

ADOPTED:
EFFECTIVE:

SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL
Snohomish County, Washington

ORDINANCE NO. 24-059

RELATING TO GROWTH MANAGEMENT;
INCREASING FLEXIBILITY REGARDING LOCATION OF PARKING;
AMENDING SECTION 30.26.020 OF THE SNOHOMISH COUNTY CODE

WHEREAS, the Growth Management Act (GMA), chapter 36.70A RCW, establishes planning goals to guide development and adoption of comprehensive plans and development regulations for those counties and cities planning under the GMA, including Goal 4 related to housing (RCW 36.70A.020(4)); and

WHEREAS, the Washington State Legislature substantially amended the GMA housing goal by passing Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1220, effective July 25, 2021, and which among other changes strengthened the goal from “Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population” to “Plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all economic segments of the population”; and

WHEREAS, the GMA requires Snohomish County (the “County”) to adopt a comprehensive plan and implementing codes and regulations related to land use and development within the County’s jurisdiction that are consistent with the comprehensive plan; and

WHEREAS, on October 29, 2020, the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) adopted Vision 2050, a plan for the central Puget Sound region, which includes Snohomish County; and

WHEREAS, Vision 2050 includes Housing Action H-Action-8 which calls on counties to “review and amend, where appropriate and consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy, development standards and regulations to reduce barriers to the development of housing by providing flexibility and minimizing additional costs”; and

WHEREAS, the Snohomish County Housing Affordability Taskforce (HART) published a report and five-year action plan in January 2020; and

WHEREAS, the County’s Growth Management Act Comprehensive Plan (GMACP) includes the General Policy Plan (GPP) which contains policies that guide the codes and regulations adopted in Title 30 of Snohomish County Code (“Title 30 SCC”); and

1 WHEREAS, the Snohomish County Council (“County Council”) concurs with the
2 finding of the Legislature in Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1110 that
3 “Washington is facing an unprecedented housing crisis for its current population and a
4 lack of housing choices” and the Council believes that code amendments to provide
5 more flexibility to construct lower cost parking designs can be part of the solution; and
6

7 WHEREAS, the County Council held a series of panel discussions titled
8 “Opening Doors to Home Ownership” on January 17, February 21, March 21, and April
9 18, 2023, and during the fourth session discussed a need to update parking standards
10 to reduce overall parking and associated costs; and
11

12 WHEREAS, County Council staff briefed the Planning Commission on February
13 27, 2024, and
14

15 WHEREAS, on March 26, 2024, the Planning Commission held a public hearing
16 to receive public testimony concerning the code amendments contained in this
17 ordinance; and
18

19 WHEREAS, at the conclusion of the Planning Commission’s public hearing, the
20 Planning Commission recommended adoption of the code amendments contained in
21 this ordinance; and
22

23 WHEREAS, on _____, 2024, the County Council held a public hearing after
24 proper notice, and considered public comment and the entire record related to the code
25 amendments contained in this ordinance; and
26

27 WHEREAS, following the public hearing, the County Council deliberated on the
28 code amendments contained in this ordinance;
29

30 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED:
31

32 **Section 1.** The County Council adopts the following findings in support of this
33 ordinance:
34

- 35 A. The foregoing recitals are adopted as findings as if set forth in full herein.
36
37 B. This ordinance will amend provisions in SCC 30.26.020 to increase flexibility
38 regarding the location of parking. In particular, the amendments will allow
39 subdivisions to have shared parking areas in tracts or on lots that are within 300 feet

1 of the homes rather than requiring parking to be located exactly on the new lots
2 containing the homes.

3
4 C. In considering the proposed amendments, the county evaluated factors including the
5 need to meet GMA mandates to provide housing for all economic segments of the
6 population.

7
8 1. Snohomish County is facing an affordable housing crisis and housing stock
9 shortage. The purpose of the proposed amendments is to provide additional
10 means to diversify the County's urban housing stock.

11
12 2. The housing authorized by this ordinance would be generally attainable to middle
13 income households interested in owning a single family home and where
14 opportunities to expand the Urban Growth Area to provide ownership
15 opportunities are limited.

