

FEMA Preliminary Special Flood Hazard Area Maps (SFHA)

Board of Supervisors Meeting
July 15, 2025



NFIP-CRS-Ordinance 15A

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

- Makes federally-backed flood insurance available in communities that agree to adopt and enforce floodplain management ordinances
- County of Santa Barbara adopted the NFIP in 1979

Community Rating System (CRS)

- Voluntary incentive program that encourages floodplain management practices that exceed the minimum NFIP requirements
- Discounted Flood Insurance in the unincorporated County. (Current discount is 20%)

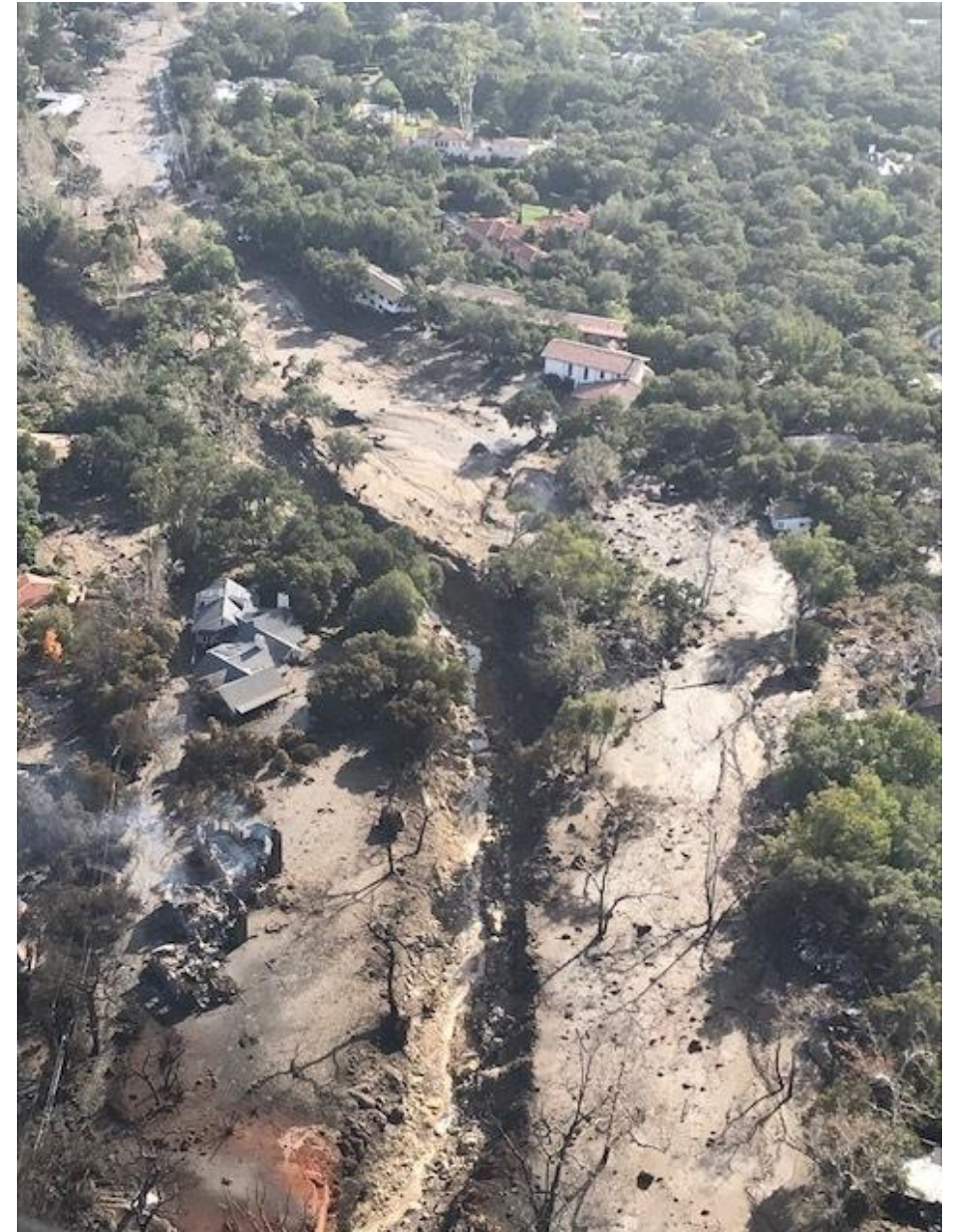
SBCC Ordinance 15A Floodplain Management

