

AGENDA

LAND USE AND DESIGN REVIEW COMMITTEE

January 12, 2012
9:00 A.M.

Laguna Woods City Hall
Council Chambers
24264 El Toro Road
Laguna Woods, CA 92637122

AGENDA DESCRIPTION: The Agenda descriptions are intended to give notice, to members of the public, of a general summary of items of business to be transacted or discussed. Any person wishing to address the Land Use and Design Review Committee on any matter, whether or not it appears on this agenda, may do so under the appropriate section of the agenda. Whenever possible, lengthy testimony should be presented to the Committee in writing (12 copies) and only pertinent points presented orally. Requests to speak to items on the agenda shall be heard at the appropriate point on the agenda; requests to speak about subjects not on the agenda will be heard during the Public Comment section of the meeting.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

A. Fire Hazard Severity Zones (Attachment)

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Recommend that the City Council:

1. Establish a very high fire hazard severity zone map and enforce Chapter 7-A California and local Building Code standards to new construction in this zone, as required by state law.

AND

2. Modify the City's Building and Construction Code to apply Chapter 7-A Building Code Standards to building modifications in the very high fire hazard severity zone.

AND

3. Modify the City's Building and Construction Code to establish a high and moderate fire hazard severity zone map (local implementation zones) and construction standards for new construction and building modifications on these zones.

IV. PENDING PROJECT UPDATE

- A. Urban Activity Center Specific Plan
- B. Modifications to Real Estate Signage

V. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS


VII. ADJOURN

The next regularly scheduled meeting is February 9, 2012; meetings may be cancelled if there is a lack of agenda items.

**City of Laguna Woods
Agenda Report**

FOR: January 12, 2012 Land Use and Design Review Committee Meeting

TO: Chair and Committee Members

FROM: Leslie A. Keane, City Manager 

AGENDA ITEM: Fire Hazard Severity Zones

Recommendation

1. Establish a very high fire hazard severity zone map and enforce Chapter 7A California and local Building Code standards to new construction in this zone, as required by state law; and
2. Modify the City's Building and Construction Code to apply Chapter 7A Building Code Standards to building modifications in the very high fire hazard severity zone; and
3. Modify the City's Building and Construction Code to establish a high and moderate fire hazard severity zone map (local implementation zones) and construction standards for new construction and building modifications in these zones.

Background

The state has declared that the prevention of fires is not a municipal affair, but instead a matter of statewide concern. Govt. Code 51175-89 directs the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to map areas of significant fire hazards based on fuels, terrain, weather, and other relevant factors. These zones, referred to as Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ), define the application of various mitigation strategies to reduce risk associated with wildland fires:

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In September 2005, the California Building Standards Commission approved a new Chapter – 7 A – of the California Building Code. This chapter, titled Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure, was included in the City's recent building code modifications; it establishes building materials, systems and/or assemblies which must be included in the exterior design and construction of new buildings located within very high fire hazard severity zones. Building standards include 1) non-combustible material used for the construction of the underside of exterior eaves, decks and stairways attached to buildings; 2) minimum requirements for ventilation openings for attics to resist the intrusion of burning embers and to further reduce fire risk; and 4) vegetation management requirements.

Discussion

Since its incorporation date fell after the last state mapping effort, the City of Laguna Woods has not adopted fire severity zone maps, although areas in the City would have been included in prior County maps.

Fire hazard severity zones are classified as very high, high and moderate. State law requires that the City formally adopt, by ordinance, a very high fire hazard severity zone map within 120 days of receiving a recommendation from CAL FIRE. The City Council introduced and approved first reading of such an ordinance at their December 7, 2011 meeting and a public hearing on this matter is scheduled for the January 18, 2012. Once adopted, applicable construction standards for new development would be triggered.

Although state law requires that local agencies adopt the very high hazard severity zone map for their jurisdiction, the City is not prohibited from adopting additional fire hazard severity zones and/or regulations which are more stringent than those prescribed in state law. City and OCFA staff are proposing two additional fire hazard severity zones and construction standards that would apply to renovations of existing development as well as new development in all three zones.

Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone

Location: Generally between Santa Maria Avenue and El Toro Road, west of Algarrobo, Calle Azul, Monte Hermoso, and Avenida Sosiega, and south of Calle Corta, including Woods End Wilderness Park.

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Construction Standards: All Title 7-A requirements would apply to new construction and building modifications. These standards were adopted by the City Council in December 2010.

High Fire Hazard Severity Zone

Location: Laguna Laurel; portions generally north of Santa Maria Avenue in the vicinity of Cantante, Avenida Del Sol, Pina, Moya, Brazo, Terro, Ovalo, Jardine, Elvira, Duenes, and Avenida Despacio; portions generally north of El Toro Road, Calle Corta, and Monte Hermoso, west of San Amadeo and Avenida Sosiega, and east of Calle Azul, and Algarobbo.

Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone

Location: Portions generally north of El Toro Road south of San Amadeo; portions generally south of Calle Sonora Este; portions generally west of Avenida Sosiega in the vicinity of Bahia Blanca and Punta Alta; and portions generally north of Santa Maria Avenua west of Santa Vittoria in the vicinity of Avenida Despacio, Duverney, Belmez, Duenes, Calzado, Miembro, and Elvira.

Proposed Construction Standards for High and Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zones:

- 1) Roofing:
 - a) Coverings: Roofing materials which allow a space between the roofing material and the roof deck or sheathing shall be constructed to prevent the intrusion of flames and embers, be fire stopped with approved materials or have one layer of minimum 72 pound mineral-surfaced non-perforated cap sheet complying with ASTM D 3909 installed over the combustible decking.
 - b) Roof Valleys: Valley flashings shall have one layer of minimum 72 pound mineral-surfaced non-perforated cap sheet complying with ASTM D 3909 at least 36 inches wide running the full length of the valley under the flashing.
- 2) Screening. Reduce the maximum attic and under floor space ventilation screen opening sizing from 1/4 to 1/8 inch which reduces the possibility of fire embers entering these spaces.

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- 3) Vents. Vents shall not be installed on the underside of eaves and cornices unless the space they ventilate is fully protected by a sprinkler system, or the exterior wall and underside of the eave or cornice is noncombustible or ignition resistant material.

Additional Proposed Construction Standards for the High Fire Severity Zone:

- 1) Patio covers. When located within 100 feet from a fuel modification zone or open space containing unmanaged non-irrigated vegetation, patio covers shall be constructed of noncombustible or ignition-resistant materials.

Patio covers would be exempt from these requirements if the construction features meet all of the following:

- a) Columns: Minimum dimension of 4x4 (nominal dimension in inches)
 - b) Horizontal beams: Minimum 4x6 (nominal dimension in inches)
 - c) Top horizontal members: A minimum of 2-inch spacing is provided between the members.
 - d) The ledger meets the ignition-resistant material definition as prescribed in CBC Section 702A.
- 2) Decks. Decks, porches, balconies and stairs shall be constructed using at least one of the following methods.
 - a) Ignition resistant materials, must meet specific State Fire Marshals standards.
 - b) Exterior fire retardant treated wood.
 - c) Noncombustible material.
 - d) When attached walls are noncombustible or ignition resistant material, the deck is only required to meet State Fire Marshal Standard 12-7A-4A. A minimum Class B flame spread rating of the deck material would satisfy this requirement.

Conclusion:

The City of Laguna Woods sits adjacent to several large wilderness areas which present to potential for wildland fires. State law mandates that the City adopt a very high fire hazard severity zone map and minimum construction standards for new development. The Orange County Fire Authority is recommending that the City adopt two additional fire hazard severity zones and that constructions standards for all three zones be implemented for both new construction and modifications to existing

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buildings.

To meet state timeline requirements, the staff recommendation has been divided into two ordinances. The first ordinance, discussed by the City Council at its December 7, 2011, meeting would establish the very high fire hazard severity zone and implement already adopted standards for new construction. The second ordinance, which would be introduced for first reading at the January 18, 2012 meeting, would establish the high and moderate fire hazard severity zones and related construction standards, and would apply standards in all three zones to building modifications as well as new construction.

Attached: Exhibit A – Proposed fire hazard severity zone map