

PC 03-09-2026

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Update to the  
Health and  
Safety Element of  
the Cupertino  
General Plan

Presentations

# CITY OF CUPERTINO HEALTH AND SAFETY ELEMENT UPDATE

PLANNING COMMISSION STUDY SESSION

March 9, 2026





# Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Health and Safety Element Overview
3. Key Updates
4. Next Steps
5. Questions and Discussion

# Introductions



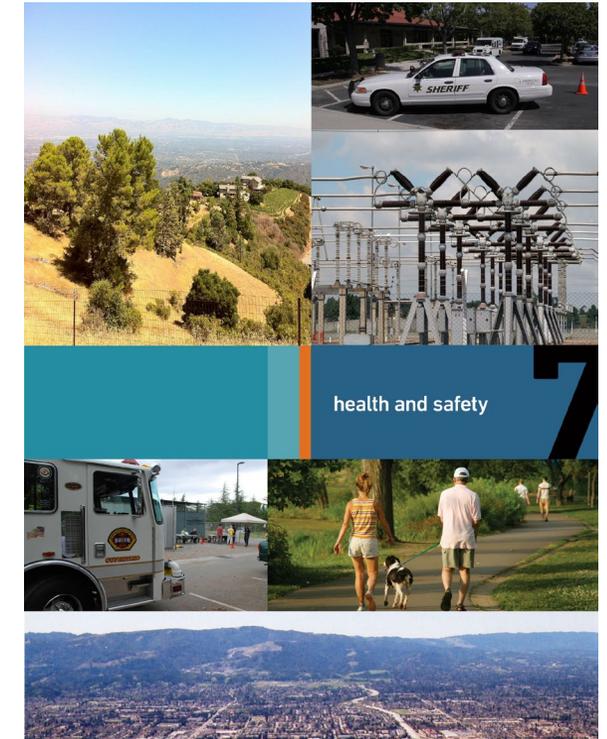
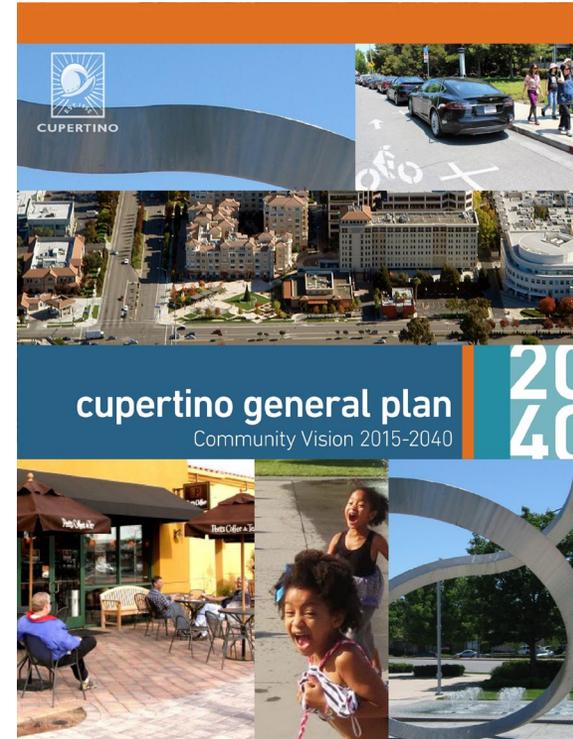
- **City of Cupertino**
  - **Luke Connolly, Assistant Director of Community Development**
  - **Piu Ghosh, Planning Manager**
- **PlaceWorks, Consultant to the City**
  - **Eli Krispi, Interim Project Manager**
  - **Tammy L. Seale, Principal**
  - **Jacqueline Protsman Rohr, Project Manager**
  - **Miles Barker, Associate**



