

TOWN CENTER PLAN & CODE AMENDMENT

# COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

JUNE 25, 2025



# AFFORDABLE HOUSING

## Proposed Affordable Housing Requirements and Incentives

Three affordable options are currently proposed in the draft Town Center code. These options will be further analyzed and presented to the Planning Commission and City Council for refinement and eventual selection.

Standards and Incentives	Affordability Requirements		
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Base Requirement: Rental Units	20% at 70% AMI or	20% at 80% AMI or	15% at 80% AMI or
	15% at 60% AMI or	15% at 70% AMI or	10% at 70% AMI or
	10% at 50% AMI	10% at 60% AMI	5% at 60% AMI
Base Requirement: Ownership Units	10% at 80% AMI or 15% at 100% AMI		
Multifamily Rental Incentive: 8-year MFTE	10% at 40% AMI	10% at 50% AMI	10% at 60% AMI
Multifamily Rental Incentive: 12-year MFTE	20% at 60% AMI	20% at 65% AMI	20% at 70% AMI

## Multi-Family Housing Property Tax Exemption (MFTE) Incentive Program

### How it Works

The MFTE program provides a property tax exemption in exchange for developing multifamily and affordable housing in designated areas, in this case, the Town Center. This includes new construction, conversion, and rehabilitation of multifamily housing with at least four units.

Participating landowners are exempt from property taxes on residential improvements for a given number of years. However, the owner still pays taxes on the land and on non-residential improvements, like the commercial portion of a mixed-use building.

Over 50 Washington jurisdictions, including Issaquah, Redmond, Kirkland, Snoqualmie, and others, currently participate in the MFTE program.

### Benefits

The MFTE program provides financial incentives to meet housing goals without direct funding, supporting affordable housing while incentivizing market-rate housing in a way that complies with state constitutional requirements. Because the MFTE incentive is used across many jurisdictions in Washington, developers tend to be familiar with the program's rules and applications.

Two types of MFTE exemptions are being considered as affordable housing incentives for Town Center:

- 1

**8-year MFTE program**  
There are no requirements for affordable housing, but some cities provide their own requirements. This project includes an affordability requirement.
- or
- 2

**12-year MFTE program**  
At least 20% of housing units must be set aside for low-income households (those with 80% of AMI or less) and moderate-income households (115% of AMI or less).

### Trade-Offs

MFTEs can result in temporarily reduced revenue for communities, reduced revenue for other taxing districts, tax shifting, and administrative costs (which can be offset through fees). These effects will be studied more, but an analysis by A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) showed that for Bellevue and Kirkland in 2024, the shift to a median-value home was \$8 and \$25, respectively.



Kirkland Boardwalk

Boardwalk, a mixed-use project in Kirkland, utilized the MFTE program in development.



