



Building/Fire Code Board Meeting Agenda

June 16, 2026

3:30 PM

[City Hall](#)

Aspen Room

415 W. 6th St

Vancouver, WA 98660

Building/Fire Code Board

Members

Michael Williams

Adrienne Linton

David Wulbers

Nathan Morris

Matt Chalka

John Gentry

Jimmy Stewart

1. **Call to Order - Commission Chair**
2. **Legislative Background – Assistant City Attorney**
3. **Technical Code Presentation – Building Official and Fire Marshal**
4. **Commission Questions – Building Official and Fire Marshal**
5. **Public Comment**
6. **Commission Deliberation, Recommendation, and Action**
To provide public testimony, please see instructions below.

Community Development

415 W. 6th Street

Vancouver, WA 98660

TTY: 771

www.cityofvancouver.us

Adjournment

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.



Title: R2 occupancy six story wood construction code alternatives-DRAFT	
Policy and Procedure Number: CDD-DS-BLDG/CODE 100	Supersedes (Number and Title): None
Scope: Inspection and plan review teams. Fire Marshal’s Office	
Effective Date: June 10 nd , 2026	Approved by: Sree Thirunagari, Building Official. Heidi Scarpelli, Fire Marshal

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish the City of Vancouver’s approval process and technical basis for permitting six-story wood-frame construction for R-2 occupancies as an equivalent code alternate. This policy provides clear direction for applicants seeking to utilize approved six-story wood-frame construction provisions and ensures consistent application of requirements across projects.

Authority

This policy is adopted under the authority of the Alternate Means and Methods provisions of Vancouver Municipal Code (VMC) Title 16 and Title 17.

The approval of this code alternative is based on the City’s review of the Coffman Engineers final report regarding six-story wood-frame construction for R-2 occupancies, discussions with Coffman Engineers, and consultation with Washington jurisdictions that currently permit six-story wood-frame construction.

Policy

Approved Code Alternatives

The City of Vancouver (COV) will accept six-story wood-frame construction provisions utilized by the City of Tacoma and the City of Seattle for R-2 occupancies as equivalent code alternatives under this policy.

Code Path-1: Tacoma Municipal Code 2.02.140

Amendment to IBC Section 504.4 – Number of Stories – by amending subsection 504.4.1 WA State amendment to the IBC and by addition of a new Section 504.4.1.1 – Type B occupancies within R-1 and R-2 occupancies.

The following section amends Section 504.4.1 of the State Building Code amendments to IBC Section 504.4 – Number of Stories, by replacing 504.4.1 in its entirety, and by addition of a new Section 5.4.4.1.1.



504.4.1 Stair Enclosure Pressurization Increase.

For Groups R-1 and R-2 in buildings of Type VA or IIIA construction, or I-1 Condition 2 Assisted living facilities licensed per chapter 388-78A WAC and residential treatment facilities as licensed by Washington state under chapter 246-337 WAC located in buildings of Type VA construction equipped throughout with an approved automatic sprinkler system in accordance with Section 903.3.1.1, the maximum number of stories permitted in Section 504.4 may be increased by one provided the interior exit stairways and ramps are pressurized in accordance with Sections 909.6.3 and 909.20.

Code Path- 2: Seattle Building Code

Chapter 5 – General Building Heights and Areas

Section 510 – Special Provisions

510.10 Group R-2 Buildings of Type IIIA Construction

The height limitation for buildings of Type IIIA construction in Group R-2 shall be increased to six stories where all of the following conditions are met:

- The first story of Type IIIA construction is separated from stories above with a horizontal assembly having a fire-resistance rating of not less than 2 hours. Fire-resistance rated mass timber is permitted in the horizontal assembly and its supporting structure.
- All stories of Type IIIA construction greater than 6,000 gross square feet shall be subdivided into compartments, by 2-hour fire-resistance rated fire walls, with areas of not more than 12,000 gross square feet.
- Each compartment shall have an enclosed exit stairway, and a standpipe in accordance with Section 905.
- Unprotected vertical openings, including unenclosed interior exit access stairways, shall not penetrate floor/ceiling assemblies between stories of Type IIIA construction or between stories of Type IIIA and Type IA construction.
- Mezzanines shall not be allowed in any story of the Type IIIA construction.
- The maximum total design dead load shall be 50 psf for all roof areas above the sixth story of Type IIIA construction.