# HEALTH AND SAFETY ELEMENT OVERVIEW

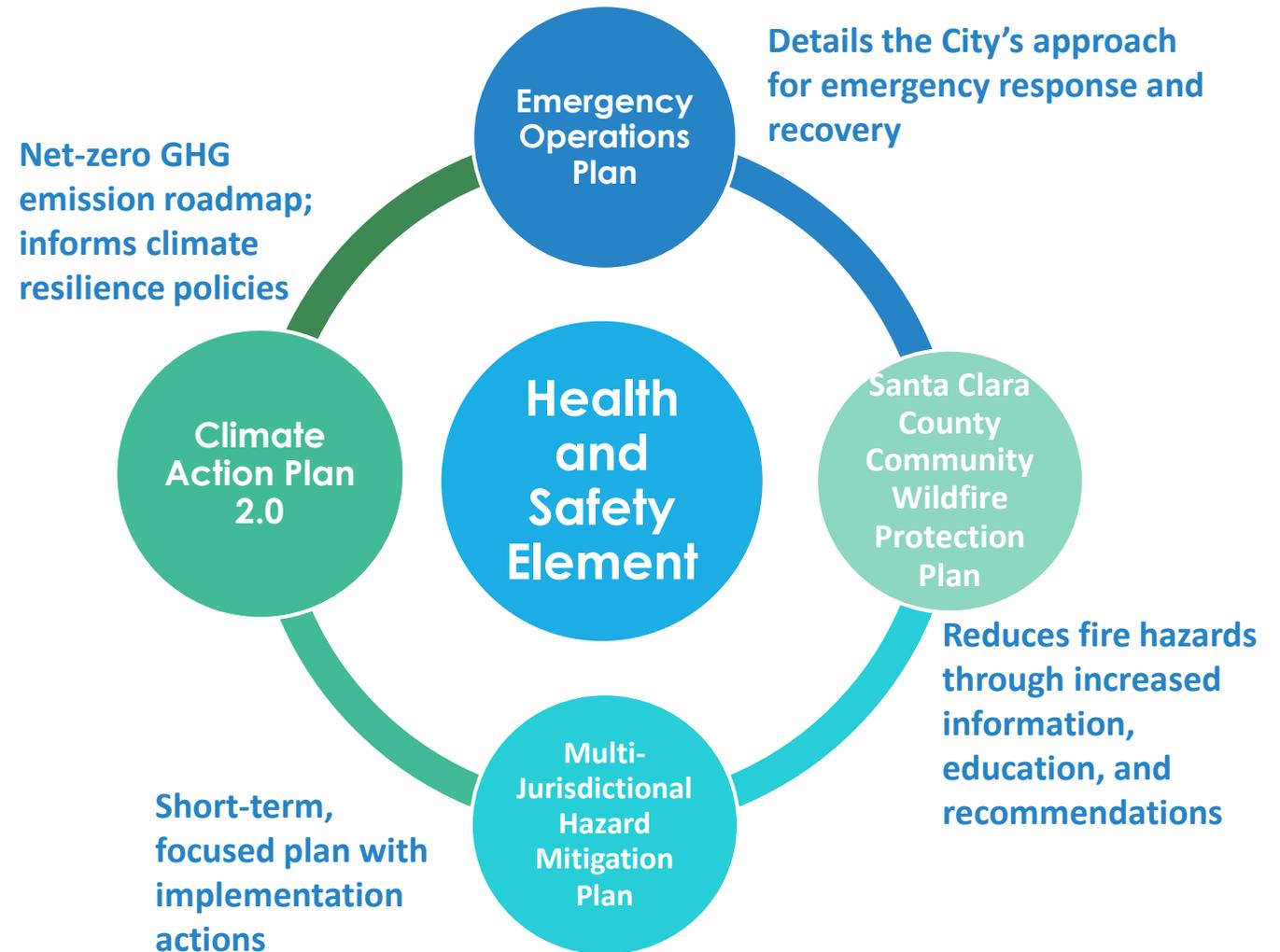
# What is a Safety Element?

- Mandatory part of a General Plan.
- Identifies hazards of concern and related risks to the community.
- Sets policies to help increase resilience to natural disasters and other hazards.
- Current element adopted in 2014.



# Health and Safety Element Update

- Required after Housing Element update to ensure compliance with current State law.
- Addresses new statutory requirements and hazards, such as climate change, wildfire, and extreme heat.
- Incorporates Santa Clara County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.
- Enhances eligibility for FEMA funding.



# Changes to State Law



## **SB 1241, adopted in 2012 (Govt. Code § 65302(g)(3))**

- Update wildfire sections.
- Identify responsible agencies.
- Minimize risks for new buildings and essential facilities.

## **SB 379, adopted in 2015 (Govt. Code § 65302(g)(4))**

- Prepare climate change vulnerability assessment.
- Develop goals, policies, and actions to increase adaptation and resilience.

## **AB 2140 (Govt. Code § 65302.6)**

- Enables incorporation of local hazard mitigation plan (LHMP) into a General Plan's Safety Element.

## **AB 2684, adopted in 2024 (Govt. Code § 65302.01)**

- Requires Safety Element update to address extreme heat upon next General Plan element update on or after January 1, 2028.
- Requires ongoing review to identify new information on extreme heat hazards.

## **SB 99, adopted in 2019 (Govt. Code § 65302(g)(5))**

- Identify evacuation-constrained residential areas.

## **AB 747, adopted in 2019 and AB 1409, adopted in 2021 (Govt. Code § 65302.15)**

- Identify evacuation route capacity, safety, viability and evacuation locations.
- Evaluate evacuation under multiple hazard scenarios.



