

Building & Fire Code Update

Primarily Single Stair Buildings & Wildland/Urban Fire Interface

Community Planning & Development and Denver Fire Department

Community Planning & Housing Committee
November 4, 2025

Agenda

1. Overview of Topics
2. Single Stair Buildings
3. Wildland/Urban Interface
4. Miscellaneous/Minor Updates
5. Timeline for Next Steps



Background / Overview

- Single Stair Apartment/Condo Buildings up to 5-Stories
 - National, state, and locally advancing updates to current regulations
 - 2027 International Building Code & International Fire Code
 - Colorado HB 25-1273
 - This amendment proposed with Council sponsors:
 - Sandoval, Parady, Kashmann, Watson
- Wildland/Urban Fire Interface
 - Colorado SB 23-166
 - Very minor impact for urban CCD (19 SFD + some DEN airport property)
- Minor residential, energy, plumbing codes, and administrative revisions

Single Stair Buildings

- Research and national + local conversations through building & fire started in 2024
- Following state adoption, we drafted code language at the direction of council sponsors
- Conducted external stakeholder engagement through an online survey and a series of in-person focus groups, as well as newsletters and webpages
- Only the Building & Fire Code require updates. There is no proposed Zoning Code update as part of this amendment package.

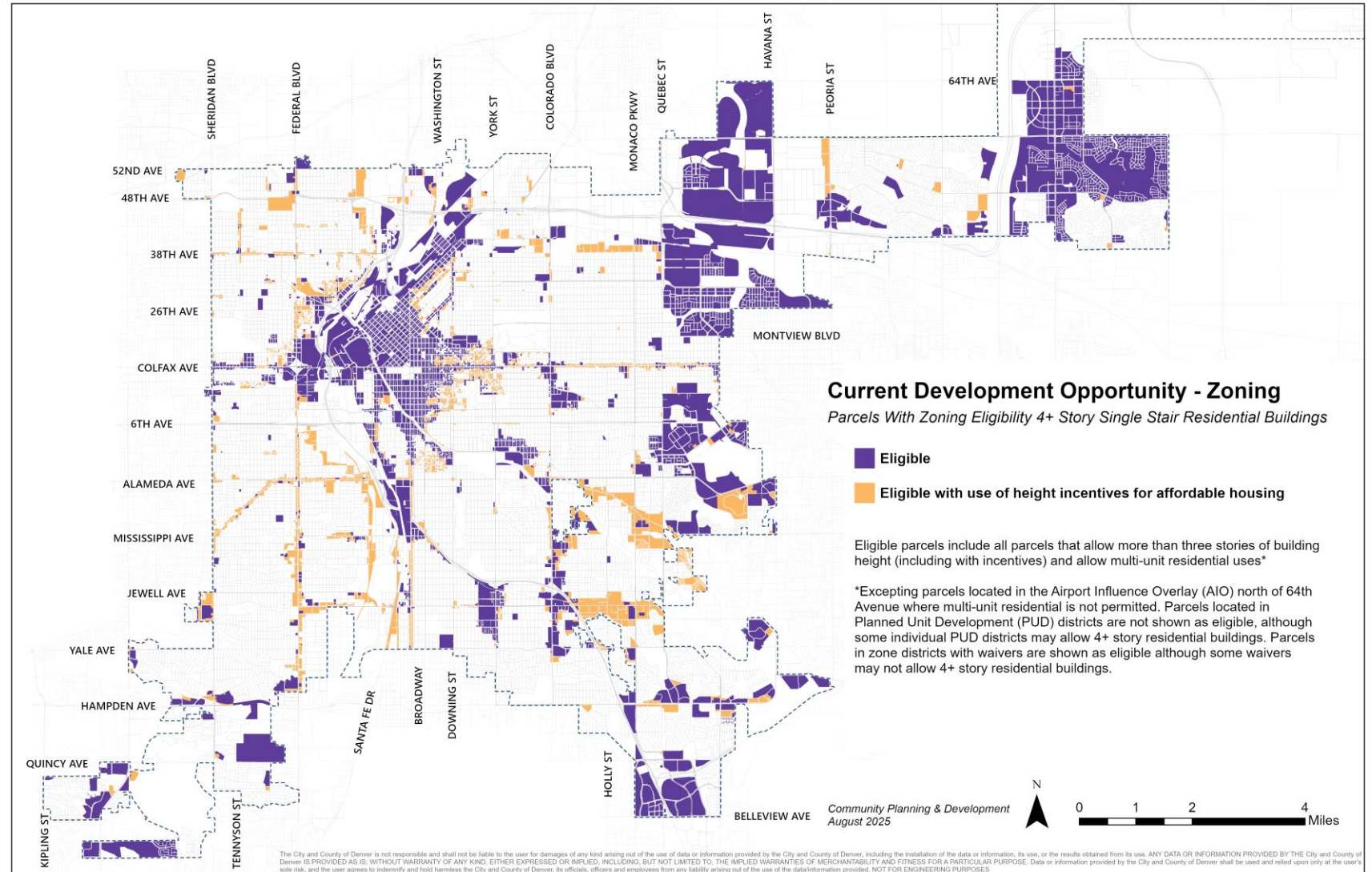
Single Stair Buildings

- New multi-family residential buildings up to 5-stories, or 4-stories with an occupied roof deck may be designed and built with a single access/exit stair subject to certain building and fire code criteria – which largely match the State law passed during the 2025 regular legislative session. Some criteria:
 - Maximum of 6,000 sq ft per story
 - Up to 4-units per story
 - Fully sprinkler protected
 - Type I, II, III, or IV construction
 - Wide stairs for simultaneous use
 - Limitations of locations of electrical outlets
 - + other detailed technical requirements
- Or 4-story single stair buildings with fewer criteria.
- Coordination between CPD Building & Zoning and DFD



