

San José Fire Department

The San José Fire Department's core mission is to serve the community by protecting life, property and the environment through prevention and response.



Wildfire Prevention & Preparedness Status Report

Public Safety, Finance, and Strategic Support Committee

June 18, 2026

Item: d(2)

Presented by:

Robert Sapien, Jr., Fire Chief

James Dobson, Assistant Fire Chief

Anthony Ibarra, Fire Captain

One Year Later — Why We're Here



- In May 2025, Fire Captain Anthony Ibarra presented the Wildfire Planning & Preparedness Study Session.
- Today's report covers:
 - Hazard context & risk mapping
 - Operational readiness
 - Collaboration & Firewise communities
 - Outreach campaign
 - SJSU partnership
 - Technology & Legislation



LA Fires —
January 2025

21,000+

acres burned

16,000+

structures destroyed

30

lives lost

Heightened statewide awareness of urban wildfire risk

San José's Wildfire Risk



Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ)



MODERATE

Elevated fuel load & fire weather



HIGH

Significant hazard — WUI overlap

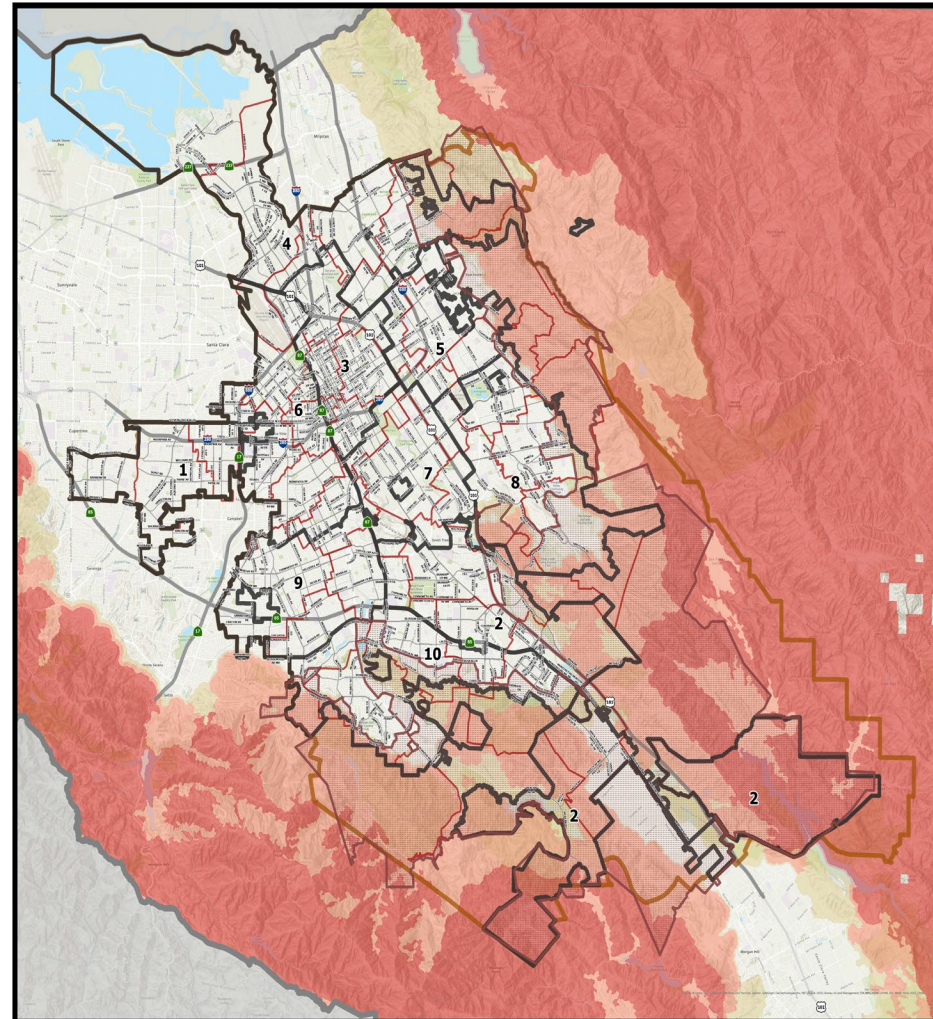


VERY HIGH

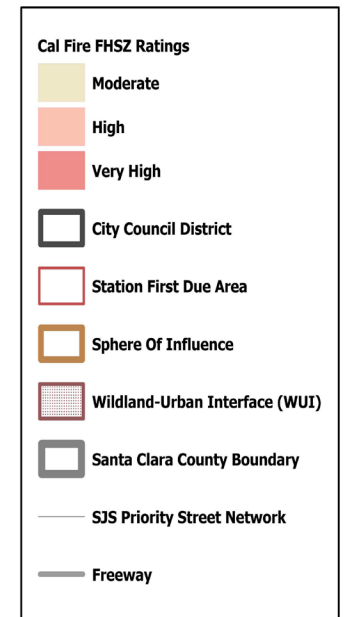
Extreme risk — SRA jurisdiction

City Council Action

June 17, 2025 — Council adopted Ordinance 31213, formally defining San José's WUI to include all Moderate, High, and Very High FHSZs. New construction must comply with California WUI Code.



