

2026



Community Wildfire Protection Plan

DEL MAR HEIGHTS FIRE SAFE COUNCIL

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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 Del Mar Heights CWPP, which was developed collaboratively by citizens, and federal, state and local management agencies, are to:

- Align 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 which is comprised of a 15-member board of directors consisting of leading representatives from federal, state, and local agencies and stakeholders throughout San Diego County. In accordance with the federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

01

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.

I. OVERVIEW

Del Mar Heights

The Del Mar Heights FSC lies within the Torrey Pines Community Planning area which encompasses approximately 2,600 acres located in the northern coastal region of the City of San Diego and is bounded by Interstate 5 and the Mira Mesa and Carmel Valley communities on the east, the Del Mar Mesa area to the Southeast, the city of Del Mar and the Pacific Ocean to the west, the city of Solana Beach to the north, and the University City community to the south. Predominant land uses are open space, residential and industrial (within Sorrento Valley).

The land where Del Mar Heights sits today was originally the home of the Kumeyaay people. Del Mar Heights evolved from a remote railroad outpost and agricultural mesa in the late 19th century into one of San Diego's most sought-after coastal communities. The most important thing to know is that Del Mar Heights is part of the city of San Diego, not the city of Del Mar.

Del Mar Heights remained unincorporated land for a long time before being annexed to the city of San Diego. This was the "Mesa". It was high, windy and largely empty agricultural land. Early pioneer families used the Heights for dry farming (mostly lima beans) and horse ranching. While the Village of Del Mar was building fancy hotels, the Heights was still a place of barns and dirt roads.

The median year of constructions for homes in Del Mar Heights is 1974. During this time, residents were concerned about preserving open spaces and convinced San Diego and Del Mar to purchase Crest Canyon from the state and voted to approve a Special Assessment District which funded a parks bond.

Many older structures undergo frequent remodeling to blend original features with modern amenities. The area is primarily made up of single-family detached and attached homes on 5,000 - 6,000 sq ft lots.

Population: 11,000

II. LANDSCAPE

Topography

The Del Mar Heights community is characterized by an abundance of natural environmental resources associated with lagoons, beaches, canyons and sandstone bluffs. Native populations of the Torrey Pine (*Pinus torreyana*) trees provide a unique environment for those who live, work and visit this coastal community. The community is also noted for major local, regional and state natural resource-based parks including Torrey Pines State Beach and Torrey Pines State Parks Extension, the San Dieguito Lagoon Ecological Reserve, San Dieguito River Park, and Crest Canyon Open Space Park. Wildland vegetation fuels in Del Mar Heights include riparian, lightweight flashy fuels, and heavier dense stands of native chaparral, manzanita and sage.

Fire History

Although San Diego County has experienced some of the largest wildfires in California, the Del Mar Heights area has not been affected until June 2024 when a brush fire in the Torrey Pines Extension charred 23 acres.

Year	Name	Acres Burned	Homes	Deaths
2003	Cedar	273,246	2,200	15
2003	Otay	46,291	1	0
2007	Witch Creek	197,990	1,040	2
2007	Harris	90,440	206	5
2024	Del Mar	23	0	0

Key Infrastructure (see Appendix)

- **Water Systems** -Water and Sewers are provided and maintained by the City of San Diego
- **Utilities** - San Diego Gas & Electric
- **Waterways** - Del Mar Heights is bordered on the north by the 110-acre San Dieguito Lagoon Ecological Reserve. It provides a critical migrating waterfowl habitat and nesting sites for sensitive bird species while contributing to coastal fisheries replenishment. On the Southern edge, Los Peñasquitos Lagoon is a dedicated State Marsh Natural Reserve of 534 acres and home to 49 sensitive species.
- **Schools** - Del Mar Heights Elementary School, Del Mar Heights Academy and Del Mar Heights Nursery School
- **Businesses** - Beachside Del Mar Shopping Center
- **Residential Structures** - The median year of constructions for homes in Del Mar Heights is 1974. Many older structures undergo frequent remodeling to blend original features with modern amenities. The area encompasses 2,602 total homes with a few apartments, condos and townhouse communities.
- **Habitat Features** - Crest Canyon Open Space Park, a 134 acre preserve nestled among residential areas, features 2.2-mile loop trails through chaparral-covered canyon; Torrey Pines Extension offers 6 loops of hiking trails.

