

Oak Park, California | 2023

# Community Wildfire Protection Plan

7/6/2023





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface: What is a community wildfire protection plan?.....	3
Section I: Snapshot of the COMMUNITY .....	5
B. OVERVIEW.....	5
B. Landscape .....	6
Topography.....	6
Fire History .....	7
Key Infrastructure.....	9
Maps.....	10
C. Firefighting Resources .....	11
D. SUMMATION.....	12
Section II: Collaboration .....	14
A. Key partners.....	14
Section III: Community Engagement & Education.....	15
A. Priorities .....	15
B. Completed and / or ongoing Projects .....	15
C. Future Projects .....	15
Section IV: Structural Hardening.....	17
A. Priorities .....	17
B. Completed and / or ongoing Projects .....	17
C. Future Projects .....	18
Section V: Defensible Space.....	19

A. Priorities .....	19
B. Completed and / or ongoing Projects .....	19
C. Future Projects .....	20
Section VI: Fuels Treatment .....	21
A. Priorities .....	21
B. Completed and / or ongoing Projects .....	21
C. Future Projects .....	22
Section VII: Evacuation Planning .....	23
A. Overview of Ingress and Egress .....	23
B. Designated Evacuation Corridors and Temporary Safe Refuge Areas (TSRA) .....	23
C. Priorities.....	23
D. Completed and / or ongoing Projects .....	24
E. Future Projects.....	24
Section VIII: Summary Of Potential Future Projects.....	25
A. Future Projects.....	25
Section IX: Signatures.....	27
Section X: Appendices.....	29
Appendix A: Meeting Tracking Documents .....	29
Appendix B: Maps .....	31
Figure 1: Oak Park Area Map Including Open Space .....	31
Figure 2: Fire Hazard Severity map.....	32
Figure 3: Fire History 1910-2010.....	33

# PREFACE: WHAT IS A COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN?

Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) are blueprints for preparedness at the neighborhood level. They organize a community's efforts to protect itself against wildfire, and empower citizens to move in a cohesive, common direction. Among the key goals of this Oak Park CWPP, which was developed collaboratively by citizens, and federal, state, and local management agencies, are to:

- Align with the local fire agency's 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, and protecting evacuation corridors.
- 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.
- Develop a robust wildfire communications plan for both emergencies and non-emergencies

*Note: Portions of this CWPP contain an overview of information that is contained in the Oak Park Wildlife Risk Assessment completed on November 2022 by Sure-Fire Training, Inc. 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." Any actual project activities undertaken that meet this definition of project activity and are undertaken by the CWPP participants or agencies listed shall meet with local, state, and federal environmental compliance requirements.*

No community is an island when it comes to wildfire. Oak Park Fire Safe Council (OPFSC) works closely with several agencies and groups in support of our approach to wildfire. The primary organizations that we work with have reviewed and had input to this document, and are as follows:

- Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council (VRFSC) - VRFSC is an umbrella organization that works with all Fire Safe Councils in Ventura County, setting standards, developing tools and methods, and fostering cross-FSC information

sharing that benefits us all. They have also provided grants to OPFSC, and worked with us on joint grant opportunities. This CWPP is aligned with VRFSC's Countywide CWPP for Ventura County.

- Santa Monica Mountain Resource Conservation District (RCDSMM)- RCDSMM's charter is larger than just wildfire and includes habitat restoration, research and monitoring of sensitive species, native habitats, streams and lagoon, landowner assistance and education and outreach. They are responsible for these activities in the Oak Park area, and currently work with us on Home Ignition Zone assessments and other projects.
- Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District (RSRPD)- RSRPD owns much of the open space around Oak Park, and are also responsible for the maintenance and care of the Medea Creek and Lindero Creek areas. They have a regulatory requirement to keep fuel cleared within 100 ft. of structures, as well as the Medea Creek and Lindero Creek beds. OPFSC works closely with RSRPD to foster a constructive dialog between the Oak Park community and RSRPD.
- Ventura County Fire Department (VCFD)- VCFD's services are built around their mission of anticipating and responding to the dynamic public safety needs of our community. This includes prevention and education, response and communication. We work closely with VCFD on education programs such as Ready, Set GO, Home Ignition Zone Assessments, Fuel Mitigation in and around Oak Park and other initiatives
- Other Organizations- We work with many other organizations such as California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and others who are leaders in wildfire; providing grants, education and other support to our organization

The CWPP is complete and approved after being reviewed and signed by the Oak Park Fire Safe Council, the Ventura County Fire Department, and the Cal Fire Ventura chapter.



## SECTION I: SNAPSHOT OF THE COMMUNITY

### B. OVERVIEW

Oak Park is an unincorporated community with approximately 14,000 residents living in more than 5,500 homes, apartments and condominiums in an approximately 4.1 square mile area., it is bordered on the west by the North Ranch community of the city of Thousand Oaks, on the south by the L A County cities of Agoura Hills and Westlake Village, and north and east by Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District (RSRPD) and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA) (See Figure 1). Oak Park is primarily a residential community with pockets of medium and high-density development interspersed with open space and parkways. Oak Park's first phase of development began in 1967 and the community was "built out" prior to 2010. The developed portions of Oak Park are primarily residential. The community also includes 9 schools, 3 business areas and 11 parks. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the community has a median household income of \$132,578.

