CITY COUNCIL MEMORANDUM

FROM: The Office of the City Manager   **DATE:**   September 23, 2019

SUBJECT: Consider Ordinance No. 3606, amending Chapter 98 of the North Richland Hills Code of Ordinances adopting the 2018 International Mechanical Code with amendments.

PRESENTER: David Pendley, Chief Building Official

SUMMARY:
In a continuing effort to modernize the city's building codes in support of Council's goal to provide quality community development and revitalization, staff recommends adoption of the 2018 International Mechanical Code with amendments.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:
The International Building Codes (I-Codes) are developed by construction industry professionals and adopted around the world as model codes based on the best, most recent building science. The I-Codes form a framework upon which the city develops a building code with regional and local amendments reflecting the city's unique needs as determined by local code users. These codes are reviewed by the Regional Codes Coordinating Committee appointed by the North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) and staff; and are ultimately recommended for approval by the Council-appointed Construction Code Board of Appeals, which also serves as the city's Technical Code Review Committee.

The I-Codes are continuously updated and republished every three years by the International Code Council, Inc. (ICC), headquartered in Washington D.C. with organizational roots dating back to the early 20th century. It has been the city's policy to update our codes every-other code cycle, or every six years.

Adoption of the 2018 I-Codes is in the best interest of the citizens of North Richland Hills by promoting health, safety and welfare. Updated codes also benefits our citizens by:

- Establishing consistency of code adoptions with other local jurisdictions.

- Ensuring the best rating possible by the Insurance Services Organization (ISO).

    ISO collects information nation-wide on building codes in effect in communities, as well as how the communities enforce their building codes. ISO analyzes the data using a Building Code Effectiveness Grading Schedule and assigns a

grade to each community. Insurers use this grading to determine premium rates for buildings constructed within the city.

The single most important factor used by ISO is how modern a jurisdiction's adopted codes are. Any city that is more than two code-cycles behind (which are the 2012 I-Codes), are automatically given the lowest rating possible.

- Contributes to the city's good standing in FEMA's Community Rating System (CRS) which enables discounted flood insurance rates for our residents.

Staff is proposing the adoption of the 2018 International Mechanical Code to go into effect upon council's approval. However, if approved, staff intends to establish a policy providing a 45 day window to submit projects that were designed under the 2012 I-Codes; giving engineers, architects, homeowners and builders time to adjust to the requirements.

Significant code changes include:

- Commercial food service establishment has been defined
- Requires enclosed parking garages to have continuous mechanical ventilation
- Dryer ducts must be sealed and cannot have a discharge fitting less than 12.5 square inches
- Commercial vent hoods cannot be discharged closer than three feet to any window (including non-operable windows)
- Pollution-Control Units to extract grease and smoke in restaurants have been codified
- Pipe insulation in air plenums must be appropriately rated against the proliferation of fire and smoke
- Refrigerant lines are prohibited from fire resistant corridors, interior exit stairways, ramps, passageways and elevator shafts

This action is consistent with surrounding communities that have adopted or will soon be adopting the 2018 I-Codes. The council-appointed Construction Code Appeals Board, acting in its role of as the Technical Code Review Committee, voted on August 15, 2019 to recommend the approval of the 2018 International Mechanical Code.

RECOMMENDATION:
Approve Ordinance No. 3606.