

MEMORANDUM

Date: May 15, 2003

To: Mayor Martinez and Council Members

Through: John Fischbach, City Manager
Gregory Byrne, CPES Director
John Stokes, Natural Resources Director
Lucinda Smith, Air Program Manager

From: Brian Woodruff, Environmental Planner

Subject: Study Session Summary 13 May 03 – Radon Resistant New Construction

The City Council discussed the proposed addition to the Building Code that would require radon resistant new construction (RRNC). The agenda item summary is attached. Council members Bertschy, Hamrick, Martinez, Roy, Tharp, and Weitkunaut participated in the study session.

Question 1: Is the Council ready to vote on RRNC?

All agreed to move forward on the issue. Council members Bertschy, Hamrick, Roy, and Tharp preferred that the Building Code require an active radon reduction system, while Martinez and Weitkunaut preferred a passive system.

Question 2: Does the Council prefer to vote on RRNC when it adopts the International Residential Code in September 2003, or earlier?

Only three Council members expressed a preference: one for earlier; two for September, to give staff time to prepare.

Question 3: Does Council want staff to include RRNC for multi-family dwellings in the next update of the Building Code, which is scheduled for 2004?

Three Council members expressed an interest in addressing multi-family buildings.

Staff also noted the following questions, which need to be answered when this issue next comes before the Council.

- Clarify the cost to install a passive or active radon reduction system.
- Provide medical or epidemiological testimony to verify radon is a health hazard:
 - How many individuals in Larimer County are diagnosed with, or die of, lung cancer due to radon?
 - Given the apparently contradictory information that we have a high radon level but a low death rate from lung cancer, how do we know radon is a health concern?
 - What is the lung cancer risk at residential radon exposures? Does household mobility (i.e., moving frequently) affect the risk?
 - Are children more susceptible to radon than adults are?

Staff understands that these are the next steps, based on the Council's direction:

1. Staff is to draft an ordinance to require that an active radon reduction system be installed in new single-family dwellings.
2. Staff is to schedule this ordinance for consideration at a regular Council meeting as soon as staff work is completed.
3. Staff is to include radon-resistant new construction for multi-family and other building types in the next update of the Building Code, which is scheduled for 2004.