



CITY OF CORONADO

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

April 16, 2024

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INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING OF “AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CORONADO, CALIFORNIA, AMENDING SECTION 48.04.120 OF THE CORONADO MUNICIPAL CODE TO LIMIT BEACH FIRES TO THE CITY-PROVIDED FIRE RINGS ON NORTH BEACH”

RECOMMENDATION:

Conduct the first reading of the proposed Ordinance to amend Coronado Municipal Code section 48.04.120 regarding fires on public beaches.

BACKGROUND:

Currently, section 48.04.120 of the Coronado Municipal Code (CMC) governs beach fires and states that fires are permitted when using a City-provided fire ring, portable barbecue, or personal fire ring container. In 2014, the City Council amended the CMC by limiting fire materials to charcoal and clean wood, consistent with the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District's regulations, and restricting fire materials to a height of twelve inches above the fire container's upper edge.

At the regular City Council meeting on November 21, 2023, the City Council approved a Policy #2 request to put on a future agenda an item that explores “establishing a policy and/or Municipal Code regulation for beach fires in front of the Shores.” The City Council also included direction to look at fire regulations at all of our City beaches, including the Hotel del Coronado's beach and to present potential options for altering existing regulations.

On February 20, 2024, the City Council received a report on existing regulations of fires on the public beach and was provided with various options to amend the City's regulations for beach fires. Coronado's North and Central Beach area is approximately 500 feet wide, while the South Beach area is approximately 150 feet from the nearest residence. The narrow beach area on South Beach causes smoke intrusion issues for nearby residents and may increase the likelihood of various respiratory impacts. Additionally, the narrow beach area creates restricted access for Fire safety and Lifeguard personnel and equipment. For these reasons, the City Council directed staff to return with an ordinance to revise the CMC to limit beach fires to City-provided fire rings on North Beach and prohibit the use of all portable fire pits, grills, and barbecues.

ANALYSIS:

During and after the February 20th Council discussion of beach fire regulations, residents shared both support of the proposed changes and concerns with the reduction of beach fire access. Some residents suggested that portable, smokeless fire pits on the beach could be an alternative.

The draft ordinance found as Attachment 1 limits beach fires to City-provided fire rings on North Beach and prohibits the use of all portable fire pits, grills, and barbecues. If there is interest, the City Council could consider allowing portable, smokeless fire pits on the beach. Smokeless fire pits from brands such as Solo Stove, TIKI, and BioLite are engineered to burn more efficiently and generate fewer emissions. These fire pits push air through the bottom of the drum and through the top vent holes to add oxygen into the fire. The air at the top of the fire pit creates a “secondary

burn” and allows the smokeless fire pit to get hot while letting off much less smoke than competing fire pits. Although this option would allow an alternative method for the public to have a fire on the beach while reducing smoke-related burdens, it may cause enforcement challenges. If the Council recommends this change, an updated ordinance would be brought to the City Council at a later date.

Should the Council introduce the ordinance as presented, it will be returned for a second reading and adoption at a subsequent City Council meeting. City staff would then present the change to the Coastal Commission for approval before implementation.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no direct fiscal impact for amending the City’s regulations for beach fires.

ALTERNATIVE:

The City Council could keep CMC 48.04.120 in its current form or direct staff to return with alternative amendments.

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT:

This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under a Class 4 exemption for minor alterations to land, because the project involves only minor and temporary alterations and uses of the beach that have negligible or no permanent effects in the environment, (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15304.) The project is also exempt under Class 7 and 8 exemptions for actions by regulatory agencies for the protection of the environment and natural resources, because it is intended to curtail uncontrolled beach fire activities that are causing environmental problems at City beaches and public health concerns for City residents. (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §§ 15307, 15308.) The City will file a Notice of Exemption documenting this finding after City Council approval of the project.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

In lieu of the full text of the ordinance being published within 15 days after passage, the City Clerk shall publish and post the summary of the proposed ordinance at least five days before the meeting at which the ordinance is to be adopted and within 15 days after adoption.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Beach Fires Ordinance 2024-05

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