

From: [Jim Silicani](#)
To: [Info](#)
Cc: [Cristina Candelori](#)
Subject: Public Comment Regarding New FHSZ For Moraga
Date: Tuesday, April 8, 2025 5:25:31 PM

Hello,

I attempted to leave my remarks on the On Line Forum, but the system was "not accepting comments" this afternoon.

I reside at 210 Paseo Bernal in Moraga, which is within the Paseo de Moraga Homeowners Association. I also head the Landscape Committee which is heavily involved with wildfire risk mitigation. I spent over 40 years as a commercial insurance broker.

I was very surprised to review the Cal Fire FHSZ map of our area, which shows our property split between "high" and "very high" risk. I would like to learn of Cal Fire's methodology in mapping our area. I have a feeling they utilized satellite mapping and some sort of software modeling and doubt very much if anyone from Cal Fire set foot on our property. I understand that Cal Fire is unwilling to disclose their mapping methodology which is mystifying and a shocking lack of transparency.

If they had, and arranged a meeting with us, they would have learned the following, which should have been factored into their mapping and future rules:

- annual tree trimming and removal in accordance with MOFD requirements
- removal of Juniper near structures and roadways
- removal of Rosemary near structures
- annual weed abatement on south and east hillsides to 3 inches - no later than June 1
- enforcement of MOFD on vegetation within Owner patio areas
- we are considering additional fire-hardening procedures such as attic vent screening

We would like to see one set of rules for our community factoring in ongoing wildfire mitigation work.

Sincerely,

Jim Silicani


Public Comment Form - Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) Maps 4-10-25

Date	First Name	Last Name	I am a District Resident	Have you reviewed the proposed Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps?	Please provide your comments, concerns, or suggested changes regarding the proposed FHSZ maps
3/5/2025	Nick	Waranoff	City of Orinda	Yes;	<p>I have compared the most recent prior fire hazard zone map against the latest one and have confirmed that my house and neighboring houses that were formerly in a very high fire hazard severity zone have been "downgraded" and are now in a high fire hazard severity zone. I urge that you NOT inquire as to why locations were "downgraded" because the response may be to upgrade them back to very high hazard. This would not be good for residents and could adversely affect our ability to renew our insurance.</p> <p>Also, I suggest that any implementation of zone zero start with VHFHSZ and see how it plays out, before expanding it to high fire hazard severity zones. I believe that this would be a good idea politically and practically.</p>
3/5/2025	Mike	Reaves	City of Orinda	Yes;	<p>Zone Zero is proposed to be 0-5 feet away from your home. Given that ADUs in Orinda are permitted to be 4 feet from the property line, where there is usually a fence, often times a wood fence, how do you propose to reconcile this? Expecting people to rip down their fences and replace with steel or other non-combustible material is going to be expensive for homeowners. We don't need to bear yet another expense due to PG&E-caused wildfires. I already have large increases to my power bill and insurance which can be attributed to PG&E. There needs to be some relief for homeowners. Take some of PG&E's record profits and distribute to homeowners for mitigation. Don't put this financial burden onto homeowners.</p>
3/8/2025	Laura	Myers	City of Orinda	Yes;	<p>I'm concerned about how the boundaries between very high, high and moderate risk were determined in the knickerbocker neighborhood (stein way, oak road, Barbara road). The risk goes from very high to moderate over a very short distance but the fuels, slope do not change that quickly. I'd like to understand what explains the risk boundaries in this neighborhood which do not make sense. For example, proximity to stein way (great access by fire department vehicles) and the fire hydrant at the intersection of Stein/Oak are major protective factors but the areas with poorer access and no fire hydrants are listed as less risk. Barbara road is still extremely mountainous, lots of fuel and much more difficult to access. I think this neighborhood needs to be re examined looking at the local geography rather than using mathematical models/mapping software to arbitrarily draw boundaries.</p>

