



**LOS ANGELES COUNTY**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
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# Los Angeles Wildfires: An Economic Update #3 Brief

LAEDC Institute for Applied Economics



**department  
of economic  
opportunity**  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

Webinar #3  
Monday, June 8, 2026





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An Economic Update**  
*June 2026*



**Kelly LoBianco**

**Director, Department of Economic Opportunity**

**LA County**



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**Kathryn Barger**  
LA County Supervisor, District 5



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**Lindsey P. Horvath**

**LA County Supervisor, District 3**



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**Stephen Cheung**

**President & CEO, LAEDC**

**President, WTCLA**



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**Shannon M. Sedgwick**

**LAEDC Vice-President, Research**

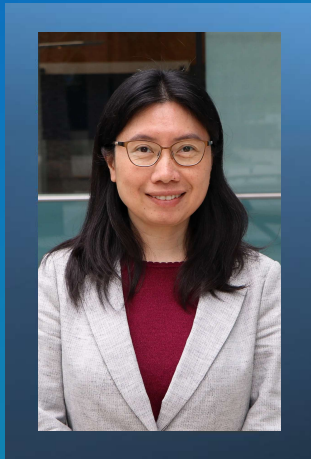


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**Justin Adams, Ph.D.**  
Senior Economist



**Dan Wei, Ph.D.**  
Economist



**Matthew Skyberg**  
Senior GIS Research Analyst



**Max Chomas, Ph.D.**  
Associate Economist

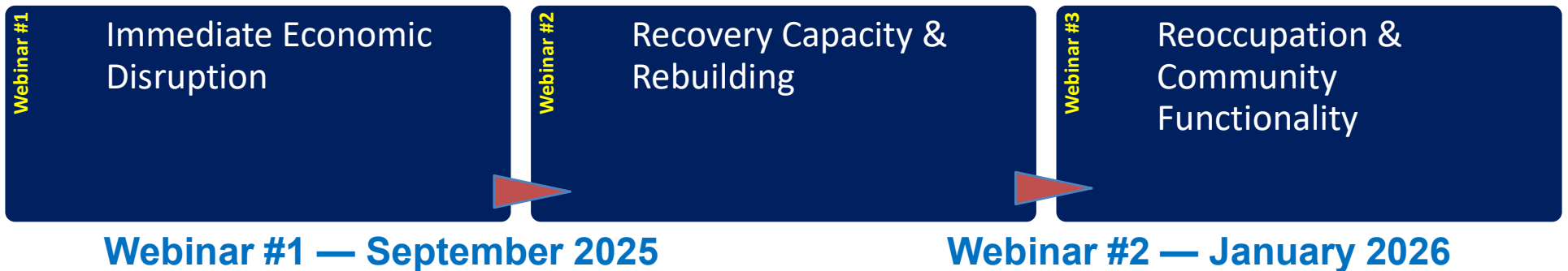


**Madeleine Waddoups**  
Research and Policy Advisor

**LAEDC Institute for Applied Economics**



## Evolution of the Recovery Analysis



### Immediate Economic Disruption

- Structural damage and burn area assessment
- Business interruptions in burn and secondary fire areas
- Initial economic impact estimates
- Early recovery indicators

### Recovery Capacity & Rebuilding

- Changes in businesses and employment over time
- Workforce demands tied to rebuilding
- Housing market and rebuilding permit trends
- Tourism and economic activity shifts



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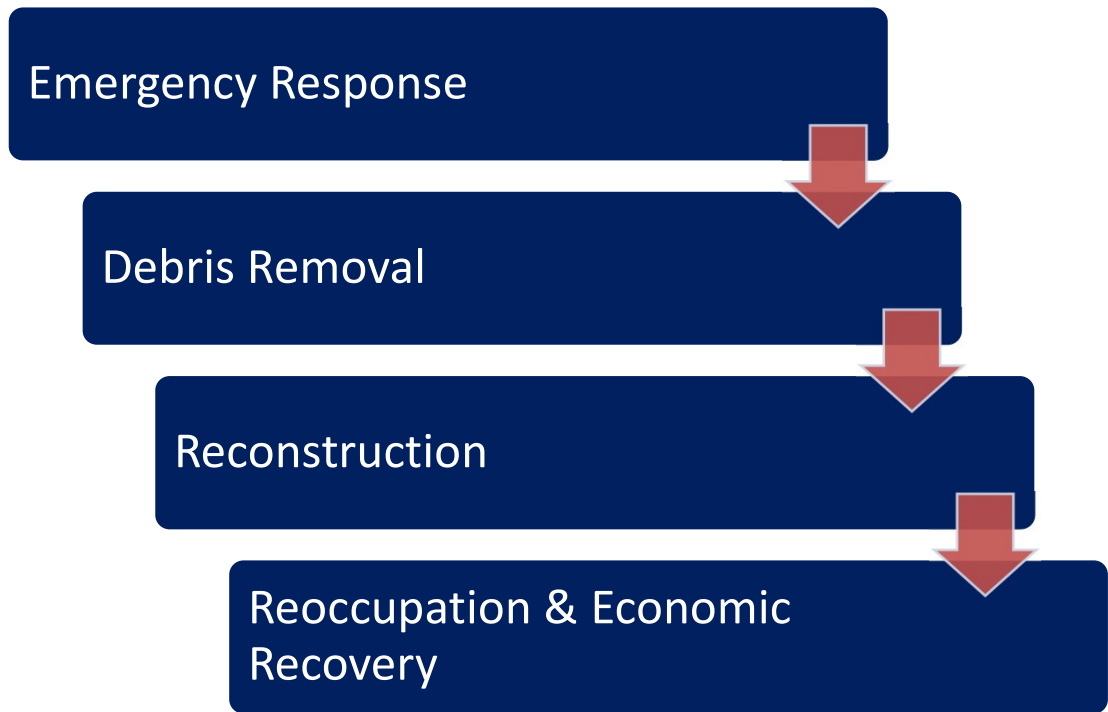
# Centering Reoccupation as a Recovery Metric:

## From Rebuilding to Reoccupation



## Recovery Is More Than Rebuilding

- Physical rebuilding does not necessarily mean communities have recovered
- Economic recovery depends on people returning
- Businesses, schools, transit systems, and local services recover through reoccupation
- Recovery should be measured not only by structures rebuilt, but by community functionality restored





# Reoccupation Drives Economic Recovery

- Local spending recovery
- Business reopening
- Employment stabilization
- Transit ridership recovery
- Restoration of schools, healthcare, and food access





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# Tracking Recovery Through Reoccupation Metrics



