

Alvarado Estates Fire Safe Council | 2023

# Community Wildfire Protection Plan



## San Diego County

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## 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 **Alvarado Estates Fire Safe Council** CWPP, which was developed collaboratively by citizens, and federal, state and local management agencies, are to:

- Align with the with the San Diego region'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

*Note: 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.*

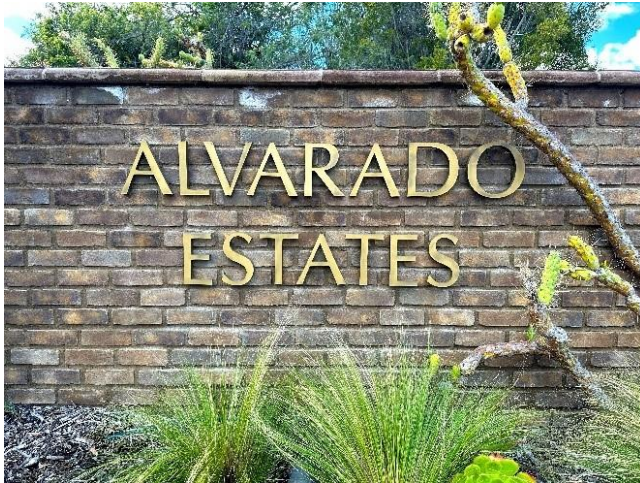
The Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County produced this report in partnership with the San Diego County Fire Safe Council. Funding is provided by a National Fire Plan grant from the Cooperative Fire program of the U.S. Forest Service through the California Fire Safe Council. In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.



## SECTION I: SNAPSHOT OF THE COMMUNITY

Each community in San Diego County has a unique history and identity. Below is a description of what sets this area apart, including its landscape, preparedness, and firefighting resources.

### A. OVERVIEW



Alvarado Estates is one of San Diego's premier neighborhoods. It consists of an area of approximately 280 acres. It is comprised of approximately 132 lots with 125 developed custom homes (to date), each on 1-2 acre parcels. The enclave is located in the College Area community, near San Diego State University (SDSU). It is a highly walkable area and neighbors know each other well. Approximately 600 San Diegans reside in this unique neighborhood.

Located in the eastern part of the City of San Diego, Alvarado Estates is in the 9<sup>th</sup> City Council District. Alvarado Estates is situated on a mesa, surrounded by canyon hillsides. To the east of Alvarado Estates lies the mid-century housing tract known as College View Estates, as well as the approximately 560-acre campus of SDSU. Interstate 8 and the MTS trolley line create the northern border. Fairmount Avenue lies to the west and Montezuma Road runs along the southern boundary.

#### **What Makes Us Unique:**

Alvarado Estates has its beginnings deeply rooted in mid-century modern history. In 1948 a group of then San Diego State College professors and other professionals shared a vision of creating large home sites which would blend country living with city convenience. Currently, Alvarado Estates is celebrating its milestone 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (2023).

One of those professors was Ilse Hamann Ruocco who taught painting, ceramic arts and industrial arts between 1934 and 1967. Her husband was master architect, Lloyd Ruocco. The neighborhood was actually designed, in large part, by Lloyd Ruocco. He and his wife built one of the first homes in Alvarado Estates as their personal residence, which they named Solari.

Considered by many to be the father of modernism in San Diego, Ruocco used his knowledge of architecture and urban planning to not only design their own home but to also influence the design of the neighborhood. Plans were laid and home sites were purchased by means of a "lot lottery." A Homeowners Association was formed and the first CC&Rs were ratified in 1952. Homes were built predominantly in the 1950's and 1960's, but continue to be built and renovated to this day.

A great number of the homes in Alvarado Estates were designed by noted architects. In addition to three other Ruocco-designed homes, the neighborhood boasts homes by Don Goldman, Henry Hester, Rex Lottery, William Lumpkins, Cliff May, John Mortenson, Richard Neutra, Sim Bruce Richards, Leonard Veitzer, Richard George Wheeler, and others. In fact, the San Diego Modernism Historic Context Statement suggests that Alvarado Estates is worthy of being a historic district of Modernist homes with numerous fine examples of Mid-century Moderns, Prairie, Ranch-style and the rare Post and Beam.



### **The People in Our Neighborhood:**

Alvarado Estates is indeed a hidden gem, but it's not just the homes that make it so ... it's the people. Past and present residents have helped our neighborhood flourish and they have also contributed to the betterment of San Diego as a whole. Former and current residents have always worked hard, taken part in interesting and worthwhile pursuits, and cared about others.

Homes in Alvarado Estates don't just serve the housing needs of residents; they are often used to serve others. Homes are routinely used for community and philanthropic purposes. Newspaper articles published during the past 7 decades shows evidence of residents' generational involvement, volunteer leadership, and support of a myriad of organizations which aim to serve the broad needs of San Diegans. Supporting the mission and operation of San Diego charities and community organizations is a neighborhood value. Of course, some residents have also been active in politics and have hosted events in support of both incumbents and candidates. It's even said that past presidents and other dignitaries have been in our homes!

No matter how broad the interests and involvement of residents, our history with our neighborhood institutions is well-rooted. Residents have benefitted from attending our

neighborhood schools, the local library and local sporting groups to mention a few. Every generation has appreciated the benefits and opportunities that living here seems to afford.

It all started in 1948 when about 50% of lot owners were affiliated with the State College. Today we still have many residents who have retired from SDSU, work there now, or have either attended SDSU in the past or are currently enrolled. In fact, the University provides its president with use of a home in Alvarado Estates, which is used for many university-related functions.

In addition to those in academics, past residents include notable doctors, researchers, attorneys, executives of prominent businesses, world-class musicians, artists, professional athletes, and many others over the years, including Navy Seals and an Admiral!

About 600 people (not verified) currently reside in Alvarado Estates. As is typical of neighborhoods built in the mid-century, we have only a few homes which are still owned by “legacy” families. While there are still many retired residents living here, increasingly younger families are making their home here. Now, more than 50 children are enjoying the idyllic upbringing which is synonymous with Alvarado Estates.

