



## INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning and Community Development Committee

CC: Mayor Thomas McLeod

FROM: Nora Gierloff, AICP, DCD Director

BY: Isaac Gloor, Senior Planner, Neil Tabor, AICP, Senior Planner

DATE: May 12, 2025

SUBJECT: Middle Housing Code Amendments

### **ISSUE**

The proposed code amendments would align the City with upcoming requirements in state law and support broader housing efforts.

### **BACKGROUND**

In the 2023 and 2024 legislative sessions, several bills were passed regarding housing allowances and development, addressing middle housing and accessory dwelling units. The legislation required that jurisdictions adopt consistent local regulations within six months of the deadline for the periodic update of the comprehensive plan, or June 30, 2025.

To set the stage for adoption of the local regulations, Tukwila integrated policy language supporting overall housing goals for growth and variety of housing into the periodic update of the comprehensive plan. The City received two grants from the Department of Commerce to support the development of a middle housing code, which included significant public outreach, combined with comprehensive plan efforts and engagement with the Planning Commission.

HB 1110, often referred to as the “Middle Housing” bill, applies different requirements for allowed housing based on the population of the jurisdiction: Tier 1 cities are those with at least 75,000 population; Tier 2 cities are those with populations of at least 25,000, but less than 75,000; and Tier 3 cities have a population less than 25,000<sup>1</sup>. Tukwila, with an estimated population of 22,930, currently qualifies as a Tier 3 City ([OFM 2024](#)).

Table 1 provides the differences in the general middle housing allowance requirements identified by the state. Cities that do not adopt code amendments that are consistent with the legislation by June 30, 2025, will automatically be subject to the state’s model code for their respective tier.

In the interest of supporting broader housing goals, anticipating a population increase into Tier 2 in the next few years (based on recent growth and the pipeline of residential development projects), and the requirement to align development allowances with HB 1337, regarding

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<sup>1</sup> Tier 3 Cities must also have a contiguous Urban Growth Area with the largest city in a county having a population of more than 275,000.

accessory dwelling unit allowances, staff developed code amendments which would comply with Tier 2 requirements.

**Table 1: Basic requirements for cities subject to the middle housing bill in the 2024-2027 periodic update.**

	<b>CITY LIMITS: Number of middle housing units that must be allowed per lot within city limits</b>	<b>NEAR A MAJOR TRANSIT STOP: Number of middle housing units per lot that must be allowed within ¼ mile of transit</b>	<b>WITH AFFORDABLE HOUSING: Number of middle housing units that must be allowed within city limits if affordable units provided Sec. 3(2)(a)</b>
<b>TIER ONE: Cities with population of at least 75,000</b> HB 1110, Sec. 3(1)(b)	4 du/lot on all lots zoned predominantly residential, unless zoning permits higher densities	6 du/ lot within 1/4 mile walking distance of a major transit stop, unless zoning permits higher densities	6 du/lot if 2 are affordable, unless zoning permits higher densities
<b>TIER TWO: Cities with population between 25,000 and 75,000</b> HB 1110, Sec. 3(1)(a)	2 du/lot on all lots zoned predominantly residential, unless zoning permits higher densities	4 du/lot within 1/4 mile walking distance of a major transit stop, unless zoning permits higher densities	4 du/lot on all lots predominantly residential if one is affordable
<b>TIER THREE: Cities with population under 25,000 that are contiguous with the UGA of the largest city in a county with a population over 275,000</b> HB 1110, Sec. 3(1)(c)	2 du/lot on all lots zoned predominantly residential, unless zoning permits higher densities		

### **PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

A public hearing on code amendments L25-0030 (TMC Title 18 Rezone), L 25-0031 (Title 17), L25-0032 (Title 18) and L25-0033 (Title 9) was held at the April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Planning Commission meeting. During the hearing, testimony was heard from four individuals. The hearing occurred individually on each ordinance, however two individuals expressed support for the overall content of all the ordinances, with one commenter suggesting the need to amend the definition of “basement”. Two individuals had general concerns with the ordinances regarding parking, tree retention and potential change.

Commissioners entertained motions to forward the code amendments as provided in their packets to the City Council with a recommendation for approval.

A link to the Planning Commission packet materials on this topic is [provided here](#).

### **SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES**

#### Code Amendments

Updates to development regulations within the municipal code are reviewed by the Department of Commerce for consistency with state laws. While some aspects of the proposed ordinances are elective Tukwila proposals intended to streamline the code, encourage more readable code and achieve housing goals, many of the standards are at least in part based on state requirements. Below is a summary of the proposed code amendments as part of the Middle Housing ordinances.

### **Rezone**

The proposed language would rezone all land within the LDR and MDR zoning districts to Community Residential (CR). Consolidation of these two zones will streamline the middle housing adoption and eliminate unnecessary differentiation in zones.