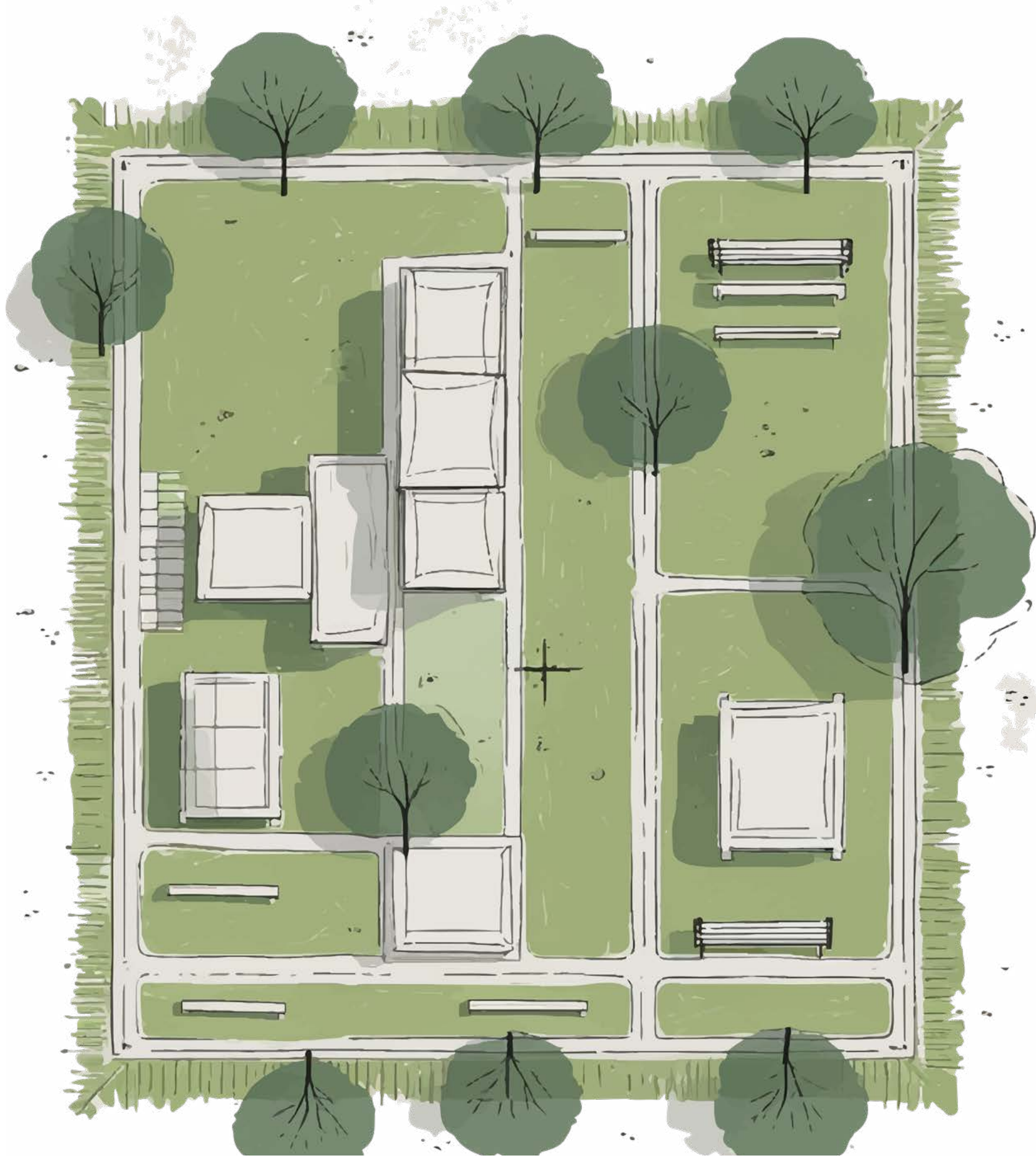
# SAMMAMISH ECO-FACTOR

## Designing with Nature

The new Sammamish Eco-Factor is Town Center's new design standards system for landscaping. It replaces scattered landscaping rules with a **single, points-based score** that emphasizes tree canopy protection, stormwater retention, and native plantings.

All new development projects must meet an Eco-Factor score threshold by combining green features including, but not limited to:

- Tree preservation
- Green roofs or walls
- Rain gardens and permeable paving
- Native landscaping and efficient irrigation



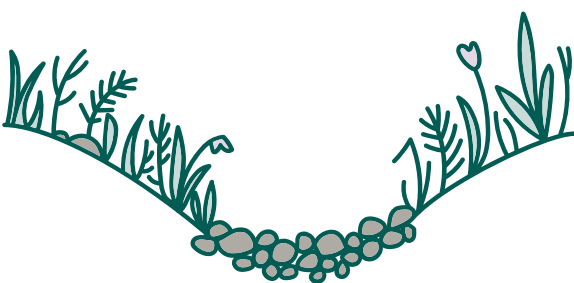
## Ecological Benefits



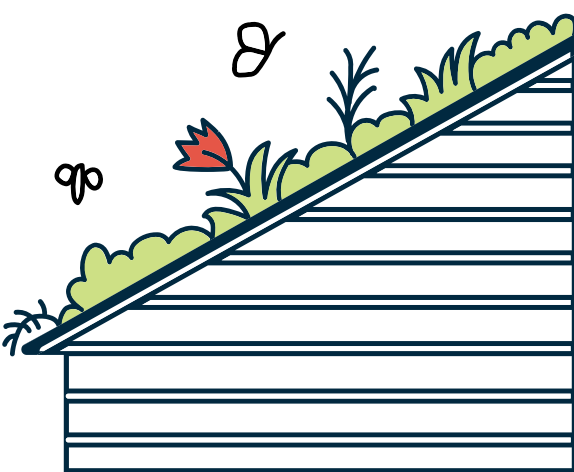
**Tree canopy protection** keeps Sammamish shaded and beautiful while contributing to carbon capture.



