

Town Hall: Preparing Oakmont Village for the Next Wildfire 04 August 2026

The recording of the event is available here:

<https://oakmontvillage.com/article/8-4-26-town-hall-firewise/>



Preparing Oakmont Village for the Next Wildfire

Google Earth Image

A Presentation by the Firewise Task Force

Too Close for Comfort



Glass Fire Burn Scar (Source: Google Earth Archive from October 2020)

Why Homes Burn in a Wildfire

Our Challenge: The three main causes exist throughout Oakmont Village:

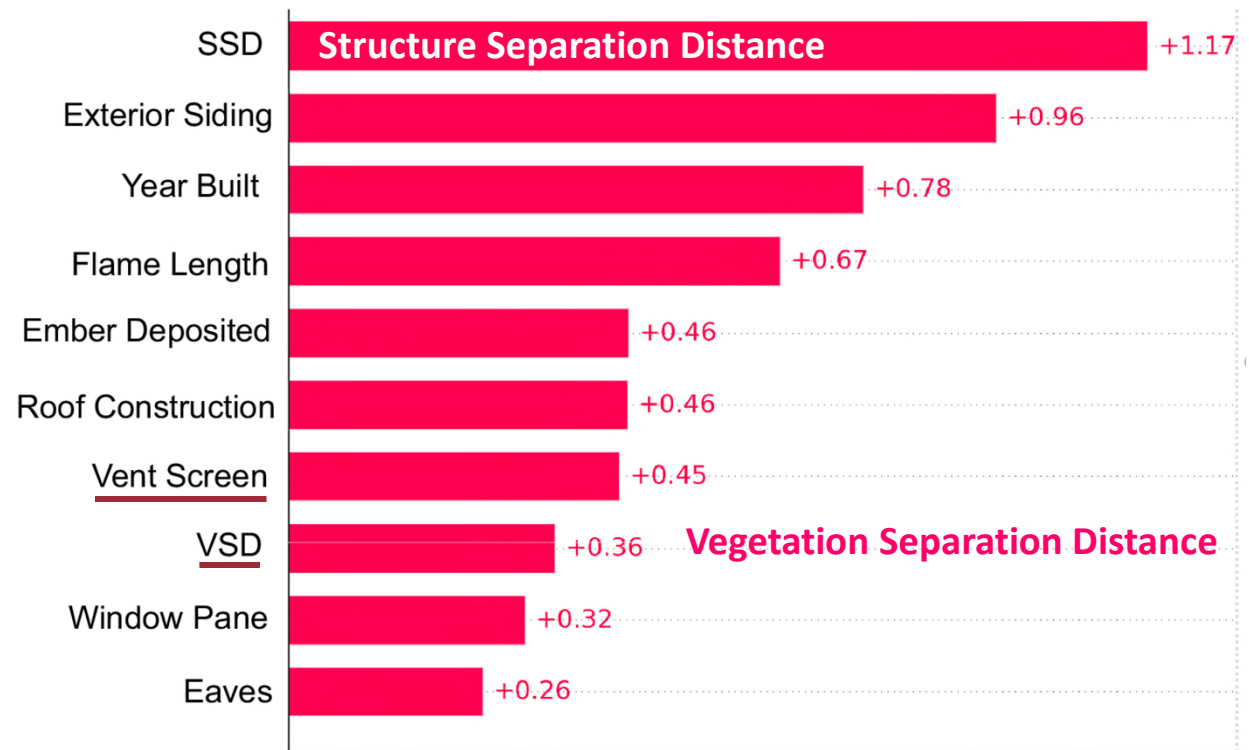
- Low Structure Separation Distance (SSD)
- Flammable Exterior Siding
- Year Built before 2008 when building codes became Firewise

The first home to burn during a wildfire in a cluster of homes will be ignited, directly or indirectly, by flying embers

A burning home can then set off an urban conflagration like the one in Coffey Park during the 2017 Tubbs Fire

Our Community Opportunity:

Increasing the Vegetation Separation Distance (VSD) or Defensible Space around homes to minimize indirect ignitions from embers



Source: "Fire risk to structures in California's Wildland-Urban Interface" article in *Nature Communications* magazine based on data from five fires: the Kincade, Tubbs and Glass Fires in Sonoma County; and the Thomas and Camp Fires.

