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This Assistance Bulletin only applies to property within unincorporated Snohomish County and does not apply to property within incorporated city limits.

Urban Residential Design Standards

Assistance Bulletin

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Urban Residential Design Standards

Urban residential design standards (URDS) are a set of development regulations contained in chapter 30.23A SCC that govern the design of new urban residential development including single family detached dwellings, duplexes, townhouses, and multiple family structures. This bulletin provides an overview of the regulations that became effective April 21, 2009. The applicable code sections are noted next to each subheading below.

Applicability (SCC 30.23A.020)

All new urban residential development located in unincorporated urban growth areas must comply with chapter 30.23A SCC unless specifically exempted. Those exemptions include:

- Mobile homes and manufactured homes within mobile home parks;
- Construction of a detached single family dwelling or duplex structure on a lot created prior to April 21, 2009;
- Residential development or mixed use development subject to chapters 30.34A or 30.41G SCC;
- Any residential remodel of an existing detached single family dwelling or duplex;
- Any remodel of a townhouse, attached single family dwelling, or multiple family structure that has not been destroyed; or
- Any remodel of a townhouse, attached single family dwelling, or multiple family structure that has been destroyed where the restoration cost does not exceed 75 percent of the assessed value of record when the destruction occurred.

Compatibility Measures (SCC 30.23A.030)

To mitigate the impacts of higher density residential on lower density residential development, additional compatibility features may be required to be incorporated into a project. If required, a project may incorporate two of the following to improve compatibility:

- Increase setbacks;
- Limit height;
- Increase perimeter landscaping;
- Limit townhouses and multiple family buildings to a maximum of three dwellings per building;
- Increase building separation; or
- Provide a decorative wall or solid and landscaped fence between buildings and adjacent properties.

This bulletin is intended only as an information guide. The information may not be complete and is subject to change. For complete legal information, refer to Snohomish County Code.

Residential Design Standards (SCC 30.23A.040-.070)

Chapter 30.23A SCC includes site and architectural design standards for various types of residential dwellings, including detached and attached single family, duplexes, townhouses, and multiple family structures. The site and architectural design standards are intended to create quality residential developments; contribute to an attractive streetscape, and create more variety between individual dwellings. Applicants are encouraged to consult the Urban Residential Design Manual for additional guidance on the site and architectural standards.

On-site Recreation Space (SCC 30.23A.080)

On-site recreation space is required for residential development that is subject to chapter 30.23A SCC. The table below shows the required amount of on-site recreation space.

On-site recreation space requirements

Number of dwelling units	Amount of on-site recreation open space required per each dwelling
Units 7 to 40	200 sq ft
Units 41 to 100	150 sq ft
Units Over 100	100 sq ft

The design of on-site recreation space shall be as follows:

- In a separate tract or tracts;
- 40% of the total required shall be located in a separate tract;
- 75% of the total required shall be located outside of critical areas;
- No tract shall contain less than 700 square feet;
- 50% or more shall be designed for active recreation (i.e. playgrounds, sports fields, or community club house); and
- Stormwater facilities may be counted as passive recreation.

Administrative Site Plan Review (SCC 30.23A.100)

An administrative site plan is required for all residential development subject to the requirements of chapter 30.23A SCC. At the discretion of an applicant, an administrative site plan may be submitted along with a permit application or deferred to building permit. The administrative site plan is a Type 1 decision unless consolidated permit review is requested by an applicant. In this case, the site plan shall be reviewed as a Type 2 decision. The administrative site plan shall expire when construction has not commenced within five years from the date an approved site plan becomes final. An applicant may request an extension of the site plan approval pursuant to the procedures established in SCC 30.70.140(2) and (3).