

Motion Sheet

I move to include the following direction with the adoption of the 2024 International Building Code:

The City Manager is directed to engage stakeholders to study impacts of borrowed light in housing citywide and its impact on quality of life, affordability, and health and safety and provide code and policy recommendations for Council's consideration. The stakeholders should include individuals and groups involved in all aspects of planning, design, and construction; residents and occupants of housing units with borrowed light, including student and tenant organizations; and experts in this area.

The study should consider the following:

- Assessment of what constitutes "adequate" light, drawing on both academic research on health and wellbeing.
- Assessment of housing developments utilizing borrowed light in the last five years and since 2024 building code adoption.
- The role of ventilation and egress in contributing to overall health and safety, and how these factors interact with borrowed light.
- Model scenarios to illustrate the application of the City's current building code and ways to optimize borrowed light solutions in floorplans to ensure light quality and design feasibility with support from the American Institute of Architects (AIA).
- Contexts and unit types where this approach may be more reasonably allowed (e.g., 1-bedrooms, lofted units with large windows, live-work spaces, or owner-occupied units).
- Variables that can be regulated in code, such as the size and location of the external window, the size and placement of the interior (borrowed light) window, and the distance between them, and what the "right" specs for each of these should be.
- The financial/economic impacts for developers/tenants of requiring more stringent light requirements in Austin and consider possible incentives to offset impacts.

The City Manager is directed to return with findings and recommendations by October 2025.