# KEY UPDATES

# Overview of Policy Updates



- Aligned wildfire standards with updated State law and CAL FIRE mapping.
- Updated and refined other hazard sections to align with State law and best practices.
- Enhanced floodplain and critical facility protection standards.
- Added new evacuation access and route management policies, based on findings from the 2025 Evacuation Route Capacity Assessment and Residential Constrained Parcel Analysis.
- Expanded climate adaptation and resilience policies based on revised Vulnerability Assessment.
- Reinforced infrastructure resilience and continuity planning.
- Clarified application of standards to new vs. existing development.

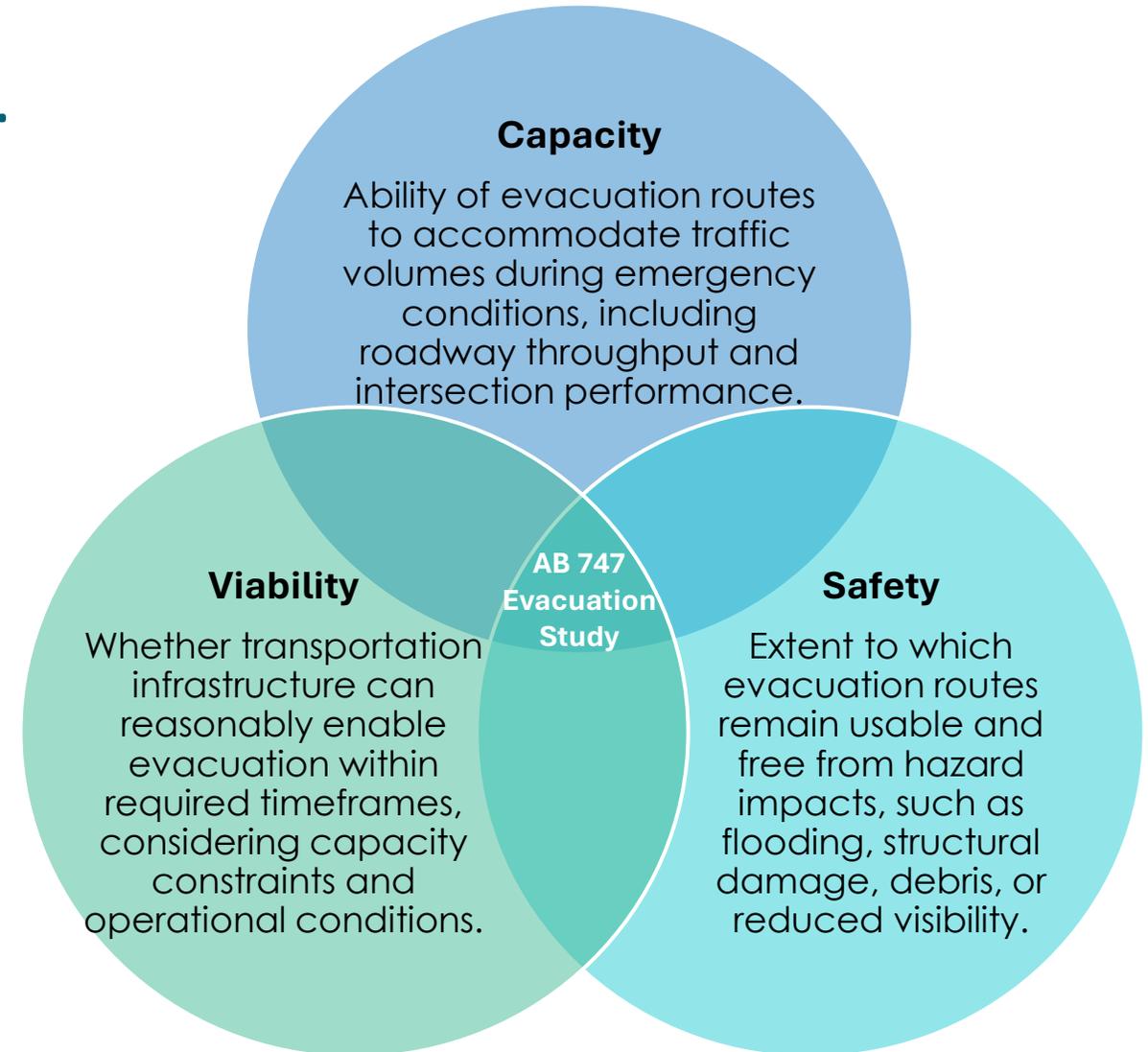
# Emergency Preparedness & Infrastructure Resilience



- Expanded emergency communications policies.
- Multilingual alert systems emphasized.
- Strengthened regional coordination.
- Strengthened evacuation communication and coordination protocols.
- Reinforced resilience of critical municipal infrastructure systems.
- Recognized Public Safety Power Shutoffs as an ongoing hazard risk.

