



CITY OF CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA

Potential Urgency Ordinance Addressing Home Hardening and Wildfire Safety Regulations Citywide

City Council Meeting

August 4, 2025



Background

- Wildfire Prevention Committee Recommendation
- Home Hardening Measures
 - Suggested Immediate Measures
 - Suggested Measures Deferred to Design Guidelines
- Need Council Policy Guidance
 - Urgency Ordinance?
 - Measures?
- Possible Return at Next Meeting



Proposed Measures - Now

IMPLEMENTATION RULES:

- Vent and window standards apply when replaced or altered - not immediate retrofits.
- Exception when strict compliance conflicts with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Properties

1. Gravel Adjacent to Structures

PURPOSE: Create a noncombustible Zone 0 within five feet of buildings to reduce ember ignition, which is often landscaped.

CURRENT RULE: Gravel counts as permeable site coverage, while combustible bark and mulch do not. This can penalize homeowners who choose safer material.

PROPOSED CHANGE: Exempt gravel within five feet of a structure from site coverage calculations. Existing Design Guidelines for natural, muted, earth-tone materials would still apply. Effective immediately.

3. Ember-Resistant Vents

PURPOSE: Prevent wind-driven embers from entering attics and crawlspaces through ventilation openings.

CURRENT RULE: Mapped hazard/WUI area properties must use State Fire Marshal-listed or ASTM E2886-compliant vents. In all other areas, the Building Code regulates only opening size (1/16 to 1/4 inch).

PROPOSED CHANGE: Require ember-resistant vents citywide when vents are replaced or altered. Effective when components are replaced or altered.

2. Firewood & Combustible Storage

PURPOSE: Keep firewood, lumber, and similar materials from becoming ignition sources next to homes.

CURRENT RULE: City codes prohibit hazardous conditions generally. In mapped hazard/WUI areas, storage is prohibited under buildings, decks, eaves, and projections; piles generally require 30-foot separation unless covered, plus 10 feet of bare-mineral-soil clearance. In all other areas, only property maintenance code applies.

PROPOSED CHANGE: Apply the existing hazard-zone and WUI storage requirements citywide. Effective immediately.

4. Fire-Resistant Windows

PURPOSE: Improve resistance to radiant heat, flame exposure, and ember intrusion through failed glazing.

CURRENT RULE: Mapped hazard/WUI areas require dual-pane glazing with at least one tempered pane and 20-minute fire rated assembly. In all other areas, only placement is regulated based on separation from property line.

PROPOSED CHANGE: Apply existing hazard-zone and WUI glazing standards citywide. Effective when components are replaced or altered.



Future Measures – Later

- More Appropriate for Design Traditions 1.5 Project:
 - Wood Shake Roofing
 - Eaves
 - Exposed Rafters
 - Deck Materials and Design
 - Gate/Fence Materials and Design
- Current draft Guidelines Contemplate Fire Safety



Council Direction

- No Ordinance/Resolution Tonight
- Policy Direction Requested:
 1. Whether Council wishes to proceed with an urgency ordinance;
 2. (If yes) Which of the four measures should be included in the ordinance; and
 3. Whether Council wishes staff to evaluate any additional home hardening recommendations before returning with a draft ordinance.



Questions