

# Urban Center Code Update Project

Planning Commission Recommendation

County Council Briefing  
July 14, 2009



*Snohomish County*

*Planning and Development Services*

*Department of Public Works*

# Policy Framework

- **General Policy Plan Objective**
  - *“Establish and implement specific design guidelines for mixed-use areas-Urban Centers.”*
  
- **Policy LU 4.B.1**
  - *“The county shall work with architects, builders and others to establish a design review process, innovative and flexible design guidelines and development regulations, and incentives for the development of urban centers...”*

Policy LU 4.B.1, implemented by the Urban Centers Demonstration Program (UDCP)

# Urban Centers Demonstration Program

- Approved by the County Council on August 8, 2001  
(Amended Ordinance No. 01-052)
- Amended in 2003 and 2005
- Expiration date of regulations extended by council action  
three times (current regulations set to expire November 29, 2009)
- Applies to Urban Centers, Urban Village and Transit  
Pedestrian Village (TPV) plan designations

# UCDP Overview

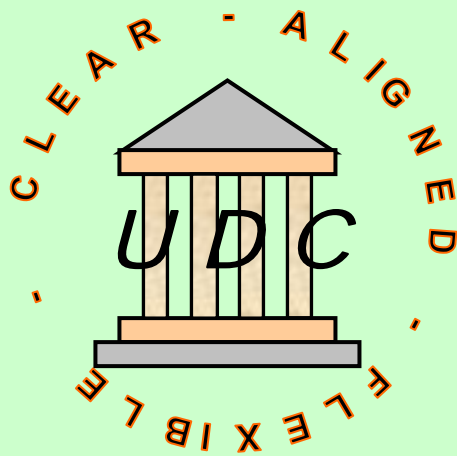
- Narrowed list of permitted uses
- Residential and non-residential required for each project
- Minimum net densities (12 du/ac) (20 du/ac in TPV)
- Flexible design standards
- Committee based review process with early public involvement
- Projects approved by the director

Plan Designation	Zoning	Required to Use UCDP
Urban Center	Planned Community Business	No
Urban Village	Neighborhood Business	No
Transit Pedestrian Village	PCB-TPV	Yes

# Lessons Learned

- Transit-oriented development is possible
- Flexibility of the code has not always achieved intended results on the ground
- Limited specificity of the code has resulted in drawn out negotiations with applicants and protracted approval processes
- Staffing and engaging the centers review committee has been problematic
- *Program awarded PSRC Vision 2020 Award in 2007*

# County Launches Code Project



- Initiated under the UDC Update Project and launched in May 2007
- Goal to adopt a set of development regulations and zoning to replace the UCDP

# Public Outreach

- 4 UDC Public Forums
  - May 3, 2007
  - December 6, 2007
  - May 1, 2008
  - April 2, 2009
- Neighborhood community meeting (164<sup>th</sup> St SW)
  - July 17, 2008
- Periodic SCT Updates
- Planning Commission workshop
  - February 26, 2008



- SCT Steering Committee
  - April 22, 2009
- SCT PAC
  - May 14, 2009
  - June 11, 2009
- SCT Steering Committee
  - June 17, 2009

# Policy Issues

- Prior to drafting the code amendments, staff requested feedback from stakeholders on key questions derived from several policy issues
- These policy issues reflected the experiences of the demonstration program
- Master Planning
- Climate Change
- Role of Cities
- Neighborhood Compatibility
- Role of Citizens
- Density
- Allowable Uses
- Pedestrian Circulation
- Vehicle Circulation
- Public Realm
- Design Standards
- Project Review Process

# The ECAF Packages

- Two ECAFs for the Planning Commission Recommendation
  - Ordinance Amending Development Regulations
  - Areawide Rezone Ordinance
- Executive Memo with amendments to development regulations ordinance

# Overview of PC Recommendation

- Repeals Urban Centers Demonstration Program
- New urban center zone
- New urban center design standards
- New administrative review process
- NB zone changes related to Urban Villages
- Areawide rezones to implement new zone

# Urban Centers Zone

(SCC 30.21.025 and SCC 30.34A.020)

- New zoning classification to implement Urban Center and TPV plan designations
- Uses not appropriate for pedestrian and transit oriented development are excluded (i.e. single family dwelling and warehousing)
- Provides a more straightforward and consistent link between the comprehensive plan and the development regulations

# Floor to Area Ratio

(SCC 30.34A.030)

- FAR=Building Area/Site Area
- Minimum/maximum floor area for residential and non-residential
- FAR bonuses for street level retail, health club, green roof, daycare, rooftop solar panels and community gardens for use by residents
- FAR super bonuses for 1% arts, LEED (silver certification), Built Green and Energy Star

