

REPORT

To the Honorable Mayor and City Council
From the City Manager

March 9, 2009

SUBJECT

Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map Ordinance

RECOMMENDATION

1. Introduce the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map Ordinance for first reading on March 9, 2009
2. Schedule a public hearing and second reading of the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map Ordinance for March 23, 2009
3. Adopt the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map Ordinance on March 23, 2009

BACKGROUND

Due to the wildland fires in California and subsequent state legislation, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) is required to review and update fire hazard severity zones. Cal Fire initially completed mapping of Fire Hazard Severity Zones for State Responsibility Areas (SRA- areas outside of city limits where the state has responsibility for wildland fire protection). Cal Fire recently completed mapping of Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones for Local Responsibility Areas (LRA- areas where local government has responsibility for wildland fire protection).

Redwood City Fire and Building & Inspection have reviewed the draft map for Redwood City and concur with the proposed boundaries of the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map. The Redwood City Board of Building Review discussed the map and related code requirements at their January 6, 2009 meeting. The Board recommends that the City Council adopt the map as presented by Cal Fire.

California Government Code Section 51179(a) requires the local agency to adopt this map by ordinance. There are approximately 1,200 properties in Redwood City in the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map area. New buildings within this area are required to comply with California Building Code Chapter 7A and maintain defensible space as required by California Government Code Section 51182. Chapter 7A contains requirements for fire retardant or ignition resistant construction materials at roofs, eaves, vents, exterior walls, exterior windows and doors, decks, and areas below decks. There are prescriptive or performance criteria that are achievable with conventional construction materials. The defensible space must be maintained up to 100 feet (or the property line, whichever is less) from the building. The Redwood City Code currently requires fire retardant roofing and fire sprinklers.

Building & Inspection will enforce the Chapter 7A requirements and Fire will enforce the defensible space requirements. The Building Official is required to provide certification at building permit issuance and at completion that the structure complies with all applicable state and local building standards. These regulations apply to new structures, not additions, alterations, or repairs to structures in existence prior to the effective date of the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map Ordinance.

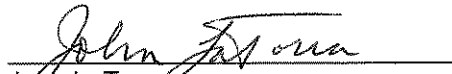
The Fire Department has been discussing the defensible space requirements with property owners and has requested the clearing of flammable vegetation in this area since 2004. Community Development Services has notified permit applicants of the pending map and requirements. The proposed ordinance will be published twice in the official newspaper, as required by California law.

ALTERNATIVES

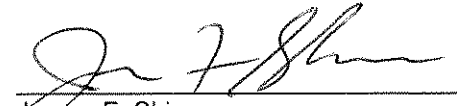
The City Council may elect to increase the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone area. Cal Fire is on record that they will not agree to any reductions of the area. Staff and the Board of Building Review recommend adopting the map as presented.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are undefined increased staff costs for enforcement of the state regulations. These costs will be absorbed in the current budgets.



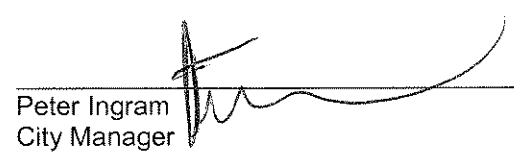
John LaTorra
Building & Inspection Manager



James F. Skinner
Fire Chief



Chu Chang
Acting Community Development Director



Peter Ingram
City Manager

ATTACHMENTS

1. Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map Ordinance
2. Redwood City- Fire Hazard Map

RELATED DOCUMENTS IN CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

None

Attachment 1

ORDINANCE NO. _____

**ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF REDWOOD CITY, CALIFORNIA
ADOPTING AND DESIGNATING VERY HIGH FIRE HAZARD
SEVERITY ZONES IN THE CITY OF REDWOOD CITY AS
DESIGNATED ON THE "REDWOOD CITY – FIRE HAZARD MAP"**

WHEREAS, due to the wildland fires in California and subsequent state legislation, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) is required to review and update fire hazard severity zones.

WHEREAS, Cal Fire initially completed mapping of Fire Hazard Severity Zones for State Responsibility Areas (SRA- areas outside of city limits where the state has responsibility for wildland fire protection), and Cal Fire recently completed mapping of Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones for Local Responsibility Areas (LRA- areas where local government has responsibility for wildland fire protection).

WHEREAS, Redwood City Fire and Building & Inspection have reviewed the draft map for Redwood City and concur with the proposed boundaries of the Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map.

WHEREAS, the Redwood City Board of Building Review ("Board") discussed the map and related code requirements at their January 6, 2009 meeting, and the Board recommends that the City Council adopt the map as presented by Cal Fire.

WHEREAS, California Government Code Section 51179(a) requires the local agency to adopt this map by ordinance.

**NOW THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF REDWOOD CITY
DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:**

SECTION 1. Section 9.43 of Article IV of Chapter 9 of the Redwood City Municipal Code is hereby renumbered to be Section 9.44, and the text of renumbered Section 9.43 shall remain unchanged.

SECTION 2. A new Section 9.43 of Article IV of Chapter 9 of the Redwood City Municipal Code is hereby added to read as follows:

"Sec. 9.43. Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map:

The City Council hereby adopts and designates Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones as recommended by the Director of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and as designated on a map titled, 'Redwood City – Fire Hazard Map,' dated February 3, 2009, and retained on file and made available at the offices of the Fire Chief and Building Official of the City of Redwood City. The 'Redwood City – Fire

Hazard Map' is also adopted in Section 12.71 of Article II of Chapter 12 of the Redwood City Municipal Code."

SECTION 3. A new Section 12.7.1 of Article II of Chapter 12 of the Redwood City Municipal Code is hereby added to read as follows:

"Sec. 12.7.1. Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map:

The City Council hereby adopts and designates Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones as recommended by the Director of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and as designated on a map titled, 'Redwood City – Fire Hazard Map,' dated February 3, 2009, and retained on file and made available at the offices of the Fire Chief and Building Official of the City of Redwood City. The 'Redwood City – Fire Hazard Map' is also adopted in Section 9.43 of Article IV of Chapter 9 of the Redwood City Municipal Code."

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