

ORDINANCE NO. 7,958-N.S.

ADOPTION OF CALFIRE MAP DESIGNATING CITY OF BERKELEY FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the City of Berkeley as follows:

Section 1: Findings

Pursuant to California Government Code 51177-51179, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE) has released identified updates to Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the Local Responsibility Area. This process last occurred in 2007 and is directed by state law. Fire Hazard Severity Zones consist of Very High, High, and Moderate designations. Of note, when the current maps were released in 2007 the High and Moderate designations did not apply to the Local Responsibility Area and only Very High area were designated by the City Council. Senate Bill 63 (Stern, 2021) amended Government Code 51178 to add the Moderate and High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the Local Responsibility Area.

Panoramic Hill and the areas immediately surrounding it are recommended to also be designated as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone due to narrow structure separation distance and high housing density, limited retrofitting of structures to bring them in compliance with Chapter 7A of the Building Standards Code, a single evacuation route that will cause extended evacuation time, proximity to dense vegetation and topographic features capable of supporting fast moving wind driven fire, the benefits to evacuation and wildfire risk reduction associated with long term replacement of existing housing stock with structures that meet wildfire resistive construction standards, and the strategic opportunity that the relatively straight, wide, north-south street selected as the western boundary could provide in terms of stopping or slowing the advance of a fire moving from the hills, west into the City.

The areas recommended to be designated as High Fire Hazard Severity Zones are included due to fire history (with major fires occurring in and around this area in 1905, 1923, 1970, 1980, and 1991), the narrow structure separation distance between homes, the limited retrofitting of structures to bring them in compliance with Chapter 7A of the Building Standards Code, the benefits to evacuation and wildfire risk reduction associated with long term replacement of existing housing stock with wildfire resistive construction, limited east to west evacuation routes that will cause extended evacuation time, and the strategic opportunity that the relatively straight, wide, north-south streets selected as western boundaries could provide in terms of stopping or slowing the advance of a fire moving from the hills, west into the City.

Community members in areas designated as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones are required to maintain defensible space within 100 feet of structures, or the property line, whichever is closer and in the case of new construction or major remodels classified by the Building Official as new construction, to meet the wildfire resistant construction requirements included in Chapter 7A of the Building Standards Code.

Community members in areas designated as High Fire Hazard Severity Zones are required to meet the wildfire resistant construction requirements included in Chapter 7A of the Building Standards Code and in the case of new construction or major remodels classified by the Building Official as new construction.

Finally, community members selling property in the Very High and High Fire Hazard Severity Zones must conduct a natural hazard real estate disclosure at time of sale per CA CIV 1102.19 (AB 38, 2019).

Section 2: Adoption of CALFIRE recommended Fire Hazard Severity Zones:

The City hereby designates the Fire Hazard Severity Zones as recommended by the CALFIRE pursuant to Government Code Section 51178, and

Section 3: Designation of Additional Lands as Fire Hazard Severity Zones:

Notwithstanding the minimum fire safety standards required by state law, under the authority included in Government Code 51175 the City has the authority to establish more stringent wildfire safety standards. Further, as part of the Local Responsibility Area map adoption process, the City may designate areas not included in the identified CALFIRE maps as Moderate, High, or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. The City may not reduce the identified designations, or boundaries, included in the CALFIRE maps.

Staff have reviewed the CALFIRE maps and recommend the following additional designations:

1. Designate as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones those areas of the City bounded by the line formed by these roads. Homes addressed on, or with a structural frontage on either side of these road segments are included in the zone:
 - a. Canyon Road from the Oakland border to Stadium Rim Way
 - b. Stadium Rim Way from Canyon Road to Bancroft Way
 - c. Bancroft Way from Stadium Rim Way to Prospect Street
 - d. Prospect Street from Bancroft Way to Bancroft Steps
 - e. Bancroft Steps from Prospect Street to Warring Street
 - f. Bancroft Way from Warring Street to Piedmont Avenue
 - g. Piedmont Avenue from Bancroft Way to Dwight Way
 - h. Dwight Way from Piedmont Avenue to the Oakland border
2. Designate as High Fire Hazard Severity Zones those areas of the City west of the CALFIRE Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone and east / northeast of the line formed by these roads. Homes addressed on, or with a structural frontage on either side of these road segments are included in the zone:
 - a. The Arlington Avenue from the Kensington Border to Marin Avenue

- b. Sutter Street from the Southern portal of the Northbrae Tunnel to Eunice Street
- c. Eunice Street from Sutter Street to Spruce Street
- d. Spruce Street from Eunice Street to Hearst Avenue
- e. Gayley Road from Hearst Avenue to Stadium Rim Way
- f. Piedmont Avenue from Stadium Rim Way to Dwight Way
- g. Warring Street from Dwight Way to Derby Street
- h. Belrose Avenue from Derby Street to Garber Street
- i. Claremont Boulevard from Garber Street to Claremont Avenue
- j. Claremont Avenue from Claremont Boulevard to the Oakland Border
- k. Tunnel Road from Ashby Avenue to the Oakland Border

Section 4. Copies of this Ordinance shall be posted for two days prior to adoption in the display case located near the walkway in front of the Maudelle Shirek Building, 2134 Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Within 15 days of adoption, copies of this Ordinance shall be filed at each branch of the Berkeley Public Library and the title shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation.

