



Board Summary Report

File #: 26-163

Agenda Date: 3/31/2026

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To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Ceila Rethamel, Interim Director, Public Works & Development

Prepared By:
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Presenter: Jason Reynolds, Planning Division Manager, PWD

Subject:
Adoption of the 2025 Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code

Purpose and Request:

The Wildfire Resiliency Code Board(WCRB) adopted the 2025 Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code on July 1, 2025. Per Section 24-35.5-1237(2)(a), Colorado Revised Statutes, a local governing jurisdiction must adopt a code that meets or exceeds the minimum standards of the Wildlife Resiliency Code within nine months of adoption by the WRCB, which is April 1, 2026. Given the state mandate, staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners adopt the 2025 Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code.

Alignment with Strategic Plan: Good Governance - Deliver mandated and essential services with excellence.

Background and Discussion: With SB23-166, the Colorado legislature created the Wildfire Resiliency Code Board (WRCB), which was tasked with creating a statewide wildfire resiliency code. The legislation required “governing bodies” to adopt those codes within six months after the WRCB finalized them on July 1, 2025. The “governing body” in Arapahoe County’s jurisdiction is either a fire protection district or, in areas without a fire protection district, the Board of County Commissioners. In 2025, the legislature adopted SB25-142, which granted governing bodies an additional three months to adopt the codes, extending the local adoption deadline to April 1, 2026.

Arapahoe County discussed the upcoming changes at the Homebuilders Association quarterly meeting on January 8, 2026. The HBA is aware of the code and some organizations including the Colorado Municipal League, Industry/Building Trades Coalition, and the American Wood Council are requesting that the legislature delay the local government implementation timeline. On March 16, 2026, House Bill 26-1334 was introduced, which would extend the local adoption deadline to April 1, 2027. As of March 17, HB26-1334 has not been scheduled for a committee hearing. Per current statute, communities must adopt the Wildfire Resiliency Code by April 1, 2026.

The WCRB published statewide maps of fire intensity, with low, moderate, and high intensity classifications. Please see attached code and maps of the affected unincorporated areas, including areas of low and moderate fire intensity. The Wildfire Resiliency Code requires new construction or

substantial additions in low, moderate, and high fire intensity areas to meet additional standards, such as maintaining clear space around structures, using noncombustible materials for exterior wall construction, and covering attic vents with noncombustible mesh. These requirements reduce fire risk but can also increase the cost of construction.

For most of Arapahoe County, the fire protection districts will adopt and administer the Wildfire Resiliency Code when referred applicable building permits. There are very few areas in unincorporated Arapahoe County outside fire protection districts; these are the only areas where Arapahoe County's adoption of the code would apply:

1. Oxford Santa Fe Area: There are some industrially zoned parcels near Santa Fe Drive and Oxford outside of fire districts. However, those sites are not within an area with elevated fire risk and the Wildfire Resiliency Code would not place any additional requirements on properties in this part of the county.
2. DADS Landfill, Sage Ridge Supportive Residential Community, and Lowry Landfill Superfund Site: These sites do include areas of low and moderate intensity fire classifications. However, these sites are unlikely to see significant construction: the state's Sage Ridge site is not proposing new buildings, the Lowry Landfill Superfund site will remain vacant, and the DADS Landfill may require additional offices or expansions to methane conversion facilities.
3. Eastern Arapahoe County near Washington County: This 16 square mile area, 14 miles east of Deer Trail near Washington County, is remote rangeland with no public roads and few water resources. Based on the 2024 aerials, there are no structures in the area. While much of the area is classified as low or moderate fire intensity, the impact of the Wildfire Resiliency Code on development potential is minimal.

Alternatives: The statute requires Arapahoe County to adopt the Wildfire Resiliency Code in unincorporated areas that are outside fire protection district jurisdiction. Given the limited areas affected in our jurisdiction, adopting the code will have minimal impact.

Fiscal Impact: Administering the Wildfire Resiliency Code in the few areas of unincorporated Arapahoe County outside of Fire Protection Districts should have little to no fiscal impact.

Alignment with Strategic Implementation Strategies: The attached framework helps Arapahoe County institutionalize values-based, transparent decision-making, documenting how we make decisions and carry out actions to achieve the county's strategic plan.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends adoption of the 2025 Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code.

Concurrence: Arapahoe County's Office of Emergency Management has been meeting with fire districts, who will be adopting the code in their jurisdictions through their own processes. Public Works & Development recommends approval of the 2025 Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code.