Embers are the Enemy



Being Firewise in Oakmont

Entity	Coverage	Applicable Regulation(s)	Requirements
Oakmont Village Association	All of Oakmont	Firewise Landscape Policy (FLP)	Good Defensible Space (DS) No Home Hardening (Except New Fences & Decks)
City of Santa Rosa Local Responsibility Area (LRA)	Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area (WUIFA)	Hazardous Vegetation and Fuels Management Regulations	Weaker DS than the FLP No Home Hardening
State of California State Responsibility Area (SRA)	Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone in the LRA	New Regulations for Zone Zero in 3 Years for Existing Homes (Pending)	Stronger DS than the FLP No Home Hardening (Except Fences & Outbuildings)
Insurance Industry	By Carrier and Wildfire Risk Score	CA's Sustainable Insurance Strategy and Safer from Wildfires Program Guided by IBHS Research	Defensible Space & Home Hardening Requirements Determined by Carrier

Zone	Requirement
0-5'	Are plants on the OVA Do Not Plant List removed?
	Are wood and rubber mulches removed?
	Are approved shrubs healthy and maintained free of dead wood?
	Are roof and gutters cleaned of debris as needed to avoid accumulation?
0-30'	Are firewood and combustible materials stored at least 30 feet from the home, garage, attached deck or other structures?
	Are dead and dying branches and limbs overhanging the roof removed?
	Are healthy branches and limbs trimmed 6 feet from the roof or structures and 10 feet from the chimney?
	Are tree limbs removed that extend within 5 feet of the home?
Entire Property	Are dead branches removed from shrubs and trees?
	Are dead shrubs and trees removed?
	Are shrubs trimmed and debris cleared to eliminate ladder fuel under trees?
	Are all junipers removed?
	Are wildland grasses cut/mowed to 4 inches?
	Have gorilla hair and rubber mulch been removed?
	Have all trees 18 feet or taller been limbed at least 6 feet from the ground?

From the Firewise Defensible Space & Home Hardening Assessment Checklist

Fire Areas & Zones in Oakmont Village

California

State Responsibility Area

Fire Hazard Severity Zones
(FHSZs)