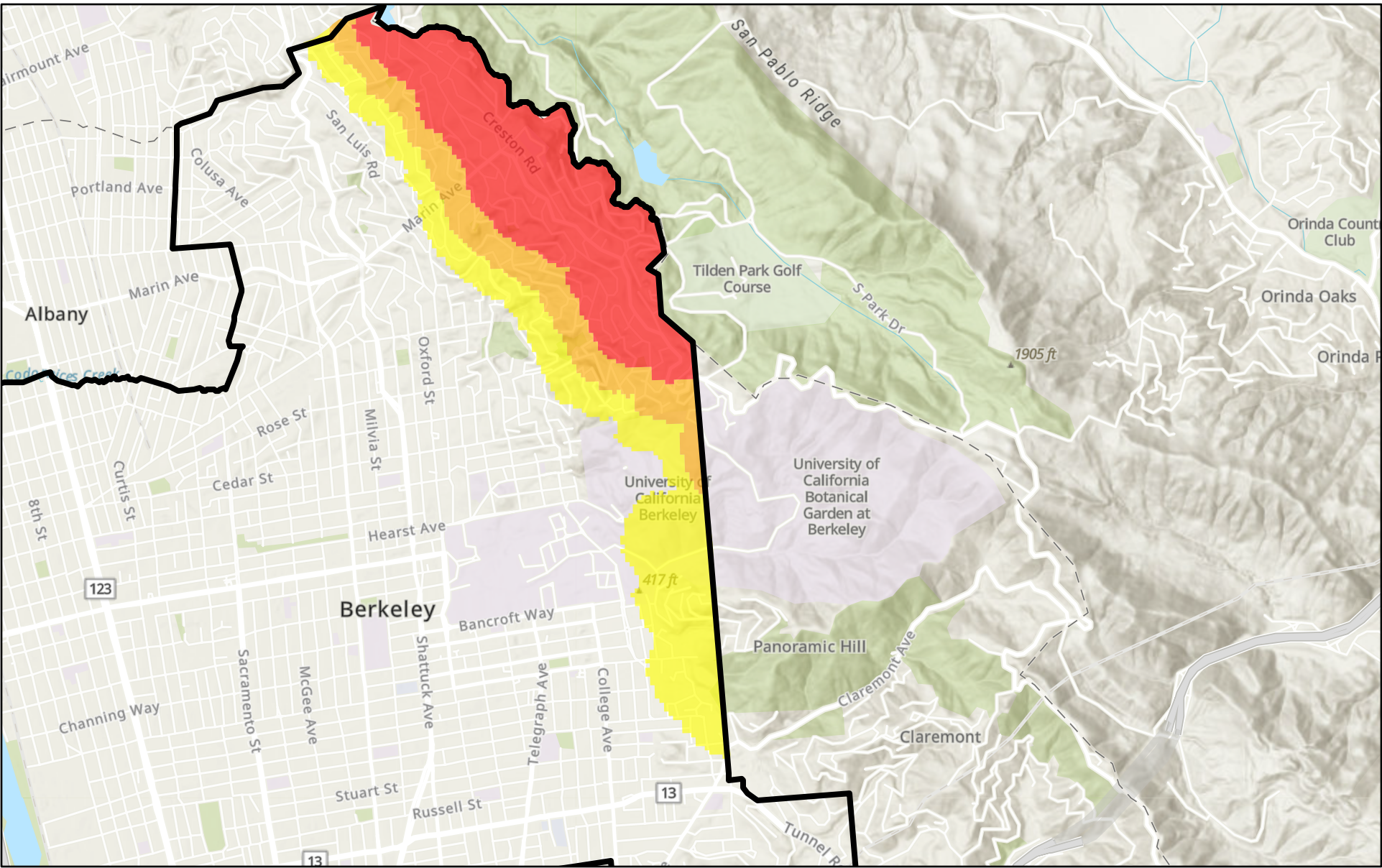
At a special meeting of the Council of the City of Berkeley held on April 15, 2025, this Ordinance was passed to print and ordered published by posting by the following vote:

Ayes: Bartlett, Blackaby, Humbert, Kesarwani, Lunaparra, O’Keefe, Taplin, Tregub, and Ishii.

Noes: None.

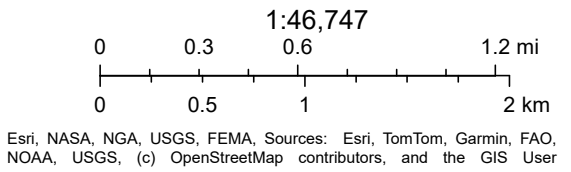
Absent: None.

