2008 Annual Amendment Application No. 2008-11
Residential Code Amendments

DISCUSSION OUTLINE

Townhouses in Multi-Family Zoning Districts

Issue: Currently the architectural townhouse style is permitted in Tacoma's multi-family zoning districts, but only as condominiums and not under individual, or fee simple ownership. By permitting fee-simple townhouse development within the R-3, R-4L and R-4 zones of the city, townhomes can be a more feasible development style and can provide additional development opportunities in areas designated for increased density while achieving some of the desirable elements of traditional single family homes.

Conceptual Proposal:

LOT AREA

- Average townhouse lot size based generally on the underlying density allowance created by the current minimum lot size requirement for other types of multi-family housing (see chart below).

Lot Size Requirements By Unit Design - Proposed

	Single-Family Detached	Townhouses (proposed)	Duplex	Triplex	Multi-Family
R-1	7500	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
R-2	5000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
R-2SRD	5000	3000	6000	9000	n/a
HMR-SRD	5000	3000	6000	9000	n/a
R-3	5000	3000	6000	9000	n/a
R-4L	5000	1500	6000	6000	6000 (1500/unit)
R-4	5000	1000	6000	6000	6000
R-5	5000	n/a	6000	6000	6000

LOT WIDTH:

- Minimum average lot width of 16 feet.
- This could vary by zone, with a larger average width requirement in R-2SRD and R-3 zones.

FRONT SETBACKS:

- Maintain existing front setback requirements (generally either 15 or 20 feet)
- This would apply along the street frontage of the development and not to yards that are internal to the development.

REAR SETBACKS:

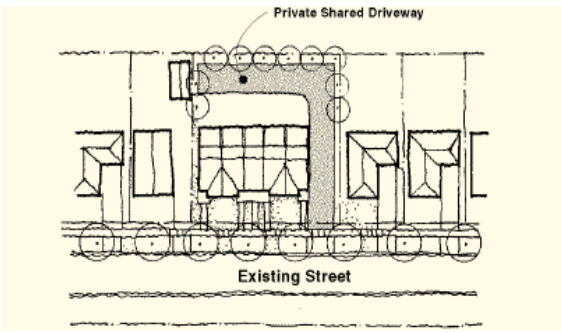
- Maintain the existing rear yard setback requirements (generally either 20 or 25 feet)
- Again, this would apply along the rear property line of the development and not to yards that are internal to the development.

SIDE SETBACKS:

- Have no setback requirement between townhouse units
- Maintain existing side yard setback requirement along exterior sides of development

NUMBER OF UNITS PER BUILDING:

- Maximum 6 units in a single-connected structure, with minimum 10-foot spacing between clusters



L-shaped driveway access

PARKING:

- Minimum one space per unit
- Place language in the code that alley must be used for parking access if available.
- Garages shall not face any street.
- Limit driveway approaches (number and width) in circumstances where street-front access is necessary

DESIGN:

- Require articulation of individual units, through features such as roofline or wall modulation
- Require a minimum of 15 percent of facades facing streets contain transparent windows and/or doors

PEDESTRIAN ORIENTATION:

- Units fronting on a street must have individual ground-related entries
- A continuous pedestrian walkway must be provided between the front entrance of each unit and the nearest public sidewalk.

UTILITIES:

- Utility apparatus and service areas shall be located along the alley, where available, and shall be located and/or designed to minimize their visibility from the street.

Historic Building Re-use Conditional Use Permits

Issue:

There are many non-residential buildings that are located within residential areas, and often within single-family residential areas. These include some commercial structures, such as old neighborhood grocery stores, and many institutional structures, such as churches, fire stations and utility buildings. Some of these structures are historically significant and an important part of the existing and desired character of the neighborhood. Over time, these historic structures often become no longer appropriate for or needed by the original user. In these circumstances, the current regulatory code restricts their reuse to either uses allowed in the underlying zoning classification (often single-family detached housing) or to uses that could be allowed through a conditional use permit (such as a day care center, church, school, etc.). These structures are often too large or expensive to be converted to single-family structures and the types of conditional uses allowed are often no longer feasible or needed.

923 North 13th Street
Historic Engine House No. 3 converted into multi-family

Reclassification requests and/or intensity change requests for such sites have been previously received (such as the intensity change associated with the Rogers Elementary School site reviewed by the Commission last year). The processes have continuously revealed that higher intensities or zoning for these individual sites within residential areas would create awkward "spot-zoning" concerns and expanding such requests to encompass surrounding areas are often not favorable. However, these processes have also highlighted the common desire to allow for some flexibility in the reuse of such historic structures to promote their preservation, maintenance and continued service.

The intent of this proposal is to allow a limited but expanded list of uses that could be permitted within historic structures located in residentially-zoned areas. This provision would be limited to designated historic structures and all projects would require the approval of the Landmarks Preservation Commission. In addition, the proposal would utilize the conditional use permit process to ensure that such proposal receive appropriate public review and can be conditioned as necessary to address any site- or neighborhood-specific impacts and concerns.

Conceptual Proposal:

LIST OF USES THAT WOULD BE ALLOWED:

- Art/craft production
- Assembly facilities (community and union halls, social clubs, youth centers, etc.)
- Continuing care retirement community

- Cultural institutions (libraries, museums and art galleries)
- Extended care facility (nursing home)
- Group housing (convents, monasteries, etc.)
- Intermediate care facility (assisted living)
- Lodging house (bed and breakfasts)
- Multi-family dwellings
- Offices offering professional dental, medical, legal or design services
- Offices for charitable, philanthropic or community service organizations where it can be shown that there is limited contact with the general public
- Personal services (barber and beauty shops, dry cleaners, self-service laundry, arts and crafts instruction, etc.)
- Retirement home
- Retail, only as an incidental use to one or more of the above uses

SPECIFIC HISTORIC REUSE CUP DECISION CRITERIA:

A conditional use permit for the reuse of a historic, non-residential structure and site for one of the above-listed uses (where not otherwise allowed by the underlying zoning) shall be authorized only if it can be found to be consistent with all of the following criteria. In granting such a conditional use permit the Land Use Administrator or Hearing Examiner may attach thereto such conditions regarding the location, character, orientation, layout, access and other features of the proposed development as may be deemed necessary to ensure consistency with the intent of the TMC and Comprehensive Plan and ensure that use of the site will be compatible with the existing, historic development on the site and surrounding uses.

1. The use shall be consistent with the goals and policies of the comprehensive plan, any adopted neighborhood or community plans, and applicable ordinances of the City of Tacoma.

2. The use shall be located, planned, and developed in such a manner that it is not inconsistent with the health, safety, convenience, or general welfare of persons residing or working in the community. The following shall be considered in making a decision on a conditional property use:

a. The generation of noise, noxious or offensive emissions, or other nuisances which may be injurious or to the detriment of a significant portion of the community.

b. Availability of public services which may be necessary or desirable for the support of the use. These may include, but shall not be limited to, availability of utilities, transportation systems (including vehicular, pedestrian, and public transportation systems), education, police and fire facilities, and social and health services.

c. The adequacy of landscaping, screening, yard setbacks, open spaces, or other development characteristics necessary to mitigate the impact of the use upon neighboring properties.

3. The proposed reuse shall promote the preservation and/or restoration of the designated historic structure on the site.

4. The proposed reuse and design of any modifications to the historic structure and site shall be approved by the Landmarks Preservation Commission