# Evacuation Route Capacity Assessment

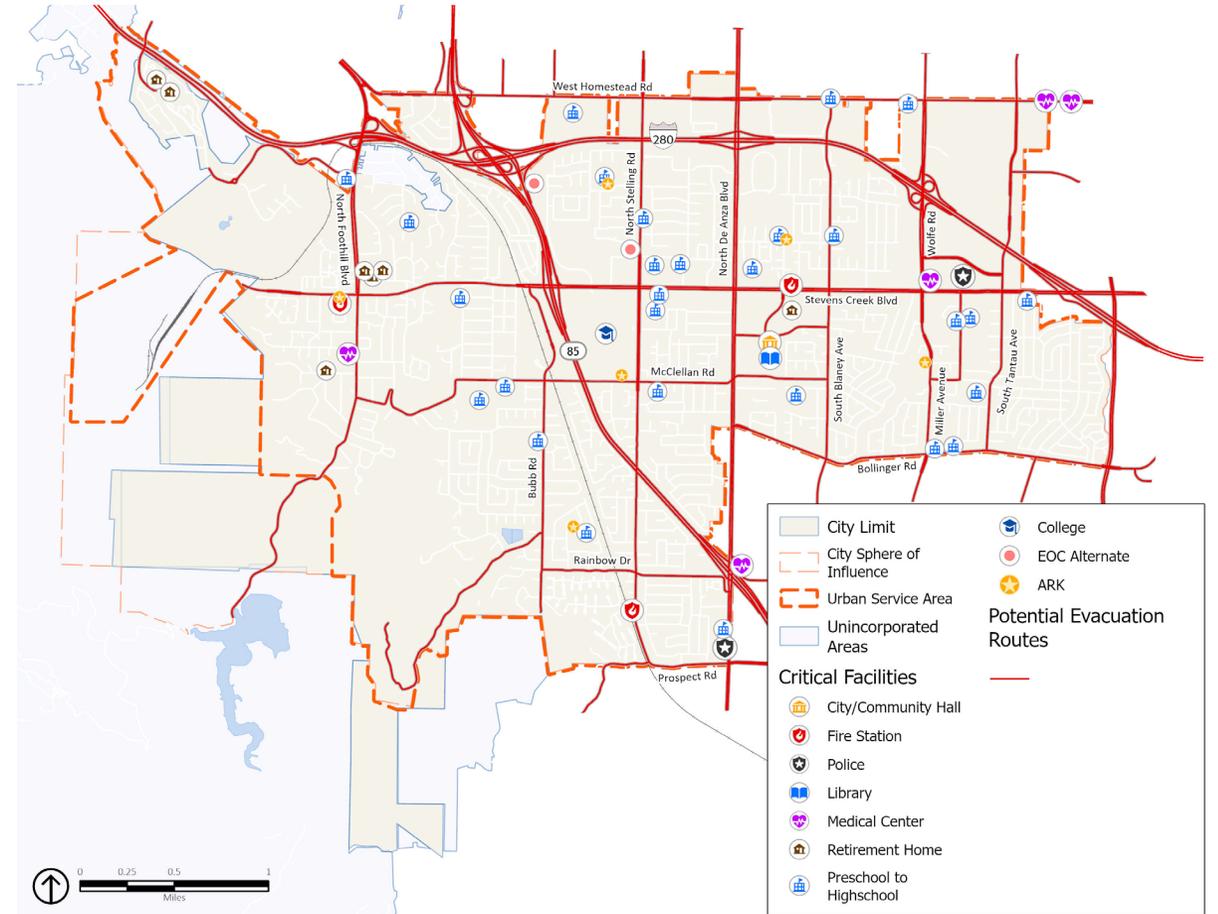
- City-led evacuation study (2025).
- Evaluated **evacuation capacity**, **safety**, and **viability** under three wildfire scenarios, including post-earthquake conditions and potential road closures.
- Identified evacuation route constraints and evacuation timing considerations.



