TO: HONORABLE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: CITY MANAGER DEPARTMENT: FIRE

DATE: SEPTEMBER 23, 2002 CMR: 382:02

SUBJECT: ORDINANCE ADOPTING THE 2001 CALIFORNIA FIRE CODE WITH LOCAL AMENDMENTS; MAKING certain FINDINGS; AND SETTING A PUBLIC HEARING FOR OCTOBER 15, 2002

RECOMMENDATION
This report recommends Council approve the following:

1. Approve the attached ordinance which amends Chapter 15.04 of the Palo Alto Municipal Code and adopts the 2001 California Fire Code with Palo Alto Local Amendments, and

2. Approve the related Findings of Fact.

BACKGROUND
The California Fire Code (CFC) is revised and published every three years. State law requires jurisdictions that adopt local amendments to adopt those amendments related to housing within 180 days from the adoption of the State codes. Finding of Facts are required by State law for local amendments to the CFC.

The purpose of the California Fire Code and local amendments is to prescribe regulations consistent with nationally recognized standards of good and safe practices. This is accomplished by safeguarding life and property from the hazards of fire, explosion and hazardous materials release as well as from hazardous conditions associated with the use or occupancy of buildings or premises.

The California Fire Code, which is based on the Uniform Fire Code, is a consensus document. The documents are developed after numerous public hearings with testimony from interested members of the fire service, private industry and other concerned individuals throughout the United States.
The Santa Clara County Fire Chiefs Association endeavors to streamline, modernize, consolidate and standardize local amendments where possible. Streamlining and uniform code interpretation is a concern of business and industry throughout the state. The primary objective has been to provide uniform language and interpretation of the codes. Additionally, consistency with the Building, Mechanical and Electrical Codes has been achieved, while addressing each community’s unique characteristics. Staff participated in the development and review of the model codes and county-wide amendments.

**DISCUSSION**

The attached ordinance reflects a number of deletions and editorial clarifications, which do not compromise public safety, but which streamline and coordinate the code requirements on a county-wide basis. Existing local amendments were reviewed to determine applicability and were carried over from previous code adoptions, when appropriate. Such amendments result from identifying hazards from lessons learned, and by proactively incorporating engineering controls and best practices into new buildings within the community. The code is not intended to be applied retroactively unless it is expressly implied by the code or is determined by the Fire Chief that an existing condition presents a distinct hazard to life or property.

A provision has been carried over from previous code adoptions that would authorize the Fire Chief to continue to require, at the time of construction, an elevator car that is sized to accommodate ambulance gurneys. This is unique from what is required by the model codes and adds minimally to the cost of construction. When buildings do not have adequately sized elevator cars, paramedics and firefighters must physically carry emergency medical patients down several flights of stairs. This results in certain lifesaving procedures, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation and artificial resuscitation, being stopped during movement of the patient to the ambulance and increases the risk of injury to firefighters.

Staff has encouraged community comments and input in this process. The draft amendments of the CFC were published on the Fire Department’s web site to provide an opportunity for community feedback for a period of 30 days. Notification was made to the Chamber of Commerce and the members of the Health and Safety Committee in the Research Park. Staff has responded to all questions and comments.

**RESOURCE IMPACT**

Adoption of the attached ordinance will not require changes to existing resources. Current staffing and facilities are not affected.
POLICY IMPLICATIONS
This recommendation is consistent with existing City policies.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW
This is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

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DEPARTMENT HEAD: ___________________________
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CITY MANAGER APPROVAL: _____________________
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ATTACHMENTS
2. Findings of Fact