



TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Rhoda Mae Kerr, Austin Fire Chief

DATE: November 10, 2016

SUBJECT: Plan and Timeline for Wildland Urban Interface Code Adoption

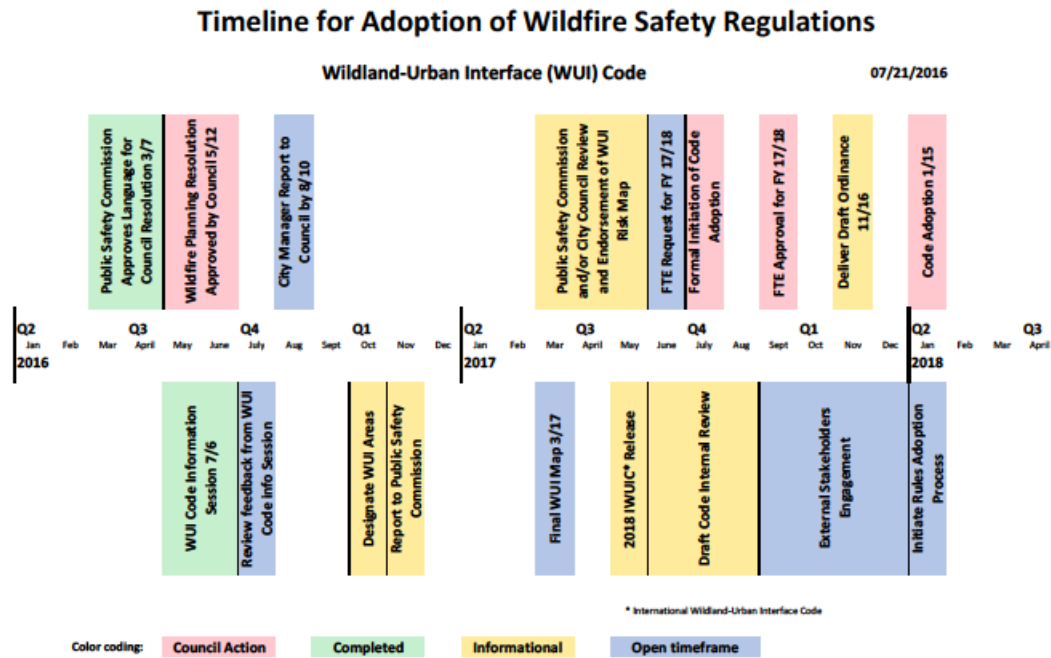
Per your resolution number 20160512-016 regarding planning for wildfire safety, I am pleased to report to you a plan and timeline for adopting regulations based on the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC). The Austin Fire Department (AFD) Wildfire staff have evaluated this technical code and have concluded that many of the practices suggested in the IWUIC would be applicable to Austin. The IWUIC, like the International Fire Code, is updated every three years. The next edition, 2018, is expected to be released in May of 2017.

In order to be in sync with the IWUIC regular release of updates my plan is to have AFD staff begin internal review in June of 2017 and subsequently ask you to initiate the formal process for code adoption in July of 2017 with a target adoption date of January 2018. A complete timeline diagram is provided on page two.

AFD's evaluation included literature review, consultations with wildfire experts, meeting with internal interest groups, and outreach to experts from the International Code Council and representatives from other communities that have adopted wildfire safety regulations. In this effort AFD staff determined that while Austin's wildland-urban interface is somewhat unique in vegetation types and development patterns it is similar in that it shares many of the same risks as other communities and regions in terms of structure ignition potential and need for safe and orderly emergency response and evacuation or shelter in place when necessary. Information obtained through this research, contacts, and local experience indicates adoption of certain accepted practices for wildfire safety can dramatically improve public safety in identified risk areas.

Any new wildfire safety regulations will be based on identified risk for individual land parcels. This risk assessment is currently being refined with plans to have it finalized by March of 2017, well ahead of the proposed time frame for review.

Staff anticipates continued coordination with numerous internal stakeholder groups such as Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Public Works, Austin Energy's Green Building program, the Austin Travis County Wildfire Coalition, and the Austin Public Lands Management group. External stakeholders are being identified and will be engaged once the formal code adoption process is initiated. Thank you for your continued support of this important public safety initiative.



CC: Elaine Hart, Interim City Manager  
Rey Arellano, Assistant City Manager  
Tom Dodds, AFD Chief of Staff  
Public Safety Commission