



Snohomish County

Planning and Development Services

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Snohomish County Planning Commission

Dave Somers
County Executive

FROM: Michael Saponaro, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Concerning Commercial and Industrial Zones Standards; Amendments to SCC 30.21.025, 30.22.100, 30.23.010, 30.31A, 30.31B, 30.70.025, 30.70.050, 30.70.140, 30.70.300, and 30.86.200.

DATE: June 24th, 2025

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this staff report is to outline proposed code amendments in chapter 30.31A Snohomish County Code (SCC): Business Park (BP), Planned Community Business (PCB), Neighborhood Business (NB), and Industrial Park (IP) Zones, referred to as the business performance zones chapter, and in chapter 30.31B SCC: General Commercial (GC) Zone, with the intention of cutting red tape for business developments, and in SCC 30.23.010, with the intention of clarifying setbacks for zones with hybrid categories of rural commercial and rural industrial.

BACKGROUND

These proposed amendments to Chapters 30.31A and 30.31B of the Snohomish County Code (SCC) will streamline the development review process, eliminate outdated procedural requirements, and improve consistency across commercial and industrial zones.

Chapter 30.31A SCC currently includes confusing and antiquated procedural requirements for developments in the PCB, BP, NB, and IP zones (collectively referred to as business performance zones). The code mandates two types of site plan approvals—Preliminary Plan Approval and Final Plan Approval—based on various factors, including project size, existing zoning, proposed rezones, and whether the site was rezoned legislatively. These layered requirements create unnecessary delays in permit processing. Moreover, the two plan types often contain identical information, adding time without improving review quality. This amendment proposes replacing these two approvals with one Official Site Plan. The new approach would treat projects under 5 acres as Type 1 permits and those 5 acres or larger as Type 2 permits. This 5-acre threshold stems from County peers and state models, including various construction permit thresholds for the EPA.

This structure aligns with existing practices in Chapter 30.31B SCC, which requires an official site plan for the General Commercial (GC) zone. Staff finds no justification for maintaining separate procedures and

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proposes folding GC zone regulations into Chapter 30.31A SCC. This consolidation will improve consistency across commercial and business zones.

Staff also recommends eliminating the requirement under SCC 30.31B.200 for an Administrative Conditional Use Permit (ACUP) when an official site plan is not consolidated with a rezone. An ACUP requires staff to prepare a formal land use decision and compatibility analysis, which adds time and complexity to projects that already meet zone standards. In practice, incompatible uses are no longer permitted in the GC zone. Historically, GC zone site plans were reviewed and approved directly through the building permit process, which was a more streamlined and effective method that this amendment seeks to restore.

In addition to streamlining site plan requirements, this proposal will:

- Clarify that outdoor storage is only allowed if covered in business performance zones, reducing visual blight and safety concerns.
- Remove excessive review authority, such as requiring the Hearing Examiner to make landscape design decisions, which unnecessarily burdens the permitting process.
- Modernize Chapters 30.31A and 30.31B, which have remained largely unchanged since Ordinance No. 86-037 (1986). These chapters were written for development contexts focused on large office parks, which no longer reflect the scale or nature of most current proposals. Staff can now review PCB, BP, NB, and IP projects effectively under a single site plan requirement.

Lastly, the proposal includes a cleanup of SCC 30.23.010, which currently creates confusion when interpreting setbacks for rural zones with hybrid commercial/industrial classifications. The amendment will categorize Rural Business, Clearview Rural Commercial, and Rural Freeway Service as commercial zones, and the Rural Industrial zone as industrial. This clarification will help staff apply the appropriate development standards and setbacks more efficiently during permit review.

Together, these changes aim to simplify code, improve permit timelines, reduce unnecessary procedural burdens, and bring consistency and clarity to commercial and industrial zoning regulations across Title 30 SCC.

PROPOSED CODE AMENDMENTS

The objectives of the proposed amendments are to:

1. Eliminate onerous regulations and clarify ambiguous language in the BP, PCB, NB, IP, and GC zones and any related administrative chapters.
2. Eliminate non-commercial uses in the GC zone.
3. Move the regulations of the GC zone from chapter 30.31B SCC to chapter 30.31A SCC and update any cross-references of the GC zone's location to chapter 30.31A SCC.
4. Clarify setbacks to zones with multiple categories, such as the rural commercial zones and the Rural Industrial zone.

These objectives will be achieved with the following changes:

1. In chapter 30.31A SCC:
 - a) Simplify antiquated procedures by requiring an official site plan, rather than having two types of site plan approvals involving preliminary and final plan approval.
 - b) Remove SCC 30.31A.020 to eliminate the minimum zoning criteria.

- c) Revise SCC 30.31A.120(1) to clarify that “no uncovered storage” means “fully enclosed within a building” per past PDS interpretations.
- 2. In chapter 30.31B SCC:
 - a) Eliminate the need for the hearing examiner’s approval in all landscape screening decisions.
 - b) Simplify official site plans by eliminating the need for an ACUP.
 - c) Move GC zone regulations from chapter 30.31B SCC to the business performance zones chapter 30.31A SCC.
- 3. In SCC 30.21.025:
 - a) Update the GC zone’s location to chapter 30.31A SCC.
- 4. In SCC 30.22.100, the Urban Zone Categories Use Matrix:
 - a) Ban all new Accessory Storage Structures of all sizes in the GC zone.
 - b) Ban all new Temporary Dwellings During Construction in the GC zone.
 - c) Permit outright all Non-Accessory Storage Structures of all sizes in the GC zone.
- 5. In SCC 30.70.025:
 - a) Update any cross-references of the GC zone’s location to chapter 30.31A SCC.
- 6. In SCC 30.70.050:
 - a) Update the application and permit process for the business performance zones.
- 7. In SCC 30.86.200:
 - a) Update relevant application fee process for the business performance zones.
- 8. In SCC 30.23.010,
 - a) Classify the rural commercial zones as commercial zones, and
 - b) Classify the rural industrial zone as an industrial zone.

The tables below inventory proposed code amendments.

