



Snohomish County

Planning and Development Services

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Snohomish County Planning Commission

FROM: Michael Saponaro, Senior Planner

SUBJECT: Proposed Amendments to SCC 30.23.050 and SCC 30.23.032

DATE: November 21, 2022

Dave Somers
County Executive

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this staff report is to outline a proposed code amendment in the General Development Standards, specifically SCC 30.23.050 (Height requirements, exceptions, and measuring height) and SCC 30.23.032 (Urban Residential Zone Categories Bulk Matrix).

The proposed amendments' objectives are to:

1. Address building height exemptions.
2. Clarify roof types used in building height measurements.
3. Encourage construction along various topographies without significant regrading by allowing daylight basements with a height bonus.

These objectives will be achieved with the following changes:

1. Add elevator hoist ways and rooftop equipment screening to the list of building height exemptions.
2. Include a diagram of roof types and add shed, gable, gambrel, and vaulted roof as potential designs.
3. Increase the maximum building height of urban residential zones by 5 feet with daylight basements.

BACKGROUND

SCC 30.23.050 (2) requires additions to the list of height exemptions. SCC 30.23.050 (3) requires a more complete list of roof types and a diagram to determine where height should be measured from. Additionally, developers have requested an increase of 5 feet to the maximum building height of SCC 30.23.032 (Urban Residential Zone Categories Bulk Matrix) when including a daylight basement, so that they may build one along various topography without having to sacrifice another floor to do so.

PROPOSED CODE AMENDMENTS

The following table provides an overview of the proposed changes to Snohomish County Code.

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CODE CHANGES

Proposed Language	Finding
<p>30.23.050 (2) The following shall be exempt from the maximum height standards, except structures and uses located in an airport compatibility area are subject to the height review requirements of SCC 30.32E.060:</p> <p>(a) Tanks and bunkers, turrets, church spires, belfries, domes, monuments, chimneys, water towers, fire and hose towers, observation towers, stadiums, smokestacks, flag poles, towers, and masts used to support commercial radio and television antennas, bulkheads, water tanks, scenery lofts, cooling towers, grain elevators, gravel, and cement tanks and bunkers, and drive-in theater projection screens, provided they are set back at least 50 feet from any adjoining lot line;</p> <p>(b) Towers and masts used to support private antennas, provided they meet the minimum setback of the zoning district in which they are located, and the horizontal array of the antennas does not intersect the vertical plane of the property line;</p> <p>(c) Towers, masts, or poles supporting electric utility, telephone, or other communication lines;</p> <p>(d) Schools and educational institutions; provided, that:</p> <p>(i) The use was approved as part of a conditional use permit;</p> <p>(ii) A maximum building height of 55 feet is not exceeded; and</p> <p>(iii) Any portion of any building exceeding the underlying zoning maximum height standard is set back at least 50 feet from all of the site's perimeter lot lines; and</p> <p>(e) Aircraft hangars located within any industrial zone; provided, that the hangar is set back at least 100 feet from any non-industrial zone.</p> <p><u>(f) Elevator hoistways; and</u></p> <p><u>(g) Rooftop mechanical equipment screening, including extended parapet walls, mansards, or other roof forms that are integrated with the architecture of the building.</u></p>	<p>Parapets (and mansards) are often used to screen mechanical equipment; which many jurisdictions prefer overseeing the equipment. Additional exceptions are needed for elevator hoist ways for higher-density residential buildings; their roofs tend to come up higher and are often considered in the same vein as mechanical equipment.</p>
<p>30.23.050 (3) Building height shall be measured as the vertical distance from the average final grade to the highest point of a flat roof, or to the deck line of a mansard roof, or to the average height of the highest gable of a pitch or hip</p>	<p>The current list of roof types is incomplete and ambiguous regarding shed, gable, gambrel, and vaulted roof designs. A diagram depicting roof</p>

