



## MEMORANDUM COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Date: 8/14/2024  
To: Planning Commission  
From: Jenn Kester, Planning Manager  
Subject: **SeaTac 2044 Work Session: Code Amendment Package 3**

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### SUMMARY

The main goals of the upcoming work session are to:

- Review Code Amendment Package 3
- Discuss Heights, Incentives, and active Ground Floor Use requirements for Neighborhood Villages.

### ENVISION SEATAC 2044 CODE AMENDMENTS PACKAGE 3

Staff and consultants will present the packet of proposed code amendments to Planning Commission for discussion. This presentation is informational (no action expected tonight), and is the third of a series of code amendments packets coming before Planning Commission as part of implementing the Envision 2044 Comprehensive Plan.

These are our preliminary code amendment recommendations. Planning Commission, public comments, agency review, and staff refinements will shape these into the final code amendments. Ultimately, a full draft of all code amendments (Public Review Draft) will be presented to Planning Commission for review and approval in September, so these interim packets are being provided to support Planning Commission's review process.

### Summary of Code Amendment Package 3:

- **DRAFT Code Amendment Matrix—Package Three**

The matrix summarizes all draft proposed code amendments being presented. The matrix is an overall guide to the amendments being presented to help with navigation through the packet and specifically addresses:

- The amendment number
  - Code section
  - Name/item of section
  - Type of amendment
  - The purpose of the amendment (what does the amendment do?)
  - The reason for making the amendment (why is the amendment needed?)
- **SeaTac Municipal Code Chapter 15.120, Nonconformance and Reuse of Facilities**
    - This change is a City-initiated update to address existing detached dwelling units that will become a nonconforming use with the proposed zoning and permitted use updates discussed in previous meetings.
    - This language allows for the continued use of these existing detached dwelling units, allows for alterations and additions, as long as additional dwelling units are *not* created.
    - The language also allows for the reconstruction of these nonconforming detached dwelling units in the event of fire or other even out of the owners control. This is permitted within

certain parameters, such as a establishing a three-year time period to submit reconstruction plans, and the structure shall be within the original configuration of the structure.

- **SeaTac Municipal Code Title 15 Division IV Citywide Development Standards, Regulations and Incentives**

- These changes are related specifically to parking updates.
- Most of these changes are required for compliance with State legislation, unless noted.
- Changes to SMC 15.465.100 related to Accessory Dwelling Unit parking requirements. Specifically, this changes sets different thresholds for ADU parking requirements:
  - Within One-Half Mile of SeaTac Airport – 1 stall per accessory dwelling unit; and 2 stalls per accessory dwelling unit greater than 600 square feet in area.
  - Within One-Half Mile of Major Transit Stops and Outside of the One Mile Radius of SeaTac International Airport – No off-street parking is required.
  - Outside of the One-Half Mile Radius of the Major Transit Stops – 1stall per accessory dwelling unit; and 2 stalls per accessory dwelling unit greater than 600 square feet in area, located on lots larger than 6,000 square feet.
- Changes to SMC 15.455.120 addresses changes to different land use types.
  - Removes the parking requirement for Emergency, Permanent Supportive, and Transitional Housing types.
  - Adds parking requirements for new Middle Housing (duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, fiveplexes, sixplexes, townhouses, stacked flats, courtyard apartments, and cottage housing); specifically setting three different thresholds/locations for parking requirements:
    - Within One-Half Mile of SeaTac Airport – 1.25 parking stalls per dwelling unit are required.
    - Within One-Half Mile of Major Transit Stops and Outside of the One Mile Radius of SeaTac International Airport – No off-street parking is required.
    - Outside of the One-Half Mile Radius of the Major Transit Stops – 1 stall per dwelling unit for lot smaller than 6,000 square feet; and 1.25 stalls per dwelling unit for lot greater than 6,000 square feet.
  - Removes the separate Townhouse row, as Townhouses will be regulated under the new Middle Housing noted above.

## **HEIGHTS, INCENTIVES, AND ACTIVE GROUND FLOOR USE REQUIREMENTS FOR NEIGHBORHOOD VILLAGES**

Staff and consultants will discuss options we are exploring for height, incentives and active ground floor uses related to Neighborhood Villages. We expect that the proposed code language will be included in the Public Review Draft that will be available mid-September.

### **Neighborhood Village Mixed Use Residential Zones**

- The purpose of the Neighborhood Village Mixed Use Residential zones (Neighborhood Village High and Neighborhood Village Medium) is to provide for a mix of multifamily development with active ground floor mixed uses and other uses that are compatible and complementary in identified neighborhood centers in SeaTac.
- New buildings would range in height from up to 90 feet (typically up to eight stories from ground level) in Neighborhood Village High and up to 45 feet (typically up to four stories from ground level) in Neighborhood Village Medium.
  - This type of podium construction with wood frame residential use over concrete base floors is common throughout the region. Typically, building heights need to be at least five stories to be

- able to incorporate structured parking within or below the buildings. For buildings lower than five stories, more surface parking would be required.
- Regarding maximum height level for this construction type allowed by building code, for Type I Mid-Rise buildings, the highest occupied level of these buildings is limited to 75 feet or less above grade. This can allow for up to eight stories, depending on the ground floor ceiling height and floor to floor height and how roofline articulation is addressed. We will be exploring these options and include them in draft code language that we will bring back to the Planning Commission. With future advances in timber building technologies, such as the use of cross-laminated timber, there could be the potential for higher buildings of this type of construction, but this would not be feasible or allowable currently in the US under our building codes.
  - We are considering the level of affordable housing that would be required in the Neighborhood Village High zone and voluntary in the Neighborhood Village Medium zone and this would be aligned with Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE) provisions.
  - We will be exploring an incentive-based bonus height program for the Neighborhood Village High zone, that could set a base height of 55 feet (five stories) or 65 feet (six stories) and allow an extra stories with the provision of certain community features and amenities. Such potential amenities could include the provision:
    - Additional affordable housing at varying income levels; this could also be implemented in alignment with Multifamily Tax Exemption (MFTE) provisions;
    - Public open spaces/gathering spaces;
    - A certain percent of ground floor space that is made available for local business retention;
    - Above a certain percentage of structured parking;
    - Regional stormwater facilities;
    - Sustainability features (building and/or site);
    - Public art;
    - And/or other features and/or a combination of these features.