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CALFIRE FHSZ Recommendations

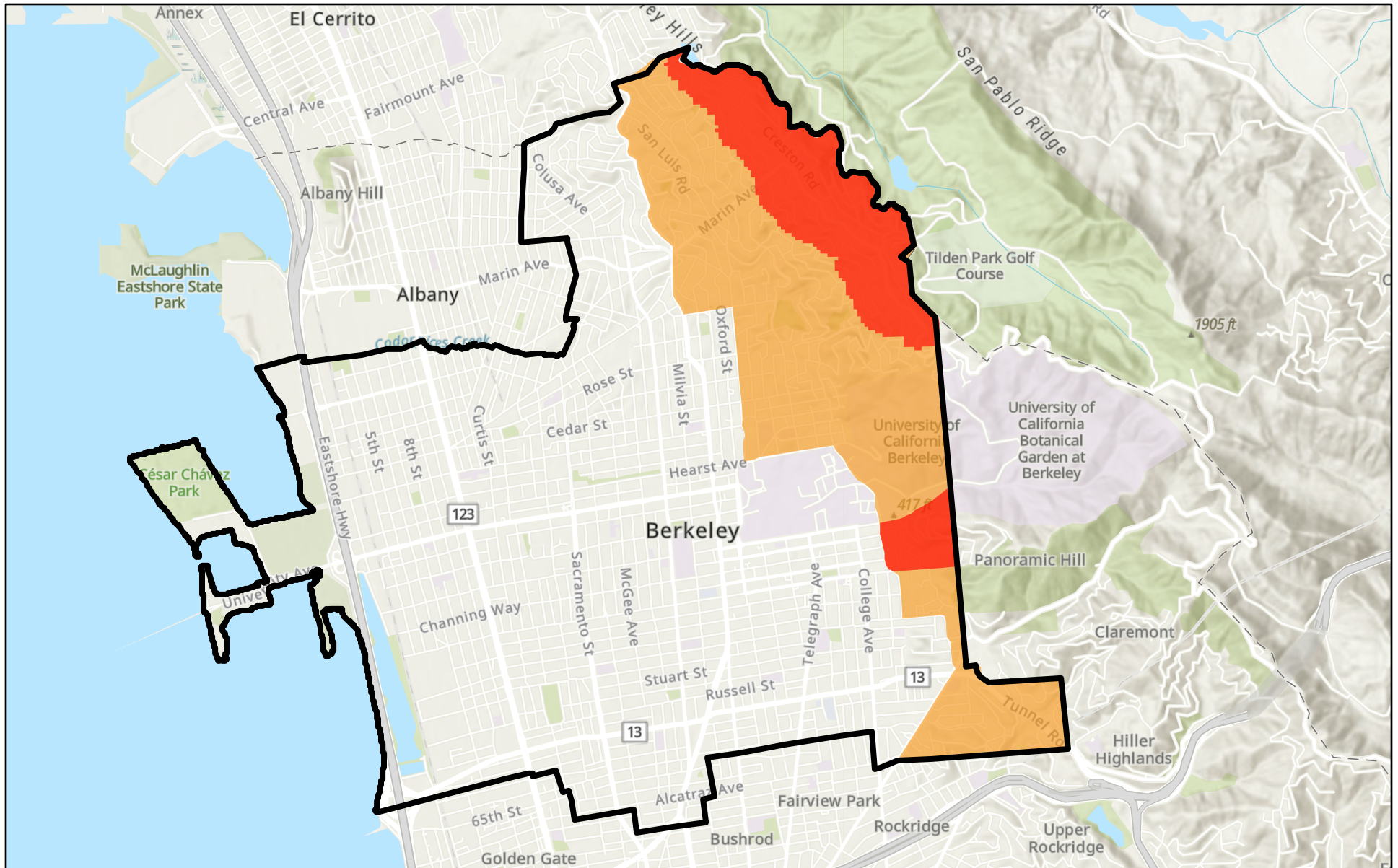


3/12/2025

City_of_Berkeley Very High Moderate
City Boundary High World_Hillshade



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Additional Areas Recommended as FHSZ by the COB