# Sample Floor Area Ratios

Building(s)	FAR (approximate)
Bob Drewel Building and Admin West	2.0
Bethany at Pacific Crest	5.0
Newberry Square	1.0
Silverlake Costco	0.18

# Building Height

## (SCC 30.34A.040)

- Maximum height of 80 feet using surface parking only
- Heights limited for buildings adjacent to R-9600, R-8400, R-7200, Townhouse and LDMR zoning
  - Height limited to equal the distance to zoning line
  - Example, if 15' to zoning line, then building height limited to 15'
- Additional height above 80 feet granted at a rate of 1 foot increase in height for each 1% of required parking within a structure, up to a max building height of 180 feet

# Parking

(SCC 30.34A.050)

## Parking Ratios

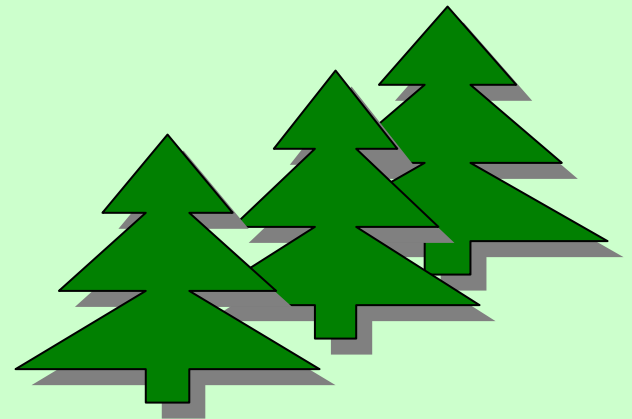
Use	Minimum <sup>1</sup>	Maximum	Current
Restaurants	2 stalls/1000 sf	8 stalls/1000 sf	10 stalls/1000 sf
Retail	2 stalls/1000 sf	4 stalls/1000 sf	4.5 stalls/1000 sf
Office	2 stalls/1000 sf	3 stalls/1000 sf	3 stalls/1000 sf
Residential (units >1000 sq ft each)	1.5 stalls per unit	2.5 stalls per unit	2 stalls per unit
Residential (units <1000 sq ft each)	1 stall per unit	1.5 stalls per unit	2 stalls per unit
Senior Housing	.5 stalls per unit	1 stall per unit	1 or 2 stalls per unit

Also, standards for the location of parking and construction of structured parking

# Landscaping

(SCC 30.34A.060)

- Requirement for areas not occupied by buildings/structures to be intensively landscaped
- Required 25 foot Type A buffer when adjacent to single family zoning
- Street trees required



# Open Space

(30.34A.070)

- Separate rates for residential and non-residential uses
  - 150 Ft<sup>2</sup> per residential unit
  - 2% of floor area for non-residential
- 50% of the open space required to be active and 25% of total needs to be in one location for active recreation



# Circulation and Access

(SCC 30.34A.080)

- Sidewalks
  - Minimum 7 feet
  - Planting/Amenity Zone-add'l 5 feet
- Transportation demand management
  - Options for reducing trips



planting/amenity zone  
5 ft minimum

Sidewalk  
Minimum 7 feet

# Signs, Screening and Lighting

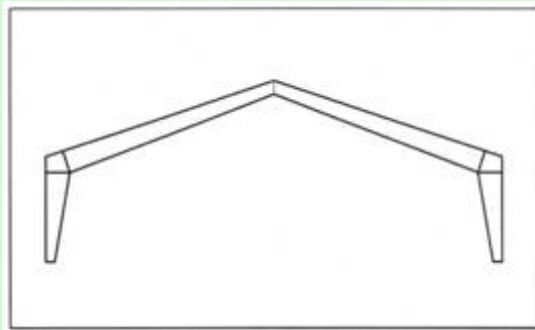
(SCC 30.34A.090, SCC 30.34A.100 and SCC 30.34A.110)

- Specific sign requirements for urban centers in addition to sign requirements in 30.27
- Screening requirements for trash/service area and rooftop mechanical equipment
- Standards for exterior lighting directing lights downward to minimize glare

# Step back and roof edge

(SCC 30.34A.120)

- Any parts of the façade over 60 feet facing a public r/w and those portions facing an urban residential zone (except MR) shall be stepped back at least 10 feet from the first floor façade
- Pitched roofs-minimum slope of 4:12



# Massing and Ground Level Detail

(SCC 30.34A.130 and SCC 30.34A.140)

example of  
building  
modulation



- Articulation required for buildings over 30 feet in height



medallions,  
seasonal  
planting,  
recessed entry,  
pedestrian  
signage

- Street level façade encouraged to be pedestrian friendly and incorporate generous amounts of glass

