



Land Use & Environment Committee

Green Building Code

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Agenda Item:
Green Building Code

Issue:
The 2012 Edition of the Washington State International Building Codes is currently undergoing review for State and local amendments and will be considered by the City Council in Spring 2013.

Committee Recommendation:
N/A

City Manager's Recommendation:
Receive a report and overview on adoption of the International Green Construction Code (IGCC) and consider next steps and options for using or adopting the International Green Constructions Code locally.

Staff Contact:
Tom Hill, Building Official, Community Planning and Development, 360.753.8486.

Background and Analysis:
What is the IGCC? It is a code intended to reduce the negative impacts of the built environment on the natural environment by addressing conservation of:

- Natural resources
- Materials
- Energy
- Water

Building codes and standards have traditionally addressed how the environment affects buildings - gravity, wind, snow, water, earthquakes, etc. Until quite recently, they have not generally addressed the other half of the equation: how buildings affect the environment. While traditional building codes provide many construction options (for example, walls can be built of wood or steel frame, masonry or concrete, etc.), they do not encourage one solution, material or system over another. In contrast, the IGCC mandates design choices based upon potential environmental impact.

Because the IGCC is consistent and coordinated with the International Code Council's (ICC) family of codes and standards, it is not a rating system, nor is it intended to replace them. The IGCC is a code which is intended to be adopted on a mandatory basis. Unlike most rating systems, the IGCC primarily consists of minimum mandatory requirements, just as other International Building Codes.

The City of Olympia staff, in concert with the Northwest Eco-guild recently completed a series of Focus Meetings that provided more detailed examination of the input the community gave us through the Imagine Olympia Comprehensive Planning process.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

Representatives of other jurisdictions, the NW Eco-Guild, the Olympia Master Builders and the Building Industry of Washington were included within the focus group discussions.

While all parties in attendance saw the potential in the IGCC to further impact the built environment for the better, especially public buildings, concerns were expressed that the IGCC also possesses the potential to significantly hinder new small business, renovation projects, and private sector growth, as well as creating educational outreach demands and inter-jurisdictional frictions due to the potential of unequal application and enforcement.

However, the feedback we received through the process clearly stated that our community wants to continue to be a leader in environmentally friendly construction and development techniques.

Options:

The 2012 Edition of the International Green Construction Code will not likely be adopted at the State level, but does authorize local jurisdictions to adopt the requirement locally if desired.

Staff recommends that the Land Use and Environment Committee:

1. Hear a status report on the IGCC requirements.
2. Consider whether there is interest in exploring adoption locally.
3. If so, provide direction how to approach this issue from a public involvement perspective and timing perspective, or
4. Proceed with a combination of the above, or
5. Take no action

Financial Impact:

N/A