



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: PLANNING AND BUILDING

File #: 23-881

Board Meeting Date: 10/17/2023

Special Notice / Hearing: None

Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Steve Monowitz, Community Development Director

Subject: Adoption of an ordinance amending Division VII (Building Regulations) of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code.

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt 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, previously introduced on October 3, 2023, and waive the reading of the ordinance in its entirety.

BACKGROUND:

The State of California updates California Building Standards (Title 24) every three years. These standards consist of 12 specific codes, including but not limited to the residential, building, fire, plumbing, electrical, mechanical, and energy codes. Local jurisdictions must enforce the most current version of these codes and may establish more restrictive standards to address local conditions. The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors adopted the 2022 version of the California Building Standards by Ordinance No. 4873, effective February 2, 2023.

The San Mateo County Fire Department (County Fire) is proposing additional local amendments to Article 3 (Fire Code) of the County's adopted Building Regulations (Division VII of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code) necessary for fire safety based on local climatic, geological, and topographic conditions within San Mateo County.

DISCUSSION:

The proposed local amendments to the 2022 California Building Standards Code and Division VII (Building Regulations) of the San Mateo County Ordinance Code submitted by the San Mateo County Fire Department establish additional local fire safety requirements necessary for the protection of the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County based on climatic, geological, and topographical conditions unique to San Mateo County, as detailed in Attachments A.

Primary issues addressed by these amendments include:

- Defining automatic fire sprinkler system requirements for additions and remodels; and
- Defining requirements and clarifying criteria for fire service features, including but not limited to access, addressing, key box, and fire control room requirements.

With regard to the requirements for the installation of fire sprinklers within existing buildings, these amendments propose a “50% rule” for alterations and additions except for Group R-3 One and Two-Family Dwellings, which have separately defined thresholds, or for any change of occupancy that results in an increased fire hazard or risk.

Additional aspects of the local amendments include but are not limited to defining and/or clarifying fire department access requirements, and definition updates unique to fire safety.

The Planning and Building Department, in coordination with County Fire, recommends that the Board adopt the ordinance amending the County’s Building Regulations to incorporate the recommended local Fire Code modifications.

The ordinance has been reviewed and approved by the County Attorney’s Office as to form.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

Adoption of the proposed amendments is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines section 15308 as an action taken by the County for the protection of the environment, and under 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.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Ordinance amending the San Mateo County Building Regulations