

ORDINANCE

ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS AMENDING CHAPTER 9 (FIRE PREVENTION AND PROTECTION) OF THE TOWN CODE REGARDING WEED ABATEMENT REGULATIONS

WHEREAS, the Town of Los Gatos; has traditionally adopted Chapter 49 of the California Fire Code (with amendments) which incorporates the legal requirements associated with State mandated defensible space;

WHEREAS, the State mandates 100 feet of defensible space around buildings and structures within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones;

WHEREAS, State law allows for jurisdictions to adopt additional defensible space standards based on severity of wildfire risk;

WHEREAS, the Los Gatos Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) planning area includes primarily Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) areas.

WHEREAS, the Town Council recognizes that in addition to the State mandated requirements the development and maintenance of defensible space is essential to reducing wildfire risk within the community;

WHEREAS, the proposed amendment changes will reduce the risk of wildfire and effectuate safer passage for first responders and residents in the event of a wildfire;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS DOES ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION II

CHAPTER 49 REQUIREMENTS FOR WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE FIRE AREAS

Section 4902 Definitions of Town Code Chapter 9 are hereby added/amended to read as follows:

DEFENSIBLE SPACE. An area around the perimeter of a structure in which vegetation, debris, and other types of combustible fuels are treated, cleared, or reduced to slow the rate and intensity of potentially approaching wildfire or fire escaping from structure(s).

REDUCED FUEL ZONE. In this area of the defensible space, efforts are placed on ensuring fuels/vegetation are separated vertically and horizontally depending on the vegetation type.

Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area. A geographical area identified by the state as a " Fire Hazard Severity Zone" in accordance with the Public Resources Code, Sections 4201 through 4204, and Government Code Sections 51175 through 51189, or other areas designated by the enforcing agency to be at a significant risk from wildfires. The Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area is defined as all areas within the Town of Los Gatos as set forth and delineated on the map entitled "Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area" which map and all notations, references, data, and other information shown thereon are hereby adopted and made a part of this chapter. The map properly attested, shall be on file in the Office of the Town Clerk of the Town of Los Gatos.

Section 4906.2 Application of Town Code Chapter 9 are hereby amended to read as follows:

2. Land designated as a Very-high Fire Hazard Severity Zone or as a Wildland Urban Interface Fire Area by the Town of Los Gatos.

Section 4907.2 Defensible Space Fuel Modification are hereby added to read as follows:

4907.2 Defensible Space Fuel Modification.

Persons owning, leasing, controlling, operating, or maintaining buildings or structures, and/or lands in, upon, or adjoining the locally adopted Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area, shall at all times comply with the following:

1. Maintain defensible space of 100 feet from each side and from the front and rear of any building or structure, but not beyond the property line except as provided by law. The 100 feet of defensible space should be segregated into the following zones:
 - a. Maintain an effective defensible space by removing and clearing away flammable vegetation and other combustible materials from areas within 30 feet of such buildings or structures.

Exception: When approved by the Fire Chief or his/her designee, single specimens of trees, ornamental shrubbery or similar plants used as ground covers, provided that they do not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire from the native growth to any structure.
 - b. Maintain an additional reduced fuel zone of 70 feet from all buildings and structures with an emphasis on vertical and horizontal separation of fuels/vegetation. Distances beyond an additional 70 feet may be required

when the Fire Chief or his/her designee, determines that due to steepness of terrain or other conditions, 70 additional feet is insufficient.

Exception: When approved by the Fire Chief or his/her designee grass and other vegetation located more than 30 feet from buildings or structures and less than 18 inches in height above the ground need not be removed where necessary to stabilize the soil and prevent erosion.

- c. New construction must create a noncombustible area a minimum of 5 feet from structures.
2. Remove portions of trees, which extend within 10 feet of the outlet of any chimney or stovepipe.
3. Maintain any tree, shrub, or other plant adjacent to or overhanging any building or structure free of dead limbs, branches or other combustible material.
4. Maintain the roof of any structure and roof gutters free of leaves, needles, or other combustible materials.
5. Maintain defensible space as determined by the Fire Chief or his/her designee around water tank structures, water supply pumps, and pump houses.
6. Remove flammable vegetation a minimum of 10 feet around liquefied petroleum gas tanks/containers.
7. Firewood and combustible materials shall not be stored in unenclosed spaces beneath buildings or structures, or on decks or under eaves, canopies or other projections or overhangs. The storage of firewood and combustible material within the defensible space shall be located a minimum of 30 feet from structures and separated from the crown of trees by a minimum horizontal distance of 15 feet.

Exception: Firewood and combustible materials not for consumption on the premises shall be stored as approved by the Fire Chief or his/her designee.

8. Clear areas within 10 feet of fire apparatus access roads and driveways of non-fire-resistant vegetation growth.

Exception: Single specimens of trees, ornamental vegetative fuels or cultivated ground cover, such as green grass, ivy, succulents, or similar plants used as ground cover, provided they do not form a means of readily transmitting fire.

Section 4907.3 Defensible Space Along Property Lines are hereby added to read as follows:

4907.3 Defensible space along property lines. Pursuant to Government Code Section 51182 and Public Resources Code Section 4291(a)(2):

1. When an occupied building is less than 100 feet from a property line and combustible vegetation on an adjacent parcel presents a fire hazard for the occupied building as determined by the Fire Chief or his/her designee then the owner of the adjacent parcel where the hazard exists shall be responsible for fuel management, including removal to the satisfaction of the Fire Chief or his/her designee.

Section 4907.4 Corrective Actions are hereby added to read as follows:

4907.4 Corrective actions. When the Fire Chief or his/her designee determines defensible space to be inadequate the Town Council is authorized to instruct the Fire Chief or his/her designee to give notice to the owner of the property upon which conditions regulated by Sections 4907.2 and 4907.3 exist to correct such conditions. If the owner fails to correct such conditions, the Town Council is authorized to cause the same to be done and make the expense of such correction a lien upon the property where such conditions exist.

SECTION III

With respect to compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Town Council finds as follows:

A. These Town Code amendments are not subject to review under CEQA pursuant to sections and 15061(b)(3), in that it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the proposed amendment to the Town Code would have significant impact on the environment; and

B. The proposed Town Code amendments are consistent with the General Plan and its Elements.

SECTION IV

If any provision of this ordinance or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidly shall not affect other provisions or applications of the ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this ordinance are severable. This Town Council hereby declares that it would have adopted this ordinance irrespective of the invalidity of any particular portion thereof and intends that the invalid portions should be severed and the balance of the ordinance be enforced.

SECTION V

Except as expressly modified in this Ordinance, all other sections set forth in the Los Gatos Town Code shall remain unchanged and shall be in full force and effect.

SECTION VI

This Ordinance was introduced at a regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Los Gatos on January 21, 2020 and adopted by the following vote as an ordinance of the Town of Los Gatos at a meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Los Gatos on February 4, 2020 and becomes effective 30 days after it is adopted.

In lieu of publication of the full text of the ordinance within fifteen (15) days after its passage a summary of the ordinance may be published at least five (5) days prior to and fifteen (15) days after adoption by the Town Council and a certified copy shall be posted in the office of the Town Clerk, pursuant to GC 36933(c)(1).

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

AYES:

NAYS:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

SIGNED:

MAYOR OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS
LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA

DATE: _____

ATTEST:

CLERK ADMINISTRATOR OF THE TOWN OF LOS GATOS
LOS GATOS, CALIFORNIA

DATE: _____

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