

April 25, 2016

CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION ITEM

SUBJECT

Discussion of proposed updates to local building and fire codes as required by state law.

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POLICY ISSUES

1) Should the City amend the City of Bellevue Construction Codes (Chapters 23.10, 23.11, 23.12, 23.50, and 23.60 BCC) and certain provisions of the Construction Administration Code (Chapter 23.05 BCC), by adopting the 2015 model construction codes including Washington State amendments and certain City of Bellevue technical and administrative amendments, and create a new Chapter 23.13 to adopt the 2015 International Existing Building Code?

2) Should the City amend Chapter 23.12 BCC by adopting Appendix U of the 2015 International Residential Code (IRC) to provide voluntary Solar-Ready Provisions for new one-family and two-family dwellings?

DIRECTION NEEDED FROM COUNCIL

 Action

 X Discussion

 X Information

Staff seeks Council feedback and direction on the proposed local code amendments, and if adoption of IRC Appendix U Solar-Ready Provisions in new one-family and two-family dwellings should receive further consideration. Staff will return to Council for final action prior to the July 1, 2016 statewide implementation of the 2015 International Building and Fire Codes.

BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS

On July 1, 2016, the State Building Code Act, Chapter 19.27 RCW, and the WAC Chapters listed below, require that all cities and counties begin enforcing the 2015 model construction codes, as adopted and amended by the State of Washington. The State Building Code Act also allows for cities and counties (with some exceptions) to amend the codes, provided that such amendments do not diminish the performance standards or objectives outlined in the State Building Code Act.

The construction codes which are proposed for adoption are:

- 2015 International Building Code (IBC) / 23.10 BCC & WAC 51-50
- 2015 International Energy Conservation Code / 23.10 BCC & WAC 51-11C / 51-11R
- 2015 International Fire Code (IFC) / 23.11 BCC & WAC 51-54A
- 2015 International Residential Code (IRC) / 23.12 BCC & WAC 51-51
- 2015 International Existing Building Code (IEBC) / 23.13 BCC & WAC 51-50
- 2015 International Mechanical Code (IMC) / 23.50 BCC & WAC 51-52
- 2015 Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) / 23.60 BCC & WAC 51-56

As part of the City's code update effort, staff reached out to customers to solicit their input using several methods, including an electronic mailbox accessible from the Development Services website, and three open houses tailored to customer groups (residential, high-rise, and commercial) which were held in November 2015 and April 2016. In addition, notification of the open houses was sent to the following organizations:

AIA	American Institute of Architects
BOMA	Building Owners and Managers Association / Seattle – King County
MBA	Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties
SEAW	Structural Engineers Association of Washington – Seattle Chapter

The meetings were attended by a diverse group of building owners, developers, architects, contractors, and engineers. The feedback that staff received was very helpful.

As part of the ongoing effort to create a consistent and efficient permitting and inspection experience for builders and developers working in our region, staff worked with representatives of the MyBuildingPermit.com regional partnership in the code update process to create relative alignment between member cities. The areas in which alignment was not achieved were high-rise requirements, due to the nature of the large projects in Bellevue, which is not as relevant to some other local cities, and the administrative provisions, for which we grant a longer permit life in order to facilitate construction of multi-tower mixed-use projects.

Staff is also working through the partnership to create public information identifying upcoming code changes and sponsoring common training for staff and customers.

The proposed amendments to Bellevue City Code are designed to accomplish four key tasks:

1. Adopt by reference the model codes including Washington State amendments;
2. Amend provisions in the Construction Code Administration (chapter 23.05 BCC), which provides for the administration, organization, and enforcement of the construction codes adopted by the city;
3. Amend technical provisions in the Construction Codes (Chapters 23.10, 23.11, 23.12, 23.50, and 23.60 BCC);
4. Create a new Chapter 23.13 Existing Building Code.

Updates to the model construction codes happen on a three-year cycle through a process managed by the International Code Council. The updated International Codes are then evaluated by the Washington State Building Code Council where amendments to the model codes are considered and approved when deemed appropriate for the State of Washington. The final step in the update process is consideration by

cities and counties and the application of local amendments. The significant code changes that originated in the national and state update processes are described below, along with the local amendments proposed for the City of Bellevue.

Significant Changes National Code Updates:

- Five stories of wood-frame building now allowed over two stories of concrete construction, with a 70-foot height limitation maintained.
- All building code provisions for existing buildings are now under the International Existing Building Code.
- New requirements were added for carbon dioxide use in beverage dispensing and marijuana production and processing.

Significant WA State Code Updates:

- Energy Code update (revised to achieve a higher level of energy conservation in new buildings)
- Fire alarm systems must be reviewed by an individual certified in fire alarms or a licensed professional engineer prior to application for permits.
- All inspection, testing, maintenance and programming not defined as "electrical construction trade" by Chapter 19.28 RCW shall be completed by an individual certified in fire alarms.

Significant Changes Proposed by City of Bellevue:

- Add project phasing language to Chapter 23.05 BCC to provide greater certainty relative to applicable codes for large projects that are designed and constructed over multiple years.
- Clarification of requirements to allow rooftop amenity areas for multi-family buildings.
- International Residential Code Appendix U to provide voluntary Solar-Ready Provisions for new one-family and two-family dwellings
- Emergency Responder Radio Coverage
 - Currently evaluating effectiveness of mobile repeaters
 - If found to be effective in certain buildings, a "fee in lieu of" fund will be proposed
 - Would improve communication ability in existing buildings and significantly reduce cost for owners/developers in certain new buildings
- Mobile Food Vending
 - Cooking hoods cleaned every 6 months
 - Fire Extinguishers on hand
 - Generators appropriately separated
 - No blocking of exits, fire lanes
 - Propane canisters in compliance with DOT regulations
- Construction mitigation for large wood buildings
 - Applies to buildings:
 - Over 350,000 and
 - Over 200,000 when the building exceeds 50 feet in height, and
 - Over 80,000 when exposures exist within 60 feet horizontal distance

- Modeled after San Jose CA ordinance developed after 11 alarm fire in 2002 (Santana Row)
- Requires installation of fire walls to limit contiguous areas of unprotected wood to 50,000 s.f. or less in area
- Requires exterior walls to be protected when exposures exist within 60'
- Confidence Testing
 - Proposal to outsource oversight of confidence testing program effective 1/1/2017
 - Will require council approval of interlocal agreement and contract
 - Will significantly increase the percentage of fire/life safety systems that are inspected, tested and repaired as required

ATTACHMENTS

- **Attachment A** -- Shows which provisions of the national codes and current City of Bellevue construction code (Chapters 23.05, 23.10, 23.12, 23.13, 23.30, 23.50, and 23.60) would be amended with adoption of the proposed ordinances.
- **Attachment B** -- Shows which provisions of the current Fire Code (Chapter 23.11) would be amended with adoption of the proposed Fire Code ordinance.

AVAILABLE IN COUNCIL OFFICE

N/A