Single Stair Buildings Zoning Opportunity

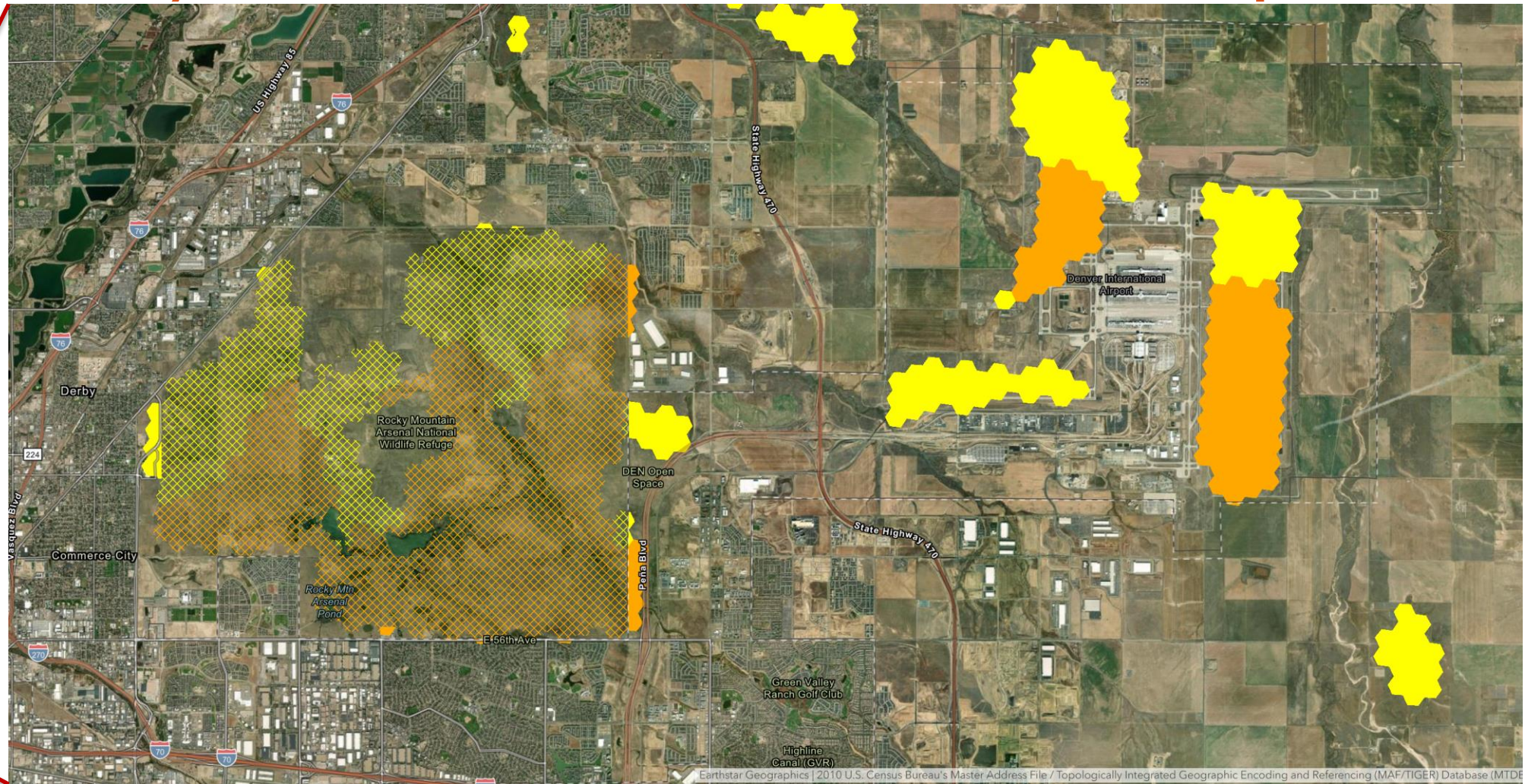
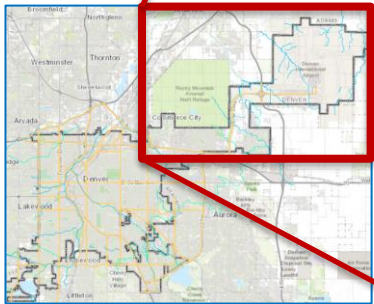
There are almost 39,000 parcels that could potentially support the single stair building configuration - both built out and vacant (11% vacant)



