TO:	T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
FROM:	James P. Duggan, Fire Chief, Fire Department
COPY:	City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT:	Request for Ordinance – Adoption of Fire Code Amendments – June 7, 2016
DATE:	May 16, 2016

SUMMARY:
The Tacoma Fire Department (TFD) is seeking approval of an ordinance to adopt the City of Tacoma amendments to the state adopted Fire Code by repealing and reenacting Chapter 3.02 of the Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC), the Fire Code of the City of Tacoma regulating hazards to life, property and the environment through the use or occupancy of buildings and premises within the City of Tacoma; providing for the issuance of permits and penalties for violations; and adopting by reference the 2015 International Fire Code (IFC) along with all adopted state of Washington amendments.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:
The proposed ordinance will help meet the City Council's strategic policy priorities by strengthening and supporting a safe city with healthy residents as well as assuring outstanding stewardship of the natural and built environment.

BACKGROUND:
Every three years the Washington State Building Code Council (SBCC) develops amendments to the newest edition of the International Fire Code (IFC) for adoption. The state has recently adopted the 2015 IFC with amendments, which will take effect on July 1, 2016. The state Fire Code sets the minimum Fire Code standards throughout the entire state of Washington. In addition, the local jurisdiction may amend the state Fire Code with additional requirements that are specific to the needs of that particular community but must not diminish the state minimum requirements. The City of Tacoma has consistently adopted local amendments to meet Tacoma's specific needs and intentions. TMC Chapter 3.02 adopts the IFC along with state amendments, and this ordinance will adopt the proposed local amendments.

The state adopted Fire Code takes effect on July 1, 2016, regardless if this ordinance is adopted. The proposed amendments are focused on life safety and environmental protection to ensure there are acceptable levels of safety regulations in our community, encourage safe and positive growth and development in Tacoma, safeguard our environment from hazardous material incidents, prevent loss of property and life, and focus on firefighter safety.

The proposed ordinance was presented to the Board of Building Appeals, a City Council-appointed group of local experts, design professionals and owners in the building and design industry, which recommended approval of these amendments on April 7, 2016. The proposed amendments were also presented to the Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability (IPS) Committee on May 11, 2016, which voted to forward the amendments to the City Council for full consideration and approval.

ISSUE:
During this code adoption cycle, TFD staff streamlined the local code amendments by minimizing the number of amendments where possible and incorporating provisions to reduce the need for updates to Tacoma's amendments in future code cycles. This creates better alignment with other City codes as well as nearby jurisdictions in the enforcement of the code regulations. It also allows for more predictability for owners, designers, and contractors who are working to develop our city in a positive way. The main underlying goals of the Fire Code amendments are to protect people, property, and the environment.

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ALTERNATIVES:
There are no alternatives being presented.

RECOMMENDATION:
TFD recommends adoption of the proposed Fire Code amendments to TMC Title 3 and requests approval by the City Council. These amendments are proposed to better protect people, property, and environment while ensuring positive and continuous growth within our community. Additional support to adopt the proposed amendments was provided from the Board of Building Appeals and the IPS Committee.

FISCAL IMPACT:
There is no fiscal impact to this proposal.

ATTACHMENTS:
- Exhibit A, proposed amendments to TMC Title 3