**Resident Return:** USPS vacancy rates, rebuild permits



**Business Recovery:** QCEW reporting and business closures



**Mobility:** Metro ridership trends



**Community Functionality:** Schools, healthcare, food access



**Housing Stabilization:** Rapid housing strategies



**Economic Activity:** The cost of delayed reoccupation



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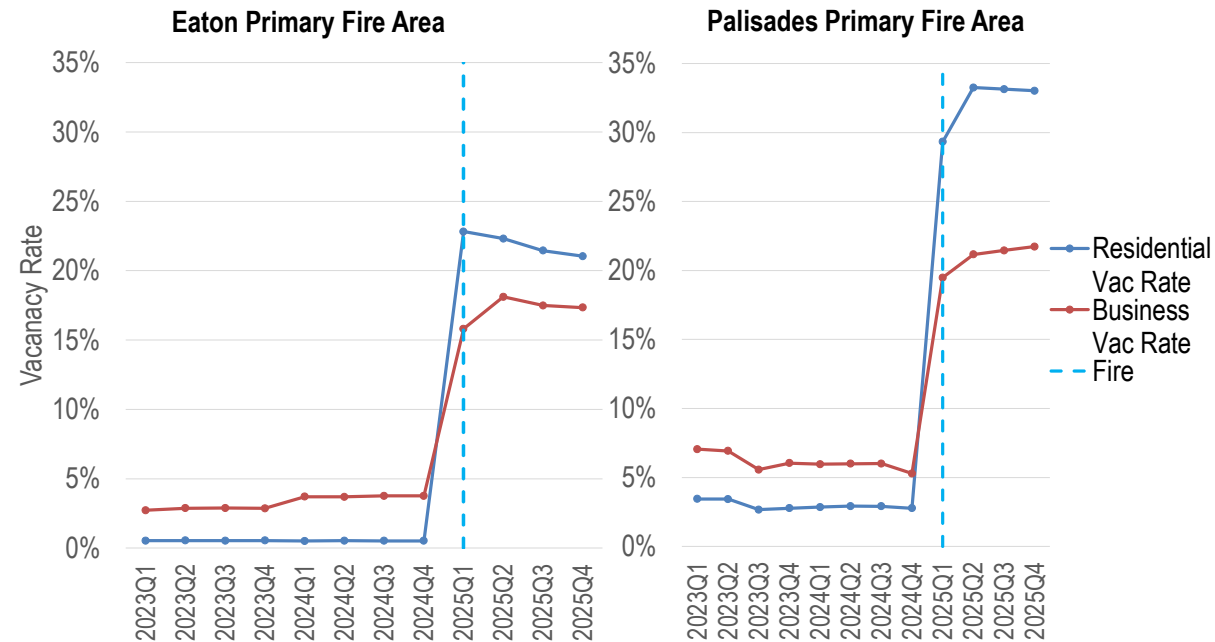
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# Recovery: Resident Return

# Vacancy Rates Remain High with Some Progress

Vacancy Rate by Fire Area: Jan 2023 – Dec 2025

- USPS defines a vacant address subjectively as one where mail is not being picked up, appears vacant, etc.
- Significant increases in vacancies during fire quarter (2025 Q1, dashed, light blue line)
- Some recovery regarding vacancies in the Eaton area; not detectable in the Palisades area

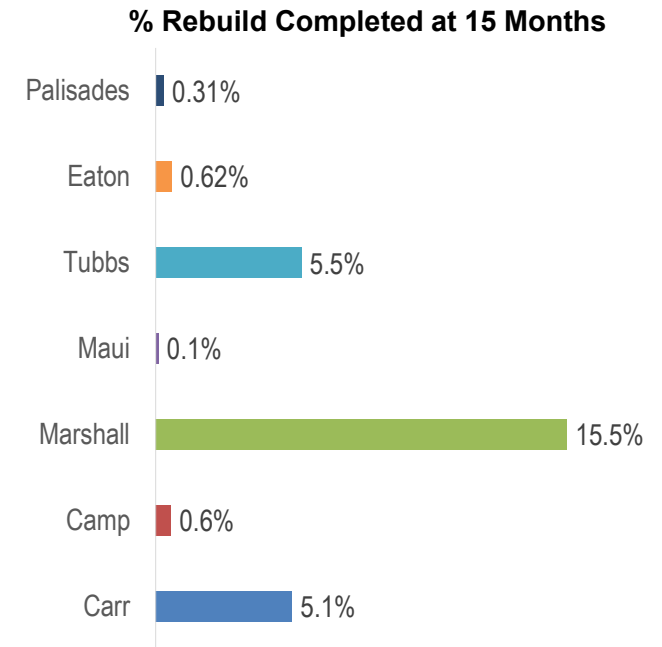
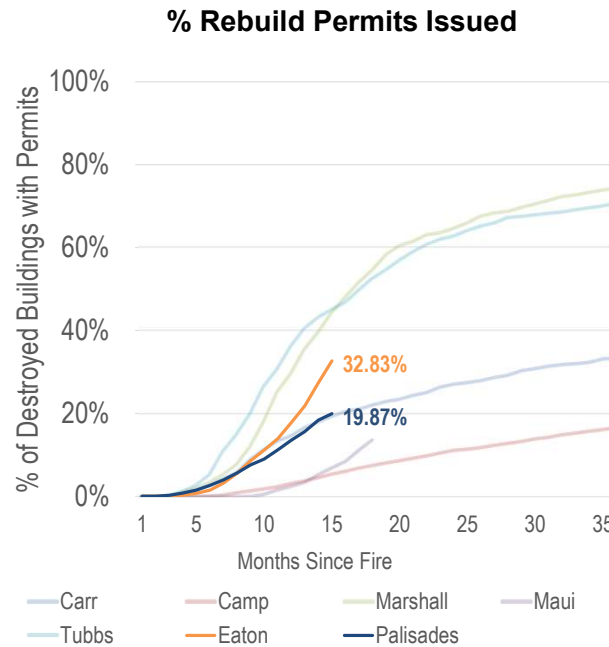


Source: USPS



# Rebuild Permits Show Strength in Issuance, not Completion

- 15 months post-fire, **Eaton/Palisades** has *higher* permits issued than other fires but *lower* rebuild completions.
- Across jurisdictions, average of 79 business days from rebuild permit application to issuance, and average of 193 business days from application to rebuild completion



Source: Urban Institute, City of Santa Rosa, City of Los Angeles, City of Pasadena, City of Malibu, EPIC LA



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# Recovery: Business Recovery



# Most Business Metrics are Below Pre-Fire Numbers

- Numbers in **green** are positive signs of recovery
- Numbers in **red** suggest a delay in recovery
- Most business metrics show:
  - Short-term momentum
  - Long-term still below pre-fire numbers

