



# International Property Maintenance Code Adoption Update

City of Tacoma | Planning & Development Services | Regulatory Compliance  
Community Vitality and Safety Committee  
April 10, 2025



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## ●●● BACKGROUND



- After receiving a comprehensive report from our consultants, with recommendations for code updates that ensure equitable and inclusive interpretation, application, and enforcement, staff began identifying areas that could be improved within current enforcement procedures.
- In 2024, Code Compliance presented the plan to update the Nuisance code to CVS, which led to conversation surrounding adopting the IPMC.
- The adoption process was temporarily stalled while Code Compliance transferred from Neighborhood and Community Services and merged with Planning & Development Services in January 2025.

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## OVERVIEW



- Background
- Current Nuisance and Building Codes
- Reintroduce IPMC
- Alignment & Efficiencies
- City Council's Policy Considerations
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Proposed Revisions
- Timeline

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## CURRENT NUISANCE ENFORCEMENT



Currently the Nuisance Code 8.30 (last updated in 2014) consists of enforcement guidelines and compliance expectations on private property (residential and commercial), and abutting right-of-way for:

- |                                |                                |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • Garbage & Debris             | • Repeat Offenders             |
| • Overgrowth Vegetation        | • Notices of Violation         |
| • Parking on Private Property  | • Appeals                      |
| • Graffiti                     | • Penalties                    |
| • Noise (TMC 8.122)            | • Abatements                   |
| • Poultry & Pigeons (TMC 5.30) | • Recovery of Costs & Expenses |

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Currently the Minimum Building and Structures Code 2.01 consists of enforcement guidelines and compliance expectations on private property and the abutting right of way for:

- Substandard Building Conditions
- Derelict Building Conditions
- Unfit or Dangerous Buildings
- Notices of Violation
- Appeals
- Penalties
- Abatements
- Certificates of Complaints
- Demolition
- Recovery Costs

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- **Purpose:** establish minimum requirements to provide a reasonable level of health, safety, property protection, and general welfare insofar as they are affected by the continued occupancy and maintenance of structures and premises.
- **Provisions:** shall apply to all existing residential and nonresidential structures and all existing premises and constitute minimum requirements and standards for premises, structures, equipment and facilities for light, ventilation, space, heating, sanitation, protection from the elements, a reasonable level of safety from fire and other hazards and for a reasonable level of sanitary maintenance.
- **Responsibility:** responsibility of property maintenance is the owner and owner's authorized agents, operators, and occupants as related to the occupancy of existing structures and premises for administration, enforcement and penalties.

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## ALIGNMENT



- **Adoption of the IPMC** will align Tacoma with surrounding municipalities and national standards in consideration of emergency response and continuity of operations plans.
- **Standard software (Accela)** for case management and data retention and retrieval will be utilized as the main system for all Regulatory Compliance interactions.
- **Continuous Improvement Initiatives** - will align the processes of the recently merged Permit Compliance and Code Enforcement groups.
- **The Uniform Enforcement Code** will act as a consistent enforcement mechanism across all chapters of the TMC enforced by Planning & Development Services.

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## EFFICIENCIES



- Case management for one case per property vs. multiple case types per property
- Clarifying and simplifying codes for more measurable and consistent implementation of total property maintenance
- Regular updates and improvements through the International Code Council, keeping our regulations current with industry best practices
- Standardized terminology and definitions

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## ●●● POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Key policy considerations requiring City Council direction include:

- Differentiated enforcement for commercial vs. residential properties
- Addressing homeless encampments on private property
- Implementing sliding scale penalties
- Addressing repeat offenders from one property or one owner of multiple properties
- Cost recovery strategies for repeat abatements

We are requesting recurring meetings with City Council Members to discuss defining these and other City Council requests before the next presentation before this Committee.

Throughout this process, Code Compliance will also continuously engage with Legal as we work through the legalities of adopting the IPMC.

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## ●●● COMMUNITY & PARTNER STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Our partners included other City of Tacoma departments from general government and Tacoma Public Utilities. We also partnered with other agencies and surrounding City and County jurisdictions.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Neighborhood Night Meetings
- 311 Submission Follow-up
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Assessments
- Direct conversations with the owners in violation, and their neighbors

### PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

- Open forum at 2024 Washington Association of Code Enforcement Conference
- Weekly/Bi-weekly scheduled meetings
- Line by line TMC review
- Site meetings with Police, Fire, and Homeless Engagement Alternative Liaison
- Surrounding jurisdictions best practices

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Additional stakeholder engagement will also be part of the adoption process.

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## PROPOSED REVISIONS



While existing codes are effective individually, adopting the IPMC would create a comprehensive framework that addresses these private property conditions under a single, internationally recognized standard. The revisions will address Council's directives to modify:

### Timeline

- 311 Response SLA
- Appeal Rights
- Re-inspections
- Civil Penalties
- Abatements
- Case open to Closure

### Fee Structures

- Civil Penalties
- Abatements
- Abatement Recovery
- Liens
- Certificate of Complaints
- Collections

### Private Property Encampments

- Abatement timeline and frequency
- Owner's rights and responsibilities

### Additional Directives

- To be added by the City Council
- CVS Committee check-ins throughout major stages of the process

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## TIMELINE



### Target adoption timeline: April 2026

- Initial code investigation and stakeholder engagement (2023-2024)
- City Council input review (Months 0-3)
- Additional code writing (Months 4-8)
- City Council adoption (Months 9-12)

### Successful Adoption April 2026

- 90-Day rollout to educate and prepare the City (April-June 2026)
- Enforce the IPMC (July 1, 2026)
- 6-month review (January 2027)

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