



## City of Grass Valley City Council Agenda Action Sheet

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**Title:** Update Municipal Code Section 8.16 Fire Control Regulations

**CEQA:** Not a project

**Recommendation:** That Council: 1) introduce and adopt urgency ordinance 831 repealing Municipal Code Chapter - 8.16 Fire Control Regulations and replacing with new Municipal Code Chapter 8.16 Fire Control Regulations, waive the full reading and read by title only, 2) introduce ordinance 832 repealing Municipal Code Chapter - 8.16 Fire Control Regulations and replacing with new Municipal Code Chapter 8.16 Fire Control Regulations, waive the full reading and read by title only

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**Prepared by:** Mark Buttron -Fire Chief

**Council Meeting Date:** 11/12/2024

**Date Prepared:** 11/07/2024

**Agenda:** Administrative

**Background Information:** In August of 2017, the Council approved repealing Municipal Code Chapter 8.16, Fire Control Regulations and 8.36, Weed Abatement. These repealed chapters were replaced with updated Municipal Code Chapter 8.16, Fire Control Regulations. Based on our experience and observations over the years in implementing the code, the Fire Department believes the vegetation management process needs to be further amended to include defensible space surrounding a structure incorporating Zone 0, Zone 1, and Zone 2 and updating definitions. To align the City's vegetation management/defensible space ordinance with known best practices under the full-time vegetation management program supported by Measure B—which includes Community Vegetation Management Assistance, Wildfire Preparedness Education, Green Waste Dropoff, and Defensible Space Inspections, an update to existing municipal code is necessary. To ensure the City's vegetation management/defensible space ordinance appropriately addresses potential fire hazards, we recommend the following changes (not a complete list)

### **Defensible Space Zones:**

- **Zone 0 (0-5 feet from structures):** This zone would likely focus on eliminating combustible materials, managing plants, and maintaining hardscape to reduce fire risks immediately around structures.

- **Zone 1 (5-30 feet from structures):** This could involve reducing vegetation density, trimming trees, and creating fuel breaks to minimize the chance of fire spreading.
- **Zone 2 (30-100 feet from structures):** Emphasizes more extensive thinning of vegetation, pruning of large trees, and ensuring that ground cover is sparse enough to limit fire progression.

**Updated Definitions:** Modern fire safety practices have evolved, and definitions in the ordinance should reflect new understanding, such as what constitutes a "combustible material," "parcel," or "refuse pile."

**Sale or Transfer of Property:** In accordance with Civ. Code, § 1102.19, as it may be amended from time to time, a seller shall, before the close of escrow on the sale of any parcel within the City, provide to the buyer documentation from the Fire Code Official stating that the parcel is currently in compliance with local vegetation management requirements. The Fire Code Official shall have the discretion to accept alternate means and measures to achieve compliance if completion of the required work will delay the sale or transfer of the parcel. If the seller of a parcel has not obtained documentation of compliance in accordance herewith, the seller and the buyer shall enter into a written agreement pursuant to which the buyer agrees to obtain documentation of compliance.

Staff recommends this amendment to the municipal code be adopted as an urgency ordinance. The urgency ordinance may be introduced and adopted at a single meeting and becomes effective immediately if adopted by a 4/5 vote. The standard ordinance is identical to the urgency ordinance but does not contain the specific findings of urgency. To make these amendments permanent without needing to defend urgency findings indefinitely, staff recommends that Council simultaneously consider a standard ordinance, adopted after first and second readings, which will take effect 30 days after adoption. Upon becoming effective, the ordinance will repeal the urgency ordinance. This is the City Attorney's standard procedure with respect to urgency ordinances that address long-term issues.

**Council Goals/Objectives:** Exceptional Public Safety consistent with the City of Grass Valley Strategic Plan

**Fiscal Impact:** None      **Funds Available:** N/A      **Account #:** N/A

**Reviewed by:** City Manager

- Attachments:**
- 1) Grass Valley Municipal Code Section 8.16
  - 2) Grass Valley Fire Department Defensible Space Requirements Handout
  - 3) Urgency Ordinance No. 831 Amending Grass Valley Municipal Code Section 8.16
  - 1) Non-Urgency Ordinance No. 832 Amending Grass Valley Municipal Code Section 8.16