# Weather Protection and Blank Walls

(SCC 30.34A.150 and SCC 30.34A.160)

- Awnings or canopies required along county arterials and streets intended for pedestrian activity



- Menu of options to address blank walls longer than 20 feet
  - Landscaping, artwork, architectural detailing



# Submittal Requirements

## (SCC 30.34A.170)

- Site Plan
  - Location of structures, parking, project description
- Circulation, landscape, and open space plan
  - On-site locations
  - Description of how on-site circulation and open space relate to abutting properties
- Building elevations



# Review Process

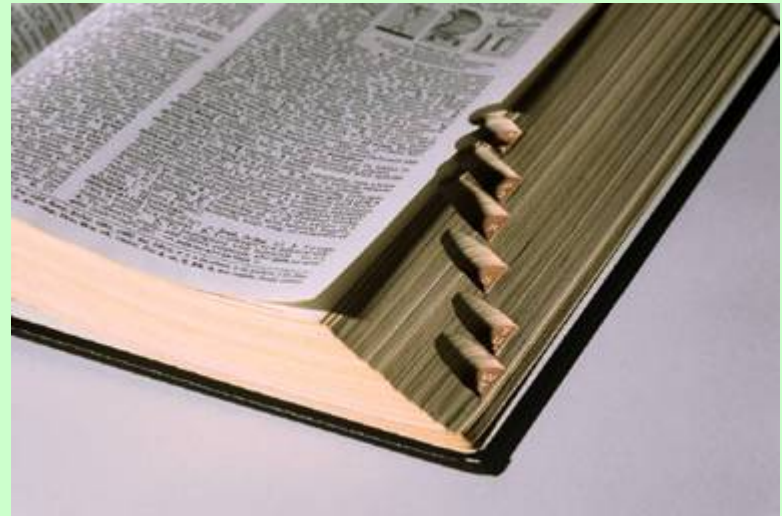
## (SCC 30.34A.180)

- Type 1 Process (SCC 30.73)
- Continued director approval authority
- Replaces committee review with administrative review
- Director decision criteria
- Code allows an interlocal agreement between a city and the county to establish city role in project review (SCC 30.34A.210)

# Definitions

## (Chapter 30.9 SCC)

- New definitions
  - Floor Area Ratio
  - Wall, Blank
- Modified definitions
  - Secondhand store
  - Urban center
  - Urban village
- Several definitions deleted to avoid confusion



# Neighborhood Business Zone

- Changes to the NB zone bulk standards (Chapter 30.23 SCC) to implement the Urban Village plan designation
  - Building Height changed from 30 feet to 40 feet
  - Setbacks reduced from 25 to 10 feet
  - Lot coverage increased from 35% to 65%
- NB zone parking requirement changed from chapter 30.26 SCC to SCC 30.34A.050 when designated an Urban Village
- Revisions preserve some “rights” granted under the demonstration program

# Areawide Rezones

- Properties designated Urban Center will be rezoned to the new urban center zone *[most properties are currently zoned PCB]*
- Manufactured home parks located in an urban center will not be rezoned as they are currently subject to interim emergency zoning
- OPUS Northwest and Calender properties will retain their existing zoning at the request of the property owners
- County is required to notify affected properties and properties within 500 feet of rezone

# **Executive Recommended Amendments to PC Recommendation on Development Regulations Ordinance**

1. Modifies the list of permitted uses;
2. Clarifies the role of cities in the review of an urban center project;
3. Corrects a typographical error in SCC 30.34A.080(9);
4. Reduces the maximum building height from 180 feet to 90 feet;
5. Adds director discretion on massing and articulation; and
6. Modifies the sign requirements.

# Executive Amendment #2

## City review

- Addresses concerns about the role of cities in the review of Urban Center projects located in a UGA or MUGA
- Provide opportunities for cities to participate in project meetings
- Encourages an interlocal agreement between the county and city to formalize a cooperative process
- SCT Steering Committee Recommendation to approve the amendment

# Executive Amendment #4

## Building Height

- Modifies the PC Recommendation to reduce the maximum building height to 90 feet
- Responds to concerns about environmental impacts of buildings over 90 feet
- Allows an additional up to 90 feet in building height when an EIS is completed that analyzes at a minimum the following:
  - Aesthetics
  - Light and Glare
  - Noise
  - Air Quality
  - Transportation
- Provides an exception for limiting building height when adjacent to urban residential zoning when critical areas or rights of way form the zoning boundary