

# Agenda Report

October 7, 2019

**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 PARTS 1-12 INCORPORATING THE 2019 CALIFORNIA BUILDING CODE AND APPENDIX CHAPTERS C, D, H, I, AND J; THE 2019 CALIFORNIA RESIDENTIAL CODE APPENDIX CHAPTERS H, J, AND V; THE 2019 CALIFORNIA GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS CODE; THE 2019 CALIFORNIA ELECTRICAL CODE; THE 2019 CALIFORNIA MECHANICAL CODE; THE 2019 CALIFORNIA PLUMBING CODE; THE 2019 CALIFORNIA ADMINISTRATIVE CODE; THE 2019 CALIFORNIA ENERGY CODE; THE 2019 CALIFORNIA FIRE CODE AND APPENDIX CHAPTER 4 AND APPENDICES B THROUGH O; THE 2019 CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL BUILDING CODE; THE 2019 CALIFORNIA REFERENCED STANDARDS CODE AND THE 2019 CALIFORNIA EXISTING BUILDING CODE

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Find that the amendments proposed herein are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (general rule); and
2. Direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance and return within 60 days adopting the California Code of Regulations Title 24, incorporating the 2019 California Building Code and Appendix Chapters C, D, H, I, and J; 2019 California Residential Code and Appendix Chapters H, J, and V; 2019 California Mechanical Code; 2019 California Plumbing Code; 2019 California Electrical Code; 2019 California Fire Code and Appendix Chapter 4 and appendices B through O; 2019 California Green Buildings Standards Code; 2019 California Administrative Code; 2019 California Energy Code; 2019 California Historical Code; 2019 California Referenced Standards Code and 2019 California Existing Building 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, 2020. 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 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 A.

Some of the new requirements that are within the codes adopted by the State this cycle and will be in effect are requirements for solar panel installations on new construction, electric vehicle charging stations, higher energy efficient equipment and appliances, higher insulation requirements, defining and clarifying ADU requirements and clarifications to many other code sections.

### **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 the existing amendments that were previously approved by the Council be carried over. Most of these amendments are relate 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 relate to added structural stability, such as adopted by most cities throughout the Los Angeles Basin.

### **Residential Building Code**

Staff is recommending that the existing amendments for the Residential Code be carried through from the previous code cycle. This includes requiring 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. Staff is recommending carrying over the existing amendments as previously adopted in 2016.

### **Green Building Standards Code**

Similar to other technical codes, staff is recommending 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 beyond the minimum requirements, such as municipal buildings over 5,000 square feet and alteration or new construction or 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. Staff is also recommending to increase the number of Electric Vehicle Charging Stations and installation of Electric Vehicle chargers for newly constructed multifamily, mixed use and commercial buildings. Some of the previous amendments do not need to be carried forward because they have now been incorporated into the new codes.

### **Fire Code**

Staff is recommending minimal modifications to the 2019 California Fire Code, in addition to carrying forward and clarifying existing amendments. The number of amendments is similar to previous code cycles with clean up language in the hazardous materials sections. Additional amendments were added to include more specific language on flammable finishes, the authority to establish an occupancy load in outdoor assembly events, the storage location of propane tanks in proximity to tents and structures, general provisions for tent permitting, and specific technical requirements related to emergency responder radio coverage. Amendments were removed because they were either absorbed into the new code or interpreted as more restrictive and were removed to more closely align with the State code.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

The action proposed herein is exempt from CEQA review pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3). The adoption of the ordinance is covered by the general rule that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to the provisions of CEQA. The State already published the new codes July 2019, which ensure that property improvements meet the State of California's health and safety requirements. The action proposed herein are minimal amendments to the State version to address issues of local and regional importance, and will not in themselves have any potential environmental effect. New property improvements may undergo their own environmental clearance, if applicable, when proposed.

### **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 associates with implementing these code changes will be recovered through the adopted fees.

Respectfully submitted,



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DAVID M. REYES  
Director of Planning & Community  
Development Department

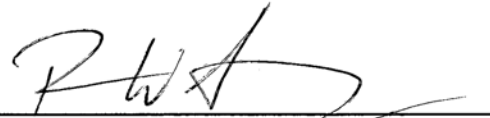
Prepared by:



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Sarkis Nazerian  
Building Official

Concurred by:



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BERTRAL WASHINGTON  
Fire Chief  
Fire Department

Approved by:



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STEVE MERMELL  
City Manager

Attachment: (1)

Attachment A – Code Adoption Table