



Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: ID#14-247 **Version:** 1 **Name:**

Type: Discussion Item **Status:** Passed

File created: 7/31/2014 **In control:** City Council

On agenda: 8/21/2014 **Final action:** 8/28/2014

Title: Implementation of Fire Department Self-Inspection Program and Fire Inspection Policy Change Recommendations
 1. * RESOLUTION - 1st amendment to the Position Authorization Resolution No. 2014-96 adding two (2) Fire Inspector positions to the Fire Department and two (2) Fire Inspector positions to the Development and Resource Management Department

Sponsors: Fire Department

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. Projected Inspections and Appointments in FY15.pdf, 2. SIP Program Packet.pdf, 3. First Position Authorization Resolution.pdf

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
8/28/2014	1	City Council	adopted	Pass
8/21/2014	1	City Council	continued as noted	Pass

REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

August 21, 2014

FROM: KERRI L. DONIS, Fire Chief
Fire Department

BY: TIMOTHY V. HENRY, Deputy Fire Chief
Fire Department

SUBJECT

Implementation of Fire Department Self-Inspection Program and Fire Inspection Policy Change Recommendations
 1. * RESOLUTION - 1st amendment to the Position Authorization Resolution No. 2014-96 adding two (2) Fire Inspector positions to the Fire Department and two (2) Fire Inspector positions to the Development and Resource Management Department

RECOMMENDATIONS

As previously directed by the City Council, it is recommended the Fire Chief implement changes to its General Inspection Program. These changes will result in a reduction of approximately 11,939 non-

state mandated fire inspections conducted by the City of Fresno. These changes include:

- Implementation of a Self-Inspection Program (SIP) for non-state mandated inspections
- The movement of residential fire sprinkler inspections to Development and Resource Management (DARM) and the addition of two (2) deleted Fire Inspectors assigned to DARM to complete them
- Reinstigate the inspection of 1,877 non-state mandated high-risk occupancies and the addition of two (2) deleted Fire Inspectors to the Fire Department (FFD) to complete those inspections and maintain the current commercial construction appointment timelines
- Reallocation of other state mandated inspections such as apartment complexes to be conducted by Fire Suppression Personnel

In conjunction with the above, staff also recommends the City Council approve and adopt the first amendment to the Position Authorization Resolution 2014-96 adding two (2) Fire Inspector positions to the FFD and two (2) Fire Inspector positions to DARM.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the City Council meeting on July 8, 2014, in which options were discussed regarding proposed changes to the City's Fire Inspection Program, staff was directed to return to Council within the next 60 days with proposed changes to the program that would include, at a minimum, the implementation of an SIP for non-state mandated inspections, moving residential fire sprinkler inspection duties to DARM, reallocate other state mandated inspections (e.g., apartment complexes) to Fresno Firefighters and reduce the number of Fire Inspector positions by six (two vacant positions and four full-time active positions).

After further review staff is recommending revisions to the City's Fire Inspection Program that meet the overall intent of the Council's direction. The implementation of this plan is scheduled to begin prior to October 1, 2014, during which time staff will evaluate the overall effectiveness of the proposed changes and will report back to Council within the next six months regarding compliance and if any additional changes to the program are warranted.

BACKGROUND

FFD has evaluated the number of inspections that are currently being performed, as well as the effectiveness of various fire departments (Santa Maria, Upland, San Diego, Sacramento City, and Sacramento Metro) who have already implemented an SIP. The following recommendations are consistent with California Fire Code and are intended to strike a balance between the importance of conducting annual fire and life safety inspections and the needs of property owners, who by nature of the business and/or activity, pose a higher risk to the health and safety of the community.

Once implemented, 10 FTE (Fire Inspector II's and/or Senior Fire Inspector) will be needed to support the Community Risk Reduction Division (CRRD). Of the six (6) FFD Inspector positions impacted in the FY15 budget, two existing Fire Inspectors slated for deletion would be retained by

FFD to perform non-state mandated high-risk occupancy inspections and continue to maintain the current timelines for commercial construction appointments. Two existing Fire Inspectors slated for deletion will be reassigned and funded by DARM, and these two positions will continue to perform residential fire inspections as well as begin cross training Building Inspectors so they too can conduct these types of inspections in the future. Two vacant Fire Inspector positions will be eliminated, maintaining a General Fund savings of \$132,600. The reassignment and elimination of two Fire Inspectors will reduce the number of Fire Inspectors assigned to the CRRD by four.

