

Commercial & Multifamily Zones: Preliminary Update Considerations

For Planning Commission Review, to be Discussed at Dec 9 Meeting

Contents:

1. Issues – Gap Analysis Summary
 - Identifies typical components and includes examples from another community
2. Zones & Permitted Uses – Preliminary Discussion/Questions
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1. Issues – Gap Analysis Summary

Below is a list of issues/objectives related to the Commercial and Multifamily zones per the Gap Analysis:

- Promote infill development in residential neighborhoods
- Encourage housing type variety
- Create affordable housing opportunities
- Allow for neighborhood commercial development in areas distant from Downtown
- Allow for office/business park development
- Encourage mixed-use development
- Discourage uncoordinated strip development
- Promote historic preservation and adaptive reuse
- Promote compatible retail development (design)
- Review industrial zone provisions (mostly use mix)
- Review parking provisions
- Review Residential/Office zone provisions (refine use mix and update dimensional standards)
- Review T-H and H-C provisions (combine?)
- Review Central Commercial zone provisions (refine use mix and update dimensional standards)

2. Zones & Permitted Uses – Preliminary Discussion/Questions

While eventually we'll need to get into detailed permitted use lists, it will likely be most useful at this point to discuss some of the larger use issues at the 30,000 foot level. Below are some key preliminary considerations and targeted questions.

CC Zone: Suggest only minor changes – let development frontage standards largely dictate use. Notable:

- Continue to allow light industrial/manufacturing uses that are tied to retail and restaurants (such as brewpubs), but make these uses Permitted By Right (rather than conditional) and update performance standards that minimize external impacts (traffic, noise, and smell).

CC-2 Zone: Suggest only minor changes – Again, let development frontage standards large dictate use. Notable:

- Consider how uses will work with the proposed frontage standards.
- Given the wide mix of uses (including residential), we'll be making suggestions to update the design standards that relate to transitions between uses (for example, screening outdoor storage areas not only from street, but from adjacent properties, as there's potential for residential development there).
- Light industrial uses – given the nature of this area and since it has transitioned from a light industrial zone, perhaps more latitude on light industrial uses should be provided as long as external impacts are minimized (again, via performance standards). Discuss what types of light industrial uses are OK or not OK and what type of performance standards are warranted given the mix of uses, long term vision, and our frontage/design standards.

T-C and C-H Zones: There's considerable overlap between these zones and staff has indicated that there have been attempts at combining them. There appears to be three obvious choices for what to do about these zones. Ultimately – we'll present these as options at the January 31 public meeting/workshop – but we'll want to identify pluses and minuses for each. Perhaps there's a preference from the Planning Commission?

1. Combine them. Iron out the differences – the most notable include:

- Retail uses - T-C allows tourist oriented retail, whereas C-H generally does NOT allow retail.
- Supermarkets T-C does not allow, but they are allowed in C-H
- Personal services – T-C does not allow most, but they are allowed in C-H
- Repair & construction services (enclosed) - T-C does not allow, but they are allowed in C-H
- Auto sales – T-C generally allows only new cars, no such limitation in C-H.
- Conditional uses – C-H allows for a broader mix of conditional uses than the T-C

If there are fatal flaws to combining these zones, what are they?

2. Eliminate C-H zone and let current C-H zones become either CC-2, I-L, or T-C zones.

First, look at differences between the C-H and CC-2/I-L zones:

- CC-2 zone allows residential and a broad array of retail uses, where C-H does not.
- Light industrial restricts office uses, but allows warehousing, distribution and a broad array of light manufacturing uses. Both I-L and C-H prohibit residential and restrict retail.

Discuss potentials and problems with either option based on characteristics of C-H zoned areas.

3. Keep both and make refinements.



I-L Zone: Perhaps the most notable issue here is the desire by many to allow for a business park/professional office uses in this district and more flexibility for supportive uses such as a restaurant. Current provisions only allow large space office uses (>5,000sf). Restaurants are allowed as a conditional use. Options to consider:

1. *Allow professional office uses outright.* This allows more flexibility, but it often has the potential to skew land values towards office uses and away from light industrial types of uses. Office uses are already allowed in the T-C, C-H, and both CC zones.
2. *Make no changes.* If there's a desire to keep offices in the other zones and reserve these areas for more industrialized uses, then this is a reasonable option.
3. Perhaps another zone is appropriate for the particular site – C-H, T-C, or even I-H? Of course, individual changes need to be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

I-L Design Standards? Regardless of which option is chosen – we'll need to determine the appropriate level of design standards for these areas. If general office uses are allowed, that perhaps necessitates a higher level of design standards.

