



County of San Mateo

Inter-Departmental Correspondence

Department: PLANNING AND BUILDING

File #: 19-1313

Board Meeting Date: 1/28/2020

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Steve Monowitz, Community Development Director

Subject: Adoption of a Resolution Amending the San Mateo County Ordinance Code, Division VII (Building Regulations), to Incorporate Local Amendments Submitted by the Woodside Fire Protection District, Coastside Fire Protection District, Menlo Park Fire Protection District, and Redwood City.

RECOMMENDATION:

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 for enforcement within the unincorporated areas of San Mateo County lying within their jurisdictional boundaries and delegating enforcement to the Fire Chief of each Fire Protection District.

BACKGROUND:

The State of California updates California Building Standards (Title 24) every three years. These standards consist of twelve specific codes, including 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 building standards to address local conditions. The new version of the California Building Standards went into effect on January 1, 2020, and amendments to the San Mateo County Building Regulations that implement and supplement the new standards were approved by the Board of Supervisors on January 7, 2020. The amendments that are the subject of this report have been adopted by the noted Fire Districts, and propose to supplement the new Fire Code a manner that establishes additional fire safety requirements within their respective Districts. In order for these additional requirements to be legally effective within the unincorporated areas of the County, the Board of Supervisors must approve the amendments, and the County must submit them to the California Building Standards Commission with facts and findings adopted by the Fire Districts that identify the local conditions which warrant the additional requirements.

DISCUSSION:

The primary issues addressed by these amendments are the following:

- Fire sprinkler requirements for residential additions and remodels;

- Roadway and driveway standards necessary to provide adequate access for fire safety equipment and personnel; and,
- Fire safety requirements within Wildland Urban Interface areas.

The amendments also provide supplemental definitions regarding fire safety terminology.

With regard to the requirements for the installation of fire sprinklers within existing buildings, the Coastside and Woodside Fire Protection Districts maintain the use of the Building Safety Score for single family residential projects that the Planning and Building Department enacted in the previous code cycle, and that were included in the recently adopted County Building Regulations. The Redwood City Fire Department proposes to require the installation of fire sprinklers when the size of an addition or alteration to an existing home is equal to or greater than 1,000 square feet. Additionally, Redwood City proposes to use some demolition criteria when requiring fire sprinklers within existing houses.

The Menlo Park Fire District proposes a “50% rule” for alterations and additions to existing structures of all types. Under this approach, the installation of fire sprinklers within an existing building will be required when the size of additions or alterations exceed 50% of the existing structure’s gross floor area.

Additional aspects of the agency amendments address roadways, fire department access, additional definitions unique to fire safety, as well as identifying additional criteria for fire safety within Wildland Urban Interface zones (Wildfire areas).

Staff has reviewed these agencies’ proposed amendments and recommends that the Board of Supervisors adopt a resolution to amend the County’s Fire Code to incorporate these local agency amendments.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Coastside Fire Protection District Ordinance
- B. Menlo Park Fire District Ordinance
- C. Redwood City Fire Ordinance
- D. Woodside Fire Protection District Ordinance