Moderate

High

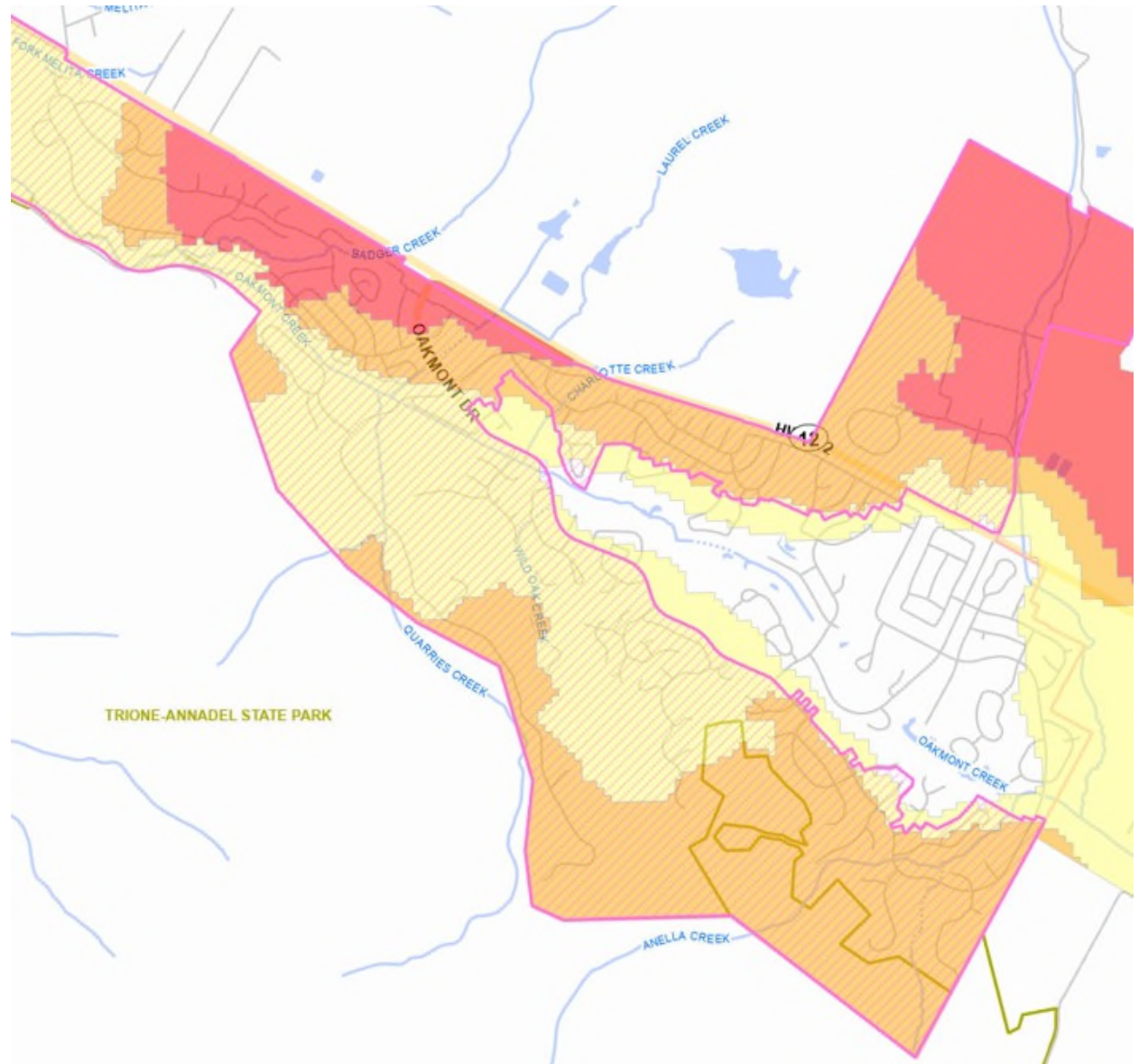
Very High

Santa Rosa

Local Responsibility Area

Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)

If any portion of a Sub-HOA is in a High or Very High FHSZ, the entire Sub-HOA is included in the WUI.





Coffey Park: Before & After





State Responsibility Area (SRA)

Coverage: Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone in Santa Rosa's LRA

Proposed Zone Zero Regulation Highlights:

- ✓ Stronger Defensible Space than Oakmont's Firewise Landscape Policy but no Home Hardening (except for noncombustible fencing and outbuildings in Zone Zero)
- ✓ New California Code of Regulations Title 14 Section 1298 being recommended by the CAL FIRE Zone Zero Regulatory Advisory Committee for approval by the Board
- ✓ Compliance required for existing structures three years after approval