<p><u>roof the building's roof surface, based on the following roof types:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. <u>For a flat or minimally pitched (less than 1:12) roof use the distance to the top of the roof;</u> b. <u>For a mansard roof, use the distance to the deck line; or</u> c. <u>For an A-Frame, gable, gambrel, pitch, or hip roof, shed, or vaulted roof, use the distance to the midpoint of the pitch of the roof, measured from the peak of the roof to that point vertically above the highest exterior wall, including dormer walls, as illustrated in SCC Figure 30.23.050(4).</u> <p><u>If a building has more than one type of roof, the highest roof shall be used to determine the height of the building.</u></p>	<p>measurement will be added for further clarity.</p>
<p><u>30.23.040 Reference notes for SCC Tables 30.23.030 (16) The maximum building height within Urban Residential zones is increased an additional five feet with a "daylight basement," except under conditions that would violate the height limit requirements of the Shoreline Management Program (See SCC 30.67.460), the airport compatibility area (See SCC 30.32E.060), or cause any other violations with the Snohomish County Code, including Urban County Residential Design Standards (See SCC 30.23A).</u></p>	<p>The five-foot building height bonus for a daylight basement requires some stipulations that it doesn't interfere with Shoreline height caps, FAA height caps, design standards, etc. Daylight basement has potential positive impacts that should be incentivized, i.e., encouraging development on the side of slopes which reduces unnecessary grading and impervious surfaces.</p>
<p><u>30.91B.036 Basement, Daylight.</u> <u>Basement, Daylight: "Daylight Basement" means a floor level that has a minimum of 1/3 of its perimeter wholly underground while the rest of the perimeter is either at grade or only partially underground grade, with one or more full-sized above-ground windows placed on one or more of the walls.</u></p>	<p>Daylight basement definition added to list of definitions for reference.</p>

Figure 30.23.050(4). Calculating Building Height Based on Roof Type

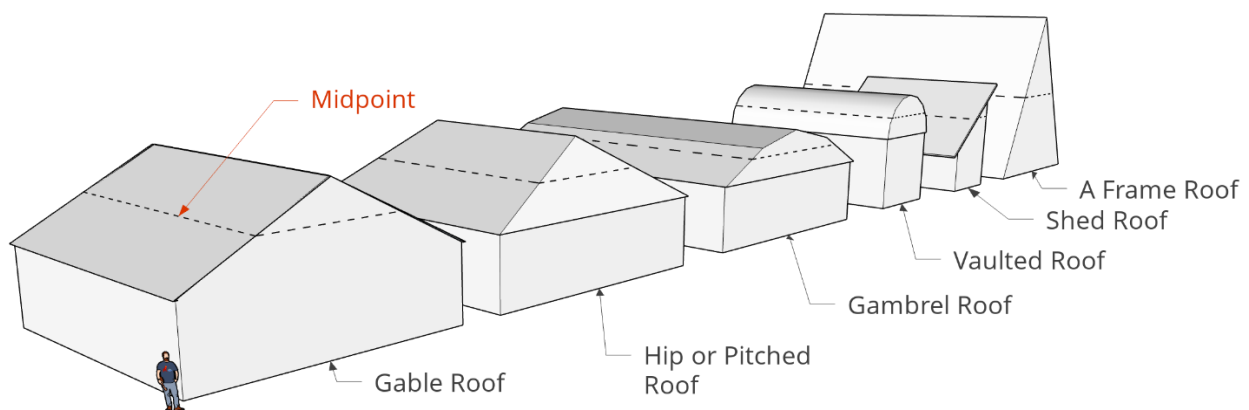
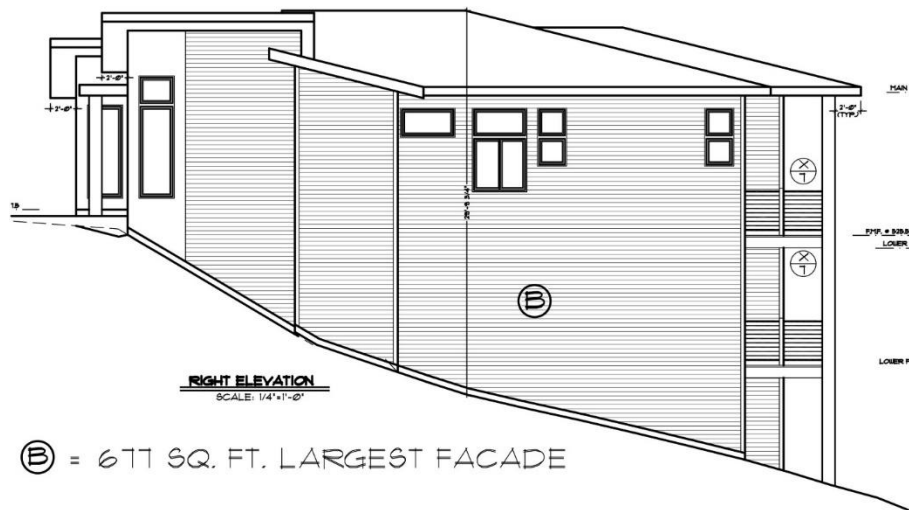


Figure 30.23.050(5). Daylight Basement Diagram



Note: Table 30.23.0032 will include an additional column that increases maximum building height by five feet in all urban residential Zones with a daylight basement.

