

1 Adopted:  
2 Effective:

3 SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL  
4 Snohomish County, Washington  
5

6 SUBSTITUTE ORDINANCE NO. 25-051  
7

8 RELATING TO GROWTH MANAGEMENT; AMENDING THE SNOHOMISH COUNTY OFFICIAL  
9 ZONING MAP TO MORE FULLY IMPLEMENT THE URBAN MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL  
10 AND URBAN HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL DESIGNATIONS ON THE SNOHOMISH COUNTY  
11 GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FUTURE LAND USE MAP  
12

13 WHEREAS, on December 4, 2024, the Snohomish County Council (“County Council”) adopted the  
14 Snohomish County Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan (GMACP) including the Future Land  
15 Use (FLU) Map through Amended Ordinance No. 24-033 pursuant to RCW 36.70A.130; and  
16

17 WHEREAS, counties and cities that are required to plan under the Growth Management Act  
18 (GMA), chapter 36.70A RCW, must ensure their comprehensive plans and zoning are consistent; and  
19

20 WHEREAS, the Snohomish County Official Zoning Map (“zoning map”) is generally consistent  
21 with the FLU Map; and  
22

23 WHEREAS, the Urban Medium Density Residential (UMDR) designation on the FLU Map allows  
24 for a range of implementing zones, with the highest density implementing zone being Low Density  
25 Multiple Residential (LDMR); and  
26

27 WHEREAS, the Urban High Density Residential (UHDR) designation on the FLU Map allows for a  
28 range of implementing zones, with the highest density implementing zone being Multiple Residential  
29 (MR); and  
30

31 WHEREAS, if those zones are not in place in those FLU designations, developers are allowed to  
32 and normally will apply for site-specific quasi-judicial rezones as part of the permitting process in  
33 advance of, or concurrent with, applications for new housing development in order to develop at the  
34 planned density, an extra and redundant step in the permitting process that increases time and costs for  
35 new housing construction that would not be necessary if those zones were in place; and  
36

37 WHEREAS, state, regional, countywide, and County laws and policies support streamlining the  
38 permitting process to be more efficient and predictable and minimize additional costs in order to  
39 address housing supply and affordability; and  
40

41 WHEREAS, on April 22, 2025, the Snohomish County Planning Commission (“Planning  
42 Commission”) was briefed by Snohomish County Planning and Development Services (PDS) staff about  
43 the zoning map amendments contained in the original Ordinance No. 25-051; and

1 WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on May 27, 2025, to receive public  
2 testimony concerning those zoning map amendments; and  
3

4 WHEREAS, the notice of the Planning Commission public hearing was mailed to 35,526  
5 addresses, including those taxpayers of record and site addresses potentially affected by the zoning map  
6 amendments and those within 500 feet of a zoning map amendment, and published in the Everett  
7 Herald; and  
8

9 WHEREAS, at the conclusion of the Planning Commission's public hearing, the Planning  
10 Commission deliberated on the zoning map amendments and voted to recommend approval of the  
11 zoning map amendments, as shown in its recommendation letter dated July 1, 2025; and  
12

13 WHEREAS, prior to presentation of the original Ordinance No. 25-051 being presented to the  
14 County Council, two properties proposed to be rezoned to LDMR under this proposal were rezoned to  
15 LDMR as site-specific rezones and Exhibit A to this Substitute Ordinance No. 25-051 reflects that; and  
16

17 WHEREAS, on October 1, 2025, the County Council held a public hearing after proper notice, and  
18 considered public comment and the entire record related to the zoning map amendments contained in  
19 the original Ordinance No. 25-051 and deliberated on the zoning map amendments contained therein;  
20 and  
21

22 WHEREAS, after much discussion and consideration, the County Council sent the original  
23 Ordinance No. 25-051 back to the Planning and Community Development Committee wherein it was  
24 reintroduced and discussed on October 7, 2025; and  
25

26 WHEREAS, Council requested that a substitute ordinance be drafted to exclude the area known  
27 as Esperance from the areawide rezone and then be sent back to Council for consideration; and  
28

29 WHEREAS, this proposed Substitute Ordinance No. 25-051 excludes Esperance from the  
30 areawide rezone as proposed in the original Ordinance No. 25-051; and  
31

32 WHEREAS, Councilmembers also requested that a new ordinance be drafted specific to rezone  
33 the Esperance area only; and  
34

35 WHEREAS, at the October 1, 2025, County Council public hearing and the October 7, 2025,  
36 Planning and Community Development Committee meeting, Councilmembers expressed a desire for the  
37 Esperance area to be annexed into the City of Edmonds and asked County Planning and Development  
38 Services staff to work with the City of Edmonds in coordination; and  
39