3/18/2025

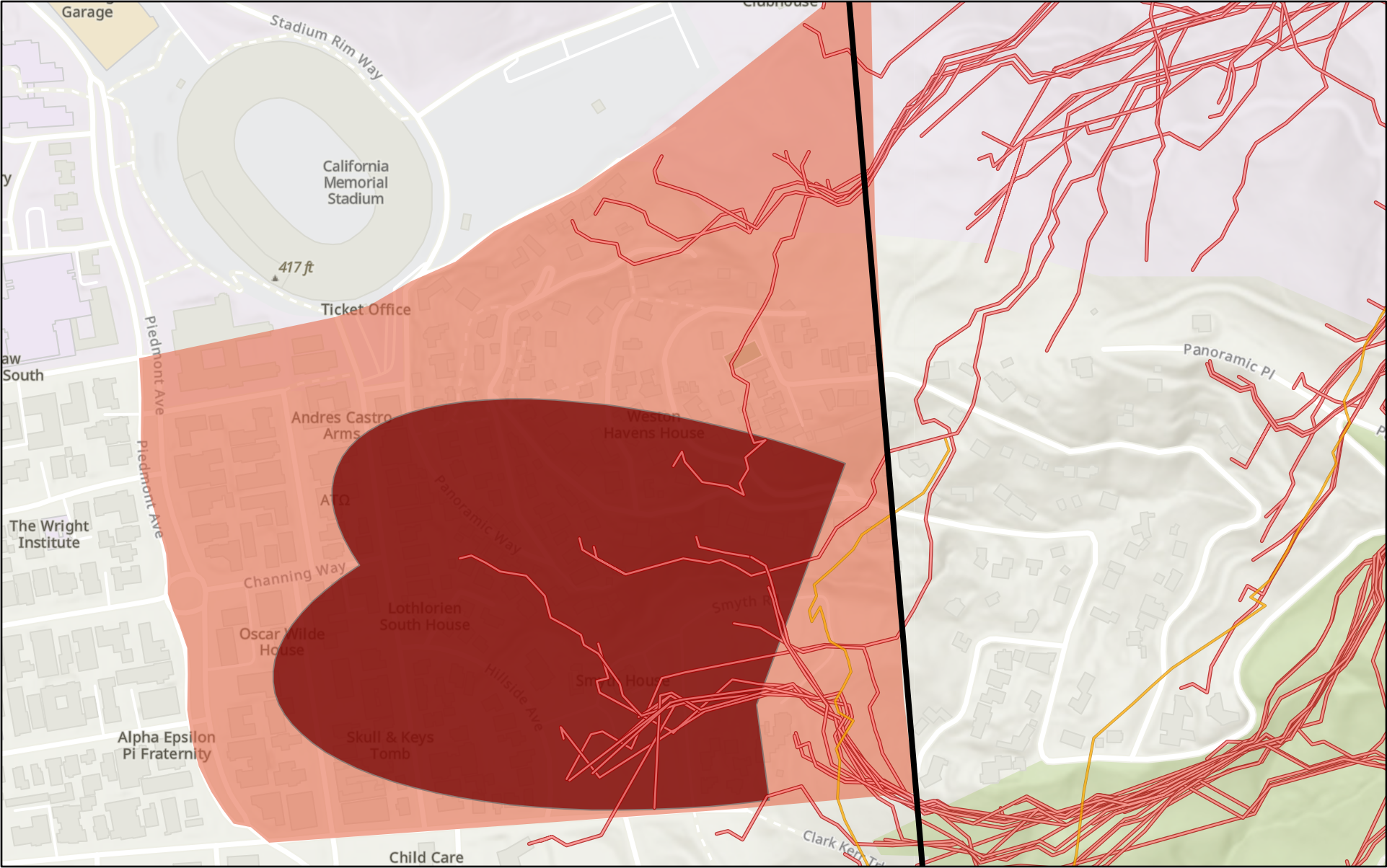
 City Boundary
 CALFIRE Very High
 COB Very High (2025)

 COB High (2025)

1:58,718
0 0.4 0.8 1.6 mi
0 0.5 1 2 km
Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User

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Panoramic Hill Mitigation Area with Fire Pathway Overlay