Base code requirements applicable to both Seattle and Tacoma options:

- NFPA 13 sprinkler protection
- Mezzanines shall not be allowed in any story of the Type IIIA construction.
- The maximum total design dead load shall be 50 psf for all roof areas above the sixth story of Type IIIA construction.
- Unprotected vertical openings, including unenclosed interior exit access stairways, shall not penetrate floor/ceiling assemblies between stories of Type IIIA construction or between stories of Type IIIA and Type IA construction.
- The first story of Type IIIA construction is separated from stories above with a horizontal assembly having a fire-resistance rating per the applicable code provision.
- This approval is strictly limited to six-story wood-frame construction for R-2 occupancies. Although the City of Seattle's provisions include allowances for wood-frame construction beyond six stories, such provisions are not authorized under this policy.



Single Code Path Requirement

Projects utilizing this code alternative must fully comply with all requirements of a single approved code path (either City of Tacoma provisions or City of Seattle provisions).

The selective use, hybridization, or combination of provisions from multiple code paths is not permitted.

Alternate Materials and Methods Application Requirement

Applicants seeking to use this code alternative must submit an Alternate Means and Methods Application (AMMA), in accordance with the City's required form. The application must clearly demonstrate compliance with the selected approved code path.

Administration

This policy is administered jointly by the City of Vancouver Fire Marshal and Building Official and shall be applied consistently in the review and approval of all applicable projects.



CITY OF
Vancouver
WASHINGTON

BFCC hearing

Six Story Wood Construction Alternate

June 16th, 2026

Sree Thirunagari

Building Official

Heidi Scarpelli

Fire Marshal

Philip Gigler

Assistant City Attorney

Why Six-Story Wood Construction Alternate?

Housing and Affordability Benefits

- Expands housing opportunities on sites that may not support podium construction.
- Reduces construction costs compared to concrete podium buildings.
- Better aligns with the City of Vancouver's Comprehensive Plan and recent land use reforms, including the elimination of minimum parking requirements for multifamily housing.



Option-1: Seattle Building Code path

- **Group R-2 Buildings of Type IIIA Construction**
- The Seattle Building Code, Section 510.10 permits an increase in height for Group R-2 Type III-A residential buildings up to six stories when enhanced fire and life safety measures are provided.



Key aspects of Seattle's code:

- **Horizontal Separation Requirement:** The first story of Type IIIA construction must be separated from the stories above by a horizontal assembly with a minimum 2-hour fire-resistance rating.
- **Fire Compartmentation:** Any Type IIIA story exceeding 6,000 gross square feet must be subdivided into fire compartments with 2-hour fire rated fire walls, and gross area not exceeding 12,000 square feet.
- **Exit and Standpipe Requirements:** Each compartment must include an enclosed exit access stairway a standpipe.



Option 2: Tacoma six-story code path

- Tacoma facilitates this via Tacoma Municipal Code, Section 2.02.140 (which amends IBC Section 504.4) alongside the Washington State Building Code.
- **Pressurization of stair enclosures:** Currently, Washington State Building Code allows additional floor for **pressurization of stair enclosures** in Type V-A buildings, this allowance is extended to Type III-A.



Key aspects of Tacoma's code

- **Provides a smoke-free means of egress** by maintaining positive air pressure within exit stairways, helping prevent smoke infiltration during fire event.
- Enhances life safety by keeping exit stairways clear of smoke, improving visibility and reducing exposure to toxic combustion products during evacuation.
- **Improves emergency response operations** by providing firefighters with a protected access route to upper floors while occupants evacuate.
- **Offers an active smoke-control measure** which is comparable to passive fire and smoke barriers in certain building configurations.



Discussion and Commission action





Vancouver Municipal Code Proposed Title 16 Amendment



Heidi Scarpelli, Fire Marshal
Vancouver Fire Department



1

Presentation Overview



- Legal and Overview – Gigler & Scarpelli
- VMC Title 16 Proposed Fee Updates – Scarpelli
- Questions & Next Steps



2

Legal & Overview

- Legal
- VFD – Title 16 (Cost Recovery)

Increase Fire and Life Safety Inspection Program fees existing commercial occupancies through a phased implementation over the 2027–2028 biennium.