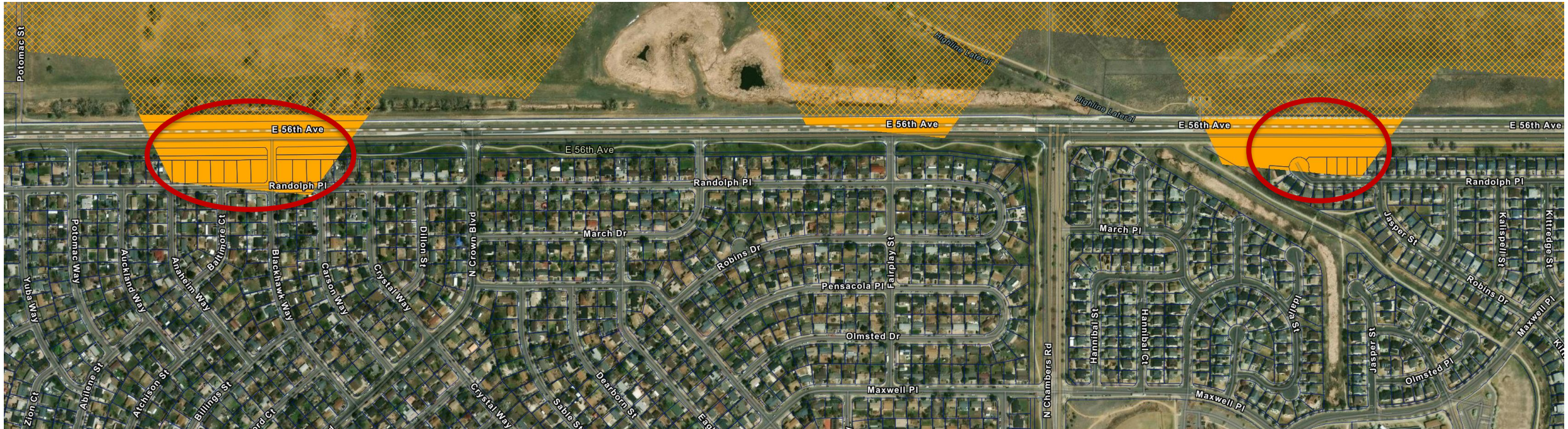
Wildland/Urban Fire Interface

- Only applies to new construction and modifications to existing buildings >25% (wall or roof).
 - Follow the State defined [2025 Wildfire Resiliency Code](#)
 - Affects buildings and landscaping – no zoning code impact or updates
- Fire Intensity Classification areas are defined by the State in the
 - [2025 Colorado Wildfire Resiliency Code Map](#)
 - Outside of mountain parks, all areas are Low or Moderate Intensity Classification
- The Intensity Classification relates to the building elements and landscape criteria
