



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: NOVEMBER 17, 2020

FROM: COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WARDS: ALL

DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: APPROVE AMENDMENTS TO CHAPTER 6.14.030 OF THE RIVERSIDE MUNICIPAL CODE REGARDING PROPERTY MAINTENANCE AND THE USE OF ALTERNATE MATERIALS IN LIEU OF GLASS FOR WINDOWS

ISSUE:

Approve amendments to Chapter 6.14.030 of the Riverside Municipal Code – Property Maintenance to regulate the use of alternate materials in lieu of window glass on buildings and structures.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council:

1. Introduce and subsequently adopt the attached Ordinance amending Title 6.14.030 of the Riverside Municipal Code regarding property maintenance and the use of alternate materials in lieu of glass for windows.

BACKGROUND:

During the months of May and June 2020, the City of Riverside experienced protests in the downtown area following the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, MN. Other areas throughout the nation were seeing similar protests with some of these deteriorating into looting, vandalism, violence and property damage. To protect their buildings and businesses, some property and business owners applied boards to their building storefronts. After the protests ended, many businesses removed their boards, while others did not.

The local business community has voiced concern that the appearance of these boarded windows is creating the perception that downtown is unsafe, or that the businesses are closed. This has had a negative impact on some businesses.

During the week of August 17th, 2020, staff conducted an informal survey of downtown businesses and identified numerous buildings where boarded windows remain. On August 26th, 2020, The City Manager's Office sent letters to the businesses explaining the need to remove the boards and asking for their cooperation. The majority of the remaining businesses voluntarily complied, but several have yet to remove the boards from their windows.

DISCUSSION:

The City's current property maintenance standards include regulations regarding broken windows, exterior structure maintenance and paint, deteriorated surfaces and materials and landscape upkeep. There is, however, no provision restricting the use of boards or other materials in place of glass on windows and storefronts.

Staff is recommending revision to RMC 6.14.030 to remedy this by prohibiting the use of boards or alternate materials in lieu of windows for all properties that are occupied and/or conducting business. The recommended changes preserve the City's ability to secure or require the boarding-up of vacant/unoccupied structures and buildings that are subject to unauthorized entry, which is paramount to protecting life/safety and preserving assets that may be experiencing extended periods of vacancy. The use of alternate window materials would only be authorized when the City Manager and/or City Council has declared an emergency and the application of other materials, such as boards, is necessary to protect life and/or property. Boards and other materials would need to be removed no later than 30 days after installation, unless extended by Order of Emergency Services Director or City Council, while an emergency declaration is in effect.

To maintain a vibrant and robust downtown, it is in the best interest of all stakeholders to remove the boards on the windows. Moving forward, having businesses remove boards, or other materials in timely manner is essential to support a healthy environment for both community members and business owners, and prevent the perception that downtown is unsafe.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact to the General Fund associated with this report.

Prepared by: David Welch, Community & Economic Development Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Chief Financial Officer / City Treasurer
Approved by: Rafael Guzman, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Kristi J. Smith, Chief Assistant City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Proposed revisions to Riverside Municipal Code Chapter 6.14
2. Letter to area businesses