



STAFF REPORT

AGENDA NO: 9i

MEETING DATE: July 6, 2026

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

Date: July 6, 2026

From: Neda Zayer, Community Development Director

Subject: Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing the Mayor to Respond on Behalf of the City Council to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Written Recommendations on the Draft Community Safety Element

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council adopt a resolution authorizing the Mayor to respond on behalf of the City Council to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection written recommendations on the Draft Community Safety Element.

BACKGROUND

In 2019, the City of Burlingame comprehensively updated its General Plan, which included an update to the Safety Element (referred to as the "Community Safety Element" in the Burlingame General Plan). The Safety Element is a State required element and in recent years, new State laws have been adopted to include additional requirements for flood, wildfire, and climate change adaptation and resilience.

The Community Safety Element is being updated again to meet State law, and at the same time address recent hazards and related issues of concern in Burlingame and across the county, respond to community concerns, and create a unified approach to improving resilience countywide.

DISCUSSION

In 2023, the City of Burlingame joined the Peninsula Resilience Planning (PREP) project, a collaborative multi-jurisdictional effort of nine jurisdictions in San Mateo County supported by a consulting team led by PlaceWorks to prepare the necessary updates. The collaborative approach allowed participating jurisdictions to share technical analyses and resources for greater efficiency and consistency across the region.

In 2025, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) updated its Fire Hazard Severity Zones Map, and Burlingame now contains a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ). Given this, the Draft Community Safety Element is required to be submitted to CAL FIRE for review and comment at least 90 days prior to adoption. All preliminary comments and recommendations provided by CAL FIRE were incorporated into the draft element, which was

submitted to CAL FIRE, consistent with and as required by Government Code Section 65302.5(b), on February 11, 2026, and was officially accepted on May 11, 2026.

The Draft Community Safety Element was scheduled for review by the State Board of Forestry's Resource Protection Committee at their June 16, 2026 meeting. At the meeting, the Committee adopted a motion that directed Board staff to prepare and send a written recommendation to the City Council regarding the incompleteness of the draft Community Safety Element due to the lack of a complete evacuation study. The City of Burlingame is participating with 36 other jurisdictions and special districts in the San Mateo County Multi-Jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJLHMP), which also includes a county-wide All-Hazards Evacuation Plan. Given this, an evacuation study was not prepared as part of the updates to the Community Safety Element as the work would be redundant.

Government Code Section 65302.5(b) details the review process for the Board of Forestry. The code requires the City Council to consider the Board's recommendations prior to adoption, and if the City Council determines not to accept all or some of the recommendations, the City Council is required to communicate that decision in writing to the Board of Forestry.

The City has not yet received the written recommendation from the Board of Forestry. The Government Code requires the Board's review process to be completed within 60 days of receipt (May 11, 2026), which is July 10, 2026.

Should the City receive the written recommendation from the Board of Forestry while City Council is in recess, staff recommends the City Council authorize the Mayor to respond to the written recommendations of CAL FIRE on behalf of City Council, if necessary.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action.