



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Christopher Burton
Robert Sapient, Jr.

SUBJECT: See Below

DATE: October 6, 2025

Approved

Date:

10/16/25

COUNCIL DISTRICT: Citywide

SUBJECT: Amendments to the San José Municipal Code Adopting the 2025 California Building Standards with Local Technical Amendments, and Repealing Superseded San José Reach Codes

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) Approve an ordinance amending Title 24 (Technical Codes) of the San José Municipal Code to:
 - (1) Adopt the 2025 editions of the California Building Code, California Residential Code, California Electrical Code, California Mechanical Code, California Plumbing Code, California Wildland-Urban Interface Code, California Historical Building Code, and California Existing Building Code.
 - (2) Find that the City of San José local climatic, geological, and topographical conditions warrant additional protections in the San José Municipal Code; and
 - (3) Adopt local amendments regarding certain structural design requirements, fire sprinkler regulations, and other building requirements.
- (b) Approve an ordinance amending Chapter 24.10 and Chapter 24.12 of Title 24 (San José Fire Code) of the San José Municipal Code to:
 - (1) Adopt 2025 editions of the California Green Building Standards Code and the California Energy Code; and
 - (2) Repeal previously adopted reach codes from the San José Municipal Code that are now superseded by the 2025 Energy and California Green Building Standards Codes.
- (c) Approve an ordinance amending Chapter 17.12 and Chapter 17.68 of Title 17 (San José Fire Code) of the San José Municipal Code to:
 - (1) Adopt the 2025 edition of the California Fire Code;
 - (2) Find that the City of San José local climatic, geological, and topographical conditions warrant additional protections in the San José Municipal Code; and
 - (3) Adopt local amendments regarding certain structural design requirements, fire sprinkler regulations, and other building requirements.

SUMMARY AND OUTCOME

Approval of the ordinances will ensure consistency of the City of San José's Building, Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing, Energy, Wildland-Urban Interface, Historical Building, Fire, Existing Building, and Green Building Standards Codes with state standards and ensure that City codes provide additional protection of the health, welfare, and safety of local residents required due to local climatic, geological, and topographical conditions.

BACKGROUND

The California Building Standards Commission publishes triennial editions of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 24, also known as the California Building Standards Code. On July 1, 2025, the California Building Standards Commission published the 2025 edition of the California Building Standards Code¹ The 2025 California Building Standards Code will apply to any building or structure for which an application for a building permit is made on or after January 1, 2026. The California Building Code (CBC), California Residential Code (CRC), Wildland-Urban Interface Code, California Fire Code, and California Existing Building Code are based on the 2024 International model codes published by the International Code Council, while the California Mechanical Code and California Plumbing Code continue to be based on the 2024 Uniform model codes published by the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials. The California Electrical Code is based on the 2023 National Electrical Code, published by the National Fire Protection Association. The California Historical Building Code and the California Green Building Standards Code are developed and published by the California Building Standards Commission. The California Energy Code is developed by the California Energy Commission.

The State of California allows local municipalities to modify the state-adopted building standards to make them more restrictive (not less), provided certain express findings are made that the proposed modifications are necessary due to special local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions that can affect the health, welfare, and safety of local residents.

The building-related codes that will be adopted in the proposed ordinance are listed below.

- 2025 California Building Code - CCR Title 24 Part 2
- 2025 California Residential Code - CCR Title 24 Part 2.5
- 2025 California Electrical Code - CCR Title 24 Part 3

¹ <https://www.dgs.ca.gov/BSC/Codes>

- 2025 California Mechanical Code - CCR Title 24 Part 4
- 2025 California Plumbing Code - CCR Title 24 Part 5
- 2025 California Energy Code – CCR Title 24 Part 6
- 2025 California Wildland-Urban Interface Code – CCR Title 24 Part 7
- 2025 California Historical Building Code - CCR Title 24 Part 8
- 2025 California Fire Code – CCR Title 24 Part 9
- 2025 California Existing Building Code - CCR Title 24 Part 10
- 2025 California Green Building Standards Code – CCR Title 24 Part 11

The San José Municipal Code, Chapter 17.68 Hazardous Materials Storage Permit and Chapter 17.82 Fire Safety During Construction, are reviewed on a triennial basis for potential updates and the removal of sections that have been incorporated into the California Fire Code. The Hazardous Materials Storage Permit and the Fire Safety During Construction sections will apply to any development or operational permits submitted for issuance, on or after January 1, 2026.

ANALYSIS

Title 24, California Building Standards Code

The proposed ordinance accomplishes the following:

1. Adopts the 2025 edition of the California Building, Residential, Electrical, Mechanical, Plumbing, Energy, Wildland-Urban Interface, Historical Building, Existing Building, and Green Building Standards Codes by a single ordinance;
2. Updates previously adopted local amendments to the California codes to match current code language and cross-references; and
3. Updates the San José Municipal Code to reflect the 2025 California Building Standards Code.

