

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: PAUL LOWENTHAL, DIVISION CHIEF FIRE MARSHAL, FIRE DEPARTMENT  
SUBJECT: ORDINANCE DESIGNATING FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION AND AMEND SECTION 18-44.4907.1 OF THE SANTA ROSA CITY CODE TO INCLUDE THE NEWLY DESIGNATED HIGH ZONE REFERENCE

AGENDA ACTION: ORDINANCE INTRODUCTION

---

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Santa Rosa Fire Department that the Council introduce an ordinance designating moderate, high, and very high fire hazard severity zones as recommended by The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) as Fire Hazard Severity Zones and amending Section 18-44.4907.1 of Chapter 18-44 of the Santa Rosa City Code to include reference to High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.

---

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As required by Government Code Section 51179, local jurisdictions are required to adopt, by ordinance, updated fire hazard severity zones in our jurisdiction within 120 days of receiving recommendations from the State Fire Marshal pursuant to Section 51178. By locally adopting the updated CalFire maps released on 2/24/2025, the City of Santa Rosa satisfies the requirements of Government Code Section 51179.

BACKGROUND

Over the last decade, numerous communities throughout the western United States have been devastated by extreme wildland fires that have destroyed thousands of homes, damaged public infrastructure, disrupted private business, and cost billions of dollars in property damage, and suppression and rehabilitation costs.

As a result of the 1991 Oakland Hills fire, the "Bates Bill" legislation was approved that required the State to identify Fire Hazard Severity Zones in which to implement ignition-resistant building standards, defensible space standards, and seller's disclosure standards to mitigate the rate of spread and reduce the intensity of uncontrolled fires. In

ORDINANCE DESIGNATING MODERATE, HIGH AND VERY HIGH FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY ZONES AS RECOMMENDED BY CALFIRE  
PAGE 2 OF 3

conjunction with the identification of Moderate, High, and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, maps are authorized via 14 CCR § 1280 and developed depicting Moderate, High, and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones as such Zones exist both in State Responsibility Areas (SRA) and Local Responsibility Areas (LRA) such as the City of Santa Rosa. The location of the boundaries was developed with recommendations from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection based on the evaluation of fire history, fuel growth, density of housing, proposed developments, access, and water supply considerations.

A final Fire Hazard Severity Zone map depicting Moderate, High, and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the City of Santa Rosa as recommended by CalFire was transmitted by the Director of CalFire to the Fire Department on February 24, 2025. Government Code § 51179(a) mandates that the local agency shall act on the recommendations from the Director of CalFire to designate the zones in the LRA within 120 days of receipt of the final map.

Adopting an ordinance designating Moderate, High, or Very High Fire Severity Zones in the City of Santa Rosa will provide the community with building standards consistent with those being enforced by the State in State Responsibility Areas.

#### PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On March 3, 2009, the City Council adopted Ordinance No. 3907 Designating Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones as recommended by CalFire and designating wildland-urban interface fire areas as designated by the Chief of the Fire Department.

#### ANALYSIS

The State designated three types of hazard zones in State Responsibility Areas—Moderate, High, and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. In the City of Santa Rosa Local Responsibility Area, the State has designated three types of hazard zones: Moderate, High, and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. The High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone areas require the application of the new building standards relating to fire and panic.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

No Fiscal Impact

#### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The Council finds that pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378, the proposed action is not a “project” subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it does not have a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the

ORDINANCE DESIGNATING MODERATE, HIGH AND VERY HIGH FIRE HAZARD  
SEVERITY ZONES AS RECOMMENDED BY CALFIRE  
PAGE 3 OF 3

environment. In the alternative, the proposed action is exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the project may have a significant effect on the environment.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not Applicable

NOTIFICATION

Public Notice

ATTACHMENTS

- Ordinance / Exhibit A - Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zone

PRESENTER

Paul Lowenthal, Division Chief Fire Marshal