

23.54.015 LAND USE CODE

criteria, according to Chapter 23.78, Establishment of Criteria for Joint Use and Reuse of Schools.

I. Bicycle Parking.

1. In L2, L3, MR and HR zones, for apartments and terraced housing, spaces for bicycles shall be provided in a safe and convenient location, according to the following chart:

Number of Units	Number of Bicycle Spaces Required
5 — 10	1
11 — 20	2
More than 20	1 for every 10 units

2. Bicycle parking spaces shall be provided by all institutions in multifamily zones. The number of required bicycle parking spaces shall be five percent (5%) of the number of required vehicle spaces. All bicycle spaces should be sheltered from the weather, visible from the institution, and conveniently located.

3. Bicycle parking facilities, either off-street or in the street right-of-way, shall be provided in NC1, NC2, NC3 and C1 zones for any new use which requires twenty (20) or more automobile parking spaces according to Chart A. Automobile service stations, and other drive-in businesses except fast-food restaurants, shall be exempted from this requirement. All bicycle parking facilities in the street right-of-way shall conform to Engineering Department standards.

a. The number of required bicycle parking spaces shall be ten percent (10%) of the number of required off-street auto parking spaces.

b. When any covered automobile parking is provided, all bicycle parking shall be covered.

4. Bicycle parking facilities accessory to nonresidential uses shall be located on the lot or within eight hundred feet (800') of the lot. Bicycle parking accessory to residential uses shall be located on-site. Bicycle parking facilities shared by more than one (1) use are encouraged. When located off-street, bicycle and automobile parking areas shall be separated by a barrier or painted lines.

(Ord. 117202 § 10, 1994; Ord. 116168 § 1, 1992; Ord. 116146 § 2, 1992; Ord. 115719 § 1, 1991; Ord. 115043 § 12, 1990; Ord. 115002 § 13(part), 1990; Ord. 114875 §§ 13, 14, 1989; Ord. 114623 § 15, 1989; Ord. 113710 § 1(part), 1987; Ord.

113658 § 7(part), 1987; Ord. 113464 § 2(part), 1987; Ord. 113263 § 26(part), 1986; Ord. 112777 § 32(part), 1986.)

**23.54.016 Major Institutions—Parking and transportation.**

Major Institution uses shall be subject to the following transportation and parking requirements:

A. General Provisions.

1. Minimum requirements for parking quantity are established in subsection B of this section.

2. The maximum number of spaces provided for the Major Institution use shall not exceed one hundred thirty-five percent (135%) of the minimum requirement, except through administrative or Council review as provided in subsection C.

3. Parking requirements for major institutions with more than one (1) type of institutional use (for example, a hospital and a university), shall be calculated for each use separately, and then added together to derive the total number of required spaces.

4. When a permit application is made for new development at an existing major institution, parking requirements shall be calculated both for the entire major institution and for the proposed new development. If there is a parking deficit for the entire institution, the institution shall make up a portion of the deficit in addition to the quantity required for the new development, according to the provisions of subsection B5. If there is a parking surplus, above the maximum allowed number of spaces, for the institution as a whole, requirements for new development will first be applied to the surplus in the required ratio of long-term and short-term spaces. Additional parking shall be permitted only when no surplus remains.

5. When determining parking requirements, individuals fitting into more than one (1) category (for example, a student who is also an employee or a faculty member who is also a doctor) shall not be counted twice. The category requiring the greater number of parking spaces shall be used.

(Seattle 12-94)

B. Parking Quantity Required. The minimum number of parking spaces required for a Major Institution shall be as follows:

1. Long-term Parking.

a. Medical Institutions. A number of spaces equal to eighty percent (80%) of hospital-based doctors; plus twenty-five percent (25%) of staff doctors; plus thirty percent (30%) of all other employees present at peak hour;

b. Educational Institutions. A number of spaces equal to fifteen percent (15%) of the maximum students present at peak hour, excluding resident students; plus thirty percent (30%) of employees present at peak hour; plus twenty-five percent (25%) of the resident unmarried students; plus one (1) space for each married student apartment unit.

2. Short-term Parking.

a. Medical Institutions. A number of spaces equal to one (1) space per six (6) beds; plus one (1) space per five (5) average daily outpatients;

b. Educational Institutions. A number of spaces equal to five percent (5%) of the maximum students present at peak hour excluding resident students.

3. Additional Short-term Parking Requirements. When one (1) of the following uses is a Major Institution use, the following additional short-term parking requirements shall be met. Such requirements may be met by joint use of parking areas and facilities if the Director determines that the uses have different hours of operation according to Section 23.54.020 G:

a. Museum. One (1) space for each two hundred fifty (250) square feet of public floor area;

b. Theater, Auditorium, or Assembly Hall. One (1) space for each two hundred (200) square feet of audience assembly area not containing fixed seats, and one (1) space for every ten (10) seats for floor area containing fixed seats;

c. Spectator Sports Facility Containing Fewer than Twenty Thousand (20,000) Seats. One (1) space for each ten (10) permanent seats and one (1) space for each one hundred (100) square feet of spectator assembly area not containing fixed seats;

d. Spectator Sports Facility Containing Twenty Thousand (20,000) or More Seats. One (1) space for each ten (10) permanent seats

and one (1) bus space for each three hundred (300) permanent seats.

4. Bicycle Parking. Bicycle parking meeting the development standards of Section 23.54.015 I4 and subsection D2 shall be provided in the following quantities:

a. Medical Institutions. A number of spaces equal to two percent (2%) of employees, including doctors, present at peak hour;

b. Educational Institutions. A number of spaces equal to ten percent (10%) of the maximum students present at peak hour plus five percent (5%) of employees.

If at the time of application for a master use permit, the applicant can demonstrate that the bicycle parking requirement is inappropriate for a particular institution because of topography, location, nature of the users of the institution or other reasons, the Director may modify the bicycle parking requirement.

5. Parking Deficits. In addition to providing the minimum required parking for a new structure, five percent (5%) of any vehicular or bicycle parking deficit as determined by the minimum requirements of this subsection, existing on the effective date of this ordinance,<sup>1</sup> shall be supplied before issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

C. Requirement for a Transportation Management Program.

1. When a major institution proposes parking in excess of one hundred thirty-five percent (135%) of the minimum requirement for short-term parking spaces, or when a major institution prepares a master plan or applies for a master use permit for development that would require twenty (20) or more parking spaces or increase the major institution's number of parking spaces by twenty (20) or more above the level existing on the effective date of this provision,<sup>1</sup> a transportation management program shall be required. The Director shall assess the traffic and parking impacts of the proposed development against the general goal of reducing the percentage of the major institution's employees, staff and/or students who commute in single-occupancy vehicles ("SOV") during the peak period to fifty percent (50%) or less, excluding those em-

ployees or staff whose work regularly requires the use of a private automobile during working hours.

2. Transportation management programs shall be prepared and implemented in accordance with the Director's Rule governing Transportation Management Programs.

3. If an institution has previously prepared a transportation management program, the Director, in consultation with the Director of Engineering, shall review the major institution's progress toward meeting stated goals. The Director shall then determine:

a. That the existing program should be revised to correct deficiencies and/or address new or cumulative impacts; or

b. That the application will not be approved until the major institution makes substantial progress toward meeting the goals of its existing program; or

c. That a new program should be developed to address impacts associated with the application; or

d. That a revised or new program is not needed.

4. Through the process of reviewing a transportation management program in conjunction with reviewing a master plan, the Council may approve in excess of one hundred thirty-five percent (135%) of the minimum requirements for long-term parking spaces, or may increase or decrease the stated fifty percent (50%) SOV goal, based upon the major institution's impacts on traffic and opportunities for alternative means of transportation. Factors to be considered shall include, but not be limited to:

a. Proximity to a street with fifteen (15) minute transit service headway in each direction;

b. Air quality conditions in the vicinity of the major institution;

c. The absence of other nearby traffic generators and the level of existing and future traffic volumes in and through the surrounding area;

d. The patterns and peaks of traffic generated by major institution uses and the availability or lack of on-street parking opportunities in the surrounding area;

e. The impact of additional parking on the major institution site;

f. The extent to which the scheduling of classes reduces the transportation alternatives available to students and faculty or the presence of

limited carpool opportunities due to the small number of employees; and

g. The extent to which the major institution has demonstrated a commitment to SOV alternatives.

5. The provision of short-term parking spaces in excess of one hundred thirty-five percent (135%) of the minimum requirements established in subsection B2 may be permitted by the Director through preparation of a Transportation Management Program. In evaluating whether to allow more than one hundred thirty-five percent (135%) of the minimum, the Director, in consultation with the Seattle Engineering Department and the Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle (METRO), shall consider evidence of parking demand and opportunities for alternative means of transportation. Factors to be considered shall include but are not necessarily limited to the criteria contained in subsection d of this section and the following:

a. The nature of services provided by Major Institution uses which generate short-term parking demand; and

b. The extent to which the major institution manages short-term parking to ensure its availability to meet short-term parking needs.

Based on this review, the Director shall determine the amount of additional short-term parking to be permitted, if any.

6. When an institution applies for a permit for development included in its master plan, it shall present evidence that it has made substantial progress toward the goals of its transportation management program, including the SOV goal. If substantial progress is not being made, as determined by the Director in consultation with the Engineering Department and METRO, the Director may:

a. Require the institution to take additional steps to comply with the transportation management program; and/or

b. Require measures in addition to those in the transportation management program which encourage alternative means of transportation for the travel generated by the proposed new development; and/or

c. Deny the permit if previous efforts have not resulted in sufficient progress toward meeting the SOV goals of the institution.

7. If one (1) major institution has acquired, merged with, or consolidated with another major institution, pursuant to Section 23.69.023, the new/surviving major institution shall prepare a new or revised transportation management program for the combined Major Institution Overlay District, according to the provisions of this section. The new/surviving major institution shall submit a draft transportation management program with any master use permit application for changes on any portion of the combined Major Institution Overlay District not already covered by an adopted master plan, or within one (1) year of the acquisition, merger or consolidation, whichever occurs first. The new or revised transportation management program shall be completed and approved by the Director as soon as is practicable, and at least before any master use permit, for which an application is filed more than one (1) year after the acquisition, merger or consolidation, is issued, for changes on any portion of the combined Major Institution Overlay District not already covered by an adopted master plan; provided that this shall not affect the Director's authority to consider and mitigate traffic and transportation impacts under the SEPA policies and procedures in SMC Chapter 25.05.

D. Development Standards for Parking.

1. Long-term Parking.

a. Carpools and vanpools shall be given guaranteed spaces in a more convenient location to the Major Institution uses they serve than SOV spaces, and shall be charged substantially less than the prevailing parking rates for SOVs.

b. There shall be a charge for all non-carpool/vanpool long-term parking spaces.

2. Bicycle Parking.

a. Required bicycle parking shall be in a convenient location, covered in the same proportion as auto parking spaces and provided free of charge.

b. Bicycle rack designs shall accommodate locking of the bicycle frame and both wheels with chains, cables, or U-shaped bicycle locks to an immovable rack or stall.

3. Joint use or shared use of parking areas and facilities shall be encouraged if approved by the Director according to the standards of Section 23.54.020 G.

4. The location and design of off-street parking and access to off-street parking shall be regulated according to the general standards of Chapter 23.54 and the specific standards of the underlying zone in which the parking is located.

(Ord. 115165 § 1(part), 1990; Ord. 115002 § 13(part), 1990; Ord. 113710 § 1(part), 1987; Ord. 113658 § 7(part), 1987; Ord. 113464 § 2(part), 1987; Ord. 113263 § 26(part), 1986; Ord. 112777 § 32(part), 1986.)