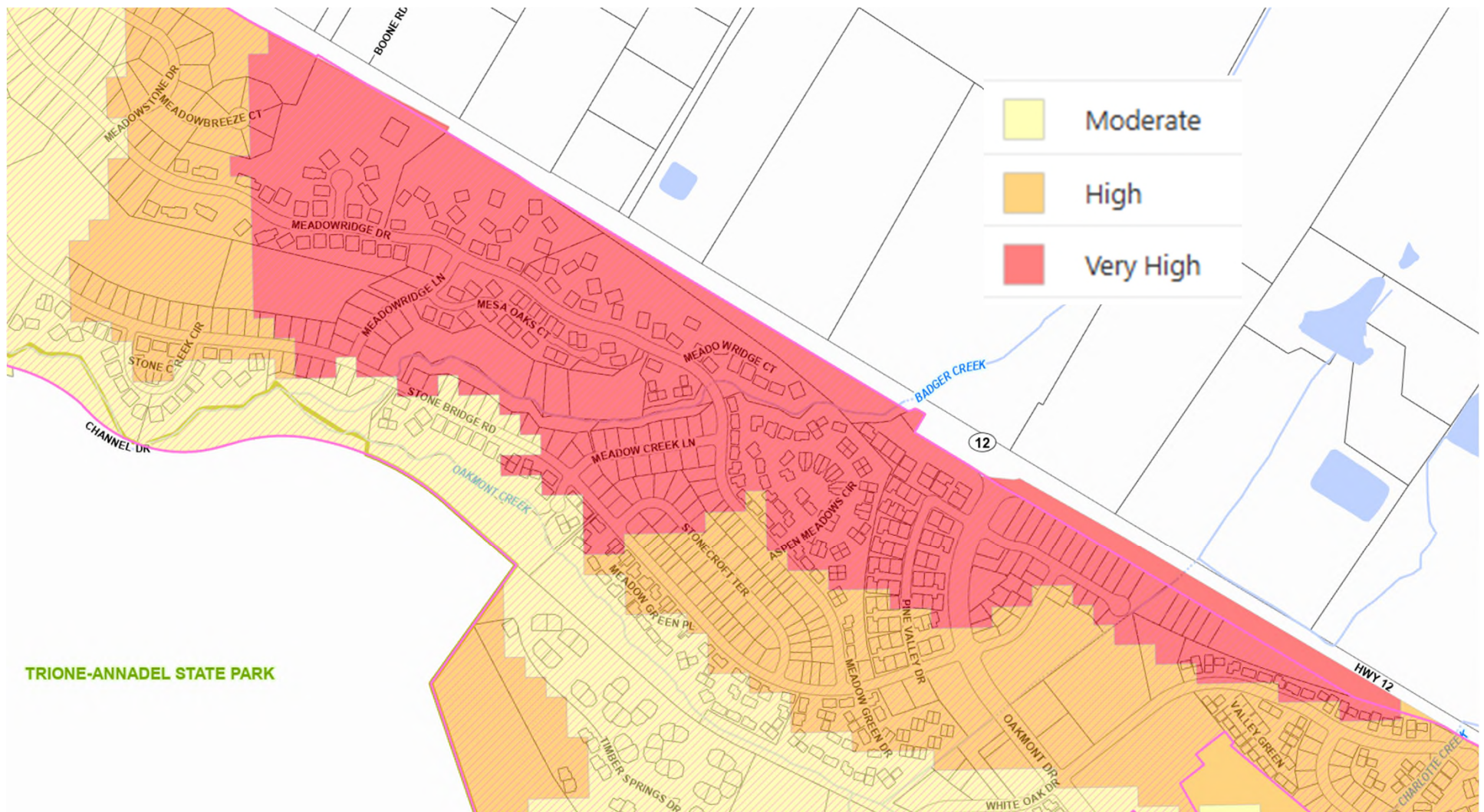
Local Responsibility Area (LRA)

Coverage: Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area (WUIFA) expanded in 2026 to include High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZs)

WUIFA Highlights:

- ✓ Weaker Defensible Space than Oakmont's Firewise Landscape Policy and no Home Hardening
- ✓ Specific guidelines for Trees, Non-Native Hazardous Vegetation, Mulch and Ground Coverings, and Defensible Space

Very High FHSZ in Oakmont Village



Expected to Become Subject to New Zone Zero Regulations in 2029

Pending LRA Zone Zero Regulations

Will apply to the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone in Oakmont

Zone Zero* Regulation Highlights (Final Version Proposed 06/23/26):



- ✓ No combustible mulch and clear all combustible debris, including on roofs and in gutters, and underneath attached decks, balconies, stairs and pergolas (Similar to OV's FLP)
- ✓ Trees to have no dead branches and no ladder fuels (limbed 6' up or one-third the height), and to be trimmed 5' above roofs, 10' from chimneys, 1' from walls and under eaves (Also Similar to OV's FLP)
- ✓ No vegetation permitted in the "Safety Zone" that is 1' from structures or under eaves, within 2' of windows, doors, posts and vents, and within 5' of attached decks, stairs and pergolas
- ✓ Beyond the "Safety Zone" well-maintained non-woody plants must be:
 - Less than 3" tall and free of dead or dying materials or...
 - Up to 18" tall if less than one square foot in area and spaced 1.5 times the height of tallest plant or...
 - Up to 18" tall in noncombustible 5-gallon maximum pots if spaced 1.5 times their height
- ✓ Combustible fences and gates shall not be attached to a home
- ✓ Fences and gates attached to or coming within 1' of the home shall have a 5' noncombustible span
- ✓ Firewood and combustible outbuildings are not allowed

* Note: There are no CAL FIRE requirements in the LRA for Zone 1 (5-30') and Zone 2 (30-100').

