



Snohomish County

Planning and Development Services

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Snohomish County Council

Dave Somers
County Executive

FROM: Michael Saponaro, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: RELATING TO THE REGULATION OF CONSTRUCTION; ADOPTING THE 2021 EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CODES AS AMENDED BY THE WASHINGTON STATE BUILDING CODE COUNCIL; AND AMENDING AND ADDING SECTIONS IN CHAPTER 3.06 AND SUBTITLE 30.5 SCC

DATE: October 16, 2024

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this staff report is to provide the County Council with proposed amendments and background information necessary to adopt the 2021 Washington State Building Code (SBC), per [Chapter 19.27 RCW](#). The 2021 SBC was adopted by the state legislature and became effective on March 15, 2024. Chapter 19.27 RCW mandates that the SBC be administered and enforced by counties and cities, and grants counties and cities limited authority to amend the code as it applies within their jurisdiction. Snohomish County Planning and Development Services (PDS) began implementing these codes as of their effective date. Subtitle 30.5 SCC currently contains the 2018 edition of the SBC, which was adopted by Ordinance 21-030 on July 14, 2021. The proposed amendments will update subtitle 30.5 to the most recent 2021 SBC standards.

Table 1 of this staff report summarizes the proposed code amendments.

BACKGROUND

The State Building Code (SBC) is the minimum construction requirement for the state to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the occupants or users of buildings and structures, as well as the general public. The SBC is comprised of state specific codes such as the Washington Energy Code and model codes, such as the International Building Code that have been amended by the [Washington State Building Code Council](#) (SBCC) for statewide application. The SBC is updated periodically to reflect updates to the model codes (International Codes) and new state requirements. The SBCC develops and amends the SBC and provides recommendations to the state legislature. The SBC is detailed [in RCW 19.27.031](#) and is comprised of the following:

- 2021 International Building Code (IBC) with statewide amendments.
 - ICC/ANSI A117.1-2017, Accessible and Usable Buildings and Facilities, with statewide amendments (adopted as part of IBC).
- 2021 International Residential Code with statewide amendments.
- 2021 International Mechanical Code with statewide amendments:

STAFF REPORT

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- 2017 Liquefied Petroleum Gas Code (NFPA 58) For LP Gas.
- 2018 National Fuel Gas Code (NFPA 54) for LP Gas installations.
- 2021 International Fire Code with statewide amendments.
- 2021 International Wildland Urban Interface Code, published by the International Code Council Inc., as set forth in RCW 19.27.560; note this code awaits amendment by the SBCC, as it requires statewide mapping efforts per Engrossed Senate Bill 6120 (ESB 6120), estimated to be completed in late 2025.
- 2021 Uniform Plumbing Code with statewide amendments.
- 2021 Washington State Energy Code – Commercial & Residential .

PROPOSED CODE AMENDMENTS

Table 1 provides a summary and rationale of the amendments to chapter 3.06 SCC and subtitle 30.5 SCC.

TABLE 1: 2021 International Codes Ordinance: Summary of proposed amendments and rationale				
Code	Chapter Title	Amendments Made	Details	Rationale
SCC 3.06	Snohomish County Green and High Performance Building	Added 1 paragraph	Added 1 paragraph on the optional 2021 International Green Construction Code (IgCC)	Developers now have an option for IgCC conformance
SCC 30.50	Construction Codes - Administration	Added 3 lines	Added cross-references to the International Fire Code, the International Wildland Urban Interface Code, and the IgCC	References to each of the construction codes were incomplete
SCC 30.52A	Building Code	Edited 1st paragraph	Updated 2018 references to 2021	2021 conformance
SCC 30.52B	Mechanical Code	Edited 1st page	Updated 2018 references to 2021	2021 conformance
SCC 30.52C	Ventilation & Indoor Air Quality Code	Added 1 paragraph	Added reference that 30.52C is now part of the International Mechanical Code	SBC combined construction codes
SCC 30.52D	Energy Code	Edited 1st page	Updated 2018 references to 2021	2021 conformance
SCC 30.52E	Plumbing Code	Edited 5 pages	Seemingly important language was deleted in past ordinances, which was re-inserted and updated where appropriate	Correcting previous oversights
SCC 30.52F	Residential Code	Edited 1st paragraph	Updated 2018 references to 2021	2021 conformance
SCC 30.52G	Automatic Sprinkler Systems	Added new paragraph	Added reference that 30.52G is now a part of the International Fire Code	SBC combined construction codes

SCC 30.53A	Fire Code	Deleted ~60 pages	Roughly 90 pages reduced to 30 pages due to redundant language from the state code	Readability improved for code users
SCC 30.53D	Wildland Urban Interface Code	Added new code, 1 paragraph total	New section of construction code added, explaining the 2021 Wildland Urban Interface Code and its enforceability	Conformance to state regulations on WUI
SCC 30.53E	International Green Construction Code	Added new code, 2 pages total	New section of construction code added, International Green Construction Code (IgCC), adopted on a voluntary basis for interested developers	Developers now have an option for IgCC conformance

ANALYSIS

The following analysis provides a summary of the proposed code amendments' compliance with state law, regional and countywide planning policies, and county comprehensive plan policies.

Compliance with State Law

The Growth Management Act (GMA) contains planning goals, contained in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 36.70A.020, which guide the development of local comprehensive plans and development regulations. The following planning goals apply to these proposed code changes:

GMA Goal 7- "Permits. Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability."

Analysis: The proposed amendments would support the permitting goal by providing consistency to the permitting process by adopting streamlined expectations from the SBC.

Compliance with the Multi-County Planning Policies

The proposed amendments are consistent with the following multicounty planning policies (MPPs) from the Puget Sound Regional Council VISION 2050:

Housing Goal: The region preserves, improves, and expands its housing stock to provide a range of affordable, accessible, healthy, and safe housing choices to every resident. The region continues to promote fair and equal access to housing for all people.

Analysis: The proposed changes would ensure housing remains safe and in conformance with the SBC.

Compliance with the Countywide Planning Policies

The proposed amendments are consistent with the following countywide planning policies:

DP-7 The County and cities shall coordinate their comprehensive plans (RCW 36.70A.100).

Coordination in unincorporated territory planned by both the County and a city means that each plan should provide for the orderly transition of unincorporated to incorporated areas, including appropriate urban design provisions, by:

- a. Creating a safe and attractive urban environment that enhances livability; and*
- b. Balancing actions necessary to meet the requirement of achieving urban uses and densities with the goal of respecting already established neighborhoods.*

Analysis: The proposed code changes encourage safe urban environments with buildings that conform to the SBC.

Compliance with the Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan

The proposed amendments would be consistent with and help implement policies contained within the Snohomish County Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan (GMACP) – General Policy Plan (GPP). The following policy applies to the code amendments as proposed in this report.

GOAL HO 1 Ensure that all county residents have the opportunity to obtain safe, healthy, and affordable housing.

Analysis: The proposed code amendments would encourage safe homes that conform to the SBC.

Environmental Review

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) is not required for adopting the SBC.

Notification of State Agencies

Notice to the Washington State Department of Commerce is not required for adopting the SBC.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation to the County Council is to approve the proposed amendments to chapter 3.06 SCC and subtitle 30.5 SCC in order to formally adopt the 2021 SBC as amended by the SBCC and adopted by the state legislature, and to provide for county specific amendments.