



Building/Fire Code Board Meeting Agenda

February 12, 2026

2:00 PM

[City Hall](#)

Aspen Room

415 W. 6th St

Vancouver, WA 98660

- 1. Call to Order - Commission Chair**
 - a. BFCC Notice
- 2. Legislative Background - Assistant City Attorney**
 - a. BFCC Hearing - Single Stair Alternate
- 3. Technical Code Presentation - Building Official and Fire Marshal**
 - a. Multifamily Single Stair Alternate
- 4. Commission Questions - Building Official and Fire Marshal**
- 5. Public Comment**
- 6. Commission Deliberation, Recommendation, and Action**

Building/Fire Code Board

Members

Nathan Morris
Adrienne Linton
David Wulbers
Michael Williams
Matt Chaika
John Gentry
Jimmy Stewart

Community Development

415 W. 6th Street
Vancouver, WA -

www.cityofvancouver.us

Community Forum Instructions

The public is invited to speak regarding any issue. Members of the public testifying are asked to limit testimony to three minutes. There are two ways to provide comments:

1. Writing: Public comments can be submitted in writing (name, address, contact information and comments) via email to sree.thirunagari@cityofvancouver.us by noon on the day of the meeting.
2. In Person: Pre-register by phone at 360-487-7837 or email sree.thirunagari@cityofvancouver.us by 5pm the day before the meeting or fill out a Public Comment form in person prior to the start of the Community Communications portion of the meeting.

City Hall is served by C-TRAN. Route information and schedules are available online at www.c-tran.com. You also

may reach C-TRAN at (360) 695-0123 for more information on times, fares, and routes.

Anyone needing language interpretation services or accommodations with a disability at a Vancouver City Council meeting may contact the City Manager's staff at (360) 487-8600 (RELAY: 711). Assistive listening devices and live Closed Captioning are available for the deaf, hard of hearing and general public use. Please notify a staff person if you wish to use one of the devices. Every attempt at reasonable accommodation will be made. To request this agenda in another format, please also contact the phone numbers listed above.



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING OF THE CITY OF VANCOUVER BUILDING AND FIRE CODE COMMISSION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Building and Fire Code Commission (BFCC) will hold a public hearing on Thursday, February 12, 2026, at Vancouver City Hall, Aspen Conference Room, 415 W 6th Street, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

The City's Building Official and Fire Marshal are requesting a BFCC meeting and public hearing to review a proposed building code alternate that would permit single-stair design within the City of Vancouver. The proposed alternate would become effective March 1, 2026, and would apply to multifamily buildings not exceeding six stories, provided they meet specific code criteria.

The proposed code path is consistent with SB 5491 (2023), the Washington State Building Code, Appendix Q, and Seattle Building Code single-stair provisions.

BFCC Agenda

2:00 PM: Call to Order – Commission Chair

1. Legislative Background – Assistant City Attorney
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3. Commission Questions – Building Official and Fire Marshal
4. Public Comment
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Vancouver City Hall is served by C-TRAN routes. Bus schedules are available at City Hall and other public buildings. For information on routes, times, and fares, please contact C-TRAN at 360-695-0123. Citizens wishing to join the meeting virtually may do so via Microsoft Teams by contacting Diana Quiroga no later than 10:00 AM on the day of the hearing. Diana can be reached at 360-487-7836 or by email at diana.quiroga@cityofvancouver.us.



CITY OF
Vancouver
WASHINGTON

BFCC hearing

Single Stair Code Alternate

February 12th, 2026

Sree Thirunagari
Building Official

Heidi Scarpelli
Fire Marshal

Philip Gigler
Assistant City Attorney

Legislative Background

- Senate Bill 5491 was passed in the 2023-2024 legislative session and became a law effective July 23, 2023. The bill legalizes single-stair multifamily buildings up to six stories. It requires the State Building Code Council (SBCC) to develop recommendations for these buildings and adopt the changes by July 2026.
- The recommendations must include considerations for adequate and available water supply, the presence and response time of a professional fire department, and any other provisions necessary to ensure public health, safety, and general welfare.



Why Single Stair Option

- **Legislative requirement:** SB 5491 directive to implement alternate single stair standards.
- **Design Flexibility:** Additional design options for architects and builders.
- **Space Efficiency:** Reduces building footprint and circulation space.



