



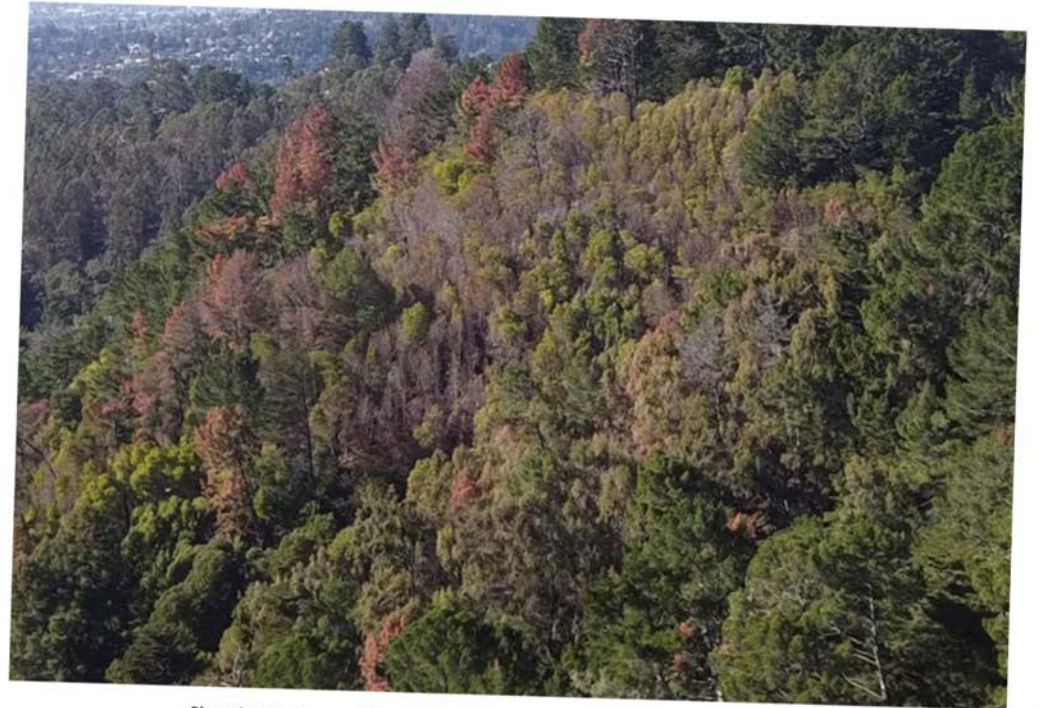
# Preparing for 2021 Wildfire Season

Department & Community Actions



# Berkeley's Changing Hazards

- Climate Change
- Changes in vegetation
- Limited resources to educate and enforce compliance



Diseased trees turning orange in the hills of Joaquin Miller Regional Park in January 2021. (Photo by John Brega)

