

ORDINANCE NO. 7769

AN URGENCY ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA, ESTABLISHING A 45-DAY MORATORIUM ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OR EXPANSION OF WOODEN PALLET STORAGE YARDS WITHIN CITY LIMITS DURING THE PENDENCY OF THE CITY'S REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF PERMANENT ZONING REGULATIONS FOR SUCH USES.

WHEREAS, the City of Riverside ("City") is a municipal corporation and charter city duly organized under the constitution and laws of the State of California; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the City's police power, the City Council of the City of Riverside ("City Council") has the authority to enact and enforce ordinances and regulations to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community; and

WHEREAS, Government Code section 65858 authorizes the City Council to adopt, as an urgency measure, an interim ordinance that prohibits uses which may conflict with a contemplated general plan, specific plan, or zoning proposal that is being considered by the City Council, Planning Commission, or planning staff; and

WHEREAS, the Riverside Municipal Code lacks specific regulatory and zoning standards to assure that wooden pallet storage yards do not adversely affect the health, safety, and welfare of the public; and

WHEREAS, the issuance of permits for wooden pallet storage yards without having zoning and regulatory standards in place, threatens the public health, safety, and welfare for the following reasons:

Fire Risk: Wooden pallet storage yards present an obvious fire hazard due to the storage of large quantities of wood, a combustible material, at a single site. Within the past few years there have been multiple fires associated with pallet yards in nearby cities that have caused millions of dollars in losses.

Stacking Hazards: Wooden pallet storage yards often store wooden pallets in high stacks. Without adequate regulation of the location, height and volume of these stacks, or the separation between these stacks, the health, safety, and welfare of the public may be endangered. The improper

1 or unsafe stacking of wooden pallets may be a falling risk, endangering employees, and visitors to
2 these sites, or may become a fire hazard, endangering the public and neighboring properties; and

3 WHEREAS, the City desires to adopt an interim urgency moratorium ordinance prohibiting
4 the establishment or expansion of wooden pallet storage yards, pending study and adoption of zoning
5 and regulatory standards to protect the public health, safety, and welfare; and

6 WHEREAS, the City intends to study the issues associated with wooden pallet yards including
7 new development standards that may be imposed on their operation to mitigate any potential impacts.
8 This could include evaluating all land use districts in which wooden pallet yards are permitted for
9 suitability and evaluating development standards and best practices from other jurisdictions to
10 determine if they would be appropriate City wide; and

11 WHEREAS, Government Code Sections 36934, 36937, and 65858 expressly authorize the
12 City Council to adopt an urgency ordinance for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health,
13 or safety and to prohibit a use that is in conflict with a contemplated general plan, specific plan, or
14 zoning proposal that the legislative body, planning commission, or the planning department is
15 considering or studying or intends to study within a reasonable time; and

16 WHEREAS, after undertaking this study, the City intends to enact regulations specific to
17 wooden pallet storage yards. The City intends to undertake the required study within a reasonable
18 time. In the interim, it is necessary to establish a moratorium on the development of new wooden
19 pallet storage yards or the expansion of existing wooden pallet yards in order to prevent a conflict with
20 the contemplated new policies or regulations; and

21 WHEREAS, if necessary, this moratorium may be extended as provided by law; and

22 WHEREAS, continued approval of entitlements, building permits, or other approvals for new
23 or expanded wooden pallet storage yards poses a current and immediate threat to public health, safety,
24 or general welfare; and

25 WHEREAS, as a result, there is an urgent necessity to establish a temporary, forty-five (45)
26 calendar day moratorium on the establishment of new wooden pallet storage yards within the City,
27 pending the completion of the City's study; and
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1 WHEREAS, the City has a compelling interest in protecting the public health, safety, and
2 welfare of its residents and businesses, and preserving the peace and integrity of neighborhoods
3 within the City; and

4 WHEREAS, to protect the City's investment in its planning efforts, ensure that the City's
5 long-term planning goals and strategies can be achieved in an effective and timely manner, and
6 to avoid a current and immediate threat to the public health, safety, and welfare, the City proposes
7 adopting a moratorium on the establishment of new wooden pallet storage yards within the City; and

8 WHEREAS, it is necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare, specifically the City
9 and the public's interests in the City's aesthetic, economic, health, safety and community character,
10 until additional staff review has been completed and any necessary local regulations or code
11 revisions have been revised, adopted and otherwise made effective.