- Administered by development review staff
- Applies to structures in mapped special flood hazard areas
- Based on the NFIP and CRS program regulations, such as elevating the finished floor

FEMA Interim Advisory Flood Maps

(FEMA Recovery Map High Hazard Area)

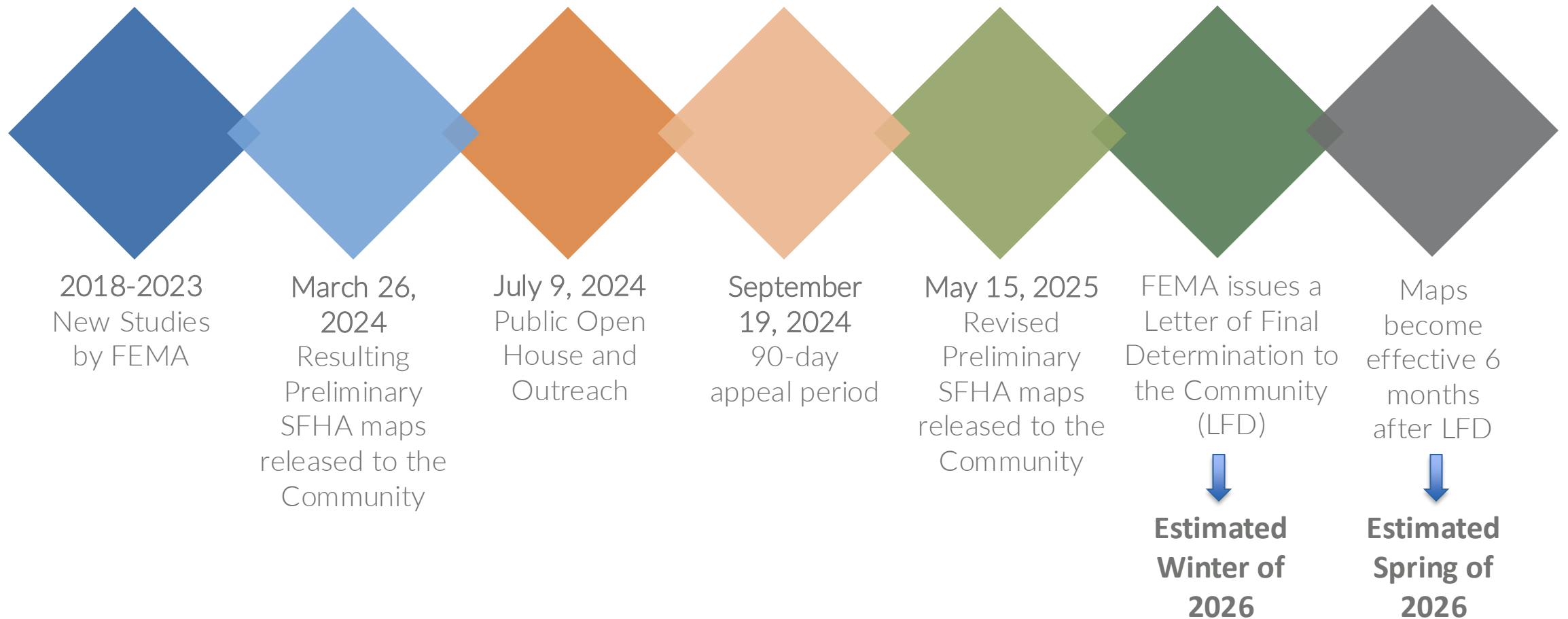
- Developed by FEMA as a result of the Thomas Fire and the January 9, 2018 Debris Flow to reflect physical changes in the watershed
- Approved by the Board of Supervisors in June of 2018
- Utilized in conjunction with the FEMA SFHA maps to regulate recovery efforts and facilitate safe rebuilds
- At this time FEMA also initiated remapping effort to eventually replace the SFHA maps and the Advisory Flood Maps