In FY14, the total number of fire and life safety inspections completed was 5,375. Also, 10,654 occupancy classes were not inspected due to the reduction in staffing. It is anticipated in FY15 through these recommended changes, 4,766 fire and life safety inspections will be conducted by FFD personnel, with 2,376 of those assigned to the firefighting force and 2,390 completed by FFD Fire Inspectors.

In addition to those inspections performed by staff, FFD will be implementing a new SIP with the goal of 11,939 non-state mandated fire inspections being performed. While the current compliance rate for inspections conducted by Fire Inspectors is 85-90 percent, the SIP program anticipates a 70 percent compliance rate during the first year due to the newness of the program.

Based on the recommended changes, it is anticipated the following will occur:

- 513 state mandated fire and life safety inspections, inspected by Fire Inspectors, will continue to be conducted as required by the *California Fire Code* (Table 1 attached)
- 2,376 state mandated apartment complex fire and life safety inspections will be performed by Fresno Firefighters (Table 1)
- 1,877 high-risk non-state mandated fire and life safety inspections annually by Fire Inspectors would continue (see Table 2 for details on occupancy type)
- 11,939 non-state mandated fire and life safety inspections would be conducted through the implementation of the proposed SIP (Table 3)
- New commercial construction appointments and plan reviews will be conducted by the Fire Department and will remain at nine business days or less
- 2,738 residential fire sprinkler construction inspections would move to DARM (along with two Fire Inspectors) with cross training of building inspectors occurring over the next year (Table 4)

Self-Inspection Implementation Schedule

Prior to the implementation of the proposed SIP, FFD will conduct a series of meetings with various stakeholders such as the Fresno Chamber of Commerce, Apartment Owner's Association, Hispanic and Black Chambers of Commerce, and the BIA, in an effort to educate businesses and property owners on the new program. This outreach effort will be completed by October 1, 2014.

Furthermore, staff has reached out to four major insurance companies in an effort to secure an

insurance inspection/life safety form (State Farm, Fireman's Fund, Global Risk Consultants, FM Global).

Staff will continue to research the use of the insurance inspection form, but has included as part of the SIP checklist, that property owners provide FFD with a copy of their insurance form. Additional changes to the program may be implemented once FFD has had an opportunity to evaluate whether the form used by insurance companies duplicates many of the requirements contained in the attached SIP form.

In conclusion, it is recommended the following changes be implemented beginning October 1, 2014:

- Letters to 11,939 businesses who qualify for the one-year self-inspection pilot program will be mailed. It is our goal to meet 70 percent compliance by educating them on a new fire and life safety self-inspection pilot program, which will include SIP instructions, forms, online filing options, and phone support. Two attempts, through mailings, will be implemented to gain compliance with businesses participating in the SIP.
- FFD will continue to review and process all fire sprinkler plans and send them to DARM within nine days. Responsibility for scheduling, permitting, and inspection of residential fire sprinkler systems will reside with DARM (two Fire Inspectors reassigned).
- Apartment fire and life safety inspections will be assigned to Fresno Firefighters for completion. The data entry component will be completed at FFD headquarters.
- Staff will return to Council in February/March 2015 with an audit of program, implementation results, and offer further revisions/recommendations for consideration.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

N/A

LOCAL PREFERENCE

N/A - Local preference does not affect the outcome of this Council item.

FISCAL IMPACT

With a reduction of Fire Inspectors and proposed alternative inspection program outlined above, the fiscal impacts are:

- The elimination of two Fire Inspector II unfilled vacancies saved \$132,600 in the General Fund. Retaining two Fire Inspector I/II's positions in the FFD will be funded through the collection of inspection fees for high-risk, non-state mandated occupancies. In addition, two Fire Inspectors will be reassigned and funded by DARM, maintaining a savings to the Fire Department budget of \$162,000.

Attachments:

- Projected Inspections and Appointments in FY15

- SIP Program Packet
- First Position Authorization Resolution