

CITY OF SANTA ROSA
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: PAUL LOWENTHAL, DIVISION CHIEF FIRE MARSHAL, FIRE
DEPARTMENT
SUBJECT: 2025 CALIFORNIA FIRE AND WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE
CODE ADOPTION WITH LOCAL AMENDMENTS

AGENDA ACTION: PUBLIC HEARING AND ORDINANCE ADOPTIONS

RECOMMENDATION

The Fire Department recommends that the Council: 1) adopt an ordinance by reference the 2025 edition of the California Fire Code as adopted and amended by the State of California, and further amended based on local condition, repeal existing sections not applicable to new codes and modify Chapter 18-44 of the Santa Rosa City Code to reflect the new model code; 2) adopt an ordinance by reference the 2025 California Wildland Urban Interface code, as adopted and amended by the State of California, and further amended based on local condition, added as Chapter 18-46 to the Santa Rosa City Code to reflect the new model code. This item has no impact on current fiscal year budget.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Every three years the State of California updates the California Code of Regulations, Title 24 (CCR-T24) including the California Fire Code and the new California Wildland-Urban Interface Code. Such model codes with State amendments and California specific codes go into effect in every City and County in the State of California 180 days after publication. The new California codes were published on July 1, 2025, and will take effect on January 1, 2026. The Fire Department is requesting adoption of the 2025 California Fire Code and the 2025 California Wildland-Urban Interface Code with local amendments and administrative changes.

GOAL

This item relates to Council Goal #2 - Invest in the Development and Maintenance of the City's Infrastructure by enhancing fire safety infrastructure to protect residents, property, and critical services.

BACKGROUND/PRIOR COUNCIL REVIEW

The ordinances were introduced at the City Council Regular Meeting of October 21, 2025, and public notice of this hearing was published in accordance with applicable law (see below under “Notifications” for publication dates).

After introduction, staff identified and made a few, non-substantive edits to one of the ordinances, including the reordering of the recitals section, deletion of one unnecessary sentence, and deletion of one redundant paragraph. These edits are identified in redline for review, and do not impact on the Council’s ability to adopt the ordinance at the November 18, 2025, meeting.

ANALYSIS

In January 2025, the State of California Building Standards Commission adopted building and safety codes with amendments and published them as California Codes. Included are the California Fire Code (Part 9) and California Wildland-Urban Interface Code (Part 7).

The codes adopted by the Building Standards Commission go into effect 180 days after publication by the State and must be enforced by each City and County.

Staff participated in the Sonoma County Fire Prevention Officer’s Fire Code Committee to create a consensus document to be utilized county-wide by cities, fire districts and the County in an effort to ensure uniformity in requirements.

The Health and Safety Code allows local jurisdictions to amend the State building and safety standards only upon an express finding that such amendments are reasonably necessary because of local topographic, geologic, or climatic conditions. In general, amendments may not be less restrictive than the State standards.

Government Code Section 50022.3 identifies the procedure for the adoption of codes by reference that established the requirement for first reading of the ordinance title and establishment of the public hearing date. The ordinances were introduced on October 21, 2025, and the public hearing is noticed for November 18, 2025.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no fiscal impacts from the proposed amendments.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378, the recommended 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

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reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. In the alternative, the recommended 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 recommended action may have a significant effect on the environment.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

A public hearing notice will publish in the Press Democrat on November 8, 2025, and November 13, 2025.

ATTACHMENTS

- Ordinance 1 – 2025 Fire Code Local Amendments Interface
- Ordinance 2 – Wildland-Urban Interface Local Amendments

PRESENTER(S)

Mike Johnson – Assistant Fire Marshal