

City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

DATE: SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

FROM: FIRE DEPARTMENT / CODE ENFORCEMENT

WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 9.60 OF THE RIVERSIDE MUNICIPAL CODE ESTABLISHING LIABILITY FOR FIRE AND COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EXTRAORDINARY CITY SERVICES OR RESPONSES

ISSUE:

Approve the amendments to Chapter 9.60 of the Riverside Municipal Code (RMC) to establish liability for Fire and Community and Economic Development Department services or responses to a business or property, including the payment of the City's actual public safety response costs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Receive this report summarizing proposed amendments to Chapter 9.60 of the RMC, and;
2. Recommend that the City Council introduce and subsequently adopt the proposed ordinance amending Riverside Municipal Code Section 9.60, "EXTRAORDINARY RESPONSES TO CERTAIN EMERGENCY INCIDENTS AND DANGEROUS PROPERTIES."

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On July 16, 2025, the proposed ordinance amendments were presented to the Safety, Wellness, and Youth Committee, which unanimously approved the recommendations set forth above.

BACKGROUND:

City departments are frequently called upon to provide extraordinary services and respond to emergency incidents that exceed what they usually offer or that are otherwise covered by user fees. Departments responding to the same or similar incidents on multiple occasions, or to certain emergency incidents or dangerous properties, exceed what Riverside taxpayers expect and are prepared to pay for. In addition, these incidents unreasonably divert vital and limited public safety resources including, police, ambulance, code enforcement, building department, and fire safety services. Owners and/or occupants of certain businesses and

properties who utilize a disproportionate amount of public safety resources, thereby unreasonably diverting these vital resources from other parts of the City.

DISCUSSION:

The purpose of the proposed amended ordinance is to hold owners and occupants of certain businesses and properties responsible for the extraordinary city services or responses caused by criminal and/or nuisance activities associated with these properties and to deter or prevent future extraordinary city responses to these businesses or properties. The purpose of the proposed ordinance is to also recover all the costs expended in responding to and investigating false reports of an emergency or other criminal offense.

The Community and Economic Development Departments Code Enforcement and Building Safety Divisions and the Fire Department are included in the proposed amended ordinance:

- **Dangerous properties:** If a building or property is determined by the Building Official or Fire Marshall to be uninhabitable or unoccupiable due to a dangerous condition existing on the property, and the building and/or property is posted by the City as "Do Not Occupy," "Do Not Enter," or equivalent, the property owner is liable for costs of emergency fire, medical, police, and public utility responses to the property, including without limitation the expenses of fighting a fire, which are determined by the Fire Chief, Police Chief, or Building Official to have been caused by or attributed to, in whole or part, the dangerous condition. This section shall only apply if the City notified the property owner of the dangerous condition prior to the response per the applicable code.
- **Emergency incident includes:** Responding to a hazardous material incident or emergency; an illegal fire; a threat of harm to oneself or others; any person obstructing, removing, tampering with or otherwise damaging any fire hydrant or city fire appliance; a structure demolition or utility line failure; water rescue attempts; a bomb threat; or any other incident where emergency medical, public safety, police, or community and economic development services are necessary.
- **Extraordinary fire service or response:** This is defined as the response of fire/EMS crews to an Emergency Incident or Dangerous Properties; the response of fire/EMS crews to five or more false medical alarms within a one-year period; and the response of fire/EMS crews to the same property or business five or more times within a 30-day period.
- **Extraordinary code service or response** occurs after the issuance of the second or more administrative citations, for an identical violation(s) at the same business or property

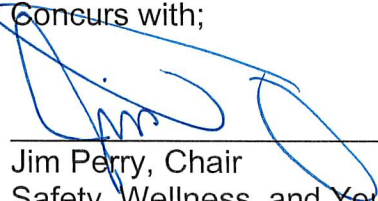
Over the past year, the City has seen a significant increase in the number of extraordinary responses because of criminal and/or negligent and/or nuisance activity occurring at certain businesses or properties in the City of Riverside. The nuisance activities occurring on the premises create a very significant public health and safety threat and the Fire Chief and the Community and Economic Development Director believe that the adoption of the proposed ordinance would effectively deter or prevent future extraordinary responses to these businesses or properties and the diversion of critically important public safety resources.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this report.

Prepared by:	Ed Torres, Senior Code Officer
Approved by:	Steve McKinster, Fire Chief
Approved by:	Mike Futrell, City Manager
Approved as to form:	Rebecca McKee-Reimbold, Interim City Attorney

Concurs with;



Jim Perry, Chair
Safety, Wellness, and Youth Committee

Attachments:

1. Exhibit "A" – Proposed Ordinance and Municipal Code Section 9.60
2. Presentation