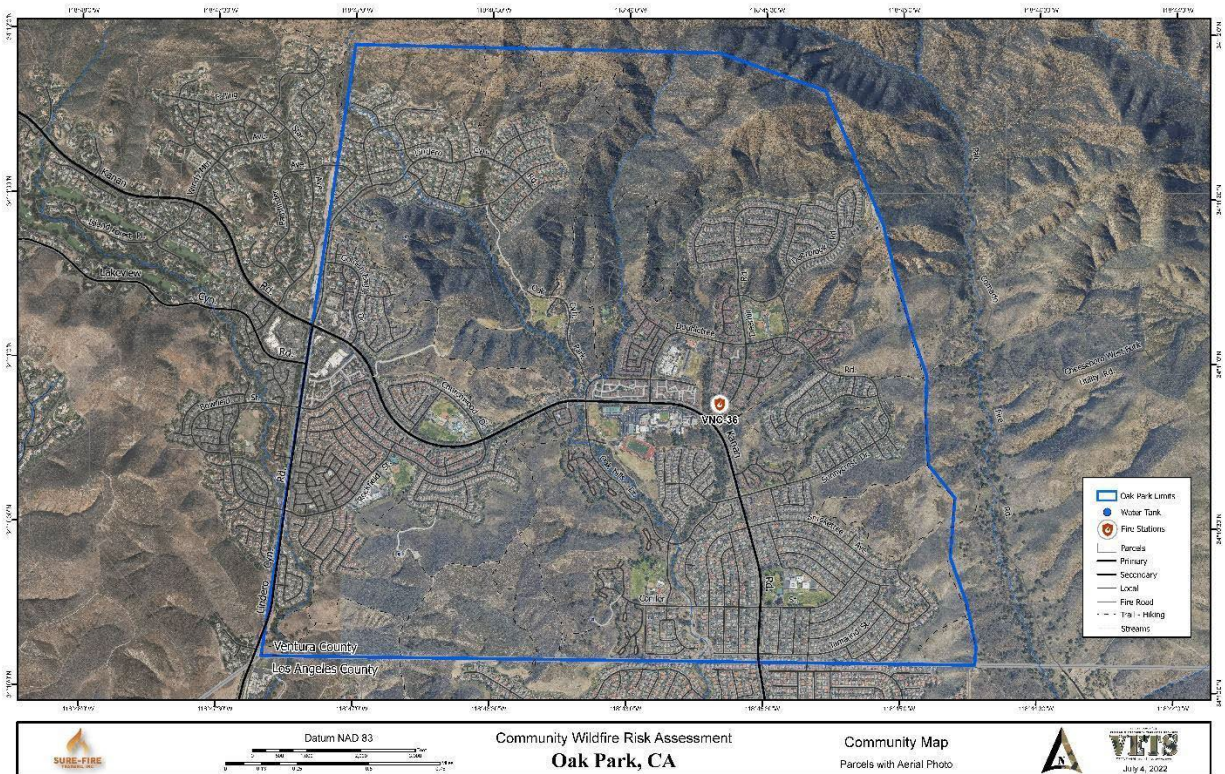


Figure 1; Map of Oak Park Community Wildfire Risk Assessment area

## B. LANDSCAPE

### TOPOGRAPHY

Located in the southern valleys of the Simi Hills in the southwest portion of Ventura County with elevation that varies between 960' and 1,500' above sea level. Approximately 60% of the land that makes up Oak Park is designated open space owned and managed by RSRPD. The open space is made up of rolling hills, the majority having a south facing aspect, and drainages that run mostly from north to south. Within Oak Park are the headwaters/riparian areas of Medea Creek and a small portion of Lindero Creek. Assets at risk are primarily structures and community infrastructure. Single and multi-family dwellings in the Oak Park areas are a specific concern due to their alignment with a Santa Ana (east) wind location in primarily a Very High Fire Hazard (VHFZ) zone.

There are 10 identified fuel beds in Ventura County as identified in the Ventura County Fire Protection District Unit Strategic Fire Plan (Ventura County Fire Department, 2022). Each is analyzed based on its topography, vegetation types, fire history and assets at risk (Ventura County Fire Department). These 10 identified fuel beds have sustained 23 fires of over 300 acres, most recently the 2019 Easy Fire. There are 68 miles of fire roads and 30 miles of fuel breaks maintained in this fuel bed. (Ventura County Fire Department, 2022).

The Oak Park assessment area is located entirely within the Simi Fuel Bed. The Simi Fuel Bed is bordered on the south by Highway 101, on the north by Simi Valley, on the east by the San Fernando Valley (Los Angeles County) and on the west by Highway 23 and Olsen Road. (See Figure 2). The dominant vegetation in the Simi Fuel Bed consists of oak woodland, chaparral, coastal sage scrub and grass. With the exception of the riparian areas, which contain heavy live and dead fuels, recent fire activity has significantly reduced much of the fuel load on the perimeter of the Oak Park area. Most of the large brush fields and heavy vegetation that existed in the surrounding open space areas prior to the Woolsey Fire in 2018 were completely consumed during the Woolsey Fire; possibly taking a decade or more to return to pre-fire conditions. In the short term this brush has been replaced by annual grasses and other invasive species such as wild mustard. Without any vegetation management or additional fire activity in these areas it is likely that the brush will continue to return over time to pre-Woolsey fire conditions.

The most current fuel model classification data is the *Standard Fire Behavior Fuel Models: A Comprehensive Set for Use with Rothermel's Surface Fire Spread Model* (Scott & Burgan, 2005). Using this data, prior to the Woolsey fire the Oak Park fuel bed fell in the category of a High Load, Dry Climate Shrub fuel model SH5. The primary carrier of fire in fuel model SH5 is woody shrubs and shrub litter with a heavy shrub load at a depth of 4-6 feet. Fire spread rate and flame length is very high. The majority of the fuels surrounding Oak Park and some of the interior open space areas are moderate grass and sparse brush. These areas prior to the Woolsey fire were covered in heavy brush, but post fires are currently consistent with fuel model GS2 Moderate Load, Dry Climate Grass-Shrub (Dynamic). The primary carrier of fire in GS2 is grass and shrubs combined. Shrubs are 1 to 3 feet high; grass load is moderate. Spread rate is high; flame length moderate. Moisture of extinction rate is low.