Table 1 provides a summary and rationale of the proposed amendments to Chapter 30.31A SCC:

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CODE CHANGES	
Proposed Amendments	Rationale
<p>30.31A.010 Purpose and applicability.</p> <p>This chapter regulates development in and establishes zoning criteria for the planned community business (PCB), neighborhood business (NB), business park (BP), ((and)) industrial park (IP) ((zones)), <u>and general commercial (GC) zones</u>. This chapter sets forth procedures and standards to be followed in applying for and building in these zones.</p>	<p>The GC zone is congruent with the business performance zones detailed within chapter 30.31A SCC. This is a housekeeping amendment to be consistent with the larger proposed amendment of removing chapter 30.31B SCC as a stand alone chapter and incorporating the necessary requirements into chapter 30.31A SCC.</p>
<p>30.31A.020 Minimum zoning criteria.</p> <p>(1) A tract of land proposed for BP zoning shall contain sufficient area to create a contiguous tract of BP-zoned land at least four acres in size.</p> <p>(2) A tract of land proposed for PCB zoning shall contain sufficient area to create a contiguous tract of PCB-zoned land at least five acres in size.</p> <p>(3) A tract of land proposed for NB zoning shall contain sufficient area to create a contiguous tract of NB-zoned land at least three acres in size.</p> <p>(4) A tract of land must be in single ownership or, for multiple parcels, under unified control. This requirement shall apply during preliminary and final plan stages to ensure continuity of plan development.</p> <p>(5) Zoning request must be accompanied by a preliminary development plan prepared by a team of design professionals in compliance with the regulations and requirements of this chapter.</p> <p>(6) Preliminary and final plans must comply with bulk regulations contained in SCC 30.23.030.</p> <p>(7) All utility services and distribution lines shall be located underground, and in the case of the BP zone the property shall be served by public water and sewer services and paved streets, paved private roads, or paved common access areas.</p>	<p>This proposed change is to simplify review of all business performance zone development, specifically by eliminating unneeded regulations on minimum zoning criteria and the elimination of preliminary development plans and final plans. There is a provision later in 30.31A.200 that waives the minimum zoning criteria of 30.31A.020(1),(2), and (3) during the comp plan process, which shows the minimum acreage regulations are not a crucial element for health, safety, and public welfare.</p>

30.31A.100 General performance standards.

Each planned zone and uses located in the BP, PCB, NB, GC, and IP zones shall comply with the following requirements unless more specific requirements are provided in code:

- (1) *Processes and Equipment*. Processes and equipment employed and goods processed or sold shall be limited to those which are not objectionable beyond the boundaries of the lot upon which the use is located by reason of offensive odors, dust, smoke, gas, or electronic interference;
- (2) *Development Phases*. Where the proposal contains more than one phase, all development shall occur in a sequence consistent with the phasing plan which shall be presented as an element of the ~~((preliminary))~~ official site plan unless revisions are approved by the department;
- (3) *Building Design*. Buildings shall be designed to be compatible with their surroundings, both within and adjacent to the zone;
- (4) *Restrictive Covenants*. Restrictive covenants shall be provided which shall ensure the long-term maintenance and upkeep of landscaping, storm drainage facilities, other private property improvements, and open space areas and facilities. Further, the covenants shall reference the official or binding site plan(s) and indicate their availability at the department, and shall provide that Snohomish County is an additional beneficiary with standing to enforce, and shall preclude the avoidance of performance obligations through lease agreements;
- (5) *Off-street Parking*. Permanent off-street parking shall be in accordance with terms of chapter 30.26 SCC, except that parking shall be in accordance with SCC 30.34A.050 when the property is designated Urban Village on the future land use map;
- (6) *Signing*. Signs for business identification or advertising of products ~~((shall conform to the approved sign design scheme))~~ submitted with the ~~((final))~~ official site plan ~~((, and))~~ must comply with chapter 30.27 SCC;
- (7) *Noise*. Noise levels generated within the development shall not exceed those established in chapter 10.01 SCC – noise control, or violate other law or regulation relating to noise. Noise of machines and operations shall be muffled so as to not become objectionable due to intermittence or beat frequency, or shrillness; and
- (8) *Landscaping*. General landscaping and open space requirements shall be in accordance with chapter 30.25 SCC.

Proposed changes will simplify permitting process with an official site plan, and revise sign design language. The review process for general performance standards is more efficient by eliminating “final” plans and employing an official site plan. Additionally, sign design schemes are less relevant lately, hence the language has been modified.

<p>30.31A.120 BP Zone performance standards.</p> <p>In addition to the minimum zoning criteria and general performance standards set forth above, the following are specific performance requirements in the BP zone:</p> <p>(1) No ((uncovered outside)) storage <u>that is not fully enclosed within a building</u> shall be allowed of any products produced or items used in the operation of the business, except vehicles used to transport either raw materials or finished products of the business;</p>	<p>SCC 30.31A.120(1) needs clarification to show that “no uncovered storage” means “no storage that is not fully enclosed within a building,” per past PDS interpretations. The January 2025 Assistance Bulletin #26, Residential Garages and Storage Buildings, elaborates on storage of items needing to be in enclosed buildings.</p>
<p>30.31A.140 BP zone performance standards for residential development.</p> <p>The following are specific requirements for development in the BP zone that includes residential uses:</p> <p>(1) The site must be a minimum of 25 contiguous acres under the same ownership or control.</p> <p>(2) The BP zoning on the site must have been in effect prior to the effective date of the ordinance codified in this section.</p> <p>(3) All proposed mixed use development consisting of residential with commercial or industrial uses in the BP zone shall also comply with the following development and design standards:</p> <p>(a) The BP ((preliminary)) <u>official</u> site plan requirements contained in chapter 30.31A SCC shall apply to all portions of the site where development is proposed except that the provisions of SCC 30.31A.120 shall only apply to areas of the site proposed for commercial or industrial uses and not to areas proposed for residential use.</p> <p>(b) The setbacks and all other bulk requirements of chapter 30.23 SCC for the MR zone shall apply.</p> <p>(4) All proposed development in the BP zone consisting of residential uses only shall comply with the ((preliminary)) <u>official</u> site plan requirements of SCC 30.31A.210, and shall also comply with the maximum residential unit yield and all other bulk regulations for the MR zone under chapter 30.23 SCC.</p> <p>(5) All proposed development in the BP zone that includes residential uses shall comply with the ((final)) <u>official</u> site plan approval requirements pursuant to SCC 30.31A.210300, including conditions of approval, and shall comply with any and all other applicable requirements of the county code.</p>	<p>BP site plan requirements for residential development can be simplified by eliminating preliminary development plans and final plans and employing an official site plan.</p>

30.31A.150 GC zone performance standards.

