



# **Introduction and Adoption of Proposed Changes To Chapter 9 Fire Code**

December 15, 2025

# Presentation Outline

- Purpose
- City Code – Chapter 9, Proposed Changes
- Article I – In General
- Article IV – Fire Prevention Code
- Suggested Motions
- Next Steps

# Purpose

- Align with the State's adoption of the 2024 model codes
- Remain a leader in the region in fire safety
- Ensure the functionality of fire protection systems in existing construction

# Article I – In General

## Significant Changes

- Permit Expiration
  - Added language to align with Chapter 5
  - must have a valid, approved inspection 180 days or permit expires
  - renewal fee per the Adopted Fee Schedule is applied
- Permit Extension
  - Added/deleted language to align with Chapter 5
  - Grants Building Official authority to extend a permit for a justified cause

# Article I – In General

## Significant Changes

- Existing Fire Protection Systems –
  - licensed vendors must provide inspection and testing reports of existing fire protection systems and fire protection features
  - Specifies timeframe for providing test reports
  - Specifies testing, inspection and maintenance frequency of certain equipment where not currently in the code

# Article IV – Fire Prevention Code

## Significant Changes

- Code Edition
  - Allow compliance with subsequent code editions where the project meets the entire code
  - Example, a design professional requests to comply with a new code section in a subsequent code edition

# Article IV – Fire Prevention Code

## Significant Changes

- Outdoor Cooking/Heating Appliances
  - Model Code requires 10 ft minimum distance to one and two-family dwellings
  - State increased minimum distance to 15 ft
  - City increase to 20 ft due to increased number of fires locally and nationally
  - Align with Montgomery County and City of Gaithersburg
- Micromobility Devices
  - Powered scooters, E-bikes, and Hoverboards
  - When charged outside, increase distance to a building from 10 ft to 15 ft

# Article IV – Fire Prevention Code

## Significant Changes

- Emergency Radio Communication
  - New buildings with below-ground floors, greater than 25,000 sq. ft per floor, or greater than three (3) stories in height
  - Must comply with Montgomery County Department of Technology Services
  - Current standard, will now be codified
- Assembly Sprinkler Protection Requirements
  - New dance hall, discotheque, nightclub, bar, restaurant, assemblies with festival seating:
    - more than 100 occupants, more than 5,000 sq. ft or located on a floor other than the level of exit discharge



# Article IV – Fire Prevention Code

## Significant Changes

- Existing High-Rise Sprinkler System Requirements
  - Must be sprinkler protected within 12 years of Notice of Violation, unless exceptions are met
  - Two high-rise buildings in the City, already in initial stages of compliance
- Public Disclosure Signage for High-Rise Buildings
  - Must be located at main building entrance of unsprinklered high-rise
  - Notification to the public that building is not sprinkler protected

# Article IV – Fire Prevention Code

## Significant Changes

- New Day-Care Sprinkler System Requirements
  - Required in all new day-cares unless:
    - less than 300 occupants
    - located on the level of exit discharge
    - rooms used for daycare have a door leading directly outside
    - less than 12,000 sq. ft
- Trash/Recycling for Collection
  - Not permitted to be stored in exit paths including in exits or exit corridors

# Article IV – Fire Prevention Code

## Significant Changes

- Assembly Occupancies Audible Announcement
  - Projected image or audible announcement required within 10 minutes of start of program.
  - Notify occupants of emergency exits
  - Theaters, auditoriums, assembly occupancies with more than 300 occupants and non-continuous programs

# Article IV – Fire Prevention Code

## Significant Changes

- Tent and Canopy Requirements
  - Additional flame resistance requirements
  - 10 ft. minimum separation between tents
  - Notify occupants of emergency exits
  - Theaters, auditoriums, assembly occupancies with more than 300 occupants and non-continuous programs

# Suggested Motions

1. I move to introduce the ordinance to amend Chapter 9 of the Rockville City Code, entitled "Fire Code."
2. I move to waive the layover period.
3. I move to adopt the ordinance at Attachment 1 of the staff report to amend Chapter 9 of the Rockville City Code entitled, "Fire Code."

# NEXT STEPS

- Code changes will be effective 30 days after adoption
- Upon adoption, staff will conduct outreach to notify stakeholders of changes



# Thank You!