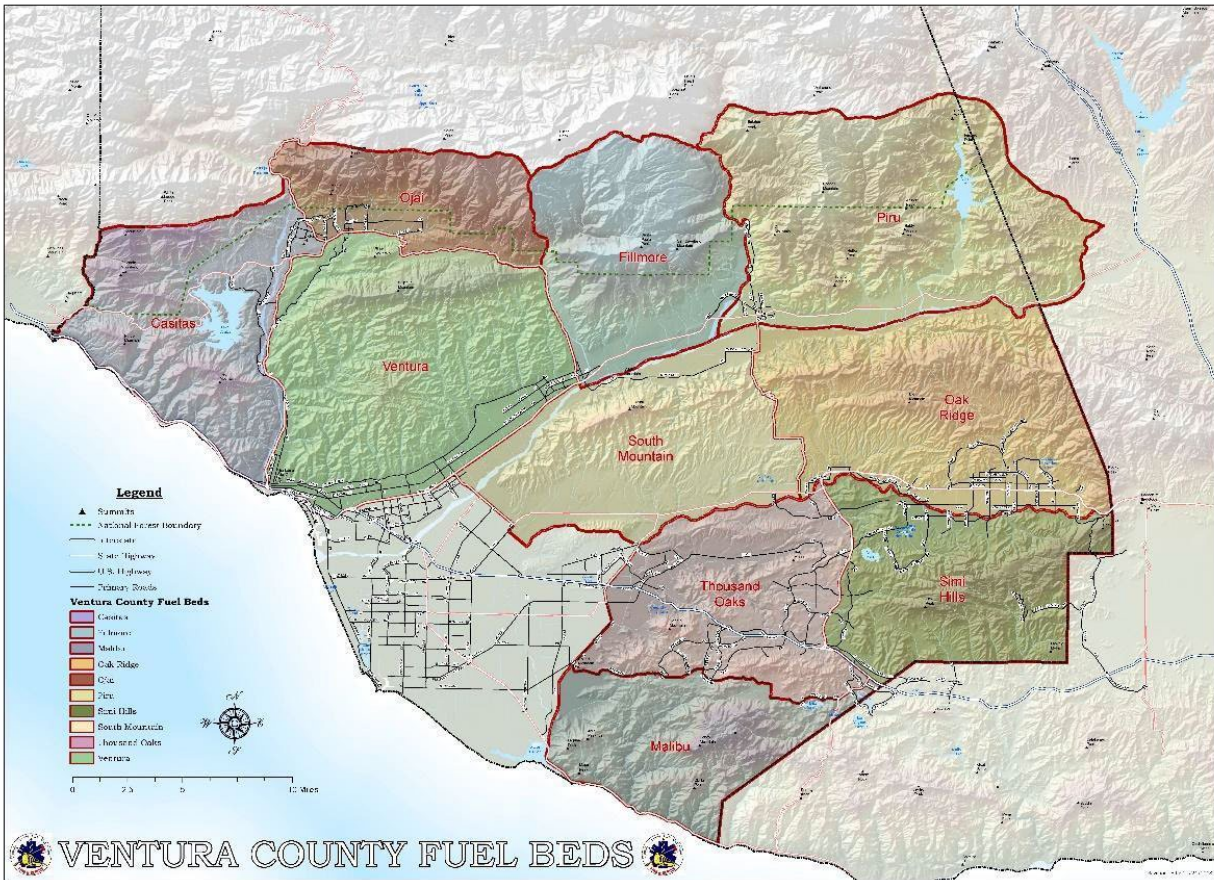


Figure 2; Fuel Beds - Ventura County Strategic Plan, May 2022, page 11

## FIRE HISTORY

Wildfire has historically been part of the eastern Ventura County area, although fire frequency due to human-caused fires has increased as population has increased. Throughout the Oak Park area, fire poses an ongoing threat to the community. The risk of an ignition is variable, with the potential for fires to occur from many types of ignition sources including natural and human activities (accidental, deliberate, or undetermined). Some of the more significant fires in recorded history for the Oak Park area are shown in the following table:

### Fire History for the Oak Park area 1949 to 2018

Fire Name	Date	Acreage
Woolsey	November 8, 2018	96,949
Topanga	September 28, 2005	23,396
Dayton Canyon	October 9, 1982	43,097
Clampitt	September 25, 1970	115,537
Simi Hills	October 31, 1949	20,578



**Total Acres**

**299,557**

*Figure 11*

### **Risk of Wildfire Occurrence**

For the purposes of this assessment, the annual historic probability of a large wildfire occurring is used to evaluate wildfire risk. Fire risk is the probability that a fire will ignite, spread, and potentially affect one or more resources valued by people. Historic wildfire records maintained by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) were analyzed for the time period 1949 through 2021. Wildfire occurrence probability was determined from these records by dividing the number of fires that have burned in the Oak Park area by the period of record, in this case, 72 years. This methodology creates a wildfire frequency probability for the planning area. The annual historic probability of fire frequency as calculated with these 5 fires over a period of 72 years indicates a probability or risk of a large wildfire occurring every 14.4 years.

The data also show that there is a much higher risk of larger fires occurring in late summer and early fall when the Santa Ana wind events are more common. All of the significant 5 fires in the Oak Park Area occurred in the period between late September and early-November for a total of 299,557 acres.

Historic fire patterns are useful general predictors of future patterns, because the geography of our fire regime is determined by ongoing patterns of ignitions, fire weather (especially Santa Ana winds), terrain, and vegetation.

A wildfire becomes a Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) fire when the fire burns in areas where wildland fuels and urban fuels (, i.e. structures, wood decks, flammable landscaping, or other improvements) combine. The probability of a catastrophic wildfire occurring at any particular location within or adjacent to the planning area is dependent on a chain of events that includes fire ignition, fire weather, topography, fire behavior, and fire suppression actions taken. The probability of large-scale WUI fires occurring within the Oak Park assessment area is high, given the nature of the local fuels, the likelihood of Santa Ana weather events, population density, and the historical data.

### **Woolsey Fire**

The Woolsey Fire burned in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties in California. The fire ignited on November 8, 2018 and burned 96,949 acres of land during a Santa Ana wind event. The fire destroyed 1,643 structures, killed three people, and prompted the evacuation of more than 295,000 people.

The fire started in Woolsey Canyon near the Santa Susana Field Laboratory in the Santa Susana Mountains just northeast of Oak Park. The Santa Ana winds pushed the fire in a south westerly direction throughout the first day pushing the fire into the Oak Park area. The Woolsey Fire burned through the Oak Park area within the first 2 days of the fire.

As shown in Figure 20, the fire destroyed 16 homes. (Max Young Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council, 2022). As many as 100 homes in the Oak Park area were damaged and required extensive repair. The majority of the structures damaged or lost from the Woolsey fire were located on or near the perimeter in alignment with the wind. However, several

homes well within the interior of the community were also lost or damaged, likely a result of ignition by flying embers. See Figure 20 for location of homes that were destroyed or severely damaged during the Woolsey Fire. A significant number of homes in the northern and eastern portions of Oak Park that remained standing after the fire also suffered considerable damage from heavy smoke and blowing embers or flying debris. Due to extended drought conditions and strong winds, the fire consumed most of the native vegetation, which could take decades to return to pre-fire conditions. (VCFD 2022)

## Existing Protective Factors (Per Oak Park WRA)

The Oak Park WRA identifies a number of existing protective factors that are presently observed in the community.