The following is a summary of the changes to each of the Title 24 Chapters.

Chapter 24.01 governs the Administrative provisions, including definitions, procedures, interpretation, and authority.

Chapter 24.02 governs the issuance of permits, including requirements, exemptions, applications, issuance, renewals and extensions, fees, inspections, certificates of occupancy, and appeals.

Chapter 24.03 adopts the CBC with the local amendments described below.

Chapter 24.04 adopts the California Plumbing Code with no local amendments.

Chapter 24.05 adopts the California Mechanical Code with no local amendments.

Chapter 24.06 adopts the California Electrical Code with no local amendments.

Chapter 24.07 adopts the California Existing Building Code with no local amendments.

Chapter 24.08 adopts the California Wildland-Urban Interface code with no local amendments.

Chapter 24.09 adopts the California Residential Code with the local amendments described below.

Chapter 24.10 adopts the California Green Building Standards Code with no local amendments.

Chapter 24.11 adopts the California Historical Building Code with no local amendments.

Chapter 24.12 adopts the California Energy Code with no local amendments.

Building staff worked with other Bay Area jurisdictions by participating in the Tri-Chapter Uniform Code Program. The cities and counties that participate in this program stretch from Contra Costa County in the north to San Benito County in the south. These amendments will be adopted uniformly in the neighboring cities and counties with some local variations. At both the regional and state levels, staff will continue to assume a leadership role to reduce individual differences between cities in Silicon Valley.

Summary of Amendments

There are no new proposed amendments for this code cycle. However, staff proposes to remove the current reach code amendments and one currently adopted local technical amendment as those amendments are now part of the 2025 codes. The remaining adopted local amendments regarding certain structural design requirements, fire sprinkler regulations, and other building requirements, will be maintained due to the following express findings.

1. The San Francisco Bay area region is densely populated and located in an area of high seismic activity. San José is bounded by the Hayward and San Andreas faults, capable of producing major earthquakes.
2. Concern for fire-life safety associated with a structural failure due to a seismic event, considering the increasing number of buildings in the region, the use of new structural systems, the poor performance of certain materials, and the quality of construction.

3. Severe seismic events could disrupt communications, damage gas mains, cause extensive electrical hazards, and place extreme demands on the limited and widely dispersed resources of the Fire Department, resulting in challenges to meet the fire and life safety needs of the community.
4. The local geographic, topographic, and climatic conditions pose an increased hazard in the acceleration, spread, magnitude, and severity of potential fires in the City of San José, and may cause a delayed response from emergency responders, allowing further growth of a fire.

A summary of previously adopted amendments to the California Code that remain adopted in Title 24 of the San José Municipal Code is as follows.

A. CBC Appendices

Modify the CBC by adopting Appendices C, J, and Q to address Agricultural Buildings, Grading, and Emergency Housing, respectively.

B. CRC Appendices

Modify the CRC by adopting Appendices BF, BG, CI, and BO to address Patio Covers, Sound Transmission, Swimming Pool Safety Act, and Existing Buildings and Structures, respectively.

C. California Plumbing Code Appendices

Modify the California Plumbing Code by adopting Appendices A, B, D, G, H, I, and M to address Sizing Water Supply Systems, Combination Waste and Vent Systems, Stormwater Drainage Systems, Venting Systems for Appliances with Draft Hoods, Private Sewage Disposal Systems, Installation Standards, and Peak Water Demand Calculator, respectively.

D. Administrative Provisions

The proposed ordinance will continue to have a single set of administrative provisions for all adopted codes.

Chapter 17.12 of Title 17, San José Municipal Code

1. Adopts the 2025 edition of the California Fire Code by a single ordinance (Chapter 17.12 San José Fire Code).
2. Updates previously adopted local amendments to the California codes to match current code language and cross-references.
3. Updates the San José Municipal Code to reflect the 2025 California Building Standards Code.

The following is a summary of changes to Chapter 17.12 (San José Fire Code).

