

## **Code Change Policy**

Governance of Columbus City Codes is one of Council’s primary responsibilities, and the impact that code changes have can be broad, significant, and can carry risk. Even minor changes can have unknown negative consequences on interested parties that may or may not have been involved in the formation of new or amended code provisions. For these reasons, we propose to follow a comprehensive policy around code changes. This policy will be enacted for all code changes that would be proposed after the 5/20/24 Council meeting, and will be included in the Clerk’s office guidelines for drafting legislation moving forward.

### **Universal Principles:**

1. Unless there are extraordinary circumstances, code changes are never adopted as emergency measures.
  - a. If code changes must be passed as an emergency, the content of the code change and a corresponding fact sheet must be published in a widely-available format for no less than 14 days prior to passage.
2. All significant code changes should be subject to a public hearing, ideally prior to appearing on a Council agenda for a first reading. Recognizing that “significant” is subjective, significant code changes would be considered anything for which we would rationally expect feedback or input from interested external parties.
  - a. An exception to this would be changes that do not enact what we would normally consider to be substantive policy changes, or anything objectively non-controversial; for example, an ordinance to clean up previously authorized code changes because of drafting errors.
3. All code changes should be accompanied by a fact sheet, the format of which will be prescribed by the Clerk’s Office, and distributed to Councilmember offices and staff well in advance (i.e. at least 5 working days) of a public hearing. It is incumbent upon drafters to complete the fact sheet and ensure that it has been distributed to Councilmember offices.
4. Drafters should be able to demonstrate that they have completed a thorough community engagement process to determine the scope of interested parties and that questions or concerns by said parties have been addressed well in advance of requesting a code change to appear on a Council agenda.

### **For Code Changes Proposed by the Administration, Attorney, or Auditor:**

1. It is strongly recommended that drafters work with Council offices to set up no fewer than two briefing sessions during which Councilmembers can be briefed on the details of a proposed code change and to allow them to ask questions of administration/Attorney/Auditor staff.

**SHANNON G. HARDIN, PRESIDENT | ROB DORANS, PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE**  
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**MELISSA GREEN | EMMANUEL V. REMY | CHRISTOPHER L. WYCHE**

**CITY CLERK | ANDREA BLEVINS, CMC**

**DRAFTING OFFICE/DEPARTMENT**

**Fact Sheet:** Proposed Changes to [insert title, chapter, etc.]

**Drafter:**



**Department Requesting Code Change:**

Council

**Drafter:**

Niyah Walters

**Email and Phone:**

[niwalters@columbus.gov](mailto:niwalters@columbus.gov) 5-2911

**Columbus City Code Title Being Amended/Created/Repealed:**

Enacts 4501.55, 4501.0747, 4501.777, 4501.147, 4501.1961, 4551.08, and 4551.081

**What is the overall purpose of this code change?** *Summarize the general themes of the code change(s) and the need for these changes. Please utilize language and descriptors that would be easily understandable by the general public.*

To create an access to counsel policy that provides counsel for our most vulnerable residents who are at risk of being evicted from their homes.

**Why is this code change needed?** *Examples: Correcting a drafting error; bringing code into alignment with changes to state law. For other policy changes, it may be necessary to provide a*

Franklin County continues to have the highest number of evictions in the state. Data shows that tenants who have representation are less likely to be evicted from their home. This policy does just that and helps keep more residents housed.

*much more in-depth rationale in the section.*

**What would be the impact of not adopting this code change?**

**Are there any operating or capital budget cost/savings implications for this code change?**

*These may be direct or in-direct, and please also consider long-term impact.*

More residents will continue to be evicted from their homes without this policy.

This policy for its initial investment would need 1.5M

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**Describe the community engagement process regarding this code change. What residents, impacted parties, and constituents may be affected? Have they been engaged, and how so? How was their feedback incorporated (or not incorporated) into this code change? Will this code change take effect with the ordinance, or is there a delayed effective date?**

This code change had a hearing as well as multiple stakeholder conversations. Additionally, this policy is the result of a study conducted by Council to determine the economic benefit if a policy such as this was enacted.

30-day legislation.

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