### **Vulnerable Populations:**

Alvarado Estates has many residents who are older than 60 years of age. Some have resided here for decades, while others more recently. Some senior residents raised children here and others did not. Some are retired and are enjoying the tranquil lifestyle and walkable streets of the neighborhood. Others have moved here to live with their adult children. In 2021, the neighborhood held a surprise celebration for the 105<sup>th</sup> birthday of one of our beloved residents. We hope to assess and support those with special mobility needs.

### **Key Landmarks, Gathering Places and Infrastructure:**

In 1948 when Lloyd Ruocco, and others originally conceived of Alvarado Estates, their aim was to create a neighborhood that would provide residents with an expanse of country-type living with city convenience. While residents enjoy large private lots, most are on the ridge of the surrounding canyons. Homesites don’t always accommodate usable space for large personal yards or areas to recreate with others.

Knowing this, the founders set aside 8 acres in the center or “heart” of the neighborhood. Located at 4770 Yerba Santa Drive, this parcel was intended to be a meeting place for residents, so that strong and nurturing relationships would be built along with homesites.

The Alvarado Estates Homeowners Association (HOA) maintains a majority of the usable area of this parcel as a large green open space. As mentioned elsewhere in this plan, this park setting may serve as the Temporary Refuge Area (TRA) for the residents of Alvarado Estates.

Through the years, the park has evolved to include resident-funded and maintained additions including a tot-lot with sand area, swings and a small play structure, an enclosed off-leash dog park, a small putting green, a gazebo with seating, and bench seating at a canyon overlook.





Community Park may serve as TRA

In addition to maintaining this primary gathering place, the Alvarado Estates HOA funds maintenance of other infrastructure needs like road maintenance, street-sweeping. City maintains the sewer cleanouts and all sewer infrastructure. Alvarado Estates maintain the storm drains.

A gate at the entrance to the community was added in 2002. It was funded in part by a settlement from SDSU filed under CEQA and related to traffic and parking issues associated with development of the Viejas Arena.

The gate is typically staffed between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. During the remaining hours of the day, the gate is controlled by remote access to sliding double gates and passive arms. Emergency responders such as fire, law enforcement and medical personnel have access 24/7.

The gate does necessitate some precautionary planning to make sure it does not hinder the efforts of fire and emergency responders or the ability of residents to evacuate. For those residents living behind the gate, there is only one egress into and out of the neighborhood. Interior streets are one lane each direction, with room for parking on most curbs. Protocols should be established for the safe entry of emergency personnel and the likely, simultaneous evacuation of residents.

In addition, to planning for safe passage through the gate, precautionary planning should be done to make sure that the emergency needs of residents living in two areas outside the gate are also met – homes on the Yerba Santa Drive spur and Yerba Anita Drive, both outside the entry gate.