The following are specific requirements for development in the GC zone:

- (1) *Landscaping.* Each development shall be permanently screened from adjoining and contiguous residential areas or zone by a wall, fence, or perimeter landscaping of minimum height of four feet and maximum height of seven feet. Other enclosure methods may be employed if approved by the department. No screening shall be required when abutting existing parks, parkways, recreational area, or by topography or other natural conditions.
- (2) *Signing.* No signs shall be permitted on any part of a screening enclosure.

GC zone performance standards are proposed to be folded from SCC 30.31B.100 into chapter 30.31A SCC, as there is no reason for it to be a stand-alone chapter.

30.31A.200 Rezone procedures.

(1) *General Procedures.* Rezone applications for the PCB, BP, GC, and IP zones are considered for approval by the hearing examiner through the normal rezoning process, pursuant to chapter 30.42A SCC. ~~((and require site plan approval as follows:~~

~~(a) For sites that are five acres or larger, a preliminary an official site plan shall be considered for approval by the hearing examiner together with the rezoning application. A preliminary site plan is not required for sites less than five acres in size; and~~

~~(b) A final plan for construction approval is required for all sites and is reviewed administratively by the department after rezoning approval, or when applicable, after rezoning and preliminary site plan approval. No development permits shall be issued until a final plan has been approved in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.~~

~~(2) *Alternative Procedure—Concurrent Rezoning, Short Subdivision or Subdivision, and Final Plan.* Concurrent applications for rezoning, short subdivision or subdivision, and final plans may be made. All items required by SCC 30.31A.210 for a preliminary site plan shall be submitted for the entirety of the rezoning site at the time application is made. The rezoning application, short subdivision or subdivision, and final plans shall be processed concurrently pursuant to chapter 30.42A SCC and chapter 30.72 SCC.~~

~~(3) *County-Initiated Rezoning Alternative Procedure for BP, IP, and PCB.* When recommended by the comprehensive plan, Snohomish County may initiate rezoning to BP, IP, and PCB as part of the comprehensive plan implementation process pursuant to chapter 30.73 SCC as a Type 3 Process. When this alternative is exercised, the provisions of SCC 30.31A.020(1), (2), and (3) shall be waived, including the portion that establishes minimum lot size for BP and PCB. Prior to development of any BP, IP, or PCB site five acres or larger in size, the developer shall submit a preliminary site plan and fees as required by chapter 30.86 SCC for hearing examiner review and approval. Prior to the approval of a preliminary site plan the hearing examiner shall hold a public hearing conducted pursuant to chapter 30.72 SCC. Notice of the hearing shall be provided in accordance with the notice requirements described in SCC 30.72.030.-))~~

Rezoning procedures can be simplified by eliminating preliminary development plans and final plans and aligning the process to how all other rezoning applications are processed. The GC zone is proposed to be included as well to be consistent with other proposed changes in the chapter.

30.31A.210 ((Preliminary)) Official site plan.

An application for an official site plan shall be submitted for development in the PCB, NB, BP, GC, and IP zones. The ((preliminary)) application for an official site plan shall contain, at a minimum, the following:

(1) Textual Material.

- (a) The names and addresses of the developer, land surveyor, engineer, architect, planner, and other professionals involved;
- (b) A document satisfactorily assuring unified control through the construction approval stage for the total site;
- (c) A description of intended type of uses and operations including timing of development, if phased, and management control;
- (d) A statement of intention to formally subdivide the property, if applicable;
- (e) A description of proposed building design, including probable exterior finish;
- (f) A provision for phasing out nonconforming uses and for removing existing structures or incorporating them into the overall development scheme;
- (g) A statement of landscape maintenance provisions;
- (h) A traffic analysis, when required by the department of public works; and
- (i) The general method proposed to comply with chapter 30.63A SCC.

(2) Graphic Material. Prints of drawings, the number and scale determined by the department showing all the following information:

- (a) A vicinity sketch locating the development;
- (b) Property boundaries of the development area;
- (c) All existing structures and improvements within the development area which are to remain;
- (d) Plans for signing and lighting, including typical entrance treatment and entrance signs;
- ((d)) (e) Existing streets bounding and/or within the development area;
- ((e)) (f) ((Tentative traffic)) Traffic and pedestrian circulation pattern within the development area, showing ((intended)) proposed street widths;
- ((f)) (g) ((Tentative location)) Location of building lots and/or building areas and major areas intended for open space;
- (h) Typical elevations (side views) of each type of building, including identification of exterior building materials;
- ((g)) (i) Phasing plan depicting development divisions, if applicable;
- ((h)) (j) General landscape plan showing areas to be landscaped, proposed plant height, and treatment of existing vegetation; ((and))
- (k) Landscape plan meeting the applicable requirements of the landscape plan submittal checklist, including plant locations and species

Business performance zone development applications and reviews can be simplified by eliminating preliminary site plans in favor of official site plans. An official site plan has been sufficient for the GC zone, pursuant to SCC 30.31B.200.