40 WHEREAS, on \_\_\_\_\_, 2025, the County Council held a public hearing after proper  
41 notice, and considered public comment and the entire record related to the zoning map amendments  
42 contained in this Substitute Ordinance No. 25-051; and  
43

1 WHEREAS, following the public hearing, the County Council deliberated on the zoning map  
2 amendments contained herein;

3  
4 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED:

5  
6 Section 1. The County Council adopts the following findings in support of this ordinance:

- 7  
8 A. The foregoing recitals are adopted as findings as if set forth in full herein.  
9  
10 B. This ordinance amends the Snohomish County Official Zoning Map to adopt LDMR and MR zones to  
11 more fully implement the UMDR and UHDR designations respectively on the adopted GMACP FLU  
12 Map.  
13  
14 C. This ordinance maintains and improves consistency with the Snohomish County GMACP as required  
15 under RCW 36.70A.040.  
16  
17 D. In developing the zoning map amendments in this ordinance, the County considered the Growth  
18 Management Act (GMA) goals within RCW 36.70A.020. In particular, the proposed amendments are  
19 consistent with and promote:

20  
21 GMA Goal 1: "Urban growth. Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public  
22 facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner."

23  
24 GMA Goal 2: "Reduce sprawl. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into  
25 sprawling, low-density development."

26  
27 GMA Goal 7: "Permits. Applications for both state and local government permits should be  
28 processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability."

29  
30 The zoning map amendments in this ordinance streamline the permitting process by removing a  
31 step in the development process to apply for a quasi-judicial rezone prior to new development, as is  
32 often necessary in areas where the FLU map has not been fully implemented in the zoning. In  
33 addition, the zoning map amendments support planned densities within the UGA where services  
34 and facilities exist currently to accommodate higher levels of growth. The zoning map amendments  
35 also support infill development to concentrate growth within the UGA, reducing urban sprawl  
36 outside of the UGA.

- 37  
38 E. In developing the zoning map amendments in this ordinance, the County considered the following  
39 Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs):

40  
41 MPP-RGS-6: "Encourage efficient use of urban land by optimizing the development potential of  
42 existing urban lands and increasing density in the urban growth area in locations consistent with  
43 the Regional Growth Strategy."  
44

1 MPP-H-10: "Encourage jurisdictions to review and streamline development standards and  
2 regulations to advance their public benefit, provide flexibility, and minimize additional costs to  
3 housing."  
4

5 The zoning map amendments in this ordinance streamline the permitting process by removing a  
6 step in the development process to apply for a quasi-judicial rezone prior to new development, as is  
7 often necessary in areas where the FLU map has not been fully implemented in the zoning. In  
8 addition, the zoning map amendments in this ordinance support planned housing densities within  
9 the UGA and opportunity for infill development, ensuring land is used efficiently.  
10

11 F. The map amendments in this ordinance support the Snohomish County Countywide Planning  
12 Policies (CPPs):  
13

14 HO-4: "The county and cities should implement policies that allow for the development of  
15 moderate density housing to help meet future housing needs, diversify the housing stock, and  
16 provide more affordable home ownership and rental opportunities. This approach should  
17 include code updates to ensure that zoning designations and allowed densities, housing  
18 capacity, and other restrictions do not preclude development of moderate density housing."  
19

20 The zoning map amendments in this ordinance are consistent with the CPPs as they support the  
21 GMACP FLU Map designation of UMDR that plans for moderate densities in urban zones to support  
22 development of more housing, and greater variety of housing, to accommodate future housing  
23 needs and availability of more affordable home ownership and rental opportunities.  
24

25 G. The zoning map amendments in this ordinance more fully implement and ensure consistency with  
26 the following policies from the Land Use and Housing Elements of the GMACP:  
27

28 "*Urban Medium Density Residential (UMDR)*. This designation allows a variety of housing types,  
29 including detached homes on small lots, townhouses, and apartments in medium density  
30 developments. Implementing zones: MHP, LDMR, PRD-LDMR, Townhouse, R-7,200, PRD-7,200  
31 and WFB."  
32

33 "*Urban High Density Residential (UHDR)*. This designation allows high density residential land  
34 uses such as townhouses and apartments generally near other high intensity land uses.  
35 Implementing zones: MHP, MR, PRD-MR, LDMR, and PRD-LDMR."  
36

37 HO 3.A.2: "Development standards and building permit requirements shall be reviewed on a  
38 continual basis to ensure clarity and consistency while providing for a timely, fair, and  
39 predictable application processing outcome."  
40

41 The zoning map amendments in this ordinance more fully implement the UMDR and UHDR FLU  
42 designations adopted on the GMACP FLU Map. The zoning map amendments in this ordinance  
43 streamline the permitting process by removing a step in the development process to apply for a

1 quasi-judicial rezone prior to new development, as is often necessary in areas where the FLU map  
2 has not been fully implemented in the zoning.

