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ORDINANCE NO.

AN URGENCY ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA,
AMENDING THE RIVERSIDE MUNICIPAL CODE BY ADDING CHAPTER 6.16
REGARDING VEGETATION MANAGEMENT AND DEFENSIBLE SPACE
NECESSARY FOR PRESERVING THE PUBLIC PEACE, HEALTH, AND SAFETY.

The City Council of the City of Riverside, California, does ordain as follows:

Section 1: Findings. In enacting this ordinance, the City Council finds and takes legislative notice as follows:

- A. The City Council of Riverside (“City”) finds and declares that the uncontrolled growth and/or accumulation of weeds, grasses, hazardous vegetation, combustible materials, or obstructions on sidewalks, streets, and on lands or lots within the City is dangerous or injurious to neighboring property and the health, safety, and welfare of the City’s residents. The City further finds that such growth and accumulation constitute a public nuisance as defined under the Riverside Municipal Code, as it creates fire hazards, reduces the value of private property, promotes blight and deterioration, invites plundering, constitutes an unattractive nuisance, and poses a hazard to the health, safety, and general welfare of the public.
- B. It is the intent of the City that this Ordinance shall create an annual program for the abatement of the growth and/or accumulation of weeds, grasses, shrubs, dormant brush, slash, tree limbs, hazardous vegetation, and combustible materials on parcels located within High or Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones within the City, and the ongoing maintenance of those parcels, to prevent hazardous vegetation from growing back.
- C. The City of Riverside is located in a wildland/suburban interface area where many native and non-native plant species within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City are highly flammable during dry periods. These conditions have contributed to significant wildfires having the potential of catastrophic losses to life, property, and the environment. The risk of significant wildfires continues to increase due to various factors.
- D. The City of Riverside has a diverse and complex landscape, including hillsides, open spaces, and grass-covered wildlands, which have the potential to fuel catastrophic fire events.

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- E. Of paramount importance to the City Council and the residents of the City of Riverside is the protection of lives and property from the threat of fire, as well as ensuring the safety of fire and law enforcement personnel during wildfires.
- F. The purpose of this Ordinance is to establish a hazardous vegetation and combustible material abatement program that protects the lives and property of the residents of the City of Riverside within High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones determined by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).
- G. It is the City of Riverside's intent to create fire-safe communities, thereby providing residents with better opportunities for affordable fire insurance.
- H. California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The subject project is Categorically Exempt (Class 4) from provisions of CEQA, pursuant to 14 CCR section 15304. The subject project is also exempt under the “common sense” exemption in 14 CCR section 15061(b)(3) because it does not involve activity that will have a significant effect on the environment.
- I. Based on the foregoing, the City hereby finds that Riverside City Charter Section 413 applies to this Urgency Ordinance, as the proliferation of wildfires in recent years poses a serious threat to the health, safety, and general welfare of the public, and this ordinance may be introduced and adopted at one and the same meeting if passed by at least five affirmative votes.

Section 2: It is hereby declared that an urgency ordinance adding Chapter 6.16 on an urgency basis, the City of Riverside will comply with Government Code Section 51175 by establishing a proactive approach to wildfire risk reduction by mandating vegetation management and defensible space requirements to protect the public lives, property, and infrastructure from the devastating effects of wildfires.

Section 3: Chapter 6.16 entitled “Vegetation Management and Defensible Space” is added to the Riverside Municipal Code as shown in Exhibit “A” attached hereto and incorporated herein.

Section 4. This ordinance is not a project within the meaning of Section 15378 of the CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) Guidelines, because it has no potential for resulting in physical change in the environment, directly or indirectly. In the event that this Ordinance is

1 found to be project under CEQA, it is subject to the CEQA exemption contained in CEQA Guideline
2 section 15061(b)(3) because it can be seen with certainty to have no possibility of a significant effect
3 on the environment.

4 Section 5. This ordinance is adopted as an urgency measure pursuant to Section 413 of
5 the Riverside City Charter. This ordinance is necessary as an emergency measure for preserving the
6 public peace, health, and safety of the City and its residents.

7 Section 6. Pursuant to Section 416 of the Riverside City Charter, this urgency ordinance
8 shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

9 Section 7. The City Clerk shall certify to the adoption of this ordinance and cause
10 publication once in a newspaper of general circulation in accordance with Section 414 of the Charter
11 of the City of Riverside.

12 ADOPTED by the City Council this _____ day of _____, 2025.

13
14 _____
15 PATRICIA LOCK DAWSON
16 Mayor of the City of Riverside

17 Attest:

18 _____
19 DONESIA GAUSE
20 City Clerk of the City of Riverside

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22 //

1 I, Donesia Gause, City Clerk of the City of Riverside, California, hereby certify that the
2 foregoing ordinance was duly and regularly introduced at a meeting of the City Council on the
3 ____ day of _____, 2025, and that thereafter the said ordinance was duly and regularly
4 adopted at a meeting of the City Council on the ____ day of _____, 2025, by the
5 following vote, to wit:

6 Ayes:

7 Noes:

8 Absent:

9 Abstain:

10 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the official seal of the
11 City of Riverside, California, this ____ day of _____, 2025.

12
13 _____
14 DONESIA GAUSE
15 City Clerk of the City of Riverside
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