A good example of bonus height structuring is found in Redmond for the Overlake Village light rail station subarea: <https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Redmond/CDG/RCDG20C/RCDG20C4550.html>

### **Active Ground Floor Provisions**

- The purpose of the Active Ground Floor provisions is to provide for building frontages in neighborhood centers that attract pedestrians, provide public access, and hide non-active uses like parking. Ground floor activation helps make street corridors more inviting and walkable and can also improve neighborhood safety by increasing "eyes on the street."
- The effectiveness of Active Ground Floors is affected by:
  - **Transparency**—Encouraging interaction between the public and private realms. For example, Bellevue City Code requires transparent windows at the street level over a certain percentage of the frontage.
  - **Pedestrian experience**—A safe, attractive, comfortable street edge that provides a visually rich experience for pedestrians.
  - **Building uses**—Retail, restaurants, cafes, coffee shops, offices, libraries, and more can be considered that promote pedestrian access into and out of frontage doorways. The variety of uses can also contribute to an active environment throughout the day. For example, cafes may be more active in the mornings; offices more active during the day; and restaurants/bars more active during the evening. Having a variety of building uses on the same street helps to ensure the street stays active throughout the day.

In some cases, it may be challenging to fully lease out retail spaces in areas where the residential development has not fully built out. Often jurisdictions will allow ground floor spaces to be built

to commercial standards but used in a variety of ways, including residential in the early stages of occupancy until commercial uses are more in demand.

- The Code could be structured to allow different types and different levels of active ground floor uses for Neighborhood Village High and Neighborhood Village Medium, and/or that percentages of active ground floor usage are required based on location and fronting streets. We will be exploring these options to bring to Planning Commission in the future.
  - For example, Neighborhood Village High zone could require the ground floor active uses to be all commercial uses – retail, cafes, etc., whereas the Neighborhood Village Medium zone would be more flexible in use types and/or could allow residential as an active ground floor uses in addition to commercial ground floor uses. In such cases, residential ground floor active uses may be walk-up/stoop residential entries, similar to brownstone housing in many cities (Bellevue, New York, etc.) and those found in the Woodin Creek development in the City of Woodinville (see examples below).

***Please see examples of Active Ground Floor Provisions at the end of this memo.***

#### **PACKET MATERIALS**

Packet materials include the following:

- This memo
- Draft Code Amendment Matrix - Package 3
- Proposed Code Amendments shown in track changes

## EXAMPLES OF ACTIVE GROUND FLOOR PROVISIONS

San Fransico produced a “Guidelines for Ground Floor Residential Design” document. Link: [https://default.sfplanning.org/publications\\_reports/Guidelines\\_for\\_Groundfloor\\_Residential\\_Design-071310.pdf](https://default.sfplanning.org/publications_reports/Guidelines_for_Groundfloor_Residential_Design-071310.pdf)

This guide focuses on emphasizing/delineating individual units and encourages a variety of styles to provide interesting, ever-changing street frontage.



*Example of active commercial ground floor uses*

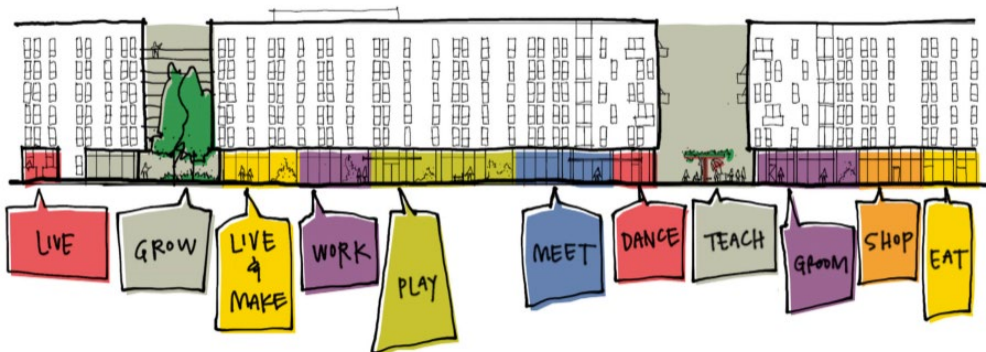


*Example of active commercial ground floor uses in Wallingford, Seattle. With laundromat, children's clothing store, restaurant, and café.*





*Examples of a variety of active ground floor uses<sup>1</sup>*



*Examples of a variety of active ground floor uses<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Source: National Model Design Code: part 2 - guidance notes. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-model-design-code/national-model-design-code-part-2-guidance-notes-html-accessible-version>

<sup>2</sup> Source: Activating the Edges: How to Create Lively, Active Streets. <https://commonedge.org/activating-the-edges-how-to-create-lively-active-streets/>



**Examples of active residential ground floor uses – Woodin Creek Village, Woodinville**



**Examples of active residential ground floor uses – ‘Brownstone’ housing in New York**