

FINDINGS AND DETERMINATION OF THE CITY OF SHORELINE PLANNING COMMISSION

Summary - The cottage housing regulations have existed since year 2000 when the City developed its first Development Code. Since then seven projects totaling 55 cottage homes have been built. Cottage housing helps meet the City's needs for consistency with the State Growth Management targets, the Comprehensive Plan, and community stated preference for smaller and alternative housing choices. However, most cottage housing projects have been met with controversy in the surrounding neighborhood. This culminated in a moratorium in August 2004 in order to study the concept of cottage housing further. The moratorium has been extended twice by Council to February 19, 2006.

I. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Project Description

There have been three primary alternatives studied during the moratoria. These alternatives include: Do Nothing (i.e. allow cottage housing to develop to meet existing standards); Prohibit cottage housing in single family residential zones; and amend the Development Code regulations pertaining to cottage housing to address the issues raised by the community. The Planning Commission focused much of its attention on amending the Development Code standards pertaining to cottage housing. The amendments include the following:

(Note: Underlined text represents additions to the regulations; ~~Strikethrough~~ text represents deletions).

Recommended Section 20.40.300 Cottage Housing Amendments.

A. For the definition of cottage housing see SMC 20.20.014. The intent of cottage housing is to:

- Place the burden on the developer for the highest quality development rather than the minimum standards and for the City to deny proposals that do not meet this intent;
- Support the growth management goal of more efficient use of urban residential land;
- Support development of diverse housing in accordance with Framework Goal 3 of the Shoreline Comprehensive Plan;
- Increase the variety of housing types available for smaller households;
- Provide opportunities for small, detached dwelling units within an existing neighborhood;
- Provide opportunities for creative, diverse, and high quality infill development;
- Provide development compatible with existing neighborhoods with less overall bulk and scale than standard sized single-family detached dwellings; and
- Encourage the creation of usable open space for residents through flexibility density and design.

1. No more than 8 cottage housing units shall be located within 1,000 feet from any single point in the City. A proposed cottage development application shall meet this requirement from the property of a previously vested application, issued permit, or built cottage development under the SMC.

2. The total floor area of each cottage unit shall not exceed 1,000 square feet. Total floor area is the area included within the surrounding exterior walls, but excluding any space where the floor to ceiling height is less than six feet. The ~~maximum~~ minimum main floor area for an individual cottage housing unit shall be 700 square feet ~~as follows~~:

~~For at least 50 percent of the units in a cluster, total floor area shall not exceed 650 square feet;~~

~~For no more than 50 percent of the units in a cluster, the floor area may be up to 800 square feet.~~

3. Up to 1.75 ~~The following number of~~ cottage housing units ~~may~~ be allowed in place of each single-family home allowed by the base density of the zone.

~~If all units do not exceed 650 square feet on main floor: 2.00~~

~~If any unit is between 651 and 800 square feet on main floor: 1.75~~

4. Cottage housing developments shall have ~~units shall be developed in clusters of~~ a minimum of four units and a maximum of 8 units not including community buildings.

5. The height limit for all cottages ~~structures~~ shall not exceed 18 feet. Cottages ~~or amenity buildings~~ having pitched roofs with a minimum slope of six and 12 may extend up to 25 feet at the ridge of the roof. All parts of the roof above 18 feet shall be pitched. Parking structures and community buildings shall not exceed 18 feet.

6. ~~Each Cottage unit~~ shall be oriented around a common open space using covered porches and entries. Cottages fronting on streets shall have an additional entry facing those streets. The common open space shall be at least 250 square feet per cottage ~~housing unit and~~ landscaped primarily with ground cover. Open space with a dimension of less than 20 feet shall not be included in the calculated common open space. Cottages and community building shall be separated at least 40 feet when separated by required open space.

7. ~~Each Cottage housing unit shall be provided with a minimum~~ private open space of 250 square feet. Private open space that is less than 10 feet wide shall not be included in the 250 sq. ft. area calculation. ~~Private open space~~ should be contiguous to each cottage, directly accessed from the porch or private walk, for the exclusive use of the cottage resident, and oriented toward the common open space. Fencing or hedges bordering private open space shall not exceed 2 feet in height.

