



**Snohomish County**

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**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Snohomish County Planning Commission

**Dave Somers**  
*County Executive*

FROM: Hilary McGowan, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Proposed Code Amendments Relating to Urban Zone Development and Urban Residential Design Standards (URDS)

DATE: February 5, 2025

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**INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this memo is to provide proposed code language to the Planning Commission for a non-project proposal to amend Snohomish County Code (SCC) chapters 30.23, 30.23A, and 30.91S SCC related to Urban Residential Design Standards (URDS). Amendments include removing outdated or inaccurate terminology, adding clarifying language to ensure consistent implementation of the URDS requirements, and removing reference to and the requirement to comply with the obsolete Snohomish County Residential Design Manual.

**PROPOSAL BACKGROUND & FINDINGS**

Chapter 30.23A SCC (URDS) provides standards and guidelines that address site and building design features for new urban residential development in urban unincorporated Snohomish County. Chapter 30.23 SCC is comprised of the General Development Standards – Bulk Regulations that contain matrices that define setback, lot coverage, building height, and lot dimension regulations for all zones in unincorporated Snohomish County. Proposed amendments aim to resolve the issues listed below.

(1) Replace the term 'stepback' with 'setback' for LDMR and MR zones. Setback is currently defined in SCC 30.91S.160 to mean "the distance that a building or use must be removed from the lot lines of the property." The term 'stepback' is not defined in code but was introduced in the code in 2009 and used colloquially as synonymous with setback. Both terms are used by PDS for the requirement that an entire building may need to be set back from a lot line, or portions of a building that are a certain height, such as a building's upper stories. Bulk matrices reference notes SCC 30.23.040(59) and (60) and a related figure detail the relationship of setback requirements to building height. SCC 30.23.040(59) and (60) use both terms 'setback' and 'stepback.' Reference notes in SCC 30.23.049 describe setbacks and building height relative to road network elements and SCC 30.23.049(7) uses both terms 'setback' and 'stepback.' Finally, SCC 30.23A.050(3), URDS architectural design elements for single-family attached dwelling, mixed townhouse, and townhouse developments uses the term 'stepback,' which has the same intended meaning as 'setback.' PDS proposes to remove and replace the term 'stepback' with 'setback' in SCC 30.23.040(59) and (60), SCC 30.23.049(7), and SCC 30.23A.050(3) described above for accuracy and clarity. Figure 30.23.040(59) will also be replaced to better illustrate setback requirements. The amended figure adds more labels and example footage to better demonstrate how the code is to be

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applied. Finally, the definition of "setback" in SCC 30.91S.160 will be amended to clarify that the term applies to both buildings and sections of a building, such as a building's upper stories.

(2) Clarify the applicability of Urban Residential Design Standards in SCC 30.23A.020 to exclude the Mixed Use Corridor Zone. On December 4, 2024, the County Council adopted Amended Ordinance 24-065, adopting regulations for the new Mixed Use Corridor (MUC) Zone in new chapter 30.31G SCC. Amended Ordinance No. 24-065 included an amendment to add a new SCC 30.31G.170 related to urban residential design standards to clarify that the requirements of chapter 30.23A does not apply to development in the MUC zone, however a similar change was not able to be made to the applicability section of chapter 30.23A through Amended Ordinance 24-065. PDS proposes to amend the URDS applicability section in SCC 30.23A.020(1)(c) to clarify that the URDS standards of chapter 30.23A does not apply to residential development or mixed use development in the MUC Zone subject to chapter 30.31G SCC, consistent with the applicability clarification in SCC 30.31G.170.