1. Section 1 of Title 17.12- Reworded amendment language for clarity.
2. Adopting Chapter 1 of the 2025 California Fire Code with an amendment regarding the Scope and Administration for adoption of Fire Code Sections 1.1.11, 103.2, 104, 109, and 110; deletion of Fire Code Section 112; and amendment to include an additional operational permit (Lithium Batteries), a construction permit for 2-way communications (for rescue Assistance), and deletion of the operational permit for Battery Storage System and Lithium Battery Storage System.
3. Adopting Chapter 2 of the 2025 California Fire Code with amendments to include additional definitions for Installation-Level Testing and Large-Scale Fire Test.
4. Adopting Chapter 5 of the 2025 California Fire Code with amendments regarding fire apparatus access roads and firefighter access.
5. Adopting Chapter 9 of the 2025 California Fire Code with minor wording changes for clarity and removal of redundancies; inclusion of existing policy language to require sprinkler system water supply valves to be locked in the open position and require electronic supervision; inclusion of existing policy language to require the installation of fire sprinklers in one- and two-family dwellings where 50% of the existing structure is demolished, as determined by the Fire Code Official; inclusion of existing policy language to identify the location of Class I standpipe hose connections; and inclusion of existing policy language regarding the termination location of Signaling Line-Circuits.
6. Adopting Chapter 10 of the 2025 California Fire Code with amendments removing alternating tread as an exception to providing a stairway to the roof, stairway to elevator equipment, stairway to roof access.
7. Adopting Chapter 12 of the 2025 California Fire Code with amendments regarding Large-Scale Fire Testing for Energy Storage Systems.
8. Adopting Chapter 39 of the 2025 California Fire Code with amendments regarding minor wording changes for clarity and removal of redundancies.
9. Adopting Chapter 41 of the 2025 California Fire Code with amendments regarding minor wording changes for clarity and removal of redundancies, and amendments to include language regarding cooking operations in relation to membrane structures.
10. Adopting the 2025 Wildland-Urban Interface Code with amendments to the Scope and Application to include all Hazard Severity Zones in alignment with

State Responsibility Area requirements.

11. Adopting Chapter 50 of the 2025 California Fire Code with amendments regarding minor wording changes for clarity and removal of redundancies; not adopting new outdoor rooftop storage, use, and handling provisions; and removing amendments for spill control for hazardous materials liquids to utilize model code language.
12. Adopting Chapter 56 of the 2025 California Fire Code amendments with minor wording changes for clarity and removal of redundancies.
13. Adopting Chapter 57 of the 2025 California Fire Code amendments with minor wording changes for clarity and removal of redundancies.
14. Adopting Chapter 60 of the 2025 California Fire Code with amendments with minor wording changes for clarity and removal of redundancies, and the removal of the Section 6004.4 and incorporating this Section in 6004.2 for clarity and removal of redundancies, regarding Highly Toxic, Toxic, and Moderately Toxic Compressed Gas scope, indoor storage and use, treatment system, stationary tanks, portable tanks and cylinders, emergency power, fail safe, fire detection, and gas detection.
15. Adopting Chapter 80 of the 2025 California Fire Code with amendments placed in alpha-numeric order; amendments to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 13) requirements for leased spaces that create “shell” fire sprinkler systems that can support proposed and potential tenant improvements based on the height of the building; and amendments to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA 72) for backbone cabling requirements for high-rise buildings.
16. Adoption of Appendices of the 2025 California Fire Code with amendments to Appendix D to include fire apparatus road turning radii and gate width requirements; and amendments to Appendix L regarding Firefighter Air Replenishment System requirements that align more closely with model codes.

Chapter 17.68 (Hazardous Materials Storage Permit) was renamed in accordance with its historical reference to the Hazardous Materials Storage Ordinance.

There are no new amendments to Chapter 17.82 (Fire Safety During Construction) of the San José Municipal Code.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The approval of this ordinance will not impact current performance measures. However, due to changes in the codes and the referenced standards, staff and the design professionals will need time to adjust and be familiar in the application of these new codes. Current performance levels for plan review are expected to slightly decline in the first six months.

COORDINATION

This memorandum and proposed ordinance were coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

This memorandum will be posted on the City's Council Agenda website for the October 28, 2025 City Council meeting.

A complete copy of the proposed ordinance will be posted on the October 28, 2025 City Council meeting agenda. The ordinance publishes the revised sections of Title 24 and Chapter 17.12 of the San José Municipal Code.

Free training sessions will be offered to the public early next year to introduce design professionals, developers, and contractors to significant changes between the 2022 and 2025 California Codes. Information about the new code adoptions will be published on the City's website, and hard copies will be available in the Permit Center.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION AND INPUT

No commission recommendation or input is associated with this action.

CEQA

Not a Project, File No. PP17-008, General Procedure and Policy Making resulting in no changes to the physical environment.

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PUBLIC SUBSIDY REPORTING

This item does not include a public subsidy as defined in section 53083 or 53083.1 of the California Government Code or the City's Open Government Resolution.



/s/

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Code Enforcement Department

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The principal authors of this memorandum are Lisa Joiner, Deputy Director, Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement Department, and James Dobson, Deputy Chief, Fire Department. For questions, please contact Lisa Joiner at Lisa.Joiner@sanjoseca.gov or (408) 535-7757 or James Dobson at James.Dobson@sanjoseca.gov or (408) 535-7794.