

City of El Paso de Robles

Department of Emergency Services



June 26, 2020

Matthew Keeling, Executive Officer
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Matt.Keeling@waterboards.ca.gov

Mr. Keeling,

The accumulation of hazardous fuels and overgrowth in the Salinas Riverbed continues to be an extreme fire risk to the community of Paso Robles. In 2019, 95 fires occurred within the Salinas Riverbed, including a fire on June 10, that burned 3 acres and a fire on June 29 that burned 11.5 acres.

As of June 24, 2020, there have been three fires larger than 1 acre within the river. So far this year there has been a total of 45 fires with the largest occurring on June 22. The River Fire which occurred on June 22, transitioned out of the riverbed and into the community. The fire destroyed two homes and damaged nine others. Additionally, there is a significant risk that future fires will damage critical infrastructure (roads and bridges) and continue to put our community at significant risk if this problem is not addressed immediately.

To minimize the threat of fires originating from the Salinas Riverbed and impacting the community and citizens of Paso Robles, we are recommending the following steps:

- Reduce light flashy fuels to a height of 4" within the proposed firebreak utilizing weed-whips and mowers where terrain allows.
- Break up the continuity of brush within the firebreak utilizing hand crews with saws and light weight mowers where terrain and access allows.
- Expand the area of the shaded fuel break, within the firebreak, utilizing hand crews with chainsaws, light tracked equipment and masticators. Work will not be conducted in high flow channels, even if dry, and no machinery will cross wetted channels.
- Reduce ladder fuels under the canopies, all while retaining native trees with a breast height diameter of 4 inches and greater. Limb up trees to a height of 6 to 8 feet and remove woody vegetation up to 8" DBH.
- Remove any dead, diseased or dying trees.
- Remove trash within the treated areas.

This emergency work will expand the firebreak from 2019 and clean up the accumulation of hazardous fuels and trash within the Salinas River Corridor. Althouse and Meade has been retained to conduct biological surveys prior to treatment and to identify avoidance areas. These actions ensure compliance with existing permits. We will continue our partnership with the Upper Salinas-

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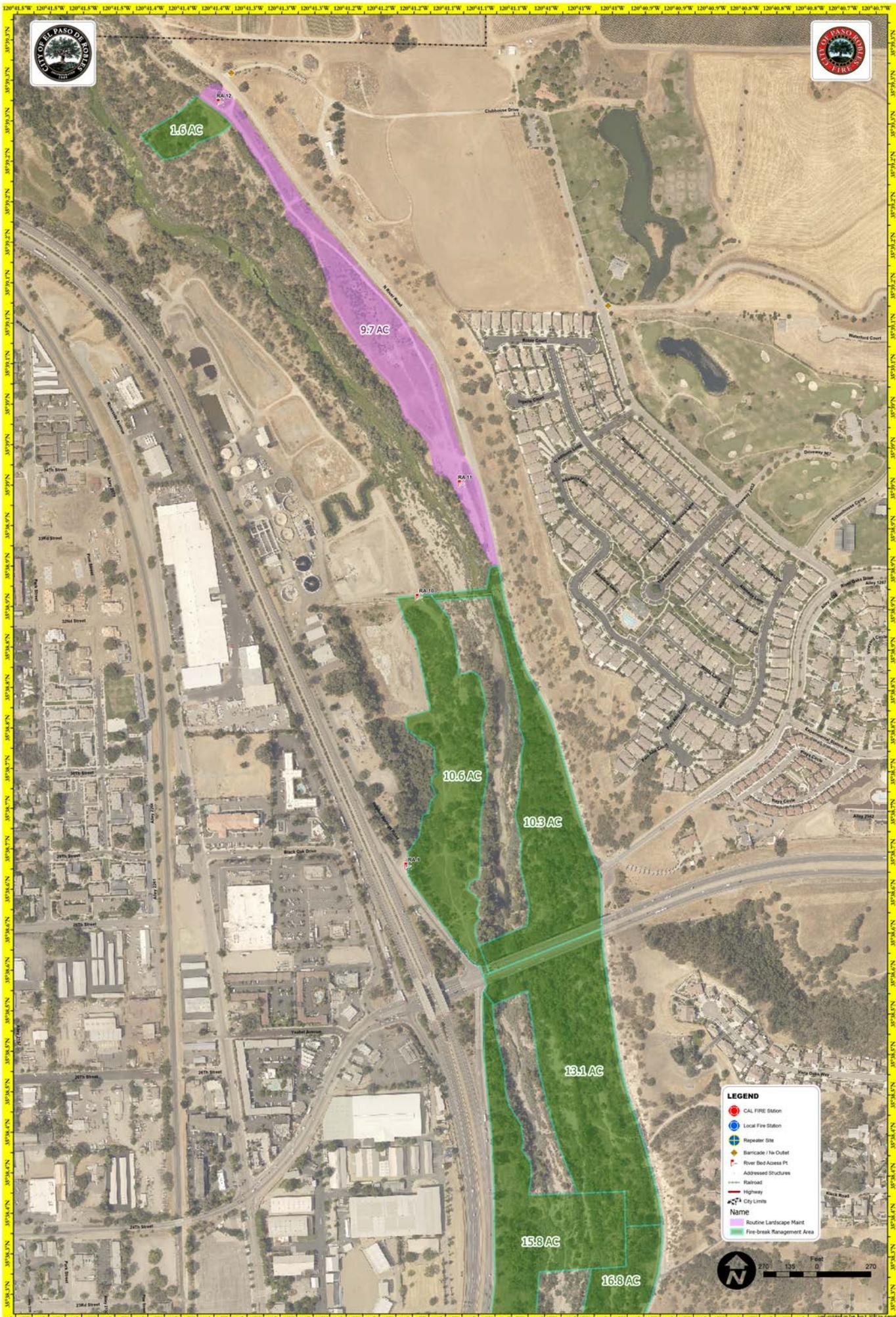
Las Tablas Resource Conservation District to better manage the riverbed and enhance restoration efforts in the future. Future work will include Beaver Dam Analogs, low intensity burns and monitoring.