Nature News

## **Disease Outbreak Appears to be Killing Bay Area Trees**

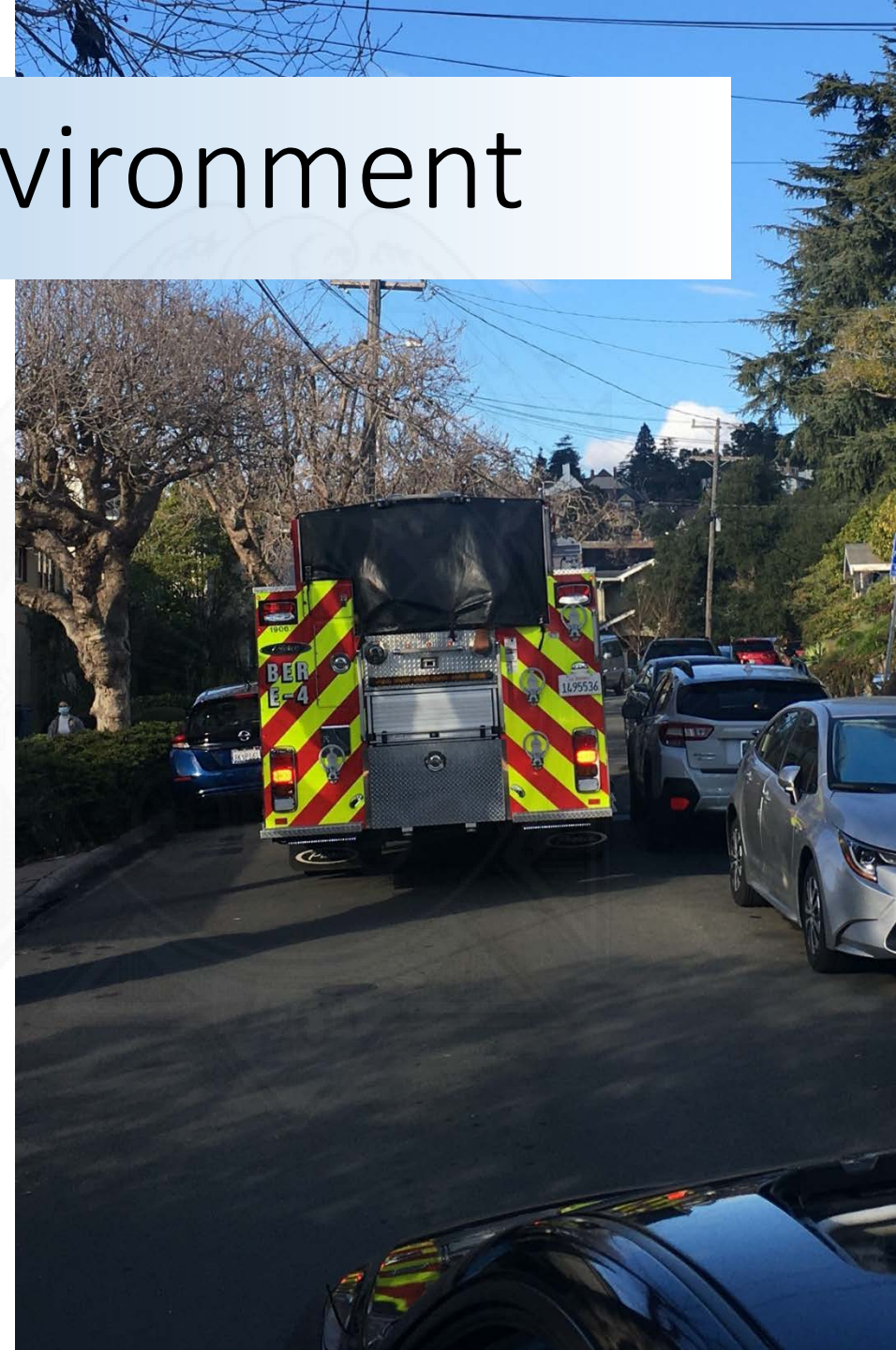
by *Eric Simons*

March 4, 2021



# Intersection with the Built Environment

- Narrow winding streets
  - On street parking
  - Unapproved encroachments
- Increasing population density





# The Big Picture

Wildfire Season 2021





# Preparedness & Enhanced Readiness

- Preparedness & Community Partnerships
  - Wildland-Urban Interface Division
  - Hazardous Hill Inspections
  - Community Wildfire Protection Plan
  - Evacuation Preparedness
- Operational Changes for Enhanced Readiness
  - Fire Weather Procedures
- Rethinking Community Readiness

**Red Flag Warning**  
Published: September 25, 2020

**Dry & Windy – Strongest in Elevations Above 1,000 Feet**

- North Bay Mountains, East Bay Hills/Interior Valleys
- Saturday 9 PM PDT – Monday 8 AM PDT
- N/NE winds with local gusts 35 - 45 mph, up to 50 mph in highest elevations
- Critically low humidity
- Easier fire starts
- Potential for rapid spread of fire

