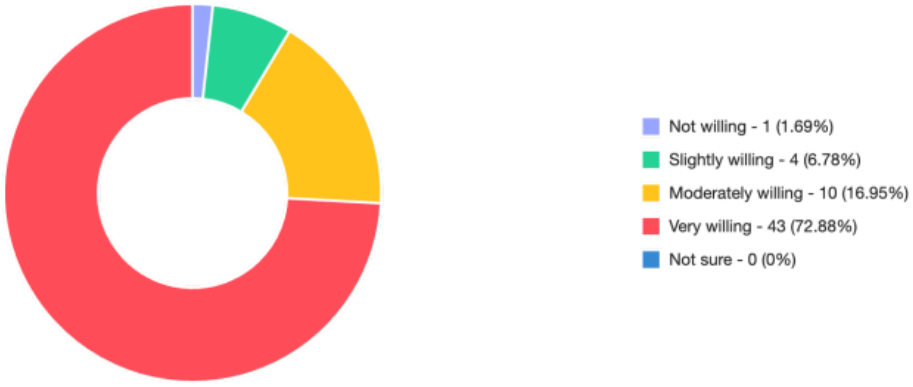
Which approach do you think is most important for improving wildfire safety in Ventura overall?



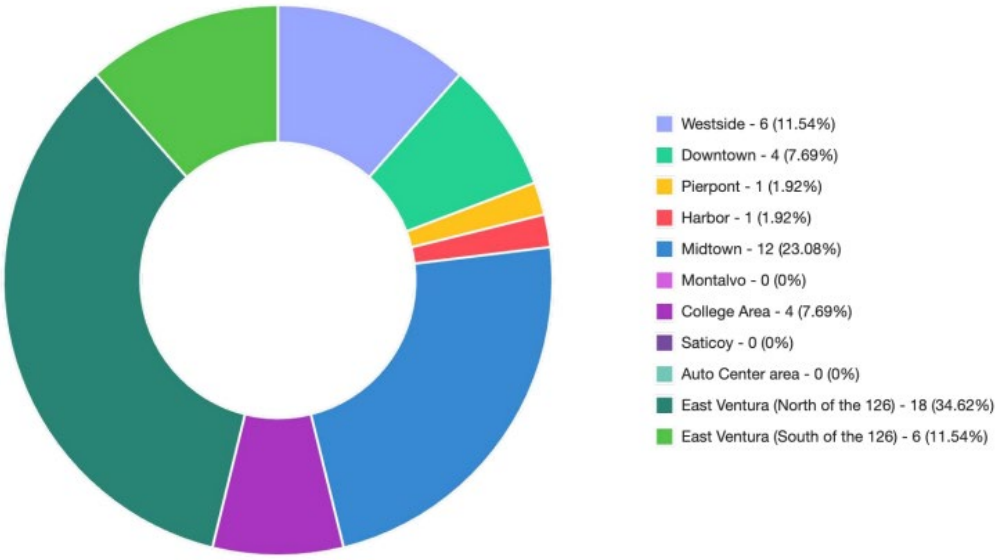
How important is the role of residents and property owners in improving wildfire safety in Ventura?



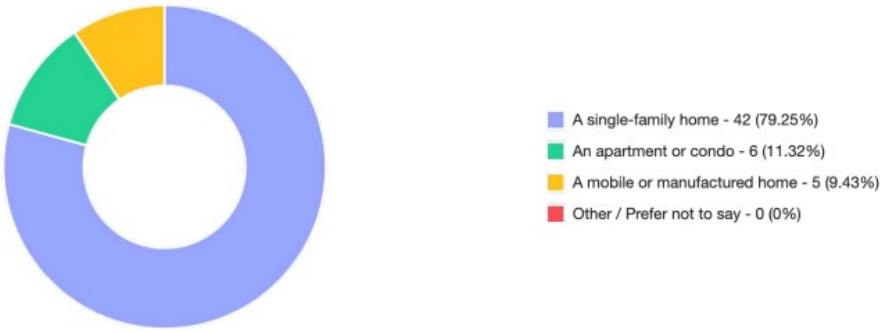
How willing would you be to take personal actions to reduce wildfire risk if provided with clear guidance and resources?



