



WASHOE COUNTY

Integrity Communication Service

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STAFF REPORT

BOARD MEETING DATE: May 13, 2025

DATE: April 11, 2025

TO: Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Kelly Mullin, AICP, Planning and Building Division Director,
Community Services Department
(775) 328-3619, kmullin@washoecounty.gov

THROUGH: Eric Crump, Community Services Department Director

SUBJECT: Request by the Community Services Department Director, through the Washoe County Clerk, and pursuant to Washoe County Code (WCC) 2.030, to initiate amendments to WCC Chapter 100 (Buildings and Construction) to update the editions of the specialized or uniform codes adopted by reference, pursuant to NRS 244.105, with any changes necessary to make them applicable to conditions within Washoe County. The newer editions include: the 2024 Northern Nevada Amendments; the 2024 versions of the International Building, Residential, Existing Building, Energy Conservation, Fuel Gas, Mechanical, Wildland-Urban Interface, and Swimming Pool and Spa Codes; the 2024 Uniform Plumbing and Mechanical Codes; the 2023 National Electrical Code; and the 2024 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 54 and 58 Codes. And direct the County Clerk to submit the request to the District Attorney's Office for preparation of a proposed ordinance in accordance with WCC 2.040. (All Commission Districts.)

SUMMARY

Pursuant to WCC Section 2.030, the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners (Board) is asked to initiate amendments to WCC Chapter 100 (Buildings and Construction), also known as the Washoe County Building Code, to adopt more current editions of the various specialized and uniform codes than those that are adopted by reference. New editions have historically been adopted every six years, in tandem with the other northern Nevada jurisdictions. The last editions were adopted in 2018, and these changes would adopt the 2024 series. Post-adoption, a six-month grace period will provide flexibility by allowing projects to conform to either the new editions or the old editions. Full implementation is anticipated on January 1, 2026, after which time, new building permit submittals must conform to the new editions.

Washoe County Strategic Objective supported by this item: Economic Impacts

AGENDA ITEM # _____

PREVIOUS ACTION

December 11, 2018 – The Board adopted Ordinance No. 1627, amending WCC Chapter 100 to adopt the 2018 Northern Nevada Amendments, and the 2018 versions of the International Building, Residential, Existing Building, Energy Conservation, Mechanical, Fuel Gas, Wildland-Urban Interface, and Swimming Pool and Spa Codes; the 2018 Uniform Plumbing and Mechanical Codes; the 2018 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 54 Code; the 2017 NFPA 58 Code; and the 2017 National Electrical Code.

May 10, 2016 – The Board adopted Ordinance No. 1579, amending WCC Chapter 100 to adopt the 2012 edition of the International Energy Conservation Code (the “IECC”) and the 2015 Northern Nevada Energy Conservation Code Amendments.

May 14, 2013 – The Board adopted Ordinance No. 1510, amending WCC Chapter 100 to adopt the 2012 Northern Nevada Amendments, and the 2012 versions of the International Building, Residential, Existing Building, Fuel Gas, Green Construction, Mechanical, Wildland-Urban Interface, Swimming Pool and Spa Codes; the 2012 Uniform Plumbing and Mechanical Codes; and the 2011 National Electrical Code.

June 12, 2012 – The Board adopted Ordinance No. 1487, amending WCC Chapter 100 to adopt the 2009 edition of the IECC and the 2011 Northern Nevada Amendments.

BACKGROUND

The International Codes (I-Codes) are a family of comprehensive building life-safety codes used in all 50 states, by the federal government, and in many other countries. They are updated every three years and take into account the latest technology and advancements in building science.

Through the Northern Nevada International Code Council Chapter, the region has historically adopted codes on a six-year cycle (instead of a three-year cycle) to minimize industry disruption. I-Codes:

- Establish minimum standards to safeguard life and public welfare by regulating and controlling the design, construction and installation of new buildings and alterations to existing buildings.
- Are continually improving to incorporate lessons learned from recent natural disasters, new construction materials/technology and occupant accidents.
- Assure our structures are safe and can be insured with the lowest risk rating (ISO rating for lower rates).
- Define the minimum acceptable standard for building and structure safety. This in turn drives our community’s marketability and resilience.

Currently, the 2018 editions of the International Codes, the 2017 National Electrical Code, and the 2018 Northern Nevada Amendments are enforced. For the purposes of this report, these codes are referred to as the 2018 codes. The newer editions identified in the subject of this report are referred to as the 2024 codes. Following the upcoming adoption process, a six-month grace period would allow an application for a building permit to be accepted using either the currently adopted 2018 Codes or the newly adopted 2024 codes. This grace period would last from July 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025. The fully effective date would be January 1, 2026, after which time, only the new code editions

could be used. Offering a six-month grace period is a recognized industry approach in Northern Nevada that allows the construction industry to transition to the new codes.