<p><u>sizes at planting, together with location and typical side or cross-section view of perimeter fencing or berms, if any;</u></p> <p><u>((l)) Site contours at five foot intervals, both existing and final where different, street layout and identification, size and shape of all building sites and lots, location of buildings, open space areas with any specific open space activity areas indicated;</u></p> <p><u>((m)) Plans for stormwater management; and</u></p> <p><u>((n)) Natural drainage courses and probable alterations which will be necessary to handle the expected drainage from the proposal, including low impact development best management practices.</u></p>	
<p>30.31A.220 Binding site plan (BSP).</p> <p>(1) An applicant may choose to divide land pursuant to a binding site plan (chapter 30.41D SCC) in conjunction with obtaining approval of ((a final)) <u>an official site plan in the BP, PCB, NB, GC, or IP ((plan)) zones.</u></p> <p>(2) All hearing examiner conditions of approval shall appear on the binding site plan and record of survey either in full or by reference to separately recorded covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CCRs).</p>	<p>Binding site plan procedures can be simplified by eliminating final site plans in favor of official site plans when dividing lands. An official site plan has been sufficient for the GC zone, pursuant to SCC 30.31B.200.</p>

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~~((30.31A.300 Requirements for the final plan.~~

~~(1) A planned development may be finalized as a whole or in successive divisions.~~

~~(2) The final plan for a planned development shall consist of the following for each division:~~

~~(a) A completed application form signed by the developer(s) of the project and by the property owner(s) if other than the developer;~~

~~(b) Prints of drawings, the number and scale determined by the director of the department, showing all the following information; however, the director may permit postponement of detailed building design information until application for building permits on each lot or site:~~

~~(i) site contours at five foot intervals, both existing and final where different, street layout and identification, size and shape of all building sites and lots, location of buildings, open space areas with any specific open space activity areas indicated;~~

~~(ii) final landscape plan, including plant locations and species sizes at planting, together with location and typical side or cross-section view of perimeter fencing or berms, if any;~~

~~(iii) plans for signing and lighting, including typical entrance treatment and entrance signs;~~

~~(iv) plans for buildings and related improvements to a scale of at least one inch to 50 feet, showing:~~

~~(A) a typical plot plan for each type of building, including location of building entrance, driveway, parking, fencing, and sight screening;~~

~~(B) typical elevations (side views) of each type of building, including identification of exterior building materials;~~

~~(C) typical street and walkway cross sections;~~

~~(D) plans for open space area improvements, if any;~~

~~(E) restrictive covenants as required, together with a statement from a private attorney as to their adequacy to fulfill the requirements of this chapter; and~~

~~(F) to ensure conformity, a short subdivision or subdivision, if required, shall be filed simultaneously with final plans. Final plan approval shall occur only after preliminary short subdivision or subdivision approval; and~~

~~(v) plans for stormwater management.~~

~~(3) Where no preliminary site plan has been required, the final plan shall also include:~~

~~(a) The names and addresses of the developer, land surveyor, engineer, architect, planner, and other professionals involved;~~

~~(b) A document satisfactorily assuring unified control through the final plan approval stage for the total zone;~~

~~(c) A vicinity sketch locating the development and defining the property boundaries of the development area;~~

Business performance zone development applications and reviews can be simplified by eliminating final site plans in favor of official site plans. An official site plan has been sufficient for the GC zone, pursuant to SCC 30.31B.200.

<p>(d) A description of intended type of uses and operations including timing of development, if phased, and management control;</p> <p>(e) A tentative traffic and pedestrian circulation pattern within the development area and a traffic analysis, when required by the department of public works pursuant to SCC 30.66B.220(1);</p> <p>(f) All existing structures and improvements within the development area which are to remain; and</p> <p>(g) A statement of landscape maintenance provisions--))</p>	
<p>((30.31A.310 Approval of the final plan.</p> <p>(1) Final plan approval subsequent to preliminary site plan. The final plan or phased divisions thereof shall be submitted to the director for final approval or disapproval. The director shall submit copies of the final plan to appropriate departments for their review and comment. Any reviewing department may request changes if they are consistent with the approved preliminary site plan. Upon review and comment, the director shall approve the final plan in writing when found to be in conformance with the approved preliminary site plan and this chapter. The director may permit revision of the general design elements of the preliminary site plan so long as it is found that impacts on adjoining properties are not significantly changed and major environmental protection features of the preliminary site plan are maintained. Upon approval, the final plan shall control all development of the property.</p> <p>(2) Final plan where no preliminary site plan is required. The final plan shall be submitted to the department for final approval or disapproval. The department shall transmit copies of the final plan to appropriate departments for their review and comment. The final plan shall conform to the applicable provisions of this chapter and other applicable provisions of county code. Upon approval, the final plan shall control all development of the property.</p> <p>(3) Final plan consolidation with building permit site plan. A final plan required pursuant to this section may be consolidated with the site development plans otherwise required for a commercial building permit application or land disturbing activity permit on the property, provided the provisions of SCC 30.31A.300 are met prior to permit issuance. Provided that the plans for the construction permits are consistent with the preliminary site plan, no separate final plan application or fees are required--))</p>	<p>See above.</p>
<p>((30.31A.400 Final plan disputes.</p> <p>Where the applicant and the department are not able to reach agreement on the provisions of the final plan, the dispute shall be submitted to the hearing examiner in accordance with the procedures established by this title for administrative appeals--))</p>	<p>See above.</p>

Table 2 provides a summary and rationale of the subsections that were deleted from chapter 30.31B SCC, and for the subsections added into chapter 30.31A SCC:

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CODE CHANGES	
Proposed Amendments	Rationale
<p>30.31B.100 General performance standards. Each development shall be permanently screened from adjoining and contiguous residential areas or zone by a wall, fence, ((greenbelt)) or <u>perimeter landscaping</u> ((or other enclosure approved by the hearing examiner))</p>	<p>Landscaping standards were moved to SCC 30.31A.150, however the hearing examiner clause was removed as they should only be involved in GC permit reviews in rezoning cases. These code changes will cut red tape by streamlining many business performance zone permits as Type 1 where the hearing examiner won't be involved, and it would be cumbersome to then require the proposal to go to hearing only for the hearing examiner to review landscaping requirements.</p>
<p>((30.31B.200 Official site plan. (1) An official site plan for the GC zone, indicating the provisions for acceleration and deceleration lanes, ingress and egress driveways; curbing, internal traffic circulation and parking; the location of structures; and the floor area devoted to accessory uses must be reviewed and approved by: (a) The hearing examiner concurrently with the GC rezone request pursuant to chapter 30.42A SCC and subtitle 30.7 SCC as a Type 2 process; or (b) The department only for properties where the GC zone already exists, pursuant to chapter 30.43A SCC as a Type 1 process. (2) The department may approve an official site plan for partial development of the existing zone. (3) The department shall include in its staff report to the hearing examiner or in its decision pursuant to chapter 30.43A SCC the director of the department of public works' written evaluation of the adequacy of the proposed traffic control measures. Where a state facility is involved, the department of public works shall request a similar evaluation by the Washington State Department of Transportation.))</p>	<p>The required review for a Commercial Building Permit and Land Disturbing Activity permit supplement the official site plan process. Submittal of a CBP requires a site plan that must include all proposed structure(s), parking, and driveways. The language here can be replaced with the official site plan procedure found with the other business performance zones in chapter 30.31A SCC.</p>
<p>Remove redundancies in SCC 30.31B.210 – 30.31B.310.</p>	<p>Much of the development application procedures and review procedures for GC zone can be copied under the procedures in the business performance zones chapter.</p>