16
17 D. In considering the proposed amendments, the County considered the goals and
18 standards of the GMA. The proposed amendments are consistent with:

19
20 1. GMA Goal 2 – Reduce sprawl. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of
21 undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.

22
23 This ordinance provides for infill development on sites in urban areas by allowing
24 compact housing without the usual drive aisle for access separating the homes.

25
26 2. GMA Goal 4 – Housing. Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all
27 economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of
28 residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing
29 housing stock.

30
31 This ordinance encourages affordable housing by allowing clustered parking
32 designs that reduce the cost of construction.

33
34 E. The proposed amendments will better achieve, comply with, and implement the
35 goals and policies of the Puget Sound Regional Council's Multicounty Planning
36 Policies (MPPs), including the following goals and policies:

37
38 1. MPP Housing Goal – The region will preserve, improve, and expand its housing
39 stock to provide a range of affordable, healthy, and safe housing choices to every

1 resident. The region will continue to promote fair and equal access to housing for
2 all people.

3
4 The proposed amendments will help to expand and improve the diversity of the
5 housing stock by reducing regulatory barriers to the construction of clustered
6 parking for subdivisions.

- 7
8 2. MPP-H-1 – Provide a range of housing types and choices to meet the housing
9 needs of all income levels and demographic groups within the region.

10
11 MPP-H-2 – Achieve and sustain — through preservation, rehabilitation, and new
12 development — a sufficient supply of housing to meet the needs of low-income,
13 moderate-income, middle-income, and special needs individuals and households
14 that is equitably and rationally distributed throughout the region.

15
16 The proposed amendments will support MPP-H-1 and MPP-H-2 by allowing for
17 the construction of subdivisions with clustered parking. Such homes will be
18 generally more affordable to middle-income households than homes providing
19 parking on individual lots.

- 20
21 F. The proposed amendments will better achieve, comply with, and implement the
22 Housing Goal of the Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs), which provides:
23 “Snohomish County and its cities will promote an affordable lifestyle where residents
24 have access to safe, affordable, and diverse housing options near their jobs and
25 transportation options.” The proposed amendment will help to diversify the housing
26 options in urban areas that are close to employment and transportation options.

- 27
28 G. In considering the proposed amendments, the county considered the goals,
29 objectives, and policies of the Snohomish County GMA Comprehensive Plan
30 (GMACP) – General Policy Plan (GPP). The proposed amendments will work to
31 support, implement, and balance the following goals, objectives, and policies in the
32 GPP:

- 33
34 1. Goal LU 1 – Establish and maintain compact, clearly defined, well designed
35 UGAs.

36
37 Objective LU 1.A – Establish UGAs with sufficient capacity to accommodate the
38 majority of the county’s projected population, employment, and housing growth
39 over the next 20 years.

1 Policy LU 1.A.9 – Ensure the efficient use of urban land by adopting reasonable
2 measures to increase residential, commercial and industrial capacity within urban
3 growth areas prior to expanding urban growth boundaries. The County Council
4 will use the list of reasonable measures in accordance with the guidelines for
5 review contained in Appendix D of the Countywide Planning Policies to evaluate
6 all UGA boundary expansions.

7
8 The amendment proposed by this ordinance would reduce regulatory barriers to
9 the construction of housing in urban areas. This is a reasonable measure that
10 increases residential capacity in UGAs thereby helping accommodate growth and
11 the maintenance of compact UGAs.

- 12
13 2. Objective HO 1.B – Ensure that a broad range of housing types and affordability
14 levels is available in urban and rural areas.

15
16 The proposed amendments reduce regulatory barriers to the development of
17 housing in urban areas, supporting the development of a broad range of housing
18 types and affordability. It will have no effect on housing in rural areas.

- 19
20 H. The proposed amendments implement action items and strategies in the HART
21 Report.

- 22
23 1. Action Item 1.A.6 which provides: “Increase housing variety allowed at a range of
24 affordability levels in single family zones [...] including consideration of zoning for
25 duplex [and other housing types].” The proposed amendment will comply with
26 action item 1.A.6 by revising Snohomish County regulations to facilitate the
27 construction of more duplexes as attached single family (i.e., subdivided)
28 dwellings.

