



**CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH**

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Newport Beach, California 92660

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[newportbeachca.gov/communitydevelopment](http://newportbeachca.gov/communitydevelopment)

January 29, 2015

California Coastal Commission  
South Coast Area Office  
Attn: Erin Prahler  
200 Oceangate, Suite 1000  
Long Beach, CA 90802-4302

**Re: Coastal Development Permit Application No. 5-14-1213  
Fire Rings – Wood-Burning Amendment  
Newport Beach, Orange County**

Dear Ms. Prahler:

The City seeks to amend the above referenced application which requested the allowance of charcoal-only fire rings. On January 13, 2015, the Newport Beach City Council asked City staff to submit a 60-ring, wood-burning plan to the Coastal Commission, provided that the plan complied with the 100' spacing requirements of South Coast Air Quality Management District's (AQMD) Rule 444.

The plan (**Plan 1**) approved by the City Council places 60-rings at the following locations and as depicted on the attached maps:

- 18 wood-burning rings at Corona del Mar (CdM) State Beach (13 separated by 100' within the 700' of residences, and five more outside of the 700' line);
- 26 wood-burning rings at the Balboa Pier area, with 13 on each side, separated by 100';
- 9 wood-burning rings at the Newport Pier/North area, separated by 100';
- 7 wood-burning rings at Newport Dunes, separated by 100'.

Alternative plans for consideration are described below. The City posted the alternatives on its website and is conducting an on-line survey to get feedback from the community until February 15, 2014. The public's input will be presented to the City Council for consideration:

- **Plan 2** would place all 60 rings in generally the same locations that they are today (CdM State Beach and Balboa Pier). However, due to the 100' distancing requirement, the footprint of the fire rings would cover more beach area. *City staff believes this is an acceptable alternative plan* (see reasons below).
- **Plan 3** would place some rings at CdM State Beach, some at the Balboa Pier, and then look to areas along the long stretch of beach between the Santa Ana River and roughly 15th Street to place smaller clusters of 4-10 rings, where the clusters are close to public restrooms and public parking lots. *City staff believes this is an acceptable plan* (see reasons below).

- **Plan 4** is like Plan 2, but it would ask the Coastal Commission to allow the City to seasonally remove half of the wood-burning fire rings, given that demand is lower during the winter months and wintertime also sees more inversion layers and "no burn" days. Sixty (60) rings would be available between March 15 and October 15 every year, and 30 rings would be available the remainder of the year. *City staff believes this is an acceptable alternative plan* (see reasons below).
- **Plan 5** would place some fire rings at CdM State Beach (14), some at the Balboa Pier (14), and then place 32 fire rings in a single line, spaced about 525' from one other, from the Balboa Pier to the mouth of the Santa Ana River, provided enough beach area is available. All rings would be at least 100' apart from one another, though most would be spaced 525' apart. *This plan is one that City staff reviewed, but preliminarily does not recommend* (see reasons below).
- **Plan 6** would attempt to keep the same general, current footprints of the fire rings, but intersperse charcoal-only rings with wood-burning rings (roughly 30 of each). The wood rings would be spaced 100' apart. The plan does not meet the City Council's goal of having 60 wood-burning fire rings nor the Coastal Commission's apparent direction - it would also be very challenging for the City to supervise and enforce. We worry that its cost, as well as the frustration it may cause some beachgoers, is too high. *This plan is one that City staff reviewed and preliminarily does not recommend.*
- **Plan 7** is the current "Charcoal-Only" approach. While staff has found this plan to be enforceable, we recognize the strong concerns of the Coastal Commission about it, as well as the wishes of the City Council that was elected in November 2014. *This plan is therefore, one that City staff reviewed and does not recommend.*

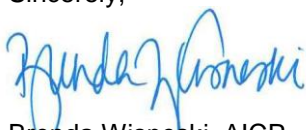
The following factors were considered in evaluating each alternative plan:

- Does it meet the goal of having 60 wood-burning rings citywide when demand exists?
- For the comfort of the fire-ring users, are the rings located near public restrooms and parking?
- Is the beach wide enough so that other uses can occur near the fire rings, and so that the rings are not routinely inundated during high tide?
- Would the fire rings' placement conflict with other organized activities, like recreational programs and camps, volleyball, flag football or Junior Guards?
- Does the fire rings' placement allow for public safety vehicle access in and around the rings? Are the rings clear of existing lifeguard towers?
- Does the rings' placement present a supervision or curfew or maintenance problem?

Please note that the City continues to consider locations for the AQMD's alternative fuel fire rings pilot program. After considering the demonstration at Balboa Pier or CdM State Beach, the City is now exploring the Newport Dunes. We will continue to keep you apprised to the program's progress.

At this time, the Newport Beach City Council recommends Plan 1. However, we would appreciate your feedback on the alternative plans for the City Council's consideration.

Sincerely,



Brenda Wisneski, AICP  
Deputy Director, Community Development

**Attachments:**

Fire Ring Plans 1 through 7

Available at:

<http://www.newportbeachca.gov/index.aspx?page=2479>

(hard copies to be provided by mail)