Maps

Using technology and local expertise, the sponsors of this CWPP have included a series of maps depicting the site and situation of Del Mar Heights (Appendix B). The following maps are visual aids from which the Del Mar Heights and community members can assess and make recommendations.

1. Area Communities Map
2. Fire Hazard Severity Map
3. Fire History (1995-Present)
4. Evacuation Map

III. FIREFIGHTING RESOURCES

The City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department provides firefighting and rescue resources.

SDFD Fire Station 24 is the closest fire station, located at 13077 Hartfield Ave, San Diego, CA 92130. This is approximately 2 miles East of I-5. It serves Carmel Valley and Del Mar Heights and its surrounding areas.

The Del Mar Heights community falls within the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.



02

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.

I. KEY PARTNERS

The Del MAR Heights FSC 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
San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD)	Provides overall support for the development of the CWPP; approves local CWPP. Provides input to the Evacuation Planning section of the CWPP. SDFD is the lead fire protection agency in the FSC area.
San Diego Canyonlands	Provides input to the Fuels Mitigation section of CWPP
San Diego County Fire Safe Council / Resource Conservation District (RCD)	Coordinates SD County Fire Safe Council, provides outreach and supports local Fire Safe Councils. Facilitates approval of local CWPPs.
Torrey Pines Community Planning Board (TPCPB)	Provides input and feedback on CWPP; provides opportunity for public communication.
CAL FIRE/San Diego County Fire	Input and expertise in forestry, fire and fuels, and Firewise concepts. Review and approval of final document.

03

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.

I. PRIORITIES

- Provide workshops about Firewise Communities.
- Promote awareness and enrollment in Alert San Diego, Genasys Protect, and other real-time evacuation and alert tools.
- Conduct consistent messaging on wildfire risk, defensible space, home hardening, and evacuation preparedness.
- Prioritize outreach to socially vulnerable communities, including seniors, low-income households, non-English speaking residents, and DAC communities.

II. COMPLETED & ONGOING PROJECTS

- In 2024, soon after the DMH FSC was formed, the website was launched and has been maintained with updated resources for the community. [DMH Website](#)
- Collaborated with SDFD, OES Department, and CAL FIRE on community outreach and posted links to their information on the DMH Fire Council's website.



III. FUTURE PROJECTS

- Update the Del Mar Heights FSC website with additional links to home hardening, landscaping, and defensible space tools and information.
- Publicize public events available to DMH residents sponsored by local agencies i.e, San Diego Fire-Rescue Department, CAL FIRE, SDCFPD, SDG&E, etc.
- Wildfire Safety Fairs – Apply for grants to be able to host engaging fairs where residents can meet organizations working on wildfire resilience and gain resources and information.
- Promote awareness and enrollment in Alert San Diego, Genasys Protect, and other real-time evacuation and alert tools through workshops, FSC meetings, and outreach campaigns.
- Consider offering a “Dump-a-thon” where community members can dispose of debris when clearing defensible space.

04

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.

I. PRIORITIES

- Develop and deliver a workshop to encourage Del Mar Heights residents to replace vulnerable materials such as wood shake roofs, open eaves, vents, single-pane windows, etc. with WUI compliant alternatives. Emphasize upgrades to vents, eaves, and the first 0-5 feet around homes.
- Investigate and communicate programs providing rebates, grants, or cost-share programs for DMH homeowners in making improvements such as upgrading to WUI compliant vent screens.
- Collaborate with HOAs in the Del Mar Heights area to align CC&R's with home hardening recommendations.
- In collaboration with Canyonlands and San Diego Parks and Recreation, apply for a grant to reduce fuel on the East side of Crest Canyon.
- Continue to recruit ~50 more Emergency Block Captains to notify neighbors of evacuation notices.