Firewise and Attractive Landscaping





Firewise and Attractive Landscaping



Firewise and Attractive Landscaping



The Change: The ***Sustainable Insurance Strategy*** from the California Department of Insurance allows forward-looking rate increases provided carriers also offer discounts for Firewise mitigations under the state's ***Safer from Wildfire*** program

Coverage: Varies by carrier's assigned ***Wildfire Risk Score***

California's Safer from Wildfire Program Highlights:

- ✓ Stronger Defensible Space than OV's FLP combined with strong Home Hardening
- ✓ Defensible Space: 5' ember-resistant zone, including fences; no vegetation or debris under decks; no combustible structures or outbuildings within 30' of the home
- ✓ Home Hardening: Class-A fire rated roof; 1/8" noncombustible vents; noncombustible 6" at the bottom of exterior walls; enclosed eaves; multi-paned tempered glass windows or shutters

Note: Insurance companies may have more stringent requirements

Summary Comparison of Insurance Guidelines

	California Safer from Wildfires	IBHS Wildfire Prepared Home (Basic)
Zone Zero (0-5')	Noncombustible	<u>Noncombustible, including tree limbs extending into Zone Zero</u>
Zone One (5-30')	Horizontal plant spacing	<u>Horizontal and vertical plant spacing</u>
Fences & Gates	Noncombustible in Zone Zero	<u>Noncombustible 5' from house or eave</u>
Decks	Clear underneath	<u>Clear underneath, posts/lattice bottoms 6" noncombustible, screen/enclose if < 4'</u>
Sheds	<u>At least 30' away from home</u>	At least 10' away from home with defensible space if > 15 SF
Vents	Metal 1/8" mesh	Metal 1/8" mesh <u>and dryer vent flap</u>
Gutters	N/A	<u>Metal and cleared of debris</u>
Siding	Noncombustible 6" at base	Noncombustible 6" at base
Windows & Doors	<u>Multi-paned or shutters</u>	N/A
Eaves	<u>Enclosed or soffit</u>	N/A
Roof	Class-A fire rated	Class-A fire rated

Note: Underlining indicates the stronger provision.

This summary is for comparison purposes only and is not intended as guidance.

