

# SEATTLE'S LOWRISE MULTIFAMILY ZONES

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Some areas have neighborhood-specific regulations that are not reflected here. Please consult the Land Use Code for individual projects.

## **THIS ZONING SUMMARY IS FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY**

This document describes development that is generally be permitted in lowrise multifamily residential zones. For specific regulations and exceptions, please refer to Chapter 23.45 of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC). If you have additional questions, you may email a Land Use Planner at <http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/LUQnA/>, or stop in to the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) Applicant Services Center (ASC) for a free 20-minute coaching session. For more detailed or project-specific information, please call the ASC at (206) 684-8850 to arrange for a paid appointment. Due to the complexity of the code, questions cannot be answered by phone.

## **Regulations common to all lowrise multifamily zones**

### **Green Factor**

Green Factor is a scoring system that increases the quantity and improves the quality of landscaping. Landscaping is required to achieve a Green Factor score of .60 or higher when more than one new dwelling unit is proposed. Credit is awarded for green roofs, rain gardens, planters, green walls, landscaping, plantings in the adjacent right-of-way, and other features.

### **Amenity Area**

Amenity area is space that provides active or passive recreational opportunities. It is either private space intended for occupants of a single dwelling unit, or common space available for use by all occupants. In LR zones, all amenity area must be unenclosed. Minimum dimensions and other standards apply.

### **Motor Vehicle Parking**

No parking is required in urban centers, station area overlays, or urban villages within a frequent transit service area. Development within Alki and the University District must provide 1.5 spaces per unit. In all other areas, 1 space per unit is required.

Required vehicular parking must be provided on-site, or off-site on a lot within 800' that is not in a single family zone. Alley access is required if an alley is present, with some allowances for street access under special circumstances.

### **Mandatory Affordable Housing (MHA)**

MHA requires new construction to include affordable housing or contribute to a City fund for affordable housing. New construction on lots in an LR zone with an MHA suffix of M, M1 or M2 are subject to Chapters 23.58B and 23.58C. The MHA suffix determines the payment or performance amount.

### **Design Standards**

Design standards provide visual interest and contribute to an attractive streetscape. Street-facing and side facades must be articulated, use varied building materials, or incorporate other architectural features. Street-facing facades must have prominent pedestrian entries and a minimum area of window openings. There are specific design standards for each multifamily housing type.

### **Design Review**

Development greater than 8,000 square feet is subject to design review. There are three types of design review: full, administrative, and streamlined. The project size and site characteristics determine which type applies. Full design review is conducted by a neighborhood Design Review Board. Administrative design review (ADR) and streamlined design review (SDR) are conducted by SDCI staff. Development undergoing design review is not subject to the multifamily design standards.

Projects may request departures or adjustments from a limited number of development standards if the resulting project better meets the intent of the adopted design guidelines.

### **Green Building**

Development may voluntarily meet a green building standard in exchange for additional development capacity, such as extra floor area or height. The green building standards save resources and promote renewable, clean energy. Development must demonstrate adherence to the LEED, Built Green, Passive House, Living Building Challenge, or Evergreen Sustainable Development certification program.



Housing Types:

Development standards apply according to the following housing types: cottage housing, rowhouses, townhouses or apartments.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are allowed with single-family dwelling units, rowhouses and townhouses in LR zones, subject to specific development standards per 23.45.545.I. ADUs do not count towards the density limit.

See SMC 23.84A.032 for complete housing type definitions.

Cottage Housing



Individual cottage house structures are arranged around a common open space; 950 square feet (sf) is the maximum size allowed for each cottage.

Rowhouse



Rowhouses are attached side by side along common walls. Each rowhouse directly faces the street with no other principal housing units behind the rowhouses. Rowhouses occupy the space from the ground to the roof. Units can not be stacked.

Townhouse



Townhouses are attached along common walls and occupy the space from the ground to the roof. Units can not be stacked. Townhouses may be located behind other townhouses as seen from the street.

Apartments



Multifamily housing that is not cottage housing, rowhouses, or townhouses is considered apartments. Apartment units may be stacked.

LR1

Lowrise 1

Areas characterized by low-density, small-scale multifamily housing types, which are similar in character to single family zones. Most appropriate outside of Growth Areas¹.

	MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix		MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix		MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix					
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	1.3		1.0		1.3		1.0		1.3		1.0					
Density	No limit		1 unit / 1,300 sf		No limit; 1 unit / 1,300 sf on interior lots less than 3,000 sf				1 unit / 1,300 sf				No limit <sup>2</sup>		1 unit / 1,300 sf <sup>2</sup>	
Building Height <sup>3</sup>	22'				30'				30'				30'			
Building Setbacks	Front Rear Side	7' ave., 5' min. 0' w/ alley; 7' w/ no alley 5' min.			Front Rear Side	5' min. 0' w/ alley; 7' ave., 5' min w/ no alley 0' where abutting another rowhouse; 3.5' or 5' when abutting a SF zone			Front Rear Side	7' ave., 5' min. 7' ave., 5' min. 5' min.; 7' ave., 5' min. for facades greater than 40'			Front Rear Side	5' min. 10' w/ alley; 15' min w/ no alley 5' min.; 7' ave., 5' min. for facades greater than 40'		
Building Width	No limit				No limit				60'				45'			
Façade Length	The maximum combined length of all portions of façades within 15' of a lot line that is neither a rear, street or alley lot line shall not exceed 65% percent of the length of that lot line, or 40' for a rowhouse development.															

LR2

Lowrise 2

Areas characterized by multifamily housing types in existing small-scale multifamily neighborhoods with arterial streets. Most appropriate within Growth Areas¹.

	MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix		MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix		MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix		MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix	
	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	1.4		1.1		1.4		1.1		1.4		1.1		1.4; 1.6 with specific amenity area requirements		1.1	
Density	No limit		1 unit / 1,300 sf		No limit		1 unit / 1,300 sf		No limit		1 unit / 1,300 sf		No limit		1 unit / 1,300 sf	
Building Height³	22'				40'		30'		40'		30'		40'		30'	
Building Setbacks	Same as LR1 with additional upper-level setback requirements based on height limit and proximity to a single family zone per SMC 23.45.518.															
Building Width	No limit				No limit				90'				90'			
Façade Length	Same as LR1				Same as LR1				Same as LR1				Same as LR1			

LR3

Lowrise 3

Areas characterized by multifamily housing types in existing moderate-scale multifamily neighborhoods with good transit service along arterial street and near commercial zones. Most appropriate within Growth Areas¹.

	MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix		MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix		MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix		MHA Suffix		No MHA Suffix	
	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area	Growth Area	Outside Growth Area
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	2.3	1.8	1.2	1.2	2.3	1.8	1.2	1.2	2.3	1.8	1.2	1.2	2.3	1.8	1.5	1.3
Density	No limit		1 unit / 1,300 sf		No limit		1 unit / 1,300 sf		No limit		1 unit / 1,300 sf		No limit		1 unit / 800 sf	
Building Height³	22'				50'	40'	30'		50'	40'	30'		50'	40'	40'	30'
Building Setbacks	Same as LR1 with additional upper-level setback requirements based on height limit and proximity to a single family zone per SMC 23.45.518.															
Building Width	No limit				No limit				150'	120'	150'	120'	150'	120'	150'	120'
Façade Length	Same as LR1				Same as LR1				Same as LR1				Same as LR1			

¹ Growth Areas include urban centers, urban villages, and station area overlay districts.

² Family-sized housing requirement applies per SMC 23.45.512.B

³ Additional height allowances apply per SMC 23.45.514.