



# RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

## Planning Commission's Recommendations on Updates to the Residential Development Standards

### What is Happening and Why?

The City of Mercer Island is considering changes to the rules for building and remodeling homes throughout the island. The City Council has heard concerns from residents about the rapidly changing character of Mercer Island's neighborhoods. Last summer, they asked the Planning Commission and staff to analyze the issue, solicit feedback from residents and stakeholders and to recommend code changes to address these concerns.

Over the last eight months, the Planning Commission has engaged in a robust community engagement process and carefully reviewed the residential development standards. The Commission has identified a number of proposed amendments for City Council adoption.

The City Council is beginning its review and considering several changes, summarized below.



### Summary of Proposed Changes

- New limits on house size
  - Reducing allowed gross floor area from 45% to 40% of the lot
    - Allowance for ADUs and ADA accessible homes for 45% gross floor area
  - Implementing a maximum house size for each residential zone
  - Height limited to 30' on downhill side (reduced from 35')
- New limits on the size of accessory structures

- Limit the gross floor area of accessory buildings to 25% of the allowed gross floor area on the site.
- Limit the height of accessory buildings and structures to 17 feet.
- Wider side setbacks between homes
  - Lots wider than 90 feet will have a 17% side setback requirement
  - Increased side setbacks for new homes with a “tall wall”
- Increased retention of large, healthy trees and more tree protection
  - A minimum of 30% of large trees must be retained when a lot undergoes major construction
  - Priority for retention of large, healthy trees
  - Exceptional trees are provided additional protection, including requirements to re-design
  - Removal of a large tree (> 24”) on any lot will require a permit
- New landscaping requirement and limit on hardscapes
  - 60% of the net lot area must be landscaped
  - 80% of the landscaped area should be improved with “softscape” such as plants, trees, garden areas, etc. The remaining area may be used for “hardscape” such as decks, walkways, etc.
  - Create an allowance for a pervious sports court or similar recreational improvement of up to 1,200 square feet.
- Reduced parking requirement (from 3 to 2 stalls, 1 of which is covered)
- Fewer deviations and variances
  - Eliminate impervious surface and fence height deviations
  - Toughen standards on all other variances and deviations
- Reduced construction hours
  - Construction will be limited to 7am-7pm on weekdays and 9am-6pm on Saturdays
  - Construction will not be allowed on Sundays or holidays
- Construction impacts are limited
  - Require construction management plans and a construction schedule for larger projects and permit renewals
  - Limit permit renewal and extensions to a total of 3 years

The full text of the recommended code amendments is available here:  
[http://www.mercergov.org/files/PC\\_RecommendationDraftRDS.pdf](http://www.mercergov.org/files/PC_RecommendationDraftRDS.pdf)

The City Council will meet at least 2 more times on this topic to review the public comment and proposed amendments in detail, deliberate and ultimately take action on a code amendment. For more information on the proposed changes, and the meeting schedule, see [www.mercergov.org/residential](http://www.mercergov.org/residential).

**LEARN MORE:**

[www.mercergov.org/residential](http://www.mercergov.org/residential)

**EMAIL COMMENTS:** [residential@mercergov.org](mailto:residential@mercergov.org)