II. COMPLETED & ONGOING PROJECTS

- Conducted a fire safety workshop in 2024 in partnership with CAL FIRE, Bureau of Land Management, and local fire

agencies for Del Mar Heights residents community FSCs.



III. FUTURE PROJECTS

- In collaboration with Canyonlands and State Parks and Recreation, apply for a grant to reduce fuel on the East side of Torrey Pines Extension.
- Apply for grants to develop and deliver workshops focusing on Zone 0 and Home Hardening.
- Solicit additional Emergency Block Captains. Utilize this group to get the word out on Workshops and Zone 0 information.
- Enhance the Del Mar Heights Fire Safe Council website with links to resources Home Hardening, and resources.

05

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.

I. PRIORITIES

- Promote defensible space through seminars and website regarding zones for home ignition zone management:
 - Zone 0: Maintain a noncombustible area around the home; (no mulch, flammable plants, or furniture).
 - Zone 1: Thin and space vegetation to interrupt fuel continuity.
 - Zone 2: Manage larger vegetation to slow approaching fire and reduce radiant heat.
- Expand defensible space assistance for seniors, disabled individuals, and low-income residents who cannot perform clearing work independently through grant assistance programs.
- Encourage residents to use the City of San Diego's Get-It-Done app to report tree & vegetation issues as well as other safety and maintenance issues.

II. COMPLETED & ONGOING PROJECTS

- Through seminars and website links, promoted Defensible Space Inspections
- The Del Mar Heights Fire Safe Council of San Diego County wants to continue to collaborate with San Diego Fire-Rescue to connect property owners to resources to assist them in complying. This collaboration is crucial to increasing wildfire resiliency in the community.

III. FUTURE PROJECTS

- Promote Defensible Space Inspections – CAL FIRE, San Diego County Fire, and local fire agencies throughout the County conduct Defensible Space Inspections to notify property owners of their current compliance with fire code.
- Consider offering a “Dumpathon” where community members can dispose of debris when clearing defensible space.

06

Fuels Treatment

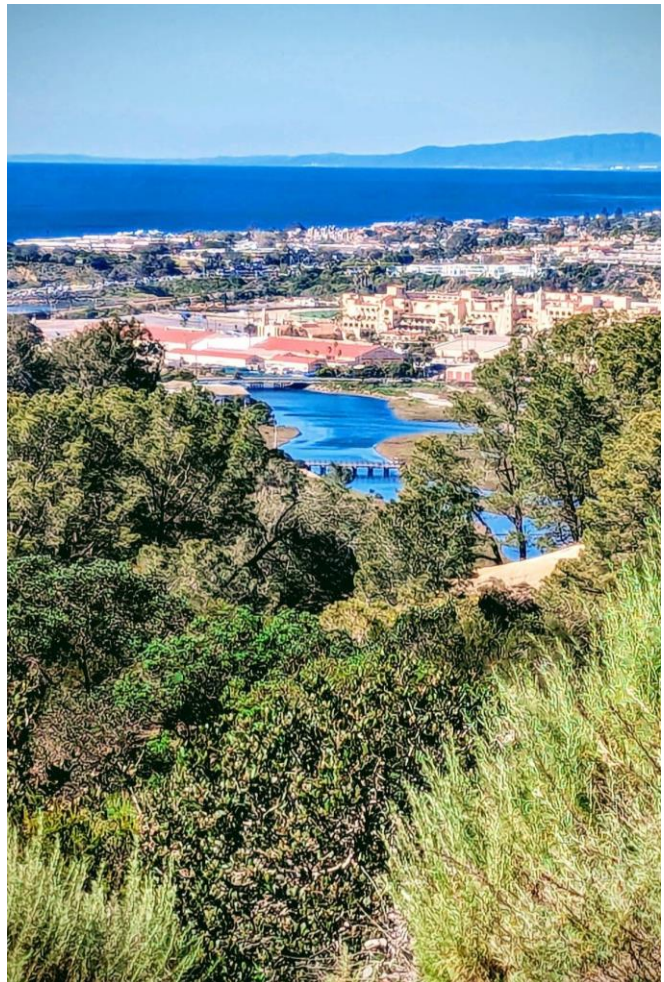
Fuels are combustible materials such as grasses, leaves, plants, shrubs and trees that feed flames. This section describes efforts to treat and manage these materials in the community.