# Evacuation Planning & Emergency Access

## ■ Policy Responses in Updated Element

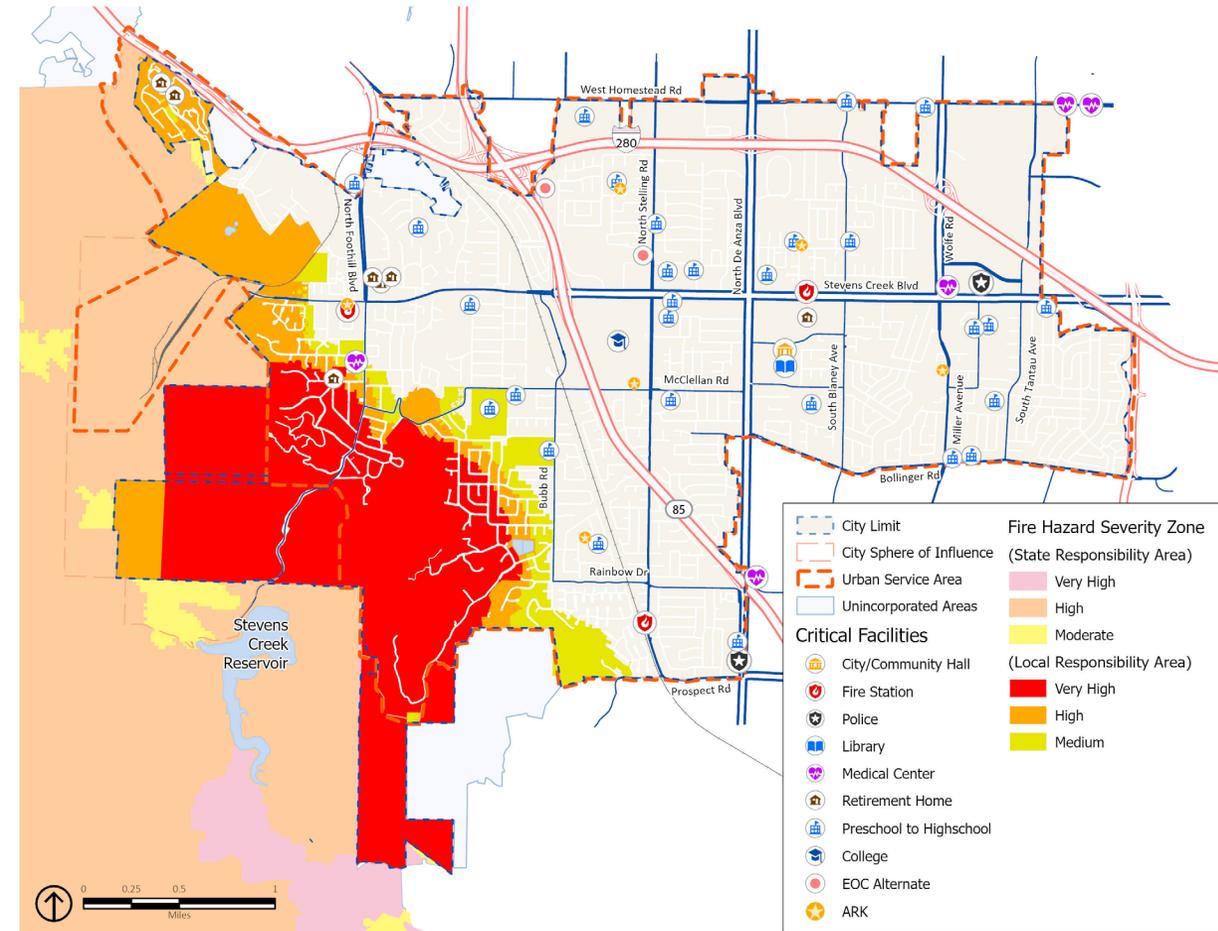
- Incorporated study findings into hazard mapping and background analysis.
- Added policies supporting multiple evacuation routes where feasible for new development.
- Reinforced ingress and egress standards in development review process.
- Strengthened coordination with emergency management agencies for effective response planning.



Source: City of Cupertino, 2023; OpenStreetMaps, 2023

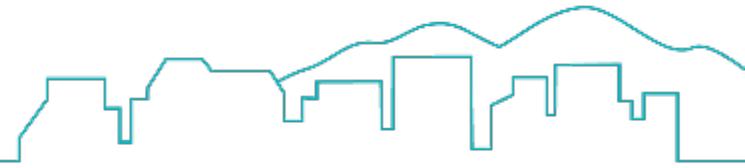
# Wildfire Hazard Mapping & Risk Reduction

- Incorporated updated CAL FIRE Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ) mapping for Local and State Responsibility Areas.
- Replaced the prior Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area (WUIFA) mapping framework with the adopted LRA FHSZ designations.
- Revised and added wildfire risk reduction policies to align with State law, consistent with CAL FIRE's standard recommendations.