1. Editor's Note: Ordinance 115002, which originally added Section 23.54.016 as subsection K of Section 23.54.015, on major institutions, was passed by the City Council on March 26, 1990. Ordinance 115165, which created Section 23.54.016 from Section 23.54.015 K, was passed by the Council on June 25, 1990.

**23.54.020 Parking quantity exceptions.**

The parking quantity exceptions set forth in this section shall apply in all zones except downtown zones, which are regulated by Section 23.49.016, and major institution zones, which are regulated by Section 23.48.018.

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A. Adding Units to Existing Structures in Multifamily and Neighborhood Commercial Zones.

1. For the purposes of this section, "existing structures" shall be those structures which were established under permit, or for which a permit has been granted and has not expired, or are substantially underway in accordance with subsection D of Section 23.04.010, as of the effective date of the applicable chapter of this Land Use Code, as follows:

a. In multifamily zones, August 10, 1982;

b. In commercial zones, June 9, 1986.

2. If an existing residential structure in a multifamily or neighborhood commercial zone has parking which meets the development standards, and the lot area is not increased, one (1) unit may be added without additional parking. If two (2) units are added, one (1) space will be required; three (3) units will require two (2) spaces, etc. Additional parking must meet all development standards for the particular zone.

3. In a Lowrise Duplex/Triplex zone:

a. When an existing residential structure provides less than one (1) parking space per unit, one (1) parking space shall be required for each additional dwelling unit when dwelling units are added to the structure or the structure is altered to create additional dwelling units;

b. When an existing nonresidential structure is partially or completely converted to residential use, then no parking space shall be required for the first new dwelling unit, provided that the lot area is not increased and existing parking is screened and landscaped to the greatest extent practical.

Additional parking provided shall meet all development standards for the Lowrise Duplex/Triplex zone.

4. If an existing structure does not conform to the development standards for parking, or is occupied by a nonconforming use, when:

— Dwelling units are added to the structure; or

— The structure is altered to create additional dwelling units; or

— The structure is completely converted to residential use,

then no parking space need be provided for the first new or added dwelling unit, provided that the lot area is not increased and existing parking is screened and landscaped to the greatest extent

practical. Additional parking provided shall meet all development standards for the particular zone. This exception shall not apply in Lowrise Duplex/Triplex zones.

B. Tandem Parking.

1. Off-street parking required for multi-family structures may be provided as tandem parking. A tandem parking space shall equal one and one-half (1.5) parking spaces and shall meet the minimum size requirements of subsection A of Section 23.54.030.

2. A minimum of one (1) parking space per multi-family dwelling unit is required, whether provided as a regular space or as a tandem space.

C. Parking Exception for Landmark Structures. The Director may reduce or waive the

minimum accessory off-street parking requirements for a use permitted in a Landmark structure, or when a Landmark structure is completely converted to residential use according to Sections 23.45.006 or 23.45.184 as a special exception, Chapter 23.76, Procedures for Master Use Permits and Council Land Use Decisions, or for a use in a Landmark district which is located in a commercial zone.

1. In making any such reduction or waiver, the Director shall assess area parking needs. The Director may require a survey of on- and off-street parking availability. The Director may take into account the level of transit service in the immediate area; the probably relative importance of walk-in traffic; proposals by the applicant to encourage carpooling or transit use by employees; hours of operation; and any other factor or factors considered relevant in determining parking impact.

2. The Director may also consider the types and scale of uses proposed or practical in the Landmark structure, and the controls imposed by the Landmark designation.

3. For conversion of structures to residential use, the Director shall also determine that there is no feasible way to meet parking requirements on the lot and that the proposal meets the objectives of the Multi-Family Land Use Policies.

D. Expansion of Existing Nonresidential Uses in Commercial Zones. In commercial zones, additional parking spaces for nonresidential uses shall not be required for the expansion of existing structures if the minimum parking requirement would not be increased by more than ten percent (10%). If the minimum parking requirement would be increased by more than ten percent (10%), the parking spaces required for the entire expansion shall be provided. This provision may be used only once for any individual structure.

E. Reductions to required parking in pedestrian-designated commercial zones shall be permitted according to the provisions of Section 23.47.044.

F. Reductions to Minimum Parking Requirements for Nonresidential Uses.

1. Reductions to minimum parking requirements permitted by this subsection shall be calculated from the minimum parking requirements in Section 23.54.015. Total reductions to required parking as provided in this subsection shall not exceed forty percent (40%).

2. Transit Reduction.

a. In commercial zones, except pedestrian-designated zones, the minimum parking requirement for a nonresidential use, except institutions, may be reduced by twenty percent (20%) when the use is located within eight hundred feet (800') of a street with midday transit service headways of fifteen (15) minutes or less in each direction. This distance shall be the walking distance measured from the nearest bus stop to the property line of the lot containing the use.

b. In industrial zones, the minimum parking requirement for a nonresidential use may be reduced by fifteen percent (15%) when the use is located within eight hundred feet (800') of a street with peak transit service headways of fifteen (15) minutes or less in each direction. This distance shall be the walking distance measured from the nearest bus stop to the property line of the lot containing the use.

3. Substitution of Alternative Transportation. For new or expanding administrative offices or manufacturing uses which require forty (40) or more parking spaces, the minimum parking requirement may be reduced up to a maximum of forty percent (40%) by the substitution of alternative transportation programs, according to the following provisions:

a. For every certified carpool space accompanied by a cash fee, performance bond or alternative guarantee acceptable to the Director, the total parking requirement shall be reduced by one and nine-tenths ( $1\frac{9}{10}$ ) spaces, up to a maximum of forty percent (40%) of the parking requirement. The Director shall consult with the Seattle Rideshare Office in certifying carpool spaces and the location of carpool parking.

b. For every certified vanpool purchased or leased by the applicant for employee use, or equivalent cash fee for purchase of a van by the public ridesharing agency, the total parking requirement shall be reduced by six (6) spaces, up to a maximum of twenty percent (20%) of the parking requirement. Before a certificate of occupancy may be issued, details of the vanpool program shall be spelled out in a Memorandum of Agreement executed between the proponent, the Director, and the Seattle Rideshare Office.

c. If transit or transportation passes are provided with a fifty percent (50%) or greater cost reduction to all employees in a proposed structure for the duration of the business establishment(s) within it, or five (5) years, whichever is less, and if transit service is located within eight hundred feet (800'), the parking requirement shall be reduced by ten percent (10%). With a twenty-five percent (25%) to forty-nine percent (49%) cost reduction, and if transit service is located within eight hundred feet (800'), the parking requirement shall be reduced by five percent (5%).

d. For every four (4) covered bicycle parking spaces provided, the total parking requirement shall be reduced by one (1) space, up to a maximum of five percent (5%) of the parking requirement, provided that there is access to an arterial over improved streets.

G. Shared Parking.

1. Shared Parking, General Provisions.

a. Shared parking shall be allowed between two (2) or more uses to satisfy all or a portion of the minimum off-street parking re-

quirement of those uses as provided in subsections G2 and G3.

b. Shared parking shall be allowed between different categories of uses or between uses with different hours of operation, but not both.

c. A use for which an application is being made for shared parking shall be located within eight hundred feet (800') of the parking.

d. No reduction to the parking requirement shall be made if the proposed uses have already received a reduction through the provisions for cooperative parking, subsection H.

e. The reductions to parking permitted through shared use of parking shall be determined as a percentage of the minimum parking requirement as modified by the reductions permitted in subsections A through F.

f. An agreement providing for the shared use of parking, executed by the parties involved, shall be filed with the Director. Shared parking privileges shall continue in effect only as long as the agreement, binding on all parties, remains in force. If the agreement is no longer in force, then parking shall be provided as otherwise required by this chapter.

2. Shared Parking for Different Categories of Uses.

a. A business establishment may share parking according to only one (1) of the following subsections, G2b, G2c or G2d.

b. If an office use and a retail sales and service use share parking, the parking requirement for the retail sales and service use may be reduced by twenty percent (20%), provided that the reduction shall not exceed the minimum parking requirement for the office use.

c. If a residential use shares parking with a retail sales and service use other than lodging uses, eating and drinking establishments or entertainment uses, the parking requirement for the residential use may be reduced by thirty percent (30%), provided that the reduction does not exceed the minimum parking requirement for the retail sales and service use.

d. If an office and a residential use share off-street parking, the parking requirement for the residential use may be reduced by fifty percent (50%), provided that the reduction shall not exceed the minimum parking requirement for the office use.

### 3. Shared Parking for Uses With Different Hours of Operation.

a. For the purposes of this section, the following uses shall be considered daytime uses:

- (1) Customer service and administrative offices;
- (2) Retail sales and services, except eating and drinking establishments, lodging uses, and entertainment uses;
- (3) Wholesale, storage and distribution uses;
- (4) Manufacturing uses; and
- (5) Other similar primarily daytime uses, when authorized by the Director.

b. For the purposes of this section, the following uses shall be considered nighttime or Sunday uses:

- (1) Auditoriums accessory to public or private schools;
- (2) Religious facilities;
- (3) Entertainment uses, such as theaters, bowling alleys, and dance halls;
- (4) Eating and drinking establishments; and
- (5) Other similar primarily nighttime or Sunday uses, when authorized by the Director.

c. Up to ninety percent (90%) of the parking required for a daytime use may be supplied by the off-street parking provided by a nighttime or Sunday use and vice-versa, when authorized by the Director, except that this may be increased to one hundred percent (100%) when the nighttime or Sunday use is a religious facility.

d. The applicant shall show that there is no substantial conflict in the principal operating hours of the uses for which the sharing of parking is proposed.

e. The establishment of park-and-pool lots shall be permitted, provided that the park-and-pool lot shall not use spaces required by another use if there is a substantial conflict in the principal operating hours of the park-and-pool lot and the use.

#### H. Cooperative Parking.

1. Cooperative parking shall be permitted between two (2) or more business establishments which are commercial uses according to the provisions of this subsection.

2. Up to a twenty percent (20%) reduction in the total number of required parking spaces for four (4) or more separate business establishments,

fifteen percent (15%) reduction for three (3) business establishments, and ten percent (10%) reduction for two (2) commercial uses may be authorized by the Director under the following conditions:

a. No reductions to the parking requirement shall be made if the proposed business establishments have already received a reduction through the provisions for shared parking, subsection G.

b. The business establishments for which the application is being made for cooperative parking shall be located within eight hundred feet (800') of the parking, and the parking shall be located in a commercial or residential-commercial zone.

c. The reductions to parking permitted through cooperative parking shall be determined as a percentage of the minimum parking requirement as modified by the reductions permitted in subsections A through F.

d. An agreement providing for the cooperative use of parking shall be filed with the Director when the facility or area is established as cooperative parking. Cooperative parking privileges shall continue in effect only as long as the agreement to use the cooperative parking remains in force. If the agreement is no longer in force, then parking shall be provided as otherwise required by this chapter. New business establishments seeking to meet parking requirements by becoming part of an existing cooperative arrangement shall provide the Director with an amendment to the agreement stating their inclusion in the cooperative parking facility or area.

(Ord. 117263 § 51, 1994; Ord. 114196 § 17, 1988; Ord. 113710 § 2, 1987; Ord. 113658 § 8, 1987; Ord. 113263 § 27, 1986; Ord. 112777 § 32(part), 1986.)

#### 23.54.025 Parking covenants.

When parking is provided on a lot other than the lot of the use to which it is accessory, the following conditions shall apply:

A. The owner of the parking spaces shall be responsible for notifying the Director should the use of the lot for covenant parking cease. In this event, the principal use must be discontinued, other parking meeting the requirements of this Code must be provided within thirty (30) days, or a variance must be applied for within fourteen (14) days and subsequently granted.