San Francisco Bay Area/Monterey  
weather.gov/bayarea

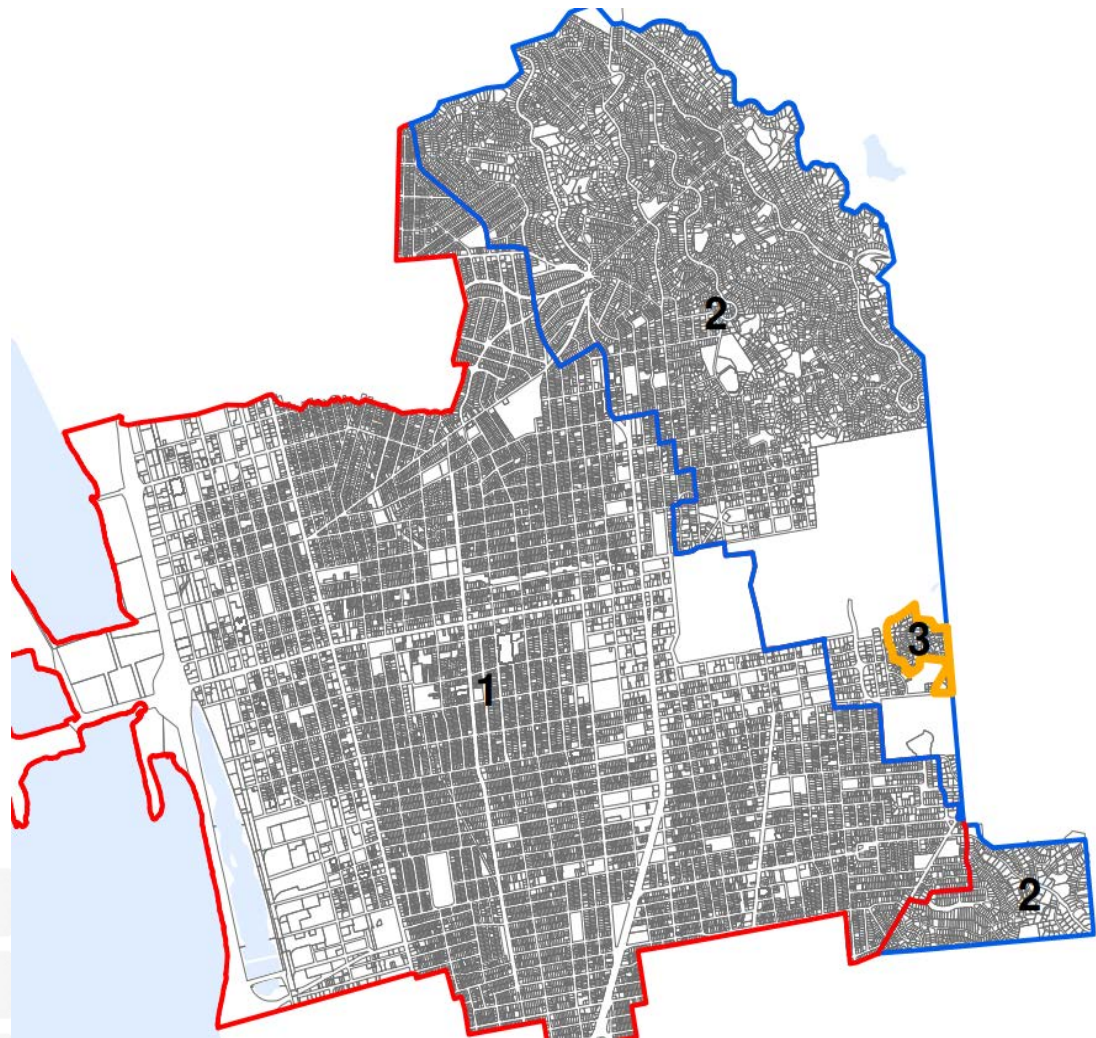


# Preparedness & Community Partnerships

Berkeley Fire Department



# Wildland-Urban Interface Division

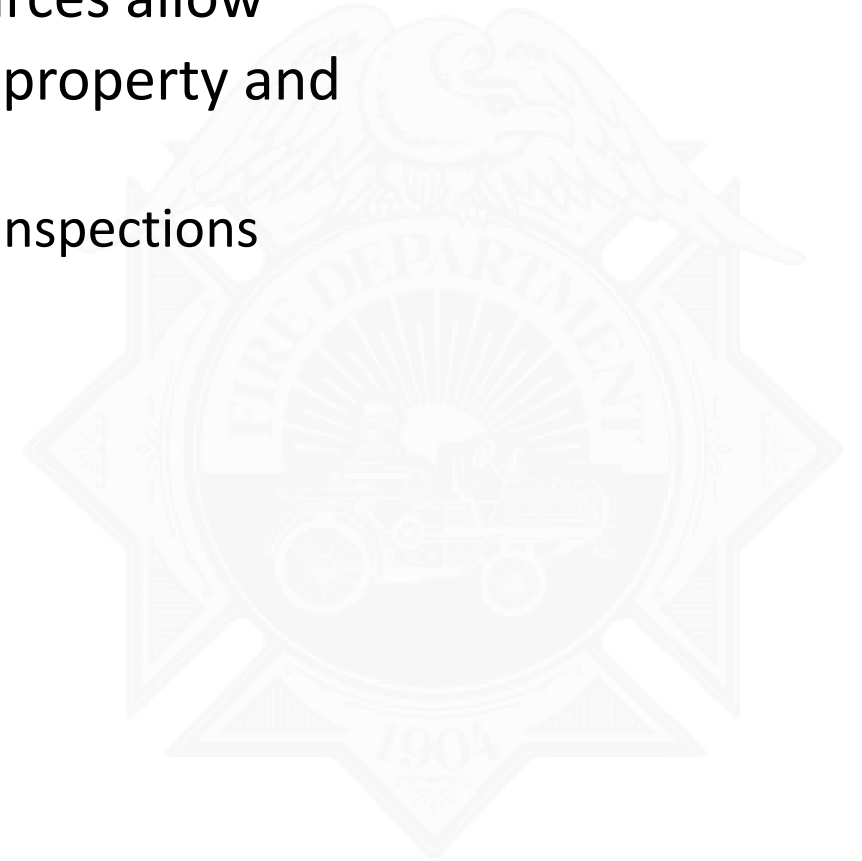


- New division funded by Measure FF
- Connects to Vision 2050 Strategy #3: Prepare a Wildfire Mitigation and Safety Plan
- Central point for programs and policies regarding Berkeley's wildland-urban interface
- Coordinates and implements vegetation management with allied agencies such as UC Berkeley and East Bay Regional Parks District
- Coordinates Safe Passages implementation plan



# Hazardous Hill Inspections: 2021 Fire Season

- Maintain Hazardous Fire Area inspections as resources allow
- Engaging community through 1-1 interaction with property and vegetation management personnel
  - Firefighters performing Hazardous Hill Patrols and inspections
  - Fire Prevention Inspectors
- Bringing back temporary retired annuitants
  - Education
  - Inspection
  - Enforcement
- The importance of Measure FF funding
- Fire Patrol







# Hazardous Hill Inspections: Long Term



- Impending State mandates for ember resistant zones around structures
  - Will first affect new structures, then existing
- State examining certificates for insurance
- Continued community and Fire Dept collaboration
  - Build increased familiarity and relationships



# Community Wildfire Protection Plan

- Collaborative effort between community members and local government regarding broader wildfire risk concerns
- Recommends strategies for vegetation management to Berkeley Fire Department, Wildland-Urban Interface Division
- Determines an implementation timeline for priority vegetation management projects