Source: City of Cupertino, 2023; Cal FIRE, 2022

# Wildfire Risk Reduction Policies



## ■ Existing Development

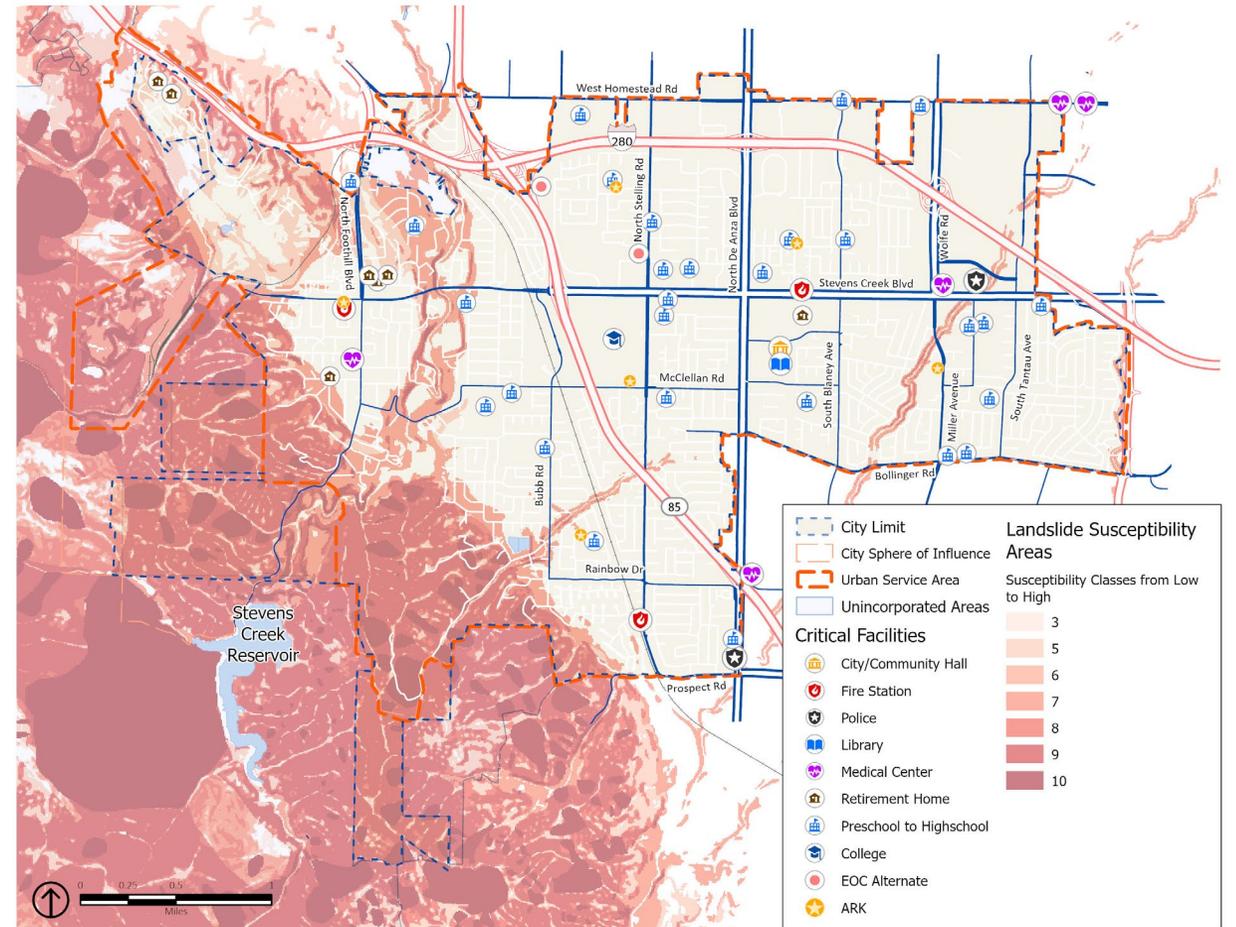
- Strengthened defensible space and vegetation management requirements (Public Resources Code §4291 and Government Code §51182).
- Roadway repair and maintenance to meet current fire safety and evacuation standards (California Building Code Chapter 7A).
- Fuel break and emergency access route maintenance coordinated with CAL FIRE and Santa Clara County Fire Department.
- Discouraged electric security gates that impede emergency access.
- Recovery and redevelopment standards following major fire events to reduce future risk.

## ■ New Development

- Early Fire Department review and response time evaluation.
- Ignition-resistant construction and Class A roofing (California Building Code Chapter 7A).
- Fire Protection Plans required for new projects (California Fire Code Chapter 49).
- Multiple ingress/egress and emergency access standards (California Building Code Chapter 7A).
- Water service extensions and fire flow verification prior to approval.
- Restrictions on subdivisions and density increases in High and Very High FHSZs.

# Seismic & Geologic Hazards

- Updated landslide and steep slope hazard discussion and mapping for clarity and consistency with current data.
- Refined discussion of cascading impacts from seismic events to better reflect potential hazard interactions.
- Clarified discussion of potential infrastructure disruption affecting emergency access during seismic events.
- Clarified existing geotechnical review requirements for new development to align with current City and State regulations.
- Clarified limitations on grading on steep slopes consistent with existing City standards.