R-O Zone: R-O is predominately residential and office, with some personal service uses also permitted. Some provisions to consider:

- Allow greater flexibility on multifamily uses – currently 4-plexes are the max allowed. I'd suggest at least allowing townhouses, and perhaps allow all multifamily, provided buildings meet height limits and design standards that seek to retain building form compatible with current character.
- Consider allowing cafes, restaurants or corner stores if within a mixed-use building on street corner sites?

C-N Zone: There are two different permitted use lists, which are confusing. The "old" list (1970) allows all but the more intensive retail types of uses (no size limitations, however) and personal service uses whereas the "new" list (1994) is more restrictive in the types of retail uses. Residential and office uses are not allowed.

Considerations:

- Frontage standards should play a major role in the design and should help to dictate use.
- Broaden the list of retail uses and place size limitations to ensure that the use remains "neighborhood" in scale.....2,000-5,000sf for standard retail uses and larger for grocery based stores (10,000-50,000, 50k is the typical size of new Safeway).
- Allow residential and office as a secondary use – upper floors, and possibly away from streetfront.

R-H Zone: Residential High Density – this is currently a "floating zone" that has actually been used only once. It's the only zone with a minimum density (8du/acre). Considerations:

- Reconsider whether the district is needed at all – particularly given suggested changes for similar zones, including the R-O, R-M, and any of the mixed-use type zones.
- If we keep the zone – refine the locational requirements, perhaps it needs to be expanded beyond arterials and the CBD. Perhaps it might be acceptable in areas adjacent to the university, served by transit access, and/or adjacent to business districts.



R-M Zone: Residential Medium Density – this is currently a “floating zone” that has actually been used only once. It’s the only zone with a minimum density (8du/acre). Considerations:

- Eliminate 4 unit/structure multifamily limit – or provide special conditions for exceeding them (for example (let design standards/guidelines and other provisions influence design and housing type).
- Perhaps mini-warehouses are not the best use for this district? (currently conditional)
- Consider an option for small scale ground level retail/café if within a mixed-use building. Perhaps only on street corners. Perhaps add other performance standards to minimize impacts. Suggest as a permitted, not conditional use, if added.

3. Density & Dimensional Standards – Preliminary Discussion/Questions

The chart below identifies current setbacks and density/height provisions along with preliminary suggestions for each of the commercial/mixed-use districts.

Zone	Setbacks	Density	Height
T-C current standards	15’ front, 0-15 side; 10’ rear	NA	No limit – though setbacks increase for +35’ buildings
T-C suggested	Little or no change <i>Refer to frontage standards</i> <i>Add design guidelines addressing side yard treatment</i>	No change	Consider flat 35’ height, but allow greater flex for 3-story hotels
C-H current standards	15’ front, 0 side; 10’ rear	NA	2-stories or 35’ except for regional retail provision.
C-H suggested	Little or no change <i>Refer to frontage standards</i> <i>Add design guidelines addressing side yard treatment</i>	No change	No changes suggested
C-C current standards	No setbacks	NA	No limit
C-C suggested	No change <i>Refer to frontage standards</i> <i>Add design guidelines addressing side yard treatment</i>	No change	Consider site specific limits – that support historic preservation in key areas and urban infill others – see page 5 for map, suggestions.



Zone	Setbacks	Density	Height
C-C-2 current standards	No setbacks	NA	No limit
C-C -2 suggested	No change <i>Refer to frontage standards</i> <i>Add guidelines addressing side yard treatment</i>	No change	Consider some limits here – either site specific overlays or blanket limit somewhere between 3-6 stories.
I-L current standards	No setbacks	NA	No limit
I-L suggested	Consider frontage standards unique to I-L district – with 0-10' front setbacks based on design, transparency?	No change	Suggest a 2 story/35' limit, if office is going to be allowed. Perhaps taller office buildings are more appropriate in CC zones?
R-O current standards	15' front, 5-10' side; 10' rear	Max 12 units/acre, 7,000sf lot size min.	35' max
R-O suggested	Seems about right. <i>Refer to frontage standards</i> <i>Add design guidelines addressing side yard treatment</i>	Suggest eliminating density limit in favor of form-based approach –letting uses, height limit, design standards, and parking dictate density; If some limits are needed, they should be at least 30 du/acre.	No change, though maybe consider flexibility for pitched roofs of 3-story buildings up to 40'.
C-N current standards	15' front, 0-10' side; 0-5' rear	5,000sf min. lot size; 50% max open space	35'
C-N suggested	Need flexibility to allow for storefronts. <i>Refer to frontage standards</i> <i>Add design guidelines addressing side yard treatment</i>	Eliminate density limit and lot coverage in favor of form-based approach	No change, though maybe consider flexibility for pitched roofs of 3-story buildings up to 40'.