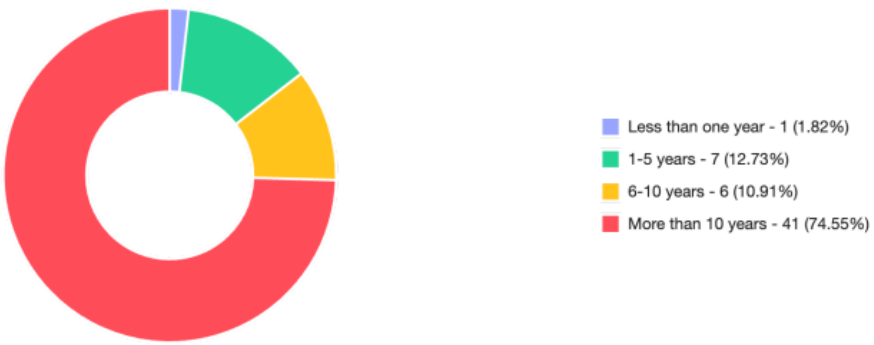
In which area of town do you live?



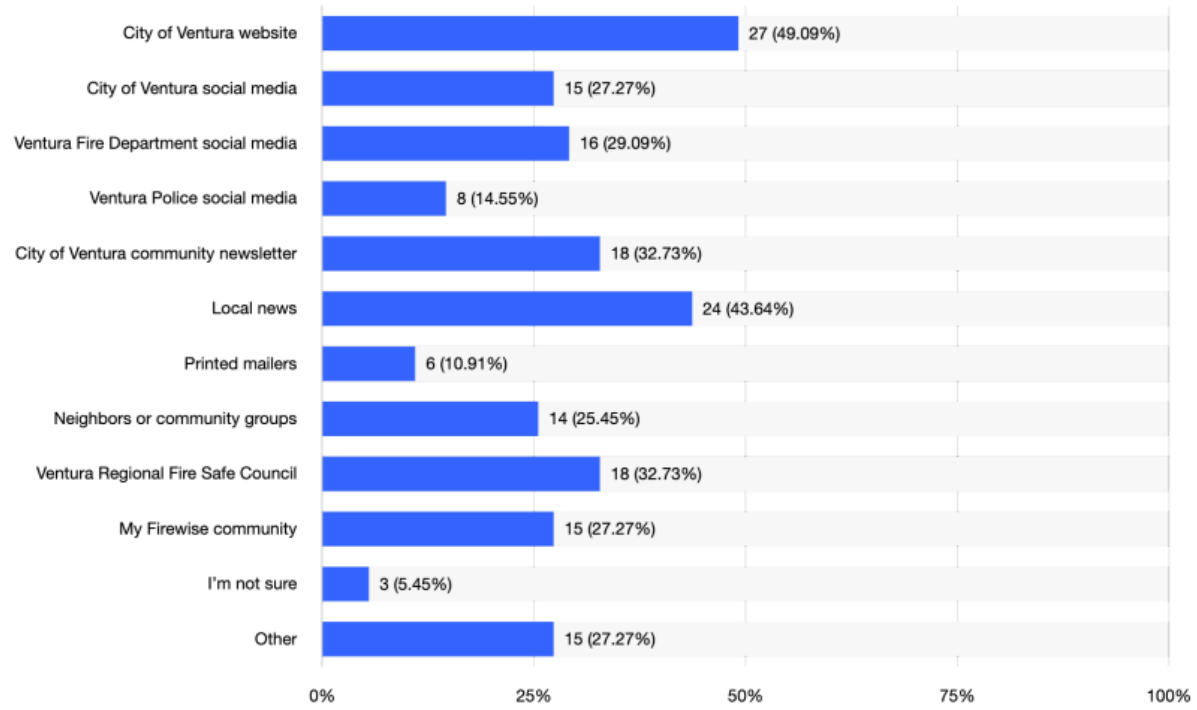
Do you live in:



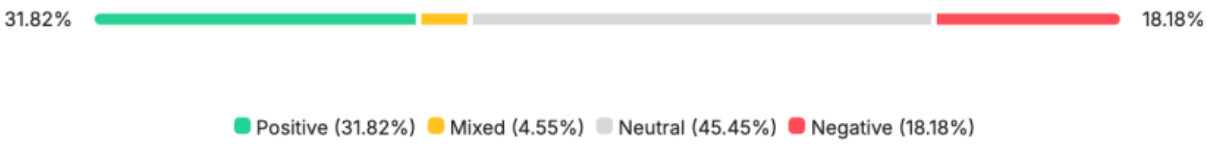
How long have you lived in Ventura?



Where do you currently get information about emergencies or wildfire risk in Ventura? (Select all that apply)



Sentiment Analysis



SUMMARY OF RESPONSES & KEY TAKEAWAYS:

Open-ended responses were reviewed and consolidated into common themes. Similar responses were grouped to identify recurring topics and areas of concern.

Theme	Description
Wildfire Preparedness & Education	Interest in expanded outreach, including school-based programs and ongoing public education campaigns
Evacuation Awareness	Need for increased distribution of and education about evacuation plans and procedures
Fuels Management	Support for increased vegetation management, particularly in high-risk and WUI areas
Defensible Space	Emphasis on improved maintenance and requirements in high-risk areas, including barrancas
Structural Hardening	Interest in reducing financial and logistical barriers to home hardening improvements

D. Methodology and Use of Input

Community input from questionnaires and workshops was compiled and evaluated by the Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council, Ventura Fire Department, and CWPP Technical Advisory Group.

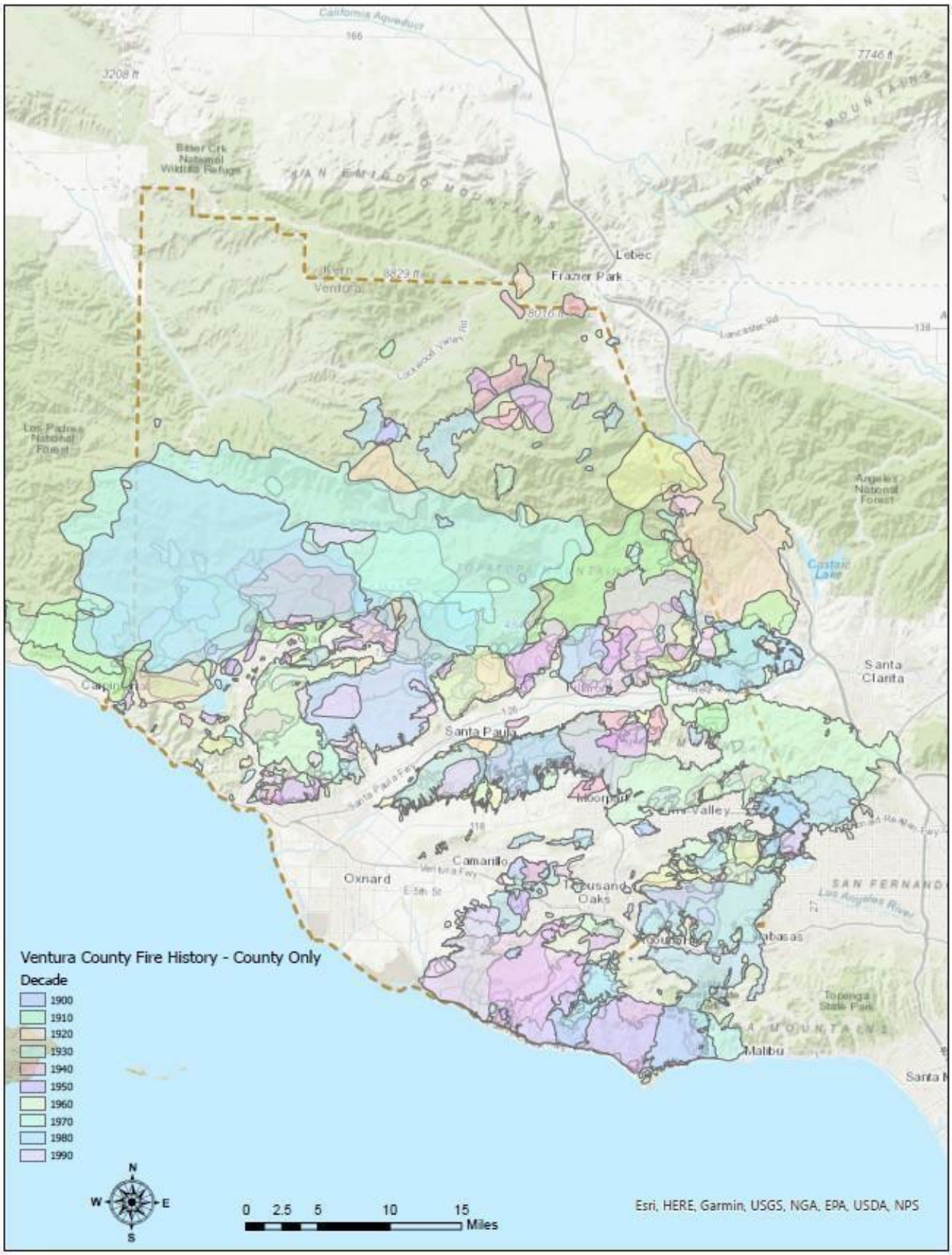
Responses were consolidated into thematic categories, and representative examples were selected to reflect common ideas. Input was considered alongside technical analysis, risk assessment, and agency expertise.