Business Metric	Year-over-Year (Q4 2024 to Q4 2025) Change		Quarter-over-Quarter (Q3 2025 to Q4 2025) Change	
	Palisades	Eaton	Palisades	Eaton
Opening Rate	- 0.9 pp	- 3.8 pp	+ 1.6 pp	+ 0.6 pp
No-reporting Rate	+ 8.0 pp	+ 5.2 pp	- 9.0 pp	- 8.1 pp
Reopening Rate	+ 1.9 pp	+ 1.9 pp	+2.1 pp	+1.8 pp
Employment Rates	-1.0 epe	-0.8 epe	-0.3 epe	-0.3 epe

*Note: Percentage Points = pp, Employees per Establishment = epe.*



## Momentum is Mostly in Tradeable Industries

- **Tradeable Industries:** primarily serve markets *outside* of Eaton/Palisades area (around 30% of establishments)
- **Local Industries:** primarily sells products and services *inside* the Eaton/Palisades area (around 55% of establishments)
- Tradeable industries are driving the Q3 2025 to Q4 2025 rebound (except openings)
  - Construction driving local openings, Real Estate & Rental & Leasing driving local no-report/reopening

Business Metric	Contribution to Year-over-Year (Q4 2024 to Q4 2025) Change		Contribution to Quarter-over-Quarter (Q3 2025 to Q4 2025) Change	
	Tradeable	Local	Tradeable	Local
Opening Rate	- 1.4 pp	- 0.6 pp	+ 0.1 pp	+ 0.5 pp
No-reporting Rate	+ 2.1 pp	+ 3.3 pp	- 6.3 pp	- 2.5 pp
Reopening Rate	+ 1.6 pp	+ 0.5 pp	+1.5 pp	+0.7 pp
Employment Rates	+0.0 epe	-0.9 epe	-0.0 epe	-0.3 epe

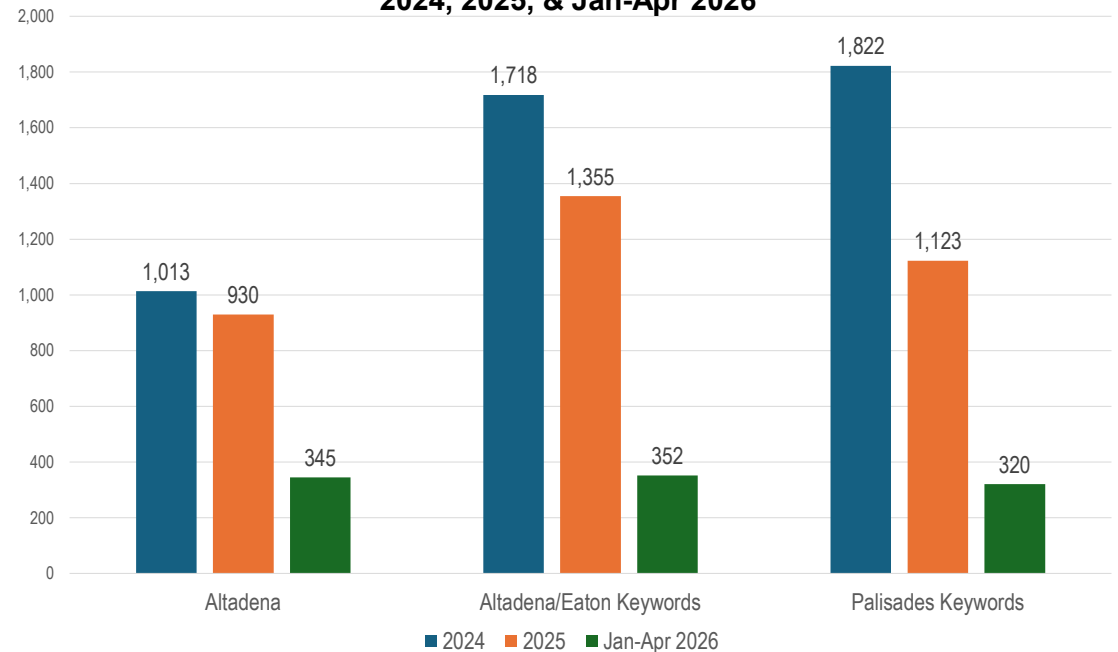
*Note: Percentage Points = pp, Employees per Establishment = epe.*



# Job Postings Data Suggest Continued Hiring Declines

- Altadena postings fell **8.2% in 2025**
- Altadena/Eaton keywords postings fell **21.1%**
- Palisades keywords postings fell **38.4%**
- These show fire area mentions, not exact job-site locations.