**Habitat preservation** helps local pollinators, birds, and other native wildlife.



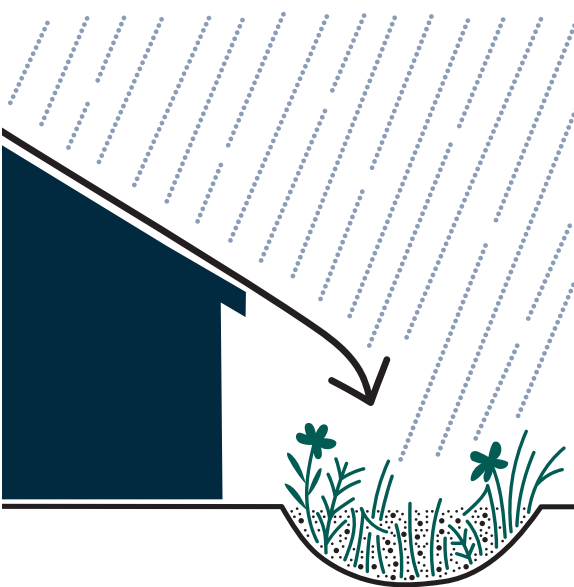
**Natural systems** mitigate long-term costs to the City by reducing strain on traditional infrastructure.



**Green roofs and shade trees** lower temps and contribute to the reduction of the urban heat island effect.



**Healthier public spaces** are enhanced by greener streets and accessible and safe trails.



**Stormwater capture** reduces runoff, flooding, and pollution.

## What Counts?

Project applicants must meet a **minimum score** to comply with Sammamish Eco-Factor requirements. A project's score is calculated by comparing the ratio of various landscape and ecological design elements to the square footage of the full site area.



**Multipliers** are assigned to qualifying elements, with larger numbers equating to more qualifying points. Some example design elements and their multipliers include:

Groundcovers and grasses	0.1
Medium-sized shrubs	0.3
Large Trees	0.9
Vegetated walls	0.4
Drought-tolerant or native planting	0.1
Other landscaping identified in the public outreach process	0.2

Additional details on the Sammamish Eco-Factor can be found in the draft Town Center Code Updates, under Section **SMC 21.07.070**.



# PUBLIC SERVICES & CAPACITY



Skyline High School, located just south of the Town Center boundary at SE 8th Street

## Schools

The City has several processes currently in place to ensure it's working closely with the school districts to coordinate and plan for growth, which will continue to be used for the Town Center. The City provides data to the school districts about housing units coming online within the City to help inform their long-range planning and Capital Improvement Projects.

Additionally, projects with five or more units are part of a school concurrency evaluation, where the City reviews materials submitted by the applicant and school district to determine if school concurrency has been met. The City sends a school concurrency form to the relevant school district for their review before the City approves projects, allowing them to update their plans to accommodate the new students. If school concurrency isn't established, The City may deny the project.

## Traffic Concurrency

Every permit application that generates additional vehicular trips is required to apply for a **Certificate of Concurrency**. When an application for Traffic Concurrency Review is submitted, the City uses the information to perform a concurrency test for the proposed development.

The concurrency test determines the proposed development's impact on the City's transportation facilities in accordance with the City's **adopted Level of Service standards** before issuing a Certificate of Concurrency.

If a project's impact **does not** cause the Level of Service to decline below the City's adopted levels, a concurrency certificate is issued and permitting is allowed to proceed.

If development **would** cause the Level of Service to decline below the City's adopted levels, a concurrency certificate is not issued and permitting is denied. A letter is issued to the applicant informing them of the test results and explaining available options as directed by the code.

These options include:

1. Amend the application to meet Level of Service standards within 90 days;
2. Appeal the denial; or
3. Propose and provide the public facilities needed to achieve adopted Level of Service

For additional information about the anticipated impacts of traffic in Town Center, see the **Transportation** board.

## Water & Sewer and Fire & Rescue Services

The City, Eastside Fire & Rescue, and the local water & sewer district (for Town Center, this is Sammamish Plateau Water) staff provide consultation to applicants during a Preapplication Conference, which typically occurs during the more advanced stages of the planning process before an application can be submitted. The conference allows the applicant to discuss the proposed project with technical experts and receive feedback to assist applicants in finalizing their development plans and preparing to submit their complete application.