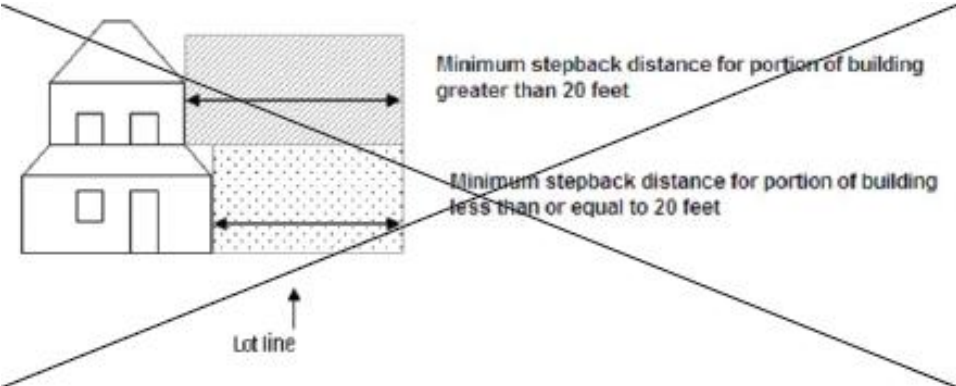
(3) Remove the terms 'subdivision', 'detached single family', and 'right of way' in SCC 30.23A.040. SCC 30.23A.040 contains the design standards for detached single-family dwellings and duplexes, however reference to "subdivisions" within the section creates confusion as the section also applies to short subdivisions and single family detached units (SFDUs), which is a development type not created through the subdivision process. SCC 30.23A.040 was added by Amended Ordinance No. 08-101 in 2009. The proposed change would replace the term 'subdivision' with 'development' to fully encompass the kinds of housing that apply to the URDS design standards. Amendments would also replace the term 'detached single family dwellings' with 'single family detached dwellings' for consistent term use throughout chapter 30.23A SCC and title 30 SCC. Finally, the amendments propose to replace the term 'public right of way' with 'public road' to better align terminology regarding public roads, private roads, and road network elements for developments applicable to URDS. 'Right-of-way' is defined in SCC 30.91R.200 as "all property in which the county has any form of ownership or title and which is held for public road purposes, regardless of whether or not any public road exists thereon or whether or not it is used, improved, or maintained for public travel." A public road consists of the improvements within the right-of-way and is a more appropriate term for the design standards chapter 30.23A SCC applicable to developments in relation to the public or private roads serving them.

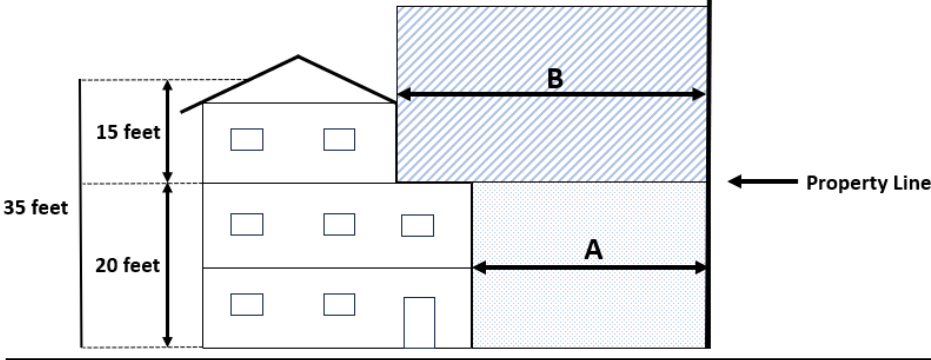
(4) Clarify on-site recreation space requirements in SCC Table 30.23A.080(2) to better describe the amount of recreation space that is required based on the total number of dwelling units in the development. This change helps to clarify how many units are counted towards the amount of space required. For example, if a project had 110 units, an interpretation of the current code could be that the first 40 units would require 200 sq. ft. of recreation space, units 41 to 100 would be 150 sq. ft., and the remaining 10 units would be 100 sq. ft. Such an interpretation does not reflect the intended application, nor how this code provision has been historically applied. The proposed code change clarifies that for a development with 110 dwelling units, all 110 dwelling units would be required to have 100 sq. ft. of recreation space required per each dwelling unit.

(5) Remove reference to the URDS Design Manual. The Snohomish County Residential Design Manual is referenced in SCC 30.23A.030, 30.23A.040, 30.23A.050, 30.23A.060, and 30.91S.455. The Snohomish County Residential Design Manual was added to chapter 30.23A SCC in 2009 via Ordinance No. 08-101, which established urban residential design standards in greater detail. The Snohomish County Residential Design Manual was adopted by the PDS director through rulemaking authority in chapter 30.82 SCC and was originally intended to assist in the application of design standards to project development and review. It provided detailed illustrations to help clarify the intent of the design standards and was meant to facilitate the permit application and review process for applicants and county staff. The definition of the Residential Design Manual states: "[it] shall provide detail and specificity regarding code requirements contained in this title and the EDDS for all urban residential

development.” This level of detail is now included in code and in EDDS (Snohomish County Engineering Design and Development Standards), and therefore not needed additionally in the Residential Design Manual. Since 2009, the Residential Design Manual has been difficult to maintain and update, and has caused confusion for applicants designing projects to meet URDS requirements in chapter 30.23A SCC.