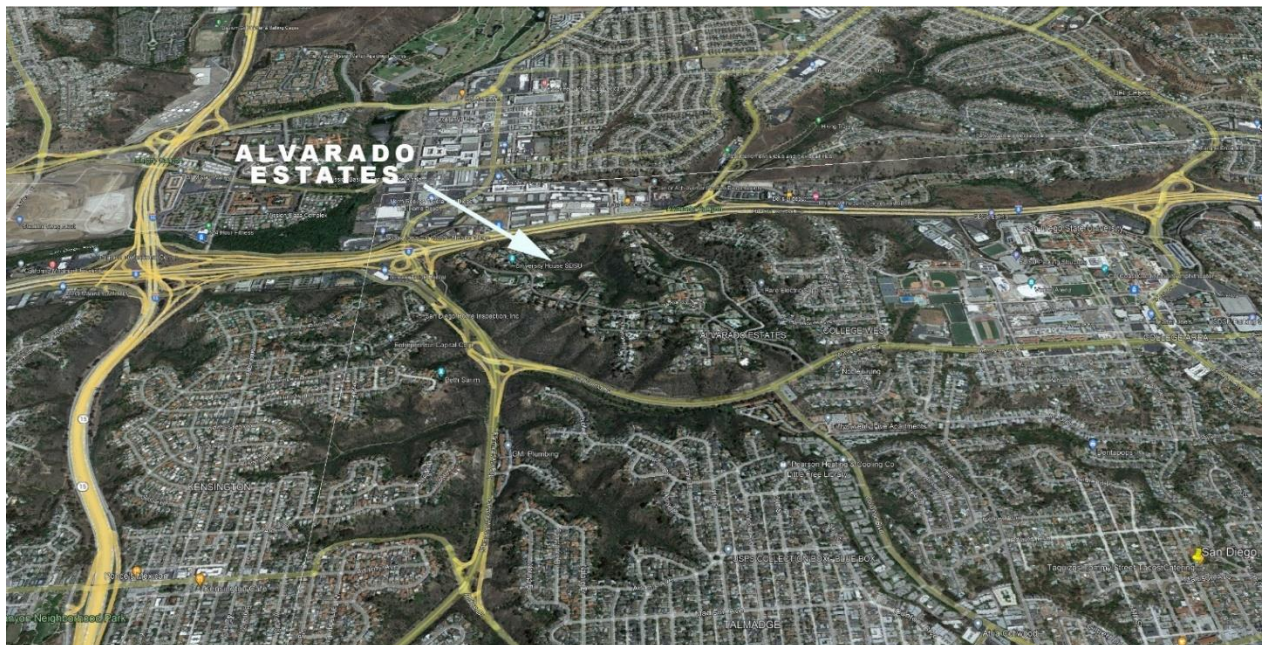


Entry Gate of Alvarado Estates

## B. LANDSCAPE

### TOPOGRAPHY

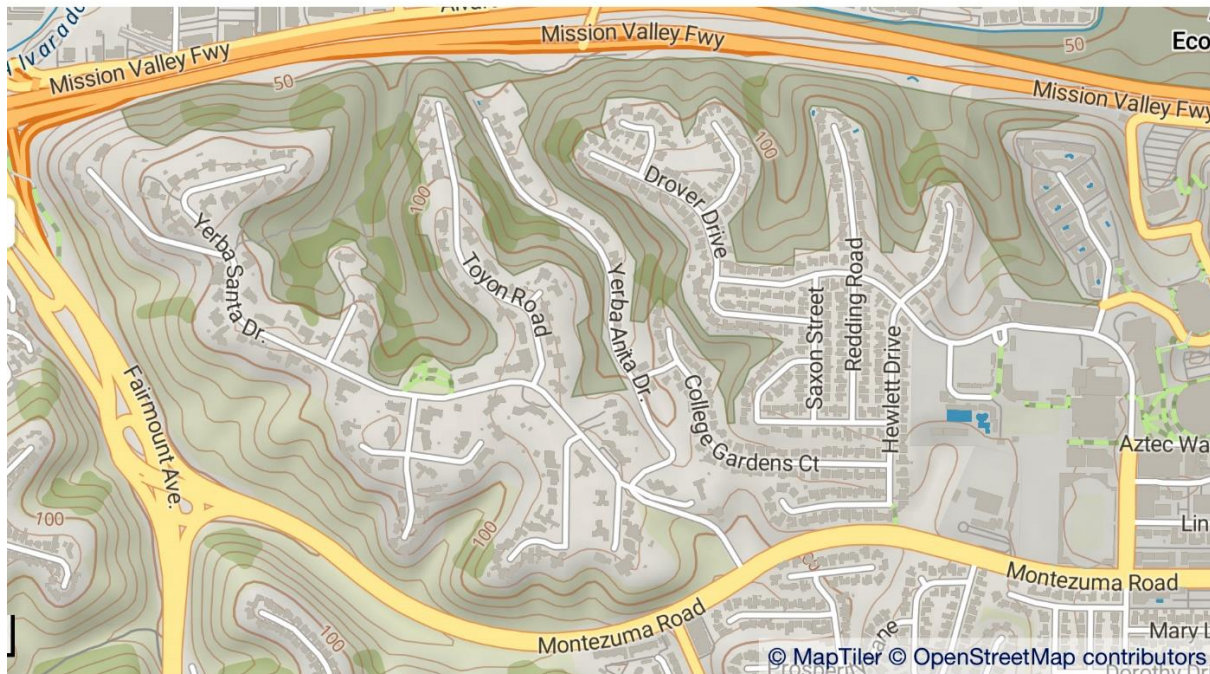
Alvarado Estates is located in the central eastern part of the City of San Diego, within the College Area community. It sits on the top of a mesa and is bisected by multiple canyons. To the east, lies College View Estates as well as the SDSU campus. Interstate 8 creates the northern border. Fairmount Avenue lies to the west and Montezuma Road runs along the southern boundary.





Wildland Urban Interface: Neighborhood homes and wildland vegetation meet at public lands found at these locations: (1) along the south side of Interstate 8 from Fairmount Avenue to Waring Road, (2) the frontage area along the east side of Fairmount Avenue, and (3) the frontage area along the north side of Montezuma Road.

Additionally, Alvarado Estates has several canyons and broad hillside slopes which may impact the course of wildfire. Our canyons create both fuel management and erosion challenges. With few exceptions, many lots interface with natural vegetation.



Topographical area map

Slope steepness affects fire behavior in a similar way as wind by changing the flame angle. Elevation and aspect are also important in determining how fire spread. Another consideration is that fires burn uphill toward the houses. Since our lots are significantly larger and more inaccessible than surrounding neighborhoods, we believe that fires would most likely be fought from aerial equipment flying overhead rather than from behind the houses themselves.

**Alvarado Estates weather:** The closest weather recording to Alvarado Estates is at the San Diego International Airport. Our climate features mild, wet winters and hot, dry summers. Temperature, humidity, wind speed, plant moisture content and other weather-related factors will influence fire risk in Alvarado Estates. Temperatures collected over the course of a year typically range from 50 to 77 degrees. Temperatures of freezing or below have rarely occurred since weather recording began in 1871. Temperatures usually don't exceed the 80's, but hot weather days of 90 degrees or above are becoming more frequent.

Highest temperatures occur in September and October. High temperatures are almost invariably accompanied by very low relative humidity, which often drops below 20 percent and occasionally below 10 percent. Early morning marine layer of moisture in the air, creates fog and clouds which can reach Alvarado Estates.

Santa Ana conditions from September through February are known to occur. Alvarado Estates is positioned along a natural pathway formed by Interstate 8 and its canyon walls, where east to west Santa Ana winds warm due to increases in barometric pressure as the air is pulled down to sea level from higher altitudes. These Santa Anas create sometimes hot, but always dry conditions, which can spread and worsen wildfires. Winds in our area can reach 40 miles per hour, which can contribute to fire risk and affect emergency response.

Seasonal rainfall generally occurs from December to March. Annual rainfall is typically 10 inches in the city. In the first quarter of 2023, San Diego has recorded above-average seasonal rainfall for the first time in three years. Rainfall is sufficient to generate the growth of more vegetation, which adds to our brush fuel load each year. As the cycle of hot, dry weather during summer and fall works to remove moisture from the plants, the hot, dry winds which follow can spread any fire that ignites.

## FIRE HISTORY

**1. September 8, 1988** – Fire near Alvarado Estates burned 50 acres and threatened several hillside homes. The blaze occurred on the east side of Fairmont Avenue, south of Interstate 8 and near Montezuma Road. Flames quickly spread up the hill to Yerba Santa Drive and Palo Verde where residents were seen hosing down their roofs. About 50 residents were forced to flee. The fast-moving fire caused minor damage to two homes and one firefighter suffered minor injuries. According to investigators, arson was the suspected cause, as three fires were set at the bottom of the canyon.

**2. June 3, 2018** – A brush fire erupted just off the north side of Interstate 8 near Waring Road. The fire scorched 38 acres before crews from San Diego Fire-Rescue and Cal Fire, assisted by three air-tankers and helicopters, brought the blaze under control with water and fire retardants. The location was just across the Interstate from Alvarado Estates and San Diego State University. Dubbed the Adobe Fire, the blaze was fought from the ground and air as it neared residences along Adobe Falls Road. At least 80 homes were



evacuated. Westbound Interstate 8 and several roads and ramps were shutdown, as the fire got as close as ten feet from the westbound lanes. The cause of the fire was under investigation, but reports suggested it was started by two 12-year-old juveniles. (From various local San Diego news media).

