

CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT

Agenda Date: October 17, 2011
Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Ordinance No. 2011-05 Amendments to the Fire Prevention Chapter of the Municipal Code related to Self-Closing Doors in Residential Structures – Second Reading

REPORT BY: Ed Tubbs, Fire Chief
Jeff Bond, Community Development Director

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council approve the second reading of Ordinance No. 2011-05 “Amendments to the Fire Prevention Chapter of the Municipal Code related to Self-Closing Doors in Residential Structures,” which requires that exterior doors in existing multi-family residential buildings that open to an exit access be self-closing. Pass to print.

BACKGROUND

Currently, California building code and fire codes require self-closing doors that lead to fire exit corridors in new construction of multi-family residential structures. In addition, self-closing doors are required in doors that lead to garages in new single-family residential construction. In most cases, however, buildings and fire codes do not require fire prevention and safety upgrades on existing structures unless a major renovation is undertaken.

DISCUSSION

Slowing the spread of smoke and fire is critical in preventing property damage, injury, or death caused by structure fires. In the event of a fire, closed doors reduce the flow of oxygen to the fire and slow the spread of flame and smoke into exit corridors and neighboring residential units. The purpose of the proposed ordinance is to require all residential units in multi-family residential structures to be retrofitted with self-closing exterior doors.

The hardware required to meet this requirement will vary depending on the size and weight of the door. In some cases, hardware will need to be installed at the top of the door. In other situations, spring-loaded hinges may be sufficient.

The proposed ordinance also provides authority to the Fire Chief to establish implementing procedures. In addition, the ordinance incorporates provisions for property owners to seek an exemption from the requirements in situations of established hardship or infeasibility.

As part of the implementation of the ordinance, staff will prepare documentation required by the California Building Standards Commission for local amendments to construction standards.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

The protection of public safety and upgrade of existing buildings in a cost effective way is consistent with the City's green building practices.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The proposed ordinance would modestly expand the scope of inspection responsibilities for the City Fire Marshal, and Community Development Department building inspector and permit technician.

Attachments

Proposed Ordinance 2011-05