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B. A covenant between the owner or operator of the principal use, the owner of the parking spaces and The City of Seattle stating the responsibilities of the parties shall be executed. This covenant and accompanying legal descriptions of the principal use lot and the lot upon which the spaces are to be located shall be recorded with the King County Department of Records and Elections, and a copy with recording number and parking layouts shall be submitted as part of any permit application for development requiring parking.

(Ord. 112777 § 32(part), 1986.)

### **23.54.030 Parking space standards.**

On lots subject to this Code, all parking spaces provided shall meet the following standards whether or not the spaces are required by this Code:

#### A. Parking Space Dimensions.

1. "Large vehicle" means the minimum size of a large vehicle parking space shall be eight and one-half feet (8½') in width and nineteen feet (19') in length.

2. "Medium vehicle" means the minimum size of a medium vehicle parking space shall be eight feet (8') in width and sixteen feet (16') in length.

3. "Small vehicle" means the minimum size of a small vehicle parking space shall be seven and one-half feet (7½') in width and fifteen feet (15') in length.

4. "Barrier-free parking" means a parking space meeting the following standards:

a. Parking spaces shall not be less than eight feet (8') in width and shall have an adjacent access aisle not less than five feet (5') in width. Van-accessible parking spaces shall have an adjacent access aisle not less than eight feet (8') in width. Where two (2) adjacent spaces are provided, the access aisle may be shared between the two (2) spaces. Boundaries of access aisles shall be marked so that aisles will not be used as parking space.

b. A minimum length of nineteen feet (19'); or when more than one (1) barrier-free parking space is provided, at least one (1) shall have a minimum length of nineteen feet (19'), and other spaces may be the lengths of small, medium or large spaces in approximate proportion to the number of each size space provided on the lot.

5. "Tandem parking" means a parking space equal to the width and two (2) times the length of the vehicle size standards in subsections

A1, A2, and A3 for the size of the vehicle to be accommodated.

6. Columns or other structural elements may encroach into the parking space a maximum of six inches (6") on a side, except in the area for car door opening, five feet (5') from the longitudinal centerline or four feet (4') from the transverse centerline of a parking space (Exhibit 23.54.030 A). No wall, post, guardrail, or other obstruction, or property line, shall be permitted within the area for car door opening.

7. If the parking space is next to a property line, the minimum width of the space shall be nine feet (9').

B. Parking Space Requirements. The required size of parking spaces shall be determined by whether the parking is for a residential or nonresidential use. In structures containing both residential and nonresidential uses, parking which is clearly set aside and reserved for residential use shall meet the standards of subsection B1; otherwise, all parking for the structure shall meet the standards of subsection B2.

#### 1. Residential Uses.

a. When five (5) or fewer parking spaces are provided, the minimum required size of a parking space shall be for a medium car, as described in subsection A2 of this section.

b. When more than five (5) parking spaces are provided, a minimum of sixty percent (60%) of the parking spaces shall be striped for medium vehicles. The minimum size for a medium parking space shall also be the maximum size. Forty percent (40%) of the parking spaces may be striped for any size, provided that when parking spaces are striped for large vehicles, the minimum required aisle width shall be as shown for medium vehicles.

#### 2. Nonresidential Uses.

a. When ten (10) or fewer parking spaces are provided, a maximum of twenty-five percent (25%) of the parking spaces may be striped for small vehicles. A minimum of seventy-five percent (75%) of the spaces shall be striped for large vehicles.

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b. When between eleven (11) and nineteen (19) parking spaces are provided, a minimum of twenty-five percent (25%) of the parking spaces shall be striped for small vehicles. The minimum required size for these small parking spaces shall also be the maximum size. A maximum of sixty-five percent (65%) of the parking spaces may be striped for small vehicles. A minimum of thirty-five percent (35%) of the spaces shall be striped for large vehicles.

c. When twenty (20) or more parking spaces are provided, a minimum of thirty-five percent (35%) of the parking spaces shall be striped for small vehicles. The minimum required size for small parking spaces shall also be the maximum size. A maximum of sixty-five percent (65%) of the parking spaces may be striped for small vehicles. A minimum of thirty-five percent (35%) of the spaces shall be striped for large vehicles.

d. The minimum vehicle clearance shall be at least six feet nine inches (6' 9") on at least one (1) floor; and there shall be at least one (1) direct entrance from the street for all parking garages accessory to nonresidential uses and all principal use parking garages which is at least six feet nine inches (6' 9") in height.

#### C. Backing Distances and Moving Other Vehicles.

1. Adequate ingress to and egress from all parking spaces shall be provided without having to move another vehicle, except for single-family dwellings.

2. Except for lots with fewer than three (3) parking spaces, ingress to and egress from all parking spaces shall be provided without requiring backing more than fifty feet (50').

D. Driveways. Driveway requirements for residential and nonresidential uses are described below. When a driveway is used for both residential and nonresidential parking, it shall meet the standards for nonresidential uses described in subsection D2.

##### 1. Residential Uses.

a. Driveways shall be at least ten feet (10') wide. Driveways with a turning radius of more than thirty-five degrees (35°) shall conform to the minimum turning path radius shown in Exhibit 23.54.030 B.

b. Vehicles may back onto a street from a parking area serving five (5) or fewer vehicles, provided that:

(1) The street is not an arterial as defined in Section 11.18.010 of the Seattle Municipal Code;

(2) The slope of the driveway does not exceed ten percent (10%) in the first twenty feet (20') from the property line; and

(3) For one single-family structure, the Director may waive the requirements of subsections D1b(1) and (2) above, and may modify the parking access standards based upon a safety analysis, addressing visibility, traffic volume and other relevant issues.

c. Driveways less than one hundred feet (100') in length, which serve thirty (30) or fewer parking spaces, shall be a minimum of ten feet (10') in width for one (1) way or two (2) way traffic.

d. Except for driveways serving one (1) single-family dwelling, driveways more than one hundred feet (100') in length which serve thirty (30) or fewer parking spaces shall either:

(1) Be a minimum of sixteen feet (16') wide, tapered over a twenty-foot (20') distance to a ten-foot (10') opening at the property line; or

(2) Provide a passing area at least twenty feet (20') wide and twenty feet (20') long. The passing area shall begin twenty feet (20') from the property line, with an appropriate taper to meet the ten-foot (10') opening at the property line. If a taper is provided at the other end of the passing area, it shall have a minimum length of twenty feet (20').

e. Driveways serving more than thirty (30) parking spaces shall provide a minimum ten-foot (10') wide driveway for one (1) way traffic or a minimum twenty-foot (20') wide driveway for two (2) way traffic.

f. Nonconforming Driveways. The number of parking spaces served by an existing driveway that does not meet the standards of this subsection D1 shall not be increased. This prohibition may be waived by the Director after consulting with the Seattle Engineering Department based on a safety analysis.

##### 2. Nonresidential Uses.

###### a. Driveway Widths.

(1) The minimum width of driveways for one (1) way traffic shall be twelve feet (12') and the maximum width shall be fifteen feet (15').

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(2) The minimum width of driveways for two (2) way traffic shall be twenty-two feet (22') and the maximum width shall be twenty-five feet (25').

b. Driveways shall conform to the minimum turning path radius shown in Exhibit 23.54.030 B.

3. Maximum grade curvature for all driveways shall not exceed the curvature shown in Exhibit 23.54.030 C.

4. Driveway Slope. No portion of a driveway, whether located on private property or on a right-of-way, shall exceed a slope of twenty percent (20%), except as provided in this subsection. The maximum twenty percent (20%) slope shall apply in relation to both the current grade of the right-of-way to which the driveway connects, and to the proposed finished grade of the right-of-way if it is different from the current grade. The Director may permit a driveway slope of more than twenty percent (20%) if it is found that:

a. The topography or other special characteristic of the lot makes a twenty percent (20%) maximum driveway slope infeasible;

b. The additional amount of slope permitted is the least amount necessary to accommodate the conditions of the lot; and

c. The driveway is still useable as access to the lot.

E. Parking Aisles.

1. Parking aisles shall be provided according to the requirements of Exhibit 23.54.030 D.

2. Minimum aisle widths shall be provided for the largest vehicles served by the aisle.

3. Turning and maneuvering areas shall be located on private property, except that alleys may be credited as aisle space.

4. Aisle slope shall not exceed seventeen percent (17%) provided that the Director may permit a greater slope if the criteria in subsections D4a, D4b and D4c are met.

F. Curbcuts. Curbcut requirements shall be determined by whether the parking served by the curbcut is for residential or nonresidential use, and by the zone in which the use is located. When a curbcut is used for more than one (1) use, the requirements for the use with the largest curbcut requirements shall apply.

1. Residential Uses in Single-family and Multi-family Zones and Single-purpose Residential Uses in All Other Zones.

a. For lots not located on a principal arterial as designated on Exhibit 23.53.015 A, the number of curbcuts permitted shall be according to the following chart:

Street or Easement Frontage of the Lot	Number of Curbcuts Permitted
0 — 80 feet	1
81 — 160 feet	2
161 — 240 feet	3
241 — 320 feet	4

For lots with frontage in excess of three hundred twenty feet (320'), the pattern established in the chart shall be continued.

b. Curbcuts shall not exceed a maximum width of ten feet (10') except that:

(1) One (1) curbcut greater than ten feet (10') but in no case greater than twenty feet (20') in width may be substituted for each two (2) curbcuts permitted by subsection F1a; and

(2) A greater width may be specifically permitted by the development standards in a zone; and

(3) When subsection D of Section 23.54.030 requires a driveway greater than ten feet (10') in width, the curbcut may be as wide as the required width of the driveway.

c. For lots on principal arterials designated on Exhibit 23.53.015 A, curbcuts of a maximum width of twenty-three feet (23') shall be permitted according to the following chart.

Street Frontage of the Lot	Number of Curbcuts Permitted
0 — 160 feet	1
161 — 320 feet	2
321 — 480 feet	3

For lots with street frontage in excess of four hundred eighty feet (480'), the pattern established in the chart shall be continued.

d. There shall be at least thirty feet (30') between any two (2) curbcuts located on a lot.

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STANDARDS FOR ACCESS AND OFF-STREET PARKING

e. A curbcut may be less than the maximum width permitted but shall be at least as wide as the minimum required width of the driveway it serves.

f. Where two (2) adjoining lots share a common driveway according to the provisions of Section 23.54.030 D1, the combined frontage of the two (2) lots shall be considered one (1) in determining the maximum number of permitted curbcuts.

2. Nonresidential Uses in Single-family and Multi-family Zones, and All Uses, Except Single-purpose Residential Uses, in All Other Zones Except Industrial Zones.

a. Number of Curbcuts.

(1) In RC, NC1, NC2, NC3, and Major Institution zones, a maximum of two (2) curbcuts for one (1) way traffic or one (1) curbcut for two (2) way traffic shall be permitted on lots with street frontage of eighty feet (80') or less. On lots with street frontage of more than eighty feet (80'), up to two (2) two (2) way curbcuts shall be permitted for each two hundred forty feet (240') of street frontage.

(2) In C1 and C2 zones, the Director shall review and make a recommendation on the number and location of curbcuts.

(3) In downtown zones, a maximum of two (2) curbcuts for one (1) way traffic at least forty feet (40') apart, or one (1) curbcut for two (2) way traffic, shall be permitted on each street front where access is permitted by Section 23.49.018. No curbcut shall be located within forty feet (40') of an intersection. These standards may be modified by the Director on lots with steep slopes or other special conditions, the minimum necessary to provide vehicular and pedestrian safety and facilitate a smooth flow of traffic, in accordance with the Downtown Land Use Policies.