**3. Sept. 15, 2019** – Flames were spotted near San Diego State University about 12:20 p.m. Fire officials believe the fire started west of College Avenue and that embers sparked two additional blazes; one east of College Avenue and one near the Villa Alvarado apartments, a student complex on Alvarado Road. As a precaution, the complex was evacuated and students were asked to report to the Tula Community Center. They were allowed to return several hours later. The fire near the college also led to the closure of several trolley stops. The College Avenue off-ramp was closed as well, and traffic was backed up for miles on eastbound Interstate 8. It took fire crews about an hour and a half to get the blaze under control. About 2 1/2 acres were charred, and crews were in the area for several hours to mop up hot spots. The cause of the fire was under investigation. Arson was suspected and a suspect was later taken into custody. (From “SDSU fire that prompted evacuations, possible series of arson fires keep fire crews busy, The San Diego Union-Tribune, Lindsay Winkley, 9/15/2019).

**4. October 15, 2019** – Nearby brushfire in the 4800 block of Fairmount Avenue, near Montezuma Road. Fairmount Road was closed in both directions and at Aldine Drive. Homes on several nearby streets were temporarily evacuated. SDG&E shut off power due to flames below power lines, which affected some 4,000 customers. Approximately 30 Mexican Palms burned, with all of the foliage in flames, which contributed greatly to the fire. SDFD prevented the fire from spreading uphill into Kensington, but embers did spread the fire across to the east side of Fairmount Avenue downwind to Talmadge. Multiple fire engine companies fought the fire from the ground for approximately 6 hours. Three helicopters completed multiple water drops over the course of approximately 3 hours. Fairmount Avenue was closed during the fire and mop up operations continued after dark to douse any remaining hot spots. Fire officials said the fire likely started in a homeless encampment. (From Fire briefly threatens homes in Talmadge, Kensington, San Diego Union-Tribune, pg. A2, October 16, 2019). *Photos by Ken Burnhart.*



*Before 2019 fire*



*Fire on Fairmount*



*After the fire*



## KEY INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Water Systems and Waterways:** There are no waterways in Alvarado Estates, as the community is built on a canyon mesa. Most homes have long narrow lots with descending canyon slopes at the rear. Adobe Creek runs along the north side of Interstate 8. A portion of the San Diego River runs through Mission Valley and north near Friars Road and Mission Gorge Road. Lake Murray is also on the north side of Interstate 8 and is about seven miles northeast of Alvarado Estates. Some of these waterways have been the source of water for extinguishing fires.
- **Residential Structures:** There are currently about 120 homes which have been built in our neighborhood. A few have separate guest houses or other free-standing structures.
- **Residential Features:** Homes are on large 1-2 acre lots. Most are situated along a canyon ridge. A few are interior lots, bound by other lots. Numerous homes have pools, which may or may not be beneficial in fighting fires.
- **Landmarks, Parks:** There is a security gate kiosk at the neighborhood entry, which is intended to discourage the parking of non-resident cars on our streets while people attend large events at SDSU Viejas Area. There is one park in the center of our neighborhood at 4770 Yerba Santa Drive. It features a gazebo, a mini golf putting green, a children's playground, a small off-leash dog enclosure, a bench at a viewpoint overlook, large grass area, and concrete walkways. All of these amenities have been funded by resident donations. There are no other landmarks.
- **Businesses:** There are no storefront businesses in the neighborhood.
- **Historical sites:** We have a number of historic Mills Act-designated homes. One example is the "House of the Future" located at 5481 Toyon Road built in 1935 for the Panama Exposition in Balboa Park. Other Mills-act designated homes include:
  - 5120 Norris Road by Henry Hester
  - 4449 Yerba Santa Drive by Richard Neutra
  - 5330 Le Barron Road by Rex Lottery
  - 4777 Avion Way by Cliff May
  - 4545 Yerba Santa Drive by William Lumpkins

## MAPS

Using technology and local expertise, the sponsors of this CWPP have included a series of maps depicting the site and situation of Alvarado Estates Community (Appendix B). The following maps are visual aids which will be used by the Alvarado Estates Fire Safe Council to assess fire risk and make recommendations to the HOA Board and residents.

- Area Communities Map
- Fire Hazard Severity map
- Fire History
- Evacuation Map

## C. FIREFIGHTING RESOURCES

Agencies with firefighting responsibilities involved in efforts to protect Alvarado Estates include:

**The City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department** responds both to fires as well as medical aides and associated emergencies for the Alvarado Estates community. The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department is currently the only fire agency in San Diego County that conducts nighttime air firefighting operations.

The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department's website contains information on Fire Prevention, Preparation and Safety information for communities within their jurisdiction.

## 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 Alvarado Estates 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
1	San Diego Fire-Rescue Dept., Local Fire Stations	Provides fire protection, suppression, and emergency services to city of SD, evacuation planning and assistance
2	Wildland Management & Enforcement Sec	Code enforcement & CWPP
3	San Diego Police Dept.	Assist with evacuation and communication during emergencies
4	Fire Safe Council of San Diego County	Primary CWPP developer, education, support for pre-wildfire disaster planning, defensible space, fuel reduction and hazard assessment; support for local fire safe councils
5	College Area Community Council	General betterment of College Area neighborhoods, forum to discuss and coordinate fire safe planning among community neighborhoods
6	Alvarado Estates HOA	Homeowners Association
7	Alvarado Estates Fire Safe Council	Develop CWPP. Assess fire risk and develop fire risk reduction strategies
8	CAL FIRE	Provides technical support and assists SDFR
9	Council District's 9's Office (CD 9's)	City Council Person-Assist with forum to discuss and coordinate fire safe planning within the boundaries of CD 9's district.
10	American Red Cross – Southern Division	Evacuation planning, assistance
11	Urban Corps	Reduce fuel load/clear brush
12	San Diego Gas and Electric (SDG&E)	Neighborhood vegetation management to protect electrical infrastructure. Fire-safe educational materials.

## 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

Alvarado Estates Fire Safe Council is working to increase fire safety in our neighborhood through education and action. Our community engagement priorities for 2023 are:

1. Meet all requirements to maintain our certification as a member in good standing with the Fire Safe Council of San Diego County.
2. Pursue support and resources to secure grants for fire safe community projects beyond the scope of individual homeowners (e.g., reduce canyon fuel load).
3. Provide fire safety educational information and support to AE residents and encourage their active participation in fire safety efforts (e.g., information about home hardening on the AE website).
4. Provide updates throughout the year about our FSC efforts and other fire safe information and activities via our HOA meetings, HOA emailing list, HOA newsletter, and AE Facebook page.