Zone	Setbacks	Density	Height
R-H current standards	15' front, 5-10' side; 10' rear	Min 8 units/acre; Max 18 units/acre, 10,000sf lot size min.	40' max
R-H suggested Remove zone specific parking requirements (now 2.5 spaces/du+ 0.5 for each bedroom over one) and go with new citywide MF parking requirements	Seems about right. <i>Refer to frontage standards</i> <i>Add design guidelines addressing side yard treatment</i>	Options: 1. Allow greater density (perhaps unlimited) if development meets higher energy efficiency standards. 2. Eliminate density limit. Perhaps require higher energy efficient construction in all development? In both options, utilize a form-based approach – where height limit, design standards, and parking dictate density.	No change, though maybe consider flexibility for pitched roofs of 4-story buildings up to 45' and/or provisions for energy efficient construction.
R-M current standards	15' front, 5-10' side; 10' rear	Max 12 units/acre, 7,000sf lot size min. with variable limits for multifamily structures	35' max
R-M suggested	Seems about right. <i>Refer to frontage standards</i> <i>Add design guidelines addressing side yard treatment</i>	Suggest eliminating density limit in favor of form-based approach –letting uses, height limit, design standards, and parking dictate density; Alternatively – allow greater density if development meets higher energy efficiency standards.	No change, though maybe consider flexibility for pitched roofs of 3-story buildings up to 40' and for solar/wind or other rooftop energy efficient elements.

Site Specific Height Limits in the CC Zone?

Most historic buildings in the historic district are 2 stories. There currently is no height limit at all. Perhaps some limits are warranted to encourage both the preservation of the historic buildings and the character of the district are warranted. Consider about a 3-story limit in the area covering the current historic district boundaries (blue line below) or perhaps a more concentrated area within the district (magenta line) which allows more flexibility around the fringe. For areas outside of this “core historic area”, consider 5-6 story height limits, which allow considerable infill development, but wouldn’t be too out of character/scale for downtown. Perhaps east of Ruby, we might suggest stepping down the heights towards 4-stories as you transition towards the residential neighborhoods???



Height limit considerations for the CC District. For the area outlined in purple, height limits in the range of 5-6 stories seem reasonable. See photo images on following page for examples.

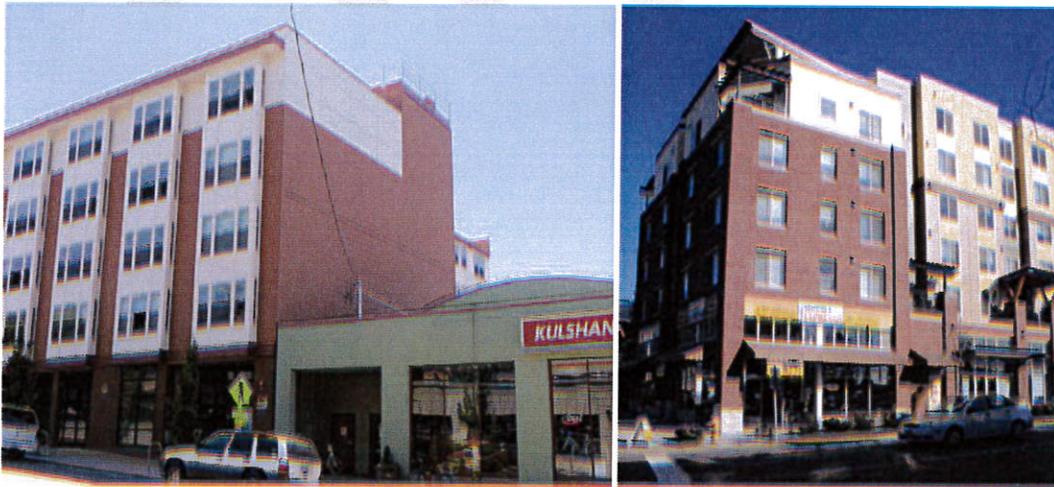
Building Height Examples



Typical historic building (left) and newer 3-story office building south of downtown.