Table 3 provides a summary and rationale for the proposed amendments in sections: SCC 30.21.025, 30.70.025, 30.70.050, 30.70.140, 30.70.300, and 30.86.200:

TABLE 3: SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CODE CHANGES

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SUBJECT: Concerning Commercial and Industrial Zones Standards; Amendments to SCC 30.21.025, 30.22.100, 30.23.010, 30.31A, 30.31B, 30.70.025, 30.70.050, 30.70.140, 30.70.300, and 30.86.200.

Proposed Amendments	Rationale
<p>30.21.025 Intent of zones.</p> <p>This section describes the intent of each use zone. Snohomish County’s use zones are categorized and implemented consistent with the comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan establishes guidelines to determine compatibility and location of use zones. The intent of each zone is established pursuant to SCC Table 30.21.020 and is set forth below in subsections (1) through (4) of this section.</p> <p>(1) <i>Urban Zones.</i> The urban zones category consists of residential, commercial, and industrial zoning classifications in Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) located outside of cities in unincorporated Snohomish County. These areas are either already characterized by, or are planned for, urban growth consistent with the comprehensive plan....</p> <p>(c) <i>Commercial.</i> The Commercial zones provide for neighborhood, community and urban center commercial, and mixed use developments that offer a range of retail, office, personal service and wholesale uses. Commercial zones consist of the following:</p> <p>...</p> <p>(iv) <i>General Commercial (GC).</i> The intent and function of the General Commercial zone is to provide for a wide variety of retail and nonretail commercial and business uses. General commercial sites are auto-oriented as opposed to pedestrian or neighborhood oriented. Certain performance standards subject to review and approval of an official site plan are contained in chapter ((30.31B)) <u>30.31A</u> SCC;</p>	<p>Proposed housekeeping amendment to update the reference in SCC 30.21.025 to the updated location of the GC zone.</p>

30.70.025 Permit Type Classification.

Application	Type
Administrative Conditional Use Permit	1
Administrative Site Plans	
• Urban Residential Design Standards	1
• Single Family Detached Unit (under chapter 30.43F SCC)	1
Binding Site Plan	
• Planned Residential Development proposing more than 9 lots	2
• All Others	1
Boundary Line Adjustment	
• When consolidated under SCC 30.41E.020(1)(b)	2
• All Others	1
Building Permits subject to SEPA	1
Code Interpretations	1
Conditional Use Permits	2
Cottage Housing Site Plan	1
Flood Hazard Permits	
• Submitted with another permit application subject to Type 2 processing (Refer to SCC 30.43D.020(3))	2
• All Others	1
Flood Hazard Variances	1
Forest Practices Permits subject to SEPA and Moratorium Lifts under chapter 30.43F SCC ¹	1
Land Disturbing Activity Permits subject to SEPA review under chapter 30.61 SCC, or subject to conditions imposed under chapter 30.32D SCC	1
Land Disturbing Activity Permits issued by the department of public works or the department of conservation and natural resources for land disturbing activity performed under SCC 30.63B.100	1
Official ((or Preliminary)) Site Plans	
• Sites 5 acres or larger in size - BP, IP, or PCB zones ((as required under SCC 30.31A.200))	2
• All Others – BP, NB, IP, PCB zones	1

Cross-references in this table are updated to reflect a different location for the business performance zones procedure, and the dissolution of preliminary site plans in favor of official site plans.

• RB, RI, T, RFS, and GC zones not submitted as part of a rezone	1		
Planned Residential Development			
• Submitted with another permit application subject to Type 2 processing	2		
• All Others	1		
Pre-application Concurrency Determination	1		
Preliminary Short Subdivision			
• Where no new public road or public road extension is proposed	1		
• Where a new public road or public road extension is proposed	2		
Preliminary Subdivision	2		
Site-specific Rezones not associated with a legislative process	2		
Shoreline			
• Shoreline Substantial Development, Shoreline Conditional Use, or Shoreline Variance, except when SCC 30.44.210(2) applies	1		
• Shoreline Substantial Development, Shoreline Conditional Use, or Shoreline Variance under SCC 30.44.210(2)	2		
• Substantial Development Permit Rescission	2		
Special Use Permit	2		
Urban Center Development	Refer to SCC 30.34A.180		
Variance			
• Submitted with another permit application subject to Type 2 processing (Refer to SCC 30.43B.020(2))	2		
• All Others	1		

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Concerning Commercial and Industrial Zones Standards; Amendments to SCC 30.21.025, 30.22.100, 30.23.010, 30.31A, 30.31B, 30.70.025, 30.70.050, 30.70.140, 30.70.300, and 30.86.200.

30.70.050 Notice of application - timing and method.

Application Type	Post	Publish	Mail
Administrative Conditional Use	X	X	X
Binding Site Plan	X	X	X
Building and land disturbing activity permits unless exempt from SEPA as minor new construction under SCC 30.61.035(1)	X	X	X
Code interpretation not related to a specific project		X	
Code interpretation related to a specific project	X	X	X
Final Subdivision	[see SCC 30.41A.600 through 30.41A.730]		
Flood Hazard Permit - except as provided in SCC 30.43C.020			X
Flood Hazard Variance	X	X	X
Free-standing sign in the RFS zone	X	X	X
SEPA threshold determination and EIS adequacy associated with project permit	X	X	X
Shoreline variance, conditional use, or	X	X	X

Clarify that preliminary plan approval is no longer associated with business performance zones and correct an oversight in the table to reflect that the other zones also do not require a preliminary site plan.

