1	Adopted: August 13, 2025			
2	Effective: September 6, 2025			
3	SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL			
4	Snohomish County, Washington			
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6	ORDINANCE NO. 25-045			
7				
8	RELATING TO GROWTH MANAGEMENT; INCREASING RESIDENTIAL MINIMUM NET DENSITY IN URBAN			
9	AREAS; AMENDING SECTIONS 30.23.020, 30.21.025, 30.41B.120, and 30.41A.180 OF THE SNOHOMISH			
10	COUNTY CODE			
11				
12	WHEREAS, on December 4, 2024, the Snohomish County Council ("County Council") adopted			
13	Amended Ordinance No. 24-033 to update the policies of the County's Growth Management Act			
14	Comprehensive Plan (GMACP) as required in RCW 36.70A.130; and			
15				
16	WHEREAS, the adopted GMACP includes the Land Use Element with Land Use Goal 2 to			
17	"Establish development patterns that use urban land more efficiently"; and			
18				
19	WHEREAS, amended Land Use Policy 2.A.1 in the adopted GMACP requires that new			
20	subdivisions achieve a minimum net density of six units per acre within the Urban Growth Area (UGA) to			
21	encourage denser urban infill development; and			
22				
23	WHEREAS, the amendments in this ordinance ensure consistency between County Code and the			
24	GMACP by raising the minimum net density in Title 30 of the Snohomish County Code (SCC) to six units			
25	per acre up from four units per acre within the current code for many new urban residential			
26	developments; and			
27	WILEDEAC on Moreh 35, 3035, the Such emish County Planning Commission ("Planning			
28	WHEREAS, on March 25, 2025, the Snohomish County Planning Commission ("Planning			
29	Commission") was briefed by Snohomish County Planning and Development Services (PDS) staff about			
30 31	the proposed code amendments contained in this ordinance; and			
32	WHEREAS, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on April 22, 2025, to receive public			
33	testimony concerning the proposed code amendments contained in this ordinance; and			
34	testimony concerning the proposed code amendments contained in this ordinance, and			
35	WHEREAS, at the conclusion of the Planning Commission's public hearing, the Planning			
36	Commission deliberated on the proposed amendments and voted to recommend approval of the			
37	amendments contained in this ordinance, as shown in its recommendation letter dated April 30, 2025;			
38	and			
39				
40	WHEREAS, on August 13, 2025, the County Council held a public hearing after proper notice, and			
41	considered public comment and the entire record related to the code amendments contained in this			
42	ordinance; and			
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sprawl:

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

The proposed amendments adhere to the goals of the MPPs within the Regional Growth Strategy by encouraging efficient use of land within UGAs.

G. The proposed amendments adhere to the Snohomish County Countywide Planning Goal HO-4:

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

The amendments are consistent with the Countywide Planning Policy (CPP) by allowing for a variety of housing types to provide more home ownership and rental opportunities.

- H. Procedural requirements.
  - 1. Under Snohomish County Code, this ordinance is a Type 3 legislative action pursuant to SCC 30.73.010.
  - 2. Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.106(1), a notice of intent to adopt this ordinance was transmitted to the Washington State Department of Commerce on April 8, 2025.
  - 3. State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), chapter 43.21C RCW, requirements with respect to this non-project action have been satisfied through the completion of an environmental checklist and issuance of a determination of non-significance on April 8, 2025.
  - 4. The public participation process used in the adoption of this ordinance complies with all applicable requirements of the GMA and the SCC, including but not limited to RCW 36.70A.035, RCW 36.70A.140, and chapter 30.73 SCC.
  - 5. The Washington State Attorney General last issued an advisory memorandum, as required by RCW 36.70A.370, in October of 2024 entitled "Advisory Memorandum and Recommended Process for Evaluating Proposed Regulatory or Administrative Actions to Avoid Unconstitutional Takings of Private Property" to help local governments avoid the unconstitutional taking of private property. The process outlined in the State Attorney General's 2024 advisory memorandum was used by Snohomish County in objectively evaluating the regulatory changes proposed by this ordinance.
- I. This ordinance is consistent with the record:

