



## Snohomish County Council

**Committee:** Planning & Community Development      **Analyst:** Ryan Countryman

**ECAF:** 2023-0325

**Proposal:** Ordinance 23-033

**Date:** April 18, 2023

### **Consideration**

Proposed Ordinance 23-033 would amend Snohomish County Code (SCC) Chapters 30.23 and 30.91B to make amendments related to building height requirements.

Executive Proposed Amendment Sheet would allow applicants with vested permits six months to opt-in to the new regulations.

### **Background and Analysis**

Current code standards work well for development on level sites and for buildings with basic roof forms, but not all development fits that description. The proposed ordinance makes three types of changes related to building height addressing: (1) building height exemptions, (2) roof types, and (3) daylight basements.

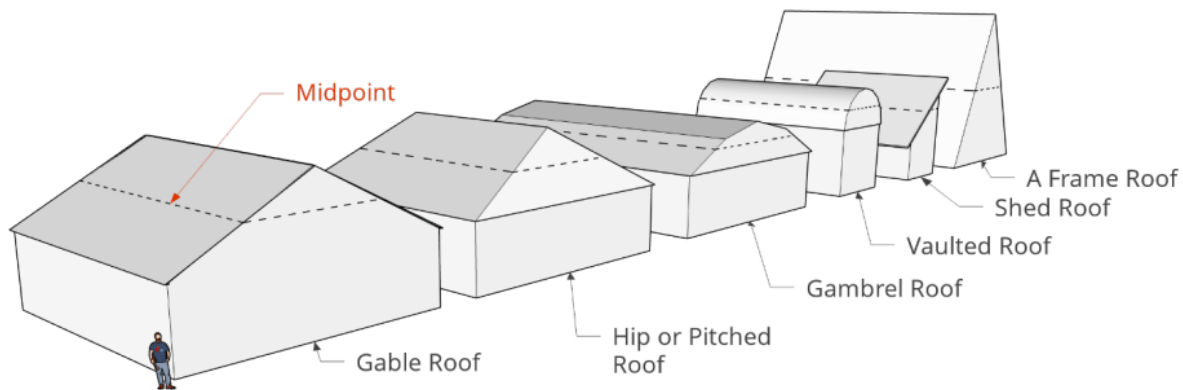
**Building Height Exemptions.** SCC 30.23.050(2) provides several existing exemptions to maximum building height, such as for church spires, utility towers, and schools. Ordinance 23-033 would add exemptions for elevator and other rooftop mechanical equipment.

**Roof Types.** SCC 30.23.053(3) describes how to measure building height for several common roof forms. However, the current list is incomplete and ambiguous. Ordinance 23-033 would expand on the list and add two diagrams to provide clarity. These diagrams appear on the next page.

Proposed Figure 30.23.050(4) illustrates the midpoint of six types of steep roof. For these roof forms, the midpoint is the maximum building height.

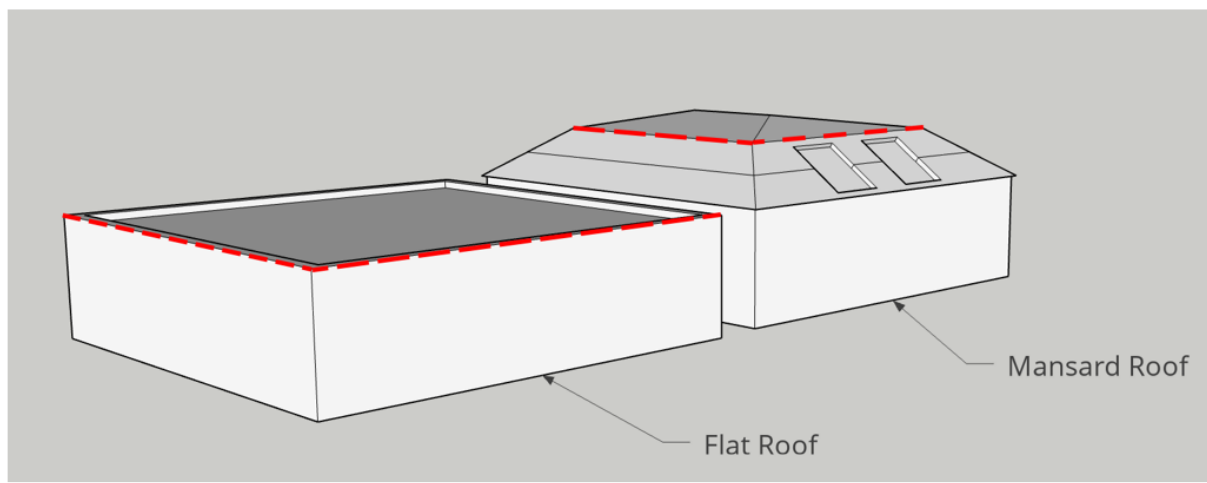
Proposed Figure 30.23.050(5) shows the building height for flat and mansard roofs.

**Figure 30.23.050(4). Finding the Midpoint of Different Roof Types**



**Proposed Figure 30.23.050(4)**

**Figure 30.23.050(5). Calculating Building Height for Flat and Mansard Roofs**



**Proposed Figure 30.23.050(5)**

**Daylight Basements.** The proposed changes in SCC 30.23.032 and 30.23.040 would give more flexibility to include daylight basements on sloping sites in urban residential zones. This would happen by giving an additional five feet in building height when including daylight basements. A new reference note in SCC 30.23.032 would point to provisions describing the additional height in SCC 30.23.040(16). The effect of these changes would be to reduce the amount of grading in locations with topography because of how Chapter 30.23 already measures building height from the average final grade around a building.

The proposed new definition of “basement, daylight” at SCC 30.91B.036 would provide an objective measure and illustration (next page) for when the proposed five-foot height increase in SCC 30.23.032 would apply. The practical effect of these changes would be a reduction of

grading on sloping sites simply to comply with present-day provisions for measuring building height.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure SCC 30.91B.036. Daylight Basement**



**Proposed Figure SCC 30.91B.036**

**Current Proposal**

*Scope and Summary:* Ordinance 23-033 would amend Title 30 SCC to address building heights as described above.

*Executive Amendment Sheet:* Would allow applicants with vested projects to opt-in to the new provisions.

*Fiscal Implications:* None

**Handling:** Normal

**Planning Commission:** Approve

**Risk Management:** Approve

**Finance:** Approve

**Approved-as-to-form:** Yes

**Executive Recommendation:** Approve

**Request:** Move to General Legislative Session on April 26th to set time and date for a public hearing. (Suggested hearing date is May 17 at 10:30 am.)

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<sup>1</sup> As proposed, daylight basement would have “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.”