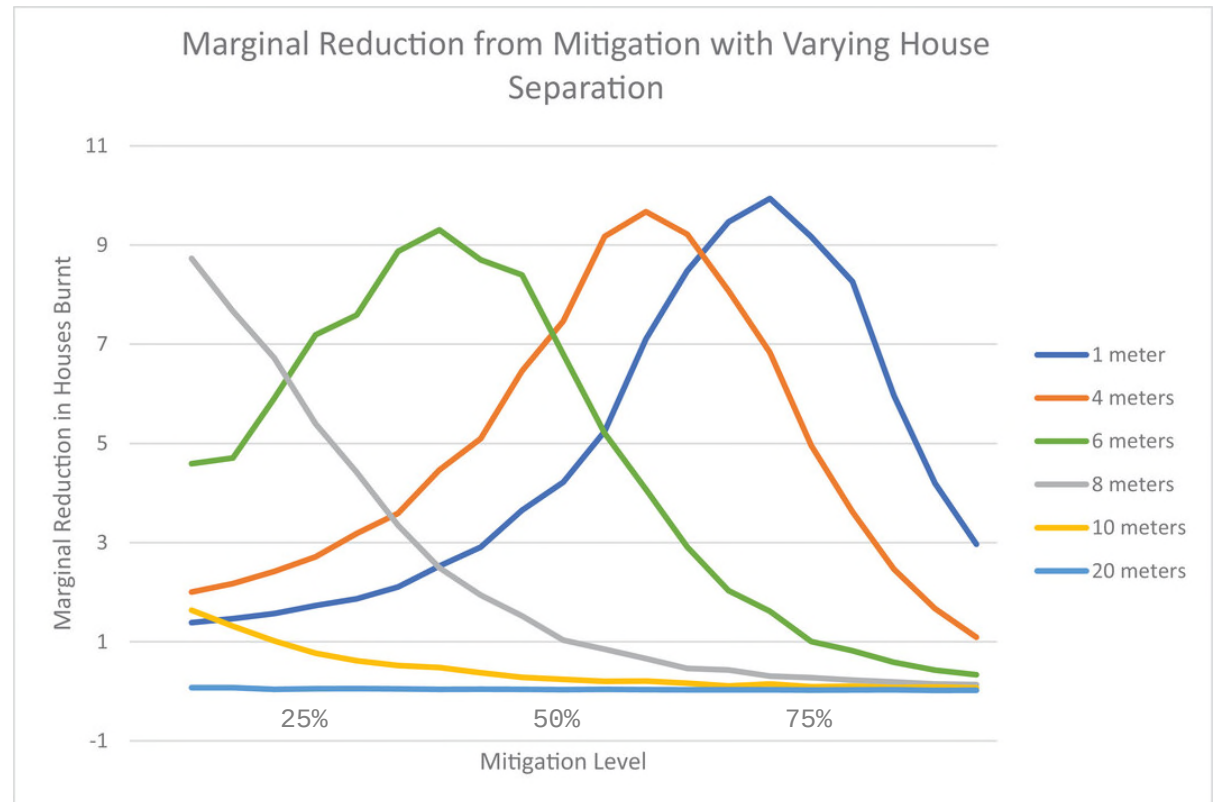
Insurance Insight #1: “Community Immunity” Goal

The purpose of this study is to help insurance companies create incentives to encourage Firewise mitigations:

- ❑ More and/or higher discounts lead to more mitigations but less revenue
- ❑ But more mitigations also result in fewer claims
- ❑ The goal is to encourage a level of mitigations capable of preventing a catastrophic loss

Oakmont Village can become significantly less vulnerable to an urban conflagration if at least 60% of the homes become Firewise (orange graph average separation of 4 meters)

Vulnerability is further reduced for up to 90% of homes becoming Firewise



Source: “Externalities in the Wildland-Urban Interface: Private Decisions, Collective Action, and Results from Wildfire Simulation Models for California” based on data from the 2017 Tubbs Fire

Insurance Insight #2: “Top 10” Mitigations

The more effective the mitigation,
the higher the discount incentive

The “Top 5” are easily achieved
throughout Oakmont Village:

- #1 Roofs almost all Class A
- #2 Comply with Oakmont’s
Firewise Landscape Policy
- #3 & #4 Let’s focus on doing
better in Zone Zero (The First 5’)
- #5 Clear under elevated decks

#6 is impossible to achieve with
Oakmont’s tight spacing of homes

#7 through #10 can be:

1. Expensive
2. Less critical if 60-90% of us do a
good job with the “Top 5”

Mitigation	Average Discount	Rank
Defensible Space		
30’ Noncombustible Structures	0.73%	6
5’ Clearance	0.72%	3
5’ Noncombustible Material	0.72%	4
Local Fuel Mitigation Ordinance	0.97%	2
Under Deck Clearance	0.72%	5
Home Hardening		
Class A Fire Rated Roof	1.05%	1
Enclosed Eaves	0.55%	9
Fire-Resistant Vents	0.67%	7
Multi-Pane Windows	0.56%	8
Vertical Siding Clearance	0.53%	10

Source: “Resources for the Future Wildfire
Mitigation Discounts Working Paper 25-30”



Graphic Credit: CAL FIRE

The First Five Feet...

“... changes the question from ‘Will the big fire come?’ (yes) to ‘When it does, will it find anything to eat right here?’ (that’s on us).”

— Nate Wittasek,
Fire Science Engineer

Source: “The Cheapest Insurance is the First Five Feet”

The First Five Feet Includes Fences



Fences are “kindling” that can be ignited by embers.