# Safe Passages

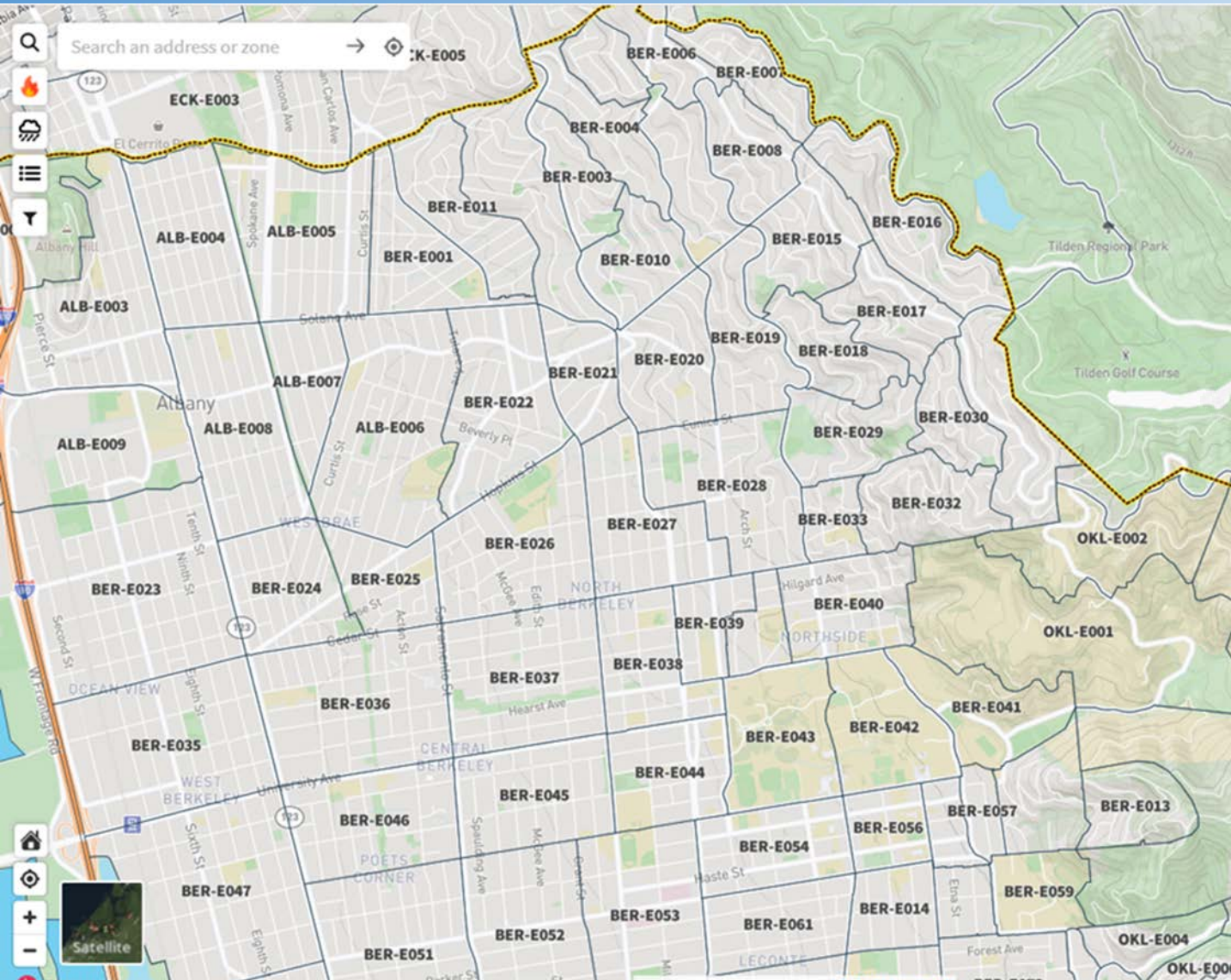
Facilitate evacuation traffic flow with:

- Vegetation Management
- Traffic control devices
- Parking restrictions
- No stopping zones





# Zonehaven



- [Community.Zonehaven.com](https://Community.Zonehaven.com)
- Speeds up communication among first responders and to the community
- Find evacuation zone and view status in real-time
- Ongoing training for first responders





# Outdoor Warning System

- Network of speakers with siren and voice capability, supported with Measure FF funds
- Phase 1 confirmed locations:
  - Berkeley Hills (North and South)
  - Berkeley Marina
  - West Berkeley
  - Downtown Berkeley
- Community partnerships:
  - UC Berkeley
  - Lawrence Berkeley National Lab
  - Zaytuna College
  - Berkeley Unified School District





