



Cover Memo

To:	City Council
From:	Planning & Development Services
Date:	May 11, 2015
Re:	2015 Building Code Amendments

History:

This Building Code is adopted under Chapter 14 of the City's Code of Ordinances. The last Building Code adoption (2009) was approved on September 7, 2010.

The International Building Code (IBC) is a publication that creates guidelines for the construction of new buildings and changes or additions to existing buildings. It is maintained by the International Code Council and updated on a three year publication cycle. Jurisdictions choose which version of the IBC to adopt and San Marcos is currently operating under the 2009 IBC. Historically, the City has adopted amendments on a five year cycle to facilitate consistency for contractors and inspection practices. The five year adoption cycle coincides with the Insurance Standards Organization (ISO) timeline and assists in the reduction of insurance costs, as well as providing cost consistency for developers and contractors on a five year project cycle.

In an effort to communicate changes to the City's licensed general contractors, the 2015 codes were covered in the recent Contractor Continuing Education classes. This included discussion of changes in both commercial and residential codes, as well as potential significant impacts with the energy and fire codes. Review of updated codes by the Fire Marshal and building inspections revealed sweeping changes in the Energy code. Due to the significance of these changes, the recommendation is to wait on adoption until the state and national teams can align this code with practical construction techniques and standards. The anticipated plan would be to bring the Energy code back to Council in the 2016 update provided by the International Code Council.

At this time, staff is proposing Code amendments to adopt the 2015 version of the IBC and to make other necessary changes to the Building Code.

Staff Recommendation:

- Grammatical edits to Chapter 14 to clarify some of the provisions of that chapter.

- Adoption of the 2015 International Building Code, along with the 2015 versions of the International Property Maintenance Code, International Mechanical Code, International Plumbing Code, International Fuel Gas Code, International Residential Code, International Fire Code, International Swimming Pool & Spa Code and the 2014 National Electrical Code.
- Requirement that all properties with addresses in the City's extra territorial jurisdiction that are connecting to City utilities including water, wastewater and electric will be required to obtain a building permit and meet all building code requirements prior to being allowed to connect to City utilities.
- Increase General Liability insurance limits for licensed commercial general contractors to \$1,000,000. Note: all of our registered commercial general contractors have already presented certificates of insurance with at least \$1,000,000 rather than the \$300,000 limit that our code currently requires.
- Removing code sections such as Downtown Building Height Restrictions & Donation Collection Facilities which are better served and already addressed in the Land Development Code.
- Requirement that all foundations be designed by a Licensed & Registered Engineer. Includes an exception for single family residential room additions and single family residential detached accessory structures.
- Inclusion of language to address the size and location of spoils piles, jobsite management and approval of truck routes by the building official.
- Update of water service piping installation and approved materials.
- Removal of unnecessary language concerning Industrialized Housing.
- Removal of prohibition of sub-metering of electrical service.
- Update of prohibited acts by a licensed residential, general and trade contractor.
- Addition of requirements for a specialist contractor
- Update of general contractor licensing qualifications to allow for a person to become a licensed general contractor in San Marcos by presenting a valid contractor's license from another jurisdiction with proof of passing an exam of equal or greater rigor as determined by the building official.
- Removal of reciprocal agreement and license language.

- Update of language regarding who can apply for a permit.