

Agenda Report

October 3, 2022

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Finance Committee

FROM: Department of Finance

SUBJECT: **DIRECTION TO PREPARE AN ORDINANCE AMENDING PASADENA MUNICIPAL CODE CHAPTER 5.24 TO ENHANCE THE CITY'S ABILITY TO PERMIT AND REGULATE ALARM SYSTEMS AND RELATED FALSE ALARM ACTIVATIONS**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. Find that the proposed action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption); and
2. Direct the City Attorney to prepare and return with an ordinance within 60-days to enhance the City's regulations over alarm systems and related false alarm activations, as further described in this agenda report.

BACKGROUND:

Pasadena Municipal Code (PMC) Chapter 5.24 regulates alarm systems installed to detect unauthorized entry to a property and subsequently notify the Police Department. This PMC Chapter was last updated in 1989 and similarly to any system relying upon technology over a period of time, the alarm industry and technology has changed. In addition to definition improvements, procedural changes based on feedback from community, is included regarding permit duration and applicability. Changes proposed include:

- a. Amend the definitions to reflect current and modern practices;
- b. Shift the responsibility of obtaining the permit to the alarm company in lieu of the property owner for professionally installed and monitored systems;
- c. Include language for self-installed and monitored systems; and
- d. Transition from four-year permits to annual permits for new permits or as existing permits come due for renewal.

As to staff's recommendation to shift permit responsibility from the property owner to the alarm company, staff frequently receives comments when a property owner is billed for a false alarm penalty without a permit. Property owners that have either purchased a new alarm system installed by a professional company or owners that purchased a property with a pre-existing alarm system have expressed frustration that the alarm companies did not inform them of the permit requirement. The proposed changes would include a requirement for the alarm company to obtain the permit for the property, which is a common practice in many other cities.

As to the suggested move to an annual permit (in lieu of a four-year permit), property owners have expressed to staff that the four-year permit requirement is easy to forget that a permit has been obtained or needs to be renewed due to the long time span. Many cities require annual renewals and the proposed changes include a shift to annual renewals.

COUNCIL POLICY CONSIDERATION:

The proposed amendment of Chapter 5.24 would help maintain fiscal responsibility, support and promote quality of life and the local economy, and ensure public safety and generate additional revenue for the City of Pasadena.

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

This proposed Ordinance is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3), the common sense exemption (formerly 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 CEQA. The development of an ordinance to enhance the City's regulations over alarm systems would not result in any direct or indirect physical changes to the environment. Since there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is exempt from CEQA.

FISCAL IMPACT:


As a result of the proposed ordinance, it is anticipated that the City's alarm permit revenue will increase on an annual basis and penalties related to false alarms without a permit will decrease. Overall, the net financial impact to the General Fund is expected to be positive.

Respectfully submitted,



MATTHEW E. HAWKESWORTH
Director of Finance

Approved by:



MIGUEL MÁRQUEZ
City Manager