City of San José:
Council Districts And
Local Fire Hazard
Severity Zones (FHSZs)



Where Fires Are Happening, 2022–2026



Fire Concentration Hot Spots

US-101 / I-680 / I-880 Corridors

Downtown → Alum Rock → Capitol Expressway

Story Road & South San José

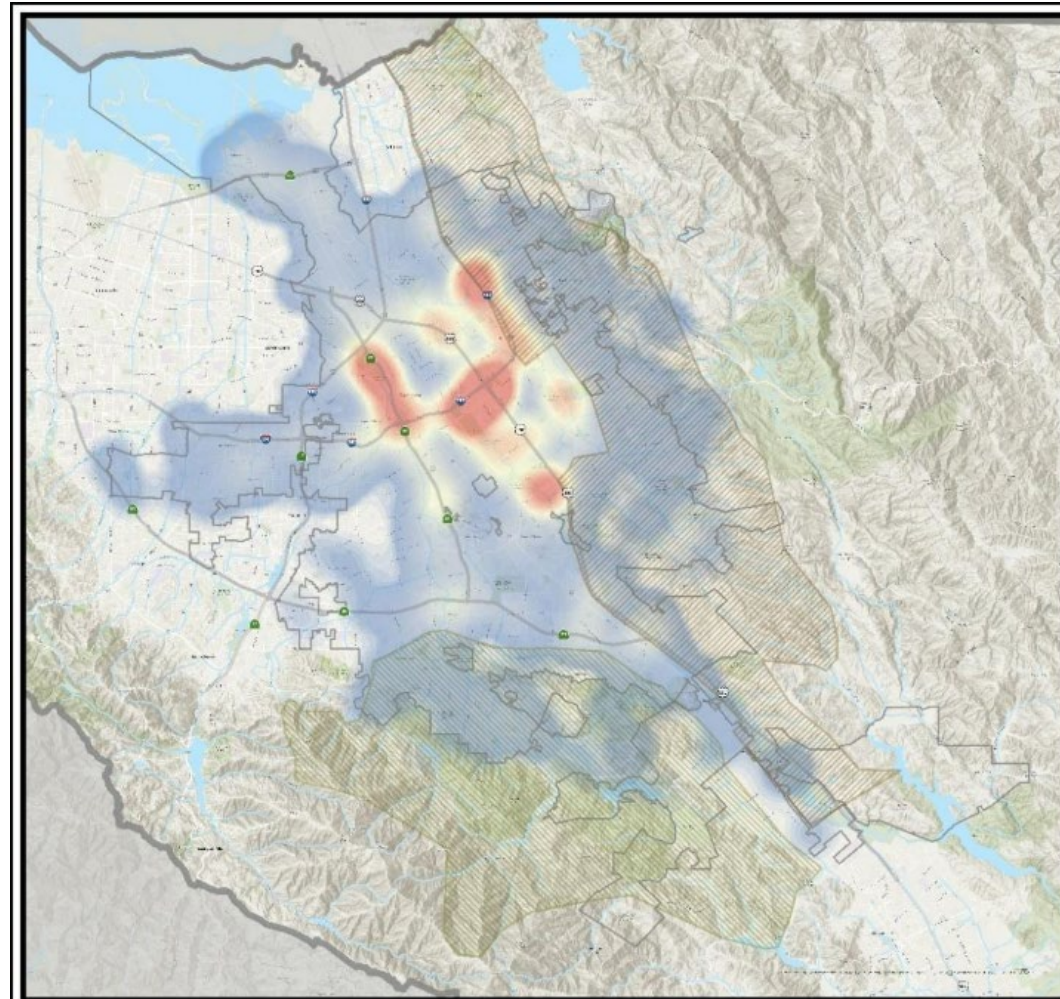
Adjacent East Foothills; unmaintained parcels

WUI Perimeter

Almaden Valley & East Foothills planning areas

! Key Finding

Encampment activity, transportation corridors, and unmaintained parcels create compounding fire risk in urbanized areas — not only in forested WUI.