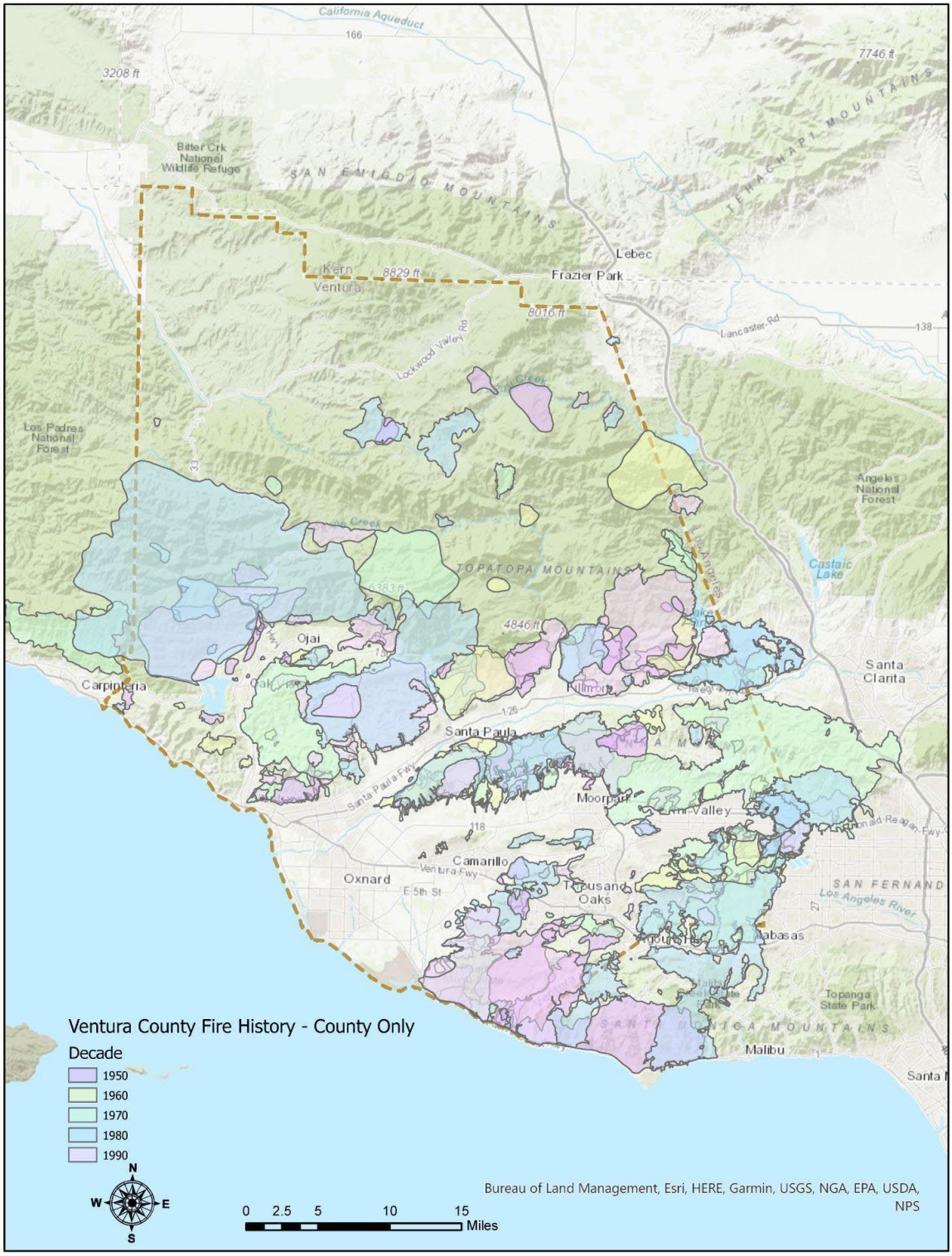
As described in Section D, community input informed the development of CWPP project recommendations but did not solely determine final project selection.