Newer 4-story building on campus (left) and illustration of a 4-6-story mixed-use project (right) in a similar downtown setting (proposed elsewhere).



Newer 5-story mixed-use building in downtown Bellingham (left) and a 5-6-story mixed-use building in Seattle.



4. Parking Standards – Issues, Research & Considerations

Issues

- Current standards are in Section 6 of the Public Works Development Standards – though there is a section in Title 13 that references them. Suggest keeping the technical aisle and space design standards in the Public Works’ standards, but moving the other parking standards into the land use code – like nearly all other cities.
- Refine minimum parking space requirements per Comprehensive Plan goals/policies and energy efficiency/conservation strategy.
- Per staff, there are some interpretation issues associated with changes in use that need to be examined.
- Review compact space requirements.
- Review bike rack requirements.

Research, Comments & Considerations

The chart below compares Ellensburg’s minimum parking requirements with those of other similar communities for notable uses. The columns indicate the minimum number of spaces required per dwelling unit, square feet or other specific unit of measurement. Based on the research findings and team experience, we’ve provided some comments and considerations for Ellensburg’s code update in the right column.

Use Type	EB-existing	Redmond	Bellingham	San Luis Obispo, CA ₁	Olympia	Comments & Considerations
Residential Uses (“u” refers to dwelling unit; MF refers to multifamily)						
Single family	2/u ₂		2/u ₂	Same as MF	2/u	
Studio	1.5/u	1.2/u	1/u	1/u	1/u	Suggest reducing to 1/du
1B MF	1.5/u	1.5/u	1.5/u	1.5/u	1.5/u	
2B MF	3/u	1.8/u	1.5/u	2/u	1.5/u	Consider projected demand/users for large apt’s. There’s certainly room for parking reductions here
3B MF	4.5/u	2/u	2/u ₄	2.5/u	1.5/u	
Senior Housing	1/u	.5-2 ₃	.5 plus ₃	.5		Like Redmond and Bham, consider discretionary option to reduce to .5 based on characteristics
MF visitor parking	-			1/ 5-units		
Boarding/Dorm/Frat	-	-	1/ 2-bdr	1/ 1.5 occ	1/ 3-beds+ 1/ 5-residents	No current provisions – has this been an issue?
Tandem Parking	No, except SF			Yes	Yes	Consider allowing for MF uses
Notes 1. San Luis Obispo is a small university city in Central California. 2. For houses in Ellensburg with 4+ bedrooms, 1 additional space/bedroom, in Bellingham, the same requirement kicks in at 3 BDR. 3. Redmond and Bellingham allow Director discretion in the amount of parking needed for senior housing, based on project characteristics. 4. For MF units in Bellingham over 4 bdr, add one space/room						



Use Type	EB-existing	Redmond	Bellingham	San Luis Obispo, CA ₁	Olympia	Comments & Considerations
Commercial + Other Uses						
Hotel	1/room ₁	1/room	1/ 2-rooms	1/ room	1/ room	
Restaurant	1/200sf	9/1,000sf ₃	1/75sf dining space	1/60sf dining +1/100sf food prep	1/100sf	Most liberal of all examples; If it's working OK, don't change
Drive-ins	6 stack sp.				6 stack sp.	
Supermarket	1/200sf ₂	1/250sf	1/250sf	1/300sf <45k; 1/200sf max >45k	1/222sf to 1/286sf size based	Consider more flexibility here – particularly for smaller developments
Retail	1/200sf ₂	1/250sf	1/250sf	1/286sf	1/286sf	
Office	1/200sf ₂	1/250sf	1/350sf	1/286sf	1/286sf	
Places of assembly	.25/pp max occupancy	1/100sf; 1/5 seats	1/100sf	1/ 4-seats	1/ 4-seats	.25 roughly = to ¼-seats, consistent with others

Notes

- For hotels with conference facilities, add 0.5 space per max room occupancy
- 1/300sf for buildings 20,000sf+
- Reduced requirements for special districts plus Director ability to reduce requirements for restaurants in pedestrian oriented settings.

