

Briefing to Los Alamos County Council on Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

March 18, 2025

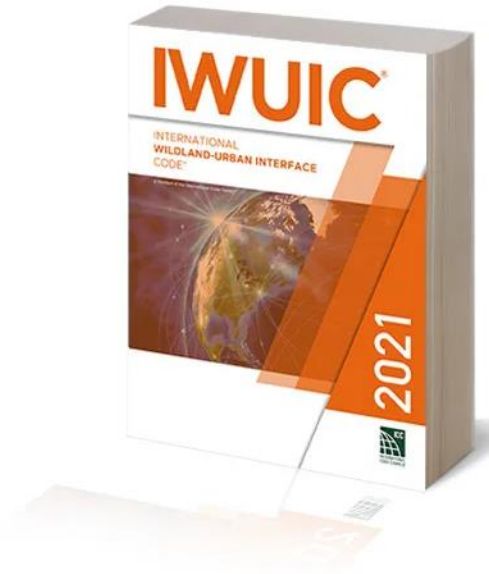
What is a WUI?

- Wildlife Urban Interface (WUI) is typically referred to as the zone where wildland areas (forests or other natural landscapes) meet with an urban development
- WUI codes are regulations designed to address fire risks and are often part of building and fire codes
 - LAC Municipal Code Chapters 10 and 22
- WUI's are particularly important for emergency planning and to aid with insurance issues

Why WUI, Why Now?

- Elevated Wildfire Risk
- Notable Historical Wildfire Events Near Los Alamos
 - Cerro Grande 2000, Dome Fire 2003, Las Conchas 2011, Thompson Ridge 2013, Cerro Pelado 2022, Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon 2022
- Optimal Time to Act
- Insurance Considerations
- Prioritizing Safety

Los Alamos County WUI



- Based on the 2021 International Wildland Urban Interface Code
- *Chapter 5, Special Building Construction Regulations, LAC Code Chapter 10*
- *Chapter 6, Fire Protection Requirements, LAC Code Chapter 22*

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APPENDIX C FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY FORM

The provisions contained in this appendix are not mandatory unless specifically referenced in the adopting ordinance.

User note:

About this appendix: Appendix C, while not part of the code, can become part of the code (replacing Table 502.1) when specifically included in the adopting ordinance. Its purpose is to provide an alternative methodology to using Table 502.1 for analyzing the fire hazard severity of building sites using a pre-assigned value/scoring system for each feature that impacts the hazard level of a building site. Included in the evaluation are site access, types and management of vegetation on the site, site topography, class of roofing and other construction materials used on the building (existing or to be constructed on the site), fire protection water supply, and whether utilities are installed above or below ground.

SECTION C101 FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY FORM

C101.1 Fire hazard severity form. Where adopted, Table C101.1 is permitted to be used as an alternative to Table 502.1 for analyzing the fire hazard severity of building sites.

TABLE C101.1 FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY FORM

A. Subdivision Design Points	
1. Ingress Egress	
Two or more primary roads	1
One road	3
One-way road in, one-way road out	5
2. Width of Primary Road	
20 feet (6096 mm) or more	1
Less than 20 feet (6096 mm)	3
3. Accessibility	
Road grade 5% or less	1
Road grade more than 5%	3
4. Secondary Road Terminus	
Loop roads, cul-de-sacs with an outside turning radius of 45 feet (13 716 mm) or greater	1
Cul-de-sac turnaround	2
Dead-end roads 200 feet (60 960 mm) or less in length	3
Dead-end roads greater than 200 feet (60 960 mm) in length	5
5. Street Signs	
Present	1
Not present	3
B. Vegetation (IWUC Definitions)	
1. Fuel Types	
Light	1
Medium	5
Heavy	10

(continued)

TABLE C101.1—continued FIRE HAZARD SEVERITY FORM

2. Defensible Space	
70% or more of site	1
30% or more, but less than 70% of site	10
Less than 30% of site	20
C. Topography	
5% or less	1
More than 5%, but less than 20%	4
20% or more, but less than 30%	7
30% or more	10
D. Roofing Material	
Class A Fire Rated	1
Class B Fire Rated	5
Class C Fire Rated	10
Nonrated	20
E. Fire Protection—Water Source	
500 GPM (1 892.5 L/min) hydrant within 1,000 feet (304.8 m)	1
Hydrant farther than 1,000 feet (304.8 m) or draft site	2
Water source 20 min. or less, round trip	5
Water source farther than 20 min., and 45 min. or less, round trip	7
Water source farther than 45 min., round trip	10
F. Existing Building Construction Materials	
Noncombustible siding/deck	1
Noncombustible siding/combustible deck	5
Combustible siding and deck	10
G. Utilities (gas and/or electric)	
All underground utilities	1
One underground, one above ground	3
All above ground	5
Total for Subdivision	
Moderate Hazard	40-59
High Hazard	60-74
Extreme Hazard	75+

- IWUC definitions
- Chapter 5, Special Building Construction Regulations, LAC Code Chapter 10
 - Class 1 Fire Hazard, Extreme- Ignition Resistant Construction
 - Roofs, Class A
 - Skylights and eaves
 - Doesn't include roof valleys, gutters or downspouts, or vertical glazing due, to burdensome costs or new/additional permits for homeowners
- Chapter 6, Fire Protection Requirements, LAC Code Chapter 22
 - Defensible space around structures
 - Requiring sprinklers for any commercial and multi-family structures

WUI Adoption Next Steps

- Educational Public Meeting
 - Goal is to inform and have dialogue about this Code Ordinance
 - Talk about roll-out process, issues begin with dialogue,
 - Not looking for citations, looking to be proactive
- Introduction of Ordinance April 2025
- Public Hearing May 2025
- 30-day appeal period

Questions?

