



City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL **DATE: OCTOBER 21, 2025**

FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT **WARDS: ALL**
DEPARTMENT
FIRE DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: INTRODUCE ORDINANCES ADOPTING THE 2025 EDITION OF CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 24, THE CALIFORNIA BUILDING STANDARDS CODE, WITH LOCAL AMENDMENTS THERETO; AMENDING CHAPTER 1.17 OF THE RIVERSIDE MUNICIPAL CODE, ADMINISTRATIVE CODE ENFORCEMENT REMEDIES; AMENDING CHAPTER 5.59 OF THE RIVERSIDE MUNICIPAL CODE, FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS AND SCHEDULING A PUBLIC HEARING TO ADOPT A RESOLUTION MAKING EXPRESS FINDINGS TO SUPPORT LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE AMENDMENTS TO THE 2025 EDITION OF CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 24 THE CALIFORNIA BUILDING STANDARDS CODE; SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER THE ADOPTION OF THE ABOVE ORDINANCES AND ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION MAKING THE NECESSARY EXPRESS FINDINGS AS REQUIRED BY STATE LAW TO SUPPORT LOCAL AMENDMENTS TO THE 2025 EDITION OF CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 24, THE CALIFORNIA BUILDING STANDARDS CODE

ISSUES:

1. Introduce the following ordinances for first reading:
 - a. Adopt Ordinances adopting the 2025 edition of the California Code of Regulations Title 24, the California Building Standards Code with local amendments thereto; and
 - b. Adopt an Ordinance amending Chapter 1.17 of the Riverside Municipal Code, Administrative Code Enforcement Remedies; and
 - c. Adopt an Ordinance amending Chapter 5.59 of the Riverside Municipal Code, Fire Alarm Systems; and

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Introduce the following ordinances for first reading:
 - a. Adopting the 2025 Edition of California Code of Regulations Title 24, the California Building Standards Code with local amendments thereto;
 - b. Amending Chapter 1.17 of the Riverside Municipal Code, Administrative Code

Enforcement Remedies; and

- c. Amending Chapter 5.59 of the Riverside Municipal Code, Fire Alarm Systems.
2. Schedule a Public hearing for the proposed date of November 18, 2025, or thereafter, to:
 - a. Adopt the ordinances introduced on October 21, 2025, and listed as follows: 1) Adopting the 2025 Edition of California Code of Regulations Title 24, the California Building Standards Code with local amendments thereto; 2) Amending Chapter 1.17 of the Riverside Municipal Code, Administrative Code Enforcement Remedies; and Amending Chapter 5.59 of the Riverside Municipal Code, Fire Alarm System.
 - b. Adopt a Resolution making the necessary express findings as required by state law to support local amendments to the 2025 edition of California Code of Regulations Title 24, the California Building Standards Code.

BACKGROUND:

The California Building Standards Commission adopts a new version of the California Building Standards Code, also known as California Code of Regulations, Title 24, every three years. The adopted building standards include 13 parts and are based on the most recent versions of the national “model” codes distributed by the International Code Council (ICC).

The triennial update enhances building performance and efficiency, fire and life safety, accessibility, sustainability, resiliency, and structural integrity using the most recent engineering, materials, and construction practices. The State formally adopts the newest building codes in July, after which local municipalities have 180 days to review, amend, and adopt before the state’s mandated effective date of January 1, 2026.

DISCUSSION:

Local jurisdictions may amend the State Building Codes to address hazards specific to their region. The State permits local amendments that are more restrictive when reasonably necessary due to local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions, and the local jurisdiction must provide express findings when proposing them. The City of Riverside has historically adopted the necessary express findings to amend the state building and fire codes to achieve higher levels of safety based on local conditions and susceptibility to earthquakes, flooding, and fire. The City’s express findings are included in a Resolution as required by Health & Safety Code 17958.5 (Attachment 1). State law requires the Resolution include express findings made after a public hearing. The findings are then submitted to the California Building Standards Commission along with the adopted ordinance. The adoption of the Resolution and adoption of the Ordinances are proposed to occur on the same date.

Local administrative amendments to the State Building and Fire Codes are commonly used to establish policies and procedures for the permitting, plan check, and inspection process. During this triennial code cycle, staff are proposing various administrative code amendments to serve our community and protect our built environment. The proposed administrative amendments refine the current code to provide the Building Official and Fire Marshal with greater flexibility, reduce redundancy, and clarify policy as needed. Additionally, new exceptions to codes are introduced, and various cleanup language is also proposed.

In accordance with State law, the triennial code update requires two City Council meetings. At the October 21, 2025 meeting, staff requests that the City Council introduce the ordinances (First Reading) and schedule a public hearing for the adoption of the Resolution of Express Findings and the adoption of the ordinances. The second reading and adoption public hearing is proposed to be scheduled for November 18, 2025. This schedule ensures the ordinances will take effect on January 1, 2026, concurrent with the statewide effective date.

Statewide Code Changes

The 2025 California Building Standards Code introduces broad updates intended to strengthen building safety, accessibility, fire resilience, seismic provisions, and sustainability. A key revision is the creation of the new California Wildland-Urban Interface Code (CWUIC), which consolidates wildfire-related construction standards and relocates Chapter 7A from the Building Code into Part 7. Fire and life safety requirements have also been modernized, including new provisions for two-way communication in egress systems, enhanced requirements for sprinkler systems and fire barriers, and updated standards for special occupancies such as child-care facilities and health care environments.

