



## Amendment of Ordinance section 16.32.365 of the Riverside Municipal Code regarding the adoption of Moderate, High, and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones

### Fire Department

City Council  
May 20, 2025



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## LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

### **Assembly Bill (AB) 337 – The "Bates Bill" (1992)**

- Required Office of State Fire Marshall (OSFM) to identify Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) in Local Responsibility Areas (LRAs)

### **2008-2011 CAL FIRE Collaboration**

- Required local governments to adopt these designations by ordinance

### **Senate Bill (SB) 63 (2021)**

- Expanded FHSZ classifications to include – Moderate and High

### **Assembly Bill (AB) 211 (2022) and Government Code 51179**

- Mandated local governments to adopt all three classifications by ordinance within 120 days of OSFM recommendations

### **Riverside Municipal Code Section 16.32.365**

- Currently addresses designation, locations, and boundaries of VHFHSZ



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## BACKGROUND

### Evolution of Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ) in California

- Developed in response to increasing wildfire threats
- Managed by the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) in collaboration with local jurisdictions
- Uses systematic approach based on wildfire hazard potential

### Factors Determining FHSZ Designations

- Likelihood of fire occurrence and expected behavior over a 30- to 50-year period
- Key considerations:
  - Fuel loading
  - Terrain
  - Fire weather conditions
  - Historical fire activity
  - Wind patterns



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## BACKGROUND

### Updated FHSZ Maps and Local Implication

- OSFM released updated maps on March 24, 2025.
- City published maps online on March 25, 2025.
- Public Review and Workshop on April 8, 2025 during City Council meeting.
- Online tool launched for parcel-level lookup and public comments.
- Full Compliance with Government Code 51178.5



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## DISCUSSION

### Local Authority Requirements

- Cities must adopt State-recommended FHSZ within 120 day.
- Cannot downgrade hazard levels.
- May increase severity or expand with significant evidence.
- Supports consistency in wildfire planning and mitigation.

### Key Implications for Local Governments:

- Building Codes: WUI standards apply to new construction in High & Very High FHSZs.
- Defensible Space: 100 feet of clearance required around structures.
- Land Use & Planning: FHSZ designations must be incorporated into general plans, zoning, and emergency response.
- Real Estate Disclosures: Property owners must disclose wildfire hazards during transactions.



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## STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

**This item contributes to Strategic Priority Number 2:  
Community Well-Being and Goal 2.6 – Strengthen  
community preparedness for emergencies to ensure  
effective response and recovery.**

### Cross-Cutting Threads



Community Trust



Fiscal Responsibility

Sustainability &  
Resiliency

Equity



Innovation



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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### That the Council:

- Adopt an amendment of section 16.32.365 of the Riverside Municipal Code to include the new Moderate, High, and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones.



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