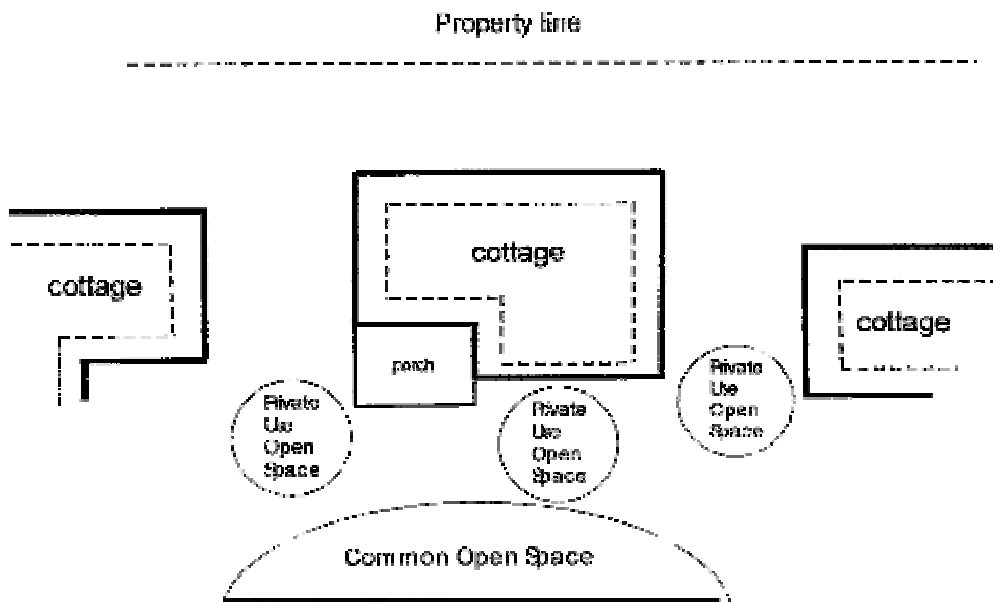


Figure 20.40.300(G): Private use open space should be contiguous to each cottage, for the exclusive use of the cottage resident, and oriented towards the common open space.

8. Cottage housing units shall have a covered porch or entry at least 60 square feet in size with a minimum dimension of six feet on any side.
9. All structures shall maintain no less than 10 feet of separation within the cluster. Projections may extend into the required separation as follows:
- Eaves may extend up to 12 inches;
 - Gutters may extend up to four inches;
 - Fixtures not exceeding three square feet in area (e.g., overflow pipes for sprinkler and hot water tanks, gas and electric meters, alarm systems, and air duct termination; i.e., dryer, bathroom, and kitchens); or
 - On-site drainage systems.

10. Parking for each cottage housing unit shall be provided as follows:

- Two parking stalls for each cottage housing unit and 1 guest stall for every 2 units shall be provided. Tandem parking is allowed. Units that do not exceed 650 square feet on main floor: 1.5. Units that exceed 650 square feet on the main floor: 2.0
- Clustered and separated from the private and common area and cottages by landscaping and architectural screen under 4 feet in height with trellis above 6 feet in height.
- Screened from public streets and adjacent residential uses by landscaping and/or architectural screen. ~~No solid board fencing allowed as architectural screen.~~
- Set back a minimum of ~~40 feet from a public street, except for an area which is a maximum of (1) 50 feet wide; or (2) 50 percent of the lot width along the public street frontage, whichever is less, where parking shall have a minimum setback of 15 feet from a public street.~~
- Located in clusters of not more than five abutting spaces.
- A minimum of 50% of the parking space shall be enclosed.

11. Setbacks for all structures from the abutting property lines shall be an average of 10 feet, but not less than five feet, except 15 feet from a public ~~street~~ Right-of-Way or public sidewalk, whichever is greater.

12. ~~All fences on the interior of a lot shall be no more than 3 feet in height.~~ Architectural screens along the property line may be up to six feet in height subject to the sight clearance provisions of SMC 20.70.170, 20.70.180 and 20.70.190(C). No chain link or solid board fences are allowed.

