

# Proposed Code Amendments Relating Density Fringe Exemptions

Snohomish County Council: Briefing

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Snohomish County

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# Presentation Overview

- Summary
- Density Fringe Background
- Density Fringe Development Regulations
- Proposed Amendment
- Public Participation



# Summary of Proposed Code Amendment

- Add an exception to density fringe development limitations
- Allow for greater flexibility for redevelopment within the density fringe area that sustains flood mitigation requirements

SCC 30.65.260

Density fringe area:  
exceptions to maximum  
allowable density and  
obstruction limitations

# Density Fringe Background

## SCC 30.91D.100

‘Density fringe area’ means that portion of the special flood hazard area of the lower Snohomish and Stillaguamish rivers in which floodway areas cannot reasonably be established and in which development is regulated by maximum development density criteria

- The density fringe area is a part of the Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRMS)
- It defines how development is regulated within the Flood Hazard Areas

# Density Fringe Background



**NATIONAL FLOOD  
INSURANCE PROGRAM®**

- The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is a federal program administered by FEMA that allows certain property owners to purchase insurance protection against losses from flooding
- This is contingent on communities adopting floodplain management regulations to reduce future flood risks



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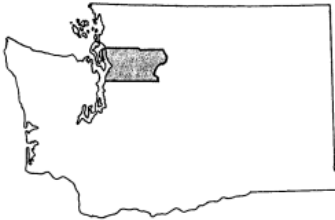


# Density Fringe Background

## FLOOD INSURANCE STUDY



SNOHOMISH COUNTY,  
WASHINGTON  
UNINCORPORATED AREAS



SEPTEMBER 15, 1983



Federal Emergency Management Agency

COMMUNITY NUMBER - 535534

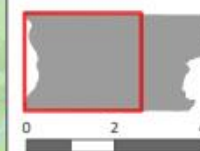
- The Snohomish County Flood Insurance Study for the NFIP:
  - Investigated the existence and severity of flood hazards
  - Analyzed data from existing conditions of development within the identified floodplains
  - Provided information for the county to create mapping that determined how much more development could occur in the floodplain and not increase water surface elevation of the base flood by more than one foot



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# SNOHOMISH COUNTY 2019 FEMA DENSITY FRINGE

- Density Fringe
- County Boundary
- Incorporated City
- Urban Growth Area
- Tulalip Reservation
- Stillaguamish Reservation
- Consolidated Borough of Quil Ceda Village
- Lakes
- Streams
- National Forest
- Railroad
- Interstate
- State Route
- Arterial



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# Density Fringe Background - Timeline

September 1983	Flood Insurance Study for Unincorporated Snohomish County was published
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February 1984	Snohomish County adopted Special Flood Hazard area development regulations. Created the density fringe area under Title 27 Snohomish County Code.

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March 1984	Snohomish County became a member of the NFIP and adopted flood mapping

# Density Fringe Development Regulations

<b>SCC 30.65.240</b>	<b>Density fringe area definition</b>
SCC 30.65.250	Maximum allowable density
SCC 30.65.255	Maximum allowable obstruction
SCC 30.65.260	Exceptions to maximum allowable density and obstruction limitations
SCC 30.65.265	Recording required when the density and obstruction allowances are increased
SCC 30.65.270	General provisions
SCC 30.65.280	Permitted uses



# Density Fringe Development Regulations

## ‘Two and Fifteen’ Regulations

SCC 30.65.250	Maximum allowable density
SCC 30.65.255	Maximum allowable obstruction

- Maximum allowable density: Development shall not exceed two percent of the lot within the density fringe area
- Maximum allowable obstruction: Maximum width of all development shall not exceed fifteen percent of the length of a line drawn perpendicular to the known floodwater flow direction



# Density Fringe Development Regulations

**SCC 30.65.260**

**Exceptions to maximum allowable density and obstruction limitations**

Summary:

- (1) Water-dependent utilities
- (2) Dikes
- (3) Utility facilities
- (4) Public works, when the project proponent demonstrates that the floodwater displacement shall not a cumulative increase in the base flood elevation of more than one foot

# Density Fringe Development Regulations

<b>SCC 30.65.280</b>	<b>Permitted uses</b>
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- In 2020, Ordinance No. 20-076 updated the Flood Insurance Rate Map and density fringe code
- Expanded permitted and conditionally permitted uses in the portions of the density fringe area that coincide with a UGA to allow certain uses that would be allowed in the underlying zone
- These changes have prompted a need from the community to have the flexibility to redevelop and modify certain properties within the density fringe area

# Proposed Code Amendments

- The proposed code would allow for an additional exception to maximum allowable density and obstruction limitations
- A one-time credit of exception for existing buildings or former buildings that were accounted for in the 1983 Flood Insurance Study (FIS)
- Any further development beyond the accounted for building footprint would continue to be subject to density fringe regulations
- Density Fringe Exception Application Fee - \$500



# Proposed Code Amendment

- This code would allow for the redevelopment of buildings that were accounted for on the original 1983 Flood Insurance Study
- Study results were reviewed by FEMA in 1981
  - Study results were prepared with consideration to all proposed and forecasted construction and development through 1986





# Proposed Code Amendment

- This credit would allow property owners greater flexibility while sustaining the original and subsequent FIS restriction for a one-foot rise from the base flood level elevation
- This redevelopment would still be subject to SCC 30.65.70 density fringe area general provisions that regulate development
- Utilizing one-time credit to redevelop existing buildings that are subject to all current building standards, providing additional flood protection measures



# Public Participation

- Outreach to FEMA and Agricultural Advisory Board
- SEPA determination of non-significance issued November 30, 2022



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# Questions?