



# Agenda Report

November 18, 2013

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**THROUGH:** Public Safety Committee

**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department

**SUBJECT: PREPARATION OF AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS TITLE 24 INCORPORATING THE 2013 CALIFORNIA BUILDING CODE AND APPENDIX CHAPTERS C, D, H, I AND J; THE 2013 CALIFORNIA RESIDENTIAL BUILDING CODE AND APPENDIX E, G AND H; THE 2013 CALIFORNIA MECHANICAL CODE; THE 2013 CALIFORNIA PLUMBING CODE; THE 2013 CALIFORNIA ELECTRICAL CODE; THE 2013 CALIFORNIA FIRE CODE AND 2013 CALIFORNIA GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS CODE**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that City Council direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance and return within 30 days adopting the California code of regulations Title 24 incorporating the 2013 California Building Code and Appendix Chapters C, D, H, I, and J; the 2013 California Residential Building Code and Appendix Chapters E, G and H; the 2013 California Mechanical Code; the 2013 California Plumbing Code; the 2013 California Electrical Code; the 2013 California Fire Code and 2013 Californian Green Buildings Standards Code with modifications as detailed in the background section of this report.

## **BACKGROUND:**

Every three years the California Building Standards Commission adopts a new set of technical codes which include building, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, fire, and green building code standards. Local jurisdictions must adopt and enforce these newly adopted codes and apply the minimum requirements to all construction projects that file an application for a building permit application after January 1, 2014. Local jurisdictions may amend the State regulations to address issues of local or regional importance, such as fire or earthquake hazards or a desire to seek increased energy efficiencies, but the changes cannot be less restrictive than otherwise mandated by the State.

Historically, the City has adopted amended versions of the California code in order to better meet local needs. Staff has been working in coordination with the eighty-seven

other cities in Los Angeles County through the Los Angeles Regional Uniform program to minimize variations and promote consistency among proposed amendments adopted by cities in the region. Similar to past code adoption cycles, staff is recommending limited amendments to the California Building, Residential, Green and Fire Codes. These proposed amendments are summarized in Attachment 1.

### **Building Code**

There are no new code requirements that staff is recommending to the City's Building Code beyond those which exist today. However, in an effort to ensure that new construction is as safe as possible, staff is recommending that most of the existing amendments that were previously approved by the Council be carried over. Most of these amendments are related to more stringent building requirements to ensure greater protection against fires and earthquakes. Examples of these amendments include the prohibition of wood roofing material, the prohibition of permanent wood foundation systems, and requirements related to added structural stability, such as additional reinforcement steel bars in concrete foundations. Such amendments are adopted by most cities throughout the Los Angeles Basin. Some of the previous amendments do not need to be carried forward because they have now been incorporated into the new codes.

### **Residential Building Code**

Staff is also recommending that most of the existing amendments for the Residential Code be carried through from the previous code cycle which include requirements such as a licensed design professional for the design of anything greater than a single story building where the State residential code allows for a single-family home of up to three stories to be built without a licensed design professional. Cities in Los Angeles County typically adopt the more stringent standard because studies have shown that homes of two stories or more do not perform well in an earthquake unless designed by a licensed architect or engineer. Other amendments include the prohibition of wood for foundations and the use of staples as fasteners. In addition to carrying over the existing amendments as previously adopted, staff is recommending that one new amendment be added to ensure that heavy mechanical, electrical and/or plumbing equipment does not pose any danger to the floor or roof support system.

### **Green Building Standards Code**

Similar to other technical codes, staff is recommended that previously approved amendments to the Green Building Standards Code be carried forward. Such amendments include an application of these energy efficient standards to a broader array of projects, such as municipal buildings over 5,000 square feet and alteration or new construction of projects of at least 25,000 square feet. Qualifying projects will need to incorporate measures such as the use of energy efficient appliances, water saving fixtures and higher efficiency electrical lighting. In addition to the existing amendments, staff is recommending two new amendments:

1. 'Cool Roof' Requirement. State code includes a cool roof requirement (additional thermal protection such as insulation) to reduce energy costs for very large

projects. Staff is proposing that this requirement be applied to projects more broadly, including those identified above - municipal buildings over 5,000 square feet and alteration or new construction of projects of at least 25,000 square feet; and

2. Electric Vehicle Charging Requirement. Staff is proposing that new construction include the installation of conduits for future electric vehicle charging. This would eliminate the need for future unnecessary demolition and electrical service upgrades.

### **Fire Code**

Staff does not recommend any amendments to the new State Fire Code beyond those which exist today and were adopted during the last code cycle in 2010. Further, staff is recommending that most of the existing amendments to the California Fire Code be carried through from the previous code cycle. Some of the previous amendments are not being carried forward because they have been incorporated into the new codes and many are amended due to code section numbers change. Several of the amendments merely provide additional detail or clarification to the regulated community. These amendments continue the City's priority of maintaining public safety through the provision of emergency exits, fire alarms, automatic fire extinguishing systems and hazardous materials control.

The attached Code Adoption Table (Attachment 1) provides a list of the local amendments, both new and carryover, which are more restrictive than the State Code.

### **COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:**

The recommended action furthers the City Council's strategic plan goal to ensure public safety by adopting the most currently available codes for all types of construction in the City. The staff recommendation also supports the City's commitment to increase conservation and sustainability.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

All costs associated with implementing these code changes will be recovered through the adopted fees.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

Attachment 1 – Code Adoption Table