2. Procedural History

- 2.1** 1998 - City adopts the Comprehensive Plan with Policy LU27 allowing cottage housing in R-6 zones of the City.
- 2.2** 1999 - City forms the Shoreline Planning Academy to receive citizen guidance for the City's first Development Code.
- 2.3** 2000 - City adopts the Development Code with provisions for cottage housing (SMC 20.40.300).
- 2.4** 2003 - City adopts refinements to the cottage housing regulations.
- 2.5** August 2004 - City adopted a six month moratorium on cottage housing.
- 2.6** February 22, 2005 - City Council amended the moratorium ordinance to be extended another 6 months until August 19, 2005.
- 2.7** March 5 and 12, 2005 - City conducts a bus tour of Shoreline's cottage housing.
- 2.8** April 2005 – Council readopts cottage housing Policy LU27 with minor modifications.
- 2.9** May 11, 2005 - Staff holds a community meeting to discuss and make recommendations on cottage housing.
- 2.10** May 26, 2005 – SEPA Determination of Non-Significance issued for proposed amendments.
- 2.11** June 2 and 16, 2005 - Planning Commission holds public hearing and deliberations.
- 2.12** July 18, 2005 – City Council adopts latest moratorium
- 2.13** August 22, 2005 - City Council adds joint City Council and Planning Commission forum to cottage housing public process.
- 2.14** September 1 and 15, 2005 – Planning Commission continues deliberation and directs staff to draft recommendations.

3. Public Comment

A great deal of public comment has been received for this project. The City has received many public comment letters over the past year primarily opposed to cottage housing. The comments seem to be divided between those who want to repeal the provisions because cottages are an inappropriate density increase in traditional single family neighborhoods and those who believe many of the projects are poorly designed. There is a contingent of citizens who support cottage housing either because they live in a cottage, they believe the city needs more alternative housing, or they believe that the regulations need improvement to produce more projects like the Greenwood Cottages. There has not been a city-wide survey of citizen opinions.

4. SEPA Determination

The City issued a SEPA determination of non-significance May 26, 2005 for the proposed amendments.

5. Consistency

Shoreline Development Code 20.30.350 Criteria for Amendment to the Development Code

A. The amendment is in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan.

Comprehensive Plan - In 1998 Shoreline adopted its Comprehensive Plan. In the plan there are policies that support cottage housing as well as alternative housing choices.

- Housing Element Goal HI: Provide sufficient development capacity to accommodate the 20 year growth forecast in appropriate mix of housing types by promoting the creative and innovative use of land designated for residential and commercial use.
- Policy H1: Encourage a variety of residential design alternatives that increase housing opportunities in a manner that is compatible with the character of existing residential and commercial development throughout the city.
- Goal LU III: To have adequate residential land and encourage a variety of quality residential buildings and infrastructure suitable for the needs of Shoreline's present and future residents.
- Policy LU27: Allow cottage housing in residential areas if they go through design review and adhere to the following characteristics:
 - Common open space
 - Reduced parking areas
 - Detached homes
 - Common amenities (e.g. garden plots, play areas, storage buildings, orchard)
- Policy LU27 was recently re-adopted with by the Council in the 2005 Comprehensive Plan update. In the adoption the Council removed language that allowed cottage housing specifically in "R6 zones and up".

B. The amendment will not adversely affect the public health, safety or general welfare.

The recommended code amendments will not adversely affect the public health, safety or general welfare because they will have the same or similar impacts of conventional single family housing and the amendments will be more restrictive and further limit the growth potential over the current cottage housing provisions of the development code.

C. The amendment is not contrary to the best interest of the citizens and property owners of the City of Shoreline.

The recommended code amendments are not contrary to the interest of the citizens and property owners of the City because they will help meet the state GMA targets, provide alternative housing for a changing housing market, and not reduce or slow the growth of surrounding, assessed property values.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The Planning Commission concluded that these amendments met the criteria for amending the Development Code. They believed that their recommendations needed more deliberation in regard to the City's housing strategy and other alternatives to meet the State GMA targets, however, the recommendations were also needed to begin discussion with the City Council in the upcoming cottage housing forum in October.