Source: City of Cupertino, 2023; California Geological Survey, 2018

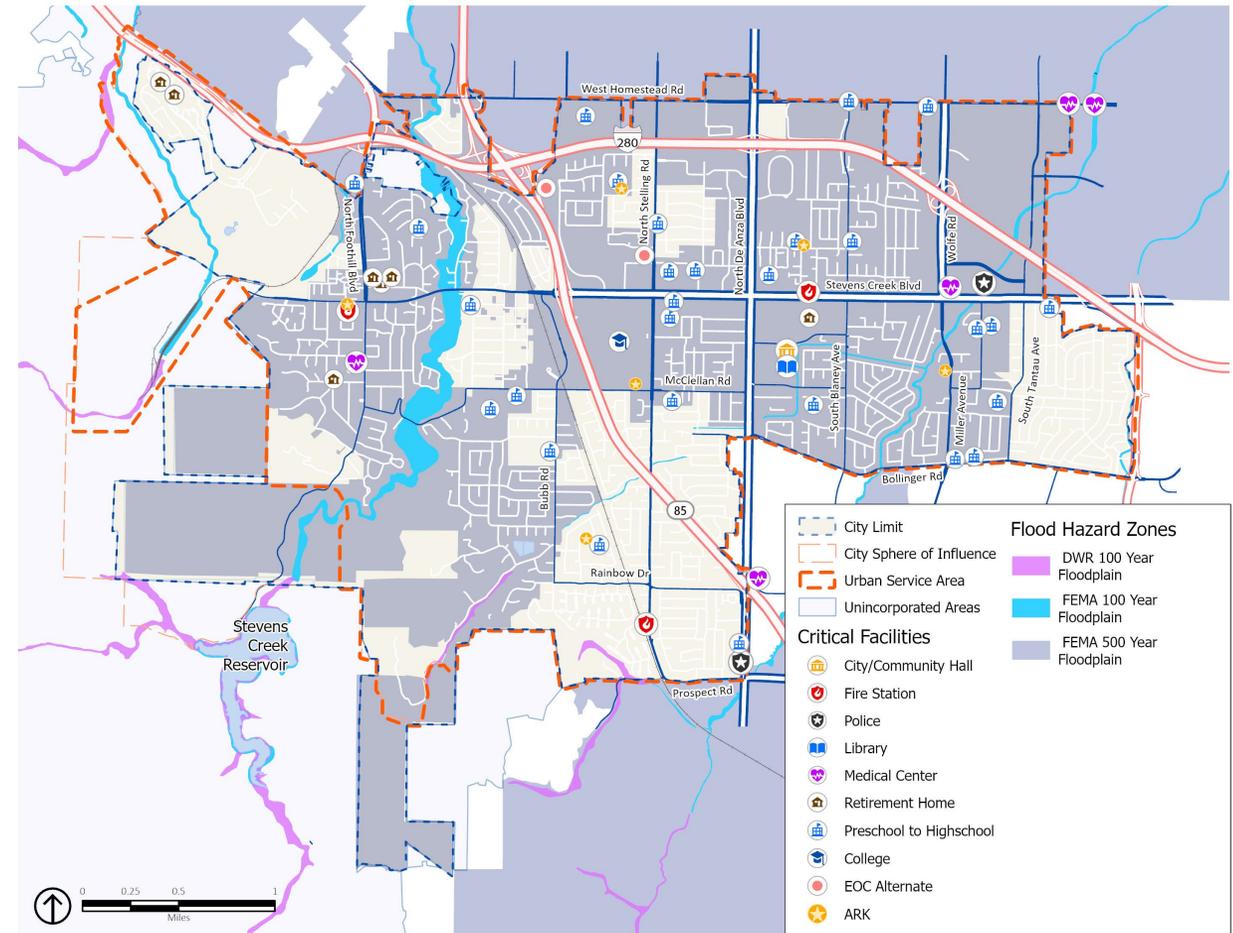
# Hazardous Waste & Materials



- Updated regulatory references to reflect current State and County oversight requirements.
- Reinforced environmental site assessment requirements.
- Maintained stringent risk reduction measures for development near known hazardous materials sites.
- Strengthened commitment to coordinate with regulatory agencies for ongoing cleanup and monitoring activities.

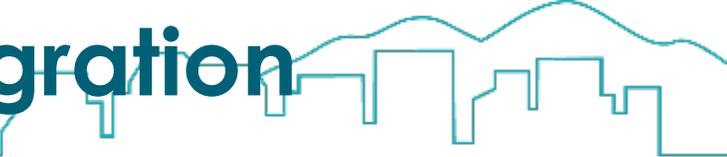
# Flood & Inundation Hazards

- Updated FEMA floodplain mapping.
- Clarified dam failure and inundation areas.
- Identified critical infrastructure and essential facilities in flood-prone areas.
- Strengthened standards for new development and redevelopment in flood-prone areas, while existing uses must meet federal and State requirements.
- Reinforced coordination with flood control agencies.