**Unique Job Postings Referencing Fire-Affected Communities,  
2024, 2025, & Jan-Apr 2026**

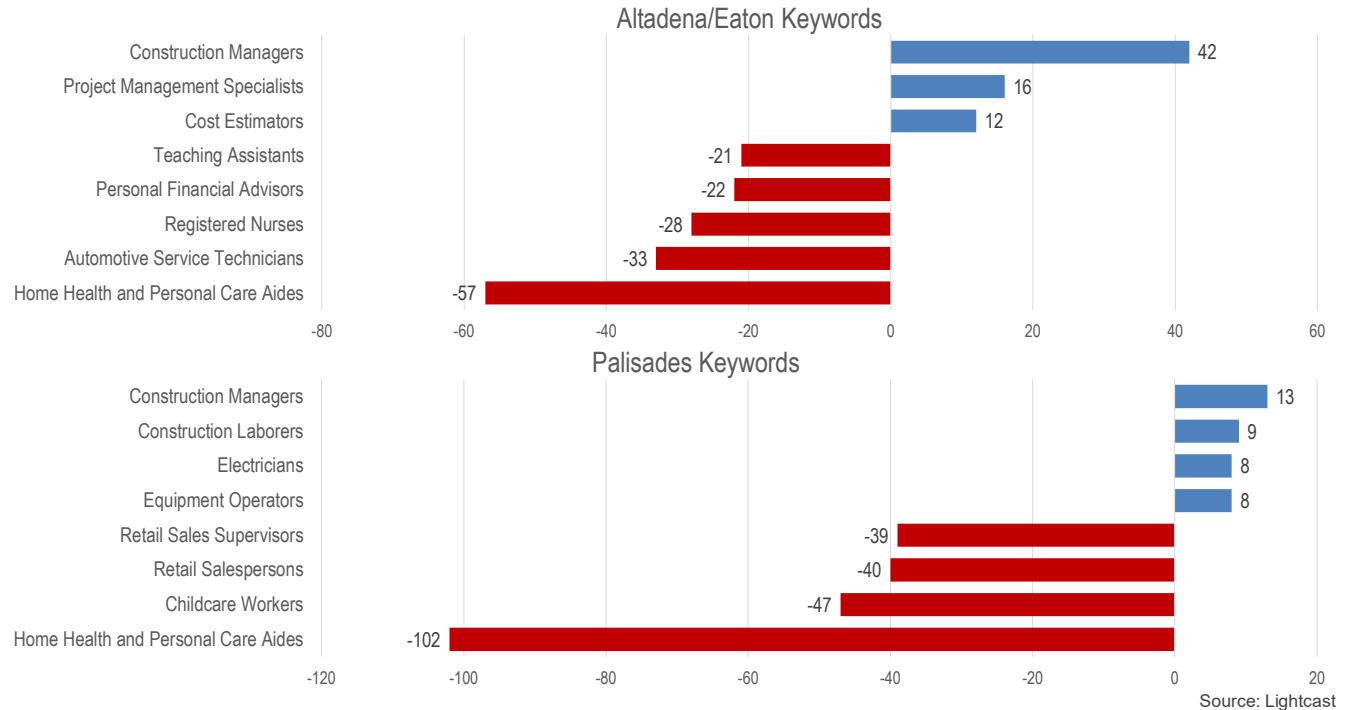




# Local-Serving Roles Drove Posting Declines

- Local-serving jobs saw the largest declines.
- Palisades-related postings declined more sharply.
- Some recovery-related roles increased in both areas.

**Selected Job Posting Changes, 2024 to 2025**



Source: Lightcast



# Job Postings Data Also Highlighted Rebuild Activity

- We used keywords because postings cannot be geocoded to exact fire-area job sites.
- The searches move from narrow to broad.
- Results show hiring demand signals, not confirmed recovery jobs.

## Tiered Keyword Method for Wildfire-Related Job Postings

### Tier 1: Direct Fire Mentions

- Postings that explicitly mention the Eaton Fire, Palisades Fire, LA wildfires, or January 2025 fires.

### Tier 2: Fire-Area Recovery Mentions

- Postings that mention affected areas plus terms like rebuilding, cleanup, debris, or restoration.

### Tier 3: Broader Recovery-Related Postings

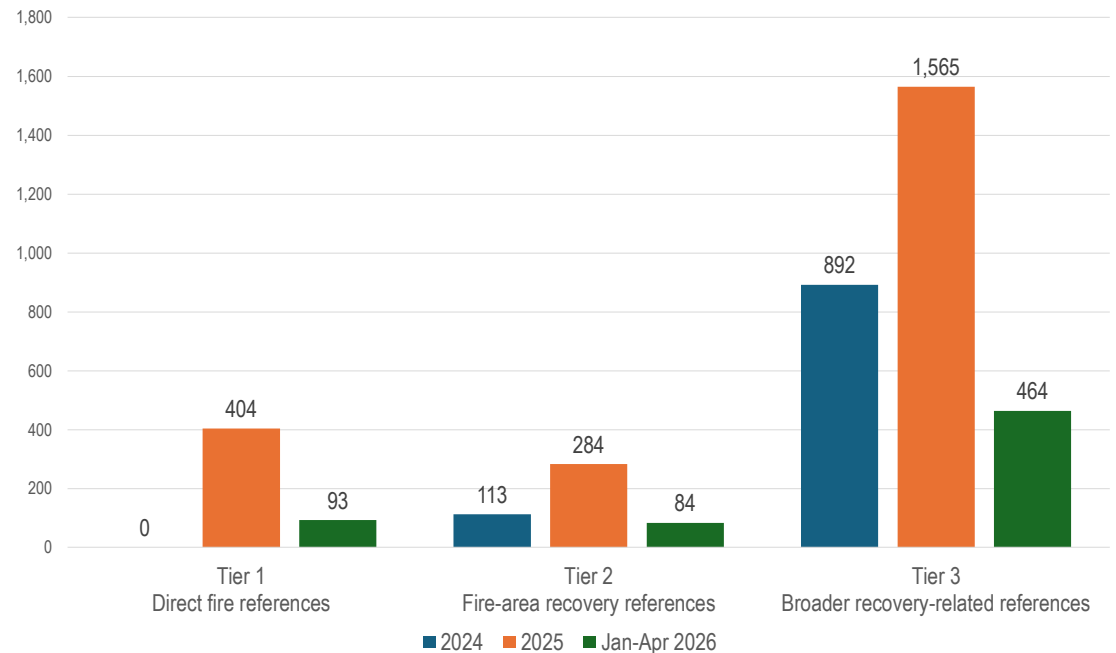
- Postings related to debris removal, permitting, emergency management, infrastructure, tree removal, and other recovery work.



# Rebuild-Related Postings Increased Countywide

- Direct fire mentions totaled **404** postings in 2025.
- Fire-area recovery mentions increased from **113 to 284**.
- Broader recovery-related postings increased from **892 to 1,565**.
- Search categories may overlap and should not be added together.

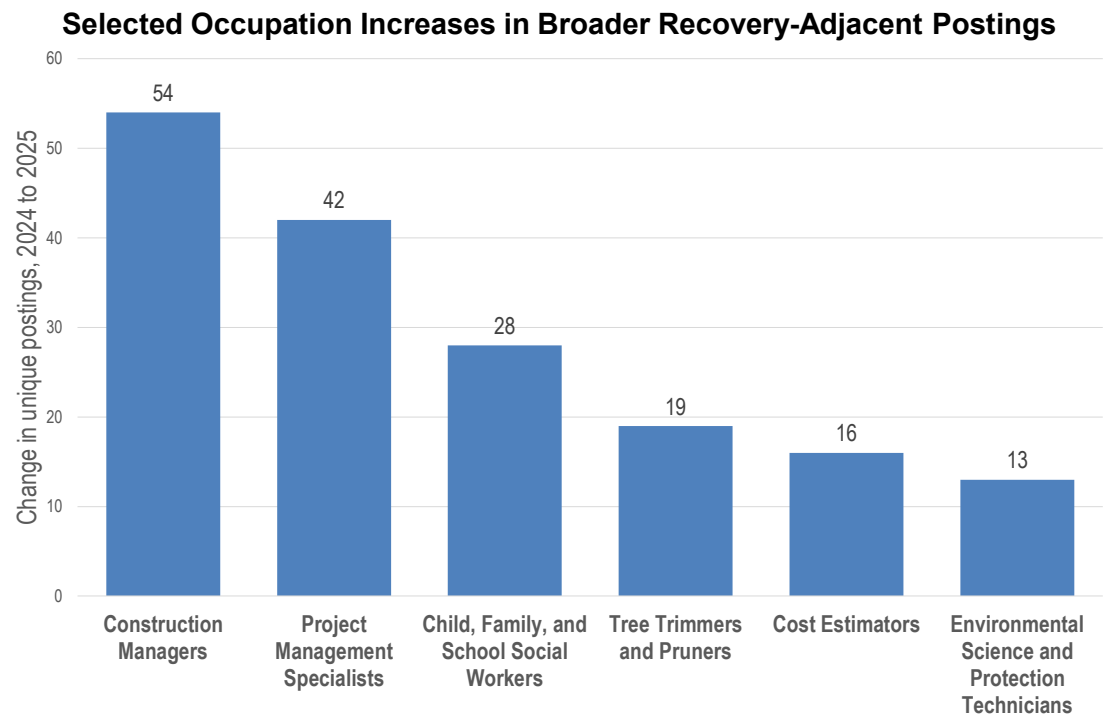
Unique Job Postings by Wildfire Recovery Search Tier, 2024, 2025, & Jan-Apr 2026





## Rebuild Demand Shifted Toward Field Roles

- Construction Managers increased from **16 to 70**.
- Project Management Specialists increased from **17 to 59**.
- Social Workers increased from **11 to 39**.
- Field and environmental roles also increased.