## PROPOSED CODE AMENDMENTS

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CODE CHANGES	
Proposed Language	Finding
<p><b>SCC 30.23.040 Reference notes for SCC Tables 30.23.030 and 30.23.032</b></p> <p>...</p> <p>(59) Relationship of setback to building height:</p> <p>The minimum setback requirements are dependent on the heights of the building as specified in this column. To meet the setback requirements, buildings over 20 feet in height must either:</p> <p>(a) Set the entire building back the minimum setback distance; or</p> <p>(b) <del>((Stepback))</del> <u>Setback</u> those portions of the building exceeding 20 feet in height to the minimum setback distance, as illustrated in Figure 30.23.040(59)</p> <p><b>Figure 30.23.040(59). <del>((Example of relationship))</del> Relationship of <del>((building height))</del> Building Height to <del>((stepback))</del> Setback</b></p> 	<p>This proposed amendment to SCC 30.23.040(59) text and figure, and 30.23.040(60) replaces the term stepback with setback. Setback is a defined in 30.71S.160 and stepback is a term used in code to roughly have the same meaning, but is not defined in SCC. Figure 30.23.040(59) title is proposed to be changed to remove the outdated term stepback and to more accurately describe the purpose and use of the figure. The figure is also proposed to be revised to better demonstrate how setback requirements are to be used.</p>

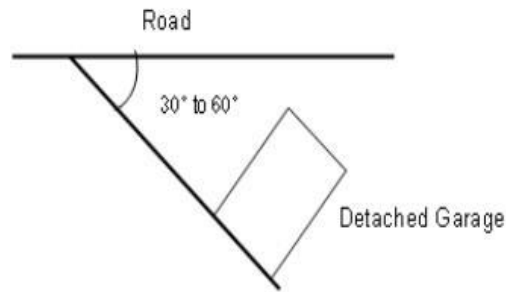
 <p>"A" represents the minimum setback distance for the portion of a building less than or equal to 20 feet in height.</p> <p>"B" Represents the minimum setback distance for the portion of a building greater than 20 feet in height.</p> <p>Note: An applicant may choose to use one for more setbacks above 20 feet in height to satisfy the setback requirements if multiple setback requirements are identified for a zone at building heights above 20 feet (e.g., between 20 and 30 feet in height a 20-foot setback is required as well as above 30 feet in height a 25-foot setback is required).</p> <p>(60) (<del>Stepback</del>) <u>Setback</u> those portions of the building exceeding 45 feet in height from the minimum side and rear yard setbacks by one additional foot for each additional two feet of building height.</p> <p>...</p>	
<p><b>SCC 30.23.049 Reference notes for SCC Tables 30.23.041 through 30.23.047.</b></p> <p>...</p> <p>(7) Structures over two stories, other than single-family detached structures, shall increase the setbacks by three feet; provided, that the additional setback shall only be required as an upper floor (<del>stepback</del>) <u>setback</u> for portions of residential structures above 20 feet in height in the same manner as SCC 30.23.040(59).</p> <p>...</p>	<p>SCC 30.23.049 is proposed to be amended by replacing the term stepback with setback, which is a more broadly used defined term.</p>
<p><b>SCC 30.23A.020 Applicability.</b></p> <p>(1) Urban residential design standards of this chapter shall apply to all new residential development located within urban growth areas, excluding the following:</p> <p>(a) Mobile homes and manufactured homes within mobile home parks;</p> <p>(b) Construction of a (<del>detached single-family</del>) <u>single-family detached</u> dwelling or duplex structure on a lot created prior to April 21, 2009;</p> <p>(c) Residential development or mixed use development subject to chapters <u>30.31G</u>, 30.34A or 30.41G SCC; and</p> <p>(d) Any remodel of an existing single family detached, duplex or attached single family structure;</p> <p>(e) Any remodel of a townhouse or multiple family structure that has been destroyed where the restoration cost does not exceed 75 percent of the assessed value of record when the destruction occurred; and</p> <p>(f) See SCC 30.42E for design standards for new mobile home parks.</p>	<p>SCC 30.23A.020(b) is proposed to change through aligning the language of single-family detached dwellings with the rest of chapter 30.23A. SCC 30.23A.020(c) is proposed to be changed to incorporate excluding the MUC zone, which clarifies that URDS standards of chapter 30.23A does not apply to residential development or mixed use development in the MUC zone.</p>