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Concerning Commercial and Industrial Zones Standards; Amendments to SCC 30.21.025, 30.22.100, 30.23.010, 30.31A, 30.31B, 30.70.025, 30.70.050, 30.70.140, 30.70.300, and 30.86.200.

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substantial development permit or permit rescission				
Short subdivision and rural cluster short subdivision	X	X	X	
Variance	X	X	X	
Conditional use and major revision	X	X	X	
Preliminary subdivision and rural cluster subdivision, and major revision	X	X	X	
Planned Residential Development and major revision	X	X	X	
Official site plan ((or preliminary plan) approval in performance standard zones (BP, PCB, IP, GC, T, RB, CRC, RFS, and RI)	X	X	X	
Rezone - site specific	X	X	X	
Review or revocation of a permit or approval pursuant to SCC 30.71.027	X	X	X	
Preapplication Concurrency Decision	X	X	X	
Any non-listed Type 1 or Type 2 permit application except Boundary Line Adjustments pursuant to SCC 30.41E.020(1)(c)	X	X	X	

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30.70.140 Expiration of applications, approvals, and permits.

Cross-references in this table are updated to reflect a different location for the business performance zones procedure.

Approval Type	Expiration of application	Expiration of approval or permit
Administrative Conditional Use Permit	36 months	5 years to commence construction or use
Administrative Conditional Use Permit – Temporary Dwelling During Construction	12 months	As determined in decision
Administrative Conditional Use Permit - Temporary Dwelling For Relative	12 months	Shall be subject to annual renewal
Administrative Conditional Use Permit - Other Temporary Uses	12 months	As determined in decision
Administrative Site Plan (pursuant to chapter 30.23A SCC)	36 months	5 years to commence construction or use
Binding Site Plan	36 months	6 months to record
Boundary Line Adjustment	12 months	12 months to record. The department may grant up to one 12-month extension.
Building Permit	Per subtitle 30.5 SCC	Per subtitle 30.5 SCC
Conditional Use Permit	36 months	5 years to commence construction or use

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SUBJECT: Concerning Commercial and Industrial Zones Standards; Amendments to SCC 30.21.025, 30.22.100, 30.23.010, 30.31A, 30.31B, 30.70.025, 30.70.050, 30.70.140, 30.70.300, and 30.86.200.

Cottage Housing (pursuant to chapter 30.41G SCC)	36 months	5 years to commence construction or use	
Flood Hazard Permit & Flood Hazard Variance	18 months, but may be extended for an additional 18 months. ⁽¹⁾	18 months from the date of issuance. Start of construction, as defined in SCC 30.91S.570, must commence within 180 days.	
Forest Practices (Class IV-General)	18 months	36 months	
Land Disturbing Activity	18 months, but may be extended for an additional 18 months. ⁽²⁾	36 months	
	36 months, for Snohomish County Department of Public Works projects only	60 months, for Snohomish County Department of Public Works projects only	
Official Site Plan and Site Plans (pursuant to ((chapters)) chapter 30.31A ((and 30.31B)) SCC)	36 months	5 years to commence construction or use	
Planned Residential Development	36 months	5 years to commence construction or use	

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Concerning Commercial and Industrial Zones Standards; Amendments to SCC 30.21.025, 30.22.100, 30.23.010, 30.31A, 30.31B, 30.70.025, 30.70.050, 30.70.140, 30.70.300, and 30.86.200.

Pre-application Concurrency Determination	6 months	Per SCC 30.66B.155	
Rezones	36 months	Not applicable	
Shoreline Conditional Use Permit	36 months	Per chapter 30.44 SCC	
Shoreline Substantial Development Permit	36 months	Per chapter 30.44 SCC	
Single Family Detached Units	36 months	5 years to commence construction or use	
Special Use Permit (pursuant to chapter 30.42F SCC)	36 months	5 years to commence construction or use	
Subdivisions	48 months	Per RCW 58.17.140, except that:	
		May be extended for an additional two years. ⁽³⁾	
Short Subdivisions	48 months	60 months, except that:	
		May be extended for an additional two years. ⁽⁴⁾	
Urban Center Development	36 months	5 years to commence construction or use	
Variance	36 months	Not applicable	

STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Concerning Commercial and Industrial Zones Standards; Amendments to SCC 30.21.025, 30.22.100, 30.23.010, 30.31A, 30.31B, 30.70.025, 30.70.050, 30.70.140, 30.70.300, and 30.86.200.

30.70.300 Vesting of applications.

The purpose of this section is to implement local vesting regulations that are best suited to the needs of the county and consistent with state law. This section is intended to provide property owners, permit applicants, and the general public assurance that the regulations for project development will remain consistent during the life of an application. This section is modified by SCC 30.70.310.

(1) Except for rezones, an application for a permit or approval type set forth in SCC Table 30.70.140(1) shall be considered under the development regulations in effect on the date a complete application is filed, pursuant to SCC 30.70.040. Provided, that projects under the authority of the director of the department of public works, the county engineer, or the director of the department of conservation and natural resources pursuant to SCC 30.63B.100 shall vest as of the date the county engineer or the surface water management engineering manager approves a design report or memorandum for the project.

(2) Building permit or land disturbing activity permit applications that are subsequent and related to the development identified in an application listed in SCC 30.70.300(2)(a) through (n), shall vest to the development regulations in effect at the time a complete application listed in SCC 30.70.300(2)(a) through (n) is filed pursuant to SCC 30.70.040.

- (a) Administrative conditional use permit;
- (b) Administrative site plan (pursuant to chapter 30.23A SCC);
- (c) Binding site plan;
- (d) Conditional use permit;
- (e) Official site plan and site plan (pursuant to ~~((chapters))~~ chapter 30.31A ((and 30.31B)) SCC);
- (f) Planned residential development;
- (g) Shoreline conditional use permit;
- (h) Shoreline substantial development permit;
- (i) Single family detached units;
- (j) Special use permits (pursuant to chapter 30.42F SCC);
- (k) Short subdivision;
- (l) Subdivision;
- (m) Urban center development;
- (n) Cottage housing (pursuant to chapter 30.41G SCC).