Challenges: One broad challenge will be getting all property owners to prioritize fire safety measures, on their personal property and neighborhood-wide as part of HOA decision-making. Connecting well with residents will help us communicate important information and inspire their participation. We are cognizant that some residents may not be readily able to attend in-person meetings or may not choose to participate in neighborhood meetings. Some residents might not have a computer or be knowledgeable about computer use to fully benefit from email and website-oriented communications. While not all residents will choose social media as a method of communication, the Alvarado Estates Facebook Page has the potential to be an effective tool to share information about our FSC with many residents now and in the future. As of this writing, 64 residents have joined the AE Facebook Page. We believe more will join over time and this will be a useful method of communication. For these reasons, we will use multiple methods to connect with residents about fire safety.

Possible future survey: A survey may be a useful tool in the future to gather information from residents regarding particulars about their household, fire safety knowledge, completed actions, planned actions, challenges to success, need for support, and so forth. A survey may be an exercise that the Alvarado Estates FSC may utilize in the future in order to poll opinions, better assist residents, influence priorities, and plan for future activities.



## B. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

### 1. Organizational Efforts

- In 2022 the Alvarado Estates FSC was created.
- Bylaws, goals, board leadership, logo, and FSC boundary map were developed.
- In 2023, we are creating this CWPP to address fire risk and establish goals for preventive steps to protect life, property and environment. Among other items, this CWPP will include necessary maps for planning purposes, and seeks approval by fire officials such as Marci Garcia, Senior Code Compliance Supervisor, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department.

### 2. Communication Efforts

#### With Other Organizations:

- Met with Fire Safe Council of San Diego County to determine steps to establish and maintain our membership status
- Routinely attend FSC SDC informational meetings, as well workshops on CWPP development.
- Attend Wildfire Risk Reduction and Asset Protection (WRAP) meetings.
- Established on-going communication with certain Fire Rescue officials.
- Met on-site in Alvarado Estates with deputy Fire Chief Daniel Eddy and Code Compliance Officer Matthew Leyba-Gonzalez.

#### With Our Neighborhood:

- Met several times with members of the Alvarado Estates Fire Safe Council.
- Made monthly reports to residents about the efforts of the Alvarado Estates FSC during HOA board meetings.
- Established and maintain an Alvarado Estates Facebook group as a mechanism to communicate with residents.
- Set up Mail Chimp for future survey capability.

## C. FUTURE PROJECTS

1. Ongoing communication with residents regarding home hardening, home evacuation planning and other important topics, via the AE website, meetings, emails, newsletters and social media.
2. Educational efforts/events timed with Fire Safety month in October.
3. Periodic ongoing community updates.
4. Investigate online and other resources for the benefit of the HOA and individual property owners (e.g., FSCSDC materials, Red Cross Fire Safety online seminars).

## SECTION IV: STRUCTURAL HARDENING

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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

A critical priority to achieve fire safety success is the education of residents about the importance of structural hardening. Because many of the homes in Alvarado Estates were built prior to new safety codes for improved risk reduction, it will be necessary to:

1. Educate residents about why and how they can reduce their fire risk by taking steps to make their homes more resilient. Recommended “home hardening” actions would include: information and resources to facilitate the installation and/or retrofitting of all exterior soffit, roof and other vents to be EMBER-RESISTANT, using double pane windows, non-combustible siding, replacing old roofs with fire resistant materials, as well as other steps. These actions would help AE homeowners to protect against sparks and embers that have proven to be disastrous during wildfires.

Challenges: Many of our homes are older, having been originally built between 1955 and 1980. Although many have undergone one or more major renovations, many are not built according to today’s hardening standards. In addition, many of the residents living in the older homes in the neighborhood are older themselves, and are seemingly less inclined to embark on renovations.

### B. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

We are featuring occasional highlights on the subject of structural hardening in our quarterly newsletter.

### C. FUTURE PROJECTS

We would like to host a professional to speak on structural hardening at one of our monthly or annual Homeowners Association meetings.

## 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

Educate residents about the importance of creating defensible space around their homes and other structures to reduce fire risk. Educate residents about applicable laws and HOA policies. Share Fire Safe Council recommendations and community resources to help homeowners achieve the required 100 feet of defensible space around their homes and other structures on their property. Recommend additional steps homeowners can take to increase home resistance to heat, flames and embers that accompany most wildfires by: clearing gutters and roofs of leaves and debris; maintain a 0 to 5 foot non-combustible ember buffer zone around homes and decks, including the removal weeds, brush and vegetation under windows; keep bark and mulch away from homes; among other actions. Where structures on adjacent properties are closer than 100 feet, encourage neighbors to work together to “harden” their homes.

Challenges: Each year, winter rains on canyon slopes bring spring vegetation. Then summer drought converts it to fuel, which puts residents and the neighborhood at risk for fire. A challenge will be to educate and reinforce the ongoing need to create defensible space by supporting homeowners.

### B. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

Alvarado Estates is part of the Fire-Rescue Department's Proactive Door to Door Inspection Program. As part of the program, defensible space inspections are conducted, leaving homeowners with recommendations and sometimes code-required changes to complete. The “Ready Set Go” flyers are also being provided during these inspections. Occasional discussion regarding defensible space occurs during community HOA meetings.

### C. FUTURE PROJECTS

Continue to develop and strengthen outreach efforts to encourage and remind homeowners to assess their fire risk and create ignition-resistant and ember-resistant zone(s) on an annual basis. We will assess the feasibility of conducting “Dumpathon” events at appropriate times of the year. Education on drought tolerant and less fire prone vegetation.