Source: Lightcast



## Postings Show Two Recovery Patterns

- Local job posting signals remain weak.
- Recovery-related hiring increased countywide.
- The data suggest recovery is moving, but unevenly.
- Some keyword results may not be directly fire-related.

**Local hiring  
remains  
soft**

- Postings mentioning fire-affected areas declined in 2025.

**Recovery  
hiring  
increased**

- Countywide recovery-related postings increased after the fires.

**Results are  
directional**

- Postings cannot be tied to exact job sites, and some keyword results may not be directly fire-related.

### What Job Postings Show



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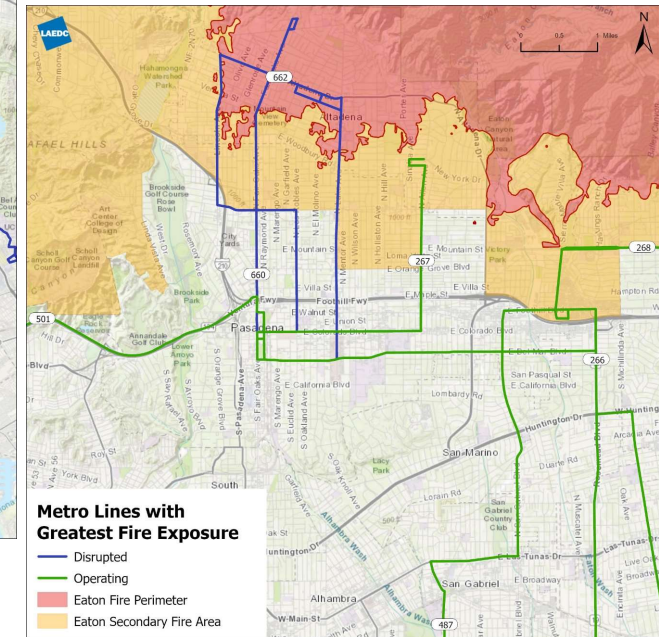
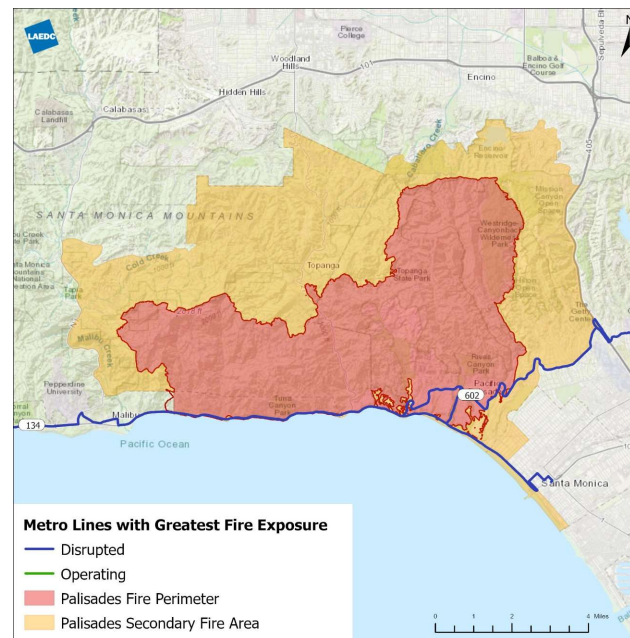
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# Recovery: Mobility



# Fire Exposure Identifies Key Transit Routes

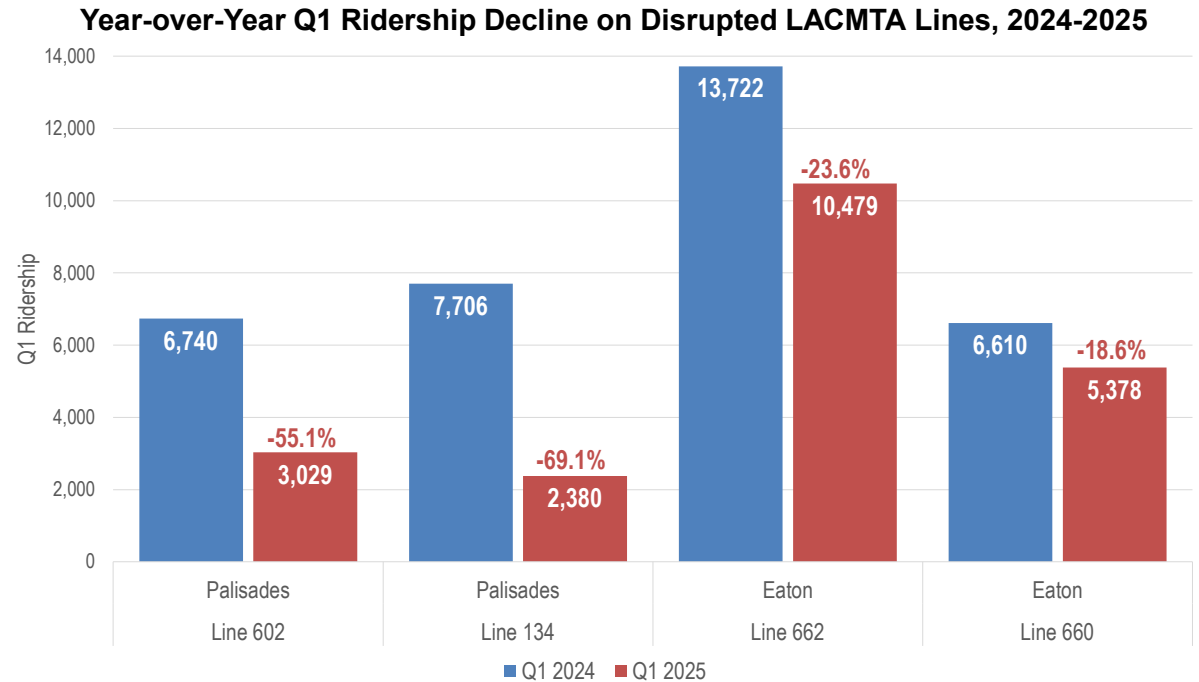
- We grouped routes by fire exposure and service disruption.
- Four lines had direct service disruption:  
**602, 134, 660, and 662.**
- Other routes crossed fire-affected areas but continued operating.
- This helps separate service disruptions from broader ridership changes.





