

AMENDMENT NO. 2 TO ORDINANCE NO. 25-078

RELATING TO GROWTH MANAGEMENT; CONCERNING URBAN ZONE DEVELOPMENT
REGULATIONS; AMENDING CHAPTERS 30.22, 30.31A, AND 30.34A OF THE SNOHOMISH COUNTY
CODE

Brief Title: Executive recommended amendments to retain townhouse as a permitted use in the Urban Center zone by reverting the Urban Zone Categories Use Matrix and urban zone development regulations to their prior versions.

Proposed by: County Executive Dave Somers

Brief Description: These amendments will undo the changes to code in Proposed Ordinance No. 25-078 that prohibited townhouse use in the Urban Center (UC) zone. Proposed Ordinance No. 25-078 removes townhouses from the Urban Zone Categories Use Matrix in SCC 30.22.100 and from related provisions in chapter 30.34A SCC. These amendments will reverse those proposed changes and retain existing code. This action reflects the limited impact of retaining townhouses on overall urban land capacity, given that most UC-zoned acreage is being rezoned to the higher-density Light Rail Community (LRC) zone where townhouses are not permitted. It also supports the need to maintain housing type flexibility, promote ownership opportunities, and better align with Comprehensive Plan policies that encourage a diverse range of housing options.

Townhomes, when well-designed and subject to form-based standards or minimum density thresholds, can contribute to pedestrian-oriented infill and expand housing choices for moderate-income households. Comprehensive Plan Policy HO 1.A.3 encourages such variety, and Policy LU 3.B.2, while calling for restrictions, does not require a blanket prohibition of townhouses in urban centers. Reinstating townhouse use in the UC zone ensures a balanced approach—supporting housing variety, maintaining development feasibility, and recognizing the transitional nature of remaining UC-zoned land, all while the County pursues its broader transit-oriented development and high-density redevelopment goals through the LRC zoning framework.

Existing Ordinance Recitals, Findings, or Sections to Delete or Modify:

Page 2, lines 24-26,

Delete: WHEREAS, the code amendments contained in this ordinance amend chapter 30.34 SCC to repeal the Urban Center Design Review Board, remove townhouse as a use in the UC zone, and increase overall consistency between County Code and state requirements; and

Insert: WHEREAS, the code amendments contained in this ordinance amend chapter 30.34 SCC to repeal the Urban Center Design Review Board and increase overall consistency between County Code and state requirements; and

Page 3, lines 36-41, delete:

The amendments to remove townhouses as an allowed use from the UC zone and improve parking and pedestrian infrastructure make development accessible to different modes of transportation.

GMA Goal 4 – Housing. Plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock.

Page 7, line 33 to Page 8, line 3, delete and re-number remaining findings:

1. SCC 30.22.100 is amended to remove townhouses as a permitted use in the UC zone to require higher-density housing development to generate more housing and to maintain consistency with the growth targets in the Urban Core Subarea. The removal of townhouses will encourage more density by prioritizing land use for multifamily developments such as mid-rise and high-rise apartments, which houses significantly more residents per acre than townhouses. The Comprehensive Plan expanded opportunities for townhouse development in other zones within the Urban Growth Area, and the Land Capacity Analysis showed that development of this type in the UC zone results in significant underbuilding and undermines the County’s urban density goals. With the UC zone often located near future Light Rail stations and along Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines, high-density development would benefit most from these services. By prioritizing apartments and multi-story developments in the UC zone, the county can maximize land use efficiency and better support transit-oriented growth while still preserving space for townhouses in more appropriate zones.

Page 14, from the 30.22.100 Urban Zone Categories Use Matrix, delete:

Dwelling, Townhouse ⁵			P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		P ⁵¹				((P))
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And replace with:

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Dwelling, Townhouse ⁵			P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		P ⁵¹				P
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Page 28, lines 6-7, delete:

~~(2) Exterior architectural treatments for above grade parking structures and garage buildings((, including individual and detached garages for townhouses,))~~

And replace with:

(2) Exterior architectural treatments for above grade parking structures and garage buildings, including individual and detached garages for townhouses,

Council Disposition:

Date:
