



CITY OF SIGNAL HILL

2175 Cherry Avenue • Signal
Hill, California 90755-3799

STAFF REPORT

11/13/2025

AGENDA ITEM

**TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**FROM: CARLO TOMAINO
CITY MANAGER**

**BY: CARLOS LUIS
PLANNING MANAGER**

SUBJECT: INTRODUCTION OF AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 15 (BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION) OF THE SIGNAL HILL MUNICIPAL CODE TO ADOPT BY REFERENCE THE 2025 CALIFORNIA BUILDING STANDARDS CODE AND OTHER UNIFORM CODES

Summary:

The City of Signal Hill ("City") regularly adopts the California Building Standards Code ("CBSC") by reference along with a few unique local codes which are all listed in Title 15 (Buildings and Construction) of the Signal Hill Municipal Code ("SHMC"). Every three years, the State of California adopts a set of newly updated building standards codes which requires that the City also adopt the updated codes. The City Council will consider an Ordinance Amendment to the Signal Hill Municipal Code revising regulations for Buildings and Construction (Title 15 of the SHMC). The primary purpose of the proposed Ordinance is to adopt the 2025 editions of the CBSC by reference along with the re-adoption of local amendments previously adopted by the City via Ordinance No. 2022-12-1542, which the California Building Standards Commission reviewed and accepted on May 1, 2023. Subject to approval by the City Council, the proposed Ordinance would return for public hearing and Second Reading at the December 9, 2025 City Council meeting and become effective thirty-days thereafter.

Strategic Plan Goals:

Goal No. 2: Community Safety: Maintain community safety by supporting public safety services and increasing emergency preparedness.

Goal No. 5: High-Functioning Government: Strengthen internal communication, recruitment, retention, systems, and processes to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of City services.

Recommendations:

1. Introduce the following Ordinance for first reading, entitled: “AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SIGNAL HILL, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING CHAPTERS 15.02, 15.04, 15.06, 15.10, 15.12, 15.16, 15.20, AND 15.36, OF TITLE 15 (BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION) OF THE CITY’S MUNICIPAL CODE TO ADOPT BY REFERENCE THE 2025 EDITION OF THE CALIFORNIA BUILDING STANDARDS CODE (CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 24), VOLUMES I AND II AND ALL APPENDICES WITH CERTAIN AMENDMENTS TO APPENDIX J, CONSISTING OF THE 2025 CALIFORNIA RESIDENTIAL CODE, THE 2025 CALIFORNIA PLUMBING CODE, THE 2025 CALIFORNIA GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS CODE, THE 2025 CALIFORNIA ELECTRICAL CODE, AND THE 2025 CALIFORNIA ENERGY CODE; TOGETHER WITH CERTAIN CHANGES THERETO; AND ADOPTING BY REFERENCE THE 2024 INTERNATIONAL SWIMMING POOL AND SPA CODE, THE 2024 INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE, 2024 INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE, 2024 INTERNATIONAL GREEN STANDARDS CODE, AND 2024 INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL CODE TOGETHER WITH CERTAIN CHANGES THERETO; AND DELETING CHAPTERS 15.22 AND 15.32 OF TITLE 15 (BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION).”
2. Set a public hearing for December 9, 2025, regarding the proposed Ordinance.

Fiscal Impact:

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with the recommended actions.

Background:

Every three years, the California Building Standards Commission updates the California Building Codes to reflect the latest in building and fire safety standards. In July 2025, the Commission published the 2025 California Building Standards Code, which will take effect on January 1, 2026. While the 2025 Code becomes effective statewide regardless of local action, State law allows cities to adopt the codes by reference and make local amendments as needed. Specifically, the City may establish more restrictive standards than those contained in the Code, provided the amendments are supported by express findings showing they are “reasonably necessary because of local climatic, geological, or topographical conditions” (Health & Safety Code, §§ 18941.5, and 17958.7.) and in accordance with Assembly Bill 130. In accordance with these statutes, the local amendment findings specified in the proposed Ordinance demonstrate that the City’s modifications are necessary and appropriate for Signal Hill.

The proposed Ordinance repeals and amends certain chapters of Title 15 (Buildings and Construction) of the SHMC to adopt the 2025 CBSC and related uniform codes, together with local amendments necessary to address unique geological, and topographical conditions in Signal Hill. Adoption ensures that the City remains consistent with State law and maintains the ability to enforce building and safety standards locally.

