



ANKENY CITY COUNCIL

**Council Action Planning Session
Monday, March 16, 2026
5:30 PM**

**Ankeny Kirkendall Public Library - City Council Chambers
1250 SW District Drive, Ankeny, Iowa**

Bobbi Bentz, Mayor
Todd Shafer, Mayor Pro-Tem

Council Members: Matt Davis, Dustin Graber, Justin Hollinrake, Jeff Perry

All City Council meetings are open to the public. Assistive Listening Devices (ALD) are available for persons with impaired hearing. To request information in an alternative format or request an accommodation to participate in a City Council meeting, contact the Office of the City Clerk at 965-6405. Anyone seeking assistance in communicating with the City should contact Relay Iowa at 1-800-735-2942 (TDY), or 1-800-735-2943 (Voice).

ELECTRONIC MEETING INFORMATION

<https://zoom.us/j/97312992966?pwd=OEFocWZGS0NYUmtNvHNxcWZFak9Pdz09>

Meeting ID: 973 1299 2966
Passcode: 1234

Dial in: +1 312 626 6799; Meeting ID: 973 1299 2966; Passcode: 1234

A. FIRE DEPARTMENT:

- 1. Business License Inspection Program

B. ADJOURNMENT

No official action will take place during this planning session.

FIRE

Business License Presentation

R. VANCE SWISHER



Presentation Purpose

- Approval for a Fire Department Business License Program
- Administered through the Community Risk Reduction Division
- Ensure all commercial occupancies are identified, inspected, and compliant with fire and life safety codes

Why Now

- Ankeny has between 1,500 and 2,000 businesses
- Many operate in multi-tenant buildings with frequent turnover
- Without a licensing system it is difficult to maintain accurate occupancy records
- Program ensures consistent inspections as the community grows

Public Safety Benefits

- Improves fire prevention and code compliance
- Enhances firefighter safety
- Maintains accurate hazard and building information
- Supports better emergency response and pre-incident planning

Fiscal Structure

- Regulatory cost recovery fee – not a tax
- Businesses receiving inspections contribute to the cost of services
- Reduces reliance on residential property tax revenue

Peer Fire Inspection/Business License Programs

City	Program Structure	Fee Range	Notes
Knoxville	Fire Department Business License	\$50 base - \$600 max	2-year license; based on building square footage.
Cedar Falls	Fire Inspection License	\$40 base - \$300 max	Annual license; based on square footage; 50% fee reduction for sprinkler systems.
Sioux City	Fire Prevention Permit	\$20 base – \$500 max	Based on square footage, building height, and hazardous materials, reductions for alarm and sprinkler systems.
Ottumwa	Fire Inspection Program	\$250 base - \$650 max	Inspection cycle of 1-3 years depending on hazard classification, based on square footage

Funding and Staffing

- Estimated between 1,500 and 2,000 businesses in Ankeny
- Projected revenue: \$225,000 – \$300,000 annually
- Funds one Community Risk Reduction position, but is expandable based on community needs
- Supports inspections, licensing, and compliance tracking

Fiscal Impact

Category	Description	FY27	FY28	FY29	Notes
<u>Revenue</u>	License Fees	\$100,000	\$180,000	\$225,000	Based on a planned three-year implementation and projected number of businesses.
<u>Expenditures</u>	Staff Cost	\$99,238	\$130,522	\$138,353	FTE salary and benefits
	Vehicle	\$35,000	\$0	\$0	Vehicle
	Equipment	\$3,500	\$850	\$850	Uniforms, IT Equipment, Safety Equipment
	Total Expenditures	\$137,738	\$131,372	\$139,203	
<u>Net Fiscal Impact</u>	Revenue – Expenditures	(\$37,738)	\$48,628	\$85,797	

Closing

- This program helps the City keep pace with Ankeny's growth
- It supports safer businesses, better firefighter preparedness
- Promotes consistent code application across all businesses
- Ensures the cost of prevention services is shared by the businesses that receive them



 Ankeny

 city of
Ankeny

Memorandum

To: Mike Schrock – City Manager

Date: March 16, 2026

Re: Proposed Ankeny Fire Department Business License Program

Ankeny Fire Department Staff requests City Council approval to:

1. Establish a Fire Department Business License Program administered through the Ankeny Fire Department's Community Risk Reduction (CRR) Division.
2. Authorize one additional full-time employee (FTE) funded through program-generated licensing revenue.