USE OF COMMUNITY FEEDBACK:

Community feedback gathered through the questionnaire and workshops was reviewed alongside technical analysis, risk assessments, and agency expertise during development of the CWPP. Public input helped identify recurring areas of concern, community priorities, and potential opportunities for future wildfire risk reduction efforts. Suggestions and ideas provided by participants were evaluated for their consistency with CWPP objectives, operational feasibility, and alignment with local capabilities and resources. The resulting project recommendations reflect a combination of community perspectives, professional judgment, and long-term wildfire resilience goals.

APPENDIX C: ADDITIONAL MAPS




Ventura County Fire History - County Only
Decade
1950
1960
1970
1980
1990
N
W
E
S
0 2.5 5 10 15
Miles
Bureau of Land Management, Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, NGA, EPA, USDA, NPS
California Aqueduct
3208 ft
7746 ft
Bitter Crk National Wildlife Refuge
SAN EMIGDIO MOUNTAINS
TEHACHAPI MOUNTAINS
Lebec
Frazier Park
Kern
Ventura
8829 ft
8016 ft
Lancaster Rd
Lockwood Valley Rd
Los Padres National Forest
Angeles National Forest
TOPATOPA MOUNTAINS
Castaic Lake
Ojai
Carpinteria
Santa Clarita
Santa Paula
Moorpark
Simi Valley
Camarillo
Oxnard
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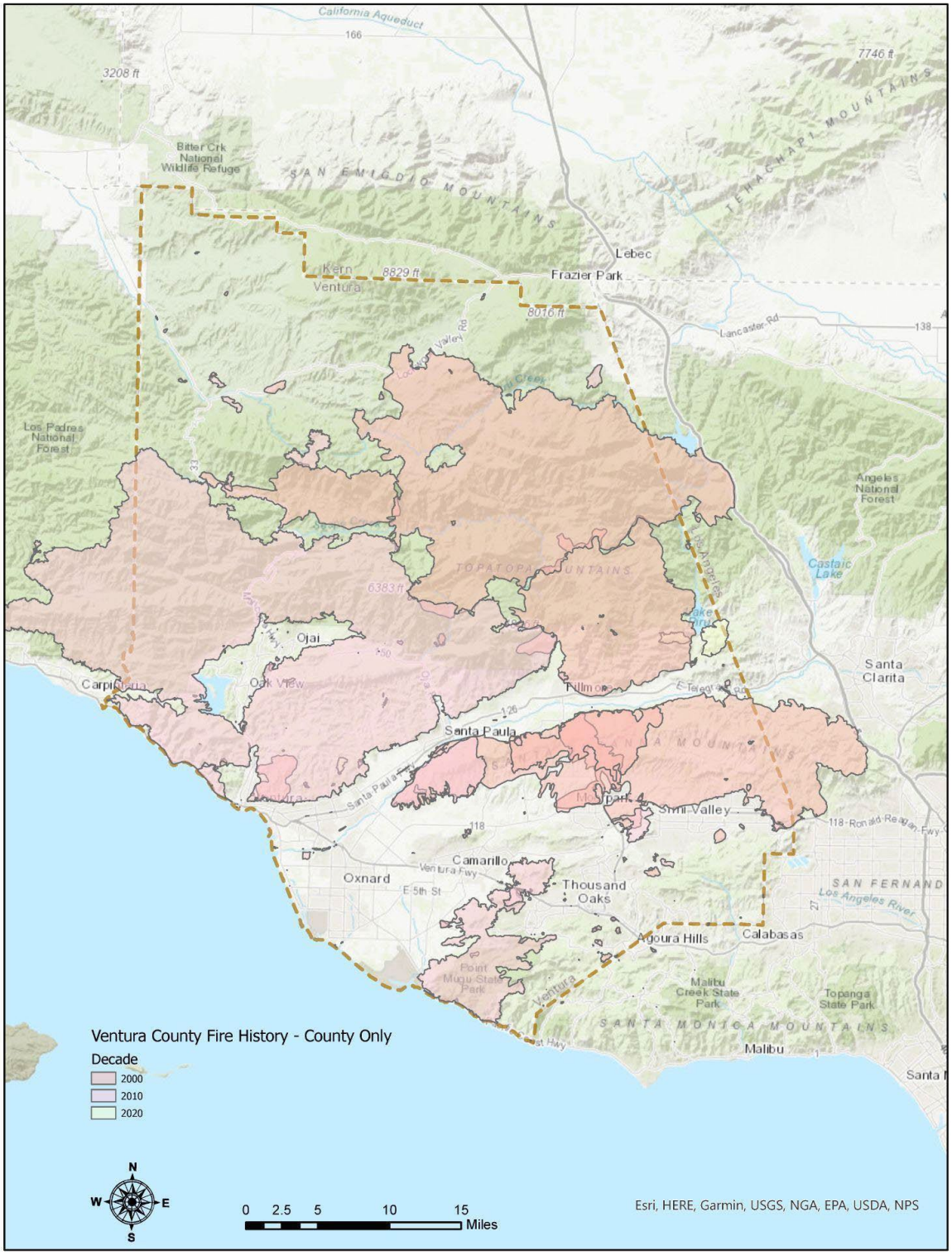
Thousand Oaks
Calabasas
SAN FERNANDO
Los Angeles River
Topanga State Park
SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS
Malibu


Ventura County Fire History - County Only
Decade
2000
2010
2020
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Miles
Esri, HERE, Garmin, USGS, NGA, EPA, USDA, NPS
California Aqueduct
3208 ft
7746 ft
Bitter Crk National Wildlife Refuge
SAN EMIGDIO MOUNTAINS
TEHACHAPI MOUNTAINS
Kern
Ventura
8829 ft
8016 ft
Lebec
Frazier Park
Lancaster Rd
Los Padres National Forest
Angeles National Forest
Castaic Lake
TOPATOPA MOUNTAINS
6383 ft
Ojai
Oak View
Carpinteria
Fillmore
Santa Clarita
Santa Paula
Simi Valley
Camarillo
Oxnard
Thousand Oaks
Agoura Hills
Calabasas
SAN FERNANDO
Los Angeles River
Point Mugu State Park
Malibu Creek State Park
Topanga State Park
SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS
Malibu

City of Ventura CWPP V14

Final Audit Report 2026-08-02

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