



CITY OF SALINAS COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

DATE: AUGUST 12, 2025

DEPARTMENT: FIRE

FROM: SAMUEL KLEMEK, FIRE CHIEF

TITLE: FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES MAP

RECOMMENDED MOTION:

Adopt an ordinance adopting by reference the State of California Fire Hazard Severity Zones Map entitled “City of Salinas—Monterey County Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

California Government Code Section 51179 requires that the local agencies, including the City of Salinas, to adopt an ordinance adopting the Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zone map prepared by the State of California Office of the State Fire Marshal. This statewide legislation is part of the larger state effort aimed at reducing wildfire risk and bolstering response capabilities. Once adopted the ordinance will become effective thirty (30) days thereafter.

BACKGROUND:

In March of 2025, the Salinas Fire Department received the updated Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) maps from the State Fire Marshal’s Office. These maps were developed by state officials pursuant to Government Code Section 51178, which mandates the identification and classification of areas in California based on their relative fire hazard severity. The designation is a crucial step in implementing fire prevention strategies and ensuring the safety of residents in high-hazard areas.

The maps do not limit or restrict the City’s authority to impose more restrictive fire and public safety requirements, as otherwise authorized by law. No further local revisions or restrictions to this map are proposed in this ordinance.

It is important to remember that these maps measure hazard and not risk.

- Fire “hazard” is based on physical conditions that create a likelihood and expected fire behavior over a 30 to 50-year period without considering mitigation measures such as home hardening, recent wildfires, or fuel reduction.

- Fire “risk” is the potential damage a fire can do to the area under existing conditions, accounting for any modifications such as fuel reduction projects, defensible space, and ignition-resistant building construction.

Though the hazard has been reduced in much of the City, this does not mean properties are less at risk. The maps do not incorporate structure density and limited evacuation routes. The Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps, created by the state, are developed using scientific models that assess factors such as vegetation, topography, and weather patterns that contribute to fire behavior. These maps are instrumental in guiding building standards, defensible space requirements in new developments and application of fire safe regulations.

CEQA CONSIDERATION:

Statutory Exemption. The proposed ordinance adopting the Fire Hazard Severity Zones as recommended by the State Fire Marshal is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a ministerial action, required by law.

CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT CODE §84308 APPLIES:

No.

STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVE:

Public Safety - Continue to improve community safety by engaging residents and using a broad range of proactive approaches that emphasize community connection and prevention programs.

DEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION:

This Fire Department has shared this information with the Community Development Department for incorporation into future planning and development policies and projects.

FISCAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT:

Fund	Appropriation	Appropriation Name	Total Appropriation	Amount for recommendation	FY 25-26 Operating Budget Page	Last Budget Action (Date, Resolution)*
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* The FY 25-26 Adopted Budget was adopted on June 17, 2025.

ATTACHMENTS:

Draft Ordinance
City of Salinas Fire Hazard Severity map