<p>...</p> <p><b>SCC 30.23A.030 Compatibility design standards.</b></p> <p>...</p> <p>(3) When compatibility design standards are applicable, residential development shall incorporate at least two of the following design standards:</p> <p>(a) Increase the minimum building setback to 20 feet from those lot lines abutting urban zones, and 40 feet for those lot lines abutting non-urban zones marked “yes” in SCC Table 30.23A.030(2);</p> <p>(b) Limit maximum building height to 30 feet within 50 feet of those abutting property lines to zones marked “yes” in SCC Table 30.23A.030(2);</p> <p>(c) Increase the perimeter landscaping vegetation by at least 50 percent over the amount required in SCC 30.25.017, or if no perimeter landscaping is required, provide a minimum 10-foot wide perimeter Type A landscaped buffer pursuant to the standards in SCC 30.25.017;</p> <p>(d) Limit townhouse and multifamily buildings located within 50 feet of abutting property lines to zoned marked “yes” in SCC Table 30.23A.030(2) to a maximum of three dwelling units per building with a minimum separation of 25 feet between buildings;</p> <p>(e) Separate single-family detached and duplex dwelling structures by at least 20 feet between buildings located within 50 feet of abutting property lines to zones marked “yes” in SCC Table 30.23A.030(2);</p> <p>(f) Incorporate two architectural features, such as those described in SCC 30.23A.040(2) <del>((or the Snohomish County Residential Design Manual))</del>, to break up blank walls greater than 500 square feet that face properties in zones marked “yes” in SCC Table 30.23A.030(2); or</p> <p>(g) Provide a decorative wall or solid and landscaped fence between buildings and adjacent properties located in zones marked “yes” in SCC Table 30.23A.030(2) that:</p> <p>(i) Uses brick or stone;</p> <p>(ii) Is a minimum height of five feet;</p> <p>(iii) Incorporates architectural detailing, such as posts, ornamental iron grillwork, or <del>((other))</del> similar elements <del>((prescribed in the Snohomish County Residential Design Manual))</del>; and</p> <p>(iv) Incorporates landscaping, openings, and other design elements that break up the continuity of a solid wall or fence at least every 10 feet unless otherwise approved by the director.</p>	<p>This proposed change to remove the Urban Design Manual from the URDS chapter supports clarity in interpreting the code. The Urban Desing Manual is difficult for staff to maintain and can cause confusion for standards that conflict with code.</p>
<p><b>SCC 30.23A.040 <del>((Detached single family))</del> <u>Single family detached dwelling and duplex design standards.</u></b></p>	<p>SCC 30.23A.040 is proposed to be amended by clarifying</p>

<p><del>((Detached single family))</del> <u>Single family detached</u> dwellings and duplex structures shall comply with the following requirements:</p> <p>(1) Buildings shall incorporate at least two of the following design elements:</p> <p>(a) A roof with a shape that is visually distinct from at least 75 percent of the other roofs in the <del>((subdivision))</del> <u>development</u> based on variations in room forms and pitch, ridge line height, overhangs, projections, and extended eaves.</p> <p>(b) A setback from the front lot line that differs by five feet or more from each of the adjacent buildings.</p> <p>(c) A porch of at least 60 square feet at the front entry of the building that differs from at least 75 percent of the other porches in the <del>((subdivision))</del> <u>development</u> by 10 percent or more in its dimensions or by its location relative to the garage.</p> <p>(d) A primary entrance facing and visible from a public <del>((right-of-way))</del> <u>or</u> private road, or courtyard that opens up to a public <del>((right-of-way))</del> or private road.</p> <p>(e) Building form and scale that is significantly different from at least 75 percent of the other buildings in the <del>((subdivision))</del> <u>development</u>, where rambler, daylight basement, split-level, tri-level, two-story, or three-story are significantly different forms. A difference in building height or width of 20 percent or more is also significantly different.</p> <p>(2) Buildings shall be visually distinct from at least 75 percent of the other buildings in the <del>((subdivision))</del> <u>development</u> in at least five of the following ways:</p> <p>(a) Window size and type, such as single hung, double hung, slider, or awning.</p> <p>(b) Window grids or mullions and trim design</p> <p>(c) Bay or bow window with a minimum projection of 12 inches.</p> <p>(d) Siding texture, appearance, or color.</p> <p>(e) Stone, brick, or other decorative siding material that wraps around the side of the building at a height of at least two feet, and for a distance of at least four feet (minimum of two feet on each side), matching elements of the facade.</p> <p>(f) Roofing material and color.</p> <p>(g) Roof forms, such as hip, gambrel, mansard, gable, or dormers.</p> <p>(h) Primary roof pitch.</p> <p>(i) Front door location, material, pattern, or color.</p> <p>(j) Use of cantilevers, dormers, or other project elements that give the face a three-dimensional quality.</p>	<p>the terminology used to describe single family detached dwellings from detached single family in order to be more consistent with terminology used in the rest of the chapter and title 30.</p> <p>The code is also proposed to be changed by removing references to subdivisions, as single family detached dwellings apply to more than subdivisions. There have been current and historical issues with restricting the term subdivision as there are different types of housing that fall under this category.</p> <p>Right of way is proposed to be removed as public/private roads are comprehensive enough in their description. Removing the term supports better code clarification.</p> <p>SCC 30.23A.040(5) is proposed to be removed as the Residential Design Manual no longer would exist in code.</p> <p>Additionally, there are minor grammatical changes proposed that include adding commas and rephrasing wording.</p>
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- (k) Variation in side wall design for houses located on a corner lot.
- (l) Variations in porch design, such as columns, details, or roof.
- (m) Size and location of a stoop of at least 30 square feet at the front entry of the building.
- (n) Design of a stoop of at least 30 square feet at the front entry of the building, considering elements such as columns, details, or roof.
- (o) The front wall forms and angle of at least 30 degrees to a public or private road.
- (p) Upstairs or “Juliet” balcony, or other similar architectural features.
- (3) At least two of the following design features shall be incorporated into any attached or detached garage facing a ~~((public right of way, road, or drive aisle))~~ road network element, unless the garage is located at least 20 feet behind the fountain wall or the front of the house with no more than 50 percent of the front of the garage visible from the street.
- (a) Angle the garage by at least 45 degrees to the ~~((public right of way, private road or drive aisle))~~ road network element if it is attached or by 30 to 60 degrees to the ~~((public right of way, private road or drive aisle))~~ road network element if it is detached (see SCC Figure 30.23A.040(3)).
- (b) If there is only one garage door, limit the width of the garage door to ~~((ten))~~ 10 feet.
- (c) If there is more than one garage door, limit the width of each door to no more than ~~((ten))~~ 10 feet and provide at least a two-foot separation between doors.
- (d) Limit the size of the automobile garage door to 25 percent or less of the area of the facade on which the garage door is located, including the area up upper floors but not including the area of the roof.
- (e) Provide variation in the appearance of the garage ~~((door(s)))~~ doors through trim, windows, ~~((and/or))~~ or relief.
- (f) Cantilever the top story above the garage by at least 18 inches.
- (g) Provide architectural treatment, such as a trellis, subroof, or awning projecting one foot or more beyond garage de-emphasize garage doors.
- (h) Locate the automobile garage door at least five feet back from the foundation wall of the front of the house, not including uncovered porches, ~~((and))~~ stoops, and similar projections.