# Disrupted Metro Lines Fell Sharply After the Fires

- The four disrupted lines were down **38.9% in Q1 2025** compared with Q1 2024.
- Declines reflect both reduced travel demand and reduced service availability.
- Palisades-related impacts were clearest on **Lines 602 and 134**.

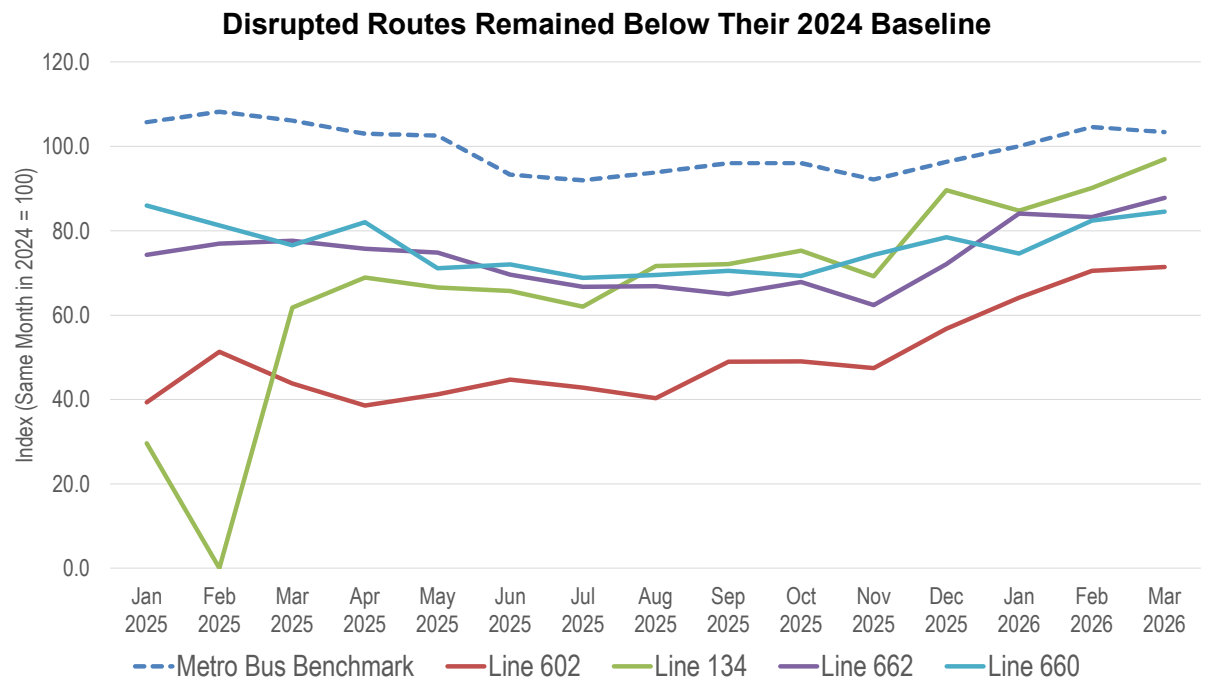


Source: LACMTA



# Disrupted Metro Lines Have Not Yet Recovered

- Overall Metro bus ridership generally stayed near or above 2024 levels.
- Disrupted lines fell well below the broader Metro trend after the fires.
- By Q1 2026, disrupted lines had improved but remained 17.7% below Q1 2024.



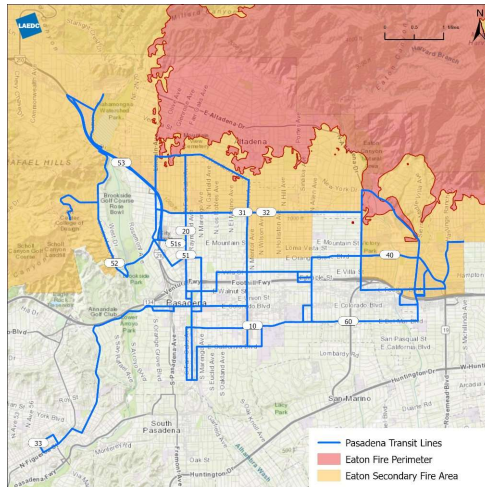
*Index compares each month to the same month in 2024. Values below 100 indicate ridership below the 2024 monthly baseline.*

Source: LACMTA

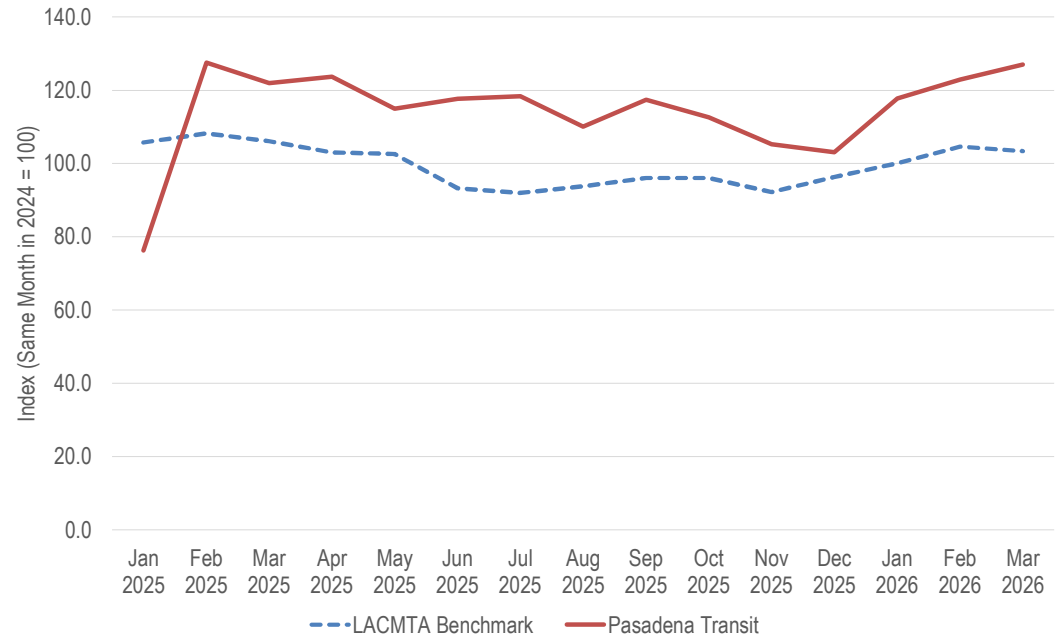


# Pasadena Transit Outpaced the Metro Benchmark

- Pasadena Transit is the primary local transit provider for Altadena.
- Ridership dropped in January 2025, then rebounded above baseline by February.
- By Q1 2026, ridership was **22.6%** above its adjusted Q1 2024 baseline.



