



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Board of Supervisors Chambers
400 County Center, Redwood City

ITEM #10

Consideration of a recommendation to adopt an ordinance amending Division VII (Building Regulations) of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code for local fire code amendments, and a resolution ratifying the ordinance codes of various fire protection districts within the County.



BACKGROUND

- The California Building Standards (Title 24) is updated every three years.
- The State standards consist of 12 specific codes, including but not limited to fire codes.
- The 2022 version of the California Building Standards was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on January 3, 2023 and took effect on February 2, 2023.
- Local jurisdictions must enforce the most current State standards and may adopt more restrictive local standards to address local conditions, subject to specific findings.



BACKGROUND

- In coordination with the San Mateo County Fire Department, County staff is proposing local amendments to Article 3 (Fire Code) of the County's adopted Building Regulations necessary for fire safety based on local climatic, geological, and topographic conditions within San Mateo County.
- In coordination with the Coastside Fire Protection District, Menlo Park Fire Protection District, Woodside Fire Protection District, and Redwood City Fire Department, who have adopted local amendments to the Fire Code within their respective districts, staff is proposing to ratify these locally adopted ordinances for enforcement within the unincorporated areas of the County lying within their jurisdictional boundaries and delegating enforcement to each respective fire chief.



LOCAL AMENDMENTS

Primary issues addressed in the proposed local amendments:

- Defining requirements and clarifying criteria for fire service features, including but not limited to access, addressing, key box, and fire control room requirements.
- Clarifying fire safety requirements within Wildland Urban Interface areas.



SUMMARY OF LOCAL AMENDMENTS

Primary issues addressed in the proposed local amendments:

- Defining automatic fire sprinkler system requirements for additions and remodels using a “50% rule” for alterations and additions with varying criteria, or for any change of occupancy that results in an increased fire hazard or risk.
 - Menlo Park Fire and Woodside Fire –
 - Whenever 50% or more of the original gross floor area is impacted.
 - San Mateo County Fire and Coastside Fire –
 - Excepts Group R-3 One and Two-family Dwellings, which have separately defined criteria.



SUMMARY OF LOCAL AMENDMENTS

- Redwood City Fire –
 - Existing one and two-family dwellings and structures when 1,000 sq. ft. or more of floor area is added, or
 - More than 50% of existing foundation is impacted other than for repair or reinforcement, or more than 50% of existing framing above the sill plate is impacted other than for repair, or
 - Whenever the combined total of existing plus added floor area is 3,000 sq. ft. or more, or the scope of work meets the definition of a substantial remodel, addition, or repair (over 50% of original floor area within a 5-year period).



FINDINGS

The unique characteristics of the topographic, geologic, and climatic conditions found in San Mateo County make the local amendments reasonable and necessary.



ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Adoption of the proposed local amendments is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15308 as an action taken by the County for the protection of the environment, and Section 15061(b)(3) on the grounds that the proposed standards are more stringent than the State standards, there are no reasonably foreseeable adverse environmental impacts, and there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant adverse effect on the environment.



RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board of Supervisors:

- Introduce an ordinance amending the 2022 California Building Standards Code and Division VII (Building Regulations) of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code to incorporate local San Mateo County Fire Department Fire Code amendments and waive reading of the ordinance in its entirety;
- Adopt a resolution ratifying the ordinance codes of the Coastside Fire Protection District, Menlo Park Fire Protection District, Woodside Fire Protection District, and Redwood City Fire Department for enforcement within the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County lying within their jurisdictional boundaries and delegating enforcement to each respective fire chief; and
- Find that the adoption of the ordinance and resolution are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15308 and 15061(b)(3).



PROPOSED LOCAL COUNTY AMENDMENTS

Proposed local amendments to the County's Building Regulations include:

- *[Added]* Clearance of brush, vegetative growth, and fire break requirements.
- *[Added and Amended]* Fire Department access requirements for additions, alterations; surfacing, turning radius, and lane markings.
- *[Added]* Fire protection water supply requirements.
- *[Added and Amended]* Fire sprinkler requirements for new construction, Group R-3 occupancies, existing buildings and structures (based on greater than 50% floor area threshold).
- *[Added]* Liability for false fire alarm reporting.
- *[Added]* Appendices for fire flow requirements, fire hydrant locations and distribution, fire apparatus access roads, fire protection systems, indoor trade shows and exhibits, and temporary haunted houses, ghost walks and similar amusement uses.



OTHER LOCALLY ADOPTED ORDINANCES

Coastside Fire Protection District

- *Same as proposed local County amendments*



OTHER LOCALLY ADOPTED ORDINANCES

Menlo Park Fire Protection District

- *[Added]* Requirements and clarifications on fees, definitions, general requirements.
- *[Added]* Clarifications and requirements for fire service features such as fire apparatus access roads, lane markings, address identification, knox key boxes, fire control rooms.
- *[Added]* Clarifications and requirements for fire sprinklers for new construction, Group M occupancies, existing buildings and structures (based on greater than 50% gross floor area threshold).
- *[Added and Amended]* Appendices for fire flow requirements, fire apparatus and access roads, firefighter air replenishment systems.



OTHER LOCALLY ADOPTED ORDINANCES

Redwood City Fire Department

- *[Added and Amended]* Defines fire access and lane requirements, fire hydrant flow requirements, removes requirement for limited area fire sprinkler systems in open parking garages located below apartment units in multi-family residential structures.
- *[Added]* Establishes minimum design criteria for fire sprinkler systems.
- *[Added]* Defines fire sprinkler requirements for existing single-family and duplex residential structures.
- *[Added]* Requirement for fire sprinklers within existing buildings and structures (based on greater than 50% floor area threshold within a 5-year period).



OTHER LOCALLY ADOPTED ORDINANCES

Woodside Fire Protection District

- *[Added and Amended]* Fire apparatus access road requirements, lane markings, open space access, maintenance of existing fire trail systems; address identification requirements.
- *[Added and Amended]* Clarifications and requirements for fire sprinklers for Accessory Dwelling Units, new construction, Group M occupancies, Group U for accessory private garages and carports, and existing buildings and structures ("substantial" alterations or more than 50% gross floor area threshold within a 2-year period).
- *[Added and Amended]* Requirements for non-permissible water supply storage, fire alarms.
- *[Added]* Appendices for fire flow requirements, fire hydrants, fire apparatus access roads, firefighter air replenishment systems,