Significant structural design changes bring California into alignment with ASCE 7-22, repealing outdated amendments and revising seismic design rules for lateral pressures, torsional irregularities, and irregular building configurations. New standards address off-site modular and panelized construction. Special inspection provisions have been expanded and reorganized to clarify quality assurance responsibilities for steel, concrete, masonry, and prefabricated building systems.

Accessibility standards see a major shift with the removal of Chapter 11A for multifamily housing, consolidating accessibility requirements into Chapter 11B. Updates include revised scoping for transient lodging, housing at educational facilities, and social service centers, along with enhanced standards for residential units with mobility or adaptable features. These revisions add clarity for thresholds, maneuvering clearances, accessible bathrooms, laundry equipment, and electric vehicle charging stations.

The California Energy Code (Part 6) continues to advance the state's electrification and energy efficiency goals, with higher performance standards for HVAC, lighting controls, and renewable energy readiness. Similarly, CALGreen (Part 11) raises both mandatory and voluntary measures for residential and nonresidential projects, including expanded sustainability requirements. The Mechanical and Plumbing Codes incorporate updates for water efficiency, ventilation, refrigeration, and alternate water systems, while the Existing Building Code (Part 10) clarifies provisions for repairs and prescriptive compliance methods.

Overall, the 2025 code cycle strengthens fire and seismic safety, expands accessibility and sustainability measures, and modernizes compliance procedures to better align with California's long-term policy objectives.

Proposed Local Building Code Amendments – Title 16

The draft updates to Title 16 incorporate adoption of the 2025 California Building Standards Code across all applicable chapters, including the Building, Residential, Green, Existing Building, Mechanical, Plumbing, Electrical, Energy, and Fire Codes. References to earlier code editions are replaced with the 2025 editions of Title 24, ensuring consistency with the state code cycle. Notably, the City is adopting the new California Wildland-Urban Interface Code (CWUIC) in Chapter 16.17, replacing CBC Chapter 7A and consolidating wildfire construction standards.

Within Chapter 16.04 (Administration), several revisions strengthen enforcement and permitting processes. These include clarified limitations on the approval and duration of temporary utility use (Section 16.04.490), new disclosure requirements for projects over \$50,000 (Section 16.04.300), updated expiration and reactivation timelines for permits and plan reviews (Sections 16.04.310 and 16.04.335), and revised refund and afterhours fee policies (Section 16.04.365).

Chapter 16.06 (Residential Code) adopts the 2025 California Residential Code with updated references to appendices. Local amendments strengthen swimming pool barrier requirements by mandating barrier upgrades when new dwellings are added or when modifications affect the ability of existing barriers to isolate or secure a swimming pool or spa (Section 16.06.040).

Chapter 16.08 (Building Code) adopts the 2025 California Building Code with local amendments, including newly established bonding requirements for Temporary Certificates of Occupancy (Section 16.08.140), clarified geologic hazard investigation provisions (Section 16.08.185), and clarified alternate means for complying with local noise insulation standards for residential uses (Section 16.08.175).

Chapter 16.23 (Electric Vehicle Charging Systems) has been amended to extend the streamlined permitting process to include hydrogen fueling stations, consistent with SB 1418. Together, these changes modernize Riverside's Building and Construction regulations by strengthening fire and seismic safety, expanding sustainability measures, streamlining EV and hydrogen fueling infrastructure permitting, and aligning local ordinances with the latest state code cycle.

Chapter 16.24 (Building Addressing) has been amended to update the City's addressing standards by clarifying the Building Official's authority to assign or change addresses, requiring addresses to be posted visibly from the public right-of-way with minimum size and illumination standards, and mandating clear and sequential numbering for multi-tenant or multi-building developments. These changes are intended to improve public safety, emergency response, and overall consistency in address assignment and display.

Proposed Local Fire Code Amendments – Title 9, Chapter 9.48, Title 16 – Chapters 16.32 and 16.36

There are no significant changes to Chapter 9.48. This section contains clean up language meeting current Health & Safety Code Section 25404(c).

Chapter 16.32 (Fire Prevention). There were several Riverside Municipal Codes that were removed to align with the State's adoption of the fire code. Section 105.6.2 Automatic Sprinkler Systems was adopted to streamline permitting process for these systems. Section 308.1.5 Open Flame Devices in wildland risk areas adopted to align with fire hazard severity zones. Section 903.2 amended to clean up language for the installation and maintenance of automatic sprinkler systems, making the process in alignment with the State. Section 907.6.6 Monitoring removed UUFX certification to align with the State.

Chapter 16.36 (Public Safety Radio Amplification System) has been removed from the Riverside Municipal Code as it is now covered in the California Fire Code.

The Fire Chief and Public Utilities General Manager concur with the recommendations in this report.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with the adoption of this resolution and its related ordinances.

Prepared by: Oscar Mancillas, Building Official
Reviewed by: Jennifer Lilley, Community & Economic Development Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Approved by: Mike Futrell, City Manager
Approved as to form: Rebecca McKee-Reimbold, Interim City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Redline Ordinance – Title 16
2. Redline Ordinance – Chapter 16.32
3. Exhibit A – Chapter 16.32
4. Redline Ordinance – Chapter 1.17
5. Redline Ordinance – Chapter 5.59
6. Resolution of Express Findings
7. Presentation