**Pasadena Fixed-Route Ridership Rebounded After January 2025 Decline**



*Index compares each month to the same month in 2024. Pasadena's 2024 baseline is adjusted to include former Metro Lines 177 and 256.*

Source: FTA National Transit Database, LACMTA



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# Recovery: Community Functionality



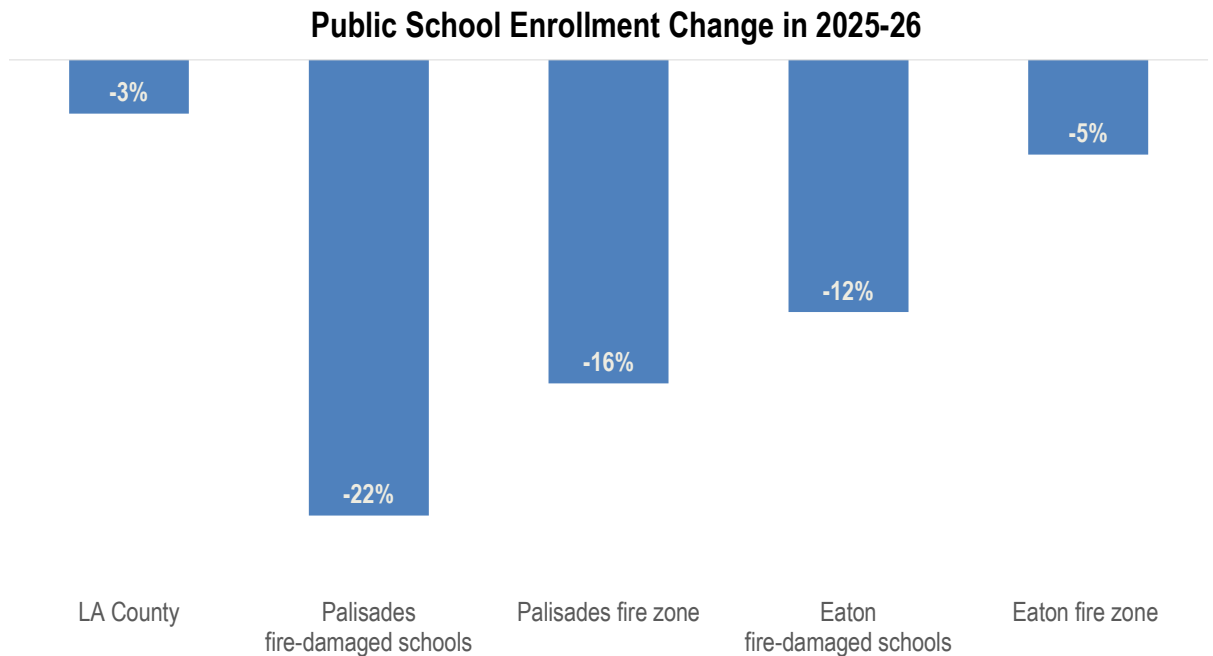
# Return of Students to Impacted Areas is Uneven

## Palisades:

- Rebuild timeline: **Open all three public schools by end of 2028**

## Altadena:

- Rebuild timeline: All three public schools are still in **planning phase**



Source: California Department of Education DataQuest



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# Return of Health and Food to Affected Communities is Slow

## Altadena

- AltaMed: destroyed, currently operating as mobile clinic unit with plans to rebuild
- Aldi: severely damaged, plans to reopen
- Altadena Grocery Outlet: reopened in Feb. 2025 aftersmoke damage

## Palisades

- Gelsons & Ralphs: both destroyed, plan to rebuild
- Erewhon: damaged, scheduled to reopen August 2026
- UCLA Health: destroyed, no announcement about rebuild
- CVS Health: damaged, reopened in September 2025





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# Recovery: Housing Stabilization



## As Displacement Coverage Runs Out, Impacts are Uneven

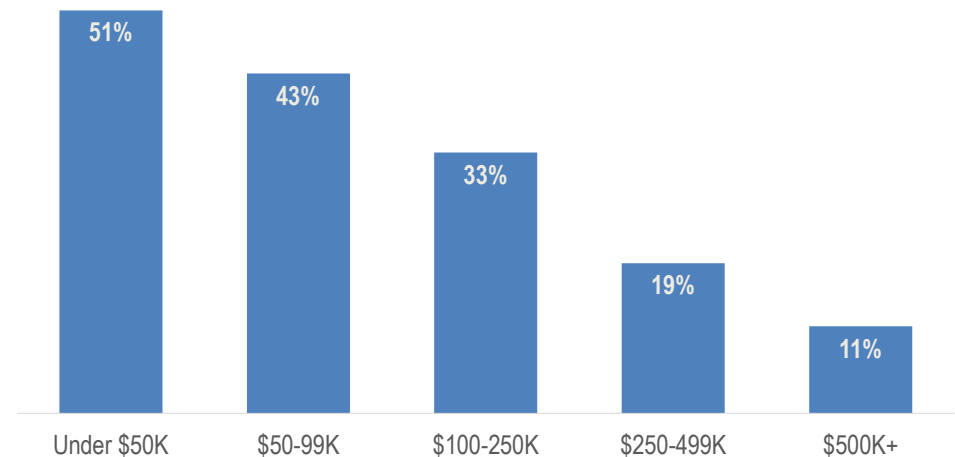
### Displacement rates are dropping for those with a standing home

- 28% have returned home, with repairs complete
- 24% are living at home while repairs continue

### Temporary housing insurance coverage is running out

- 38% have already or will soon run out of temporary housing insurance
- 16% have coverage for at least one more year

### Share of Households that Can Afford Less than Three Months of Housing after Displacement Coverage Ends



Source: Department of Angels Survey, April 2026



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# Rapid Rehousing Solutions Deployed in Altadena

## Case Study:

### Altadena Rapid Housing Solution

#### Step 1: RV Rapid Rehousing

- Grants to move families back onto their land in an RV
- Coordinate with utilities to resume services to land

