



STAFF REPORT

AGENDA NO: 10a

MEETING DATE: October 20, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council

Date: October 20, 2025

From: Neda Zayer, Community Development Director – (650) 558-7253
Jonah Glen, Chief Building Official – (650) 558-7270
Patricia Koch, Fire Marshal CCFD (650) 558-7618

Subject: Introduction and First Reading of Ordinances

Amending Chapter 17.04 of Chapter 17, “Fire,” of the Burlingame Municipal Code with Local Amendments; CEQA Determination: Exempt Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines 15378, 15061(b)(3)

Amending Chapters 18.05, 18.06, 18.07, 18.08, 18.09, 18.10, 18.11, 18.12, 18.13, 18.16, 18.22, 18.30, and 18.31 of Title 18, “Building Construction,” of the Burlingame Municipal Code with Local Amendments; CEQA Determination: Exempt Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines 15378, 15061(b)(3);

Adopting a New Title 19 to Adopt the 2025 California Building Standards Code with Local Amendments; CEQA Determination: Exempt Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines 15378, 15061(b)(3)

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the City Council conduct a public hearing to:

1. Introduce an Ordinance of the City of Burlingame amending Chapter 17.04 of Title 17, “Fire,” of the Burlingame Municipal Code, by Adopting by Reference the 2025 Edition of the California Fire Code and Amendments and Modifications thereto; CEQA Determination: Exempt Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines 15378, 15061(b)(3)
2. Introduce an Ordinance of the City of Burlingame, amending Chapters 18.05, 18.06, 18.07, 18.08, 18.09, 18.10, 18.11, 18.12, 18.13, 18.16, 18.22, 18.30, and 18.31 of Title 18 of the Burlingame Municipal Code, “Building Construction”, by Adopting by Reference the 2025 Editions of the California Building Standards Code, California Code of Regulations, Title 24 (CCR-T24), California Code of regulations(CCR-T24), California Code Of Regulations (CCR-T24), State Housing Law, the California Code of Regulations, Title 25, Division 1, Chapter 1, Subchapter 1, Section 32 (CCR, T-25), 2024 International Swimming Pool and Spa Code, 2024 International Property Maintenance Code, 1997 Uniform Code for the Abatement of Dangerous Buildings, and Amendments and Modifications thereto; CEQA Determination: Exempt Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines 15378, 15061(b)(3)

3. Introduce an Ordinance of the City of Burlingame, adopting a new Title 19 of the Burlingame Municipal Code by Adopting by Reference the 2025 Edition of the Wildland Urban Interface Code, and Amendments and Modifications thereto; CEQA Determination: Exempt Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines 15378, 15061(b)(3).

Recommended Procedure and Order of Operations:

- A. Receive the staff report and ask any questions of staff.
- B. Conduct a Public Hearing.
- C. Discuss the Ordinances and, by motion, determine whether to bring them back for second reading and adoption. If the Council is in favor of the Ordinances, direct the City Clerk to publish a summary of the Ordinances at least five days before its proposed adoption.

BACKGROUND

The California Building Standards Commission (CBSC) was established in 1953 and is appointed by the Governor. Since 1978, all proposed regulations promulgated by the various state agencies must be reviewed and approved by the Building Standards Commission. The CBSC adopts a new California Building Standards Code (Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations, “State Code” or “Title 24”) every three years, which all cities in California are required to enforce.

On December 17, 2024, the Building Standards Commission voted to adopt the most up-to-date edition of the model codes as amended by those various state agencies. The 2025 California Building Standards Code was published on July 1, 2025, and will become effective on January 1, 2026.

Although there are no significant changes proposed to the State Code, it is worth noting that these updates will supersede the City’s previous Reach Codes. The 2025 California Energy and Green Building Standards Codes provide more strict energy efficiency requirements than previous editions, and staff recommends adoption of these codes without further amendment. In addition, AB 306 limits local amendments to residential building standards from October 1, 2025, to June 1, 2027, except in specific circumstances, such as local residential standards filed and effective by September 30, 2025, standards related to home hardening (wildfire mitigation), or during times of declared emergency

Also, the City of Burlingame is proposing the adoption of the California Wildland Urban Interface Code (CWUI). The City of Burlingame-designated Fire Hazard Severity Zones have requirements for fire resistant construction and vegetation management that until now have been part of the California Fire and Building codes. During the State Code adoption cycle, the requirements for fire hazard zones have been removed from building and fire codes and relocated to a new code, the 2025 California Wildland Urban Interface Code, California Code of Regulations Title 24 part 7. Staff recommends adopting this new code with amendments to include local administrative requirements.