Once submitted, the City requires the local water and sewer provider and Eastside Fire & Rescue to review and approve all land use and building permit applications for proposed developments. Additionally, both the Water & Sewer districts, Eastside Fire & Rescue, and the City review and provide feedback on one another's long-range planning documents, like Comprehensive and Strategic Plans.



Eastside Fire & Rescue provides fire and emergency medical services to Town Center.



# PERMITTING PROCESS

## Process Improvements

The current Unified Zone Development Plan (UZDP) process is proposed to be **replaced by Master Concept Plans** in the future. Master Concept Plan review aims to improve administrative efficiency for both staff and applicants, preserving the benefits of planning-at-scale while removing red tape for smaller projects, eliminating redundancy with Commercial Site Development Permits.

## Master Concept Plans

A Master Concept Plan (MCP) is a coordination tool for planning Town Center. It helps guide new development by providing:

- A **predictable network of streets**, sidewalks, and trails
- **Anticipated locations** of buildings, parks, and public spaces
- Early confirmation that **designs meet key standards**, helping applicants **avoid surprises** down the line
- **Reduced review burden** on City staff
- **Faster project timelines** thanks to simplified review and more transparent and consistent outcomes



## Environmental Protections

From the beginning of the permit application review process, the City engages in the identification and protection of **environmentally sensitive areas** such as wetlands, streams, and steep slopes and their associated buffers overlaying properties proposed for development.

Along with their permit application, applicants are required to submit supporting technical reports prepared by a qualified professional, including critical area reports and geotechnical reports. These supporting documents must detail how the proposed development will adequately protect these sensitive areas pursuant to the City’s strong **Environmentally Critical Areas regulations**. These areas

are then **protected in perpetuity** within separate property tracts or easements.

## Historic & Cultural Resources

Every application the City receives to demolish an existing structure is **shared with the King County Historic Preservation Program and Snoqualmie Tribe** for review. This is done to ensure the **proper protection of Historical Landmarks and Cultural Resources** is implemented prior to any action being taken on site by the applicant.



# TRANSPORTATION

## Anticipated Impacts

Transportation impact modeling used **future road alignments for Town Center** anticipated by the City's Transportation Master Plan (TMP), shown on the map to the right in blue. Analysis considered impacts on included **all critical intersections across Sammamish** identified in the TMP, due to the number of trips expected from Town Center. Impacts of growth were measured by the **expected seconds of delay at a given intersection**.

The map at right shows the differences in **PM peak hour delays** (in seconds) between the No Action and Action scenarios side by side.

### No Action

- Consistent with existing Town Center Plan, Code, and 2007 EIS
- 2,000 housing unit max (10% affordable at 80% AMI)
- Five high density nodes spread across Town Center
- Commercial capacity limits remain in place