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Fire Fee Benchmarking / Council Actions

- Fire Fee Benchmarking – Tacoma * Seattle * Spokane * Bellevue * Portland
- City of Vancouver – Budget Committee / City Council Revenue Direction
- Previous City Council Actions – Fire & Life Safety Inspection Program

January 1, 2017

+5% on January 1, 2018

+5% on January 1, 2019

+5% on January 1, 2020



+5% on January 1, 2021

+5% on January 1, 2022

No increase on January 1, 2023

No increase on January 1, 2024

No increase on January 1, 2025

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Title 16 – Proposed Modifications Overview

PROPOSED PHASED FEE MODIFICATION - 2027 / 2028 Biennium Budget

Fees for Fire and Life Safety Inspections and Fire Operational Permits

25.99% January 1, 2027

25.99% July 1, 2027

25.99% January 1, 2028

Temporarily suspend the annual adjustment / Seattle-Tacoma CPI on fees

for Inspections and Ops Permits - **Excludes ITM Technical Reviews*



5

Realignment and Cost Recovery

Proposed fee revisions support the recovery of inspection costs from those receiving the service

Proposed revisions better align local fees with benchmarks from regional fire service agencies

Proposed fee revisions are designed to achieve approximately 90% cost recovery for the Fire and Life Safety Inspection Program

City Council and VFD Strategic Goal – Safe and Prepared Community



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Questions and Next Steps



Heidi Scarpelli, Fire Marshal
Vancouver Fire Department
Fire Marshal's Office



ORDINANCE NO. M-_____

AN ORDINANCE relating to the increase of fire and life safety inspection fees and fire operational permit fees over the next 2 years to bring fees in line with cost recovery and other similar jurisdictions and technical code cleanup; providing for savings, severability and an effective date.

WHEREAS, as reflected in SR - _____, the Building and Fire Codes Commission and the Vancouver Fire Department have recommended certain amendments be made to Title 16, and

WHEREAS, Fire fees shall maintain cost recovery associated with fire and life safety inspections, fire plans review and new construction inspection functions; and

WHEREAS, A fee increase modification is proposed to Title 16 inspection fees and operational permit fee schedules in order to keep pace with program costs

WHEREAS, the fire and life safety environment continues to evolve due to changes in building materials, construction practices, technology, and emerging hazards. Regular review of code provisions and fees is necessary to ensure the City maintains effective service delivery and appropriate cost recovery, and

WHEREAS, this ordinance is an exercise of the city of Vancouver's police and legislative authority derived from Wash. Const. art. XI, § 11 and is consistent with RCW 19.27 and WAC 51-54, and is to protect the public's health, safety and welfare; and

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY OF VANCOUVER:

Section 1. That part of Section 1 of Ordinance 3659, and previously amended by that part of Section 40 of Ordinance 4485, codified as 16.04.280, is hereby amended to read as follows:

16.04.280 Permits and inspection fees.

A. Whenever any permit is required by the fire code, such permit shall be in addition to all other permits or licenses required by law or other ordinance.

B. Construction and land use permit fees for permits required under the IFC shall be established in Chapter 17.08 VMC, Fees Table V Fire Fees, and VMC 20.180.080, Fire Review Fees.

C. Fire-related permit and inspection fees shall be adjusted annually on January 1st pursuant to the methodology set forth in VMC 3.08.100. Each such newly adjusted fee shall be rounded to the next higher whole dollar.

D. The owner or occupant of buildings that have any of the existing occupancy types listed in this section shall pay a periodic inspection fee, according to the fee schedule listed in this section. For the purposes of this section, “periodic inspection” means an inspection of the existing occupancy types listed in this section, according to the fire code official’s preset inspection schedule. A “periodic inspection” under this section is not related to any inspection associated with a construction permit, required under Chapter 17.08 VMC. For the purposes of this section, “special inspection” means any inspection of the existing occupancy types listed in this section to ensure compliance with newly adopted rules or regulations, compliance with a manufacturer’s recall, or any inspection related to a fire code enforcement investigation. There shall be no special inspection fee if a fire code complaint does not result in identifying a fire code violation.

1. The inspection fees in this table shall be adjusted as follows:

a. On January 1, 2027, the inspection fees shall increase by 25.99%, this increase shall be in lieu of the fee increase authorized in VMC 3.08.100.

b. On July 1, 2027, the inspection fees shall be increased by 25.99%.

c. On January 1, 2028, the inspection fees shall be increased by 25.99%, this increase shall be in lieu of the fee increase authorized in VMC 3.08.100.