DISCUSSION

The City Council should review the proposal to amend the building regulations by adopting the most recent edition of the California Building Codes. Staff also recommends the City Council adopt local

modifications as authorized by state law. California Health and Safety Codes Sections 13143.5, 17958.5, 17958.7, and 18941.5 allow the City, by ordinance, to make local amendments to the State Codes when such amendments are reasonably necessary because of local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions. The City Council must make findings to support the local amendments. Evidence to support the findings necessary for these amendments includes the following:

1. Burlingame is located between the Santa Cruz Mountains foothills and San Francisco Bay, with seven major creeks flowing through highly developed residential and industrial areas. The City is surrounded by large areas of open space maintained in natural conditions, as well as having a significant natural canyon in the center of the residential area. Strong winds come down the foothills during both the driest and the wettest parts of the year. The city is directly east of the San Andreas Fault, while the majority of the developed part of the city is located along the front of the Bay, much of it on fill. The United States Geologic Survey, the California Division of Mines and Geology, and the Association of Bay Area Governments have extensively mapped the area for such earthquake probabilities. The foothill areas have a variety of soil formations with steep canyons and heavy precipitation. Much of the city has a high water table. The proposed amendments to the Building Codes address the local geological conditions in Burlingame.
2. Fires in the community could quickly spread because of the extensive, natural vegetation throughout the city. In February of 2025, the Office of the State Fire Marshal identified new Fire Hazard Severity Zones for the City of Burlingame, including “Very High”, “High”, and “Moderate” zones, which affect minimum standards for construction within these zones. The city has several highly developed commercial areas with older buildings, and an industrial area that is filled with mixed uses utilizing various materials that could be highly hazardous. Heavily traveled approach and departure routes for San Francisco International Airport are immediately adjacent to or over the city. The city is also located in a national climate zone that is designated “Very High” on the Termite Infestation Probability Map. The proposed amendments to the Building, Fire, and Wildland-Urban Interface Codes address the local topographical conditions in Burlingame.
3. The City has worked with other jurisdictions on the San Francisco Peninsula to establish consistent standards to minimize the impact that varying standards might have on development and redevelopment of both residential and commercial buildings. It is only through strong building standards and effective fire prevention and containment programs that citizens will receive the protection they deserve and that citizens will be able to obtain reasonably priced insurance for their homes and businesses.
4. The City operates its own sanitary sewer system and water quality control plant and is subject to State and Federal laws regarding both point and non-point discharges. The proposed amendments to the Building Code are intended to assist the City in meeting its responsibilities regarding those laws as well as protecting the public safety and welfare.
5. The City also operates its own water supply system for its citizens. The proposed amendments to the Building Code are intended to provide consistent policy regarding water service installations and to protect the public’s water supply.

Given these conditions specific to Burlingame, staff recommends amendments to the State Code as described above that address these local geological and topographic conditions. If the City Council chooses not to adopt the State Code with the proposed local amendments, the Burlingame Municipal Code would default to the new State Code as prescribed by State law. However local geographic, topographic, and climatic conditions unique to Burlingame would not be addressed.

The Effective Date of all three Ordinances is January 1, 2026.

Environmental

Adoption of local amendments to the California Building Standards Code and amendments to the City of Burlingame Municipal Code are not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines. Pursuant to Title 14 of the California Administrative Code, Section 15061(b)(3) these Ordinances are exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in that it is not a Project which has the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. This action is further exempt from the definition of Project in Section 15378(b)(2) in that it concerns general policy and procedure making.

FISCAL IMPACT

There are no fiscal impacts associated with the adoption of the 2025 California Building Standards Code.

Exhibits:

- Proposed Ordinance for Title 17
- Proposed Ordinance for Title 18
- Proposed Ordinance for Title 19