#### Step 2: ADU Medium-Term Housing

#### Step 3: Permanent Rebuild Assistance





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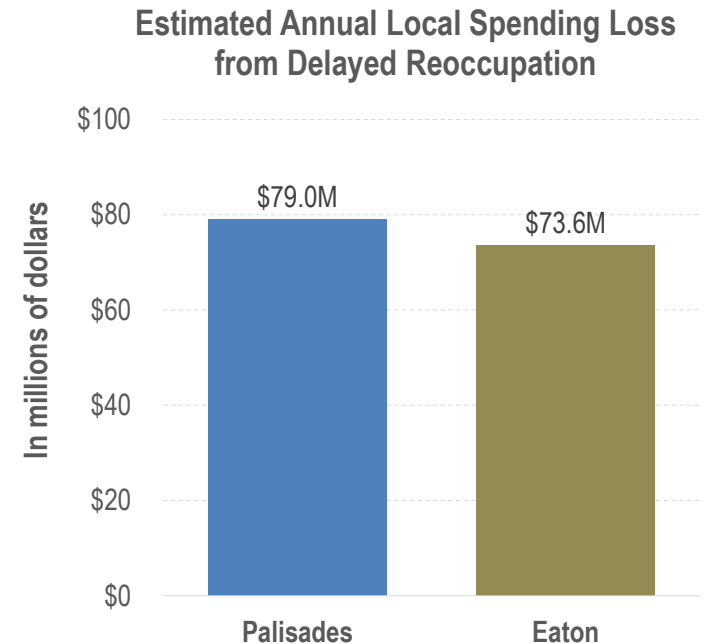
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# Recovery: Economic Activity



## Delayed Reoccupation Costs Localities \$150M Annually

- Annual localized spending losses from delayed reoccupation are estimated at \$79 million in the Palisades burn area and \$73.6 million in the Eaton burn area
  - Destroyed (>50% damage) and major damaged (26-50% damage) homes face the longest rebuilding timelines and greatest disruptions to local spending
  - Minor (10-25% damage) and affected (<10% damage) homes are more likely to remain occupied or return more quickly
- Accelerating rebuilding and reoccupation can help restore local spending and support faster economic recovery

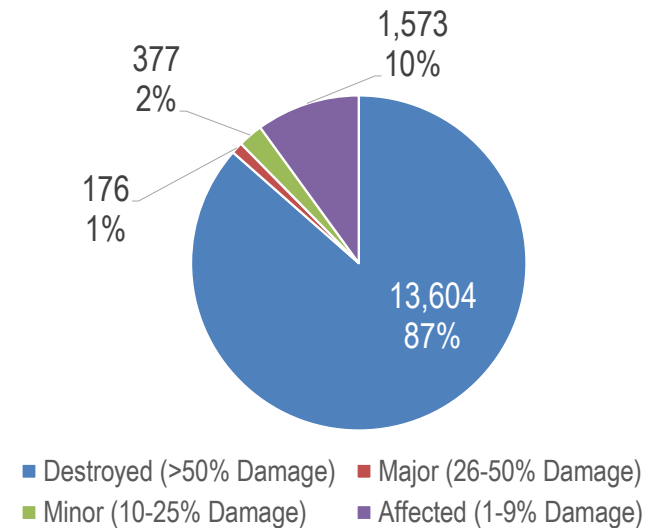




# Household Displacement Reduces Local Spending

- The scale of displacement behind these spending losses is significant
- More than 15,700 housing units were destroyed or damaged by the fires
- Delayed reoccupation reduces local spending on retail, restaurants, healthcare, personal services, and other neighborhood-serving businesses
- Each additional year of displacement prolongs lost spending and slows neighborhood economic recovery

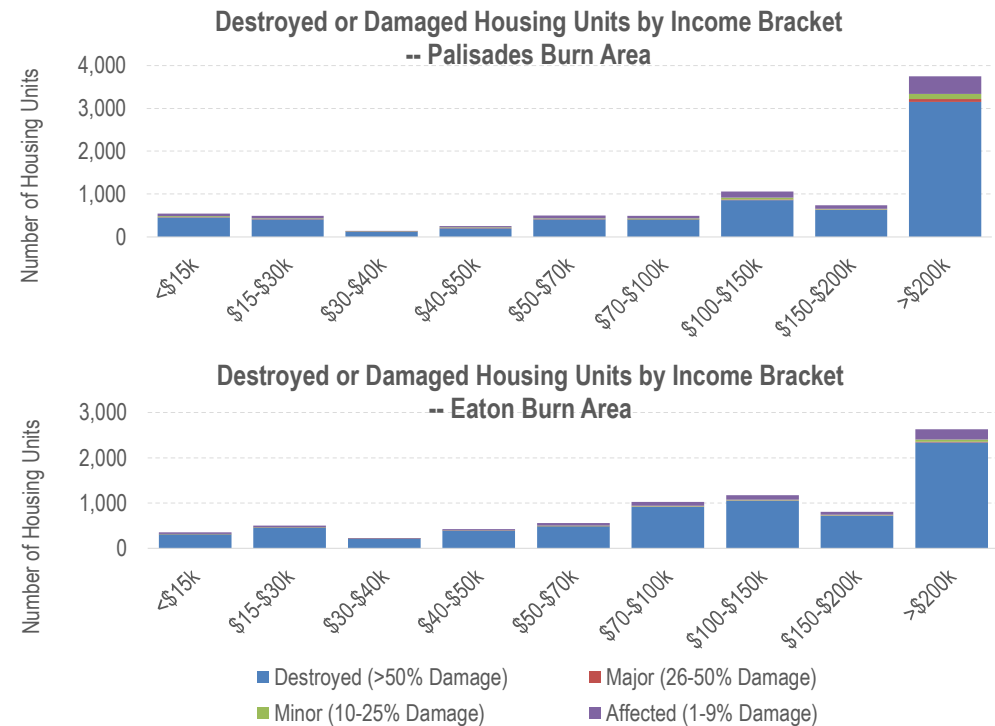
**Housing Units Destroyed or Damaged in Eaton and Palisades Fires**





# Consumer Spending is Disrupted across All Income Levels

- Delayed reoccupation reduces local spending across all income levels
- Palisades has a high concentration of households earning over \$200k annually; Eaton reflects a more diverse income mix
- Income-specific spending profiles were applied to estimate the over \$150 million annual localized spending losses from delayed reoccupation
- These displacement-related spending losses highlight the importance of faster household reoccupation to restore community spending and local economic activity





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# Los Angeles Wildfires: An Economic Update

## Questions?

**Thank you!**

## **Upcoming LAEDC Events**

### **2026 88 Cities Summit**

October 14<sup>th</sup> @ 9:00 am – 2:00 pm  
Quiet Canyon Montebello  
77 Bella Verde Dr, Montebello

[www.laedc.org/events](http://www.laedc.org/events)

 [info@laedc.org](mailto:info@laedc.org)