I. COMPLETED & ONGOING PROJECTS

- Sponsored a fire prevention and fuels mitigation workshop in 2024 in partnership with SDFD and CAL FIRE for Del Mar Heights residents. Over 100 residents participated in this event.

II. PRIORITIES

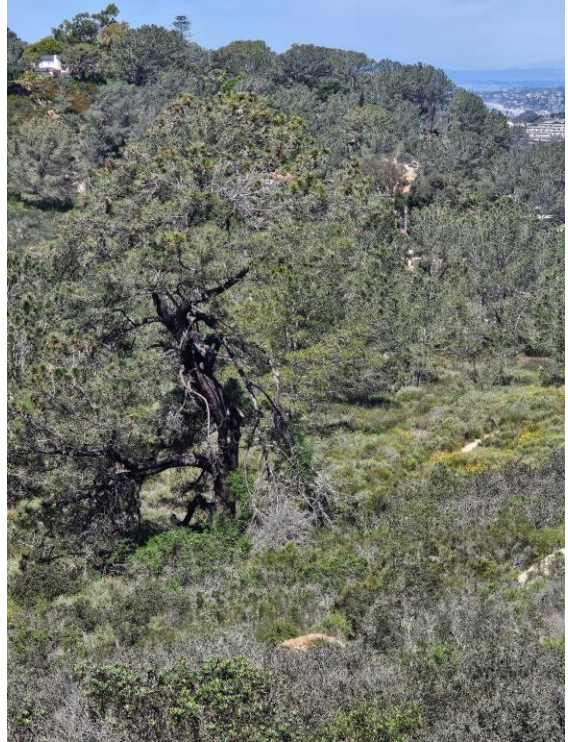
- Utilize advanced planning tools, including the Vibrant Planet platform, to identify and prioritize treatment areas based on structure exposure, fire behavior modeling, and community risk profiles.
- Focus treatments adjacent to Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) communities, particularly those located within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFSZs).
- Advocate to treat fuels surrounding designated Temporary Refuge Areas to improve survivability should evacuation not be immediately possible.



III. FUTURE PROJECTS

Future fuels treatment efforts will build on existing programs while expanding the scale, coordination, and effectiveness of treatments:-

- Continue integrating fire modeling, structure exposure analysis, and local knowledge into fuels planning to ensure treatments are strategically placed and cost-effective.
- Partner with SDFD and San Diego County Fire Safe Council in identifying priority fuels projects within their Del Mar Heights neighborhood.
- As a result of analysis utilizing the Vibrant Planet platform, the Del Mar Heights Fire Safe Council identified and prioritized fire reduction areas based on structure exposure, fire behavior modeling, and community risk profiles.
- Advocate for fuels reduction and brush thinning in these Del Mar Heights area canyons: Crest Canyon, Mira Montana South - between school and trail entrance, and Torrey Pines State Park Extension.



07

Evacuation Planning

Identifying key corridors in and out of a community – as well as temporary 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 Del Mar Heights key ingress and egress, as well as designated evacuation corridors, Temporary Refuge Areas, completed projects, priorities and future projects. **See Appendix B for Evacuation Map**

I. OVERVIEW OF INGRESS AND EGRESS

Del Mar Heights Road – Primary east-west arterial connecting the community to I-5 and inland areas.

Interstate 5 – Regional north-south evacuation corridor providing access to:

- North toward Solana Beach / Carlsbad
- South toward La Jolla / Downtown San Diego

Carmel Valley Rd – The southern border of Del Mar Heights FSC functions as an east-west arterial connecting Torrey Pines State Beach to I-5.

