



Agenda Report

Item #: 25-534

Meeting Date: 11/4/2025

TITLE: ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 5: BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES AND TITLE 7: FIRE PROTECTION AND PREVENTION OF THE COSTA MESA MUNICIPAL CODE AND TO ADOPT BY REFERENCE THE 2025 CALIFORNIA BUILDING STANDARDS CODE, INCLUDING SPECIFIED APPENDICES AND LOCAL AMENDMENTS, AND ADOPTING THE ORANGE COUNTY GRADING AND EXCAVATION CODE AND ASSOCIATED SUPPLEMENTS

DEPARTMENTS: ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT / BUILDING DIVISION AND FIRE AND RESCUE/ FIRE PREVENTION & COMMUNITY RISK REDUCTION DIVISION

PRESENTED BY: ZIAD DOUDAR, BUILDING OFFICIAL & RYAN BOHR, FIRE MARSHAL

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RYAN BOHR, FIRE MARSHAL, (714) 754-5049**

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council:

1. Conduct a public hearing and introduce Ordinance No. 2025-XX for first reading to amend Title 5 and Title 7 of the Costa Mesa Municipal Code to:
 - a. Adopt by reference the 2025 California Building Standards Code, as locally amended, and the current edition of the Orange County Grading and Excavation Code
 - b. Repeal the City's prior adoption of the 2022 code editions
 - c. Set an effective date of January 1, 2026
2. Adopt Resolution No. 2025-XX of the City Council of the City of Costa Mesa, California, setting forth findings of local climatic, geological, and topographical conditions within the City of Costa Mesa to support certain local amendments to the California Building Code, California Residential Code, California Fire Code, and California Wildland-Urban Interface Code.
3. Find that this action is not a project under CEQA Guidelines §15378(b) and, alternatively, is exempt under §15061(b)(3) (the common sense exemption).

BACKGROUND:

The California Building Standards Commission updates the California Building Standards Code (Title 24, California Code of Regulations) on a three-year cycle. The 2025 editions take effect statewide on January 1, 2026. Cities may adopt these codes by reference and, with findings of local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions (Health & Safety Code §§ 17958, 17958.5, 17958.7), may adopt local amendments. Consistent with this cycle, the City regularly adopts the

State codes, together with duly adopted local amendments supported by statutorily required findings, every three years. The 2025 California Building Standards Code is derived from nationally recognized model codes, summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Reference Model Codes for the 2025 California Building Standards Code	
<u>California Building Standards Code</u>	<u>Reference Model Code</u>
2025 California Building Code (Vol. 1 & 2)	2024 International Building Code (ICC)
2025 California Residential Code	2024 International Residential Code (ICC)
2025 California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen)	California-Specific Code
2025 California Fire Code	2024 International Fire Code (ICC)
2025 California Existing Building Code	2024 International Existing Building Code
2025 California Plumbing Code	2024 Uniform Plumbing Code (IAPMO)
2025 California Mechanical Code	2024 Uniform Mechanical Code (IAPMO)
2025 California Energy Code	2024 International Energy Conservation Code
2025 California Wildland-Urban Interface Code	2024 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code
2025 California Electrical Code	2023 National Electrical Code (NFPA)
2021 International Swimming Pool & Spa Code	

ANALYSIS:

The proposed ordinance (ORDINANCE NO. 2025-XX) adopts by reference the 2025 California Building Standards Code with local amendments, repeals references to the 2022 editions, and adopts the current Orange County Grading and Excavation Code, including any associated supplements.

The companion resolution (RESOLUTION NO 2025-XX) documents the required findings of local climatic, geological, and topographical conditions pursuant to the applicable sections of the California Health and Safety Code (HSC) in support of the City's local amendments.

Local amendments are proposed within the following 2025 code components as summarized below:

- California Building Code (CBC)
 - Fencing not to exceed 6 feet (Section 105.2)
 - Minimum roof covering classification to be Class B (Table 1505.1)
 - Prescriptive foundation wall design shall not be used in structures assigned to Seismic Design Category D, E or F. (Section 1807.1.6)
- California Residential Code (CRC)
 - Fencing not to exceed 6 feet (Section R105.2)
 - Minimum roof covering classification to be Class B (Section R902.1)

- California Fire Code (CFC)

Administrative updates:

- Inserted, where applicable, “City of Costa Mesa Fire & Rescue” as the Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) to identify CMFR as the enforcing agency. (101.1, 103.1)
- Clarified permitting requirements for various types of work/operations. (105.5.18(10)–(11); 105.5.19–105.5.21 [deleted]; 105.5.34 [deleted]; 105.6.1.1 [added])
- Modified submittal, document delivery, and retention requirements to align with the City’s all-digital permit processing system (digital plan submittals; approved digital set provided to the applicant; on-site copy during work; defined minimum retention periods). (106.1; 106.4)

Readoption of previously approved local amendments, with minor updates, to align with the state-reformatted 2025 CBSC, including:

- Tightened outdoor burning rules. (305.6; 305.7; 307)
- Added minimum clearances and spark arresters for fire pits. (307.6; 307.6.1; 307.6.2)
- Strengthened the citywide ban on sky lanterns. (308.1.7)
- Added bans triggered by wind/Red Flag events. (305.6)
- Required emergency stops on commercial solar installations with ESS. (1207.4.1)
- Modified in-building emergency responder radio coverage requirements to align with Orange County regional technical requirements. (510.1; 510.2)

- Prohibited on-demand mobile fueling (gasoline/diesel/CNG/LNG/hydrogen) and tightened hydrogen/CNG/LNG station provisions. (5701.1.1 ; 5707 ; 5801.1 ; 5809)
- Strengthened safety/setback/staffing requirements for commercial firework displays. (5608.2 ; 5608.3 ; 5609.1 ; 5609.2–5609.17)

New local amendments:

- Modified CFC 1207.11.5.1 to require an emergency Energy Storage System disconnect within 36 inches of the main electrical service in residential occupancies, aligning with the previously adopted commercial requirement. (1207.11.5.1)

Assembly Bill (AB) 130, signed into law in June 2025, establishes a statewide freeze on residential building standards from October 1, 2025, through June 1, 2031, locking in the standards that take effect on January 1, 2026. Interpreted to apply to all residential occupancies under the CBC and CRC, AB 130 prohibits new or more restrictive local residential amendments, including reach codes, except under narrow statutory exceptions such as home-hardening and emergency standards, changes necessary to implement a pre-existing federally compliant local plan, or specified administrative adjustments that do not create stricter residential standards. For this ordinance, the City of Costa Mesa carries forward previously adopted residential amendments and introduces no new residential amendments; proposed updates to non-residential titles (CBC, CFC, WUI) are unaffected.

The City's proposed Building Code amendments are consistent with AB 130 and align with the recommendations from the California Local Building Officials (CALBO) - Orange County Chapter to promote countywide consistency where appropriate, and the proposed Fire Code amendments align with recommendations from the Orange County Fire Authority (OFCA) to support regional consistency, interoperability, and clarity in enforcement. Other modifications are administrative or procedural in nature and address subjects not covered by the codes or are reasonably necessary to safeguard life and property within Costa Mesa.

Adopting the 2025 editions of the California Building Standards Code, together with duly supported local amendments, and adopting the current Orange County Grading and Excavation Code, maintains alignment with statewide standards, improves internal consistency across related titles, and advances the Council's commitment to public safety and resilient construction practices, effective January 1, 2026.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council may adopt the 2025 Edition of the California Building Standards Code with the amendments and the current edition of the Orange County Grading and Excavation Code as recommended by Staff, with or without modifications. If the City Council does not adopt the 2025 Codes, then by default the new Building Codes as shown in the California Code of Regulations will take effect on January 1, 2026, without local amendments.

FISCAL REVIEW:

There are no fiscal impacts associated with these actions.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed this report and approves it as to form.

CITY COUNCIL GOALS AND PRIORITIES:

This item supports the City Council's Goal:

- Strengthen the Public's Safety and Improve the Quality of Life.

CONCLUSION:

Staff recommends the City Council adopt the Resolution and approve the first reading of Ordinance No. 2025-XX, which modifies the Costa Mesa Municipal Code to adopt the 2025 Edition of the California Building Standards Code, as locally amended, and the current edition of the Orange County Grading and Excavation Code for implementation in the City of Costa Mesa. If the first reading is approved, staff will agendize a second reading and adoption of the Ordinance at the next available City Council meeting.

If the City Council approves the Ordinance, it will become effective on January 1, 2026.