However, a complete application for any subsequent application must be submitted prior to the expiration date of the permit(s) or approval(s) applied for in the application types listed in this subsection.

(3) For the purpose of this section, "development regulation" means those provisions of Title 30 SCC that exercise a restraining or directing influence over land, including provisions that control or affect the type, degree, or physical attributes of land development or use. For the purpose of this section, "development regulation"

Cross-references are updated to reflect a different location for the business performance zones procedure.

<p>does not include fees listed in Title 30 SCC or procedural regulations.</p> <p>(4) A complete building permit application shall always be subject to that version of subtitle 30.5 SCC in effect at the time the building permit application is submitted.</p> <p>(5) Notwithstanding any other provision in this section, any application dependent on approval of a rezone application shall not vest until the underlying rezone is approved.</p>	
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STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT: Concerning Commercial and Industrial Zones Standards; Amendments to SCC 30.21.025, 30.22.100, 30.23.010, 30.31A, 30.31B, 30.70.025, 30.70.050, 30.70.140, 30.70.300, and 30.86.200.

30.86.200 Rezone fees.

Table 30.86.200 Rezone and Official Site Plan Fees.

						FEES^{(1), (2)}
PRE-APPLICATION CONFERENCE						
Application fee						\$480
((FINAL PLAN FILING FEE (fractions rounded to the next highest acre)))						
((Chapter 30.31A SCC BP, IP, PCB Zones \$50/acre))						
OFFICIAL SITE PLAN⁽³⁾						
((Chapter 30.31A SCC BP, IP, and PCB Zones and Chapter 30.31F SCC RB, RI, RFS, and CRC Zones))						
Application fee						\$1,440
Minor revision request ((administrative)) ⁽⁴⁾						\$780
Major revision request ((public hearing)) ⁽⁴⁾						\$1,248
REZONE TYPE	Rezone Area Acreage					
	0-<3	3-<10	10-<30	30-<200	200-<500	500+
COMMERCIAL (All Commercial Zones)						
Base fee	\$5,400	\$5,940	\$7,740	\$15,840	\$24,840	\$33,840
Plus \$ per acre	\$960	\$720	\$480	\$120	\$60	\$36
INDUSTRIAL (All Industrial Zones)						
Base fee	\$7,200	\$7,740	\$9,540	\$17,640	\$35,640	\$58,140
Plus \$ per acre	\$1,080	\$840	\$600	\$240	\$120	\$60
MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL (LDMR & MR Zones)						
Base fee	\$5,400	\$5,670	\$6,570	\$11,970	\$38,970	\$47,970
Plus \$ per acre	\$720	\$600	\$480	\$240	\$60	\$36

Update relevant application fee process for the business performance zones and correct an oversight in the table to reflect that the other rural business performance zones also may require an official site plan. Additionally, the parenthetical clarifications on official site plan's minor and major revision requests were removed as they do not always correspond to administrative and public hearing situations.

ALL OTHER RESIDENTIAL, AGRICULTURE, RECREATION & MC Zones						
Base fee	\$1,140	\$1,170	\$2,070	\$3,420	\$5,220	\$9,720
Plus \$ per acre	\$360	\$240	\$120	\$60	\$48	\$36
Reference notes:						
(1) The rezone fee amount is based on the highest intensity use requested being applied to the gross acreage noted on the application, and is equal to the sum of all applicable parts. Application fees for public agencies shall be the same as for nongovernmental applicants.						
(2) A base fee shall be increased by 25 percent when an official site plan is required or offered for rezone approval.						
(3) This fee is only applicable for official site plan approvals when no zoning change is requested.						
(4) Subsequent to initial approval of the official site plan.						

Table 4 provides further details for the proposed amendments mentioned above for Table 30.22.100.

30.22.100 Urban Zone Categories Use Matrix.	<p>The allowable uses in the Urban Zone Categories Use Matrix (SCC 30.22.100) have a lot of uses that are inconsistent with its intended commercial purposes described within SCC 30.21.025(1)(c)(iv). Currently, the GC zone does not permit new single family dwellings or duplexes, and thus should not permit accessory uses to SFR nor temporary dwellings during construction. The proposed removal will align the allowed uses with the intent of the zone. Additionally, non-accessory storage structures could be utilized by commercial and retail establishments and should be permitted outright instead of as an CUP that causes additional permit review times. This is already the case for non-accessory storage structures that are less than 2,400 square feet in size and should also apply to those larger than 2,400 square feet.</p>
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TYPE OF USE	R-9,600 ⁸⁸	R-8,400 ⁸⁸	R-7,200 ⁸⁸	T	LDMR	MR	NB	PCB	CB ¹²⁸	GC ¹²⁸	IP ⁷⁶	BP	LI ⁵⁵ , 76	HI ⁵⁵	MHP ¹¹⁴	UC ¹²²
Storage Structure, Accessory ⁶⁰																
Up to 2,400 sq ft	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	((P))	P	P	P	P	P	P
2,401 - 4,000 sq ft on More than 3 Acres ^{41, 59}	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	((P))	P	P	P	P	P	
2,401 - 4,000 on Less than 3 acres ^{41, 59}	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	((A))	A	A	A	A	A	
4,001 sq ft and Greater ^{41, 59}	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	((C))	C	C	C	C	C	
Storage Structure, Non-accessory ⁶⁰																
Up to 2,400 sq ft	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
2,401 sq ft and greater ^{41, 59}	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	((C))	P	C	C	C	C	

STAFF REPORT

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TYPE OF USE	R- 9,600 ⁸⁸	R- 8,400 ⁸⁸	R- 7,200 ⁸⁸	T	LDMR	MR	NB	PCB	CB ¹²⁸	GC ¹²⁸	IP ⁷⁶	BP	LI ⁵⁵ , 76	HI ⁵⁵	MHP ¹¹⁴	UC ¹²²
Temporary Dwelling During Construction	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	((A))						A

Table 5 provides a summary and rationale for the proposed amendments in section: SCC 30.23.010.

