

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: SCOTT WESTROPE, FIRE CHIEF, FIRE DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: ORDINANCE INTRODUCTION – ORDINANCE ENTITLED:
ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANTA ROSA
TO AMEND CHAPTER 18-46 – 2025 CALIFORNIA WILDLAND
URBAN INTERFACE CODE ADDING SECTION 18-46.202 –
DEFINITIONS, WITH LOCAL AMENDMENT, AND UPDATE THE
EXISTING DESIGNATED WILDLAND URBAN INTERFACE AREA

AGENDA ACTION: PUBLIC HEARING

RECOMMENDATION

The Fire Department recommends that the Council approve the first reading and introduce an Ordinance to amend Chapter 18-46 – 2025 California Wildland Urban Interface Code to add Section 18-46.202 Definitions, with local amendments, to the Santa Rosa City Code and update the existing designated Wildland Urban Interface Area. This item has no impact on the current fiscal year budget.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the release of the most recent Fire Hazard Severity Zones in the Local Responsibility Area maps by CAL FIRE in February of 2025, the Fire Department seeks to update the boundary of our local Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area to reflect the changes in the High and Very High Severity Zones. By modifying our existing boundary to reflect the new areas of High and Very High within the City, we will ensure that State regulations applicable to both zones align with local ordinances applicable to our Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area. This ordinance will also include the updated reference to the newly adopted 2025 California Wildland-Urban Interface Code.

GOAL

This item relates to Council Goal #4 - Foster a Safe, Healthy, and Inclusive Community and ensures that there is consistency in State regulations and local ordinances that apply to our most fire-prone areas of the City.

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BACKGROUND/PRIOR COUNCIL REVIEW

On February 24, 2009, Council approved an amendment to Chapter 47 Section 18-44.4702.1 of the 2007 California Fire Code (CFC), defining a Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area as well as designating the geographical boundary in GIS.

In February of 2025, CAL FIRE released new Local Responsibility maps of the Fire Hazard Severity Zones in Santa Rosa. Following the release of these maps, Council approved an ordinance (ORD-2025-006) designating the Fire Hazard Severity Zones and amending section 18-44.4907.1 of Chapter 18-44 of the Santa Rosa City Code to include the newly designated high zone reference.

ANALYSIS

- This modification to the existing ordinance would ensure that State regulations and local ordinance apply consistently across newly added High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones within the City.
- A key provision of this ordinance will be to reference the newly introduced 2025 Wildland-Urban Interface Code and amend the definition of a Wildland-Urban Interface Area.
- By not approving this ordinance, the City would have areas designated by CAL FIRE as High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones that are not currently located within our local Wildland-Urban Interface Area. Property owners could experience confusion and have justification to not conform to local ordinances designed to apply to such areas. Approving this ordinance would simply align State and local maps to accurately reflect applicable regulations to these areas.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this action does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The Council finds that the adoption and implementation of this ordinance are exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15307 and 15308, which apply to actions taken by regulatory agencies to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of natural resources and the environment. The ordinance updates the City's Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area to align with updated State Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps and applies existing fire safety standards to areas at elevated wildfire risk. These actions are intended to reduce wildfire hazards and protect life and property and will not result in significant adverse environmental effects.

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

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Fire Department staff held two community meetings on this topic on March 4 and 12, 2026. Staff also mailed out approximately 3,893 targeted postcards notifying residents of the proposed updates and community meetings.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Local Responsibility Area Fire Hazard Severity Zones
- Ordinance / Exhibit A – Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area

PRESENTER(S)

Jared McDaniel, Assistant Fire Marshal