- The Ventura County Fire Protection District defensible space requirements seem to be generally well established and maintained in the HOA and open space areas surrounding the perimeter of the community.
- The community has multiple schools and sports fields that offer opportunity for use as shelter in place locations or safe refuge areas.
- Underground utilities exist throughout the entire community.
- All homes are built on slab foundations reducing opportunity for wind blown ember intrusion in crawl spaces under structures.
- Water supply systems did not fail during the Woolsey fire, and have been improved since.
- Many homes are built with fire resistant construction features.
- A county fire station is located centrally in the community.

## KEY INFRASTRUCTURE

### Structures

As previously stated in Section I.B, the community of Oak Park is made up of approximately 5,500 homes made up of single family residences, condominiums, and apartments. The community also includes 9 schools (including the school district office building), 3 churches and 11 developed public parks. Oak Park has three modest sized business areas made up of multiple commercial structures. These areas include mostly restaurants, retail businesses and some office space.

### Water System

Triunfo Water & Sanitation District (TWSD) supplies 2.6 million gallons of potable water daily to more than 14,000 people in the community of Oak Park. The water distribution system consists of four storage reservoirs, five pumping stations, and 54 miles of pipeline. Triunfo purchases 100% of its water from northern California via the California State Water Project. Triunfo also supplies recycled water for irrigation of parks, schoolyards, homeowner association landscapes, and roadway greenbelts. In 2017, the district expanded that service, and increased its operating efficiency, with the purchase of Calleguas Municipal Water District's recycled water system. TWSD's network of water storage tanks allow some in-system transfers between reservoirs in the event of water outages. Tank levels in each of

the reservoirs are also maintained for Ventura County Fire Department specifications for optimum water quality and for distribution system efficiency. Presently the total storage volume is equivalent to approximately two days' worth of supply. There are several water storage tanks, pumping stations and other important water and sanitation facilities located throughout Oak Park.

The system also complies with the County Fire Department's requirement to provide sufficient supply for structure fires. The municipal water system has fire hydrants spaced every 300-500 feet throughout the residential areas. TWSD's primary pump stations have auxiliary power from diesel fueled generators sufficient to move water supplies into any area of the system.

Many of the homes and apartment complexes have swimming pools which can possibly assist firefighters with additional water supply.

### Electrical Utilities

The electrical utilities in Oak Park are provided by Southern California Edison and all electrical transmission service is located underground.

### Current Projects

#### **Calleguas – Las Virgenes Interconnection**

Calleguas Municipal Water District (Calleguas) provides water supplies to local water agencies that serve the communities of North Ranch and Oak Park. Calleguas and Las Virgenes Municipal Water District (LVMWD) each own and operate potable water systems largely dependent on imported water supply. The Calleguas water system currently relies on a single point of connection to receive imported water. Calleguas and LVMWD are constructing an interconnection to improve the redundancy and reliability of both water systems. The construction of this water supply reliability project involves the installation of a 24" watermain and a pump station along Lindero Canyon Rd between Thousand Oaks Blvd. and Kanan Rd.

#### Project Objectives

- Improve the reliability and flexibility of your water storage and distribution systems.
- Improve the ability to provide potable water to the community during periods of reduced imported water supply.
- Reduce the risk for potential water shortages associated with natural disasters, such as wildfire and earthquake, and required system maintenance.

### MAPS

Using technology and local expertise, the sponsors of this CWPP have included a series of maps depicting the site and situation of the Oak Park Community (Appendix C). The following maps are visual aids from which the Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council, Ventura County Fire Department, community members and other stakeholders can assess and make recommendations.

1. Area Communities Map
2. Fire Hazard Severity map

3. Fire History (1910-2010)
4. Evacuation Map
5. Fuel Treatment Projects (optional)

## C. FIREFIGHTING RESOURCES

Oak Park, an unincorporated community in the County of Ventura, is immediately surrounded by State Responsibility Area (SRA). CAL FIRE has the overall responsibility for wildland fire response in the SRA. In Ventura County, CAL FIRE has contracted with Ventura County Fire Department to provide initial attack resources to wildland fire incidents.

Ventura County Fire Station 36 is centrally located in Oak Park at 855 Deerhill Road and is staffed 24 hours daily with a Type 1 Medic Engine and 3 firefighters plus a reserve Type 1 Engine.

Type 1 fire engines are used primarily for structural firefighting and initial Emergency Medical Service (EMS), and although not specialized for the wildland firefighting mission type 1 engines are often deployed for initial attack and structure protection during wildland fires.

There currently is not a wildfire preplan for the Oak Park area, however Ventura County Fire Dept personnel have stated that the development of a wildfire preplan for Oak Park has begun and is in progress. The standard Ventura County Fire dispatch for a brush fire is at the “High” level, unless otherwise directed by the Duty Chief. As identified in the VCFD Operational Procedure 1002, response levels, a high-level response plan will be in force year-round except when altered by the Duty Chief to “Low” or Plan 2 (Ventura County Fire Department, 2018).

Due to the proximity of Los Angeles County to the southern border of Oak Park, Ventura County Fire and Los Angeles County Fire have developed an automatic aid response agreement for wildland fires.

The standard auto aid dispatch from LA County Fire for a wildland fire in Oak Park is:

- 7 Engines
- 2 Chiefs
- 1 Water Tender
- 1 Fire Patrol
- 2 Hand Crews
- 2 Helicopters
- Super Scoopers when available
- 1 Medic Squad

For wildland fires originating from the Santa Susana area to the northeast and the Bell Canyon area to the east the Ventura County Fire Department, Los Angeles County Fire Department and Los Angeles City Fire Department have developed a mutual response agreement for areas identified to be in a Mutual Response Zone (MTZ), where the three agencies have mutual interest in wildland fire threat where there are jurisdictional



boundaries that meet. These agencies work together to send the closest available resources to emergencies regardless of land ownership or jurisdiction. Each agency sends a very robust wildland response with a variety of firefighting resources as part of the agreement. When a wildland fire is reported in the MTZ over 50 pieces of fire apparatus and multiple firefighting aircraft respond. Not only do these agencies commit to responding to fires in the region as a matter of mutual risk, the fire departments train together to ensure operational coordination and effectiveness.

More detailed information is available in the Oak Park WRA.

