



TO: T.C. Broadnax, City Manager
FROM: Sue Coffman, Building Official; Planning and Development Services Department
Peter Huffman, Director, Planning and Development Services Department
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Ordinance Amending Tacoma Municipal Code (TMC) Title 2, Buildings– State Building Code Adoption – June 7, 2016
DATE: May 18, 2016

SUMMARY:

Planning and Development Services is requesting approval of an ordinance to adopt the City of Tacoma amendments to the State adopted building codes. These codes include the 2015 International Building Code, 2015 International Residential Code, 2015 International Existing Building Code, 2015 Uniform Plumbing Code, 2015 International Mechanical Code, and 2015 International Fuel Gas Code.

These codes help ensure buildings and facilities constructed in Tacoma are safe and healthy for building occupants, accessible to persons with disabilities and the elderly, and energy efficient.

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

The proposed ordinance will help to meet the City Council’s strategic policy priorities of 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 new building codes for adoption by the state legislature. The State has adopted the 2015 international codes with amendments which take effect on July 1, 2016. These adopted codes set the minimum building standards throughout the entire state. In addition, the local jurisdiction may amend the codes with requirements that are specific to the needs of that particular community and do not diminish the minimum requirements.

Planning and Development Services has worked closely with the Council-appointed Board of Building Appeals in reviewing the proposed amendments to the building codes. The Board voted in favor of the proposed local amendments on April 7, 2016, and recommended their approval to Council.

The current adopted amendment also requires fire sprinklers for townhomes when there are five or more connected units but the proposed amendment will require fire sprinklers in all townhomes which is defined as three or more connected units. This amendment is supported by Master Builders of Pierce County.

At the May 11, 2016, Infrastructure, Planning and Sustainability (IPS) Committee meeting, staff reviewed the proposed amendments with the committee and received a due pass recommendation.

ISSUE:

During this code cycle, Planning and Development Services staff have streamlined the local code amendments, minimizing the number of local code amendments where possible and incorporating provisions which will reduce the need for updates to Tacoma’s amendments in future code cycles. This creates better alignment with other nearby jurisdictions in the enforcement of the code regulations. In addition, TMC Title 2.12, Flood Hazard and Coastal High Hazard Areas would be repealed because the provision in this code would be adopted within the TMC 2.02 adoptions of the 2015 International



Building and International Residential Codes. Minor changes are also proposed to TMC 2.13, Waterfront Structures and Marina Code and 2.17, Board of Building Appeals to align the code with changes in the Fire Code as well as to streamline the codes.

ALTERNATIVES:

There are no alternatives being presented.

RECOMMENDATION:

Planning and Development Services recommends adoption of the proposed City amendments to TMC Title 2 and requests approval by the City Council. These amendments incorporate important local considerations in enforcing the State building codes as well as support the adoption of codes to enhance the safety of Tacoma buildings.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact to this proposal.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Exhibit A, proposed amendments and staff recommended changes to TMC Title 2