Table 30.23.032 Urban Residential Zones Bulk Matrix

Category	Zone	Lot Dimension (feet) ⁵⁴				Minimum Setback Requirements From (feet) ^{11, 33}							Maximum Lot Coverage ⁸
		Minimum Lot Area ²⁹ (square feet)	Minimum Lot Width	Maximum Building Height (feet) ^{27, 64}	Maximum Building Height with a Daylight Basement (feet) ^{16, 27, 64}	Side and Rear Lot Lines Adjacent to:				Resource Lands		Seismic Hazards	
						Commercial and Industrial Zones	R-9,600, R-8,400, and R-7,200 Zones	Other Urban Residential Zones	Rural Zones	Agriculture	Forest		
Urban Residential	R-9,600	9,600 ^{23, 2}	70	30	35	10	5	5	5	See SCC 30.32B.130	See SCC 30.32A.110	See chapters 30.51A and 30.62B SCC	35%
	R-8,400	8,400 ²³	65	30	35	10	5	5	5				35%
	R-7,200 (buildings ≤ 30 feet high)	7,200 ^{23, 65}	60	35	40	10	5	5	5				35%
	R-7,200 (buildings > 30 feet high) ⁶⁷						10	10	10				
	T (buildings ≤ 20 feet high) ⁶⁹	See SCC 30.31E.050		35	40	10	10	5	25	See SCC 30.31E.050			
	T (buildings > 20 feet high) ⁶⁹					15	20	10					

	LDMR (buildings ≤ 20 feet high) ^{15, 59, 61, 62}	7,200 ⁴ , 65	60	45	50	10	10	5	25			50% ⁶⁶
	LDMR (buildings 20 - 30 feet high) ^{15, 59, 61, 62}					10	20	10				
	LDMR (buildings > 30 feet high) ^{15, 59, 61, 62}					15	25	15				
	MR (buildings ≤ 20 feet high) ^{5, 15, 59, 61, 62}	7,200 ⁵ , ⁹ 65	60 ⁹	45 ¹⁴	50 ¹⁴	10	10	5	25			50% ⁹ , ⁶⁶
	MR (buildings 20 - 30 feet high) ^{5, 15, 59, 61, 62}					10	20	10				
	MR (buildings > 30 feet high) ^{5, 15, 59, 61, 62}					15	2560	15				
MHP	⁵⁵	None	25	30	See SCC 30.42E.100(5)(a)				50%			

ANALYSIS

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

Compliance with State Law

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

GMA Goal 7- "Permits. Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability."

Analysis: The proposed amendments would add clarity to the permitting process by outlining clearer expectations for building heights and building height measurements.

Compliance with the Multi-County Planning Policies

The proposed amendments are consistent with the following multicounty planning policies (MPPs) from the Puget Sound Regional Council 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 allow flexibility for houses to develop along natural elevations and varied topography with daylight basements and would add clarity to the permitting process.

Compliance with the Countywide Planning Policies

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

DP-7 The County and cities shall coordinate their comprehensive plans (RCW 36.70A.100).

Coordination in unincorporated territory planned by both the County and a city means that each plan should provide for the orderly transition of unincorporated to incorporated areas, including appropriate urban design provisions, by:

- a. Creating a safe and attractive urban environment that enhances livability; and*
- b. Balancing actions necessary to meet the requirement of achieving urban uses and densities with the goal of respecting already established neighborhoods.*

Analysis: The proposed code changes encourage urban environments by allowing for more density and more urban features under appropriate situations.

Compliance with the Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan

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

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

Analysis: The proposed code amendments would make SCC more understandable for both developers and permitting staff.

Environmental Review

Staff is in the process of completing a State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) checklist for this proposed code amendment and will issue a Determination of Nonsignificance prior to the Planning Commission public hearing. The fourteen-day public comment period will conclude prior to the Planning Commission public hearing.

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 2022.

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: David Killingstad, PDS Manager
Michael Dobesh, PDS Manager