3  
4 H. Procedural requirements.

5  
6 1. The zoning map amendments in this ordinance are a Type 3 legislative action under SCC  
7 30.73.010 and 30.73.020.

8  
9 2. As required by RCW 30.70A.106(1), a notice of intent to adopt the proposed zoning  
10 amendments was transmitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce for  
11 distribution to state agencies on May 5, 2025.

12  
13 3. State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), chapter 43.21C RCW, requirements with respect to this  
14 non-project action were satisfied through analysis in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)  
15 for the Snohomish County 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update and an addendum to that EIS  
16 issued to that effect on May 5, 2025.

17  
18 4. The public participation process for the proposed zoning amendments has complied with all  
19 applicable requirements of the GMA and SCC.

20  
21 5. As required by RCW 36.70A.370, the Washington State Attorney General last issued an advisory  
22 memorandum in October 2024 titled "Advisory Memorandum and Recommended Process for  
23 Evaluating Proposed Regulatory or Administrative Actions to Avoid Unconstitutional Takings of  
24 Private Property" to help local governments avoid unconstitutional takings of private property.  
25 The process outlined in the State Attorney General's 2024 advisory memorandum was used by  
26 the County in objectively evaluating the regulatory changes in this proposal.

27  
28 I. The zoning map amendments in this ordinance are consistent with the record:

29  
30 1. This ordinance amends the Snohomish County Official Zoning Map to adopt LDMR and MR  
31 zones over approximately 3,049 acres within the Southwest County Urban Growth Area to more  
32 fully implement the UMDR and UHDR designations respectively on the adopted GMACP FLU  
33 Map.

34  
35 2. The zoning map amendments are consistent with the record as set forth in the PDS Staff Report  
36 dated April 4, 2025.

37  
38 Section 2. The County Council makes the following conclusions:

39  
40 A. The amendments proposed by this ordinance are consistent with all applicable federal, state, and  
41 local laws and regulations.

- 1 B. The amendments proposed by this ordinance are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies  
2 of the MPPs, CPPs, and the Snohomish County GMACP.  
3  
4 C. The County has complied with all SEPA requirements in respect to this non-project action.  
5  
6 D. The public participation process used in the adoption of this ordinance complies with all applicable  
7 requirements of the GMA and title 30 SCC.  
8  
9 E. The amendments proposed by this ordinance do not result in an unconstitutional taking of private  
10 property for a public purpose.  
11

12 Section 3. The County Council bases its findings and conclusions on the entire record of the  
13 County Council, including all testimony and exhibits. Any finding, which should be deemed a conclusion,  
14 and any conclusion which should be deemed a finding, is hereby adopted as such.  
15

16 Section 4. The Snohomish County Official Zoning Map maintained pursuant to SCC 30.21.030  
17 shall be revised to reflect the zoning map amendments adopted by the County Council as indicated in  
18 Exhibit A to this ordinance, which is attached hereto and incorporated by reference into this ordinance.  
19

20 Section 5. Severability and Savings. If any section, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance  
21 shall be held to be invalid by the Growth Management Hearings Board (Board), or unconstitutional by a  
22 court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the validity or  
23 constitutionality of any other section, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance. Provided, however,  
24 that if any section, sentence, clause or phrase of this ordinance is held to be invalid by the Board or  
25 court of competent jurisdiction, then the section, sentence, clause or phrase in effect prior to the  
26 effective date of this ordinance shall be in full force and effect for that individual section, sentence,  
27 clause or phrase as if this ordinance had never been adopted.  
28

29  
30 PASSED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

31  
32 SNOHOMISH COUNCIL  
33 Snohomish, Washington  
34

35  
36 \_\_\_\_\_  
37 Council Chair

38 ATTEST:  
39  
40  
41

42 \_\_\_\_\_  
43 Deputy Clerk of the Council

- 1 ( ) APPROVED
- 2 ( ) EMERGENCY
- 3 ( ) VETOED

DATE:

\_\_\_\_\_  
County Executive

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approved as to form only:

 11/7/2025

\_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

EXHIBIT A