3/12/2025

City_of_Berkeley

City Boundary

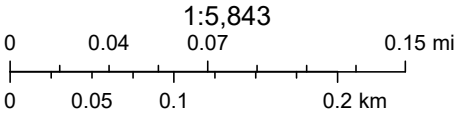
SW Fire Pathways

NE Fire Pathways

NE Entry

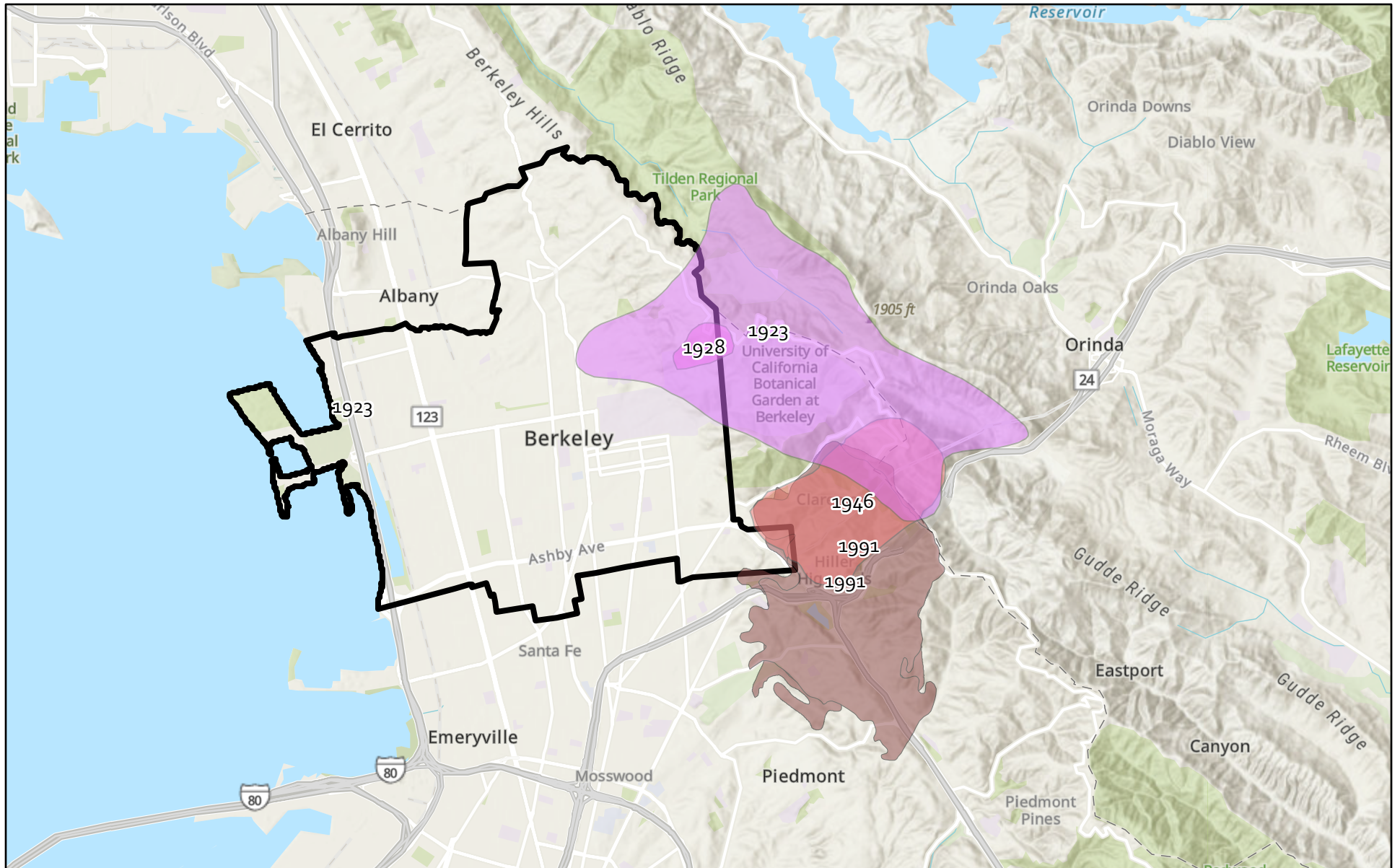
COB Very High FHSZ (2025)

World_Hillshade

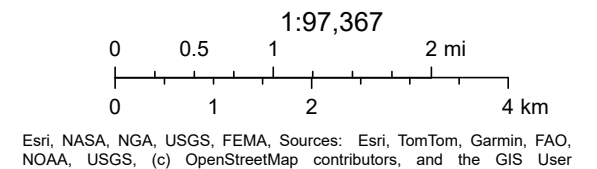
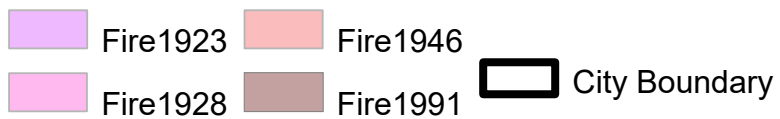


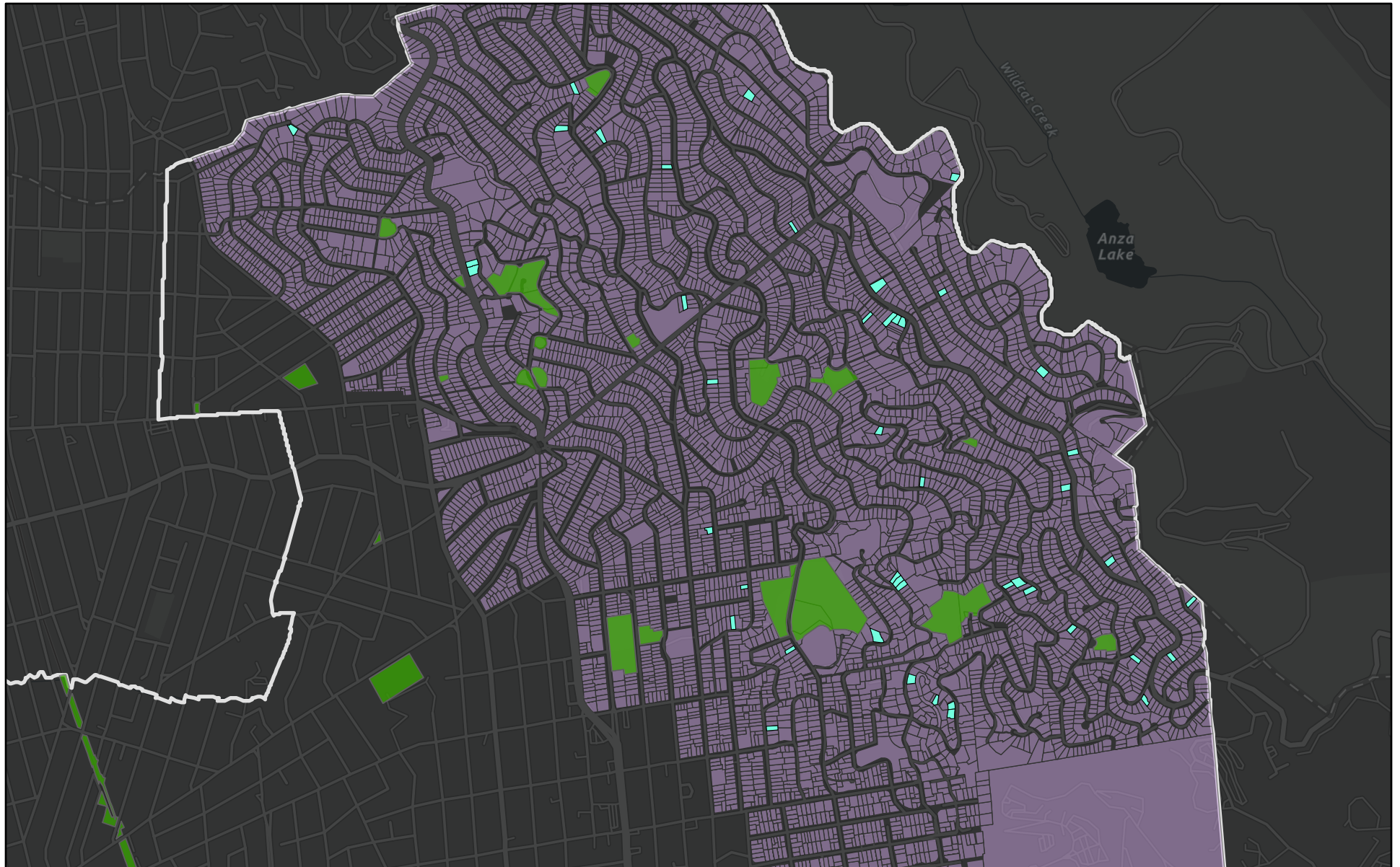
Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, Maxar, Airbus DS,