## D. SUMMATION

### Summary of Existing Protective Factors (Per Oak Park WRA)

- The Ventura County Fire Protection District defensible space requirements seem to be generally well established and maintained in the HOA and open space areas surrounding the perimeter of the community.
- The community has multiple schools and sports fields that offer opportunity to identified and used as shelter in place locations or safe refuge areas.
- Underground utilities exist throughout the entire community.
- All homes are built on slab foundations reducing opportunity for wind blown ember intrusion in crawl spaces under structures.
- Water supply systems did not fail during the Woolsey fire.
- Many homes are built with fire resistant construction features.
- A county fire station is located centrally in the community.
- The Oak Park Fire Safe Council is actively pursuing risk mitigation efforts and is working with the community, land management agencies, and public safety agencies to reduce risk to wildfire for the community.

### Summary of Existing Risks Identified

- The community of Oak Park is in the Wildland Urban Interface surrounded by wildland fuels and large open space areas.
- The community is positioned in direct alignment with large areas of wildland and open space areas to the northeast frequented by Santa Ana winds and historic wildland fires.
- The wildland fuels in the area can support rapid high intensity fire behavior.
- The area has a continued history of periodic large wildland fires.
- There are pockets of heavy fuels throughout the interior parkways, riparian areas and open space areas in Oak Park.
- There are few coordinated fuels mitigation projects that are planned and funded for the area, other than the maintenance being done by RSRPD, HOAs and the requirement for each property owner to maintain defensible space and comply with Ventura County's Fire Hazard Reduction Program.
- Many structures are vulnerable to wildland fire and are not in compliance with Home Ignition Zone guidelines.

- Dependence on a limited road system for access and egress in an emergency that can become severely congested or be cut off by wildfire leaving no exit route, extended evacuation times, and unsafe travel conditions.

## SECTION II: COLLABORATION

Strong working relationships are critical in ensuring that our communities are well-prepared. This section describes those key partners and their roles in developing this CWPP.

### A. KEY PARTNERS

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

Organization	Roles/Responsibilities
<b>Oak Park Community Foundation (OPCF)</b>	Oak Park Fire Safe Council (OPFSC) operates as a non-profit activity committee under the OPCF
<b>Ventura County Regional Fire Safe Council (VCFRSC)</b>	Provides “Home Hardening Inspections” as well as assistance with fuel mitigation throughout Ventura County. Currently working with OPFSC to develop a custom inspection protocol and data software to track “Home Hardening” efforts by HOA’s and residents
<b>Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains (SMMRCD)</b>	Provides “Home Hardening Inspections” as well as assistance with fuel mitigation, as well as a variety of environmental services outside the scope of fire prevention
<b>Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District (RSRPD)</b>	Responsible for maintaining “Defensible Space” through fuel mitigation in the open space areas of Oak Park
<b>Ventura County Fire Department (VCFD)</b>	Responsible for Fire and EMS services as well as fire prevention inspections to assure annual fuel mitigation and maintenance of “Defensible Space.”

## SECTION III: 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

Engage and Educate the community regarding wildfire related issues. We do this through a variety of communications mechanisms, some of which exist today, and some of which are planned.

In general, one challenge that we face is lack of resources. The Oak Park Fire Safe Council is small, and already stretched by the projects that they are currently engaged in. We need to redouble our efforts to engage more volunteers.

### B. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

- Annual Townhall - We have held an annual townhall in each of the past two years, engaging the County Supervisors Office, the Ventura County Fire Department and other agencies involved in wildfire protection in Oak Park. Each of these townhalls was attended by approximately 50 homeowners, and resulted in further engagement with the community.
- The Acorn- The local newspaper, The Acorn, has published a variety of articles about our efforts. We use these articles, and interviews, to solicit new homeowners to the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ program), as well as new volunteers.
- Doorhangers- Members of the Fire Safe Council walk the most critical neighborhoods of Oak Park in order to solicit HIZ assessments.
- Digital Infrastructure - OPFSC recently won a grant from CAL FIRE and Southern California Edison to build out a digital outreach infrastructure. We will use this grant to improve the OPFSC web site, develop a social media outreach program, and publish video content which can be monitored for hours that can be applied to Firewise certification.

### C. FUTURE PROJECTS

- The Digital Infrastructure will be built out over the next year. This will accelerate our ability to reach out to the community, and accomplish our objectives
- Evacuation Communication Plan- This does not exist today, but we are informed by the Ventura County Fire Department that they are working on it for our area. While this plan will be developed by VCFD, we will serve a communications role in Oak Park.
- Ventura County Wildfire Collaborative- OPFSC is not currently a member of this organization, but in recent meetings with them, there seems to be an opportunity for us to become a member of that group. This is a group of the Fire Safe Councils in Ventura County, along with the VC Resource Conservation District, all working closely with the VC



Fire Department. This group will shortcut our learning time for many of our programs, and many of the Fire Safe Councils have already implemented similar programs.

- Two or three community wide events held in early September just before the fire season gets going. These public events are helpful in bringing residents, fire personnel and experts together and is a good way for us to recruit volunteers.
- Projects and events in support of ongoing Firewise certification for Oak Park communities.
- Home Hardening educational workshops.

## SECTION IV: STRUCTURAL HARDENING

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

### A. PRIORITIES

OPFSC's priority in regard to structures is to educate homeowners regarding the various structure hardening techniques and technologies that will protect their home from wildfire. Our digital infrastructure will allow us to identify assessment opportunities, and follow up post assessment regarding further recommended actions. This will also afford us the opportunity to create a "community picture" of success regarding the program, and identify opportunities for improvement.

Additionally, we aspire to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Firewise Community Certification, which will further protect and engage the community, and reduce the cost of insurance to our homeowners.

### B. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

From a general survey it appears that some of homes in Oak Park have been built with the WUI environment in mind. Many homes are constructed of fire resistive materials such as stucco siding, class A rated fire resistive roofing, slab foundations, boxed eaves, and have well maintained landscaping with hardscapes often adjacent to the structure. The Tax Assessor's data shows that the majority of homes in Oak Park were built prior to California Building Code Chapter 7A.

Chapter 7A WUI building code requirements, were established July 1, 2008. Chapter 7A codes apply to the WUI areas in California and identify minimum standards for materials and construction methods for exterior wildfire exposure. Chapter 7A requires building construction used in the exterior of buildings within Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) fire areas to be fire-resistive construction. Lumber products used as siding, decking or soffits in exteriors must pass state-mandated fire tests. In addition, there are a variety of other improvements that minimize risk of wildfire including 1/8" screening on all vents, weatherstripping of all door gaps, tempered glass windows, screen covered gutters, and many others.