### Action

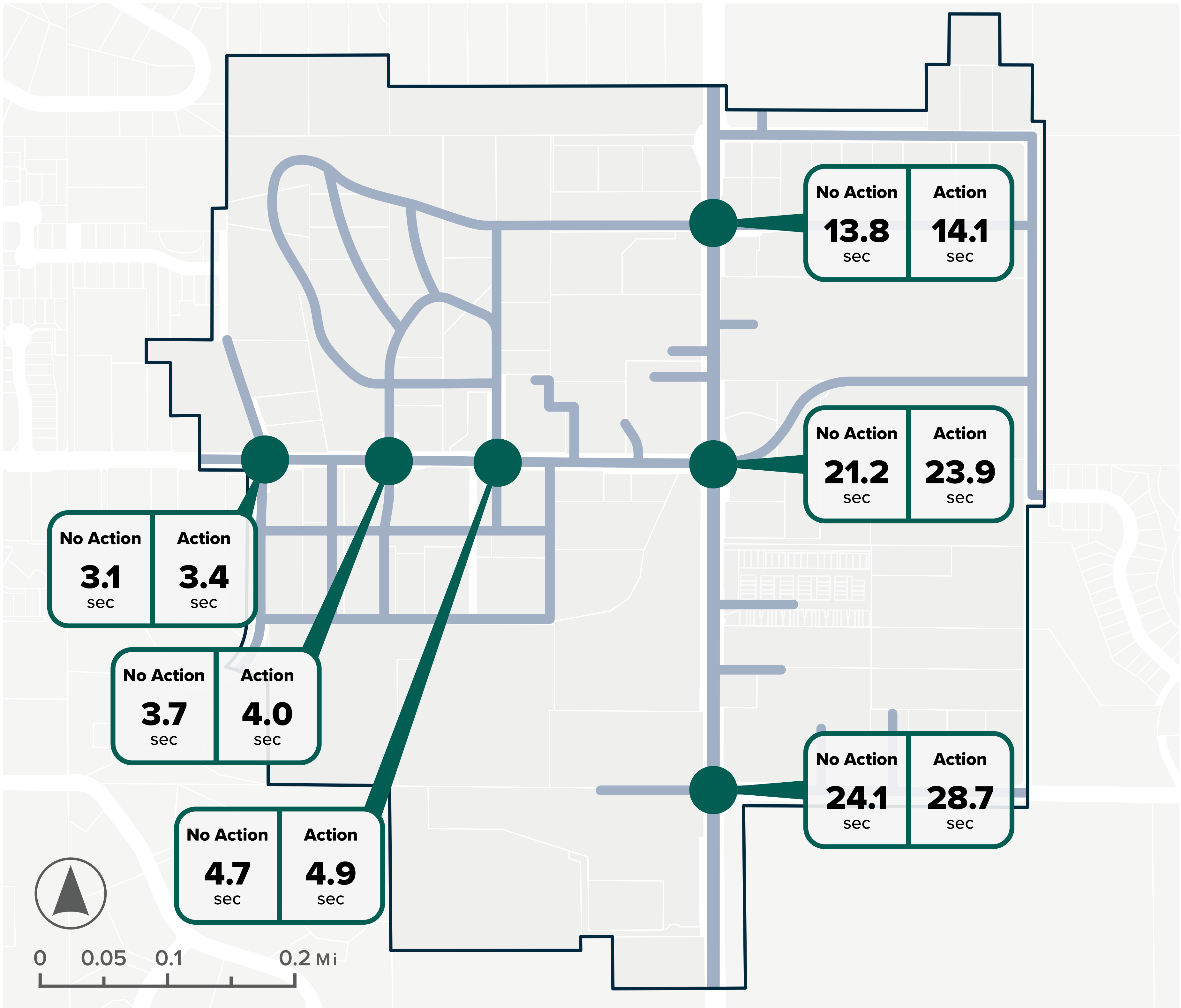
- Implements proposed changes to Town Center Plan and Code
- Studies up to 4,000 housing units, new affordability requirements
- One high density core
- Commercial capacity governed by form-based code

In both buildout scenarios, delays at intersections inside the Town Center boundaries were **all within the acceptable Level of Service (LOS) standards** adopted by the City.

One intersection, 212<sup>th</sup> Ave SE and SE 8<sup>th</sup> St (outside Town Center), failed to meet acceptable LOS under **both the No Action and Action scenarios**. Intersection improvements would mitigate delays at this intersection.

As the Town Center continues to develop over time, any projects that generate new vehicle trips must undergo a concurrency review to ensure it does not degrade the City's adopted LOS standards. For additional information about traffic concurrency requirements, see the **Public Services & Capacity** board.