Attached fences become fuses.

A noncombustible section (*or gap*) 5 feet from the eaves can save a home.

Graphic Credit: NIST

Pursuing Community-wide Protection Against Wildfires

Layer 1: Individual Structure Resilience (the physics layer)

Layer 2: Neighborhood Coordination (the herd layer)

Where wildfire resilience turns into wildfire immunity, beginning with three small “experiments”:

- 1) The Five-Foot Pact (30 days)
Every household commits to the same baseline around the structure. Not perfection—just the highest-leverage zone done by everyone.
- 2) The Ember Walk (one day)
A small group walks the block with a checklist: vents, gutters, fences, under-deck storage, etc. to identify ignition amplifiers.
- 3) The Group Retrofit Order (one contractor, one spec)
Pick one item (vents, gutter protection, fence breaks, deck detailing) and do it in bulk to leverage economies of scale.

Layer 3: Policy and Pricing (the scale layer)

Source: “Does herd immunity work for wildfire?” by Nate Wittasek, Fire Protection Engineer

Preparing to Evacuate

Evacuation Checklist



**Be sure to add
“Prop open wooden gate(s)”**

“Go Bag”

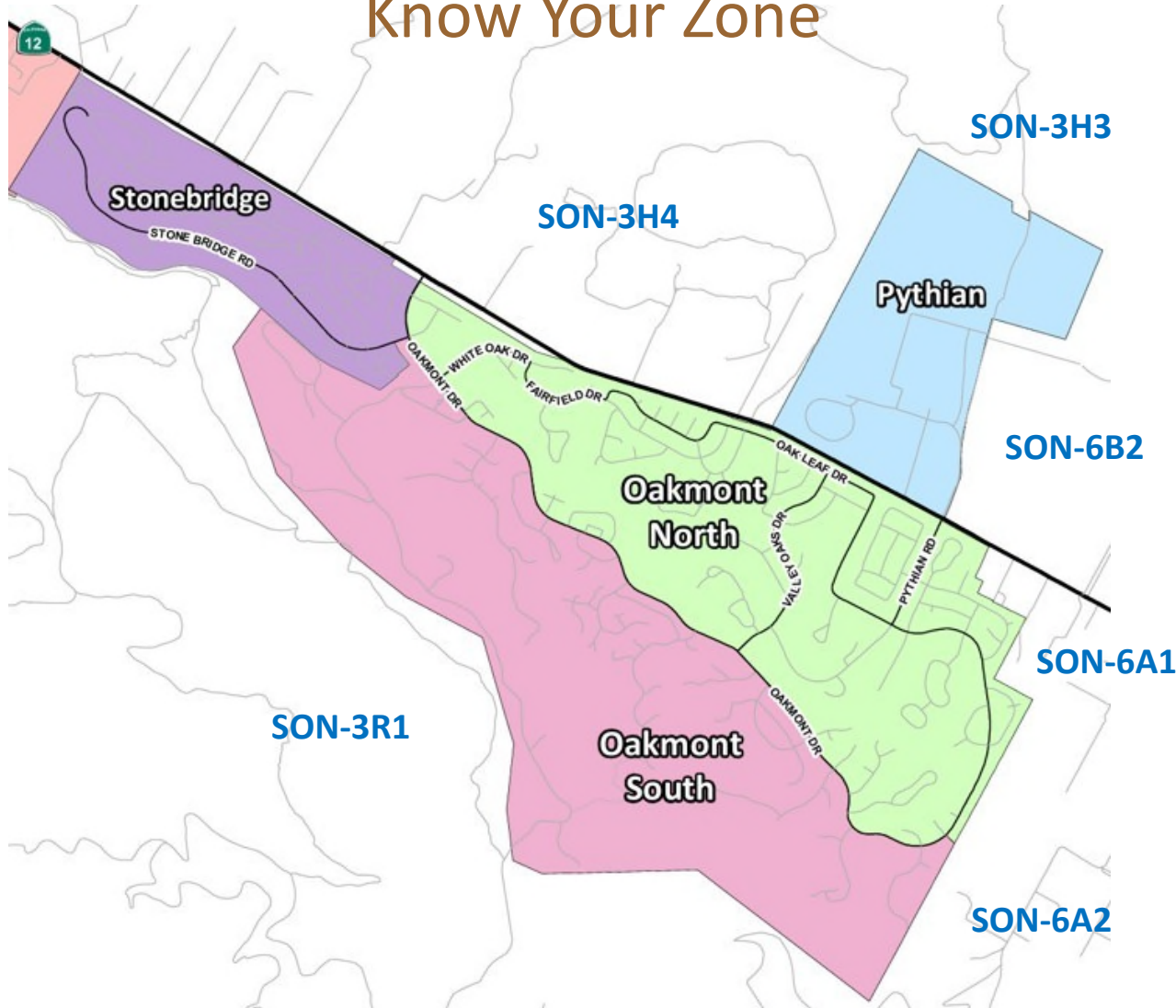


Be sure to include prescription medications

Detailed information is available from Meet Your Neighbors on the OV website

Evacuating Oakmont

Know Your Zone



Get Notified

No Registration Needed

- ☐ Wireless Emergency Alerts (Vicinity Text Messages)
- ☐ Reverse 911 (Land Lines)
- ☐ Emergency Alert System (All TV & Some Radio Stations)
- ☐ NOAA Weather Radio (Channel 4 at 162.475 MHz)
- ☐ Hi/Lo Sirens (European-style 2-Tone)

Registration Required

- ☐ Sonoma County's SoCoAlert (Phone and/or Email)
- ☐ Santa Rosa's CivicReady (Phone and/or Email)

Useful Phone App: WatchDuty

Visit OakmontVillage.com or SRCity.org for detailed information



Cellphone

SoCoAlert Primary Alert System Subscription Required

Emergency notification service providing Sonoma County first responders the ability to alert residents by landline or mobile phone, text message and email about imminent threats to life and property in specific impacted areas. Register all addresses that you would like to receive alerts for (work, child's school, etc.). You don't have to be in the location of the emergency to receive the alert. **Must register at SoCoAlert.com OR call (866) 939-0911, press "2" at the menu, ask operator for assistance with registering for SoCoAlert. SoCoAlert calls will come from (866) 419-5000. Please add that phone number to your contacts.**

Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA)

Urgent alerts sent as text-like messages to your mobile phone based on your location (you will only receive notification if you are in the area of the emergency). WEAs have three alert categories – Imminent Threat, AMBER, Presidential. **Keep factory settings on your WEA-capable phone to receive a WEA.**

CivicReady Subscription Required

The City of Santa Rosa's police and fire departments can send you public safety alerts and news delivered by email always, text message when imminent/urgent, and very rarely as a voice call. **You must register at SRCity.org/CivicReady.**

Know Your Zone

The City of Santa Rosa has designated evacuation zones in the event of a large-scale emergency. Go to SRCity.org/EvacZones and enter your address to determine your evacuation zone.



SRCity.org/KnowYourAlerts

Broadcast

Emergency Alert System (EAS)

National public warning system that will interrupt local broadcast tv and radio programming to provide an alert in the event of a large-scale emergency.

All Hazards NOAA Weather Radio (NWR)

A low-cost home alerting tool that is remotely activated by the National Weather Service to broadcast life-saving warnings issued by first responders. **To work, Sonoma County residents must tune their NWR to frequency 162.475.**

Local Radio and Television

The City communicates with local news broadcasters to provide updates during an emergency. **Tune radio to 1350 AM, 89.1 FM (bilingual), 98.7 FM (Spanish), 100.1 FM, Latino 100.9 FM, 103.5 FM; or preferred local TV news channel.**



Sirens



Listen to Hi/Lo Sirens

Hi/Lo Sirens

Santa Rosa police and fire department vehicles are equipped with Hi/Lo sirens, a different sounding European-style, 2-tone siren. It will only be used in an emergency to alert residents within specific areas of the need to evacuate.

We know the way.

All we need is the
collective will.

Please visit
oakmontvillage.com/firewise
to learn more about how you can do
your part to help prepare Oakmont
Village for the next wildfire.