- 29
30 2. Strategy 1.B.6, which says in part that the “cost of building structured parking or
31 reserving a substantial portion of a project site for parking can significantly
32 increase the per-unit cost and/or reduce the number of units that can be built.”
33 Although this strategy specifically relates to low-income housing, its point about
34 the cost of constructing parking is applicable to all housing, including housing in
35 subdivisions built for middle-income households.

- 36
37 I. Procedural requirements.

- 38
39 1. State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), chapter 43.21C RCW, requirements with
40 respect to this non-project action have been satisfied through the completion of
41 an environmental checklist and the issuance on February 6, 2024, of a

1 Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) for this non-project proposal to Amend
2 Title 30 Snohomish County Code (SCC).

- 3
- 4 2. The proposal is a Type 3 legislative action pursuant to SCC 30.73.010.
- 5
- 6 3. Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.106(1), a notice of intent to adopt this ordinance was
7 transmitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce for distribution to
8 state agencies on February 6, 2024, and assigned material number 2024-S-
9 6859.
- 10
- 11 4. The public participation process used in the adoption of this ordinance complies
12 with all applicable requirements of the GMA and the SCC.
- 13
- 14 5. The Washington State Attorney General last issued an advisory memorandum,
15 as required by RCW 36.70A.370, in September of 2018 entitled "Advisory
16 Memorandum: Avoiding Unconstitutional Takings of Private Property" to help
17 local governments avoid the unconstitutional taking of private property. The
18 process outlined in the State Attorney General's 2018 advisory memorandum
19 was used by the County in objectively evaluating the regulatory changes
20 proposed by this ordinance.

21

22 **Section 2.** The County Council makes the following conclusions:

- 23
- 24 1. The proposed amendments are consistent with the goals, policies, and objectives
25 of the MPPs, CPPs, and GPPs.
- 26
- 27 2. The proposed amendments are consistent with applicable federal, state, and
28 local laws and regulations.
- 29
- 30 3. The County has complied with all SEPA requirements with respect to this non-
31 project action.
- 32
- 33 4. The regulations proposed by this ordinance do not result in an unconstitutional
34 taking of private property for a public purpose.
- 35

36 **Section 3.** The County Council bases its findings and conclusions on the entire
37 legislative record, including all testimony and exhibits. Any finding which should be
38 deemed a conclusion, and any conclusion that should be a finding, is hereby adopted
39 as such.

40

1 **Section 4.** Snohomish County Code Section 30.26.020, last amended by
2 Amended Ordinance No. 16-013 on March 8, 2017, is amended to read:

3
4 **30.26.020 Location of parking spaces.**

5 Parking spaces shall be located as specified in this section. Where a distance is
6 specified, the distance shall be the walking distance measured from the nearest point of
7 the parking facilities to the nearest available entrance of the building which it serves.

8 (1) Parking for single and multifamily dwellings shall be within 300 feet of ~~((and on~~
9 ~~the same lot or building site with))~~ the building it serves. If the parking is not on the
10 same lot or building site as the building it serves, it shall be on a lot or tract that provides
11 a parking easement for the benefit of the lot or site served and shall be configured in a
12 way that provides safe walking conditions to the building served by the parking.

13 (2) Parking for uses not specified above shall not be over 300 feet from the building
14 it serves. Parking spaces for uses on land subject to a binding site plan (BSP) with
15 record of survey shall be located on land within the BSP area per recorded covenants,
16 conditions, and restrictions (CCRs) or declaration.

17 (3) All parking spaces shall be located out of the public right-of-way and on land
18 zoned in a manner which would allow the particular use the parking will serve.

19 (4) Parking shall be set back from lakes, streams, wetlands, and other bodies of
20 water as necessary to comply with the shoreline management and critical areas
21 regulations. See chapters 30.44, 30.62A and 30.67 SCC.

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

1 PASSED this ____ day of ____, 2024.

2
3 SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL
4 Snohomish County, Washington
5

6 _____
7 Council Chair

8 ATTEST:
9

10 _____
11 Clerk of the Council
12

13 () APPROVED

14 () EMERGENCY

15 () VETOED

16 DATE: _____
17

18 _____
19 County Executive
20

21 ATTEST:
22

23 _____
24
25
26 Approved as to form only:

27 

28 _____
29 Deputy Prosecuting Attorney