**Figure 30.23A.040(3) ((-))  
Angled Garage**



(4) The director may implement the requirements of ~~((SCC 30.23A.040(1), (2), and (3)))~~ subsections (1) through (3) of this section through a self certification program, provided that an applicant is ineligible for self-certification if that applicant has been found non-compliant with the requirements of those subsections on any project within the previous 12 months.

~~((5) The architectural design elements in SCC 30.23A.040(1), (2), and (3) shall be implemented pursuant to the Snohomish County Residential Design Manual to the extent that they are covered in the Snohomish County Residential Design Manual, provided that in the event of a conflict between the Snohomish County Residential Design Manual and Title 30 SCC, the code shall take precedence)).~~

**30.23A.050 Single-family attached dwelling, mixed townhouse, and townhouse development design standards.**

...

(3) *Architectural design elements.* Each single-family attached dwelling structure, townhouse structure, and residential dwelling structure in a mixed townhouse development shall incorporate variation to any facade of a building that faces a road network element or other public space, whether publicly or privately owned (such as a shared common space or internal pedestrian facility providing access to other dwelling units), by using at least three of the following elements:

(a) Changes in the roofline at intervals not greater than 40 feet in continuous length, such as variations in roof pitch, overhangs, projections, and extended eaves;

(b) Distinctive window patterns that are not repeated within groupings of up to four dwelling units;

(c) Variations in the setback of the front facade of the building by at least five feet between adjoining dwelling units;

(d) ~~((Stepbacks))~~ Setbacks on the facade of at least two feet in depth and four feet in width at intervals of not more than 30 feet;

(e) Diminishing upper floors (gross floor area of upper story is smaller than the gross floor area of the lower story);

(f) Balconies, bays, or changes in the wall plane of the front facade of the building;

PDS proposes to remove references to the URDS Snohomish County Residential Design Manual in this section, as the design manual is burdensome and difficult to maintain and may cause confusion. Stepbacks is replaced with setbacks consistent with changes to other sections.