Analysis:

On December 13, 2022, the City adopted codes based on the 2022 editions of the CBSC and

comprise the current Signal Hill Building and Safety Code (Building Code).

Local Building Code Modifications

Municipalities may adopt their own local building standards in addition to the CBSC standards which may be more restrictive, but they may not be less restrictive. The City of Signal Hill regularly adopts local building standards for the purpose of addressing local conditions. Cities are required by the State to justify modifications to their local building codes based upon local climatic, geologic, or topographic conditions.

The proposed Ordinance will adopt the 2025 edition of the CBSC and make minor amendments to it. These amendments consider the City's unique geological and topographical conditions. In addition to the CBSC, this Ordinance adopts a number of other specified uniform codes. The City of Signal Hill local conditions that justify modifications to the Code are as follows:

- Local administrative processes
- Petroleum production areas
- Earthquake fault hazards
- Soils conditions
- Drainage
- The City's View Policy

Many of the local modifications to the Code are administrative in nature, are clarifications, or are based upon local geologic or topographic conditions. Modifications also include public feedback received during implementation of previous code cycles. Specifically, removing redundant requirements to the exploratory excavations exemptions section of the code while maintaining safety during exploratory excavations.

Staff is providing a brief explanation of various local conditions that justify the proposed local Building Code modifications. To be clear, staff is not proposing new local standards to Title 15 of the SHMC. The City is re-adopting the same local modifications the City previously adopted by the City via Ordinance No. 2022-12-1542, which were reviewed and accepted by the California Building Standards Commission on May 1, 2023; however, two sections of the local modifications are being deleted as these are now included in the 2025 CBSC (see the first bullet below). In addition, minor edits and clarifications to the previous local modifications and their justifications are included in the proposed Ordinance amendment.

The following is a summary of the 2025 local modifications:

- Staff proposes to delete Chapters 15.22 (Housing Code) and 15.32 (Code for the Abatement of Dangerous Buildings) of the SHMC from Title 15 (Buildings and Construction) because these are now included in the 2025 CBSC being adopted by reference and are therefore redundant.

Staff updated a reference to the former editions of the CBSC and other uniform codes to refer to the correct edition.

- Building Code:
 - A building permit is not required for replacement windows of the same size or for doors installed in existing openings under certain conditions.
 - References to the Los Angeles County Grading Manual.
 - Clarifications of the requirements for exploratory excavations to streamline the process subject to conditions and ensure safeguards are in place.
 - Methane Assessment and Mitigation requirements pursuant to Chapter 16.24.080 of the Signal Hill Oil and Gas Code.
 - Clarifications on the requirements for obtaining an electrical permit.
 - The addition of residential Energy Storage Systems, i.e., Batteries, and residential EV chargers to the expedited permit and inspection process in conformity with State laws.
 - Clarification of the barrier requirements for residential pools.
- Plumbing Code:
 - The requirement for an expansion tank with the addition of a pressure regulator.
- Electrical Code:
 - The addition of a requirement that electrical permits only be issued to State licensed electrical contractors or an owner/resident of a single family or two-family dwelling employing a state licensed electrical contractor.

Procedurally, the City must take special steps whenever it adopts a code by reference. It must (1) introduce the ordinance and conduct a first reading; and (2) schedule a public hearing that may coincide with the second reading.

In accordance with Government Code Section 6066, notice of the public hearing must be published once a week for two successive weeks, with at least five days in between each publication. The first notice must be published at least 14 days before the hearing date. Accordingly, if the City Council wishes to adopt the Ordinance, it should schedule the public hearing and second reading for its December 9, 2025 regular meeting to allow for the second reading and public hearing to be published in accordance with the requirements of Government Code Section 6066.

Conclusion

Staff is introducing the 2025 CBSC for City Council approval to adopt by reference along with the amendments to the local modifications to the specified chapters of Title 15 of the SHMC. Should the City Council approve the proposed Ordinance, staff would bring back the Ordinance for a public hearing and second reading at its upcoming December 9, 2025 City Council meeting and would be effective thirty days thereafter.

Reviewed for fiscal impact:

11/13/2025

Siamlu Cox
Administrative Services Officer/Finance Director

Attachment:

A. Ordinance No. 2025-11-1555