## 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

Our Fire Safe Council believes that the single most important project to be completed and maintained is brush thinning and clearing of excess fuel, including the removal of over-growth, stressed, diseased, dead or dying shrubs and trees. The single most critical of these is an approximately 40 feet wide strip along our southern and western boundaries. This area stretches from approximately 200 feet east of Yerba Santa Drive and then proceeding west on the north side of Montezuma Drive along the base of the canyon slope onto the east side of Fairmount Ave heading north to the eastbound onramp of Interstate 8. This 1.5-mile strip is the area of highest risk of fire initiation from automobiles passing by, as well as from occasional homeless encampments, frequent littering and illegal dumping.



*Red line indicates highest fire risk area for fuels treatment.*

### B. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

None, other than fuels assessments which are part of our current, ongoing defensible space inspections of personal properties.



## C. FUTURE PROJECTS

The thinning of our canyon areas beyond the 40 feet strip mentioned above, is a high priority and would also include our northern and eastern boundaries. We are considering mechanical and livestock treatments, as well as wood chipping activities.



Brush on Montezuma



Brush on Fairmount



Cleaned area in foreground, overgrown brush behind

## 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 Alvarado Estate'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

Alvarado Estates has extremely limited access by a two-lane road (Yerba Santa Drive) that runs northwest from Montezuma Road. There is a controlled gate access point into the majority of the neighborhood. However, there are two exceptions:

1. A spur of Yerba Santa Drive immediately opposite and outside the entry gate which includes three homes (5002, 5020, 5040).
2. Four homes outside the gate on Yerba Anita Drive have maintained their membership in the Alvarado Estates HOA. For practical planning purposes, however, the Alvarado Estates Safe Council includes all of Yerba Anita within its boundaries. Note: two homes on the corner of Yerba Anita Drive and Yerba Anita Way technically fall outside our purview, as they have front doors and therefore addresses on Yerba Anita Way (5021 and 5026). Alvarado Estates does not have contact with these homeowners, which would have membership in the HOA of the adjacent College View Estates tract of homes.

The onramps to Highway 8 would most likely be backed up in the event of a major fire in the canyons on either side of this freeway and are a cause of concern.

It is the responsibility each individual community member to know the evacuation route from their home and to proceed early and in an orderly fashion out of the neighborhood to safety. During an emergency, the evacuation route will be confirmed by our local law enforcement agency, the San Diego Police Department (SDPD), not the Fire-Rescue Department. Residents are advised to have an evacuation go-kit that can be carried as it may be necessary to evacuate on foot.

To further assist residents in being prepared, we will use resources such as the Fire-Rescue Department's "Ready, Set Go!" brochure. This brochure is used to assist residents in creating their own wildfire action plan and includes a safety checklist.

<https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/rsq-english.pdf>

## B. DESIGNATED EVACUATION CORRIDORS AND TEMPORARY REFUGE AREA(S) (TRA)

### **Evacuation corridors and PACE (Primary, Alternate, Contingency and Emergency)**

**options:** In the PACE system, **P** represents a Primary evacuation option, **A** an Alternate, **C** a Contingency, and **E** is an Emergency. A Temporary Refuge Area (TRA) represents an emergency location at which to take refuge if safe evacuation route is no longer possible. Evacuation corridors are selected as PAC options if there are safer possibilities available in each category. A large open parking lot or park may be used as a TRA in a community.

*During an emergency that requires an evacuation, residents must follow the directions of local Authorities.* Neither the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department nor the San Diego Police Department publishes pre-planned evacuation routes. In the Alvarado Estates City Fire Safe Council area, evacuation corridors are subject to change due to many conditions such as:

- Location of fire
- Size and intensity of fire
- Weather conditions
- Traffic patterns
- Road conditions
- Traffic conditions
- Time of day
- Day of week

Evacuation routes are determined during an assessment of the emergency incident by the local law enforcement agency San Diego Police Department (SDPD). The SDPD will direct traffic via the safest route possible and to control the flow of traffic. The San Diego Fire-Rescue Department does not have the authority to review or approve community evacuation routes and cannot endorse pre-planned evacuation routes. Community members are urged to always maintain situational awareness. Residents can be notified about fire activity, evacuations, and temporary safe refuge areas via public service announcements on the radio, TV, reverse 9-1-1, 2-1-1, and mobile apps. SDPD and emergency agencies issue wireless emergency alerts (WEA). Users are urged to enable their mobile devices to receive Emergency and Public Safety Alerts. Community members are urged to use mobile applications such as “PulsePoint”, “AlertSanDiego” and “San Diego County Emergency” apps to get up to date information.

As advised in the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department’s *Ready, Set, Go! Wildland Fire Action Guide* (available at [sandiego.gov/fire](http://sandiego.gov/fire)), if there is a possible threat to homes or evacuation routes, residents should not wait to be advised to leave. By leaving early, residents give themselves and their families the best chance of surviving a wildfire. They also help firefighters by keeping roads clear of congestion, enabling emergency personnel to move more freely and do their jobs in a safer environment. Residents should leave early enough to avoid being caught

in fire, smoke, or road congestion. When advised to evacuate by the local Authorities, residents should not hesitate.

*During an emergency that requires an evacuation, residents must follow the directions of local Authorities.* Some of the University City area streets and roadways that could be designated by the San Diego Police Department as Primary, Alternate, or Contingency options (PAC) and options for Emergency Temporary Refuge Area (E), depending on fire and emergency conditions, are listed in this section, and are displayed on the maps included in Appendix B.

**Primary Options:**

- Follow Yerba Santa Drive to exit community to Montezuma Rd. proceeding East to College Ave. Proceed south on College Ave. or north to College Ave. to Interstate 8;

**Alternate Options:**

- Follow Yerba Santa Drive to exit community turning left onto Mesquite Rd, right onto Yerba Anita Drive, turning right onto College Gardens Court, left on Hewlett Drive, right on Remington Rd., left on Montezuma Road. East-West major street, 2 lanes each way. Begins at El Cajon Blvd and heads west and terminates at Fairmount Ave.
- Follow Yerba Santa Drive to exit community, turning right on Montezuma Rd., turning left on Collwood Blvd. Road.
- Follow Yerba Santa Drive to exit community, turning right on Montezuma Rd., merging right onto Fairmount Ave.

**Contingency Options:**

- Follow Yerba Santa Drive to exit community, turning right on Montezuma Rd., proceeding onto southbound Fairmount Ave.