Effective 01/01/2026:

First Code-Compliance Inspection	Occupancy Group Types B, M & R (Not Including R-3 Occupancies) & U	Occupancy Group Types A, E & LC	Occupancy Group Types F, H, I & S
0 – 500 sq. ft.	\$48 (limited to type B & M occupancies only)	\$120	\$150
501 – 3,000 sq. ft.	\$90	\$120	\$150
3,001 – 5,000 sq. ft.	\$140	\$171	\$201
5,001 – 7,500 sq. ft.	\$186	\$246	\$318
7,501 – 10,000 sq. ft.	\$201	\$305	\$444
10,001 – 12,500 sq. ft.	\$225	\$349	\$473
12,501 – 15,000 sq. ft.	\$253	\$408	\$496
15,001 – 17,500 sq. ft.	\$267	\$438	\$503
17,501 – 20,000 sq. ft.	\$284	\$462	\$541
20,001 – 30,000 sq. ft.	\$305	\$484	\$563
30,001 – 40,000 sq. ft.	\$342	\$541	\$579

First Code-Compliance Inspection	Occupancy Group Types B, M & R (Not Including R-3 Occupancies) & U	Occupancy Group Types A, E & LC	Occupancy Group Types F, H, I & S
40,001 – 50,000 sq. ft.	\$364	\$579	\$599
50,001 – 60,000 sq. ft.	\$386	\$615	\$615
60,001 – 70,000 sq. ft.	\$408	\$652	\$652
70,001 – 100,000 sq. ft.	\$422	\$682	\$682
100,001 – 150,000 sq. ft.	\$452	\$719	\$719
150,001 – 200,000 sq. ft.	\$506	\$763	\$763
Over 200,000 sq. ft.	\$615	\$800	\$800
If the actual costs (including, but not limited to, preparation, administration and inspection time) exceed double the fee established in Section 1 of the fee table, an additional hourly rate may apply.	\$97 per hour (actual costs, including, but not limited to, preparation, administrative, and inspection time)	\$97 per hour (actual costs, including, but not limited to, preparation, administrative, and inspection time)	\$97 per hour (actual costs, including, but not limited to, preparation, administrative, and inspection time)

First Code-Compliance Inspection	Occupancy Group Types B, M & R (Not Including R-3 Occupancies) & U	Occupancy Group Types A, E & LC	Occupancy Group Types F, H, I & S
Where the inspectable portions of the building are less than 50% of the total building square footage, then an hourly rate may be applied in lieu of the fee established in Section 1 of the fee table.	\$97 per hour (actual costs, including, but not limited to, preparation, administrative, and inspection time)	\$97 per hour (actual costs, including, but not limited to, preparation, administrative, and inspection time)	\$97 per hour (actual costs, including, but not limited to, preparation, administrative, and inspection time)
Where the inspectable portions of the building are less than 50% of the total building square footage, then an hourly rate may be applied in lieu of the fee established in Section 1 of the fee table.	\$97 per hour (actual costs, including, but not limited to, preparation, administrative, and inspection time)	\$97 per hour (actual costs, including, but not limited to, preparation, administrative, and inspection time)	\$97 per hour (actual costs, including, but not limited to, preparation, administrative, and inspection time)
Second and subsequent reinspections	\$97 per hour (actual costs, including, but not limited to, preparation, administrative, and inspection time)	\$97 per hour (actual costs, including, but not limited to, preparation, administrative, and inspection time)	\$97 per hour (actual costs, including, but not limited to, preparation, administrative, and inspection time)

First Code-Compliance Inspection	Occupancy Group Types B, M & R (Not Including R-3 Occupancies) & U	Occupancy Group Types A, E & LC	Occupancy Group Types F, H, I & S
			and inspection time)
Special inspections or other fire code inspections or fire code related activities	\$97 per hour (actual costs, including, but not limited to, preparation, administrative, and inspection time)	\$97 per hour (actual costs, including, but not limited to, preparation, administrative, and inspection time)	\$97 per hour (actual costs, including, but not limited to, preparation, administrative, and inspection time)

E. Second inspections are at no cost; all subsequent compliance inspections shall be charged an hourly rate per the table above. Where authorized by the Fire Code Official, the affidavit process shall constitute a second inspection at no cost.