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Historical Fire Boundaries

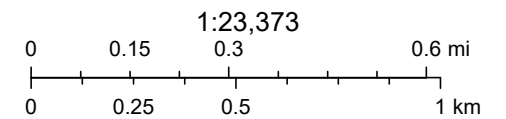
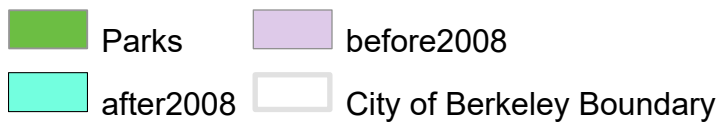


3/14/2025

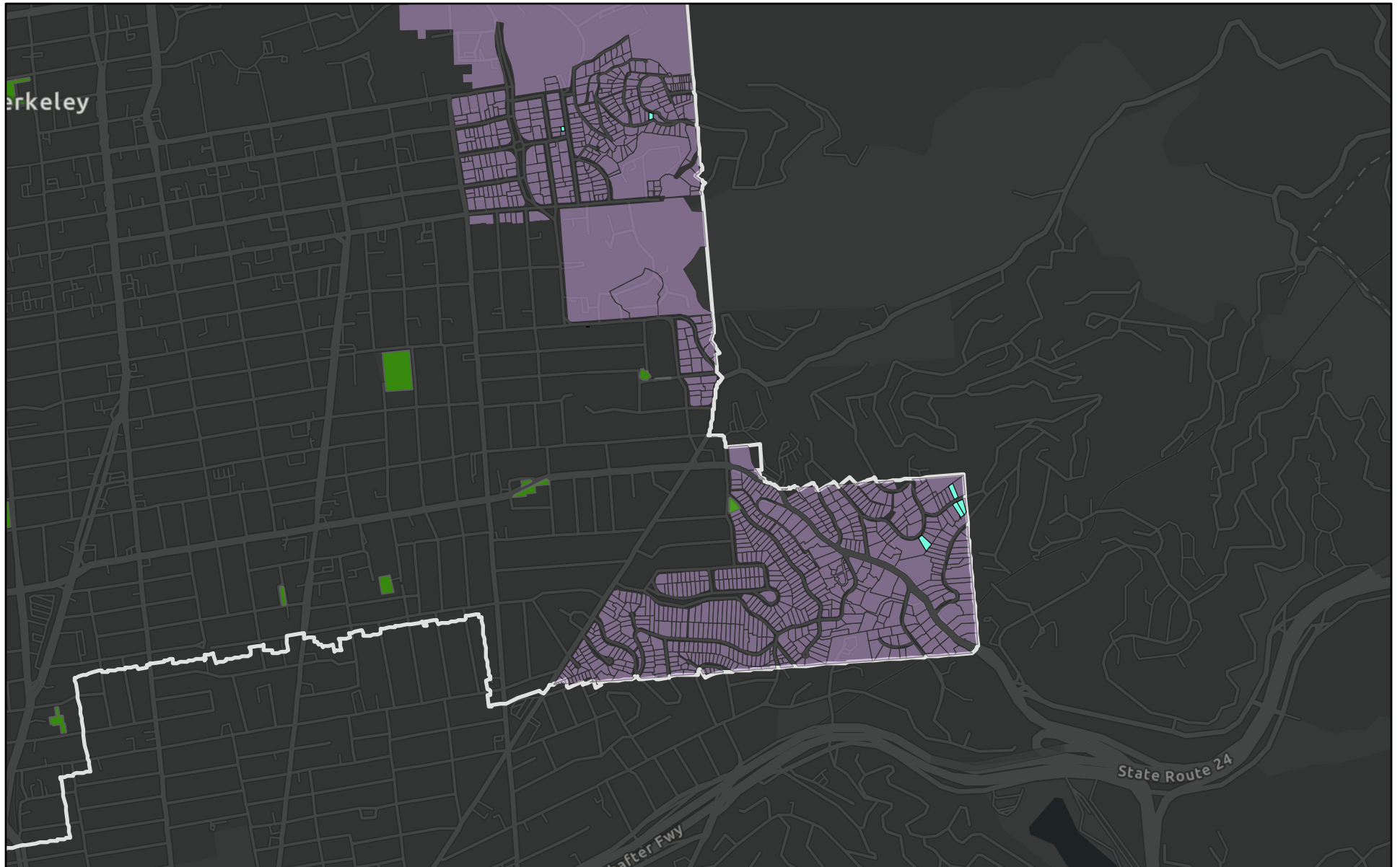




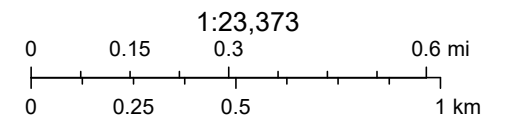