12 The City Council of the City of Riverside does ordain as follows:

13 Section 1. Incorporation of Recitals.

14 The above recitals are hereby declared to be true and correct and represent findings of the City
15 Council, made in the exercise of its independent judgment, and are hereby incorporated by reference
16 and made a part of this ordinance.

17 Section 2. Authority.

18 In accordance with Government Code section 65858 *et seq.*, to protect the public safety, health,
19 and welfare, the City Council hereby adopts, as an urgency measure, this interim ordinance prohibiting
20 the establishment or expansion of wooden pallet storage yards within the City, because they may be
21 in conflict with a contemplated general plan, specific plan, or zoning proposal that the City through
22 either the City Council, Planning Commission, or the planning department is considering or studying
23 or intends to study within a reasonable time.

24 Section 3. Findings.

25 The City Council hereby finds wooden pallet storage yards pose a current and immediate
26 threat to the public health, safety and welfare on the citizens of the City and are a use which may be
27 in conflict with a contemplated general plan, specific plan, or zoning proposal that the City Council,
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1 Planning Commission or the Planning Division is considering or studying or intends to study within a
2 reasonable time. The City Council further hereby finds that the approval of land use permits,
3 building permits, business licenses, or any other applicable approval or decision for the
4 establishment or expansion of wooden pallet storage yards would result in that threat to public
5 health, safety, or welfare. These findings are based upon all of the facts recited in this ordinance,
6 in the staff report accompanying this ordinance, all matters and information presented to this City
7 Council at its meeting on May 19, 2026. The City Council hereby directs the Planning Division and
8 the City's Fire Department to work together to consider and study impacts and adoption of zoning and
9 regulatory standards to protect the public health, safety, and welfare and to create new or revised
10 regulations and/or ordinances that address such impacts.

11 Section 4. Moratorium Imposed.

12 A temporary moratorium is hereby established and imposed and no land use entitlements,
13 building permits, business licenses and any other applicable approval or decisions for the
14 establishment or expansion of wooden pallet storage yards, shall be granted for such activities.

15 Section 5. Effective Date and Duration.

16 This ordinance shall become effective immediately upon adoption if adopted by at least four-
17 fifths vote of the City Council, and shall remain in full force and effect for a period of forty-five (45)
18 days from the date of its adoption unless extended by the City Council in accordance with the
19 provisions of Government Code section 65858.

20 Section 6. Severability.

21 If any provision of this ordinance or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is
22 held to be unconstitutional or otherwise invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity
23 shall not affect other provisions or applications of this ordinance which can be implemented without
24 the invalid provision or application and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are declared to be
25 severable.

26 Section 7. California Environmental Quality Act.

27 The City hereby finds that this ordinance is not subject to review under the California
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1 Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines sections 15060, subdivision (c)(2)
2 (the activity will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the
3 environment) and 15061, subdivision (b)(3) (there is no possibility the activity in question may have
4 a significant effect on the environment). In addition to the foregoing general exemptions, the City
5 Council further finds that this ordinance is categorically exempt from review under CEQA under the
6 Class 8 Categorical Exemption (regulatory activity to assure the protection of the environment),
7 CEQA Guidelines section 15308.

8 Section 8. The City Clerk shall certify to the adoption of this ordinance and cause
9 publication once in a newspaper of general circulation in accordance with Section 414 of the Charter
10 of the City of Riverside.

11 ADOPTED by the City Council this 19th day of May, 2026.

12 
13 PATRICIA LOCK DAWSON
14 Mayor of the City of Riverside

15 Attest:

16 
17 DONESIA GAUSE
18 City Clerk of the City of Riverside
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1 I, Donesia Gause, City Clerk of the City of Riverside, California, certify that the foregoing
2 ordinance was duly and regularly adopted by the City Council of the City of Riverside, at a regular
3 meeting held on the 19th day of May, 2026, by the following vote of the City Council:

4 Ayes: Falcone, Cervantes, Robillard, Mill and Perry

5 Noes:

6 Absent: Conder and Hemenway

7 Abstain:

8 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the official seal of the
9 City of Riverside, California, this 26th day of May, 2026.

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12 DONESIA GAUSE
13 City Clerk of the City of Riverside

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