### **Density & Housing Type Allowances**

The proposal would:

- Establish a minimum lot size for the CR zoning district of 5,000 square feet
- Count accessory dwelling units toward the total density allowance
- Allow three units per lot (outside of ¼ mile transit buffer), with additional unit allowance per 1,500 square feet lot of additional lot area, up to 5 units per lot
- Allow four units per lot (within ¼ mile transit buffer), with additional unit allowance per 1,500 square feet lot of additional lot area, up to 5 units per lot
- Allow 8 of 9 middle housing types; however, not allowing sixplexes

### **Parking**

The proposal would require:

Single-Family Housing

- 2 parking spaces per dwelling unit

Middle Housing

- 1 parking space per dwelling unit (outside of the ½ mile major transit stop buffer)
- No parking requirement within the ½ mile major transit stop buffer, per State law

Accessory Dwelling Units

- No parking required

Multifamily Housing

- 0.75 parking spaces per studio unit
- 1 parking space per 1 bedroom unit or larger

### **Setbacks & Building Massing**

The proposal would:

- Reduce the existing 20-foot LDR front setback to 15 feet in the CR zone, with additional encroachment allowances for porches and certain architectural features
- Reduce the existing 10-foot LDR rear setback to 5 feet in the CR zone
- Increase building height allowance to 35 feet
- Increase building lot coverage to 50%

### **Road & Frontage Standards**

The proposal would:

- Broaden allowances for use of more proportionately-sized roads
- Consolidate access points
- Require sidewalks and curbs for more types of development

### **Design Review**

The proposal would:

- Update design standards to ensure they comply with “clear and objective” criteria requirements
- Create a design checklist to provide clear options for residential developers

### **Miscellaneous**

Miscellaneous proposed amendments include:

- Update code references to LDR and MDR zones and “single-family only” standards for consistency
- Update definitions to be consistent with and comply with state law

- Amending the applicability of tree regulations to apply current “single-family” tree standards to single-family and middle housing development
- Add graphics for clarity

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

No direct costs to the City are expected from this code amendment.

**REQUESTED ACTION**

No action is being requested at the May 12, 2025 PCD meeting.

At the June 9, 2025, PCD meeting, Council members will be asked to forward the ordinances to be considered at the June 9, 2025, COW meeting, and to adopt this proposal at the subsequent June 16, 2025, Regular meeting.

**ATTACHMENTS**

A. Presentation



# Middle Housing Ordinances

Planning & Community Development  
Committee

May 12, 2025



# Ordinances

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- L25-0032, Title 18 Amendments
- L25-0030, Community Residential Rezone
- L25-0031, Title 17 Amendments
- L25-0033, Title 9 Amendments



# Legislation Directing Updates

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- HB 1110, Middle Housing
- HB 1337, Accessory Dwelling Units
- HB 1293, Objective Design Standards
- SB 5058, Definition of Multifamily
- SB 5258, Condos, Proportionate Impact Fees and Unit Lot Subdivisions
- SB 6015, Parking Considerations



# L25-0032, Title 18 Amendments

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- Title 18
  - Housing allowances
  - Development standards
  - Parking
  - Design Review
  - Consistency
  - Nonconformance





# L25-0032, Title 18 Amendments

	<i>LDR (existing)</i>	<i>MDR (existing)</i>	<b>Community Residential (replacing LDR &amp; MDR)</b>
<b>Detached house</b>	P	P	P
<b>Cottage (small-lot)</b>			P
<b>Stacked Flats</b>			P
<b>Duplex</b>		P	P
<b>Triplex</b>		P	P
<b>Fourplex</b>		P	P
<b>Fiveplex</b>			P
<b>Sixplex</b>			
<b>Townhouses</b>		(up to four)	P
<b>C ourtyard Apts.</b>		(up to four)	P

**Middle Housing Types**



# L25-0032, Title 18 Amendments

- Basic Development Standards

	Outside of 1/4 Mile of Major Transit Stop	Within 1/4 Mile of Major Transit Stop, or if at least 1 unit affordable at 60% AMI (Rental), or 80% (Ownership) for a period no less than 50 years
Lot area, minimum	5,000 sq. ft.	
Average lot width, minimum	40 feet	
Density	(3) units per parcel,	(4) units per parcel,
	plus 1 unit per 1,500 SF of parcel area over 5,000 SF, whichever is greater, up to 5 units	plus 1 unit per 1,500 SF of parcel area over 5,000 SF, whichever is greater, up to 5 units
	2 Units per lot can be designated as accessory residences, provided they meet ADU requirements (ADUs count toward maximum density)	2 Units per lot can be designated as accessory residences, provided they meet ADU requirements (ADUs count toward maximum density)
Building Footprint, maximum	50%	
Development Area Coverage, maximum	75%	
Setbacks		
Front	15 feet	
Front Porch	7 feet (if porch of at least 40 square feet, with no dimension less than 5 feet)	
Second Front	10 feet	
Side	5 feet	
Rear	5 feet	
Rear (Alley DADU)	0 feet	
Building Height	35 feet	



