GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS | OCTOBER 2026

Building North Central Washington | Board meeting report | Updated October 14, 2026

BOARD SNAPSHOT The immediate watch items are the pending state energy code, local land-use planning, and 2027 employer costs. Items below distinguish confirmed changes from proposals and identify practical member-facing follow-up.

1 | Washington State Energy Code

Status: The proposed 2024 residential and commercial energy codes are still under review. Final action is targeted for November 20, 2026, with a proposed May 3, 2027 effective date. Neither should be treated as final. Natural gas compliance questions, including the relationship to Initiative 2066, remain relevant.

WHY SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS CARE

Equipment suppliers, service firms and smaller employers may need to budget for product changes, training and additional administrative work. Uncertainty makes it harder to quote projects or plan inventory.

WHY THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY CARES

Builders and trade contractors may face changes in energy credits, insulation, mechanical systems, documentation and inspection requirements. The practical question is whether new compliance paths change the price and complexity of a typical home.

BUILDING NCW NEXT STEPS

Monitor the November decision; prepare a short member explainer on final requirements and effective dates. Ask builders and energy consultants for a documented, apples-to-apples cost comparison for a representative single-family home. Do not publish a dollar estimate without a verified methodology.

2 | Local Planning, Zoning and Housing Supply

Status: Wenatchee is reviewing its 2046 Comprehensive Plan and related zoning/design rules, with hearings scheduled October 14 and November 19. Chelan County posted an updated 2026-2046 plan draft October 11. Douglas County has a joint planning meeting scheduled October 28. Check current agendas before participating.

WHY SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS CARE

Local retailers, professional services and suppliers depend on housing availability for workers and customers. Growth patterns also affect commercial space, transportation and utility demand.

WHY THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY CARES

Zoning, land availability, density allowances, infrastructure capacity and development standards influence what can be built, where, and at what cost. Design rules and permitting uncertainty can affect project feasibility.

BUILDING NCW NEXT STEPS

Review published proposals for measurable impacts on buildable land, project timelines and costs. Gather specific examples from member builders before submitting comments. Share meeting and public-comment opportunities with members.

3 | 2027 Employer Costs and Compliance

Status: Washington minimum wage increases to $17.73/hour January 1, 2027. The weekly overtime-exempt salary threshold for employers with 1-50 employees rises to $1,595.70, where applicable. L&I has proposed a 4.9% average workers compensation premium increase for 2027; final rates and individual impacts may differ.

WHY SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS CARE

Payroll, staffing plans and insurance are major overhead costs, particularly for smaller companies without dedicated HR staff. Exempt salary thresholds require careful review of both duties and pay.

WHY THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY CARES

Contractors should account for wage and insurance assumptions in bids, especially projects spanning calendar years. Risk classifications differ, so a statewide average does not predict an individual contractor's premium.

BUILDING NCW NEXT STEPS

Send a concise 2027 employer checklist with official agency links. Encourage members to review classifications and budgets with payroll and insurance advisers; avoid presenting general guidance as legal advice.

4 | Public Works and Permitting Watch

Status: L&I published prevailing-wage corrections effective October 9 for certain trades. Local permit turnaround times and fee impacts remain areas to gather member evidence, not quantified findings in this report.

WHY SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS CARE

Firms bidding public work may face wage-documentation requirements and costly errors. Project delays can affect cash flow for small businesses serving the construction sector.

WHY THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY CARES

Prevailing-wage errors can affect bid accuracy and certified payroll. Permit delays, re-submittals and inconsistent interpretations may increase carrying costs and disrupt subcontractor scheduling.

BUILDING NCW NEXT STEPS

Provide links to current prevailing-wage lookup tools. Collect examples of permitting delays with jurisdiction, project type, dates and direct cost effects before escalating concerns.

BOARD PRIORITIES | NEXT 30-60 DAYS

WHEN	BUILDING NCW ACTION
October	Review Wenatchee and Douglas County meeting materials; invite specific member feedback.
November 20	Verify state energy-code adoption outcome and the actual effective date.
November-December	Publish an employer-cost reminder and a plain-language construction compliance update.
Ongoing	Build a short log of permitting concerns and verified cost examples from members.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Would the board support a short member pulse survey focused on energy-code compliance costs, permit timelines and rising operating expenses? Results would help Building NCW prioritize education and determine whether formal comments are warranted.

SOURCE / STATUS NOTE

Primary agencies: WA State Building Code Council; WA Labor & Industries; City of Wenatchee; Chelan County; Douglas County. This briefing reflects information assembled through October 14, 2026. Verify agency calendars, final rule text and effective dates before member notices or public testimony.