Courtesy of CalOES

Timeline

(All dates are controlled by FEMA and Subject to Change)

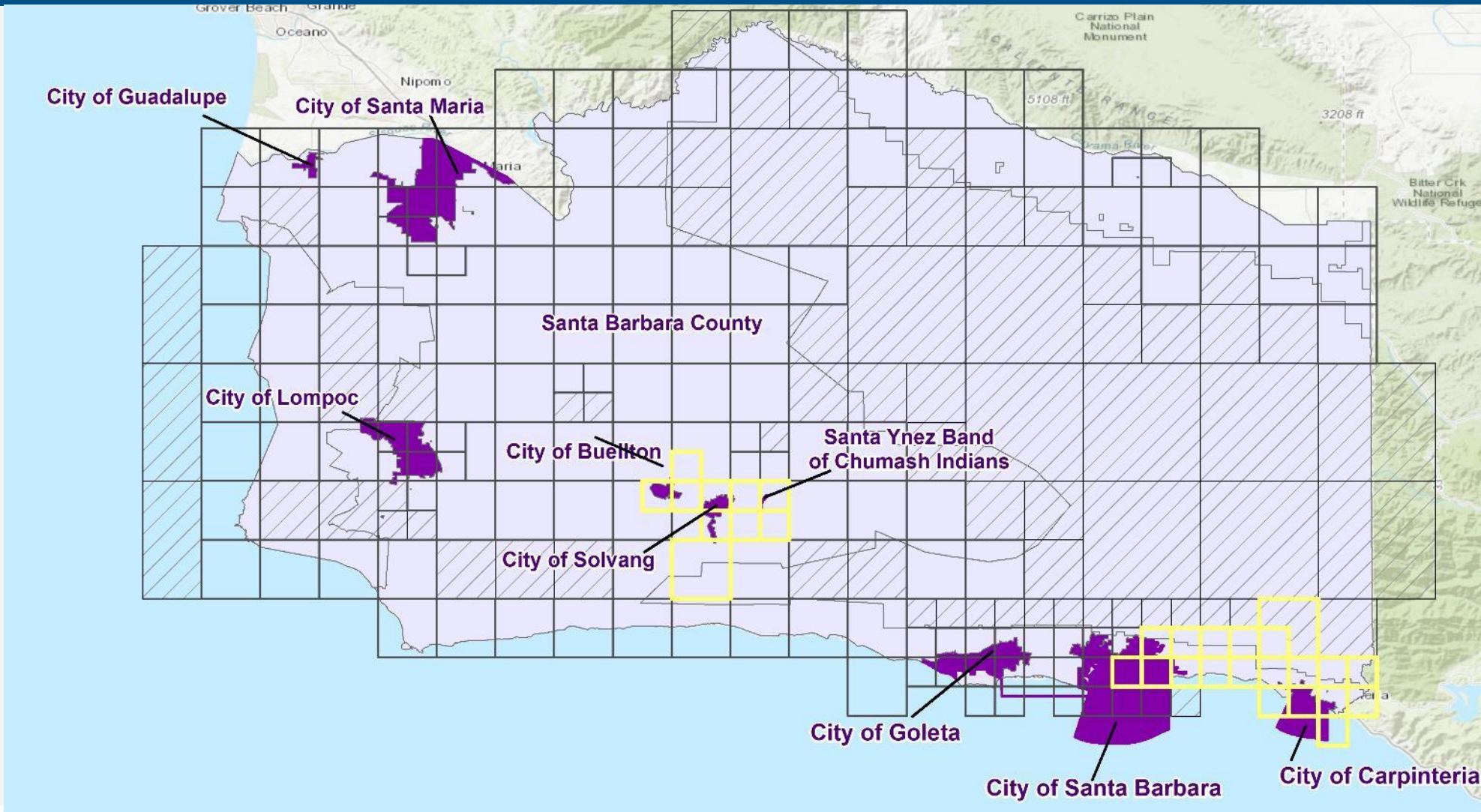


Use the Preliminary Flood Maps

- The FEMA Preliminary Flood Maps have been developed and reviewed to the point where they can be considered the best available information.
- The watersheds have recovered over the past 7 years and many of the conservative assumptions used to develop the Advisory Flood Maps are no longer valid.
- Flood Maps are available to view online at:
<https://www.countyofsb.org/2158/FEMA-Remapping>