(4) For public schools, the minimum number of curbcuts determined necessary by the Director shall be permitted.

b. Curbcut Widths.

(1) For one (1) way traffic, the minimum width of curbcuts shall be twelve feet (12'), and the maximum width shall be fifteen feet (15').

(2) For two (2) way traffic, the minimum width of curbcuts shall be twenty-two feet (22'), and the maximum width shall be twenty-five feet (25'), except that the maximum width



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may be increased to thirty feet (30') when truck and auto access are combined.

or amount of curbcut permitted to a lot if the lot is not itself served by the easement.

(3) For public schools, the maximum width of curbcuts shall be twenty-five feet (25'). Development standards departure may be granted or required pursuant to the procedures and criteria set forth in Chapter 23.79.

(4) When one (1) of the following conditions applies, the Director may require a curbcut of up to thirty feet (30') in width, if it is found that a wider curbcut is necessary for safe access:

- i. The abutting street has a single lane on the side which abuts the lot; or
- ii. The curb lane abutting the lot is less than eleven feet (11') wide; or
- iii. The proposed development is located on an arterial with an average daily traffic volume of over seven thousand (7,000) vehicles; or
- iv. Off-street loading space is required according to subsection H of Section 23.54.015.

c. The entrances to all garages accessory to nonresidential uses and the entrances to all principal use parking garages shall be at least six feet nine inches (6'9") high.

3. All Uses in Industrial Zones.

a. Number and Location of Curbcuts. The number and location of curbcuts shall be determined by the Director.

b. Curbcut Width. Curbcut width in Industrial zones shall be provided as follows:

(1) When the curbcut provides access to a parking area or structure it shall be a minimum of fifteen feet (15') wide and a maximum of thirty feet (30') wide.

(2) When the curbcut provides access to a loading berth, the maximum width of thirty feet (30') set in subsection E3b(1) may be increased to fifty feet (50').

(3) Within the minimum and maximum widths established by this subsection, the Director shall determine the size of the curbcuts.

4. Curbcuts for Access Easements.

a. When a lot is crossed by an access easement serving other lots, the curbcut serving the easement may be as wide as the easement roadway.

b. The curbcut serving an access easement shall not be counted against the number

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5. **Curbscut Flare.** A flare with a maximum width of two and one-half feet (2½') shall be permitted on either side of curbscuts in any zone.

6. **Replacement of Unused Curbscuts.** When a curbscut is no longer needed to provide access to a lot, the curb and any planting strip shall be replaced.

G. **Sight Triangle.**

1. For exit-only driveways and easements, and two (2) way driveways and easements less than twenty-two feet (22') wide, a sight triangle on both sides of the driveway or easement shall be provided, and shall be kept clear of any obstruction for a distance of ten feet (10') from the intersection of the driveway or easement with a driveway, easement, sidewalk or curb intersection if there is no sidewalk, as depicted in Exhibit 23.54.030 E.

2. For two (2) way driveways or easements at least twenty-two feet (22') wide, a sight triangle on the side of the driveway used as an exit shall be provided, and shall be kept clear of any obstruction for a distance of ten feet (10') from the intersection of the driveway or easement with a driveway, easement, sidewalk, or curb intersection if there is no sidewalk. The entrance and exit lanes shall be clearly identified.

3. The sight triangle shall also be kept clear of obstructions in the vertical spaces between thirty-two inches (32") and eighty-two inches (82") from the ground.

4. When the driveway or easement is less than ten feet (10') from the property line, the sight triangle may be provided as follows:

a. An easement may be provided sufficient to maintain the sight triangle. The easement shall be recorded with the King County Department of Records and Elections; or

b. The driveway may be shared with a driveway on the neighboring property; or

c. The driveway or easement may begin five feet (5') from the property line, as depicted in Exhibit 23.54.030 F.

5. An exception to the sight triangle requirement may be made for driveways serving lots containing only residential structures and fewer than three (3) parking spaces, when providing the sight triangle would be impractical.

6. In all downtown zones, the sight triangle at a garage exit may be provided by mirrors and/or other approved safety measures.

7. Sight triangles shall not be required for one-way entrances into a parking garage or surface parking area.

H. **Attendant Parking.** In downtown zones, any off-street parking area or structure providing more than five (5) parking spaces where automobiles are parked solely by attendants employed for that purpose shall have parking spaces at least eight feet (8') in width, and fifteen feet (15') in length. Subsections A, B, C, D and E shall not apply, except that the grade curvature of any area used for automobile travel or storage shall not exceed that specified in subsection D3. Should attendant operation be discontinued, the provisions of subsections A, B, C, D and E shall apply to the parking.

I. **Off-street Bus Parking.** Bus parking spaces, when required, shall be thirteen feet (13') in width and forty feet (40') in length. Buses parked en masse shall not be required to have adequate ingress and egress from each parking space.

J. The Director may reduce any required dimension for nonresidential uses up to three percent (3%) to allow more efficient use of a surface parking area or parking garage, except for the dimensions of parking spaces and aisles for small vehicles.

(Ord. 117432 § 39, 1994; Ord. 117263 § 52, 1994; Ord. 115568 § 9, 1991; Ord. 115326 § 28, 1990; Ord. 113710 § 3, 1987; Ord. 113658 § 9, 1987; Ord. 113279 § 30, 1987; Ord. 113263 § 28, 1986; Ord. 112777 § 32(part), 1986.)

### **23.54.035 Loading berth requirements and space standards.**

A. **Quantity of Loading Spaces.**

1. The minimum number of off-street loading berths required for specific uses shall be set forth in Chart A. (See Chart A for Section 23.54.035.)

2. For uses not listed on Chart A the Director shall determine the loading berth requirements. Loading demand and loading requirements for similar uses shall be considered in determining such requirements.

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- 3. Existing deficits in the number of required loading berths shall be allowed to continue if a change of use occurs.
- 4. Uses shall be considered low-demand uses, medium-demand uses and high-demand uses, as follows. (See Table for 23.54.035 A.)

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**!!!EXHIBIT 23.54.030 F, SIGHT TRIANGLE EXCEPTION, GOES HERE!!!**

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**Chart A  
for Section 23.54.035**

<b>Type of Use</b>	<b>Square Feet of Aggregate Gross Floor Area</b>	<b>Required Number of Loading Berths</b>
<b>Low Demand</b>	40,000 to 60,000	1
	60,001 to 160,000	2
	160,001 to 264,000	3
	264,001 to 388,000	4
	388,001 to 520,000	5
	520,001 to 652,000	6
	652,001 to 784,000	7
	784,001 to 920,000	8
	For each additional 140,000	1 additional berth
<b>Medium Demand</b>	10,000 to 60,000	1
	60,001 to 160,000	2
	160,001 to 264,000	3
	264,001 to 388,000	4
	388,001 to 520,000	5
	520,001 to 652,000	6
	652,001 to 784,000	7
	784,001 to 920,000	8
	For each additional 140,000	1 additional berth
<b>High Demand</b>	5,000 to 16,000	1
	16,001 to 40,000	2
	40,001 to 64,000	3
	64,001 to 96,000	4
	96,001 to 128,000	5
	128,001 to 160,000	6
	160,001 to 196,000	7
	For each additional 36,000	1 additional berth

**Table for Section 23.54.035 A**

<b>Low Demand</b>	<b>Medium Demand</b>	<b>High Demand</b>
Animal services	Agricultural uses	Airport, land-based



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Business incubator	Airport, water-based	Cargo terminals
Business support services	Automotive parts or accessory sales	Commercial laundries
Car wash	Eating and drinking establishments	Construction services
Custom and craft work	Heavy commercial services except commercial laundries and construction services	Food processing for human consumption
Entertainment uses	Institute for advanced study	High-impact uses
Gas station	Mini-warehouse	Hospitals
Helistop and heliport	Mortuary services	Manufacturing
Institutions, except hospitals and institutes for advanced study	Passenger terminal	Outdoor storage
Lodging	Personal and household retail sales and services	Recycling center (separate facilities)
Marine retail sales, services	Recycling collection stations	Sale of heating fuel
Medical services	Research and development laboratory	Sales, service and rental of commercial equipment and construction materials
Offices	Sales, service and rental of equipment	Salvage yard
Personal transportation services	Transit vehicle base	Warehouse
Sales and rental of motorized vehicles	Utilities	Wholesale showroom
Towing services	Vehicular repair, major and minor	

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5. When a lot contains more than one (1) business establishment within the same category of low-, medium- or high-demand use, the square footage of the business establishments within the same category shall be added together in order to determine the number of required loading berths.

B. Exception to Loading Requirements. For uses with less than sixteen thousand (16,000) square feet of gross floor area which provide a loading space on a street or alley, the loading berth requirements may be waived by the Director following a review by the Seattle Engineering Department which finds that the street or alley berth is adequate.

C. Standards for Loading Berths.

1. Width and Clearance. Each loading berth shall be not less than ten feet (10') in width and shall provide not less than fourteen feet (14') vertical clearance.

2. Length.

a. High-demand Uses. Each loading berth for a high-demand use shall be a minimum of fifty-five feet (55') in length unless reduced by determination of the Director as provided at subsection C2c.

b. Low- and Medium-demand Uses. Each loading berth for low- and medium-demand uses, except those uses identified in subsection C2d, shall be a minimum of thirty-five feet (35') in length unless reduced by determination of the Director as provided at subsection C2c.

c. Exceptions to Loading Berth Length. Where the Director finds, after consulting with the property user, that site design and use of the property will not result in vehicles extending beyond the property line, loading berth lengths may be reduced to not less than the following:

(i) High-demand Uses. Thirty-five feet (35') when access is from a collector arterial or local access street; and forty-five feet (45') when access is from a principal or minor arterial street;

(ii) Low- and Medium-demand Uses. Twenty-five feet (25').

d. Multi-purpose convenience stores, sales, service and rental of major durables, and specialty food stores may be required by the

Director to increase the length of required loading berths; however, these uses shall not be required to provide loading berths in excess of fifty-five feet (55'). The review of loading berth length requirements for these uses shall focus on the size of vehicles that frequently serve the business and the frequency of loading activity that will extend beyond the lot line during daytime hours (six a.m. (6:00 a.m.) to six p.m. (6:00 p.m.)). Large-truck loading occurring on a daily basis shall generally require longer loading berths; when such activity occurs on at least a weekly basis, it will be evaluated regarding the amount of traffic disruption and safety problems potentially created; such activity occurring on less than a weekly basis shall generally not require longer loading berths.

3. For uses not listed in Chart A, the Director shall determine the loading berth length requirements. Loading demand and loading requirements for similar uses shall be considered.

4. Maneuvering Space for Loading Berths. In addition to the length of the loading berth, additional maneuvering space may be required by the Director in the following cases:

a. For any uses with over ten thousand (10,000) square feet of gross floor area with loading berth access from a principal or minor arterial street;

b. For high-demand uses with over ten thousand (10,000) square feet of gross floor area with loading berth access from a collector arterial or local access street, especially if located across the street from another high-demand use. When required, the additional maneuvering space shall be designed and arranged to allow the most efficient use of all required loading berths by motor vehicles of the types typically employed by the activities served.

(Ord. 117432 § 40, 1994; Ord. 113658 § 10, 1987.)

**Chapter 23.55  
SIGNS**

**Sections:**

23.55.001 LAND USE CODE

**Part 1 General Standards for All Zones**

**23.55.001 Intent.**

**23.55.002 Scope of provisions.**

**23.55.003 Signs prohibited in all zones.**

**23.55.004 Signs projecting over public rights-of-way.**

**23.55.008 Signs near intersections or driveways.**

**23.55.012 Temporary signs permitted in all zones.**

**23.55.014 Off-premises signs.**

**23.55.016 Light and glare from signs.**

D. To protect the public interest and safety; and

E. To protect the right of business to identify its premises and advertise its products through the use of signs without undue hindrance or obstruction.

(Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

**Part 2 Standards for Specific Zones**

**23.55.020 Signs in single-family zones.**

**23.55.022 Signs in multi-family zones.**

**23.55.024 Signs in residential commercial (RC) zones.**

**23.55.028 Signs in NC1 and NC2 zones.**

**23.55.030 Signs in NC3, C1 and C2 zones.**

**23.55.032 Sign overlay district in commercial zones.**

**23.55.034 Signs in downtown zones.**

**23.55.036 Signs in IB, IC, IG1 and IG2 zones.**

**23.55.038 Signs in open space zones.**

**23.55.040 Special exception for signs in commercial zones.**

**23.55.042 Off-premises and business signs adjacent to certain public highways.**

**Part 1 General Standards for All Zones**

**23.55.001 Intent.**

The intent of the standards in this chapter is:

A. To encourage the design of signs that attract and invite rather than demand the public's attention, and to curb the proliferation of signs;

B. To encourage the use of signs that enhance the visual environment of the city;

C. To promote the enhancement of business and residential properties and neighborhoods by fostering the erection of signs complementary to the buildings and uses to which they relate and which are harmonious with their surroundings;

**23.55.002 Scope of provisions.**

A. The provisions of this chapter shall apply to signs in all zones, except those zones regulated by Chapter 23.66, Special Review Districts.

B. Signs located in the Shoreline District shall meet the requirements of the Seattle Shoreline Master Program in addition to the provisions of this chapter. In the event that there is a conflict between the provisions of this chapter and the regulations of the Shoreline Master Program, the provisions of the Shoreline Master Program shall apply.

C. Signs are also regulated by the provisions of the Building Code, Title 22 of the Seattle Municipal Code, including the permit requirements of that title.

D. Signs located completely within public rights-of-way shall be regulated by the Street Use Ordinance, Title 15 of the Seattle Municipal Code. Signs projecting from private property over public rights-of-way are also regulated by the Street Use Ordinance, as well as the provisions of this chapter.

E. Signs adjacent to certain public highways and designated scenic routes shall meet the provisions of Section 23.55.042 of this chapter. Signs adjacent to state highways may also be regulated by state law or regulations.

F. Variances may be permitted from the provisions of this chapter, except that variances shall not be permitted from subsection A of Section 23.55.014, and variances from Section 23.55.042, Off-premises and business signs adjacent to certain public highways, shall be limited by the provisions of subsection E of Section 23.55.042.

G. Measurements provisions for signs are located in Chapter 23.86, Measurements. (Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

3. Signs attached to or located on stationary motor vehicles, equipment, trailers, and related devices, except for signs not exceeding five (5) square feet in area and relating to the sale, lease or rent of a motor vehicle to which the signs are attached;

**23.55.003 Signs prohibited in all zones.**

A. The following signs shall be prohibited in all zones:

1. Flashing signs;
2. Signs which rotate or have a rotating or moving part or parts that revolve at a speed in excess of seven (7) revolutions per minute;

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4. Portable signs other than readily detachable signs having a fixed base or mounting for the placement and intermittent use of such signs;

5. Banners, streamers, strings of pennants, fabric signs, festoons of lights, clusters of flags, wind-animated objects, balloons, searchlights, and similar devices, except where the principal use or activity on the lot is outdoor retail sales in NC3, C1, C2 and downtown zones, and except where permitted as temporary signs under Section 23.55.012.

(Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

G. Roof signs shall not project into any public right-of-way.

(Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

**23.55.004 Signs projecting over public rights-of-way.**

A. Signs projecting into any public right-of-way, except alleys, shall have a minimum clearance of eight feet (8') over the adjacent sidewalk or other grade.

B. Signs projecting into any public alley shall have a minimum clearance of sixteen feet (16') above grade, and shall not project more than twenty-four inches (24") beyond the property line.

C. No permanent sign shall extend into any public right-of-way to within less than two feet (2') of the curblines, or more than six feet (6') beyond the property line, except that at street intersections, signs which project from intersecting street property lines may extend to the intersection of the six-foot (6') projection margins on each street (Exhibit 23.55.004 A).

D. No barberpole, including the brackets and fastenings for the barberpole, shall extend more than one foot (1') into any public right-of-way.

E. No temporary sign made of rigid material shall extend more than four inches (4") into the public right-of-way.

F. Marquee signs may be permitted in conjunction with any lawful marquee, provided that they shall not project more than twelve inches (12") beyond the front of the marquee, nor closer than two feet (2') to the curblines. Marquee signs may not exceed thirty inches (30") in height above the top of the marquee, and total vertical dimension may not exceed five feet (5'). Only one (1) sign may be placed on or attached to an end face of a marquee.

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**23.55.008 Signs near intersections or driveways.**

Signs which are ten feet (10') or less in height as measured from street or driveway grade and which obscure the vision of motorists shall be located at least twenty feet (20') from intersections and driveways.

(Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

**23.55.012 Temporary signs permitted in all zones.**

A. The following temporary signs shall be permitted in all zones:

1. Temporary nonilluminated real estate "for sale" or "for rent" signs, not exceeding an area of eight (8) square feet in single-family zones, and twenty-four (24) square feet in all other zones, and not painted with light-reflecting paint;

2. Temporary political yard signs, permitted by the Seattle Municipal Code, Fair Campaign Act, Chapter 2.24;

3. Large signs required for public notice according to Chapter 23.76, Procedures for Master Use Permits and Council Land Use Decisions.

4. Temporary decorations customary for special holidays, such as Independence Day, erected entirely on private property;

5. One (1) temporary sign identifying the architect, engineer or contractor for work under construction, not exceeding twelve (12) square feet in area for each three hundred feet (300') of street frontage;

6. Banners, streamers, strings of pennants, fabric signs, festoons of lights, clusters of flags, wind-animated objects, balloons, searchlights, temporary signs located on vehicles and similar devices of a carnival nature, or a group of temporary portable signs when displayed on private property;

7. Readily detachable signs having a fixed base or mounting for the placement and intermittent use of such signs.

8. Temporary signs shall not be displayed for more than fourteen (14) days.

B. Size Standards for Temporary Signs. Temporary signs made of rigid material shall not

exceed thirty-two (32) square feet in area, and no dimension shall be greater than eight feet (8'). Temporary signs not made of rigid material shall not exceed one hundred (100) square feet in area. (Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

**23.55.014 Off-premises signs.**

A. Advertising Signs.

1. No advertising sign shall be erected, or constructed, unless an existing advertising sign is relocated or reconstructed at a new location. An advertising sign may be relocated or reconstructed if:

a. The existing advertising sign was lawfully erected and after the effective date of the ordinances codified in this section,<sup>1</sup> is registered to pursuant to subsection F of this section;

b. The advertising sign is located on a site or in a zone where it is not permitted, except as provided in subsection A1c of this section;

c. In each calendar year one advertising sign which is located on a site or in a zone where it is permitted may be relocated or reconstructed if a citizen submits a written request for relocation to the Director;

d. The reconstructed or relocated advertising sign will be a permitted use and will conform with all ordinances of the City at its new location.

e. The construction permit for the relocated or reconstructed advertising sign is issued during the pendency of the demolition permit for the existing sign;

f. The advertising sign face does not increase in size; and

g. The advertising sign is relocated to an area with the same or more intensive zoning. Areas in which advertising signs are allowed are listed below from least intense to most intense zoning, and zones listed on the same line are considered of the same intensity. Zones which do not allow advertising signs shall be considered less intense zones for the purpose of relocation. This list is for purposes of this criterion only.

**Downtown Mixed Residential/Commercial (DMR/C)**



23.55.008 LAND USE CODE

Commercial 1 and 2 (C1 and C2) |  
Downtown Zones (Except DMR/R and  
DMR/C) |  
↓  
Industrial Zones (I)

Least intense  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
Most intense

h. The number of relocated advertising signs does not exceed twelve (12) structure locations per year or twenty-four (24) sign face

locations per year, excluding relocations pursuant to subsection G of this section.

2. For purposes of relocation, sign owners maintain the right to relocation.

3. Wall signs cannot be relocated.

4. Maximum Sign Face Area. The maximum total area of any advertising sign in Commercial 1 and 2, Industrial and Downtown (except Downtown Mixed Residential/Commercial) zones shall be six hundred seventy-two (672) square feet, with a maximum vertical dimension of twenty-five feet (25') and a maximum horizontal dimension of fifty feet (50'), provided that cutouts and extensions may add up to twenty percent (20%) of additional sign area. The maximum total area of any advertising sign in Downtown Mixed Residential/Commercial (DMR/C) zones shall be three hundred (300) square feet, except for visually blocked signs which may be a maximum of six hundred seventy-two (672) square feet.

5. All advertising signs shall be located at least fifty feet (50') from any lot in a residential zone, and at least five hundred feet (500') from any public school grounds, public park, or public playground, or community center. For purposes of this section, a public park or public playground means a park or playground at least one (1) acre in size and a community center must be publicly owned.

6. No variances shall be permitted from the provisions of this subsection A.

B. Off-premises Directional Signs. The maximum area of any off-premises directional sign shall be one hundred (100) square feet, with a maximum vertical dimension of ten feet (10') and a maximum horizontal dimension of twenty feet (20').

C. The maximum area for each sign face for business district identification signs shall be that permitted for pole signs in the zone.

D. The maximum area for each sign face for residential district identification signs shall be fifty (50) square feet.

E. Development Standards Applicable to All Off-premises Signs.

1. Dispersion Standard.

a. Directional Sign Faces and Business District Identification Signs. Not more than a total of four (4) off-premises directional sign faces, plus two (2) identification signs for a business district, shall be permitted on both sides of a street within a space of six hundred sixty feet

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(660'). There shall be a minimum distance of one hundred feet (100') between sign structures.

b. Advertising Signs.

(1) Not more than a total of five (5) advertising sign structures shall be permitted when counting both sides of a street within a linear distance of two thousand six hundred forty feet (2640', one-half (1/2) mile).

(2) There shall be a minimum distance of three hundred linear feet (300') between advertising sign structures on the same side of the street; a maximum of two (2) advertising sign structures within three hundred linear feet (300') when counting both sides of the street; and, a minimum distance of one hundred radial (100') between advertising sign structures.

(3) Visually blocked advertising signs shall count as one-half (1/2) a structure, and may be within any distance from each other on the same side of the street as long as they are oriented in opposite directions. Visually blocked advertising signs oriented in the same direction or on opposite sides of the street are subject to the spacing criteria under subsection E1b(2) of this section.

(4) There shall be a maximum of two (2) sign faces per advertising sign structure and a maximum of one (1) sign face per side of the advertising sign structure.

2. Off-premises signs shall not be roof signs.

3. Lighting. No off-premises sign shall be incandescently illuminated by more than one and one-quarter (1 1/4) watts of electrical power per square foot of sign area, or be fluorescently or otherwise illuminated by more than one (1) watt of electrical power per square foot of sign area. Off-premises signs that include lights as part of the message or content of the sign (chasing and message board advertising signs) are prohibited.

4. Sign Height. The maximum height limit for any portion of an off-premises sign (except in Industrial zones) is forty feet (40') or the height limit of the zone, whichever is less. The maximum height limit for any portion of an off-premises sign in an Industrial zone is sixty-five feet (65') or the height limit of the zone, whichever is less.