A Home Ignition Zone Assessment will identify for a homeowner the opportunities for improvement to minimize risk of ignition through contact with fire, ember intrusion and radiation. Oak Park has conducted a number of these assessments in conjunction with our partners, the

Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council and the Santa Monica Mountains Resource Conservation District. A number of Oak Park residents are trained (and are being trained) on use of the assessment tool.

The following are ongoing structural hardening projects:

- Development of a digital infrastructure to communicate with homeowners, track assessments, and identify opportunities for follow up with homeowners.
- Development of relationship with Santa Monica Mountains Resource Conservation District to perform assessments, and train our local Oak Park assessors on their tool and processes
- Development of relationship with Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council to perform assessments, and train our local Oak Park assessors on their Fire Aside assessment tool and processes. In addition, we are the pilot community for testing the newly developed assessment tool.

## C. FUTURE PROJECTS

In order to significantly expand our program in Oak Park, we need to improve our communication with homeowners, better educate them on structural hardening techniques, and follow up with them to make sure they have what they need to make the recommended improvements. Potential Future Projects are:

- Significant expansion (and extension) of our Digital Infrastructure, and other methods for reaching out to the community such as the local newspaper (The Acorn), townhalls, newsletter, etc.
- Substantially increase our ability to do assessments by recruiting more Oak Park based assessors.
- Acquire grant awards to do more assessments and to assist Oak Park homeowners with post assessment improvements
- Develop a list of potential contractors that can assist in making the updates and improvements
- Secure Firewise Community Certification
- "Appoint a **neighborhood captain** as the touchpoint for each particular street or neighborhood."
- Build a large volunteer base to help with assessments and volunteer hours for Firewise certification
- Develop a process for routine/periodic follow up assessments with homeowners,

## SECTION V: 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

Our priority is to educate homeowners regarding the various defensible space improvement techniques that will protect their home from wildfire. The zones and recommendations for defensible space improvement are highlighted in the HIZ assessment program. Our digital infrastructure will allow us to identify assessment opportunities, and follow up post assessment regarding further recommended actions. This will also afford us the opportunity to create a “community picture” of success regarding the program, and identify opportunities for improvement.

Additionally, we aspire to Firewise Community Certification, which will further protect and engage the community, and reduce the cost of insurance to our homeowners.

### B. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

Many of the homes on the outer perimeter of the Oak Park are built on parcels that back up directly to open space areas. These homes have direct exposure to wildland areas and could be the first line of homes to be directly impacted by wild fire advancing from open space areas. It is important to continue to maintain the fuels and defensible space in these areas. Some of these areas that are contiguous with wildland areas are also some of the older homes in Oak Park that were built in the first development phases. Earlier construction features are often more vulnerable to wildfire. Additional Home Ignition Zone inspections are needed to help better define the risk to individual homes and neighborhoods.

Home and structure loss during wildfires occur as a result of some part of the structure or surrounding environment igniting from one or more of the three basic wildfire exposures: 1) embers, 2) radiant heat, and 3) direct flame contact.

There are methods for homeowners to prepare their homes to withstand ember attacks and minimize the likelihood of flames or surface fire touching the home or any attachments. Experiments, models and post-fire studies have shown homes ignite due to the condition of the home and everything around it, up to 200' from the foundation. This is called the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ), and is defined as follows:

**Immediate Zone:** The home and the area 0-5' from the furthest attached exterior point of the home; defined as a non-combustible area. Science tells us this is the most important zone to take immediate action on as it is the most vulnerable to embers. Start with the house itself then move into the landscaping section of the Immediate Zone



Intermediate Zone: 5-30' from the furthest exterior point of the home. Landscaping/hardscaping should employ breaks that can help influence and decrease fire behavior.

Extended Zone: 30-100 feet, out to 200 feet. Landscaping – the goal here is not to eliminate fire but to interrupt fire's path and keep flames smaller and on the ground.

The HIZ assessment is the primary method for identifying potential improvements to the defensible space around the home.

The following are ongoing projects for protection of defensible space:

- Development of a digital infrastructure to communicate with homeowners, track assessments, and identify opportunities for follow up with homeowners.
- Development of relationship with Santa Monica Mountains Resource Conservation District to perform assessments, and train our local Oak Park assessors on their tool and processes
- Development of relationship with Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council to perform assessments, and train our local Oak Park assessors on their tool and processes. In addition, we are the pilot community for testing the newly developed assessment tool.

## C. FUTURE PROJECTS

In order to significantly expand our program in Oak Park, we need to improve our communication with homeowners, better educate them on defensible space improvement, and follow up with them to make sure they have what they need to make the recommended improvements. Potential Future Projects are:

- Significant expansion (and extension) of our Digital Infrastructure, and other methods for reaching out to the community such as the local newspaper (The Acorn), townhalls, newsletter, etc.
- Substantially increase our ability to do assessments by recruiting more Oak Park based assessors.
- Acquire grant awards to do more assessments and to assist Oak Park homeowners with post assessment improvements
- Develop a list of potential contractors that can assist in making the updates and improvements to defensible space
- Secure Firewise Community Certification
- "Appoint a **neighborhood captain** as the touchpoint for each particular street or neighborhood."
- Build a large volunteer base to help with assessments and volunteer hours for Firewise certification

## SECTION VI: FUELS TREATMENT

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

### A. PRIORITIES

VCFD is working with local parkland agencies to improve backcountry access and explore opportunities for future fuel mitigation projects in the publicly-owned open space areas adjacent to, or near Oak Park. These agencies include Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District (RSRPD), National Park Service (NPS) Chesebore/Palo Comado Canyons and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA). The primary agency charged with maintenance of open space around Oak Park is the RSRPD.

### B. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District (RSRPD) Fuel Mitigation Projects RSRPD maintains annual brush and fuel clearance of 100 feet from structures in its open space areas, primarily around the perimeter of the community. Weed abatement and brush clearance is also well maintained at many of the trail access points. In the newer tracts of Oak Park, HOA's are typically responsible for conducting 100-foot defensible space and weed abatement. RSRPD maintains the defensible space in the open space areas of the older tracts of Oak Park. RSRPD applied for and was awarded a \$395,000 Grant from the State of California Natural Resource Agency through the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy for the Medea Creek Wildfire Resiliency Project. This project has three major components:

- Fire Debris and Invasive Plant Removal along Medea Creek.
- Creation of an Oak Tree Fire Break along the northeasterly leading edge of the community.
- Purchase of a Bobcat Skid-Steer with attachments to widen trails for fire access and on-going fuel management activities.

