

**City of Culver City, California
Agenda Item Report**

Meeting Date: 09/24/2012		Item Number: <u>A-6</u>	
AGENDA ITEM: Introduction of an Ordinance Adding a Subchapter Entitled “Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone” to Chapter 9.02 of Title 9 of the Culver City Municipal Code to Designate Certain Properties in the Culver Crest Area a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone Based on the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s Recommendations.			
Contact Person/Dept.: Michael Bowden, Fire Prevention		Phone Number: (310) 253-5926	
Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒		General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒	
Public Hearing: ☐		Action Item: ☒ Attachments: ☒	
Public Notification: Publication in the Culver City News on September 20, 2012; Meetings and Agendas – City Council (09/20/12); Affected Property Owners (09/10/12)			
Department Approval: Chris Sellers (by M. Bowden 09/04/12)		City Attorney Approval: Carol Schwab (by L. Vidra 09/10/12)	
Chief Financial Officer Approval: Jeff Muir (by M. Noller) (09/19/12)		City Manager Approval: John M. Nachbar (09/19/12)	
<u>RECOMMENDATION:</u> Staff recommends the City Council introduce an ordinance adding a Subchapter entitled Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone to Chapter 9.02 of Title 9 of the Culver City Municipal Code, to designate certain properties in the Culver Crest area a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) based on the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection’s recommendations. <u>BACKGROUND:</u> In California, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is mandated by Public Resources Code Sections 4201-4204 and Government Code Sections 51175-51189 to identify fire hazard severity zones statewide. These state statutes arose out of legislation following large, catastrophic urban conflagrations and are designed to implement mitigations to reduce damages from wildfires. The areas identified pose a significant fire hazard based on fuels, terrain, weather patterns, and other relevant factors. In the state responsibility areas, CAL FIRE has mapped three hazard ranges: moderate, high, and very high. In local responsibility areas, the law only requires identification of VHFHSZ. In Culver City, a section of the Culver Crest neighborhood has been identified by the State as a VHFHSZ, and the City Manager was officially notified via letter from CAL FIRE on May 10, 2012.			

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DISCUSSION

Government Code Sections 51178.5 and 51179(a) through (g) describe local agency responsibilities regarding the adoption by ordinance of VHFHSZ maps. (Attachment 1). In general, a local agency is required to designate by ordinance VHFHSZ in its jurisdiction (see proposed Ordinance-Attachment 2). A local agency may be exempt from this requirement if they have adopted by ordinance, prior to December 31, 1992, standards that are equivalent to, or more restrictive than, these standards. Culver City does not meet this exemption requirement.

Additionally, the local agency must give notice to the affected residents, which was done via mail on June 14, 2012 (Attachment 3). A copy of the VHFHSZ map for Culver City was posted on the City's website and is on display in the Fire Prevention Office in City Hall. A copy of the map will also be maintained in the City Clerk's Office. (Attachment 4).

The VHFHSZ maps will be the basis of legal requirements affecting property owners in the VHFHSZ and will influence construction materials and methods for new buildings, brush clearance and hazard (fuel load) reduction, and natural hazards disclosure requirements whenever the property title is transferred.

FISCAL ANALYSIS:

Introduction of the Ordinance does not create a material fiscal impact on the City.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Relevant California Government Code and Public Resources Code Sections
2. Proposed Ordinance
3. June 14, 2012 letter to property owners
4. September 10, 2012 letter to property owners
5. VHFHSZ map

MOTION:

That the City Council:

Introduce an ordinance adding a Subchapter entitled Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones to Chapter 9.02 of Title 9 of the Culver City Municipal Code, to designate certain properties in the Culver Crest area a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) based on the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's recommendations, and waive further reading.