II. DESIGNATED EVACUATION CORRIDORS

Del Mar Heights

PRIMARY

Del Mar Heights Road to I-5
Carmel Valley Road
I-5 north and south

ALTERNATE

Camino Del Mar
Cordero Rd.
Carmel Valley Road
I-5 north and south

CONTINGENCY

Local Connector roads and Mango Dr.

EMERGENCY

Law enforcement directed

III. TEMPORARY REFUGE AREAS

- **Torrey Pines State Beach parking areas**
Large open paved areas with minimal vegetation fuel.
- **Beachside Del Mar Shopping Center**
Large paved parking lot with minimal vegetation fuel.
- **Del Mar Fairgrounds Parking Lot**
Large paved parking lot with minimal vegetation fuel.

IV. PRIORITIES

- Del Mar Heights Elementary School
- Del Mar Hills Nursery School
- Del Mar Hills Academy
- Coastal & Canyon-Edge Residences
- Older Adult Population

V. COMPLETED & ONGOING PROJECTS

In alignment with the City of San Diego Municipal Codes and using information and resources publicly available from SDFD, the San Diego Police Department, the San Diego County Office of Emergency Services (OES), the American Red Cross Southern California Region, Ready San Diego, and related agencies, the Fire Safe Council provides information related to Evacuation Planning and Emergency Response through:

- Articles in Del Mar News
- Website posts and Facebook posts
- Community information items at local community meetings
- Public meetings about the Fire Safe Council and fire safe practices

VI. FUTURE PROJECTS

- Research, support, and promote the use of agency guides for fire prevention, protection and evacuation planning
- Research, support, and promote the use of public service mobile apps for emergency preparedness and response alerts – including the use of SD Emergency App, Genasys Protect, and AlertSanDiego.
- Support the Del Mar Union and San Dieguito School Districts' evacuation and preparedness efforts.

08

Other Mitigation & Preparedness

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.

I. PRIORITIES

- Analyze needs for a community-wide “Dump-a-thon” to reduce fire risks. Develop a Dump-a-thon Plan including securing funding, dumpsters, locations and volunteers based on data analysis results.
- Present awards, possibly donated gift certificates for fire safe landscaping.
- Consider proven new technology to improve preparedness such as sensors to detect fires early.

II. COMPLETED AND/OR ONGOING PROJECTS

- Sponsored a fire prevention and fuels mitigation workshop in 2024 in partnership with CAL FIRE and SDFD for Del Mar Heights residents. Over 100 residents participated in this event.

III. FUTURE PROJECTS

- Identify and communicate to Del Mar Heights residents opportunities for educational home assessments
- Education on fire-prone vegetation, perhaps in conjunction with the local Garden Club.

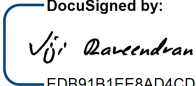
09

Signatures

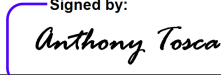
This plan must be approved by the following key parties: the local author (examples include Fire Safe Council President, Firewise Community, Tribal National, HOA, etc.), the chief of the primary responding fire agency, the CAL FIRE Unit Chief, and chair of the CWPP review committee. This section includes these signoffs.

*The Community Wildfire Protection Plan, as developed for as developed for **Del Mar Heights:***

- 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.

X  DocuSigned by:
Viji Ravendran
E7A696775E494EA...


President of the
Fire Safe Council Submitting this CWPP

X  Signed by:
Anthony Tosca
E7A696775E494EA...

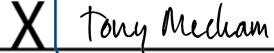
Participating Fire Agency representative
(State, Local, or Tribal)

San Diego County Community Wildfire Protection 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.