F. Registration of Advertising Signs. Each owner of an off-premises advertising sign shall file a written report with the Director on or before July 1 of each year. The report shall be submitted

on a form supplied by the Director. The owner shall identify the number and location of advertising signs maintained by the owner in the city at any time during the previous year, and provide such other information as the Director deems necessary for the inspection of signs and for the administration and enforcement of this Section. The owner shall pay a fee to the Director at the time the written report is filed. The amount of the fee is Forty Dollars (\$40.00) for each sign face identified in the report. DCLU shall assign a registration number to each sign face, and the sign number shall be displayed on the face of the billboard frame in figures which are a minimum of eight inches (8") tall. It is unlawful to maintain a sign face which has not been registered as required by this section. Notwithstanding any other provision of this code, any person who maintains an unregistered sign face is subject to an annual civil penalty of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) for each unregistered sign face.

G. Side-by-Side Advertising Signs. One (1) of the two (2) sign faces that comprise side-by-side advertising signs shall be removed within three (3) years of the effective date of the ordinance codified in this Section.<sup>1</sup> The sign face may be relocated if the sign will meet the requirements of subsections A1e, A1f and A1g of this section, provided that in lieu of relocation the two (2) side-by-side advertising signs may be replaced by one (1) six hundred seventy-two (672) square foot advertising sign at the same location.

(Ord. 116780 § 1, 1993; Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

1.Editor's Note: Ordinance 116780 was passed by the City Council on July 19, 1993.

**23.55.016Light and glare from signs.**

A. The source of light for externally illuminated signs shall be shielded so that direct rays from the light are visible only on the lot where the sign is located.

B. The light source for externally illuminated signs, except advertising signs, shall be no farther away from the sign than the height of the sign.

(Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

**Part 2 Standards for Specific Zones**

**23.55.020Signs in single-family zones.**

23.55.014 LAND USE CODE

A. Signs shall be stationary and shall not rotate.

B. No flashing, changing-image or message board signs shall be permitted.

C. No roof signs shall be permitted.

D. The following signs shall be permitted in all single-family zones:

1. Electric, externally illuminated or nonilluminated signs bearing the name of the occupant of a dwelling unit, not exceeding sixty-four (64) square inches in area.

2. Memorial signs or tablets, and the name of buildings and dates of building erection when cut into a masonry surface or constructed of bronze or other noncombustible materials;

3. Signs for public facilities indicating danger and/or providing service or safety information;

4. Properly displayed national, state and institutional flags;

5. One (1) electric or nonilluminated double-faced identifying wall or ground sign for an institution on each street frontage, not to exceed fifteen (15) square feet of area per sign face; except that for public elementary or secondary schools, departure from these standards may be granted or required pursuant to the criteria and procedures of Chapter 23.79.

6. On-premises directional signs not exceeding eight (8) square feet in area. One (1) such sign shall be permitted for each entrance or exit to a surface parking area or parking garage.

E. Existing business signs for nonconforming business establishments may be replaced, provided that:

1. Maximum total area of sign faces shall be one hundred seventy (170) square feet, and the maximum area of the face of any single sign face shall be eighty-five (85) square feet.

2. The replacement sign shall not be a roof sign.

3. Replacement signs may be located in the same place as the original sign except that maximum height of any portion of the replacement sign shall be twenty-five feet (25').

4. Replacement signs may be electric or nonilluminated.

5. The number of business signs shall not be increased.

F. No sign shall be maintained in a surface parking area or on a parking garage which faces a

residential lot other than one (1) designating an entrance, exit, or condition of use.

G. Off-premises signs shall not be permitted, except that:

1. When accessory parking is provided on a lot other than the lot where the principal use is located, off-premises directional signs five (5)

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square feet or less in area identifying the accessory parking shall be permitted;

2. One (1) residential district identification wall or ground sign per entrance meeting the standards of Section 23.55.014 shall be permitted. (Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

**23.55.022 Signs in multi-family zones.**

A. Signs shall be stationary and shall not rotate.

B. No flashing, changing-image or message board signs shall be permitted.

C. No roof signs shall be permitted.

D. The following signs shall be permitted in all multi-family zones:

1. Electric, externally illuminated or nonilluminated signs bearing the name of the occupant of a dwelling unit, not exceeding sixty-four (64) square inches in area;

2. Memorial signs or tablets, and the names of buildings and dates of building erection when cut into a masonry surface or constructed of bronze or other noncombustible materials;

3. Signs for public facilities indicating danger and/or providing service or safety information;

4. Properly displayed national, state and institutional flags;

5. One (1) electric, externally illuminated or nonilluminated sign bearing the name of a home occupation not exceeding sixty-four (64) square inches in area;

6. One (1) nonilluminated wall or ground identification sign for multi-family structures on each street or alley frontage in addition to signs permitted by subsection D2. For structures of sixteen (16) units or less, the maximum area of each sign face shall be sixteen (16) square feet. One (1) square foot of sign area shall be permitted for each additional unit over sixteen, to a maximum area of fifty (50) square feet per sign face;

7. One (1) electric or nonilluminated double-faced identifying wall or ground sign for an institution on each street frontage, not to exceed twenty-four (24) square feet of area per sign face; except that for public elementary or secondary schools, departure from these standards may be granted or required pursuant to the criteria and procedures of Chapter 23.79 of the Land Use Code;

8. One (1) electric, externally illuminated or nonilluminated sign bearing the name of a bed

and breakfast, not exceeding sixty-four (64) square inches in area.

E. In Midrise and Highrise zones which are not designated Residential-Commercial, permitted ground-floor business establishments in multi-family structures may have one (1) electric or nonilluminated sign per street frontage. The sign may be a wall or projecting sign. The maximum area of each sign face shall be twenty-four (24) square feet. The maximum height of any portion of the sign shall be fifteen feet (15').

F. Existing business signs for nonconforming uses may be replaced, provided that:

1. Maximum total area of sign faces shall be one hundred seventy (170) square feet, and the maximum area of any single sign face shall be eighty-five (85) square feet;

2. The replacement sign shall not be a roof sign;

3. Replacement signs may be located in the same place as the original signs, except that the maximum height of any portion of the replacement sign shall be thirty feet (30');

4. Replacement signs may be electric or nonilluminated;

5. The number of business signs shall not be increased.

G. On-premises directional signs shall be permitted. Maximum sign area shall be eight (8) square feet. One (1) such sign shall be permitted for each entrance or exit to a surface parking area or parking garage.

H. No sign shall be maintained in a surface parking area or on a parking garage which faces a residential lot other than one (1) designating an entrance, exit, or condition of use.

I. Off-premises signs shall not be permitted, except that:

1. When accessory parking is provided on a lot other than the lot where the principal use is located, off-premises directional signs five (5) square feet or less in area identifying the accessory parking shall be permitted;

23.55.022 LAND USE CODE

2. One (1) residential district identification, wall or ground sign per entrance meeting

**Seattle Municipal Code  
March 2025 code update file  
Text provided for historic reference only.**

**See ordinances creating and amending sections for complete text, graphics, and tables and to confirm accuracy of this source file.**

(Seattle 12-93)

23-358.14b

**For current SMC, contact  
the Office of the City Clerk**

the standards of Section 23.55.014 shall be permitted.  
(Ord. 113464 § 3, 1987; Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

**23.55.024 Signs in residential commercial (RC) zones.**

A. The standards of this section shall apply only to signs for business establishments permitted on the ground floor or below in RC zones. The standards for multi-family zones, Section 23.55.022, shall apply to all other signs in RC zones.

B. Ground-floor business establishments may have one (1) electric or nonilluminated wall sign per street frontage, located on the commercial portion of the structure.

C. Maximum total area of sign faces per business establishment shall be one hundred seventy (170) square feet, and the maximum area of any single sign face shall be eighty-five (85) square feet.

D. The maximum height of any portion of a sign for a business establishment shall be fifteen feet (15').

(Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

**23.55.028 Signs in NC1 and NC2 zones.**

A. Signs shall be stationary and shall not rotate, except for barberpoles.

B. Signs may be electric, externally illuminated, or nonilluminated.

C. No flashing, changing-image or chasing signs shall be permitted, except that chasing signs for motion picture and performing arts theaters shall be permitted in NC2 zones.

D. On-premises Signs.

1. The following signs shall be permitted in addition to the signs permitted by subsections D2, D3 and D4:

a. Electric, externally illuminated or nonilluminated signs bearing the name of the occupant of a dwelling unit, not exceeding sixty-four (64) square inches in area;

b. Memorial signs or tablets, and the names of buildings and dates of building erection when cut into a masonry surface or constructed of bronze or other noncombustible materials;

c. Signs for public facilities indicating danger and/or providing service or safety information;

d. Properly displayed national, state and institutional flags;

e. One (1) under-marquee sign which does not exceed ten (10) square feet in area;

f. One (1) electric, externally illuminated or nonilluminated sign bearing the name of a home occupation, not exceeding sixty-four (64) square inches in area.

2. Number and Type of Permitted Signs for Business Establishments.

a. Each business establishment may have one (1) ground, roof, projecting or combination sign (Type A sign) for each three hundred (300) lineal feet, or portion thereof, of frontage on public rights-of-way, except alleys.

b. In addition to the signs permitted by subsection D2a, each business establishment may have one (1) wall, awning, canopy, marquee, or under-marquee sign (Type B sign) for each thirty (30) lineal feet, or portion thereof, of frontage on public rights-of-way, except alleys.

c. In addition to the signs permitted by subsections D2a and D2b, each multiple business center and drive-in business may have one (1) pole sign for each three hundred (300) lineal feet, or portion thereof, of frontage on public rights-of-way, except alleys. Such pole signs may be for a drive-in business or for an individual business establishment located in a multiple business center, or may identify a multiple business center.

d. Individual businesses which are not drive-in businesses and which are not located in a multiple business center may have one (1) pole sign in lieu of another Type A sign permitted by Section D2a for each three hundred (300) lineal feet, or portion thereof, of frontage on public rights-of-way, except alleys.

3. Maximum Area of Signs for Nonresidential Uses. The maximum area of all signs for each business establishment permitted in subsection d2 shall be one hundred eighty-five (185) square feet, and the maximum area of any one (1) Type A sign shall be seventy-two (72) square feet, provided that the maximum area of pole signs for gas stations which identify the price of motor fuel being offered by numerals of equal size shall be ninety-six (96) square feet

4. Identification Signs for Multi-family Structures.

a. One (1) identification sign bearing the name of a multi-family structure shall be permitted on each street or alley frontage of a residential use in addition to the signs permitted by subsection D1.

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b. Identification signs may be wall, ground, awning, canopy, marquee, under-marquee, or projecting signs.

c. For structures of twenty-four (24) units or less, the maximum area of each sign face shall be twenty-four (24) square feet. One (1) square foot of sign area shall be permitted for each additional unit over twenty-four (24), to a maximum of fifty (50) square feet per sign face.

5. Sign Height.

a. The maximum height for any portion of a pole, projecting or combination sign shall be twenty-five feet (25').

b. The maximum height for any portion of a wall or under-marquee sign shall be twenty feet (20') or the height of the cornice of the structure to which the sign is attached, whichever is greater.

c. Marquee signs may not exceed a height of thirty inches (30") above the top of the marquee, and total vertical dimension shall not exceed five feet (5').

d. No portion of a roof sign shall exceed a height of twenty-five feet (25') above grade.

E. Off-premises Signs. Off-premises signs shall not be permitted, except that:

1. Each business district may have two (2) identifying ground, pole, wall or projecting signs which may list businesses located in the district. The identifying signs shall not be located in a residential zone, and shall meet the standards of Section 23.55.014, Off-premises signs.

2. One (1) residential district identification wall or ground sign per entrance, meeting the standards of Section 23.55.014, shall be permitted.