**Emergency**

- **None available.**

**Temporary Refuge Area (TRA) Options:**

- A Temporary Refuge Area (TRA) represents an emergency location at which to take refuge if safe evacuation is no longer possible. A TRA is a short-term emergency option representing the E in the PACE system. P represents a primary evacuation option, A an alternate and C a contingency.
- Evacuation routes are determined during an assessment of the emergency incident by the local law enforcement agency San Diego Police Department (SDPD) and are selected as PAC options if there are safe possibilities available in each category. If safe evacuation is no longer possible, a large open parking lot or park could be designated as a Temporary Refuge Area.

*During an emergency that requires an evacuation, residents must follow the directions of local Authorities.* Parks and open areas such as those listed below could be designated at the time of

the emergency as possible emergency Temporary Refuge Area (TRA) within or near to the College area community:

- SDSU – Viejas Arena
- SDSU – assorted Parking structures
- SDSU – assorted sports fields
- Hardy Elementary School
- Vons Parking Lot – El Cajon Blvd
- Hoover High School – El Cajon Blvd
- Snap Dragon Stadium
- Colina Park

### **Temporary Evacuation Point (TEP)**

- A Temporary Evacuation Point (TEP) is defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as a safe staging area for those who will be (or have been) displaced by an emergency incident or disaster. Temporary Evacuation Points are typically used on a short-term basis before residents are permitted to return home or referred to another location, such as a disaster shelter. Depending on emergency conditions, a TEP could be set up at an area park or school or parking lot.
- The American Red Cross Southern California Region maintains a database of potential locations throughout the City and County of San Diego and has agreements in place with facilities that can be utilized in a disaster for various purposes such as temporary evacuation points, temporary safe refuge areas, sheltering, staging of supplies, distribution of emergency supplies, pet sheltering, feeding sites, etc.
- Safe evacuation sites are determined during an assessment of the emergency incident by the Authorities in partnership with the Red Cross. There is no pre-planned map or lists of evacuation or overnight sheltering sites.
- If you are unable to get to a TEP and are trapped, call 9-1-1 and shelter in place if no other options are available. Refer to the Survival Tips in the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department's *Ready, Set, Go! Wildland Fire Action Guide* available on the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department website at [sandiego.gov/fire](http://sandiego.gov/fire).

### **C. PRIORITIES**

Our priority is educating and preparing our residents about the need for the contingency of evacuation planning.

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

An ongoing project is to include specific information about evacuation in our outreach communications.



## E. FUTURE PROJECTS

- Research and provide educational information about evacuation planning for our residents, including how to receive communications such as reverse 911 notifications tasks to be performed.
- Setting up a group text method whereby all residents are able to receive an emergency notification.
- Possibly hold a fire evacuation drill to engage residents in the practice of an evacuation from their home and then discussing issues that arise via resident email, the Alvarado Estates Facebook Page and at a subsequent HOA meeting.

## SECTION VIII: OTHER MITIGATION & PREPAREDNESS PROJECTS

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There are countless ways that communities can act to protect themselves ahead of wildfires. This section details additional past, current and future efforts underway that were not previously mentioned.

### A. PRIORITIES

It is our goal through education and community outreach efforts to create a fire safe community and reduce homeless encampment fires.

### B. COMPLETED AND / OR ONGOING PROJECTS

None

### C. FUTURE PROJECTS

We will assess the feasibility of conducting “Dumpathon” events at appropriate times of the year. Education on drought tolerant and fire wise landscaping is a priority as well.

## 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 Alvarado Estates Fire Safe Council:

- 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.

DocuSigned by:  
**X** *Eric Sands*

68240003EBFC47D...

President of the  
Fire Safe Council Submitting this CWPP

DocuSigned by:  
**X** *MARLI GARCIA*

200D9FA0A74C43E...

Participating Fire Agency representative  
(State, Local, or Tribal)

## **SAN DIEGO COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PREVENTION PLANS REVIEW COMMITTEE:**

This CWPP was reviewed and recommended for approval by the San Diego Community Wildfire Protection Plan Review Committee as demonstrated by the signature below.

DocuSigned by:  
**X** *Donald H. Butz*

Don Butz, President  
Fire Safe Council of San Diego County

The CAL FIRE Unit Chief has final signing authority on CWPPs in San Diego County. The signature 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.

DocuSigned by:  
**X** *Tony Mecham*

Tony Mecham, Unit Chief  
CAL FIRE San Diego Unit

## SECTION X: APPENDICES

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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 Alvarado Estates through a series of community meetings. The Alvarado Estates Fire Safe Council members who contributed to the document include the following:

#### **Community Representatives**

1. Eric Poliak
2. Karen Austin
3. Jose Reynoso
4. David Wiles

#### **Agency Representatives**

SD Fire Rescue Department Officials:

- Marci Garcia - Senior Code Compliance Supervisor, Wildland Management and Enforcement Section
- Matthew Leyba-Gonzalez II - Code Compliance Officer, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department

RCDGSDC/FSCSDC Staff

#### **Meetings Dates**

- Several meeting between Feb. 1 and March 15.
- AE Fire Safe Committee members in person and socially distanced in AE park
- Attended FSCSDC CWPP Writers Workshop