1 1. SCC 30.21.025 is amended to be consistent with Land Use Policy 2.A.1 in the Land Use 2 section of the Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan and to encourage development in 3 urban areas, reducing sprawl. 4 2. SCC 30.23.020 is amended to be consistent with Land Use Policy 2.A.1 in the Land Use 5 section of the Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan and to encourage development in 6 urban areas, reducing sprawl. 7 3. SCC 30.41A.180 is amended to be consistent with Land Use Policy 2.A.1 in the Land Use 8 section of the Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan and to encourage development in 9 urban areas, reducing sprawl. 10 4. SCC 30.41B.120 is amended to be consistent with Land Use Policy 2.A.1 in the Land Use 11 section of the Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan and to encourage development in 12 urban areas, reducing sprawl. 13 5. The code amendments are consistent with the record as set for in the PDS Staff Report dated March 7, 2025, and memo dated April 21, 2025. 14 15 16 Section 2. The County Council makes the following conclusions: 17 18 A. The amendments proposed by this ordinance are consistent with all applicable federal, state, and 19 local laws and regulations. 20 21 B. The amendments proposed by this ordinance are consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies 22 of the MPPs, CPPs, and the Snohomish County GMACP. 23 24 C. The County has complied with all SEPA requirements in respect to this non-project action. 25 26 D. The public participation process used in the adoption of this ordinance complies with all applicable 27 requirements of the GMA and title 30 SCC. 28 29 E. The amendments proposed by this ordinance do not result in an unconstitutional taking of private 30 property for a public purpose. 31 32 Section 3. The Snohomish County Council bases its findings and conclusions on the entire record of the County Council, including all testimony and exhibits. Any finding, which should be deemed a 33 34 conclusion, and any conclusion which should be deemed a finding, is hereby adopted as such. 35 36 Section 4. Snohomish County Code Section 30.21.025, last amended by Amended Ordinance No. 37 24-065 on December 4, 2024, is amended to read: 38 39 30.21.025 Intent of zones. 40 41 This section describes the intent of each use zone. Snohomish County's use zones are categorized and 42 implemented consistent with the comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan establishes guidelines to

determine compatibility and location of use zones. The intent of each zone is established pursuant to

SCC Table 30.21.020 and is set forth below in subsections (1) through (4) of this section.

- (1) *Urban Zones*. The urban zones category consists of residential, commercial, and industrial zoning classifications in Urban Growth Areas (UGAs) located outside of cities in unincorporated Snohomish County. These areas are either already characterized by, or are planned for, urban growth consistent with the comprehensive plan.
  - (a) Single Family Residential. The intent and function of Single Family Residential zones is to provide for predominantly single family residential development that achieves a minimum net density of ((four)) six dwelling units per net acre. These zones may be used as holding zones for properties that are designated Urban Medium-Density Residential, Urban High-Density Residential, Urban Commercial, Urban Industrial, Public/Institutional use (P/IU), or Other land uses in the comprehensive plan. The official Snohomish County zoning maps prepared pursuant to SCC 30.21.030 shall use the suffix "P/IU" to indicate all areas in which these zones implement the P/IU designation (e.g., R-7,200-P/IU). Single family residential zones consist of the following:
    - (i) Residential 7,200 sq. ft. (R-7,200);
    - (ii) Residential 8,400 sq. ft. (R-8,400); and
    - (iii) Residential 9,600 sq. ft. (R-9,600).
  - (b) *Multiple Family Residential*. Multiple Family Residential zones provide for predominantly apartment and townhouse development in designated medium- and high-density residential locations. Multiple Family Residential zones consist of the following:
    - (i) *Townhouse* (T). The intent and function of the Townhouse zone is to:
      - (A) provide for single family dwellings, both attached and detached, or different styles, sizes, and prices at urban densities greater than those for strictly single family detached development, but less than multifamily development;
      - (B) provide a flexible tool for development of physically suitable, skipped-over or under-used lands in urban areas without adversely affecting adjacent development; and
      - (C) provide design standards and reviews which recognize the special characteristics of townhouses, to ensure the development of well-planned communities, and ensure the compatibility of such housing developments with adjacent, existing, and planned uses. Townhouses are intended to serve the housing needs of a variety of housing consumers and producers. Therefore, townhouses may be built for