Background

The Ankeny Fire Department is responsible for enforcing the adopted fire code through inspections, operational permits, plan reviews, and hazard oversight for commercial occupancies. As Ankeny continues to experience significant commercial and industrial growth, the demand for fire prevention services has increased.

Currently, the City does not maintain a comprehensive licensing system for commercial occupancies. Without a consistent licensing requirement, businesses may open, change occupancy type, or expand operations without timely notification to the Fire Department or Community Development. This can lead to incomplete occupancy records, inconsistent inspections, and limited hazard information available to emergency responders.

A Fire Department Business License Program would establish a consistent process for identifying, inspecting, and maintaining fire and life safety compliance for commercial occupancies throughout the community.

Why Now

Ankeny's continued commercial growth has increased the number and complexity of businesses operating within the community. The Fire Department estimates there are between 1,500 and 2,000 businesses currently operating within the city limits, many within multi-tenant buildings where tenant turnover occurs frequently.

Without a structured licensing system, maintaining accurate occupancy data and ensuring consistent fire inspections becomes increasingly difficult. Implementing the program now allows the City to

proactively manage growth, maintain reliable occupancy information, and ensure fire prevention services keep pace with development.

Additionally, the program establishes a sustainable funding mechanism for prevention services as inspection demand continues to grow with the community.

Program Overview

The proposed program would require commercial occupancies operating within the City of Ankeny to obtain an annual Fire Department Business License administered through the Fire Department’s Community Risk Reduction Division.

Key components include:

- Annual licensing for commercial occupancies
- Fire and life safety inspections
- Verification of fire protection systems
- Hazard identification and pre-incident planning
- Compliance tracking and re-inspections when necessary

Licensing records would be maintained within the City’s current permitting platform LAMA, aligning with the structure used for the City’s rental licensing program, reducing administrative duplication across departments.

Peer City Fire Inspection/Business License Programs

Several Iowa communities use similar programs to support fire prevention services and ensure consistent fire and life safety inspections.

Peer Fire Inspection/Business License Programs			
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Financial Impact

The Business License Program is intended to create a sustainable funding mechanism for fire prevention services and have the capability to support the program as the community continues to grow. To implement and manage the program, the Fire Department is requesting authorization for one additional FTE within the Community Risk Reduction Division. The recommended position is a single-role Fire Inspector focusing specifically on the management of and inspections associated with the proposed licensing program. A single role position ensures that key components of the proposed program are achieved, strengthening the department’s community risk reduction capacity.

Estimated program assumptions:

- Between 1,500 and 2,000 businesses operating in Ankeny
- Utilize the existing CRR license fee structure of \$150
- Projected Annual Revenue When Fully Implemented:
 - Approximately \$225,000 – \$300,000

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Program revenue will support inspection activities, program administration, and community risk reduction staffing.

This license should be viewed as a regulatory cost recovery fee rather than a tax. The Fire Department already performs fire inspections, plan reviews, and life-safety compliance activities for commercial occupancies under the adopted fire code. The license simply provides a mechanism for businesses

receiving these regulatory services to contribute to the cost of those services, reducing reliance on general tax revenue and creating a more equitable funding structure.

Benefits

Implementation of the program will:

- Improve identification and tracking of commercial occupancies
- Provide consistent and proactive fire inspections
- Enhance firefighter safety through improved pre-incident planning
- Reduce the risk of fires, injuries, and property loss
- Establish a fair and consistent regulatory framework for commercial occupancies
- Provide sustainable funding for prevention services as the community grows

This program aligns Ankeny with other Iowa communities and is being discussed within Fire Departments across the state as it ensures commercial growth contributes proportionally to the life-safety services required to support it. The program is designed to support responsible businesses by providing clear safety expectations while helping ensure safe environments for employees, customers, and the public.

Recommendation

Ankeny Fire Department Staff recommends City Council approve the Fire Department Business License Program and authorize one additional Community Risk Reduction FTE funded through program-generated revenue to support implementation and ongoing administration of the program.