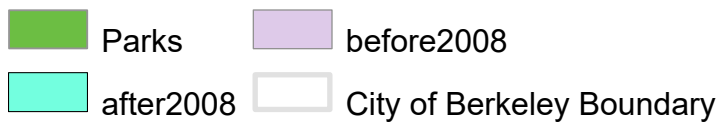
3/12/2025



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

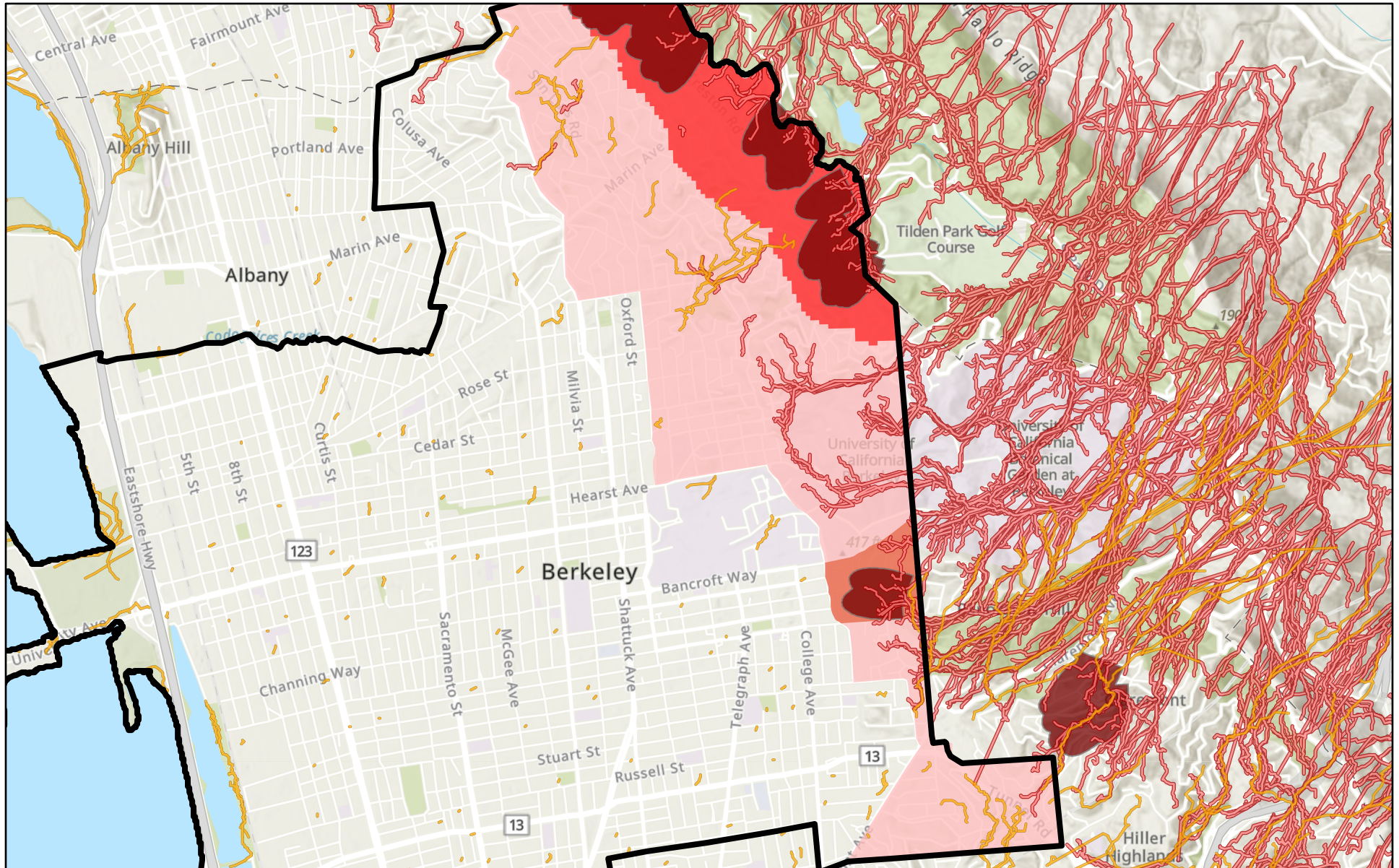


3/12/2025



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Very High & High FHSZs with Fire Pathway Overlay