3. When accessory parking is provided on a lot other than the lot where the principal use is located, off-premises directional signs five (5) square feet or less in area identifying the accessory parking shall be permitted. Off-premises directional signs five (5) square feet or less in area shall not be counted in sign size or number limits.

F. Signs Near Residential Zones. When located within fifty feet (50') of an abutting lot in a residential zone, electric and externally illuminated signs shall be oriented so that no portion of the sign face is visible from an existing or permitted principal structure on the abutting lot.

(Ord. 113387 § 5, 1987; Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

### **23.55.030 Signs in NC3, C1 and C2 zones.**

A. No sign shall have rotating or moving parts that revolve at a speed in excess of seven (7) revolutions per minute.

B. Signs may be electric, externally illuminated, or nonilluminated.

C. No flashing signs shall be permitted.

D. On-Premises Signs.

1. The following signs shall be permitted in addition to the signs permitted by subsections D2 and D3:

a. Electric, externally illuminated or nonilluminated signs bearing the name of the occupant of a dwelling unit, not exceeding sixty-four (64) square inches in area;

b. Memorial signs or tablets, and the names of buildings and dates of building erection when cut into a masonry surface or constructed of bronze or other noncombustible materials;

c. Signs for public facilities indicating danger and/or providing service or safety information;

d. Properly displayed national, state and institutional flags;

e. One (1) under-marquee sign which does not exceed ten (10) square feet in area;

f. One (1) electric, externally illuminated or nonilluminated sign bearing the name of a home occupation, not to exceed sixty-four (64) square inches in area.

2. Number and Type of Permitted Signs for Business Establishments.

a. Each business establishment may have one (1) ground, roof, projecting or combination sign (Type A sign) for each three hundred

(300) lineal feet, or portion thereof, of frontage on public rights-of-way, except alleys.

b. In addition to the signs permitted by subsection D2a, each business establishment may have one (1) wall, awning, canopy, marquee or under-marquee sign (Type B sign) for each thirty (30) lineal feet, or portion thereof, of frontage on public rights-of-way, except alleys.

c. In addition to the signs permitted by subsections D2a and D2b, each multiple business center and drive-in business may have one (1) pole sign for each three hundred (300) lineal feet, or portion thereof, of frontage on public rights-of-way, except alleys. Such pole signs may be for a drive-in business or for an individual business establishment located in a multiple business center, or may identify a multiple business center.

d. Individual businesses which are not drive-in businesses and which are not located in multiple business centers may have one (1) pole sign in lieu of another Type A sign permitted by subsection D2a for each three hundred (300) lineal feet, or portion thereof, of frontage on public rights-of-way, except alleys.

e. Where the principal use or activity on the lot is outdoor retail sales, banners and strings of pennants maintained in good condition shall be permitted in addition to the signs permitted by subsections D2a, D2b and D2c.

3. Maximum Area.

a. NC3 Zones.

(1) The maximum area of each face of a pole, ground, roof, projecting or combination sign shall be seventy-two (72) square feet plus two (2) square feet for each foot of frontage over thirty-six feet (36') on public rights-of-way, except alleys, to a maximum area of three hundred (300) square feet, provided that:

i. The maximum area for signs for multiple business centers, and signs for business establishments located within one hundred feet (100') of a state route right-of-way which is not designated in Section 23.55.042 as a landscaped or scenic view section, shall be six hundred (600) square feet; and

ii. The maximum area for pole signs for gas stations which identify the price of motor fuel being offered by numerals of equal size shall be ninety-six (96) square feet.



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(2) There shall be no maximum area limit for wall, awning, canopy, marquee or under-marquee signs.

b. C1 and C2 Zones. There shall be no maximum area limits for on-premises signs for business establishments in C1 and C2 zones.

4. Identification Signs for Multi-family Structures.

a. One (1) identification sign shall be permitted on each street or alley frontage of a multi-family structure.

b. Identification signs may be wall, ground, awning, canopy, marquee, under-marquee, or projecting signs.

c. The maximum area of each sign shall be seventy-two (72) square feet.

5. Sign Height.

a. The maximum height for any portion of a projecting or combination sign shall be sixty-five feet (65') above existing grade, or the maximum height limit of the zone, whichever is less.

b. The maximum height limit for any portion of a pole sign shall be thirty feet (30'); except for pole signs for multiple business centers and for business establishments located within one hundred feet (100') of a state route right-of-way which is not designated in Section 23.55.042 as a landscaped or scenic view section, which shall have a maximum height of forty feet (40').

c. The maximum height for any portion of a wall, marquee, under-marquee or canopy sign shall be twenty feet (20') or the height of the cornice of the structure to which the sign is attached, whichever is greater.

d. No portion of a roof sign shall:

(1) Extend beyond the height limit of the zone;

(2) Exceed a height above the roof in excess of the height of the structure on which the sign is located; or

(3) Exceed a height of thirty feet (30') above the roof, measured from a point on the roof line directly below the sign or from the nearest adjacent parapet.

E. Off-Premises Signs.

1. Identifying Signs for Business Districts. Each business district may have up to two (2) identifying ground, pole, wall or projecting signs which may list businesses located in the district. The identifying signs shall not be located

in a residential zone, and shall meet the standard of Section 23.55.014, Off-premises signs.

2. One (1) residential district identification wall or ground sign per entrance, meeting the standards of Section 23.55.014, shall be permitted.

3. When accessory parking is provided on a lot other than the lot where the principal use is located, off-premises directional signs five (5) square feet or less in area identifying the accessory parking shall be permitted.

4. Off-premises directional signs and advertising signs, in addition to those permitted by subsections E1, E2 and E3, shall be permitted according to Section 23.55.014, Off-premises signs.

5. Advertising signs are prohibited in Neighborhood Commercial 3 zones.

F. Signs Near Residential Zones. When located within fifty feet (50') of an abutting lot in a residential zone, electrical and externally illuminated signs shall be oriented so that no portion of the sign face is visible from an existing or permitted principal structure on the abutting lot. (Ord. 116780 § 2, 1993; Ord. 113387 § 6, 1987; Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

**23.55.032 Sign overlay district in commercial zones.**

A. Sign overlay districts may be established by rezone in all commercial zones according to the process established for rezones in Chapter 23.76, Procedures for Master Use Permits and Council Land Use Decisions.

B. Sign overlay districts are intended to maintain or create more unified commercial areas, or to enhance the special character of individual business districts.

C. A sign overlay district shall be large enough to establish a recognizable character or image for the business district to which it applies.

D. The regulations of a sign overlay district may be more or less restrictive than the underlying zone regulations.

E. The sign overlay district may establish specific regulations for the size, number, type, format, height, material, lighting, motion and location of on-premises signs. The sign overlay district shall not establish qualitative design standards which would require discretionary review.

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F. Sign overlay districts shall not regulate off-premises signs or modify regulations for signs completely in the public right-of-way.

G. Once adopted, the boundaries of a sign overlay district shall be shown on the Official Land Use Map, Chapter 23.32. Regulations for specific sign overlay districts shall be adopted as a text amendment and codified at the end of this chapter. (Ord. 113263 § 29, 1986; Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

**23.55.034 Signs in downtown zones.**

A. The provisions of this section shall apply to all downtown zones except PSM, IDR and IDM zones, and portions of PMM zones located in a Historic District. In areas of PMM zones not located in a Historic District, these regulations may be modified by the provisions of the Pike Place Urban Renewal Plan. Signs in the PSM, IDR and IDM zones are regulated by the provisions of Chapter 23.66, Special Review Districts.

B. The following signs shall be permitted in all downtown zones regulated by this section:

- 1. Electric, externally illuminated or nonilluminated signs bearing the name of the occupant of a dwelling unit, not exceeding sixty-four (64) square inches in area;
- 2. Memorial signs or tablets, and the names of buildings and dates of building erection when cut into a masonry surface or constructed of bronze or other noncombustible materials;
- 3. Signs for public facilities indicating danger and/or providing service or safety information;
- 4. Properly displayed national, state and institutional flags.

**C. General Standards for All Signs.**

- 1. Signs may be electrical, externally illuminated, or nonilluminated.
- 2. No sign shall have rotating or moving parts that revolve at a speed in excess of seven (7) revolutions per minute.
- 3. No flashing signs shall be permitted.
- 4. Roof signs shall not be permitted.
- 5. No portion of any on-premises or off-premises sign shall be located more than sixty-five feet (65') above the elevation of the sidewalk at the street property line closest to the sign.

**D. On-premises Signs.**

- 1. Number and Type of Permitted Signs.

a. Each use may have one (1) pole, ground, wall, marquee, under-marquee, projecting or combination sign for each three hundred (300) lineal feet, or portion thereof, of frontage on public rights-of-way, except alleys.

b. In addition to the signs permitted by subsection D1a, each use may have one (1) wall, awning, canopy, ground, marquee, under-marquee or projecting sign for each thirty (30) lineal feet, or portion thereof, of frontage on public rights-of-way, except alleys.

c. In addition to the signs permitted by subsections D1a and D1b, each multiple business center may have one (1) wall, marquee, under-marquee, projecting or combination sign for each three hundred (300) lineal feet, or portion thereof, of frontage on public rights-of-way, except alleys.

d. Where the principal use or activity on the lot is outdoor retail sales, banner and strings of pennants maintained in good condition shall be allowed in addition to the signs permitted by subsections D1a, D1b and D1c.

2. There shall be no maximum area limits for on-premises signs.

**E. Off-premises Signs.**

1. When accessory parking is provided on a lot other than the lot where the principal use is located, off-premises directional signs five (5) square feet or less in area identifying the accessory parking shall be permitted.

2. Off-premises directional signs and advertising signs, in addition to those permitted by subsection E1, shall be permitted according to Section 23.55.014.

3. Advertising signs are prohibited in Downtown Mixed Residential/Residential (DMR/R) zones.

(Ord. 116780 § 3, 1993; Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

**23.55.036 Signs in IB, IC, IG1 and IG2 zones.**

A. No sign shall have rotating or moving parts that revolve at a speed in excess of seven (7) revolutions per minute.

B. Signs may be electric, externally illuminated, or nonilluminated.

C. No flashing signs shall be permitted.

**D. On-premises Signs.**

1. The following signs shall be permitted in addition to the signs permitted by subsections D2, D3 and D4:

a. Electric, externally illuminated or nonilluminated signs bearing the name of the occupant of a dwelling unit, not exceeding sixty-four (64) square inches in area;

b. Memorial signs or tablets, and the names of buildings and dates of building erection when cut into a masonry surface or constructed of bronze noncombustible materials;

c. Signs for public facilities indicating danger and/or providing service or safety information;

d. Properly displayed national, state and institutional flags;

e. One (1) under-marquee sign which does not exceed ten (10) square feet in area;

f. One (1) electric, externally illuminated or nonilluminated sign bearing the name of a home occupation, not exceeding sixty-four (64) square inches in area.

2. Number and Type of Permitted Signs for Business Establishments.

a. Each business establishment may have one (1) ground, roof, projecting or combination sign (Type A sign) for each three hundred (300) lineal feet, or portion thereof, of frontage on public rights-of-way, except alleys.

b. In addition to the signs permitted by subsection D2a, each business establishment may have one (1) wall, awning, canopy, marquee, or under-marquee sign (Type B sign) for each thirty (30) lineal feet, or portion thereof, of frontage on public rights-of-way, except alleys.

c. In addition to the signs permitted by subsections D2a and D2b, each multiple business center and drive-in business may have one (1) pole sign for each three hundred (300) lineal feet, or portion thereof, of frontage on public rights-of-way, except alleys. Such pole signs may be for a drive-in business or for an individual business establishment located in a multiple business center, or may identify a multiple business center.

d. Individual businesses which are not drive-in businesses and which are not located in multiple business centers may have one (1) pole sign in lieu of another Type A sign permitted by subsection D2a for each three hundred (300) lineal feet, or portion thereof, of frontage on public rights-of-way, except alleys.

e. Where the principal use or activity on the lot is outdoor retail sales, banners and strings of pennants maintained in good condition

shall be permitted in addition to the signs permitted by subsections D2a, D2b and D2c.