F. *Inspection and Issuance of Operational permits required by IFC Section 105.5.* An applicant for an operational permit, required under IFC Section 105.5, shall pay an inspection and issuance fee of \$58.00 for each operational permit. The \$58.00 permit fee shall be increased by 25.99% on January 1, 2027, in lieu of any fee increase authorized in VMC 3.08.100. The permit fee shall be increased by 25.99% on July 1, 2027; and the permit fee shall be increased by 25.99% on January 1, 2028, in lieu of any fee increase authorized in VMC 3.08.100, except that the following subcategories of operational permits are hereby created:

1. *Special Event Master Permit.* Event producers shall obtain such permit for amusement buildings, organized carnivals and fairs (including festivals and concerts), exhibits and trade shows, etc. The fee for a special event master permit shall be \$103.00 for single use and \$209.00 for multi-use (includes fire permit and fire inspection). Both Special Event Master

Permit fees shall be increased by 25.99% on January 1, 2027, in lieu of any fee increase authorized in VMC 3.08.100. The permit fees shall be increased by 25.99% on July 1, 2027; and the permit fees shall be increased by 25.99% on January 1, 2028, in lieu of any fee increase authorized in VMC 3.08.100.

2. Operational permits issued for the storage and use of LP gas in structures with an aggregate quantity less than 125 gallons (water capacity) shall not be charged a fee.

G. *Inspection, Testing and Maintenance Report Processing.* There shall be a review fee for reports submitted to the Fire Code Official according to the schedule below.

H. *Payment process for Technical Assistance Fire Review.* A deposit fee is required prior to commencement of technical assistance review. A \$953.00 deposit for senior fire protection engineer/technical consultation plans review and/or specialized consultation at \$477.00 per hour. If additional fire protection engineering review and/or technical consultation time is required, the applicant may request additional time in two-plus-hour increments.

1.	Each Commercial Cooking Maintenance (Includes Suppression Systems and Hood Cleaning Reports)	\$61 per initial fire protection system type and \$8 per additional system of the same protection type
2.	Each Fixed Chemical System (Fixed Chemical Systems Include All Systems Defined in the IFC and Paint Booths and Clean Rooms)	\$61 per initial fire protection system type and \$8 per additional system of the same protection type
3.	Fire Sprinkler	\$61 per initial fire protection system type and \$8 per additional system of the same protection type
4.	Fire Alarm	\$61 per initial fire protection system type and

		\$8 per additional system of the same protection type
5.	Fire Pump	\$61 per initial fire protection system type and \$8 per additional system of the same protection type
6.	Emergency Generator	\$61 per initial fire protection system type and \$8 per additional system of the same protection type
7.	Standpipes	\$61 per initial fire protection system type and \$8 per additional system of the same protection type
8.	All Other Fire Protection Systems	\$61 per initial fire protection system type and \$8 per additional system of the same protection type

Section 2. **Savings.** Those ordinances or parts of ordinances which are amended or repealed by this ordinance shall remain in full force and effect until the effective date of this ordinance.

Section 3. **Severability.** If any clause, sentence, paragraph, section, or part of this ordinance or the application thereof to any person or circumstance shall be adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such order or judgment shall be confined in its operation

to the controversy in which it was rendered and shall not effect or invalidate the remainder of any parts thereof to any person or circumstances and to this end the provisions of each clause, sentence, paragraph, section or part of this law are hereby declared to be severable.

Section 4. **Effective date.** This ordinance is effective on _____, ____, 20__.

DATE OF FINAL PASSAGE at a Regular Meeting of the Vancouver City Council:

_____.

SIGNED this _____ day of _____, 2026.

Anne McEnery-Ogle, Mayor

Attest:

Lisa Brandl, City Clerk

Approved as to form:

Nena Cook, City Attorney

SUMMARY

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE relating to the increase of fire and life safety inspection fees and fire operational permit fees over the next 2 years to bring fees in line with cost recovery and other similar jurisdictions and technical code cleanup; providing for savings, severability and an effective date.

The full text of this ordinance will be mailed upon request. Contact public records staff at (360) 487-8480, citypdr@cityofvancouver.us, or via [Public Records Request -The City of Vancouver, WA](#).