# L25-0032, Title 18 Amendments

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- Tree standards which currently only apply to single-family and vacant LDR parcels is proposed to be expanded to all CR properties
- These standards, codified in TMC 18.54, require tree replacements for most removals
- Staff is currently working through further updates of overall tree regulations



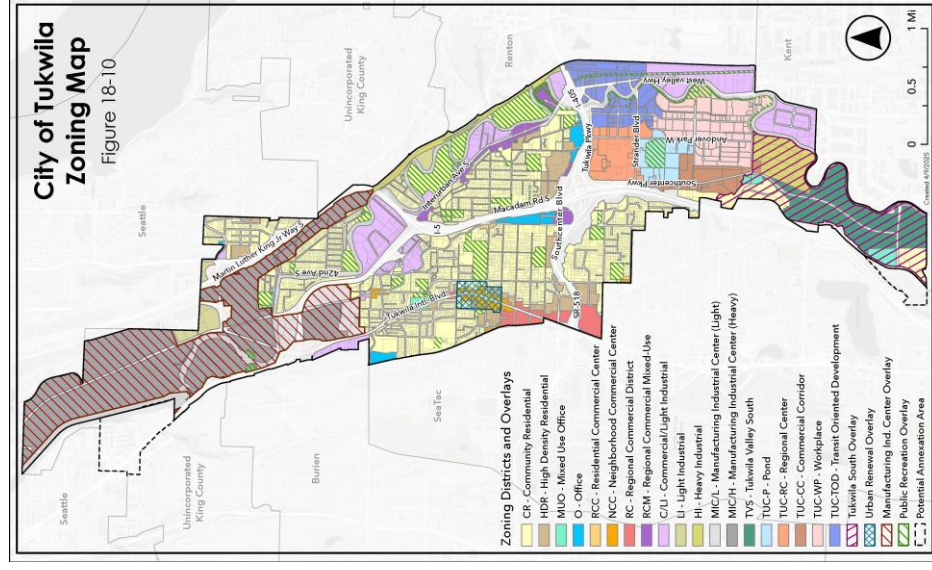
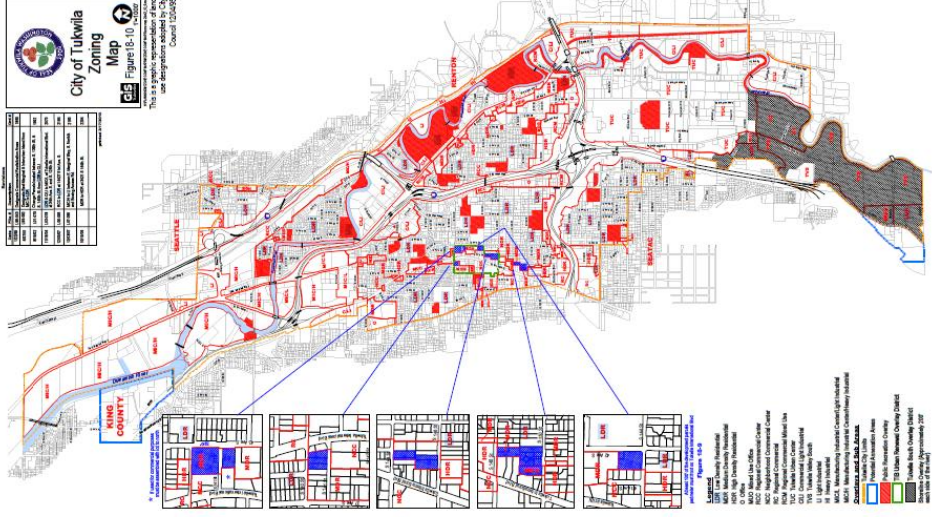
## L25-0030, Community Residential Rezone

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- The Community Residential Rezone amendment includes a consolidation of the Low Density Residential (LDR) and Medium Density Residential (MDR) zones to Community Residential (CR)



# L25-0030, Community Residential Rezone





# L25-0031, Title 17 Amendments

## Land Division Regulations

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- **Streets**

- Two new street types:
  - Neighborhood Yield Streets
    - Streets with parking, landscaping areas, and sidewalks
  - Living Streets
    - Shared streets with low vehicle volumes

- **Frontage Improvements**

- Require improvements (sidewalks, curbs) for more projects
  - Lowering applicability threshold for land division
  - Setting new applicability threshold for new development at projects exceeding a valuation of \$700,000.

- **Miscellaneous**

- Minor edits throughout for consistency with new zoning districts and terminology in Title 18.



# L25-0033, Title 9 Amendments

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- Title 9, Vehicles and Traffic largely oversees regulations regarding traffic and vehicle parking
- Though not administered by DCD staff, there is a singular section which includes references to the LDR and MDR zoning districts
- Full text of the proposed amendments can be in the packet