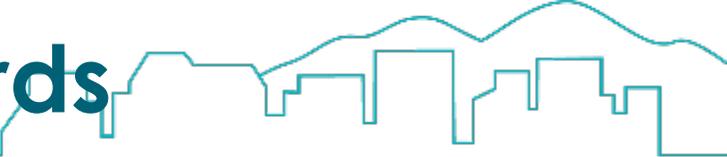
Source: City of Cupertino, 2023; Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2021; Department of Water Resources, 2021

# Climate Vulnerability Assessment Integration



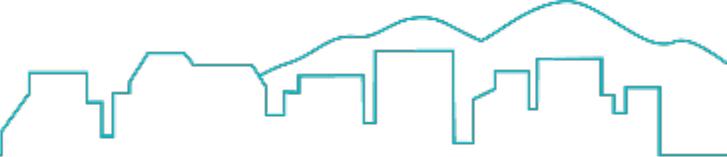
- Integrated SB 379 Vulnerability Assessment.
- Flooding, extreme heat, wildfire identified as highest risk.
- Identified vulnerable populations and critical infrastructure.
- Added adaptation and resilience strategies.
- Climate considerations integrated across hazard sections.
- Added policies and implementation strategies to expand emergency preparedness outreach, education, and support for vulnerable populations.

# New vs. Existing Development Standards



- Mentions if the requirements apply to new development, redevelopment, or both, consistent with State wildfire planning requirements (Gov. Code §65302(g); SB 1241).
- Identifies risk reduction strategies for existing neighborhoods where many State building standards apply primarily to new development.
- Specifies policy triggers (e.g., subdivision size, change of use, site modification thresholds) to clarify when State and local fire safety requirements apply.
- Improves transparency and predictability in development review.
- Supports consistent implementation aligned with State wildfire safety and evacuation planning requirements (SB 99; AB 747; PRC §4290–4291; CBC Chapter 7A).

# Noise Element



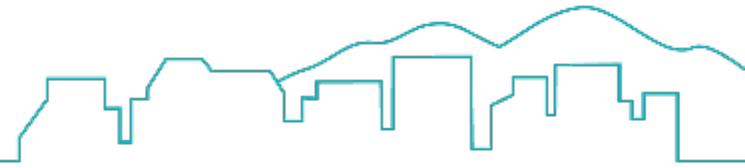
- Part of the Health and Safety Element, but not part of the comprehensive update.
- Minor updates were made to ensure consistency with current municipal requirements.
- Revisions reflect input from the Planning Commission and Public Safety Commission during the 2025 study sessions.
- Added implementation strategies to guide review of new noise-generating uses, including public and private recreational activities near residential areas.
- Added consideration of restrictions on quarry truck operations during designated quiet hours.



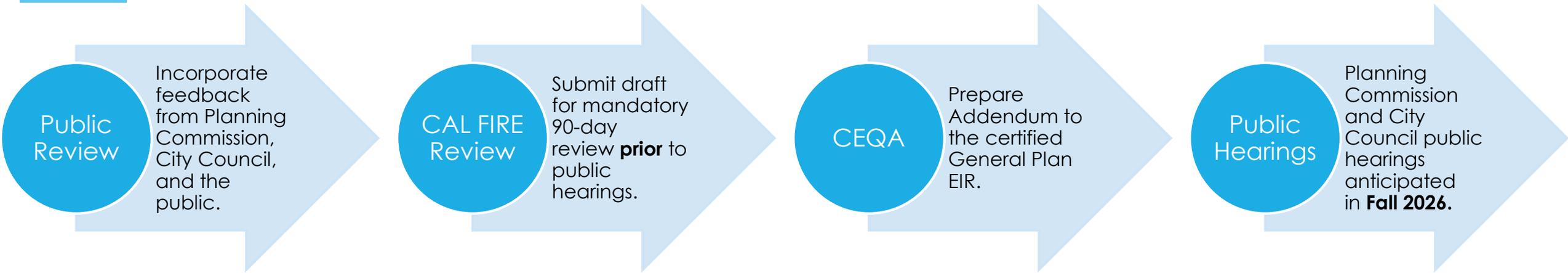
# NEXT STEPS



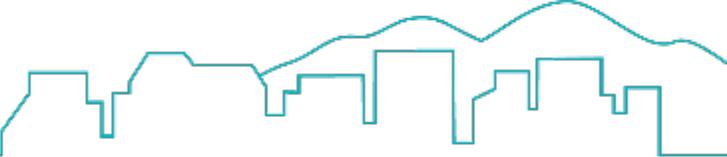
# Next Steps



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# Recommended action



- Receive the presentation and provide input on the Public Draft of the Health and Safety Element.