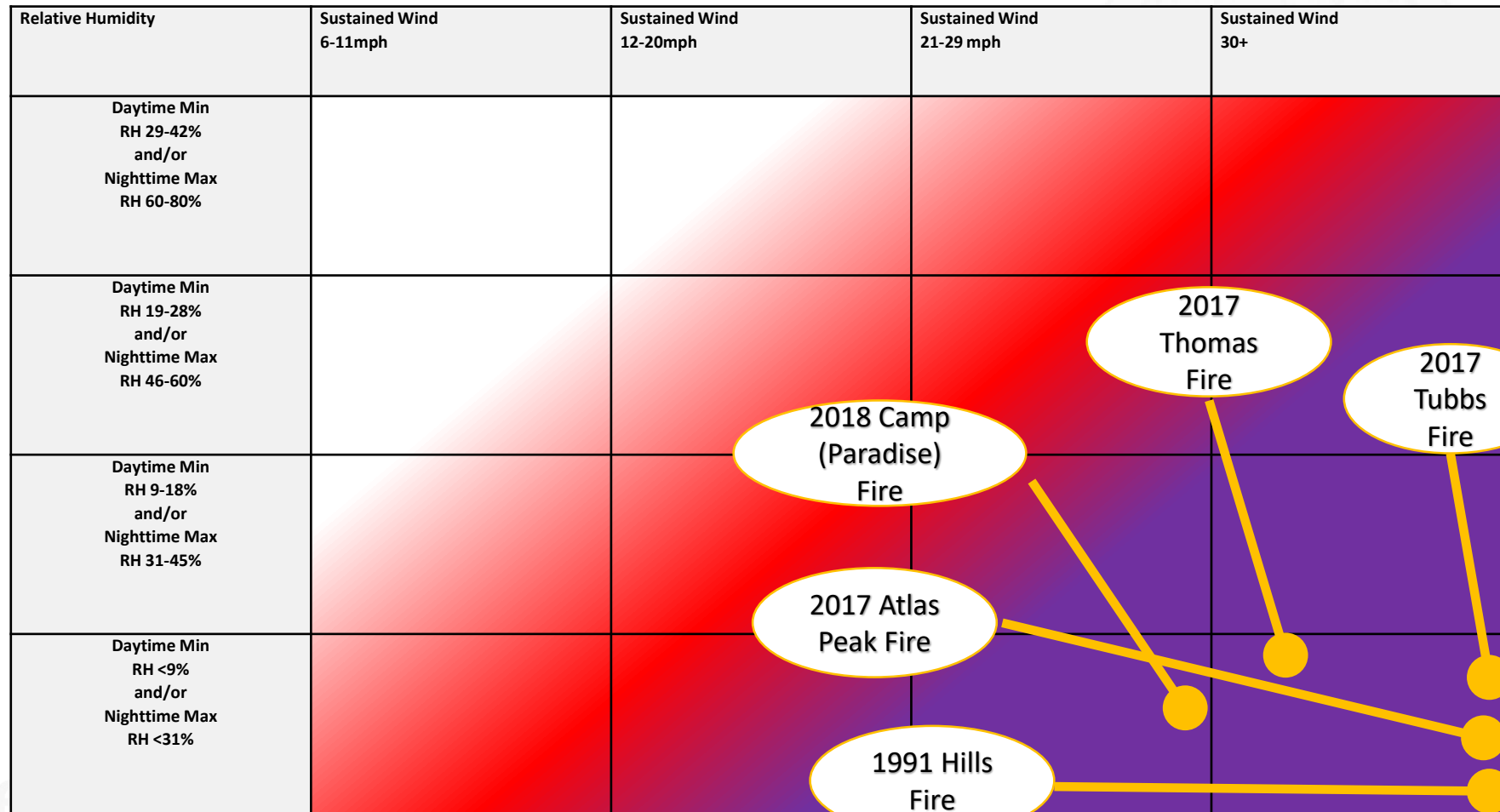
# Fire Weather: Operational Changes for Enhanced Readiness

