



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
**REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

**DATE ISSUED:** April 17, 2008 **REPORT NO:** 08-065  
**ATTENTION:** Ad Hoc Fire Prevention and Recovery Committee  
April 21, 2008  
**SUBJECT:** Clarification of City's Brush Management Regulations

**SUMMARY:**

**THIS IS AN INFORMATIONAL REPORT ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE COMMITTEE OR THE CITY COUNCIL.**

**BACKGROUND:**

In response to lessons learned from the 2003 Cedar Fire, new building and brush management regulations were developed. In January of 2004 staff was directed to modify these regulations and in September of 2005 the new regulations were adopted by the City Council. These new requirements are important because there are a number of wildland/urban interface areas within the City of San Diego. These areas are considered a high hazard fire environment because they possess all of the ingredients necessary to support large, intense, and uncontrollable wildfires. The ability to live and operate more safely in this fire environment greatly depends upon preventative measures that include proper brush management around structures (known as defensible space), and the use of fire resistant building materials.

Over the recent past, a number of issues have surfaced relative to the City's Brush Management Regulations. In order to respond to these issues, a working group was formed and comprised of representatives from Fire-Rescue, Development Services and Park and Recreation Departments. This group identified some areas in the current Brush Management Regulations that were unclear and causing challenges for the public as well as City staff. As a result of this effort, a policy was developed to clarify these areas.

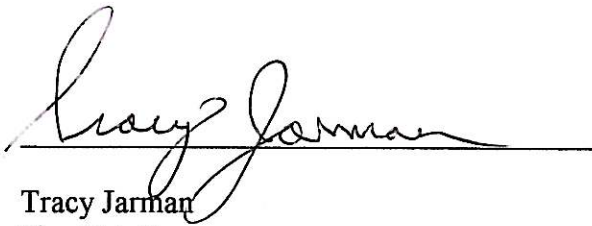
**DISCUSSION:**

The Clarification of Brush Management Regulations Policy includes the following:

- Description and guidance, including diagrams, relative to thinning requirements, spacing and slope
- Specific language referencing trees

- Specific alternate equivalencies (e.g. fire-rated construction) when defensible space requirements cannot be met
- Clarifies “previously conforming” rights
- Clarifies language regarding process for increasing defensible space requirements
- Defines how to measure defensible space distance

It is important to note that the issues identified above are designed to address the more immediate issues and do not reflect a code revision but rather provide clarification to the existing Brush Management Regulations. Moreover, some of the diagrams are hand sketched but will be professionally produced once the policy is finalized.



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