Thank you for understanding the importance of our immediate action and working with us through the process.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "AA" followed by a stylized flourish.

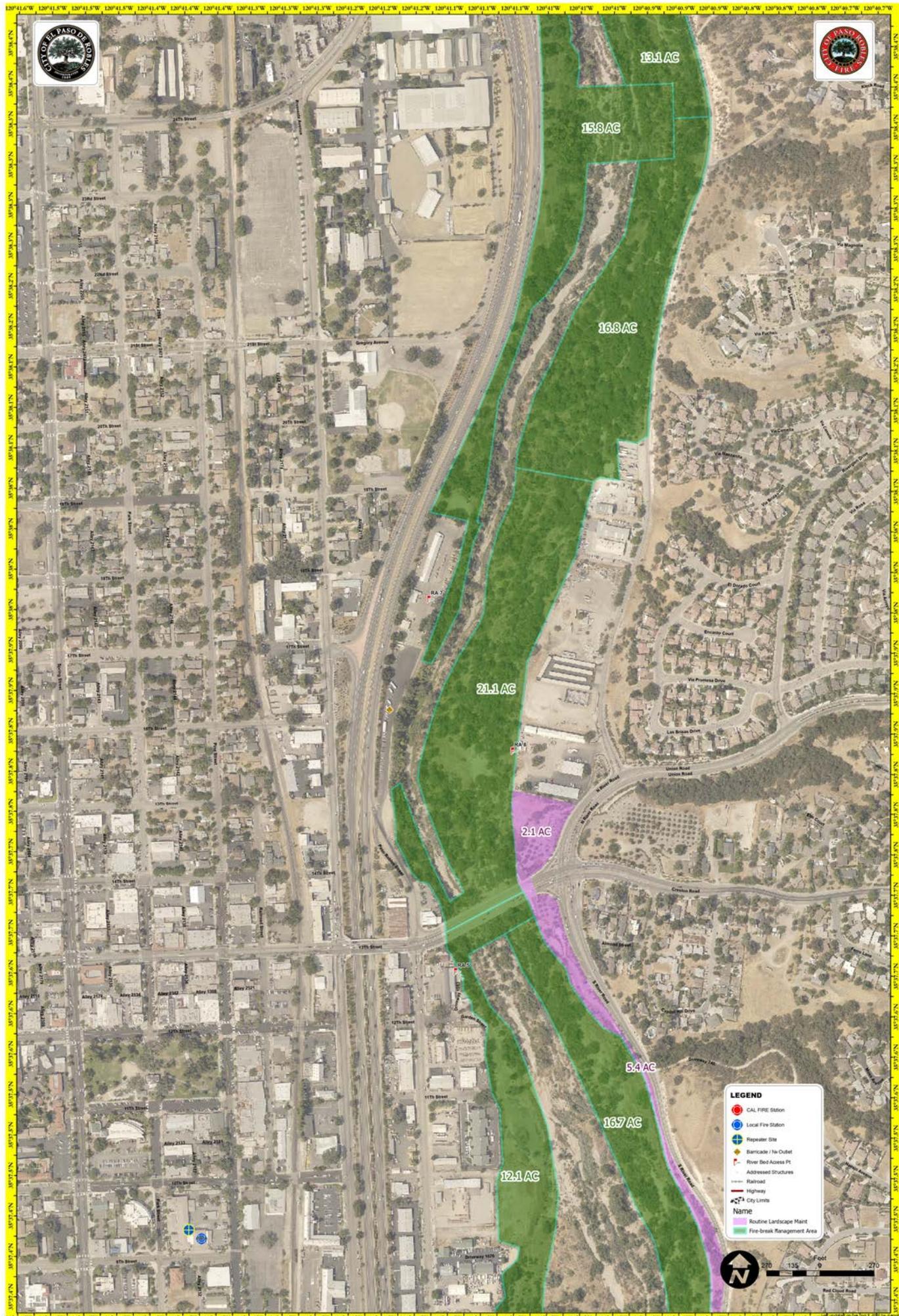
Jonathan Stornetta
Fire Chief

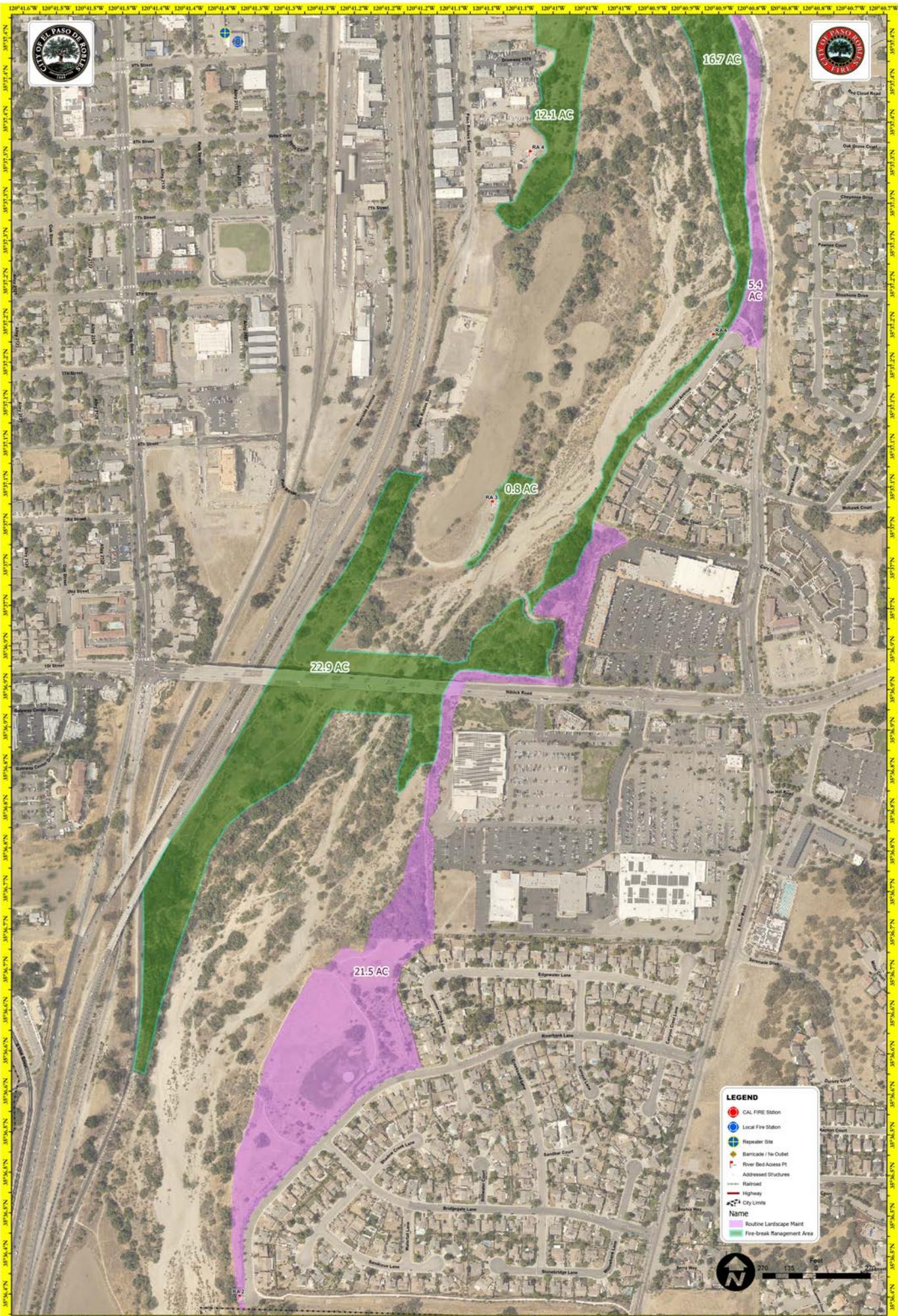


LEGEND

- CAL FIRE Station
- Local Fire Station
- Repeater Site
- Barricade / No Outlet
- River Bed Access Pt.
- Addressed Structures
- Railroad
- Highway
- City Limits
- Routine Landscape Maint
- Fire-break Management Area







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