 - **Low Intensity** = Class A roofs, protected eave vents, 5-ft structure ignition zone may be landscape rock, pavers, concrete or ignition resistant vegetation, Ø new trees
 - **Moderate Intensity** = Low Intensity + eave protection, non-or-limited combustibile exterior wall finishes, ignition-resistant deck materials
 - Landscape = Low Intensity + tree trimming & shrub spacing within 10' structure
- Coordination between CPD Building & Zoning, DFD, CASR, DPR, DEN

Wildland/Urban Fire Interface Maps



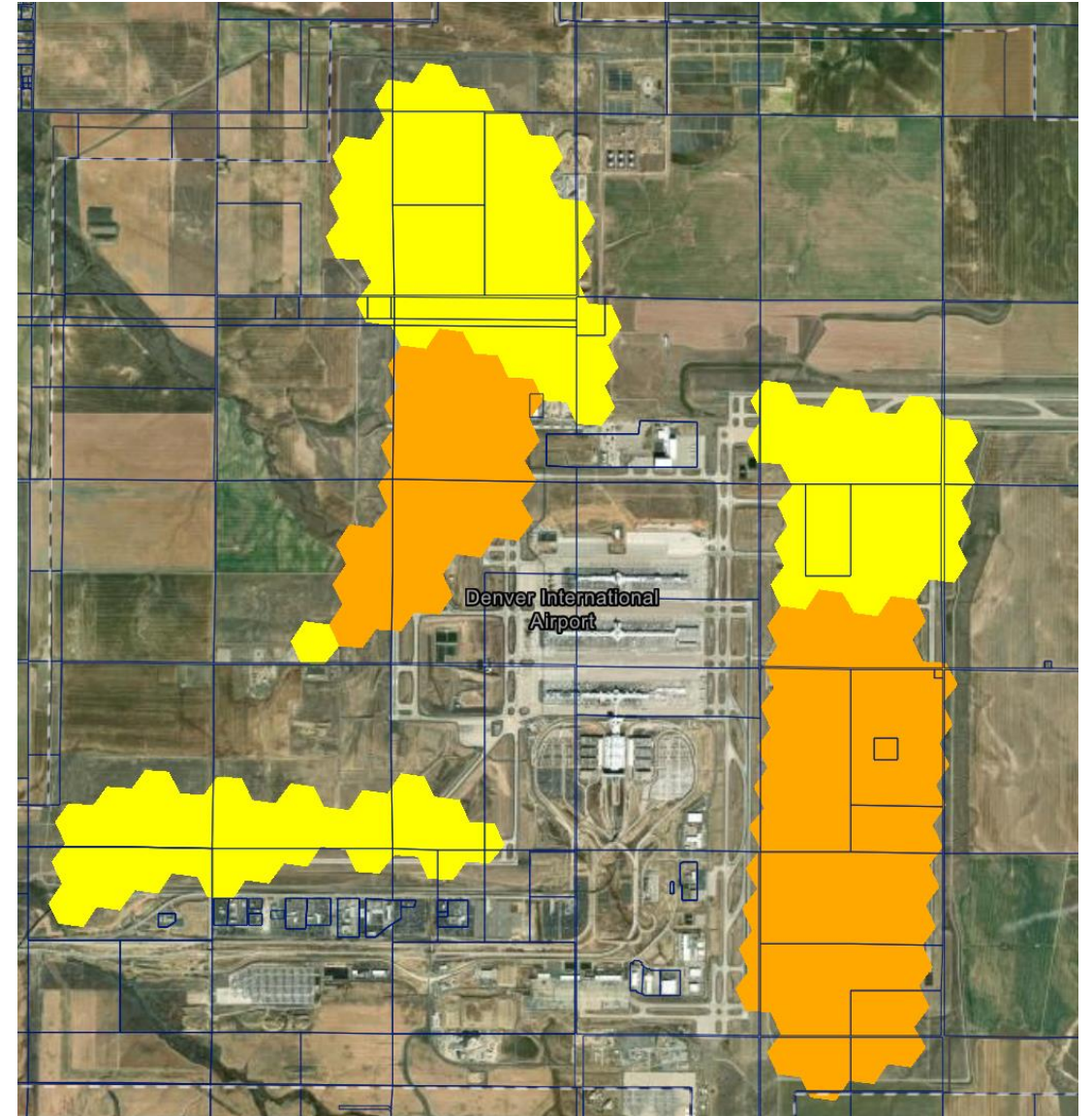
Wildland/Urban Fire Interface Map - Montbello