3/12/2025

City_of_Berkeley

City Boundary

SW Fire Pathways

NE Fire Pathways

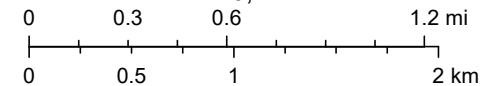
NE Entry

CALFIRE Very High (2025)

COB Very High FHSZ (2025)

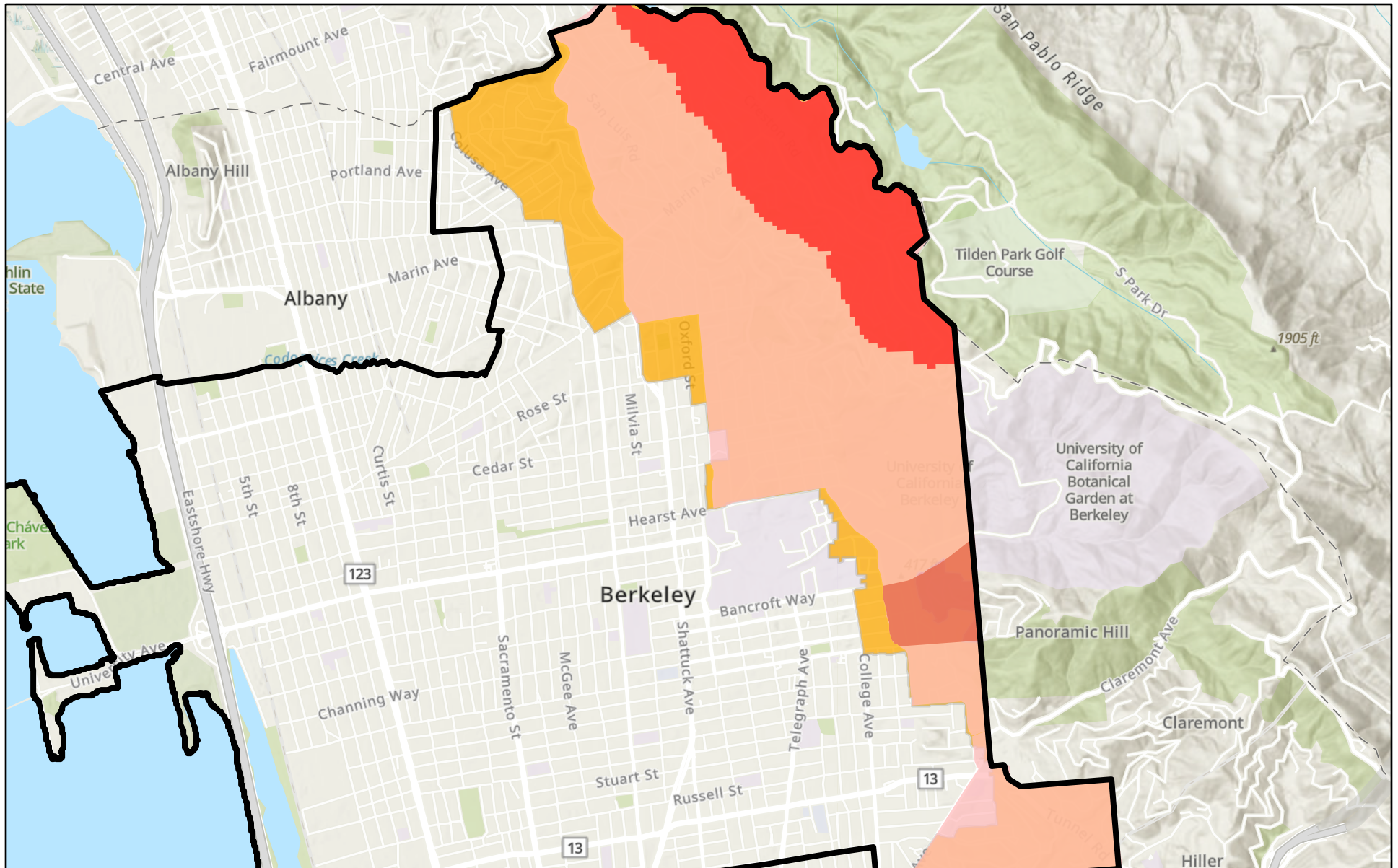
COB High FHSZ (2025)

1:46,747



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User

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FHSZ Comparison 2019 to 2025



-  City Boundary
-  CALFIRE Very High (2025)
-  Additional Area Recommended as a **Very High** Fire Hazard Severity Zone by the City of Berkeley(2025)
-  Additional Area Recommended a **High** Fire Hazard Severity Zone by the City of Berkeley (2025)
-  Very High FHSZ (2019)