<p>(g) Garage door entrance(s) for automobiles located at the side or rear of the building; or</p> <p>(h) Other architectural elements that the director determines accomplish the objective of visually dividing the structure into smaller identifiable sections.</p> <p><del>((4) The architectural design elements in this subsection (3) of this section shall be implemented pursuant to the Snohomish County Residential Design Manual.))</del></p> <p><del>((5))</del> <u>(4)</u> <i>Reduced setbacks and required easements.</i> Single-family attached dwelling, mixed townhouse, and townhouse developments may qualify for reduced setbacks and require special easements in accordance with the following:</p> <p>(a) The director may reduce the underlying zoning side and rear lot line setbacks to zero for townhouse structures, dwellings in a mixed townhouse development, and single-family attached dwellings to allow for zero lot line development; provided, that the remaining underlying zoning setbacks meet the requirements of the zone.</p> <p>(b) Single-family attached dwellings, townhouse structures, and residential dwelling structures in mixed townhouse developments built as zero lot line development shall provide a five-foot wide building maintenance easement for walls, eaves, chimneys, and other architectural features that rest directly on the lot line. The maintenance easement shall be included in the covenants, conditions, and restrictions of the adjoining lots, and may be recorded with the covenants, conditions, and restrictions or in a separate document approved by the director.</p> <p><del>((6))</del> <u>(5)</u> <i>Restrictive covenants.</i> The directory may require an applicant to grant and records covenants, access easements, and joint use and maintenance agreements for a townhouse or mixed townhouse development. When required, covenants, access easements, and joint use and maintenance agreements shall be recoded with the county auditor prior to final inspection of the first unit and identify the rights and responsibilities of the property owner(s) and/or homeowners' association. These rights and responsibilities may describe the use and maintenance of: common garage, parking areas, and vehicle access areas; pedestrian facilities; on-site recreation areas; landscaping; underground utilities; common open space; exterior building facades and roofs; and other similar features.</p> <p><del>((7))</del> <u>(6)</u> <i>Specific design standards for townhouse and mixed townhouse developments.</i> Townhouse and mixed townhouse developments shall be subject to additional design standards contained in SCC Table 30.23A.050(1), SCC Table 30.23A.050(2), and SCC Table 30.23A.050(3).</p>	
<p><b>30.23A.060 Multifamily design standards.</b></p> <p>Multifamily dwellings shall comply with the following requirements:</p> <p>(1) <i>Site layout and pedestrian circulation.</i></p> <p>(a) Multifamily development shall have pedestrian facilities pursuant to SCC 30.24.080.</p>	<p>PDS proposes to remove references to the URDS Snohomish County Residential Design Manual in this section to be consistent with other proposed amendments.</p>

(b) When a site has more than one multifamily building, the buildings shall be arranged in a cohesive manner incorporating at least one of the following:

(i) Configure the buildings around the courtyard;

(ii) Limit the average number of dwellings per building to seven and cluster these into groups of not more than four buildings with each group of buildings having designed common space and internal circulation and parking separated from other groups of buildings; or

(iii) Buildings with 10 or more dwellings include an internal building courtyard or create several smaller areas of common space that are located within 25 feet of a building entry.

(c) Pedestrian facilities should be visible from buildings or parking lots, and shall be designed to avoid creating “dead ends” or isolated areas.

~~((d) The design standards of this section shall be implemented pursuant to the Snohomish County Residential Design Manual.))~~

*(2) Location of Parking.*

(a) Surface parking spaces shall be located to the side or rear of buildings.

(b) Structured parking facilities shall be located underneath residential dwellings or to the side of the building.

(c) Large parking areas shall be divided into small groupings of not more than 15 parking spaces in a row. A landscaped island of at least 72 square feet shall be utilized to divide groups of parking spaces.

(d) Parking may be located in a rear or side setback area when vehicle access is from an alley abutting the rear or side lot line.

(e) Parking structures located entirely below the finished grade may have parking located within a front or side setback area.

*(3) Exterior lighting.*

(a) Lighting shall illuminate building entries and surfaces intended for pedestrians and vehicles.

(b) Exterior lighting shall be used along pedestrian facilities to identify and distinguish the pedestrian facilities from automobile circulation and parking areas.

(c) All building lighting for security or aesthetics will be full cut-off or a shielded type, not allowing any upward distribution of light.

(4) Buildings shall be oriented pursuant to SCC 30.23A.070.

*(5) Architectural design elements.*

<p>(a) When a multifamily building has shared entryways, the building entrances shall incorporate a canopy, awning or other architectural element that provides pedestrians protection from the weather.</p> <p>(b) Each multifamily building shall incorporate variation to any facade of a building that faces a public or private <del>((right-of-way))</del> <u>road network element</u> by incorporating at least three of the following elements:</p> <p>(i) Incorporates changes in the roofline at intervals not greater than 40 continuous feet in length, such as variations in roof pitch, dormers, overhangs, projections and extended eaves;</p> <p>(ii) Provide distinctive window patterns that are not repeated within groupings of up to six dwelling units;</p> <p>(iii) Include balconies, bay windows, cornices, covered porches or other changes in the facade of the building;</p> <p>(iv) Set back balconies and other architectural elements on the upper floors of multi-story buildings;</p> <p>(v) Incorporate diminishing upper floors (gross floor area of upper story is smaller than the gross floor area of the lower story);</p> <p>(vi) Provide variations in the setback of the building from the front lot line by at least five feet at horizontal intervals of 40 feet or less; or</p> <p>(vii) Provide other architectural elements that the director determines accomplish the objective of visually dividing the structure into smaller identifiable sections.</p> <p><del>((c) The architectural elements in this section shall be implemented pursuant to the Snohomish County Residential Design Manual.))</del></p>			
<p><b>30.23A.080 On-site recreation space</b></p> <p>(1) On-site recreation space shall be required for residential development that is subject to the provisions of this chapter and containing seven or more dwellings, except this section shall not apply to projects submitted under chapter 30.42B SCC.</p> <p>(2) On-site recreation space shall be provided in accordance with SCC Table 30.23A.080(2):</p> <p><b>Table 30.23A.080(2) <del>((On-site recreation space requirements))</del> <u>On-site Recreation Space Requirements</u></b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="131 1803 1117 1913"> <tr> <th data-bbox="131 1803 626 1913"><b><u><del>((Number of Dwelling Units))</del> Total number of dwelling units within the development</u></b></th><th data-bbox="626 1803 1117 1913"><b><u>Amount of on-site recreation open space required per each dwelling unit</u></b></th></tr> </table>	<b><u><del>((Number of Dwelling Units))</del> Total number of dwelling units within the development</u></b>	<b><u>Amount of on-site recreation open space required per each dwelling unit</u></b>	<p>Table 30.23A.080(2) is proposed to be amended to better describe the amount of recreation space is required by dwelling unit. This change helps to clarify how many units are counted towards the amount of space required.</p> <p>There are additional grammatical changes to this section to aid in readability.</p>
<b><u><del>((Number of Dwelling Units))</del> Total number of dwelling units within the development</u></b>	<b><u>Amount of on-site recreation open space required per each dwelling unit</u></b>		

