

REVISED AGENDA MATERIAL for Supplemental Packet 2

Meeting Date: December 2, 2025

Item Number: 40

Item Description: Adoption of the 2025 California Fire Code with Local Amendments
– Second Reading

Submitted by: Councilmember Lunaparra and Councilmember Humbert

This supplemental material proposes:

- Adopting sections 503.2.1, 503.2.2, and 503.4.1 and Appendix D as written and refer them to the City Manager, Disaster and Fire Safety Commission, and Transportation and Infrastructure Commission to develop and recommend revisions for council consideration by April 2026.
- Severing Section D105.2 to allow for further input and clarification before adoption.

Appendix D Section D105.2 states, “Aerial fire apparatus access roads shall have a minimum unobstructed width of 26 ft (7925 mm), exclusive of shoulders, in the immediate vicinity of the building or portion thereof.” Aerial fire apparatus roads are defined in Appendix D Section D105.1.

There is growing concern about how these code sections are being enforced in Berkeley and their implications for traffic safety. Appendix D has been unevenly enforced since its adoption in 2007. With the recent shift toward more technical enforcement, the policy has raised serious questions within the community, underscoring the need for discussion and modification. Most recently, its application has affected longstanding cultural events, such as the annual Juneteenth Festival and the Telegraph Avenue Holiday Fair, where Appendix D provisions were cited as the basis for proposing relocating them from their traditional venues. This shift highlights the need for an ongoing public process that engages street fair organizers and street-safety stakeholders to clarify the code's implications moving forward.

- Section 503.4.1 prohibits traffic calming devices unless approved by the fire code official. Decisions about traffic calming features like speed tables and cushions, raised crosswalks, and traffic circles should balance the need for quick

emergency response with the need to prevent deaths and injuries from traffic collisions, in line with the newly established Street Trauma Prevention program.

- Sections 503.2.1 and 503.2.2, and Appendix D, include clear roadway width requirements and authorities for fire apparatus access. Section 503.2.1 requires at least 20 feet of unobstructed width for most roads, while Appendix D includes the 26-foot rule that any street with buildings more than 30 feet high or three stories tall must have 26 feet of clear roadway to accommodate ladder trucks. Section 503.2.2 gives the fire code official the authority to require or permit even larger roadway width modifications. Wider streets are associated with faster driving speeds and increased risk of severe injuries and fatalities. Moreover, these road width standards are challenging to implement on many of Berkeley's narrower, historic streets. One possible modification for these sections is to include roadway separated by flex posts, mountable curbs, or medians in clear width calculations.

These provisions (all of Section 503 and Appendix D) are not mandated for adoption like the other provisions of the code. The 2025 California Fire Code specifically states that the state agency does not adopt these sections.

In fact, the following California municipalities have opted to modify, or not to adopt, these sections of the code entirely (this is not a comprehensive list):

- **Oakland** - Since 2022, section 503 and Appendix D were excluded from the municipal fire code over concerns of traffic safety¹
- **San Francisco** - Excludes Appendix D² and 503.4.1 in their entirety³. Amends section 503.4 to include sidewalks and medians in the 20-foot clear width.
- **Sacramento** - Excludes Appendix D
- **Emeryville** - Amends 503.2.2 to allow for widths below the required 20-foot clear width when needed to accommodate the city's urban design goals⁴
- **Santa Rosa** - Amends Appendix D to remove the requirement that roads with hydrants must be 26 feet in width within 20 feet of each hydrant
- **Orange County Fire Authority** - Excludes Appendix D⁵. Does not amend 503, but provides a Traffic Calming Devices Guideline⁶ for acceptable use of speed humps and speed cushions

This supplemental does not intend to reject these provisions outright, but rather to facilitate ongoing discussion and collaboration between our city's diverse stakeholders.

This may be considered a substantive revision, in which case, the December 2nd regular meeting would serve as a first reading, and Council would have to schedule a second reading in a special meeting before the end of the calendar year.

¹ <https://oaklandside.org/2025/11/05/fire-department-debates-safe-street-advocates-on-oakland-road-design/>

² <https://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/2022%20SFFC%20-%20Updated%20February%202024.pdf>

³ <https://sf-fire.org/sites/default/files/2025-03/2022%20SFFC%20-%20Updated%20February%202024.pdf>

⁴ <https://emeryville.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=14821063&GUID=43BD86B5-63F4-4494-804E-5B1C4B70E935>

⁵ <https://ecode360.com/LO4963/laws/LF2477842.pdf>

⁶ <https://storageocfaprod001.blob.core.windows.net/blobocfaprod01/2025/06/B-04-Traffic-Calming-Devices-2023-1.pdf>