Signed by:

05EBDCB2A3B6403...
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:

69A84432E235429...
Tony Mecham, Unit Chief
CAL FIRE San Diego Unit

10

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 Del Mar Heights, through a series of community meetings. The Fire Safe Council members who contributed to the document include the following:

Community Representatives

- Viji Raveendran
- Enid Sherman
- Ronnie Rossman
- Steven Post
- Mike Halpern

Agency Representatives

- Helen Sylvia, SFD
- Jeshua Taucher, Canyonlands

Meetings Dates

- 02-25-2026
- 03-19-2026
- 03-22-2026

**APPENDIX B.
MAPS**

Figure 1 Area Communities Map

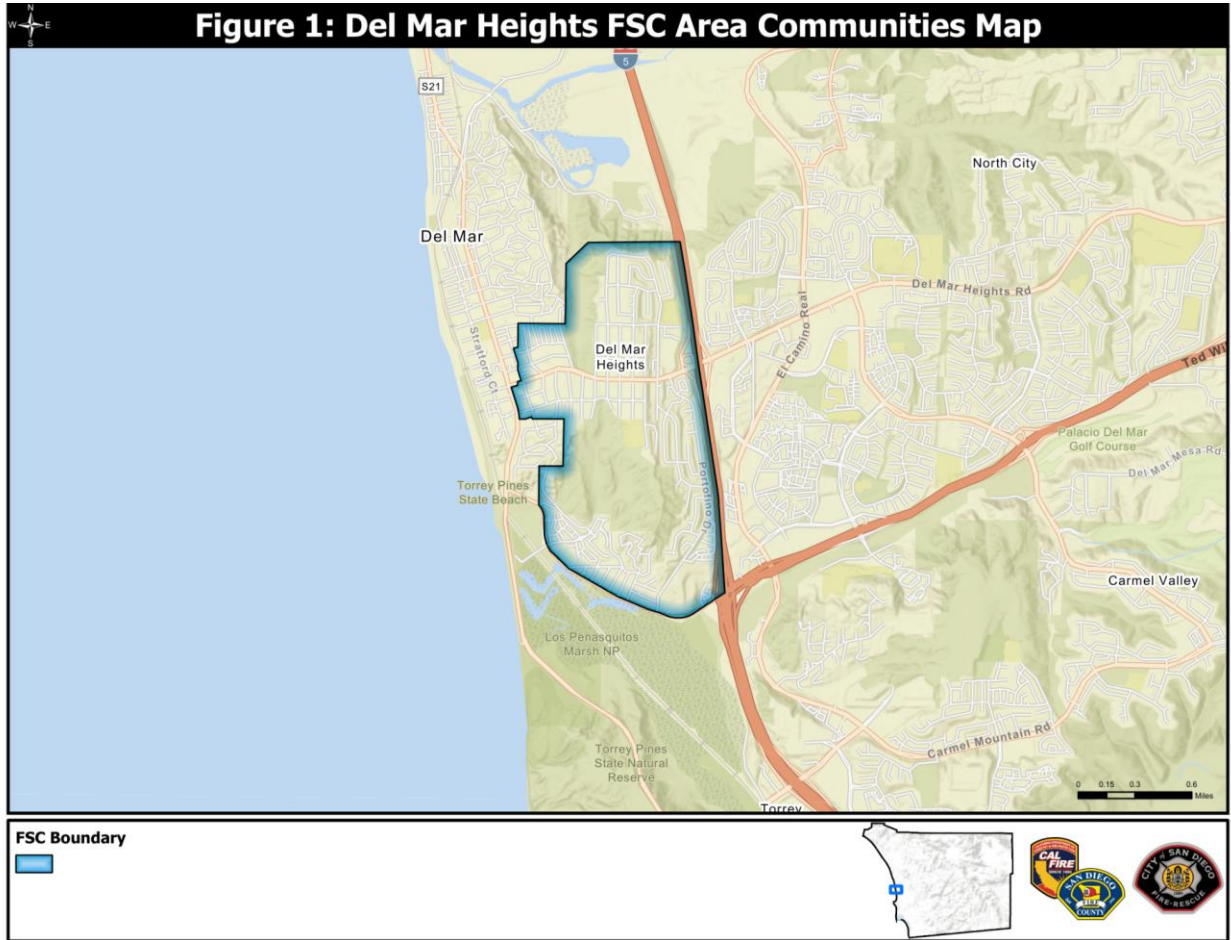


Figure 2 Fire Hazard Severity Map

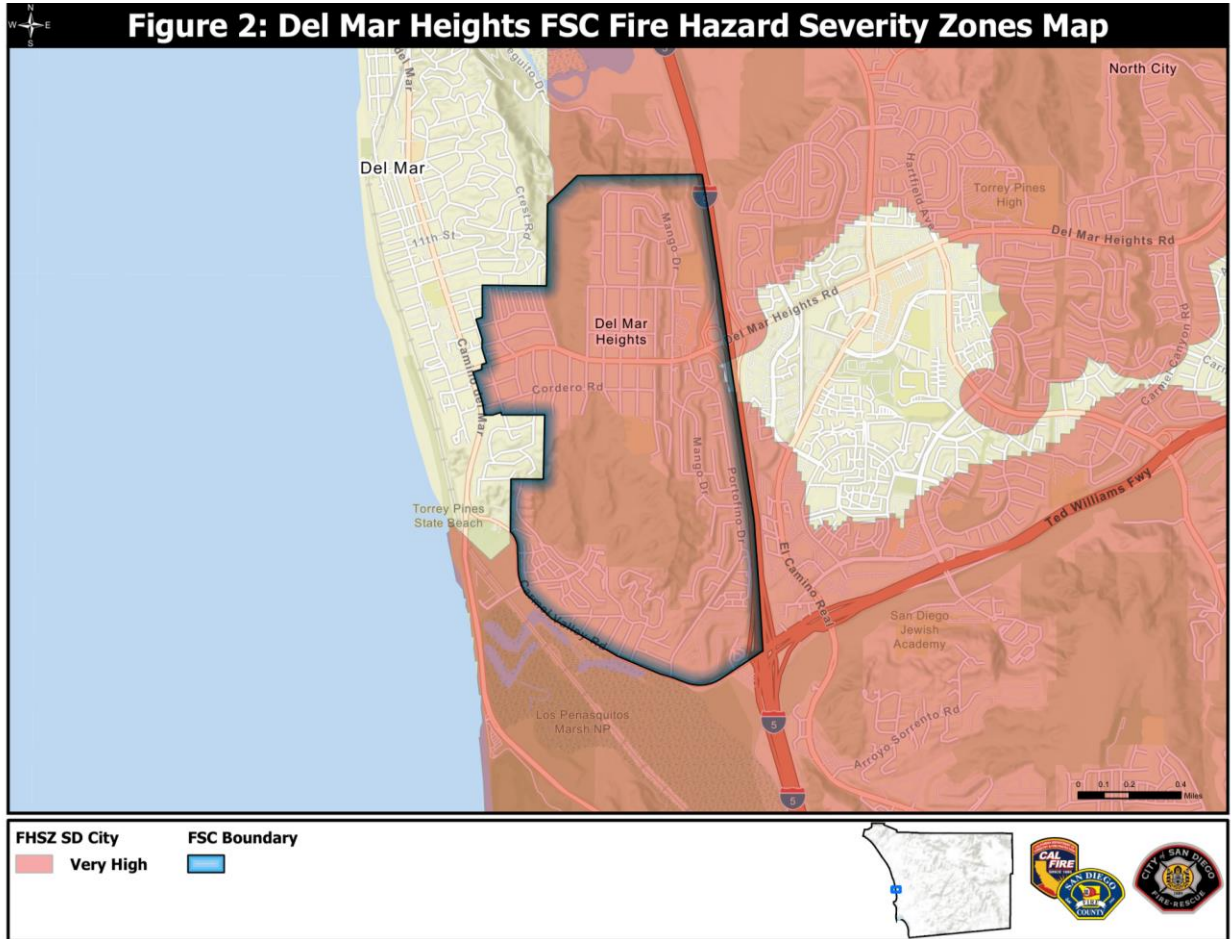


Figure 3 Fire History 1995-Present

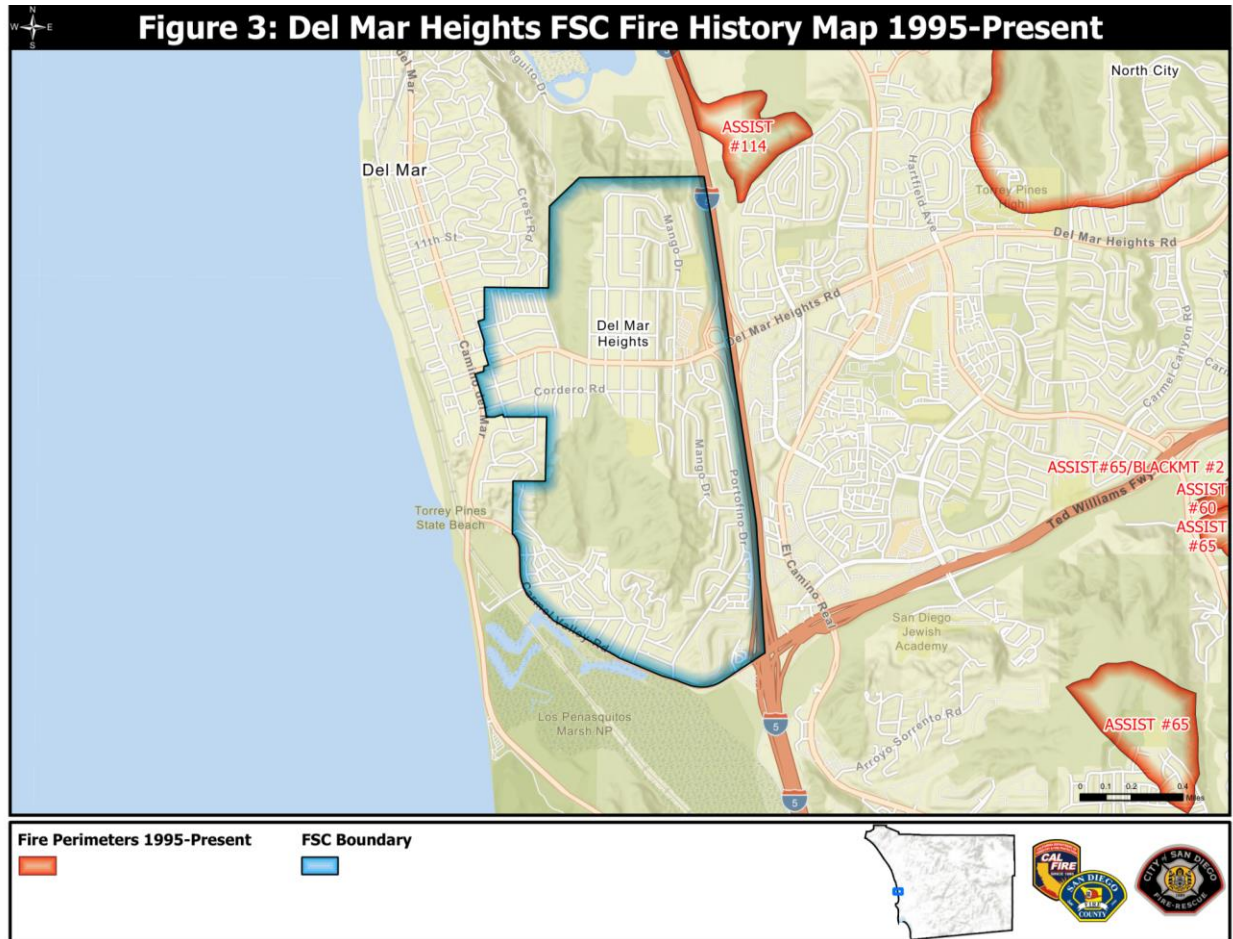


Figure 4 Evacuation Map