<del>((Units))</del> 7 to 40 <u>dwelling units</u>	200 sq ft
<del>((Units))</del> 41 to 100 <u>dwelling units</u>	150 sq ft
<del>((Units))</del> Over 100 <u>dwelling units</u>	100 sq ft

(3) The requirements in SCC Table 30.23A.080(2) may be reduced by up to 50 percent for residential development that is located within one-quarter mile walking distance of a public park or public school containing a playground or outdoor recreational facilities. The director shall determine the amount of reduction based on the following:

- (a) The availability of safe pedestrian facilities connecting to the development to the ~~((park/school))~~ park or school;
- (b) The ability of the ~~((park/school))~~ park or school facilities to accommodate additional usage by residents of the development; and
- (c) The number of parks and school facilities located within one-quarter mile distance.

(4) On-site recreation open space shall be designed as follows:

- (a) On-site recreation open space shall be located in a separate tract for subdivisions and short subdivisions from the residential dwellings and shall have an undivided ownership interest by owners of the development;
- (b) At least 40 percent of the total required on-site recreation open space shall be consolidated in one location within the development;
- (c) At least 75 percent of the total required on-site recreation open space shall be located outside of critical areas other than buffers identified in chapter 30.62A SCC;
- (d) No on-site recreation open space ~~((tract))~~ shall contain less than 700 square feet in area;
- (e) on-site recreation open space shall be developed for active and passive uses. At least 50 percent of the on-site recreation open space shall be designed and improved for one or more active uses. When an area of on-site recreation open space is designed and improved for active uses other than improved pedestrian or bicycle paths with hard surfaces, the average width of the area shall be at least equal to half of the average length of the area. Active uses include, but are not limited to:
  - (i) Playgrounds developed with children's play equipment;
  - (ii) Improved pedestrian or bicycle paths with hard surfaces;
  - (iii) Sports fields (such as soccer or softball fields), with associated improvements;
  - (iv) Indoor or outdoor sports courts (such as volleyball, basketball or tennis courts), swimming pools, and similar facilities;
  - (v) Picnic areas with permanent tables, benches, or gazebos;

<p>(vi) Community clubhouse and meeting facilities;</p> <p>(vii) Community gardens for use by the residents;</p> <p>(viii) Plazas with lighting, artwork, and sitting space for pedestrians at four or more spaces for every required 100 square feet of area; and</p> <p>(ix) Other similar uses approved by the director;</p> <p>(f) Passive uses include critical areas that cannot be developed, nature interpretive areas, bird watching facilities, unimproved trails, and similar uses approved by the director;</p> <p>(g) The following drainage facilities may be counted as <u>passive</u> on-site <del>((passive))</del> recreation space;</p> <p>(i) Unfenced detention, retention, and wet ponds;</p> <p>(ii) Stormwater treatment wetlands;</p> <p>(iii) Stormwater infiltration trenches and bioswales that serve more than one dwelling <u>unit</u>; and</p> <p>(iv) Vegetated areas located above underground detention facilities; <del>((and))</del></p> <p>(h) Access for pedestrians shall be provided from all <del>((dwellings))</del> <u>dwelling units</u> within the development to the on-site recreation space through trails, <u>pedestrian facilities</u>, <del>((sidewalks, pathways))</del> and other similar means of access pursuant to SCC 30.24.080; and</p> <p>(i) On-site recreation space shall not include privately owned yards.</p>	
<p><b>30.91S.160 Setback.</b></p> <p>"Setback" means the distance that a building, <u>a section of a building such as upper stories</u>, or use must be removed from the lot lines of the property.</p>	<p>This proposed change to setbacks clarifies setbacks to reflect the proposed new diagram in SCC 30.23.040 and the interpretation of setback.</p>
<p><del>((30.91S.455 Snohomish County Residential Design Manual.</del></p> <p><del>"Snohomish County Residential Design Manual" means the residential manual adopted by the director by rule under chapter 30.82 SCC. The residential design manual shall provide detail and specificity regarding code requirements contained in this title and the EDDS for all urban residential development.))</del></p>	<p>PDS proposes to remove references to the URDS Snohomish County Residential Design Manual in this section, as the design manual is burdensome and difficult to maintain and may cause confusion.</p>