Use Type	EB-existing	Redmond	Bellingham	San Luis Obispo, CA ₁	Olympia	Comments & Considerations
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Other Notable Parking Provisions

Cooperative parking reductions?	None		Shared parking, no % reduction	Up to 30% reduction	Admin variances of up to 40%	Flexibility is needed here – MAKERS to work with Transpo on concepts
Special low income housing reductions?			-	1/ du		Good idea.
Auto trip reduction provisions?			-	Yes, no max % reduction		Good idea. MAKERS to work with Transpo on concepts
Compact parking				•	No more than 30%	

Other considerations/observations:

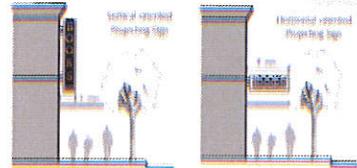
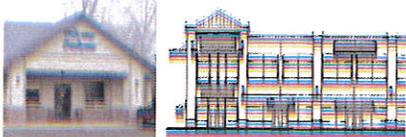
- MAKERS/Transpo to provide bicycle parking suggestions.
- Change in use provisions needs work. San Luis Obispo had the most extensive provisions out of the list here.
- In the CC District – parking is only required for residential uses outside the historic district. Consider extending the exemption to entire CC-District – and let market conditions dictate parking.

5. Signage – Preliminary Discussion/Questions

Issues:

- Move chapter out of Title 3 Building Code and into a unified land use code.
- Update confusing language – particularly for on-premise and off-premise signs.
- There also needs to be an appeal process for sign decisions.
- Remove specific fee \$.
- Basically no guidance provided on the design of signage desired by city.

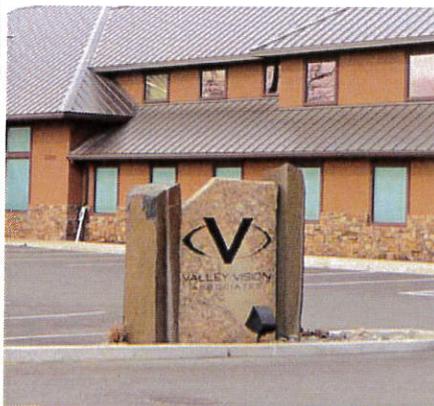
Current Codes and Considerations

	Current	Comments, Consideration
On-Premise Signs 3.12.240	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refers to any sign on the project site – including freestanding or sign attached to building. • Standards for max sign height and size are addressed here 	Suggest moving sign height and size standards to go with the particular type of sign that's proposed. Thus, perhaps this section isn't needed at all.
Off-Premise Signs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essentially refers to billboards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only allowed in T-C zone as conditional use • Max size 286sf, max height 35' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When was the last time an off-premise sign was permitted? • Problems/concerns? • Is there a desire/need to allow more?
Sign Illumination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backlit and neon signs allowed • No flashing, animation, or excess glare 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest prohibiting backlit signs (neon OK) in historic district (character, historic precedent) and consider limiting or prohibiting them in areas desired for compact pedestrian-oriented development.
Freestanding Signs  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes pole signs and monument signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One permitted per frontage up to 2 total. • Max size 286sf, max height 35' (off-premise) • Have to look in several different places to find applicable standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate freestanding sign provisions • Should tall pole signs be allowed everywhere? Perhaps only near freeway? • Consider emphasis on monument and/or building-mounted signs rather than pole signs away from freeway. • Provide tiered standards based on size of business.
Projecting Signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 25sf in CC zones • One sign/frontage • Project up to 6' into ROW • 14' min ground clearance • No projection above roof except C-T zone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide standards for vertical and horizontal oriented signs • Requiring only 8' ground clearance – allows for smaller pedestrian-oriented projecting signs
Wall Signs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific wall sign standards – see on-premise sign provisions • Max size 286sf, max height 35' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider tiered standards based on size of business; for example, 1.5sf sign area/lineal foot of façade, or max 10% of façade. • Don't let new wall signs cover windows • Encourage/require signs proportional to facade

	Current	Comments, Consideration
<p>Marquee/Awning Signs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific marquee/awning sign standards – see on-premise sign provisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider size/design provisions
<p>Under Canopy Signs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific under canopy sign standards – see on-premise, projecting sign provisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide for 8' min. clearance
<p>Window Signs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific window sign standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cities often restrict window signs to no more than 33% of the total window area; Chelan considered it, but then dropped standard as regulating it appeared to be more problematic than it was worth.
<p>A-Frame/Standing Signs</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 32sf max, no ped obstructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider standard – only allowed within a certain distance of entry, near storefront
<p>Design Review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All signs currently require landmark design review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggest eliminating requirement except for signs in the historic district and projects already utilizing process (for departures, for instance)

Local Sign Examples





Other Sign Examples