TABLE 5: SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CODE CHANGES	
Proposed Amendment	Rationale

<p>30.23.010 Bulk matrices - Purpose, applicability and general provisions.</p> <p>(1) SCC Tables 30.23.030, 30.23.032, 30.23.041, 30.23.043, 30.23.045, and 30.23.047 constitute the bulk matrices. The bulk matrices contain the setback, lot coverage, building height, and lot dimension regulations for all zones in unincorporated Snohomish County.</p> <p>(2) Additional setback, lot width and lot area requirements and exceptions are found at SCC 30.23.100 through 30.23.260 and chapters 30.34A, 30.41C, 30.41G, 30.42B and 30.67 SCC.</p> <p>(3) All lots and structures shall conform to the requirements listed in the bulk matrices, SCC Tables 30.23.030, 30.23.032, 30.23.041, 30.23.043, 30.23.045, and 30.23.047, unless modified elsewhere in this title.</p> <p>(4) SCC 30.23.040(41) establishes minimum lot area for the RU zone.</p> <p>(5) For design reasons, the director may reduce the property line setbacks established in SCC Tables 30.23.030 and 30.23.032 by up to 25 percent for walls or structures that are 20 feet in length or less; provided, that a minimum setback of three feet is maintained.</p> <p>(6) Except as otherwise provided in this title, every required setback shall be open and unobstructed from the ground to the sky except for trees and other natural vegetation, eaves, foundations and walls.</p> <p>(7) A setback or the open space required around any structure or use shall not be calculated in an adjacent development's setback or open space for a structure or use.</p> <p>(8) SCC 30.23.250 establishes the setback requirements for aggregated lots.</p> <p><u>(9) For the purposes of determining setbacks under SCC Tables 30.23.030 and 30.23.032 only: (a) the Rural Industrial zone shall be considered an industrial zone, and; (b) the Rural Business, Clearview Rural Commercial, and Rural Freeway Service zones shall be considered commercial zones.</u></p>	<p>To clarify how setback requirements are applied to new development, a code amendment is necessary to specify that rural industrial zones are to be considered an industrial zone and rural commercial zones are to be considered a commercial zone. The rural industrial zone is more similar in character to an industrial zone, as the intent and function of the zone is to provide for small-scale light industrial, light manufacturing, recycling, mineral processing, and resource-based goods production uses. The rural commercial zones are more similar to commercial zones, as the intent of functions of those zones is to allow commercial businesses and services that primarily serve the local rural population.</p>
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ANALYSIS

The following analysis provides a summary of the proposed code amendments' compliance with state law, regional and countywide planning policies, and county comprehensive plan policies.

Compliance with State Law

The Growth Management Act (GMA) contains planning goals, contained in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 36.70A.020, which guide the development of local comprehensive plans and development regulations. The following planning goal applies to the proposed code amendments:

GMA Goal 7: Permits. Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.

Analysis: By eliminating the need for two separate approvals (final and preliminary site plans), and streamlining business performance zone applications with a standard official site plan, the proposed amendments ensure that applications are processed in a predictable, timely, and fair manner to all similarly situated applicants.

Compliance with the Multi-County Planning Policies

The proposed amendments are consistent with the following multicounty planning policy (MPPs) from the Puget Sound Regional Council VISION 2050:

MPP-DP-47: Streamline development standards and regulations for residential and commercial development and public projects, especially in centers and high-capacity transit station areas, to provide flexibility and to accommodate a broader range of project types consistent with the regional vision.

Analysis: By routinizing development applications in business performance zones with an official site plan, the proposed amendments ensure a more streamlined and consistent set of regulations for commercial developments. Additional clarification on rural commercial and rural industrial zones provide consistent and expected norms for setback regulations.

Compliance with the Countywide Planning Policies

The proposed amendments are consistent with the following countywide planning policies (CPPs):

CPP- ED-16 The expeditious processing of development applications shall not result in the reduction of environmental and land use standards.

Analysis: The proposed amendments ensure an expeditious processing of development applications by simplifying site plan reviews and eliminating instances of a hearing examiner review for landscaping issues, without reducing environmental or land use standards. Additionally, the reduction in setback size for rural commercial and rural industrial zones ensures more dense development and less environmental degradation from sprawl.

Compliance with the Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan

The proposed amendment would be consistent with and help implement policies contained within the Snohomish County Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan (GMACP) – General Policy Plan (GPP). The following policy applies to the code amendment as proposed in this memorandum:

ED Policy 2.A.3: To ensure timeliness, responsiveness, and increased efficiency, the county shall develop and maintain a program of periodic review of the permitting process to eliminate unnecessary administrative procedures that do not respond to legal requirements for public review and citizen input.

Analysis: By eliminating the more complicated application review procedures in both the business performance zones and clarifying the setbacks in the rural commercial and rural industrial zones, the proposed amendments ensure a more efficient and less costly application process with less time wasted on site review.

Public Participation

The GMA requires early and continuous public participation (GOAL 11). Public participation on the proposed code amendments has been provided to date through:

- A 14-day public comment period on the preliminary draft amendment from June 10th through June 24th, 2025; and
- Email distributions to key parties about the comment period and updates to the code development webpage on the PDS website.

The county did not receive questions from the public about what this code project meant. No amendment to the proposed code amendment was necessary based on public comment.

Environmental Review

A State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Determination is required for the proposed code amendment. The Department will make a threshold determination under SEPA in the coming months.

Notification of State Agencies

Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.106, a notice of intent to adopt the proposed regulations and standards will be transmitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce in the coming months.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the proposed code amendment and findings contained in this staff report.

Action Requested

The planning commission is requested to hold a public hearing, consider the proposed code amendment, and provide a recommendation to the county council. The planning commission can recommend approval of the amendment with supporting findings of fact as proposed or modified, deny the proposal with findings, or amend the proposal with appropriate findings.

cc: Ken Klein, Executive Director
Mike McCrary, PDS Director
Darren Groth, PDS Manager
Michael Dobesh, PDS Manager

Attachment

[Summary Notice – Concerning Commercial and Industrial Zones Standards](#)