

## MOTION

PLANNING & LAND USE MANAGEMENT

Beginning ten days ago on Friday, January 7, 2025, five major fires broke out in the city of Los Angeles. The Hurst, Kenneth, Palisades, Sunset, and Sunswept fires all caused evacuations, burning of wildlands, and property damage, with the Palisades fire creating the most devastation. The State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection indicates that as of Friday, January 17, 2025, the Pacific Palisades Fire has burned 23,713 acres and is 31 percent contained and has caused the destruction of a preliminary estimated 3,501 structures and threatening 12,250 structures, inclusive of residential homes and commercial sites, with initial estimates indicating that this is one of the costliest natural disasters in California and U.S. history.

Going forward, one possible way to improve the safety and well-being of City residents, is to explore the feasibility of adopting a program that incents the application of fire resilience best practices in construction, beyond that of what is required in the Building Code, but has also been researched and supported by experts. An incentive program could be a more nimble solution, inasmuch as updates to the Building Code can take longer to effectuate, and rebuilding will need to start as soon as possible.

Modern research supports many fire resilience best practices beyond what is currently adopted by code, and in many cases, the insurance industry accepts certifications that confirm the implementation of these best practices to improve coverage or lower insurance costs. For example, the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety, an independent, nonprofit, scientific research and communications organization, in September 2023, published a Model Ordinance For Construction in Wildland-Urban Interface Zone, which provides municipalities with wildfire resistance options for one- and two-family dwellings, new construction and retrofits of existing housing stock, that are designed to be adopted and enforced with the Building Code in place within a jurisdiction.

In addition, Headwaters Economics, an independent, nonprofit research group whose mission is to improve community development and land management decisions, published a report in July 2022, Construction Costs for a Wildfire-Resistant Home, that compares the costs for constructing three different versions of a wildfire-resistant home in California, and focuses on construction costs for ignition resistance.

It is of utmost importance, and in the interest of building construction policy, and foremost fire prevention safety, that the Council explore the feasibility of the adoption of an incentive program for residential and commercial property owners who voluntarily implement insurance industry approved best practices for fire resiliency, inasmuch as updates to the Building Code can take longer to effectuate, and rebuilding will need to start as soon as possible.

**I THEREFORE MOVE** that the Council instruct the Department of Building and Safety, with the assistance of the Fire Department, the Planning Department, and any other relevant departments, to prepare a report providing recommendations for adopting an incentive program for residential and commercial property owners that voluntarily implement construction best practices for fire resiliency beyond what is currently required in the Building Code, (e.g. Supplemental code best practices supported by the fire prevention and insurance industries, outlined in reports such as the *Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety's Model Ordinance For Construction in Wildland-Urban Interface Zone*; and *Headwaters Economics' Construction Costs for a Wildfire-Resistant Home*). The incentives explored should include but are not limited to, reduce permitting cost, expedited processing, and expedited inspection.

PRESENTED BY:

  
MONICA RODRIGUEZ  
Councilwoman, 7th District

SECONDED BY:



  
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