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REPORT TO ELECTORAL AREAS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9, 2021

SUBJECT BC Energy Step Code - Status Update

ISSUE SUMMARY

An update on the BC Energy Step Code and the intentions of the Building and Safety Standards Branch to introduce revisions by 2022.

BACKGROUND

The BC Energy Step Code was first introduced into the BC Building Code in April 2017 as an optional standard for increased energy efficiency of new buildings (see attached overview of the Energy Step Code as Appendix A). These voluntary provincial standards are based on incremental steps, whereby for houses and Part 9 buildings Step 1 is considered equivalent to current prescriptive Code requirements and Steps 2, 3, 4 and 5 are 10%, 20%, 40% and 80% respectively more energy efficient than Step 1.

The current 2018 Building Code includes both prescriptive insulation requirements, such as minimum insulation values for a wall system, as well as the performance based options of the Energy Step Code, involving energy modelling to demonstrate an overall efficiency of a building as a whole.

Provincial targets for mandatory energy efficiency requirements for new buildings were originally set at 20% more energy efficient by 2022, 40% by 2027 and 80% by 2032. The 2032 goal of 80% would result in net-zero energy ready buildings.

In recent discussions with the Building and Safety Standards Branch, the CRD was advised that the intention is to still introduce changes to the Building Code within 2022 that will increase energy efficiency requirements by 20%. A draft of the revisions is expected to be prepared by the fall of 2021. Industry consultation and review will take place prior to the expected adoption of the revisions in December 2022. Once the increased energy efficiency requirements have been adopted into the BC Building Code, municipalities and districts must apply, at minimum, the requirements appropriate to buildings of new construction. Details and specific timeframes have not been established at this time.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Electoral Areas Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That the BC Energy Step Code – Status Update report be received for information.

Alternative 2

That the BC Energy Step Code - Progress Review report be referred back to staff for further information based on Electoral Areas Committee direction.

IMPLICATIONS

Intergovernmental Implications

At present municipalities and districts may voluntarily implement Step Code requirements within their bylaws. Many districts and municipalities throughout BC have begun varying forms of implementation ranging from initial notification and consultation to mandatory steps for buildings of new construction.

CONCLUSION

The original provincial targets for mandatory energy efficiency under the BC Energy Step Code remain the same with an expected implementation of a 20% energy efficiency increase by 2022. Details and exact timeframes are yet to be determined.

RECOMMENDATION

The Electoral Areas Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That the BC Energy Step Code – Status Update report be received for information.

Submitted by:	Mike Taylor, RBO, Manager and Chief Building Inspector, Building Inspection
Concurrence:	Kevin Lorette, P. Eng., MBA, General Manager, Planning & Protective Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A - How the BC Energy Step Code works