- 19 residential parcels with existing homes in Montbello neighborhood, immediately south of Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Refuge in Moderate Fire Intensity Classification Zone
- CPD, CASR, & DPR will discuss opportunities to eliminate these zones as part of the scope of the 56th Ave. landscape replacement project.

Wildland/Urban Fire Interface Map - Airport

- Miscellaneous structures on DEN airport property (hangars, fire stations, utility sheds) within Low and Moderate Fire Intensity Classification zones
- Majority of areas are runways/taxiways



Miscellaneous Code Updates

- Minor Residential, Energy, Plumbing Codes and Administrative revisions
 - Simplified building permit application expiration (18 mos. after *next* code adoption)
 - Updating neighbor notifications to allow posting of property
 - (Similar to a zoning permit information notice, 'ZPIN')
 - Exempting modifications to most wireless telecommunication sites (per HB 25-1056)
 - Simplifying criteria for installation of residential rooftop solar PVs
 - Clarifying the energy code compliance criteria for small commercial change of occupancy projects 5,000 sq ft or less to simplify adaptive reuse / tenant finishes
 - Plumbing Code revisions coordinated with DOTI for easier grease interceptors and pipe sizing (more options for customers, less regulatory conflict)

Timeline / Next Steps

- Jan. - Oct. 2025 - R & D, External Engagement, and Draft Code Language
- Oct. - Dec. 2025 - Notification, Communication, & Training
- Nov. 4, 2025 - Community Planning & Housing Committee
- Nov. 17, 2025 - First Reading at Full Council
- Nov. 24, 2025 - Final Vote Full Council
- Dec. 31, 2025 - Effective Date

Recommendation & Reasoning

- CPD & DFD are requesting approval from the CPH Committee to continue with the legislative process by moving the bill to full council
- The code updates proposed will accomplish multiple goals:
 - Ensure regulatory compliance with state laws (WUI code & telecoms)
 - Create additional development pathways for a new residential model in support of more housing units (single stair)
 - Eliminate or reduce regulatory burden through strategic code updates based on community feedback (residential, energy, plumbing codes)



Questions?

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