

Community Development staff presented information to Council on the proposed adoption of the 2012 editions of the International Codes and 2014 National Electric Code at a Study Session on April 11<sup>th</sup>. During that meeting, Council heard information on five issues relating to the new code adoption including:

- Residential fire sprinkler systems in one- and two-family dwellings and townhouses constructed under the International Residential Code
- Transition to newer, more restrictive energy conservation provisions
- Homebuilder costs to update master model home plans to the 2012 codes
- SACFD request to return an amendment to the IBC and IFC establishing 5,000 square feet for new buildings and building additions as a new area threshold for fire sprinkler systems

These issues are essentially the same as when the City adopted the 2009 code editions in 2012.

### **Residential fire sprinkler systems in one- and two-family dwellings**

The IRC has provisions to require fire sprinkler systems for one and two-family dwellings. Five metro area jurisdictions (Golden, Westminster, Boulder, Boulder County, Louisville) require residential fire sprinkler systems in dwellings and townhouses. Others, including our surrounding, competing jurisdictions (Adams County, Brighton, Thornton, Aurora) do not. Further, this requirement was included in the last round of building code updates, and Commerce City amended this requirement out at that time. Based on these factors, staff continues to support that decision as part of the 2012 code adoption.

Please see attachments for additional information on residential fire sprinkler systems.

### **Transition to newer, more restrictive energy conservation provisions**

Homebuilders have expressed concerns regarding needed time necessary to begin transitioning to more restrictive energy conservation provisions. Community Development Staff agrees and we propose a six month, market driven transition to the new provisions to be complete by the end of 2016. The City took this approach during the last code adoption and it helped make for a successful transition.

### **Homebuilder costs to update master model home plans to the 2012 codes**

Homebuilders have dozens of master models on file with the City. After the passage of these new building codes, these homebuilders will need to prepare new master models for submission and approval by the city. Allowing a six month transition to update models to the 2012 code editions is important to builders, as the cost and logistics of submitting and reviewing multiple master models on a short schedule is problematic - both for builders and Community Development staff. For these reasons, staff has proposed a six month transition period and a fixed price of \$150 for each master model. The goal is to provide a predictable cost to builders allowing for an easy transition while also providing a financial incentive to update their plans at a reduced plan review rate. This time extension will allow homebuilders to update plans on a planned schedule based on need without overwhelming Community Development staff. The City took this approach during the last code adoption and staff recommends this program for adoption of the 2012 codes.

## **South Adams County Fire District request to return an amendment to the IBC and IFC regarding non-residential fire sprinkler systems.**

At the April 11<sup>th</sup> Study Session, SACFD provided information on their request to return an amendment to the IBC and IFC establishing 5,000 square feet for new buildings and additions when fire sprinkler systems are required. The proposed amendment lived in the City's building codes for decades but was removed as part of the last code adoption. The proposed amendment is significantly more restrictive than thresholds established in the codes, and as a result, staff has expressed concerns regarding costs for small businesses and effects on economic development, and therefore recommended to Council to forego returning the amendment.

However, following additional discussions with SACFD, Fire Marshal Kevin Phillips rescinded the District's request as part of this code adoption with an understanding the City, including ED, work with SACFD in the coming months to consider a possible amendment at a later date that meets the objectives of the District and needs of the City. Staff certainly respects the District's desires on this important matter and intends to faithfully work with the District to arrive an agreeable solution. Please see Fire Marshal Kevin Phillips email attachment for further details.

### **Council concerns**

At the April 11<sup>th</sup> Study Session, Council expressed concern regarding adoption of the 2012 codes asking several questions why we aren't considering newer codes, namely the 2015 editions. Quite a bit of discussion occurred on this topic. As a follow up, and for those Council members not present at the Study Session, staff wishes to communicate the following with respect to the timing of code adoptions:

- The City has historically not been an early adopter of the most recent code editions, because this early adoption often translates to logistical issues with implementing new codes; providing education and training to builders and solving numerous application issues.
- Building Safety staff is small and not necessarily equipped to undertake education and training programs.
- The transition to newer codes is made easier by allowing larger jurisdictions to do much of the problem solving and training, thus making the City's transition more comfortable and predictable to homebuilders.
- Updating codes on a three to four year cycle provides consistency and predictability for homebuilders
- Adopting the 2015 editions now instead of the 2012 editions would be a bigger disruption to homebuilders as it is still early and many communities have not yet adopted the 2015 editions.
- To address some Council members concerns with falling behind in adopting new codes, staff is able to position itself to adopt the next code editions sooner after their publication, but recommends coordinating the timing with surrounding communities. Several have expressed interest in doing so, and a coordinated effort will benefit both homebuilders and involved communities. We can make this a priority with the next adoption cycle.

### **Codes proposed for adoption**

Community Development proposes to adopt the following 2012 and 2014 codes

- Ordinance No. 2079 adopting the 2012 International Building Code (all buildings except one- and two-family dwellings and certain townhouses)
- Ordinance No. 2089 adopting the 2012 International Existing Buildings Code (for all existing buildings, alterations and additions)
- Ordinance No. 2090 adopting the 2012 International Residential Code (one- and two-family dwellings and certain townhouses)
- Ordinance No. 2091 adopting the 2012 International Fire Code (all fire prevention and fire-fighting matters)

- Ordinance No. 2092 adopting the 2012 International Fuel Gas Code (fuel burning appliances, gas piping)
- Ordinance No. 2093 adopting the 2012 International Mechanical Code (heating, cooling and mechanical systems)
- Ordinance No. 2094 adopting the 2012 International Plumbing Code / International Private Sewage Disposal Code (all things plumbing related)
- Ordinance No. 2095 adopting the 2012 International Energy Conservation Code (energy efficiency for all buildings)
- Ordinance No. 2096 adopting the 2014 National Electric Code (all electrical regulations for all buildings and electrical installations)
- Ordinance No. 2097 adopting the 2012 International Property Maintenance Code (housing and property maintenance standards)

Also proposed is an ordinance repealing old, outdated codes including the Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators, Safety Standard for Platform Lifts and Stairway Chairlifts and the International Code Council Performance Code for Buildings and Facilities. This ordinance is a housekeeping item only. Regulation of elevators, platform lifts and chairlifts now belong to the State of Colorado and the International Code Council Performance Code is outdated. These codes should have been repealed as part of the last code adoption but were overlooked. Staff recommends repealing these codes as part of the current code adoption.

- Ordinance No. 2098 repealing the Elevator, Escalator, Platform and Chair Lift Codes and Performance Code for Buildings and Facilities