DIRECTOR'S INTERPRETATION: MHO-1 COTTAGE HOUSING ALLOWANCE

City of Sammamish
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REQUEST SUMMARY

How will the City of Sammamish interpret and apply the MHO-1 cottage housing density allowance under SMC 21.04.030.Z when reviewing development applications within the MHO-1 overlay?

Specifically, what criteria will the City use to determine eligibility for additional density beyond the standard middle housing allowances and assess compliance with cottage housing standards? How will the City ensure that proposed development enhances the existing development pattern and neighborhood character of the R-1 zone while appropriately addressing design elements such as vegetation/landscaping, topography, drainage, access, internal circulation, parking, building orientation, and community spaces?

INTERPRETATION

SMC 21.04.030.Z applies to qualifying cottage housing in the MHO-1 overlay of the R-1 zone. This cottage housing allowance applies specifically to cottage housing development with units limited to 900 or 1,000 square feet of floor area in maximum unit size. This cottage housing allowance may allow more cottage units than the standard middle housing provisions in SMC 21.04.030.Y when specific design requirements are met. It is important to distinguish that there are two paths to development of cottage housing as middle housing in the R-1 MHO-1 overlay: 1) As traditional middle housing units under SMC 21.04.030.Y, or 2) Through the MHO-1 cottage housing allowance under SMC 21.04.030.Z. Each of these paths to cottage housing development has their own standards, methods of density limitations, and design requirements.

This Director's Code Interpretation clarifies application of SMC 21.04.030.Z and addresses how the design requirements of this section apply to site design.

The MHO-1 cottage housing allowance provisions found in SMC 21.04.030.Z do not set a separate maximum density in the MHO-1 overlay. The number of units allowed depends on what the site can accommodate after all design requirements are applied to the project's site plan. In addition to meeting applicable municipal code dimensional requirements and limitations, and along with demonstrating compliance with public works design standards, development proposals intending to use the MHO-1 cottage housing allowance must be designed to meet SMC 21.04.030.Z.

Related Code References

SMC 21.04.030.Y – *Site Planning Standards – Middle Housing Overlays.*

SMC 21.04.030.Z.1 – *Purpose*

SMC 21.04.030.Z.2 – *Intent*

SMC 21.04.030.Z.3 – *Application Requirements*

SMC 21.04.030.Z.4 – *Site Design Principals*

SMC 21.04.030.Z.5 – *Lot – MHO-1 Cottage Allowance.*

SMC 21.04.030.Z.6 – *Parking and Access – MHO-1 Cottage Allowance.*

SMC 21.04.030.Z.7 – *Amenity Space – MHO-1 Cottage Allowance.*

SMC 21.04.030.Z.8 – *Building Form – MHO-1 Cottage Allowance.*

Resources

Middle Housing Webpage

2044 Sammamish Comprehensive Plan

Following the stated purpose [Z(1)] and intent [Z(2)], the MHO-1 cottage housing allowance design standards found in SMC 21.04.030.Z cover the following categories which must be clearly reflected and prioritized in project design:

From SMC 21.04.030.Z [(#) denotes subsection]
(2) Sensitive Design. Projects proposing to utilize the MHO-1 cottage housing allowance must demonstrate a site design with units arranged in meaningful clusters to minimize impact to the site and to retain existing site features.
(2) Unit Clustering. Projects proposing to utilize the MHO-1 cottage housing allowance must demonstrate a site design with units arranged in meaningful clusters to promote a sense of community and walkability. To prioritize pedestrian movement and develop a sense of community parking must be consolidated and located outside of clusters and away from residences.
(2) Reforestation and Landscaping. Projects proposing to utilize the MHO-1 cottage housing allowance must demonstrate a site design that protects and reinstate existing forest ecosystems through clustering of cottage units and establishment of areas set aside for protection of existing forest ecosystems or if deforested establishment of reforestation areas through landscape design to create a lush forest environment.
(3) Tree retention and protection. Projects proposing to utilize the MHO-1 Cottage housing allowance must demonstrate a site design that includes clustering of cottage units to facilitate retention of meaningful tree clusters and tree protection plans designed to protect trees to be retained.
building size, clustering, setbacks, open space, parking, landscaping, and site design.
(4) Site Design Principles. Projects proposing to utilize the MHO-1 Cottage housing allowance must follow site design principles listed in this subsection. These site design requirements are formulated to shape a community focused sensitive layout of cottage clusters that prioritize pedestrian movement and create a welcoming connected living environment.
(5) Lot Design. Projects proposing to utilize the MHO-1 Cottage housing allowance must follow the lot design requirements in this subsection. This includes clustering requirements, hardscape coverage, and building placement. Clustering is required and must prioritize pedestrian movements through the cluster.
(6) Parking and Access. Projects proposing to utilize the MHO-1 Cottage housing allowance must follow the parking and access design requirements listed in this subsection. Parking, either open-surface parking or garage parking, must be consolidated into parking lots, located away from cottage living units, and connected to community clusters by pedestrian path. If parking is located in a garage the garage structure shall be detached and shall be located a minimum of 10 feet from the cottage structures.
(7) Amenity Space. Projects proposing to utilize the MHO-1 Cottage housing allowance must incorporate the amenity space requirements listed in this subsection. Amenity spaces must be pedestrian focused and shall not allow