Berkeley Fire Department





# Fire Weather Drives Response Policies



**Red Flag Weather  
(25 days in 2020)**

**Extreme Fire Weather  
(2 days in 2020)**





# Fire Weather: Monitoring & Messaging

- Weather monitoring
- Fire weather flags
- AC Alert activation
- Partner coordination
- Hills patrols





# Fire Weather: Adding Staff & Resources



- **Red Flag Warning**

- Duty Chief returns to City and facilitates department coordination and additional upstaffing

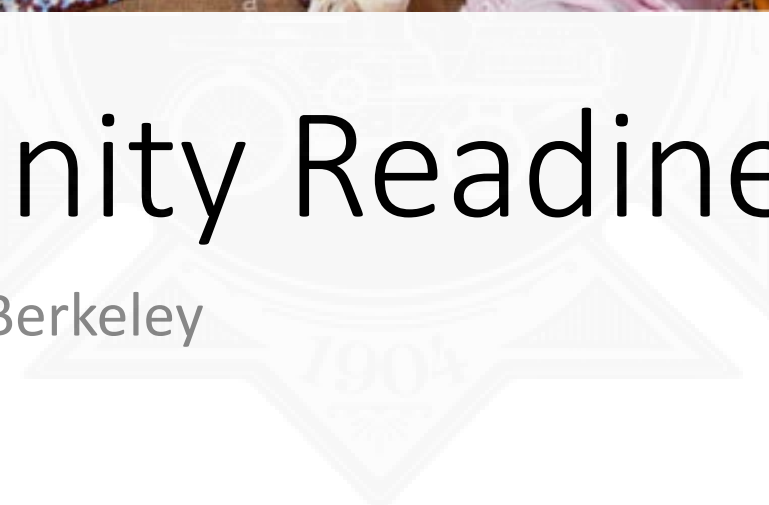
- **Extreme Fire Weather**

- Activate all Red Flag Warning procedures, and:
  - Deploy a second Battalion Chief
  - Upstaff an additional engine at Station 7
  - Additional units to support response



# Rethinking Community Readiness

A new approach to take control of wildfires in Berkeley







# Rethinking Community Readiness

[CityofBerkeley.info/Wildfire](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/Wildfire)

- Understanding fire weather
- Taking action before a fire starts



*Be connected. Be prepared. Be Berkeley.*





# Every Community Member

- Sign up for alerts and know your zone!
  - Sign up for AC Alert:
    - [www.acalert.org](http://www.acalert.org) or download the Everbridge app
  - Look up your evacuation zone:
    - [www.community.zonehaven.com](http://www.community.zonehaven.com)
- Fire Weather Planning Tool
  - Leave early during extreme fire weather
  - Get to know your neighbors
- Self-Inspection of vegetation

## Make a fire weather plan

Fires are unpredictable and conditions can change rapidly. Make a plan with your household ahead of time for what you will do during fire weather.

Download our [step-by-step guide](#) to creating your household fire weather plan. Your plan will:

- **Identify your trigger for leaving the hills**

Will you wait to evacuate after fire starts, or will you leave during periods of heightened threat?

If you live in **Fire Zone 2 or 3 (the Berkeley hills)**, the Berkeley Fire Department recommends that you leave during Extreme Fire Weather, before a fire starts.



Leaving early gives you the most control over how you will get down the hill and what you can bring. If you leave after a fire starts, you may not be able to get out with your car, so you must be prepared to evacuate on foot.

- **Decide where you will go**

Whether you plan to leave early or after a fire starts, think ahead of time about where you'll stay. Talk to friends and family who you might be able to stay with, or consider putting aside money to stay in a hotel.

In an evacuation, we will set up mass care sites for those who have no place to go, but these will take time to set up and will rarely be your most comfortable option.



# Community Based Action

1

- Neighbors & CERTs Organize
  - Fire Safe Councils

2

- Fire Safe Councils
  - Adopt FireWise Standards

3

- A Fire Adapted Community





# Thank you