Specific Changes

The more current editions of the specialized and uniform codes proposed to be adopted by reference include the following:

- 1) 2024 International Building Code ("IBC First Print"), Chapters 1 through 35 and Appendices A, C, E, I, and P.
- 2) 2024 International Residential Code ("IRC First Print"), Chapters 1 through 44 and Appendices BB, BF, BG, BH, BO, CA, CB, and CD.
- 3) 2024 International Existing Building Code ("IEBC First Print"), Chapters 1 through 16 and Appendices A, B, C, and E.
- 4) 2024 International Energy Conservation Code ("IECC First Print"), Chapters 1 through 6.
- 5) 2024 International Fuel Gas Code ("IFGC First Print"), Chapters 1 through 8 and Appendix A.
- 6) 2024 International Mechanical Code ("IMC First Print"), Chapters 1 through 15.
- 7) 2024 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code ("IWUIC First Print"), Chapter 5.
- 8) 2024 International Swimming Pool and Spa Code ("ISPSC"), Chapters 1 through 11.
- 9) 2024 Uniform Plumbing Code ("UPC First Print"), Chapters 1 through 17 and Appendices A, B, D, E, I, and L.
- 10) 2024 Uniform Mechanical Code ("UMC First Print"), Chapters 1 through 18.
- 11) 2023 National Electrical Code ("NEC First Print").
- 12) 2024 National Fire Protection Association ("NFPA") 54 and 2024 NFPA 58.
- 13) 2024 Northern Nevada Amendments by the Northern Nevada Chapter of the International Code Council.

Regional Coordination and Industry Outreach

In November 2023, Washoe County, together with eleven other northern Nevada government jurisdictions and 24 industry partners began the review and development process for the proposed amendments of the 2024 International Codes. These codes are adjusted regionally not just to bring a more consistent approach to the way building codes are adopted and interpreted in this region, but to better suit the northern Nevada climatic and geographical characteristics, including frost depths, wind speeds and seismic requirements. The local amendments are the result of a transparent, consensus-based, and technical vetting process in conjunction with the local Northern Nevada International Code Council (NNICC) Chapter, construction associations, private industry professionals and other building departments in the northern Nevada area, including the cities of Reno, Sparks, Carson, Elko, Fernley, and Fallon, the counties of Washoe, Churchill, Douglas, Lyon, and Storey, and the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony.

Dozens of contractors, builders, developers, architects, engineers and building staff from twelve jurisdictions participated in seven subcommittees and one steering committee over an 18-month period.

At the conclusion of this 18-month process, the NNICC steering committee, comprised of representatives from each northern Nevada jurisdiction, voted to approve the amendments, which were subsequently presented to and approved by the Nevada Governor's Office of Energy.

The northern Nevada amendments were then presented in spring 2025 to industry professionals and other interested parties over three informational sessions hosted by the Associated General Contractors (AGC), Builders Association of Northern Nevada (BANN), and Nevada Association of Industrial and Office Parks (NAIOP).

The scope of this extensive vetting process was to provide local review and adjustments of the codes into a single amendment package for regional consistency and user-friendliness among different jurisdictions.

The request to initiate proceedings to amend County Code Chapter 100 is the next step in the process. If approved by the Board, an introduction and first reading of the proposed amendments to the Washoe County Code will be held in late May, and a second reading and possible adoption of the ordinance will be held in June, with the proposed amendments effective July 1, 2025.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended the Board approve a request by the Community Services Department Director, through the Washoe County Clerk, and pursuant to WCC 2.030, to initiate amendments to WCC Chapter 100 (Buildings and Construction) to update the adopted building code editions as identified in the subject description; and direct the County Clerk to submit the request to the District Attorney's Office for preparation of a proposed ordinance in accordance with WCC 2.040.

POSSIBLE MOTION

Should the Board agree with staff's recommendation, a possible motion would be:

"Move to approve a request by the Community Services Department Director, through the Washoe County Clerk, and pursuant to Washoe County Code (WCC) 2.030, to initiate amendments to WCC Chapter 100 (Buildings and Construction) to update the editions of the specialized or uniform codes adopted by reference, pursuant to NRS 244.105, with any changes necessary to make them applicable to conditions within Washoe County. The newer editions include: the 2024 Northern Nevada Amendments; the 2024 versions of the International Building, Residential, Existing Building, Energy Conservation, Fuel Gas, Mechanical, Wildland-Urban Interface, and Swimming Pool and Spa Codes; the 2024 Uniform Plumbing and Mechanical Codes; the 2023 National Electrical Code; and the 2024 National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 54 and 58 Codes. And, direct the County Clerk to submit the request to the District Attorney's Office for preparation of a proposed ordinance in accordance with WCC 2.040."

Attachment: Clerk's letter from Community Services Department Director requesting initiate proceedings to amend Washoe County Code Chapter 100