APPENDIX B: MAPS

FIGURE 1: AREA COMMUNITIES MAP

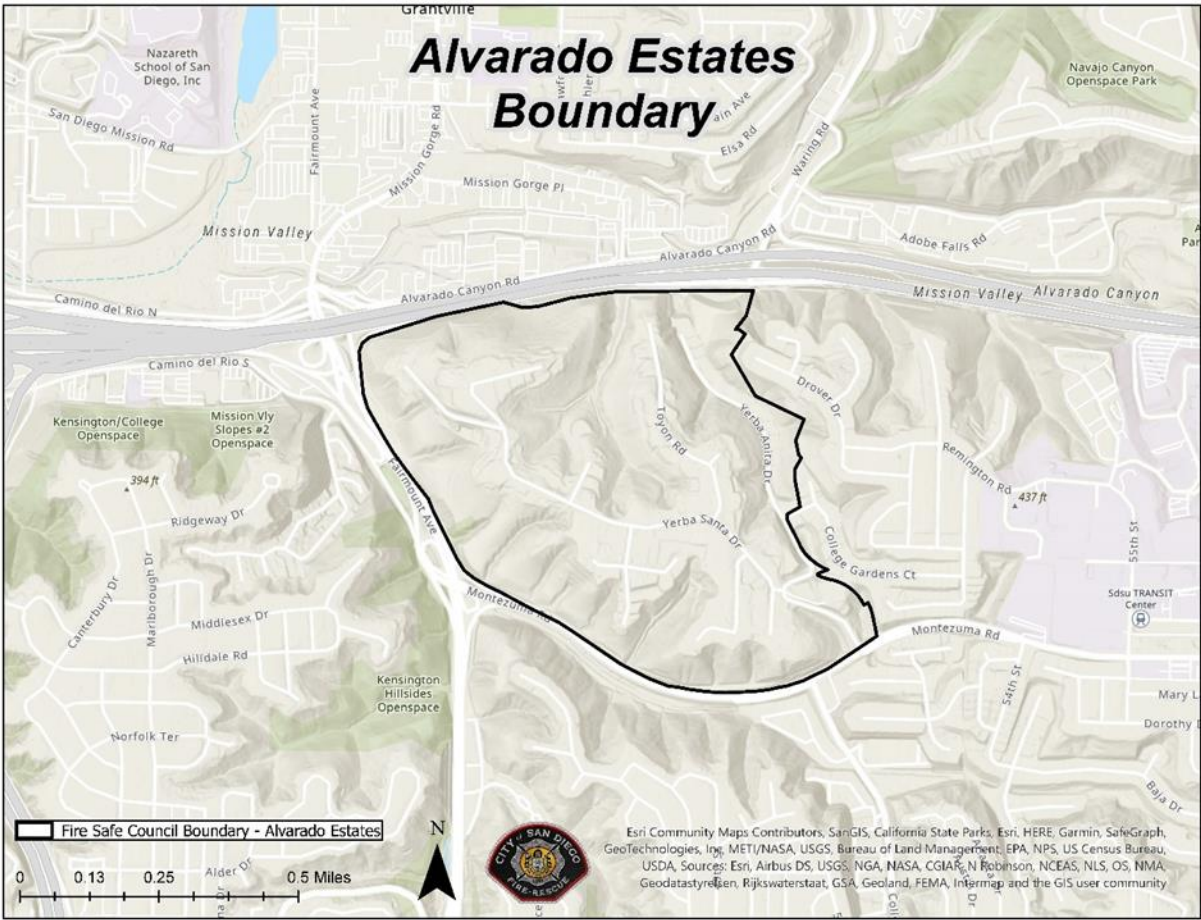


FIGURE 2: FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY MAP

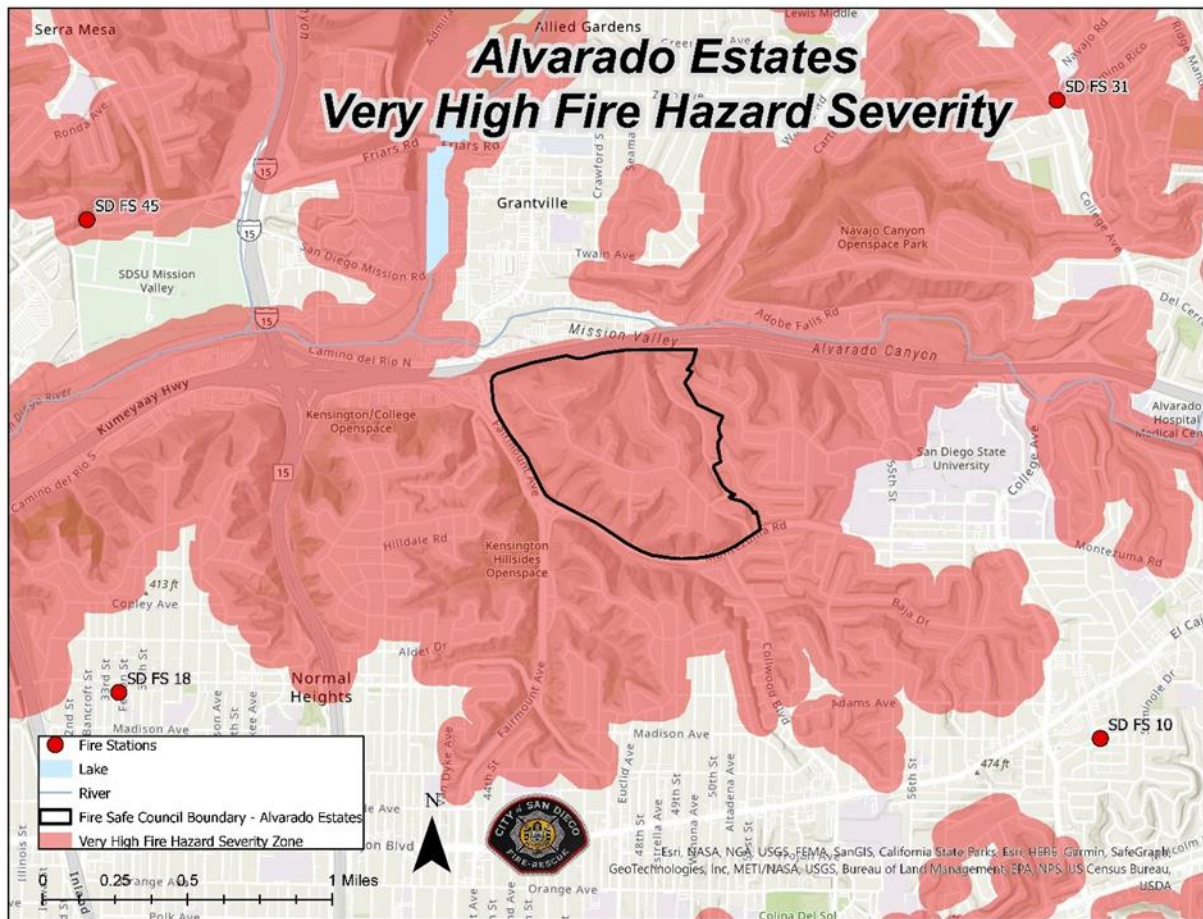


FIGURE 3: FIRE HISTORY 1910-2010