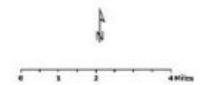


Vegetation Fires Within SJFD Response Area: CY 2022-2026

Vegetation Fire Frequency



- East Foothills Planning Area
- Almaden Valley Planning Area
- San José Incorporated City Limits
- Santa Clara County Boundary



Scale: 1" = 0.25"
Downloaded: 10/16/2021 10:01 AM
Prepared by: DFP, GIS, Michael D'Amico
Last Prepared: 10/16/2021

Operational Readiness — Updated TIER Model



2026 MODEL UPDATE: Dispatches closest available unit → Response time cut by nearly HALF during critical early attack phase

TIER I

Initial Wildland Response

- 2 Battalion Chiefs
- 3 Type 1 Engine Companies
- 1 Engine Tender (Type 1 + Water Tender)
- 1 Type 3 Engine
- CAL FIRE notification

TIER II

Adds to TIER I

- 3 Battalion Chiefs (total)
- 7 Type 1 Engines (total)
- 2 Engine Tenders (total)
- REDNET mutual aid advisory
- Duty Mechanic & Fuel Truck

TIER III

Adds to TIERS I & II

- 4 Battalion Chiefs (total)
- 9 Type 1 Engines (total)
- 1 Wildland Engine
- SCC Wildland Task Force
- County mutual aid standby

UPDATE: TIER I = 7 units (5 suppression + 2 command) | Type 3 engines + 2,000-gal water tenders for WUI terrain



Interagency & City Collaboration



Regional Partners

- CAL FIRE Santa Clara Unit
- Santa Clara County Fire Department
- Santa Clara County FireSafe Council
- Annual Operating Plan & MTZ Agreements
- CA Fire & Rescue Mutual Aid System



City Departments

- Dept. of Transportation
- Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services
 - Weed Abatement
- Code Enforcement



Transportation *Planning, Building and Code Enforcement*

— SAN JOSE —
PARKS, RECREATION & NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

Academic Partner

- San José State University Wildfire Interdisciplinary Research Center
- AI-powered fuel mapping tools
- Aerial surveillance technology
- Enhanced situational awareness across WUI areas



Technology & Firewise Communities



Genasys Protect — Evacuation Platform

- Real-time evacuation notifications
- Public status updates during emergencies
- Multi-agency coordination support
- Free to download — promoted at all community events
- Funded through FY 2025-2026 Operating Budget

 **genasys Protect**

Scan to learn more →



Firewise USA — Recognized Communities

1 → 3 Firewise USA recognized communities



FIREWISE USA®
Residents reducing wildfire risks

The Villages Golf & Country Club

2024

Miradero-Crothers Road

Post-2025 Study Session

Rancho San Vicente

Post-2025 Study Session

3 additional communities currently completing applications



SJSU Wildfire Interdisciplinary Research Center

AI-powered fuel mapping • Aerial surveillance • Enhanced WUI situational awareness

Community Outreach



10

Neighborhood Presentations

3

Partner Organizations

Neighborhoods Reached:

Almaden Valley • Santa Teresa • Berryessa • Alum Rock • Mayfair • Evergreen • Southside • Camden • Almaden

Fireside Chats — The Villages Community

1,200-acre senior active-living community. Open-discussion wildfire preparedness. Part of the CAL Chiefs WUI Risk Reduction Program.



Suncrest Neighborhood — Red Cross Partnership

Collaborated with American Red Cross & Santa Clara County FireSafe Council. Personalized go-kit, alert, evacuation planning for residents.



Multilingual Materials

Brochures, door hangers, digital ads, and community presentations developed in multiple languages through FEMA 2023 grant funding.



Award-Winning Public Education

WUI Wildfire Risk Reduction Education Campaign



~7,000

Homes visually assessed
by SJFD personnel

FEMA

2023 Fire Prevention
& Safety grant funded

4

Languages of
materials produced

Campaign Coverage:

- Emergency go-kit assembly
- Defensible Space
- Home Hardening
- Family communication plans
- Local emergency alert enrollment with Evacuation route identification

Phase 1 — Nearly Complete

Assessment & education of all residents in Moderate, High & Very High FHSZs

Phase 2 — In Development

Formal WUI inspection program: education first, then compliance pathway



Legislative Watch

AB 1455 (2025)

New WUI building and safety requirements

SB 504 (2024)

Wildfire risk reduction and defensible space

Executive Order N-18-25

Ember-resistant zone within 5 ft of structures — rulemaking in progress

Questions?

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