State Building Code Council process

- Existing Appendix Q is based on Seattle's single exit code provision.
- Seattle's single exit code path for 6-story buildings has been in place since the mid-1970s.
- As required by SB 5491, the Technical Advisory Group is reviewing and updating Appendix Q.
- Code update process is in the final stages. No change to key code provisions.
- Final copy is expected to be published around June 2026.
- Once adopted, single exit design option becomes mandatory statewide (with limited exemptions).



Single exit code alternate

Base code requirement:

Two exit stairways are required for buildings that are more than 3 stories in height.

Single exit code alternate:

Can be approved with a single stairway.

Additional fire-life safety requirements will apply-

The stair enclosure shall be pressurized



Discussion and Commission action





Title: R-2 Occupancy Single Exit alternate design option. VMC 17.12/Seattle Building Code 1006.3.2.7	
Policy and Procedure Number: CDD-DS-BLDG 005	Supersedes (Number and Title): NA
Scope: Building plan review and permitting	
Effective Date: March 1 st , 2026	Approved by: Sree Thirunagari/Building Official. Heidi Scarpelli/Fire Marshal

Purpose:

The purpose of this Policy is to provide an alternate code path for applicants who wish to utilize “single exit” design approach for multi-story apartment buildings not exceeding 6 stories in height.

Authority:

VMC 17.08.080(H) allows for “*Alternative materials, design and methods of construction and equipment.*” Stating that:

The provisions of this code are not intended to prevent the installation of any material or to prohibit any design or method of construction not specifically prescribed by this code or technical codes provided that any such alternative has been approved...

Limitations and Conditions:

This policy is supplemental to IBC/State Building Code Chapter 10 — Means of Egress and applicable fire code provisions.

Building Official and/or Fire Marshal may require additional conditions or deny single Exit provisions based on:

- Life-safety considerations outlined in SB 5491;
- Occupancy mix;
- Site and design constraints.

If a proposed single exit cannot meet all criteria, additional exits will be required as normally provided under the building code.

Policy:

Single exit design complying with Seattle Building Code single exit code provisions will be considered as an approved alternate to the City of Vancouver adopted building code (VMC 17.12) and the applicable state building code provisions.

Seattle Building Code 1006.3.3 Single Exits

7. Not more than 5 stories of Group R-2 occupancy are permitted to be served by a single exit under the following conditions:

- 7.1. The building has not more than six stories above grade plane.
- 7.2. The building does not contain a boarding house.
- 7.3. There shall be no more than four dwelling units on any floor.
- 7.4. The building shall be of not less than one hour fire-resistive construction and shall also be



Community Development Department-Development Services Policies and Procedures

equipped throughout with an *automatic sprinkler system* in accordance with subsection 903.3.1.1. Residential-type sprinklers shall be used in all habitable spaces in each *dwelling unit*.

7.5. There shall be no more than two single exit stairway conditions on the same property.

7.6. An exterior stairway or interior exit stairway shall be provided. The interior exit stairway, including any related *exit passageway*, shall be pressurized in accordance with subsection 909.20. Doors in the stairway shall swing into the interior exit stairway regardless of the occupant load served, provided that doors from the interior exit stairway to the building exterior are permitted to swing in the direction of exit travel.

7.7. A *corridor* shall separate each *dwelling unit* entry/exit door from the door to an interior exit stairway, including any related *exit passageway*, on each floor. *Dwelling unit* doors shall not open directly into an interior exit stairway. *Dwelling unit* doors are permitted to open directly into an exterior stairway,

7.8. There shall be no more than 20 feet (6096 mm) of travel to the exit stairway from the entry/exit door of any dwelling unit.

7.9. Travel distance measured in accordance with section 1017 shall not exceed 125 feet (38100 mm).

7.10. The exit shall not terminate in an egress *court* where the *court* depth exceeds the *court* width unless it is possible to exit in either direction to the public way.

7.11. Elevators shall be pressurized in accordance with section 909.21 or shall open into elevator lobbies that comply with section 713.14. Where *approved* by the *building official*, natural ventilation is permitted to be substituted for pressurization where the ventilation would prevent the accumulation of smoke or toxic gases.

7.12. Other occupancies are permitted in the same building provided they comply with all the requirements of this code. Other occupancies shall not communicate with the Group R occupancy portion of the building or with the single-exit stairway. Exception: parking garages and occupied roofs accessory to the Group R occupancy are permitted to communicate with the exit stairway.

7.13. The exit serving the Group R occupancy shall not discharge through any other occupancy, including an accessory parking garage.

7.14. There shall be no openings within 10 feet (3048 mm) of unprotected openings into the stairway other than required exit doors having a one-hour fire-resistance rating.