As noted above, RSRPD annually clears around Oak Park to within 100 ft. of structures (which is partially paid for with the annual Oak Park property tax assessment), and has recently budgeted \$100,000 in the current budget to thin out the live and dead fuel load in approx. 250' linear feet of Medea Creek beginning at the southwest corner of Oak Hills Dr and Kanan Rd, continuing downstream to the point that the creek passes under Oak Hills Dr. RSRPD has future plans to remove invasive palm trees in portions of Medea Creek from Bromely Dr. to Kanan, as well as invasive weeds and old dead fuels remaining from the Woolsey Fire. RSRPD continues to work on reducing more fuels in interior park ways of Oak Park as funding becomes available.

## C. FUTURE PROJECTS

- RSRPD has been working with VCFD and OPFSC on a plan to improve the removal and mitigation of fuels within the 30' to 100' defensible space zone involving the environmentally sensitive riparian areas of Medea Creek and Lindero Creek in Oak Park. Because of the environmental challenges as well as the involvement of multiple agencies, the work involved in getting approvals will be costly. RSRPD applying for a grant to cover the cost of environmental studies and permits as well as cost of fuel mitigation. OPFSC supports RSRPD in these efforts. OPFSC has agreed to offer additional support to RSRPD by increasing awareness and the support of the community toward this project.
- OPFSC also intends on applying for grants to assist RSRPD in maintaining the defensible space in the riparian areas once the initial mitigation and thinning of fuels is complete.
- Potential volunteers for monitoring once the initial mitigation is complete.
- Chipper events to minimize and remove fuel from open space areas

## SECTION VII: 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 the PACE system (primary, alternate, contingency and emergency) used to plan ahead.

Evacuation planning is a dynamic process subject to the nuances of each community. Below is an overview of the Oak Park's key ingress and egress, as well as designated evacuation corridors, Temporary Safe Refuge Areas, completed projects, priorities and future projects.

### A. OVERVIEW OF INGRESS AND EGRESS

Oak Park has two major thoroughfares:

Kanan Road - Kanan is a four-lane, well-maintained paved road that allows egress to the south through the City of Agoura Hills and eventually to the 101 freeway, approximately 1.5 miles from the southern border of Oak Park. This path is the major ingress/egress for the majority of Oak Park residents. Kanan Road also allows egress to the west to Lindero Canyon Road and also extends beyond through Thousand Oaks to Westlake Blvd. From that point residents can continue south toward the 101 freeway or west toward the 23 freeway.

Lindero Canyon Road - Lindero is a four-lane, well-maintained paved road that in places serves as the border between Oak Park and the City of Thousand Oaks. It runs north and south, allowing access from Kanan Road along Lindero to the 101 freeway.

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### B. DESIGNATED EVACUATION CORRIDORS AND TEMPORARY SAFE REFUGE AREAS (TSRA)

At this time, there are no officially designated evacuation corridors or TSRA's established in Oak Park.

Wildfire is a dynamic situation; residents are encouraged to find alternate routes of travel before an emergency happens.

Ventura County Office of Emergency Services (OES) is responsible for evacuation procedures.

### C. PRIORITIES

Maintain Communication with VCFD and Ventura County OES in order to assure community involvement and input in regard to strategic planning and evacuation notifications



#### **D. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS**

Ventura County Office of Emergency Services is currently working under a grant to improve evacuation notification. Part of this project involves community outreach. OPFSC has been in contact with OES and plans to take an active role in assuring the community's involvement during the outreach.

#### **E. FUTURE PROJECTS**

- Assure that the Oak Park Fire Safe Council community communications plan and mechanisms eventually support the Ventura County OES-developed Evacuation Plan.

## SECTION VIII: Summary Of Potential Future Projects

There are countless ways that communities can act to protect themselves ahead of wildfires. This section provides a summary of the potential future projects identified in this plan. This list is the community's first cut at current high priority projects, and is expected to be modified over time.

### A. FUTURE PROJECTS

- The Digital Infrastructure will be built out over the next year. This will accelerate our ability to reach out to the community, and accomplish our objectives
- Evacuation Communication Plan - Ventura County OES is responsible for development and maintenance of an evacuation plan for Oak Park. Work with OES to support their plan.
- Ventura County Wildfire Collaborative - We are not currently a member of this organization, but in recent meetings, there seems to be an opportunity for us to become a member of that group. This is a group of the Fire Safe Councils in Ventura County, along with the VC Resource Conservation District, all working closely with the VC Fire Department. This group will shortcut our learning time for many of our programs, and many of the Fire Safe Councils have already implemented similar programs.
- Substantially increase our ability to do assessments by recruiting more Oak Park based assessors.
- Acquire grant awards to do more assessments and to assist Oak Park homeowners with post assessment improvements
- Develop a list of potential contractors that can assist in making the updates and improvements
- RSRPD has been working with VCFD and OPFSC on a plan to improve the removal and mitigation of fuels within the 30' to 100' defensible space zone involving the environmentally sensitive riparian areas of Medea Creek and Lindero Creek in Oak Park. Because of the environmental challenges as well as the involvement of multiple agencies, the work involved in getting approvals will be costly. RSRPD is in the process of applying for a grant to cover the cost of environmental studies and permits as well as cost of fuel mitigation. OPFSC supports RSRPD in these efforts. OPFSC has agreed to offer additional support to RSRPD by increasing awareness and the support of the community toward this project.
- Oak Park Fire Safe Council also intends on applying for grants to assist RSRPD in maintaining the defensible space in the riparian areas once the initial mitigation and thinning of fuels is complete.
- Secure Firewise Community Certification.
- "Appoint a **neighborhood captain** as the touchpoint for each particular street, neighborhood or HOA."

- Build a large volunteer base to help with assessments and volunteer hours for Firewise certification

## SECTION IX: 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 Oak Park:

- 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.