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3/8/2025	Steve	Compton	City of Orinda	Yes;	<p>The area around Oak Road just South of Stein Way is developed and well maintained, there are mainly grass or low fire risk irrigated yards on this street. Can we have Oak Road re-categorized as a lower risk than "Very High"?</p>
3/11/2025	Tyler	Burkett	City of Orinda	Yes;	<p>I bought my house (on Oak Rd) in Oak Springs 4 years ago because it wasn't listed as a fire hazard. It's now suddenly listed as a severe hazard.</p> <p>I do appreciate all the work of Cal Fire. I'm curious what has changed in that time? and what can be done about it?</p>
3/18/2025	Joan	Dorsey	Town of Moraga	Yes;	<p>My property was classified as low hazard and now most of my property is reclassified as moderate. Is it true that my entire property will be reclassified as moderate? When will fire remediation guidelines by hazard class be published?</p>
3/20/2025	Chee	Chow	City of Orinda	Yes;	<p>Studies have shown that clearing plants and flammable materials that lie within five feet of a building significantly reduces the risk of fire spreading to that building. But by how much-- 20%? 80%? Data from these studies, i.e. primary sources, should be made widely available to the public. And not just "available"; this should be an active effort to educate the public.</p> <p>Once the facts are established, a more rational discussion is possible. Arguments on one side, such as "this will destroy the whole character and appeal of Orinda" and "we're comfortable and familiar with the woodsy Orinda vibe-- that's why we moved here with our kids" contrast with the other side: "If Orinda burns to the ground, what will happen to its character and appeal then?" and "how did comfort and familiarity protect Pacific Palisades and Altadena?" Guided by data-proven facts, people who are currently weighing one emotion-laden argument against another will be able to make a more informed decision.</p> <p>They may also see their responsibility to the community more clearly. This is analogous to the issue of vaccination, where achieving herd immunity protects the entire community, even the unvaccinated. Data that show the benefits vs risks of vaccines, at various levels of vaccine uptake, is essential to decision-making. Of course, an order to clear vegetation coming from the state level may make the issue moot, but anger and resentment are likely to remain, unless folks can come to the right conclusion themselves.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment.</p>

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3/24/2025	Richard	Husby	Town of Moraga	Yes;	<p>I have been a homeowner in St. Marys Gardens for over 30 years. I have reviewed the newly released fire hazard map, and I am struggling to understand why almost all of the southeastern part of Moraga, including St. Marys Gardens (but excepting Bollinger Canyon?), has been elevated from moderate (2020 map) to very high risk (2025 map). What specifically has occurred to warrant this apparent increase in risk? Can we expect any explanation for the changes in ratings? I don't believe there are wildfire risks that exist now that were not present five years ago. Indeed, the entire town as well as the surrounding open space has changed very little since I moved here.</p> <p>At the same time, there are entire neighborhoods on the west side of the Oakland and Berkeley hills that have been reduced from very high risk (2020 maps) to high or even moderate risk (2025 map), including much of the area that burned during the devastating Oakland Hills fire in 1991.</p> <p>I also note that our neighborhood is a mile farther from the Oakland hills than those south of Moraga Shopping Center, which have no risk rating at all.</p> <p>Further, in many cases, the distance between very high risk and moderate risk zones appears to be less than 100 yards.</p> <p>Inconsistencies like these make the risk ratings seem rather arbitrary.</p> <p>The fire hazard risk rating is particularly impactful for those people now included in the very high risk category who may see higher insurance premiums, difficulty obtaining insurance, and decreased property values. Yet we have no insight into how the risk ratings have been determined. Presumably there was significant computer modeling involved. I would hope and expect that there was also direct physical observation of all areas.</p> <p>Whatever the methodology, it is difficult to agree with the risk rating assigned to our neighborhood, and therefore I respectfully request that the rating be reviewed and reconsidered.</p>
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4/4/2025	Pamela	Friedman	City of Orinda	Yes;	<p>1) I am concerned that my address has moved from “moderate risk” to “very high” risk (an increase of two risk levels) in spite of individual homeowner and city/fire district mitigations and hardening. Increasing education, awareness and compliance with increasingly strict requirements doesn’t seem to be reflected at all. How can Orinda’s progress not be recognized in the revised map while areas in the Oakland Hills that actually burned in 1991 (with 30 years’ worth of new fire fuel) were reclassified to lower risk categories?</p> <p>2) The boundaries between “very high”, high” and “moderate” risk in my South Orinda neighborhood don’t make logical sense for several reasons:</p> <p>First of all, the decrease in risk severity fall in the middle of city blocks with no discernible difference in terrain, vegetation, residential density, home hardening, or any other differentiation that might impact wildfire spread.</p> <p>Second, it makes sense that degree of risk (and therefore boundaries between levels of risk severity) is significantly impacted by existing natural boundaries, like major streets (such as Moraga Way and Glorietta Blvd). These are not only evacuation routes, but also serve as natural fire breaks and would be the logical locations for equipment and staff to protect residents during evacuation and to make a strong stand against a spreading fire. The current map completely disregards this logic.</p> <p>Third, I notice that the relatively short distances on the map from “very high” to “high” to “moderate” occur within several blocks - again, in the middle of residential blocks and with no distinction that would explain the differences in rating. In South Orinda there should absolutely be a reduction in risk severity between the west side and east side of Moraga Way.</p> <p>Fourth, creating an artificial boundary between severity of risks in the middle of residential blocks not only fails to consider my previous point but creates disparities in the level of home hardening required, by risk category, under the pending state regulations that seek to tie home hardening measures to fire risk category. It also results in inequities for homeowners’ access to fire insurance coverage. In my neighborhood the proposed map shows “very high” risk homes next door to “high” and a few doors down from “moderate” risk homes. The map is arbitrary but the implications are significant and costly. Some must spend thousands more on home hardening compliance than their next door neighbors; some may get insurance; some won’t.</p>
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