Sammamish Municipal Code

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for vehicle access or double as circulation roads, driveways, or parking areas.
(8) Building Form. Projects proposing to utilize the MHO-1 Cottage housing allowance must follow the building form requirement listed in this subsection. This subsection sets standards for Type A and Type B cottages. Each unit must meet one type's requirements. A development may include both types. Type A cottages may be up to 1.5 stories and 26 feet tall. The Type A cottage maximum building footprint/floor area is 900 square feet. Upper-level habitable space may not exceed 80% of the lower-level gross floor area. Type B cottages may be up to two stories and 28 feet tall. The Type B cottage maximum total building footprint/floor area is 1,000 square feet. Upper-level habitable space may not exceed 100% of the lower-level floor area. For both types of cottages, primary roofs must have a minimum pitch of 6:12. Dormers must have a minimum pitch of 4:12. Cottage duplexes may include up to two attached units. Each unit must meet the applicable standards.

SUMMARY: Projects proposing to utilize the MHO-1 Cottage housing allowance must follow site design principles listed in SMC 21.04.030.Z. The site layout must meet clustering and building placement standards. Each cluster must include four to 12 cottages grouped together as a distinct grouping. At least 75% of all units must be in clusters. Buildings must be at least 10 feet apart. A development may include more than one cluster. Hardscape may cover no more than 40% of the parent parcel, including roads, driveways, paths, structures, patios, and other features meeting the definition of hardscape. Setbacks are 20 feet from the front lot line and 25 feet from each side lot line. The rear setback is either 20 or 30 feet, depending on alley access. Site design must account for and respond to existing features such as trees, vegetation, topography, and drainage and should minimize grading and the visual presence of vehicles. Site design should prioritize pedestrian movement, bicycle access, and trail connections.

Each unit must provide at least one off-street parking space, and parking must be clustered and located away from cottages; vehicle access must be provided from an open alley when available, with no street access permitted, otherwise a maximum of two curb cuts per street frontage is allowed, spaced at least 100 feet apart. A parking cluster may include up to four spaces. It may include five spaces if a five-foot landscaped buffer is provided between every three stalls. Parking areas, garages, walkways, and entrances must meet applicable setbacks. Walkways must connect parking and primary sidewalks to each cottage's main entrance.

Each development must provide at least 300 square feet of shared yard per unit and at least 3,000 square feet of shared yard overall and should be designed within a cluster. It must also provide 800 square feet of private yard per unit. Shared yards must be contiguous, should be incorporated into a cluster design, and accessible to all cottages. Each shared yards' minimum dimension must be at least 25 feet. When included in project design,

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community building must be included on the same project site and be commonly owned by residents and have kitchen and bathroom facilities. Its floor area may count toward the shared-yard requirement. The minimum required shared-yard area must still be provided.

In summary, the cottage housing allowance found in SMC 21.04.030.Z do not set a separate maximum density. The number of cottages depends on what the site can reasonably accommodate when the design requirements established under SMC 21.04.030.Z are properly applied. The development must meet all applicable requirements. These cover building size, clustering, setbacks, parking, access, open space, landscaping, vegetation preservation, drainage, stormwater, and other development standards.

David Pyle

David Pyle, Director of Community Development

CONTEXT, FACTS, AND FINDINGS

Cottage housing creates more housing options by grouping smaller, detached cottage style units in clusters around shared open space intended to promote pedestrian movement and a sense of community. The standards in SMC 21.04.030.Z allow this added housing while helping new development fit the residential character of the R-1 zone.

Qualifying cottage housing developments in the MHO-1 overlay may include more units than the standard middle housing allowances would otherwise permit. SMC 21.04.030.Z does not set a separate maximum density. Instead, the number of cottages depends on whether the proposal meets the applicable development standards which limit density through design.

Those standards cover design elements such as building layout and size, cottage clusters, setbacks, shared and private open space, detached parking, and landscaping. Together, they help keep the development at the scale and in the pattern intended for the area.

New development should fit the existing R-1 pattern. Building orientation, cottage clusters, detached consolidated parking, pedestrian connectivity, open space, and landscaping all play a role. The site design should also preserve significant trees and vegetation, limit grading and changes to the natural topography, and provide appropriate drainage and stormwater management.

The required tree retention plan and landscaping plans should explain how buildings and other site improvements will preserve meaningful groups of existing trees and vegetation and when necessary restore the lush forest

environment that Sammamish is known for. The development must also meet all applicable requirements for tree protection, critical areas, grading, stormwater, and other environmental matters.

In summary, SMC 21.04.030.Z allows qualifying cottage housing developments in the MHO-1 overlay to include more units than the standard middle housing allowances, without imposing a separate maximum density cap. The number of cottages will depend on whether the proposal meets the cottage housing standards and other applicable development regulations. The development must also fit the existing R-1 pattern and respond appropriately to vegetation, topography, and drainage.