**VENTURA COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PREVENTION PLANS REVIEW COMMITTEE:**

This CWPP was created, reviewed and submitted by the Oak Park Fire Safe Council, with input from Community and Partner Stakeholders. We recommend approval of this CWPP as demonstrated by the signature below

X



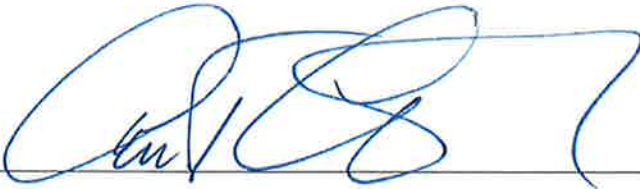
7/13/23

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JL Diaz, Chairman, Oak Park Fire Safe Council

The signatures 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. This CWPP was reviewed and recommended for approval by the Ventura County Community Wildfire Protection Plan Review Committee as demonstrated by the signatures below.

X



7-11-23

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Andrew Ortega, President, Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council

X



7-21-2023

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John Owens, San Luis Obispo Unit Chief, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

X



7-11-23

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Dustin Gardner, Fire Chief, Ventura County Fire Department

## SECTION X: APPENDICES

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

### APPENDIX A: MEETING TRACKING DOCUMENTS

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

#### **Oak Park Fire Safe Council Representatives**

JL Diaz	Chairman
John Faucher	Vice-Chairman
Robert Convey	Treasurer
Doug Wilson	Secretary
Lori Gunn	Board Member
Jay Fernandez	Board Member
Ed Reiner	Board Member

#### **Agency Representatives**

Stephen Watson- Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council, Executive Director

Max Young- Ventura Regional Fire Safe Council, Wildfire Liaison

Pauline Allen- Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains, Community Resilience Team

Clark Stevens- Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains, Executive Officer and Architect

Larry Williams- Ventura Fire Department, Fire Prevention Supervisor

Celine Moomey- Ventura Fire Department, Cal Fire Liaison

Dan Paranick- Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, District Manager

Wayne Nakaoka- Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, Director of Planning and Maintenance



## **Meetings Dates**

There have been many meetings of the OPFSC to develop this document. A copy of this document has been sent out to each of our four primary partner agencies for feedback and input, including the Ventura County Fire Department, Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, Santa Monica Mountains Resource Conservation District and the Ventura County Regional Fire Safe Council. We have also shared the document with the Oak Park Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) and the Community Foundation for Oak Park for their feedback. All comments and edits have been reviewed and incorporated into this document as appropriate.

FIGURE 1: OAK PARK AREA MAP INCLUDING OPEN SPACE



FIGURE 2: FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY MAP

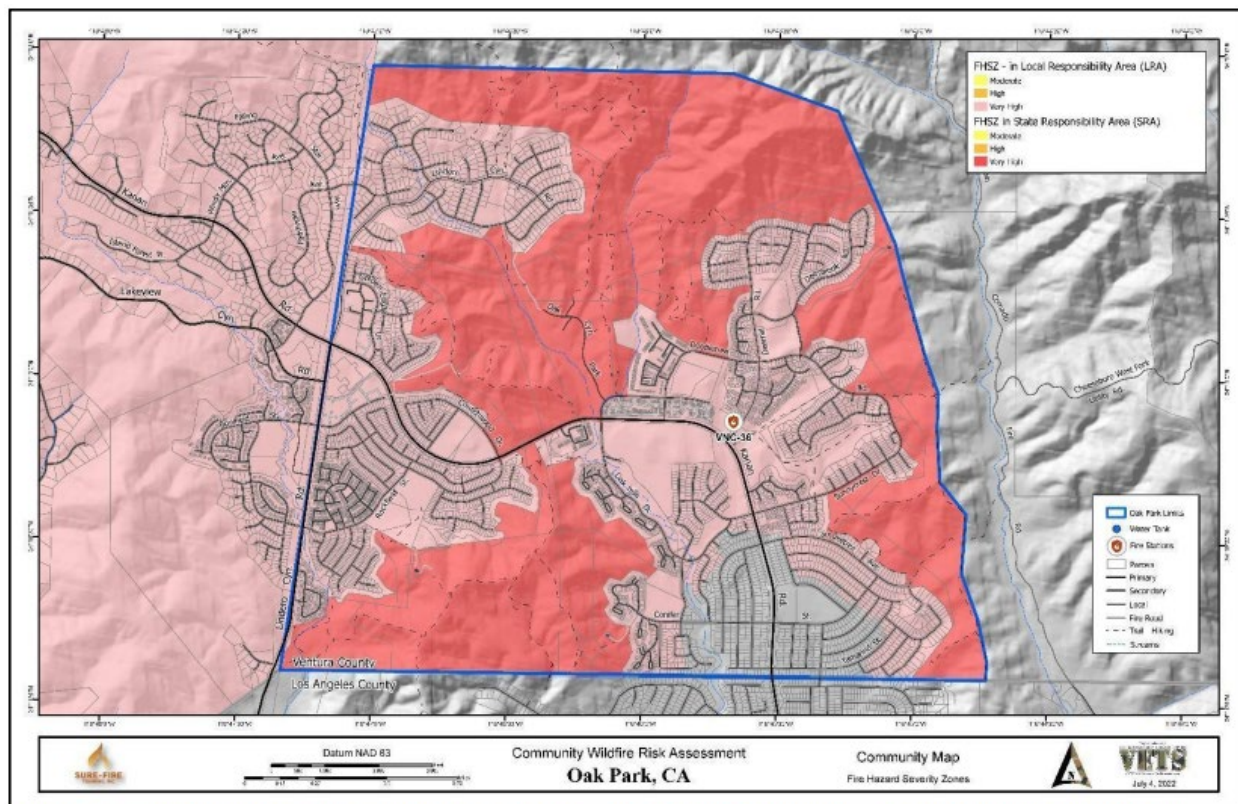


Figure 8; Oak Park FHSZ Map The FHSZ map shows the entire Oak Park planning area to be classified as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone by CAL FIRE, November 2007. <https://egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/>

FIGURE 3: FIRE HISTORY 1910-2010

Fire History for the Oak Park area 1949 to 2018		
Fire Name	Date	Acreage
Woolsey	November 8, 2018	96,949
Topanga	September 28, 2005	23,396
Dayton Canyon	October 9, 1982	43,097
Clampitt	September 25, 1970	115,537
Simi Hills	October 31, 1949	20,578
<b>Total Acres</b>		<b>299.557</b>

