

COMMUNICATION

TO: LOS ANGELES CITY COUNCIL

File No. 11-1443

**FROM: COUNCILMEMBER MITCHELL ENGLANDER, CHAIR
COUNCILMEMBER DENNIS P. ZINE, MEMBER
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE**

COMMUNICATION FROM CHAIR AND MEMBER, PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE relative to proposed fees for the plan review, inspection, and testing of fire hydrants, fire access, and fire-flow requirements.

Recommendations for Council action:

1. REQUEST that the City Attorney prepare and transmit to Council an ordinance to amend Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 57.09, Access, Hydrants and Fire Flow Requirements to include provisions to effectuate the recommended collection of the following fees:

<u>Fee</u>	<u>Proposed Fee</u>	<u>Inspector Hours</u>
Fire environmental impact report research and review fee	\$156	1
Fire hydrant plan review fee	\$156	1
Fire hydrant field inspection and/or test fee	\$312	2
Fire Department access plan review fee	\$156	1
Fire Department access field inspection fee	\$312	2
Additional plan review, inspection or re-inspection fee – (minimum 1 hour and per hour thereafter)	\$156	1

2. INSTRUCT the Department of Building and Safety to collect fees for plan checks and other fire hydrant and access related services through its cashiering system.
3. DIRECT the Fire Department and the City Administrative Officer (CAO) to report to Council with an analysis of the proposed fees and the time required for Department staff to perform inspections.

Fiscal Impact Statement: The CAO reports that the proposed fees are estimated to generate an additional \$409,440 per year in General Fund revenue. The above recommendations are in compliance with City financial policies inasmuch as the proposed fees are fair and fully recover the total fee-eligible cost of providing fire hydrant related services.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

Summary:

In a report to the Mayor and Council dated December 12, 2011 (attached to the Council file), the CAO states the Fire Department has proposed a set of fees to be charged for inspection services of fire hydrants, fire access, and fire-flow requirements. The Department recommends that fees be levied for fire environmental impact report research and review, fire hydrant plan review, field inspection, and other inspections directly related to the enforcement of LAMC Section 57.09, Access, Hydrants, and Fire Flow Requirements. The Fire Department's Hydrants and Access Unit

enforces Division 9 of the Fire Code to ensure Department access, reasonable response distances from Fire and Emergency Medical Service resources, and adequate fire protection water availability throughout the City.

According to the CAO, the proposed fees will provide for approximately 40 percent of the full cost recovery potential of the Hydrants and Access Unit. Currently, 2,559 hours are spent for plan review, consultations, and the other services, provided to developers and contractors at no charge by the Department. Using the current hourly rate of \$156 for inspection and related services, the CAO estimates an annual inspection cost recovery of \$409,440 to the General Fund.

The CAO goes on to report that the remaining 60 percent of the workload is derived through interaction with governmental development agencies including the Department of Building and Safety, the Planning Department, the Public Works Bureau of Engineering, the Department of Water, and Power and the State of California Division of the State Architect. Cost recovery for this workload will be provided through a proposed "case management" and/or "fire protection infrastructure" type fee to be developed by the Fire Department in the near future.

The CAO further reports that the proposed fees would be collected by the Department of Building and Safety on behalf of the of the Fire Department similar to the current practice of other construction-related projects processed through the City's One-Stop Construction Services Centers. On August 16, 2011, the Board of Fire Commissioners approved the Fire Department's set of proposed inspection fees, as listed above. The CAO concurs with this action.

At the Public Safety Committee meeting held January 13, 2012, the Committee Chair and member discussed this matter with representatives of the Fire Department and the CAO. The Fire Department representative stated that fees will be charged to the developer and collected by the Department of Building and Safety. Proposed fee amounts include the costs of administration, employee benefits, and other overhead. The Committee Chair stated that the proposed fees seemed excessive and directed the Fire Department and the CAO to report to Council with further analysis. The Committee Chair and member recommended that Council approve the proposed fee schedule, as recommended by the Board of Fire Commissioners and the CAO, as amended to include the additional analysis.

Respectfully submitted,

- NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS -

MITCHELL ENGLANDER, CHAIR
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

DENNIS P. ZINE, MEMBER
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
ENGLANDER:	YES
PERRY:	ABSENT
KREKORIAN	ABSENT
ZINE:	YES