What Areas Did FEMA Newly Study Flood Hazards?



This map shows the locations of preliminary floodplain mapping (March 26, 2024) covering over 100 detailed study miles along multiple streams in Montecito, Cities of Buellton, Carpinteria, Santa Barbara and Solvang, Santa Ynez Tribe of Chumash Indian Native Lands, and the unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County.



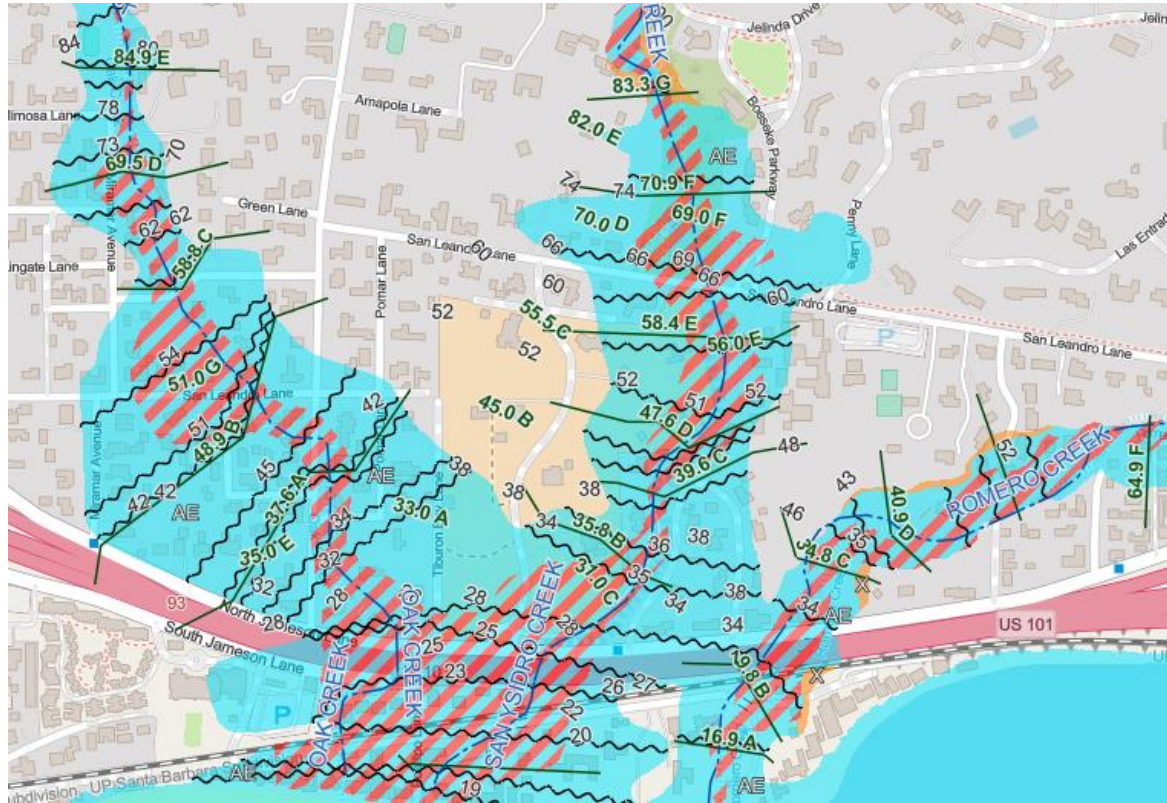
FEMA

Recommended Actions

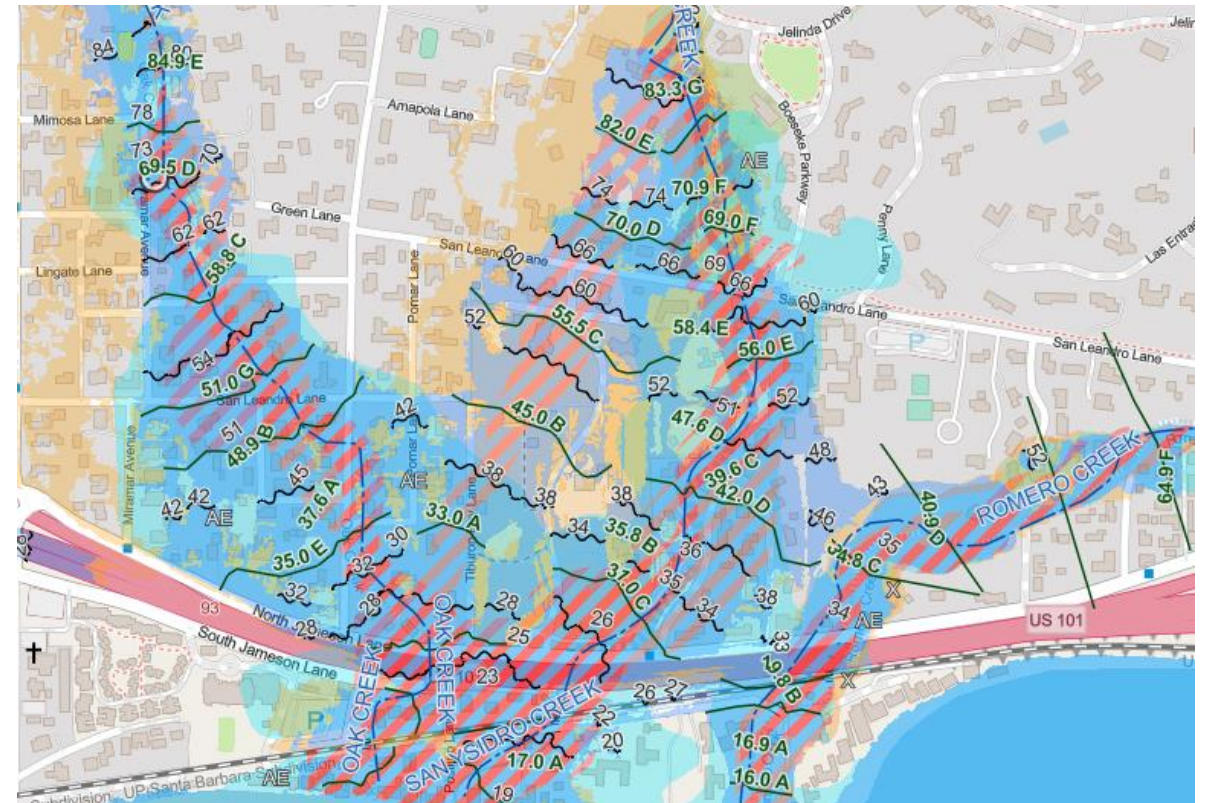
- a) Consider and approve the recommendation of the Floodplain Administrator to supplement the areas of special flood hazards identified in County Code Chapter 15A with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps and Associated Preliminary Products, with a Preliminary Issue Date of March 26, 2024, and revision date of May 15, 2025, for portions of Santa Barbara County;
- b) Rescind the use of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Interim Advisory Flood Maps for Santa Barbara County, added on June 19, 2018, in lieu of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Maps dated March 26, 2024, and revised on May 15, 2025; and
- c) Find that the proposed action is an administrative activity of the County, which will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment and is therefore not a "project" as defined for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5)

Effective vs. Preliminary Special Flood Hazard Area

Results were initially released to the Public in March of 2024. A revision was released in May of 2025



Effective SFHA
Oak and San Ysidro Creek



Preliminary SFHA
Oak and San Ysidro Creek