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May 4, 2021

Honorable Members of the City Council
City of Los Angeles
City Hall, Room 395
Attn: City Clerk

Honorable Eric Garcetti
Mayor, City of Los Angeles
Room 303, City Hall
Attn: Legislative Coordinator

[BFC 21-040] – FEE BASED INSPECTION PROGRAM R1/R2 PROPERTIES

At its special meeting of May 4, 2021, the Board of Fire Commissioners approved the report and its recommendations. The report is hereby transmitted concurrently to the Mayor and City Council for consideration and approval.

Should you need additional information, please contact the Board of Fire Commissioners' office at 213-978-3838.

Sincerely,

Isela Iñiguez
Acting Commission Executive Assistant

Attachments

cc: Board of Fire Commissioners (without attachments)
Fire Chief Ralph M. Terrazas (without attachments)

MAY 4, 2021

LOS ANGELES FIRE DEPARTMENT



RALPH M. TERRAZAS
FIRE CHIEF

APPROVED: 5/4/2021
BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
BY: [Signature]
COMMISSION EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

March 30, 2021

BOARD OF FIRE COMMISSIONERS
FILE NO. 21-040

TO: Board of Fire Commissioners

FROM: [Signature] Ralph M. Terrazas, Fire Chief

SUBJECT: FEE BASED INSPECTION PROGRAM – R1/R2 PROPERTIES

FINAL ACTION:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved w/Corrections	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn
	<input type="checkbox"/> Denied	<input type="checkbox"/> Received & Filed	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

SUMMARY

Existing California law requires that all multi-family residential apartment buildings consisting of 3 -15 units ("R1/R2 Properties") be inspected annually by local fire prevention programs. The City of Los Angeles (City) has approximately 54,000 R1/R2 Properties within its boundaries.

The Fire Prevention and Public Safety Bureau (FPB) has conducted inspections of R1/R2 Properties since 2017 and has collected data regarding the cost of these inspections. The FPB seeks approval to establish a fee sufficient to cover the costs of the state-mandated inspections.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Board:

Transmit this report to the Mayor and City Council, with recommendations that the Council:

- 1) Request the City Attorney's Office to draft an ordinance establishing a fee for the inspection of R1/R2 Properties; and
- 2) Direct the Controller's Office to work with the Fire Department to conduct a fee study to establish a fee structure that would reflect the costs of an R1/R2 Inspection Program.

DISCUSSION

Existing California law requires that all R1/R2 properties be inspected annually by local fire prevention programs. According to data collected from the Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department (HCID), the City has approximately 54,000 R1/R2 properties within its jurisdiction.

California Health and Safety Code section 13146.2 allows a city that provides fire protection services *and* inspects R1/R2 structures to charge and collect a fee for the inspection from the owner of the structure in an amount, as determined by the city, sufficient to pay the costs of that inspection.

From July 21, 2017 – September 17, 2017, the FPB conducted a pilot Inspection Program for R1/R2 properties (R1/R2 Inspection Program). The focus of the pilot was to determine the extent of tasks and commitment of resources necessary to complete all R1/R2 inspections in an efficient and effective manner. The inspection process includes pre-inspection tasks, on-site inspection, record management, and compliance measures.

The FPB also conducted a 60-day pilot R1/R2 Inspection Program in each of the 4 geographic operational bureaus utilizing a combination of both field members and FPB Inspectors. Due to staffing challenges, increased emergency call load and competing training requirements by the field resources, this pilot program determined that it was more efficient and effective to use FPB personnel as opposed to field members from the individual operational bureaus to conduct the R1/R2 Inspection Program.

Currently, the R1/R2 Inspection Program is funded by Variable Staffing Hours (V-Hours) and supported by volunteer staffing from the FPB. These volunteers conduct the inspections on their days off or during the weekend.

PILOT DATA

The following data was collected from the 2017 FPB pilot R1/R2 Inspection Program and again in 2020 based on the current FPB R1/R2 Inspection Program. Any established fee should be based on the Fire Inspector's hourly rate and be calculated to cover the full cost of staffing and support necessary to sustain an R1/R1 Inspection program.

Number of R1/R2 Properties within the City: 53,817

Average of Time of Inspection per Building: 10-20 minutes

Fire Inspector's Hourly Rate: \$341

Cost of Inspection per Building: \$57-\$114

Estimated Annual Cost recovery of R1/R2 Inspection Program: \$3,067,569 -
\$6,135,138

CONCLUSION

Given the current number of R1/R2 properties in the City, the cost of a state mandated R1/R2 Inspection Program is already considerable. With the increasing demand for housing in the City, FPB anticipates a continual rise in the development of multi-family residential apartment buildings. This on-going, and likely increasing, workload will require a long-term solution to recover associated costs in support of the program. A fee to conduct these annual inspections is authorized by state law and will allow FPB to sustain proper staffing levels to increase public safety in R1/R2 properties.

Board report prepared by Kristin M. Crowley, Deputy Chief, Fire Prevention and Public Safety Bureau.