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## ANALYSIS

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

### Compliance with State Law

The Growth Management Act (GMA) planning goals, contained in RCW 36.70A.020, guide the development of local comprehensive plans and development regulations. The following planning goals apply to the proposed code changes:

*GMA Goal 7 – Permits. Applications for both state and local permits should be processed in a timely and fair matter to ensure predictability.*

Analysis: The proposed amendments would support the permitting goal, as they support clarifying code language which ensures predictable and fair permitting review.

*GMA Goal 1 – Urban growth. Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.*

Analysis: The proposed code changes to the URDS chapter and removing the URDS Design Manual references supports the GMA Goal 1 as it reduces confusion for developing housing in urban areas and allows for more development.

### Compliance with the Multi-County Planning Policies

The proposed amendments are consistent with the following multicounty planning policies (MPP) from the Puget Sound Regional Council's VISION 2050:

*MPP-H-10 – Encourage jurisdictions to review and streamline development standards and regulations to advance their public benefit, provide flexibility, and minimize additional costs to housing.*

Analysis: The proposed changes would clarify code to be more understandable. Replacing setback with setback improves code consistency, as the terms are used synonymously, although setback is not defined in code. Removing the terms 'subdivision', 'detached single family', and 'right of way' in SCC 30.23A.040 removes potential confusion about the applicability of the section to projects, as the terms do not comprehensively describe the kinds of housing that apply to URDS. Amending Table 30.23A.080(2) to describe the amount of recreation space that is required per dwelling unit additionally helps to make SCC more understandable and consistent.

*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: The proposed changes would support urban development through streamlining the permitting review process for urban residential development. Additionally, removing references to the URDS Design Manual helps to reduce confusion between the outdated designs presented in the manual and the design standards in code.

### **Compliance with the Countywide Planning Policies**

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

*HO-11 – The county and cities should consider the economic implications of proposed building and land use regulations so that the broader public benefit they serve is achieved with the least additional cost to housing.*

Analysis: The proposed changes would streamline the permitting process through reducing confusion in code language and eliminating the URDS Design Manual which could encourage increased housing development.

*DP -13 – The County and cities should integrate the desirable qualities of existing residential neighborhoods when planning for urban centers and mixed-use developments. Jurisdictions should adopt design guidelines and standards for urban centers to provide for compact, efficient site design that integrates building design with multimodal transportation facilities and publicly accessible open space.*

Analysis: Through eliminating the URDS Design Manual in the proposed code, the URDS chapter more consistently and accurately describes the design guidelines for urban development.

### **Compliance with the Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan**

The proposed amendments would be consistent with and help implement the Snohomish County Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan (GMACP). The following policy applies to the code amendments as proposed in this report.

*Objective LU 4.A – Improve the quality of residential, commercial, and industrial development through comprehensive design standards and a design review process.*

Analysis: The proposed code amendment to remove reference to the URDS Design Manual support Objective LU 4.A through improving the permitting design review process and making the design standards more consistent.

*Policy ED 2.A.1 – Snohomish County shall work to ensure that the Snohomish County Code is understandable, accessible, and user friendly document.*

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

Analysis: The proposed code amendments streamline the permitting process through clarifying code, better defining standards, and reducing additional steps for design review.

### **Environmental Review**

Staff has completed a SEPA checklist for this proposed code amendment and will be issuing a Determination of Non-significance on January X, 2025. The 14-day public comment period will conclude prior to the Planning Commission briefing on February 25, 2025.

**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 February 2025.

**Staff Recommendation:**

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

**Action Requested**

The Planning Commission is requested to hold a public hearing, consider the proposed code amendments, and provide a recommendation to the County Council. The Planning Commission can recommend approval of the amendments with supporting findings of fact as proposed or modified, deny the proposal with findings, or amend the proposal with appropriate findings.

cc: Mike McCrary, PDS Director  
David Killingstad, PDS Manager  
Michael Dobesh, PDS Manager