

ORDINANCE AMENDMENT REVIEW SHEET

Amendment: C20-2022-021 Wildland Urban Interface Code Amendments

Description: Consider amendments to Title 25 of the City Code to address wildfire risk and wildfire mitigation by adding definitions and adjusting ordinance to improve planning and evacuation risk concerns.

Proposed Language: See attached draft ordinance and background information.

Summary of proposed code amendment

- Access Streets: Allow a single-access street to be longer than 2,000 feet and serve more than 30 dwellings if the access street does not cross an area identified as Wildland-Urban Interface as shown on the Austin Fire Department Wildfire Risk map (as described in the [Land Development Code Revision Section 23-8F-3030](#)).

The application of this change prevents AFD from creating unsafe conditions for evacuation. Determining a cost impact is difficult without having specific items or examples to review. The safe evacuation of residents is the highest priority.

- Add mitigation of wildfire risk to the list of enumerated purposes in the General Planning Requirements Chapter (as described in the [Land Development Code Revision Section 23-4A-1010](#)).

Given the significant wildfire risk in the Austin area, adding wildfire risk mitigation to the list of enumerated purposes for planning gives all stakeholders the best information to plan a safe and well-designed development. Determining a fiscal impact may be difficult but from a prevention, recovery and life safety standpoint the resiliency built into the community serves to minimize the fiscal impact of an adverse event. This is a direct response to the CPAW plan by directing responsible growth into safe areas.

- Right-Of-Way Dedication and Improvement Right-of-Way Alignment: Require the director to base right-of-way alignment on engineering criteria related to the safe use and maintenance of public right-of-way, including grade, sight distance, turning radii, curvature, existing green infrastructure, and the existence of flood plain or wildfire hazards. These criteria are to be the primary considerations used in determining right-of-way alignment and are controlling over other criteria in the event of conflict (as described in the [Land Development Code Revision Section 23-8B-2040](#)).

This is another case where adding wildfire consideration to a long list of concerns that need to be addressed in planning safe use and design of public right of ways could improve community safety. The addition of “wildfire hazards” can help relieve some current concerns regarding evacuation and ensure wildfire risk takes its proper place on the list of significant considerations in future roadway planning, design and improvement. Assigning a cost to a consideration is difficult, however, the potential to improve evacuation routes and road designs will create a safer community.

Delaying implementation of this consideration will add to the lack of evacuation and response routes AFD is currently dealing with. Right-Of-Way consideration need to be included in the planning process to reduce life safety risk during potential evacuations.

- **General Definitions:** Define "Fire Protection Plan" as a document prepared for a specific project or development proposed for the wildland-urban interface area that describes ways to minimize and mitigate the fire problems created by the project or development, with the purpose of reducing the effect on the community's fire protection delivery system (as described in the [Land Development Code Revision Section 23-12A-1030](#)). Define "Wildland-Urban Interface Area" as an area designated by the city council as one where conditions affecting the combustibility of both wildland and built fuels allow for the ignition and spread of fire through the combined fuel complex (consistent with the definition already adopted in [City Code 25-12-183](#)).

Background: Initiated by City Council Resolution 20220609-021.

In June 2022, City Council issued a resolution that directed staff to modify the Land development code to reduce wildfire risk.

Staff Recommendation: Pending

The Austin Fire Department currently does not have any concerns with the proposed adjustments. Alignment of the Land development Code and the Wildland Urban interface code is a logical step in our work toward risk reduction and preservation of life and property.

Board and Commission Actions

March 15, 2023: To be reviewed by the Codes and Ordinances Joint Committee.

March 28, 2023: A public hearing will be held by Planning Commission.

Council Action

April 13, 2023: A public hearing has been scheduled.

Ordinance Number: NA

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