1	renter occupancy of units on a site under single ownership, owner
2	agreements pursuant to chapters 64.32 or 64.34 RCW, or owner or
3	renter occupancy of separately conveyed units on individual lots
4	created through formal subdivision pursuant to chapter 58.17 RCW;
5	
6	(ii) Low-Density Multiple Residential (LDMR). The intent and function of the
7	Low-Density Multiple Residential zone is to provide a variety of low-density,
8	multifamily housing including townhouses, multifamily structures, and attached
9	or detached homes on small lots;
10	
11	(iii) Multiple Residential (MR). The intent and function of the Multiple
12	Residential zone is to provide for high-density development, including
13	townhouses and multifamily structures generally near other high-intensity land
14	uses; and
15	
16	(iv) Mobile Home Park (MHP). The intent and function of the Mobile Home Park
17	zone is to provide and preserve high density, affordable residential
18	development consisting of mobile homes for existing mobile home parks as a
19	source of affordable detached single-family and senior housing. This zone is
20	assigned to existing mobile home parks which contain rental pads, as opposed
21	to fee simple owned lots, and as such are more susceptible to future
22	development.
23	·
24	(c) Commercial. The Commercial zones provide for neighborhood, community and
25	urban center commercial, and mixed use developments that offer a range of retail,
26	office, personal service and wholesale uses. Commercial zones consist of the following:
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28	(i) Neighborhood Business (NB). The intent and function of the Neighborhood
29	Business zone is to provide for local facilities that serve the everyday needs of
30	the surrounding neighborhood, rather than the larger surrounding community;
31	
32	(ii) Planned Community Business (PCB). The intent and function of the Planned
33	Community Business zone is to provide for community business enterprises in
34	areas desirable for business but having highly sensitive elements of vehicular
35	circulation, or natural site and environmental conditions while minimizing
36	impacts upon these elements through the establishment of performance
37	criteria. Performance criteria for this zone are intended to control external as
38	well as internal effects of commercial development. It is the goal of this zone to
39	discourage "piecemeal" and strip development by encouraging development
40	under unified control;
41	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
42	(iii) Community Business (CB). The intent and function of the Community
43	Business zone is to provide for businesses and services designed to serve the
44	needs of several neighborhoods;
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- (iv) General Commercial (GC). The intent and function of the General Commercial zone is to provide for a wide variety of retail and nonretail commercial and business uses. General commercial sites are auto-oriented as opposed to pedestrian or neighborhood oriented. Certain performance standards, subject to review and approval of an official site plan, are contained in chapter 30.31B SCC;
- (v) Business Park (BP). The intent and function of the Business Park zone is to provide for those business/industrial uses of a professional office, wholesale and manufacturing nature which are capable of being constructed, maintained, and operated in a manner uniquely designed to be compatible with adjoining residential, retail commercial, or other less intensive land uses, existing or planned. Strict zoning controls must be applied in conjunction with private covenants and unified control of land; many business/industrial uses otherwise provided for in the zoning code will not be suited to the BP zone due to an inability to comply with its provisions and achieve compatibility with surrounding uses. The BP zone, under limited circumstances, may also provide for residential development where sites are large and where compatibility can be assured for on-site mixed uses and uses on adjacent properties;
- (vi) Light Industrial (LI). The intent and function of the Light Industrial zone is to promote, protect, and provide for light industrial uses while also maintaining compatibility with adjacent nonindustrial areas;
- (vii) Heavy Industrial (HI). The intent and function of the Heavy Industrial zone is to promote, protect, and provide for heavy industrial uses while also maintaining compatibility with adjacent nonindustrial areas; and
- (viii) Industrial Park (IP/PIP). The intent and function of the Industrial Park and Planned Industrial Park zones is to provide for heavy and light industrial development under controls to protect the higher uses of land and to stabilize property values primarily in those areas in close proximity to residential or other less intensive development. The IP and remaining Planned Industrial Park (PIP) zones are designed to ensure compatibility between industrial uses in industrial centers and thereby maintain the attractiveness of such centers for both existing and potential users and the surrounding community.

  Vacant/undeveloped land which is currently zoned PIP shall be developed pursuant to industrial park zone regulations (chapter 30.31A SCC).
- (d) *Industrial Zones*. The Industrial zones provide for a range of industrial and manufacturing uses and limited commercial and other nonindustrial uses necessary for the convenience of industrial activities. Industrial zones consist of the following:

(i) Business Park (BP). See description under subsection (1)(c)(v) of this section;

1	(C) Supplemental sources of on-farm income that support and sustain	
2	on-farm agricultural operations and production;	
3		
4	(D) Support services that facilitate the production, marketing and	
5	distribution of agricultural products;	
6		
7	(E) Off-farm and on-farm sales and marketing of predominately	
8	regional agricultural products from one or more producers,	
9	agriculturally related experiences, products derived from regional	
10	agricultural production, products including locally made arts and crafts,	
11	and ancillary sales or service activities; and	
12		
13	(F) Accessory commercial or retail uses which shall be accessory to the	
14	growing of crops or raising of animals and which shall sell products	
15	predominately produced on-site, agricultural experiences, or products,	
16	including arts and crafts, produced on-site. Accessory commercial or	
17	retail sales shall offer for sale a significant amount of products or	
18	services produced on-site.	
19		
20	(v) Allowed uses shall comply with all of the following standards:	
21		
22	(A) The uses shall be compatible with resource land service standards.	
23		
24	(B) The allowed uses shall be located, designed and operated so as not	
25	to interfere with normal agricultural practices.	
26		
27	(C) The uses may operate out of existing or new buildings with parking	
28	and other supportive uses consistent with the size and scale of	
29	agricultural buildings but shall not otherwise convert agricultural land to	
30	non-agricultural uses.	
31		
32	(d) Repealed by Amended Ord. 21-060.	
33	(Repealed by Amended ord. 21 060, Oct 6, 2021, Eff date Oct. 22, 2021)	
34		
35	(4) Other Zones. The Other zones category consists of existing zoning classifications that are no	
36	longer primary implementing zones but may be used in special circumstances due to	
37	topography, natural features, or the presence of extensive critical areas. Other zones consist of	
38	the following:	
39		
40	(a) Suburban Agriculture-1 Acre (SA-1);	
41		
42	(b) Rural Conservation (RC);	
43		
44	(c) Rural Use (RU);	

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2 3	PASSED this 13 <sup>th</sup> day of August 2025.	
4 5		SNOHOMISH COUNTY COUNCIL Snohomish County, Washington
6 7		A / A / O `
8		N Nehman
9		Council Chair
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13	ATTEST:	
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16	Juse J MCNIY	
17	Asst. Clerk of the Council	
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22	(X ) APPROVED	
23	() EMERGENCY	
24	() VETOED	DATE: August 29, 2025
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32	ATTEST:	
33	Malina Cara alata	
34	Melíssa Geraghty	
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38	Approved as to form only:	
39	Approved as to form only.	
40	/s/Elie Steinberg	
41	Deputy Prosecuting Attorney	