PM Peak Hour Delays, No Action vs Action



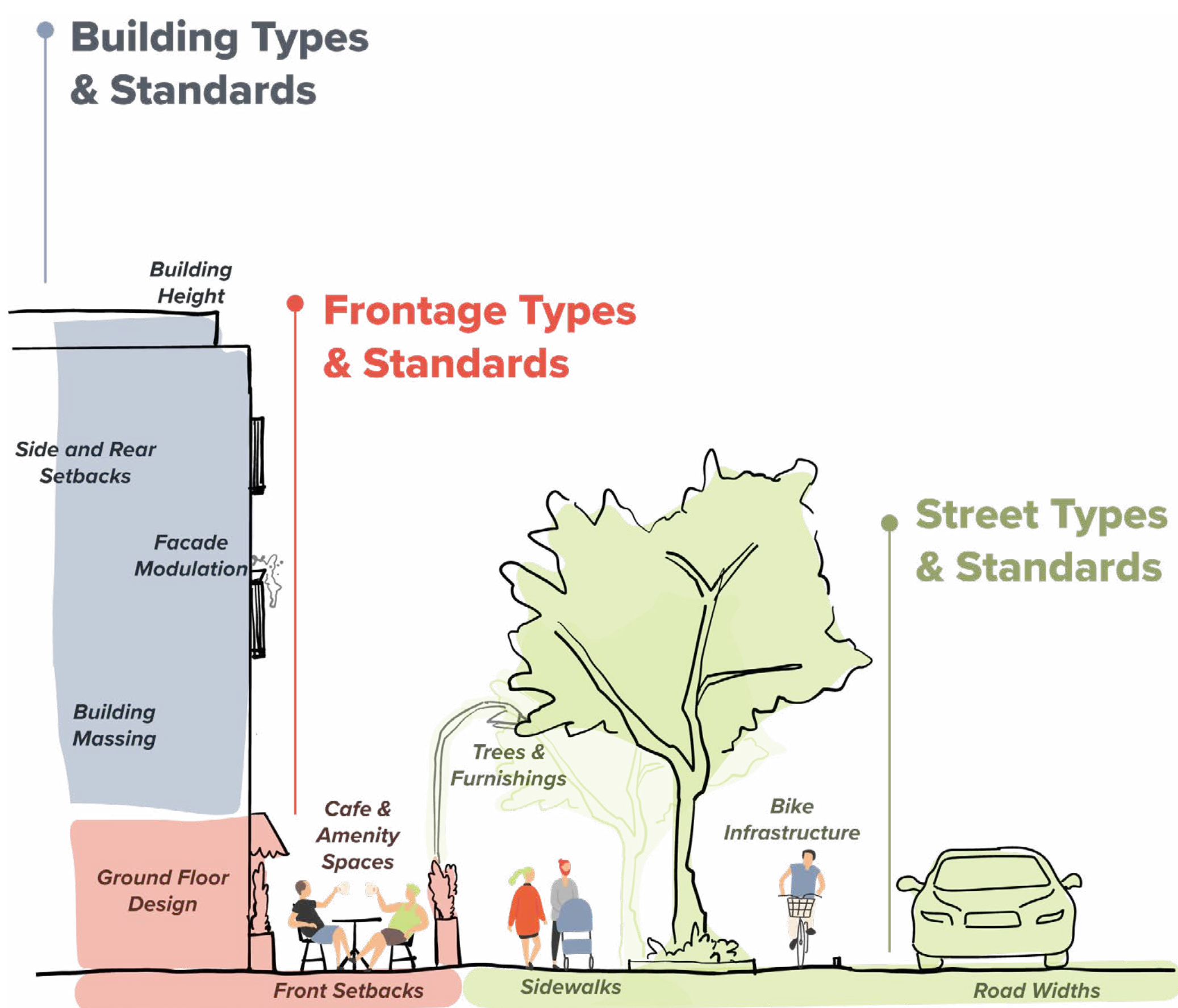


# FORM-BASED CODE

## Code Update Strategy

A **form-based code** addresses the physical form and design of buildings, public space, and the streetscape, and is more **experientially focused** than traditional use-based zoning. The shift to a form-based code is intended to **provide the predictability and flexibility** needed to catalyze the next phase of private development.

Below is an illustration of typical components regulated by a form-based code:



### Buildings

Building height, building massing, bulk, scale, access, community space, building design standards

### Frontages

Setbacks, parking location, street level uses, landscaping, tree planting, public space design

### Streets

Travel lanes, sidewalks, bike facilities, trees and landscaping, street furniture, parking, green infrastructure, lighting, public art

Urban Core		Urban Mixed	Garden Mixed
up to 85 feet (8 stories)		up to 50 feet (4-5 stories)	up to 40 feet (3-4 stories)
Potential Max Building Height w/ Bonuses		Max Building Height, no Bonuses	Max Building Height, no Bonuses

## Building Types in Town Center

The Urban Core district would allow the **greatest development intensity**. Like the current TC-A zones, it emphasizes **mixed-use development** and allows **buildings up to 70 feet high (about 6-7 stories)** by right. By taking advantage of incentive programs, buildings could reach up to **85 feet (about 8 stories)**.

The Urban Mixed district is **less intense**, allowing buildings up to **50 feet high (4-5 stories)** and accommodating both **mixed-use and residential-only buildings**, as well as limited commercial development. Like the Urban Core, projects could reach additional height through incentive programs, though the maximum height achievable is limited to **70 feet (about 6-7 stories)**.

The Garden Mixed district focuses on **residential buildings**, primarily **middle housing** including low-rise apartment buildings, multi-plex units, and attached townhouses.



(right) Development examples. Clockwise from top left, attached townhomes in Bryant Heights, multi-family middle housing in Shoreline, and mixed-use buildings in Woodinville.