3. Maximum Area. There shall be no maximum area limits for on-premises signs for business establishments.

4. Identification Signs for Multi-family Structures.

a. One (1) identification sign shall be permitted on each street or alley frontage of a multi-family structure.

b. Identification signs may be wall, ground, awning, canopy, marquee, under-marquee, or projecting signs.

c. The maximum area of each sign shall be seventy-two (72) square feet.

5. Sign Height.

a. The maximum height for any portion of a projecting or combination sign shall be sixty-five feet (65') above existing grade, or the maximum height limit of the zone, whichever is less.

b. The maximum height limit for any portion of a pole sign shall be thirty feet (30'); except for pole signs for multiple business centers and for business establishments located within one hundred feet (100') of a state route right-of-way which is not designated in Section 23.55.042 as a landscaped or scenic view section, which shall have a maximum height of forty feet (40').

c. The maximum height for any portion of a wall, marquee, under-marquee, or canopy sign shall be twenty feet (20') or the height of the cornice of the structure to which the sign is attached, whichever is greater.

d. No portion of a roof sign shall:

(1) Extend beyond the height limit of the zone for office uses;

(2) Exceed a height above the roof in excess of the height of the structure on which the sign is located; or

(3) Exceed a height of thirty feet (30') above the roof measured from a point on the roof line directly below the sign or from the nearest adjacent parapet.

E. Off-premises Signs.

1. Identifying Signs for Business Districts. Each business district may have up to two (2) identifying ground, pole, wall, or projecting signs which may list businesses located in the district. The identifying signs shall not be located in a residential zone, and shall meet the standard of Section 23.55.014, Off-premises signs.

(Seattle 12-93)

2. When accessory parking is provided on a lot other than the lot where the principal use is located, off-premises directional signs five (5) square feet or less in area identifying the accessory parking shall be permitted.

3. Off-premises directional signs and advertising signs in addition to those permitted by subsections E1, E2, and E3 shall be permitted according to Section 23.55.014, Off-premises signs.

F. Signs Near Residential Zones. When located within fifty feet (50') of an abutting lot in a residential zone, electrical and externally illuminated signs shall be oriented so that no portion of the sign face is visible from an existing or permitted principal structure on the abutting lot. (Ord. 113658 § 11, 1987.)

**23.55.038 Signs in open space zones.**  
(Reserved)

**23.55.040 Special exception for signs in commercial zones.**

The Director may authorize exceptions to the regulations for the size, number, type and height of on-premises signs in commercial zones as a special exception pursuant to Chapter 23.76, Procedures for Master Use Permit and Council Land Use Decisions, when the following standards and criteria are met.

23.55.040 LAND USE CODE

**Seattle Municipal Code**

**March, 1995 code update file**

**Text provided for historic reference only.**

**See ordinances creating and amending sections for complete text, graphics, and tables and to confirm accuracy of this source file.**

(Seattle 12-93)

**For current SMC, contact  
the Office of the City Clerk**

23.358.20a

**Seattle Municipal Code  
March, 1995 code update file  
Text provided for historic reference only.**

**See ordinances creating and amending  
sections for complete text, graphics,  
and tables and to confirm accuracy of  
this source file.**

**For current SMC, contact  
the Office of the City Clerk**

Seattle Municipal Code  
March, 1995 code update  
Text provided for historical reference only.  
See ordinances creating amendments,  
sections for complete text, graphics,  
and tables and to consult key of  
this source file.

A. Review Criteria. The Director may approve a special sign exception for one (1) or more of the following reasons:

1. The proposed sign plan shows an exceptional effort toward creating visual harmony between the signs, structures, and other features of the property through the use of a consistent design theme;

2. The proposed sign plan will preserve a desirable existing design or siting pattern for signs in an area;

3. The proposed sign plan will minimize view obstruction or preserve views of historically or architecturally significant structures.

B. Submittal Requirements. As part of any application for a special sign exception, the following information shall be submitted:

1. A narrative describing how the proposal is consistent with the criteria listed in subsection A2;

2. A colored rendering showing the proposed signs and how they relate to development in the area and on the subject property.

(Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

**23.55.042 Off-premises and business signs adjacent to certain public highways.**

A. Intent. The purpose of this section is to implement the purpose and policy expressed by the Highway Advertising Control Act of the State of Washington in the regulation of outdoor off-premises signs adjacent to certain public highways, and this section is declared to be an exercise of the police power of the City to protect the public health, safety, convenience and the enjoyment of public travel, to attract visitors to the City and to conserve the beauty of the natural and built environment by regulating the size and location of certain signs adjacent to certain designated freeways, expressways, parkways and scenic routes within the City. This section shall be liberally construed for the accomplishment of these purposes and is intended to be additional and supplemental to other laws regulating the size and location of signs.

B. Off-premises and Business Signs Prohibited Near Certain Areas. No off-premises sign or business sign shall be erected within six hundred sixty feet (660') outgoing from the nearest edge of the main traveled way of any landscaped and/or scenic view section of a freeway, expressway, parkway or scenic route designated by this subsection and shown on Exhibit 23.55.042 A (Type A sections), and no off-premises sign shall be erected within two hundred feet (200') in any direction from the main traveled way of the exit and entrance ramps thereto, if any part of the

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!!!EXHIBIT 23.55.042 A GOES HERE!!!

advertising matter or informative content of the sign is visible from any place on the traveled way of the landscaped and/or scenic view section or ramp, except as provided in subsections C and D:

1. West Seattle Freeway from Harbor Avenue S.W. to 35th Avenue S.W.;
2. The west side of the Alaskan Freeway from South Connecticut Street to the west portal of the Battery Street Tunnel. The east side of the Alaskan Freeway from South Connecticut Street to the west portal of the Battery Street Tunnel;
3. Interstate Highway No. 5 from the north City limits to the south City limits;
4. Interstate Highway No. 90 from the east City limits to Interstate Highway No. 5.

C. Business Signs Permitted on Type A Landscaped and Scenic View Sections. The following business signs shall be permitted outright on Type I landscaped and scenic view sections:

1. Stationary, nonflashing business signs on the face of a structure, the total area of which shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the face of the structure or two hundred fifty (250) square feet, whichever is less;
2. Stationary, nonflashing freestanding business signs, of which the total area visible from any place on the traveled way of the landscaped and/or scenic view section does not exceed seventy-five (75) square feet, and not exceeding thirty feet (30') in height including structures and component parts as measured from the grade immediately below the sign;
3. Real estate "for sale" or "for rent" signs, provided the total area of all such signs on any lot shall not exceed fifty (50) square feet;
4. Stationary, nonflashing business signs for gas stations, the area of a single face of which shall not exceed one hundred fifty (150) square feet and the total combined area of which shall not exceed two hundred fifty (250) square feet, which may be apportioned among freestanding business signs not exceeding thirty feet (30') in height and business signs on the face of a structure.

D. Discretionary Exceptions.

1. Discretionary exceptions from the provisions of subsection B may be issued for the types of signs listed in subsection D2 as a Type I



decision under Chapter 23.76, Master Use Permits and Council Land Use Decisions, when the Director finds that the following criteria are met:

a. The exception will not make difficult the viewing and comprehending by motorists and pedestrians of official or conforming signs; and

b. The exception will not increase the density of signs along a designated landscaped and/or scenic view section to an extent tending to constitute a hazard to traffic safety or a detriment to the appearance of the neighborhood; and

c. The exception will not allow a sign to impinge upon a view of scenic interest.

2. Discretionary exemptions may be permitted for the following types of signs:

a. Business signs composed of letters, numbers or designs individually painted or mounted directly on a structure;

b. Business signs on a structure which extend not more than twelve feet (12') in height above the face of the structure, provided that the maximum permitted area of such signs, except for gas station signs, shall be reduced by fifty percent (50%);

c. Time, temperature and/or stock index recording devices as part of a business sign;

d. Business signs on a structure face of five thousand (5,000) square feet or more, the area of which exceeds two hundred fifty (250) square feet but which in no case exceeds five percent (5%) of the area of the face of the structure;

e. Except signs for gas stations, free-standing business signs on the same premises with business signs on the face of a structure.

E. Off-premises Signs Prohibited Near Certain Areas. No off-premises sign shall be erected within six hundred sixty feet (660') outgoing from the nearest edge of the main traveled way of any landscaped and/or scenic view section designated by this subsection (Type B section) and shown on Exhibit 23.55.042 A, and no off-premises signs shall be erected within two hundred feet (200') in any direction from the main traveled way of the exit or entrance ramps thereto, if any part of the advertising matter or informative content of the off-premises sign is visible from any place on the traveled way of the landscaped and/or scenic view section or ramp.

1. The east side of Aurora Avenue North from the George Washington Memorial Bridge (Raye Street) to Prospect Street;

2. The east side of Dexter Avenue North from Westlake Avenue North to Aloha Street;

3. The east side of Westlake Avenue North from the Fremont Bridge to Valley Street;

4. The west side of Fairview Avenue North and Fairview Avenue East from Valley Street to the Lake Union Ship Canal;

5. The north side of Valley Street from Westlake Avenue North to Fairview Avenue North;

6. The south side of North 34th Street from the Fremont Bridge to North Pacific Street;

7. The south side of North Northlake Way and Northeast Northlake Way from the George Washington Memorial Bridge to Tenth Avenue Northeast;

8. The east side of Harbor Avenue Southwest from Southwest Florida Street to Duwamish Head;

9. The northwesterly side of Alki Avenue Southwest from Duwamish Head to Alki Point;

10. Lake Washington Boulevard and Lake Washington Boulevard South from Interstate 90 to Denny Blaine Park;

11. The perimeter streets of Green Lake, consisting of Aurora Avenue North from West Green Lake Way North to West Green Lake Drive North; West Green Lake Drive North; East Green Lake Way North; and West Green Lake Way North;

12. Northwest 54th Street and Seaview Avenue Northwest from the Hiram Chittenden Locks to Golden Gardens Park;

13. All streets forming the perimeter of Seattle Center, as follows: Mercer Street from Warren Avenue North to Fifth Avenue North; Fifth Avenue North from Mercer Street to Broad Street; Broad Street from Fifth Avenue North to Denny Way; Denny Way from Broad Street to Second Avenue North; Second Avenue North from Denny Way to Thomas Street; Thomas Street from Second Avenue North to First Avenue North; First Avenue North from Thomas Street to Republican Street; Republican Street from First Avenue North to Warren Avenue; Warren Avenue from Republican Street to Mercer Street;

14. The south side of North Pacific Street and Northeast Pacific Street from 34th Street North to Latona Avenue Northeast;

15. Fourth Avenue South from Dearborn Street to South Royal Brougham and South Royal Brougham Way from Fourth Avenue South to South Occidental Street.

(Ord. 116780 § 4, 1993; Ord. 112830 § 10(part), 1986.)

**Division 3 Overlay Districts**

**Chapter 23.56  
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**Sections:**

**23.56.010 Overlay districts generally.**

**23.56.010 Overlay districts generally.**

A. Purpose. Overlay districts are established to conserve and enhance The City of Seattle's unique natural marine and mountain setting and its environmental and topographic features; to preserve areas of historical note or architectural merit; to assist in the redevelopment and rehabilitation of declining areas of the City; to balance the needs of Major Institution development with the need to preserve adjacent neighborhoods; and to promote the general welfare by safeguarding such areas for the future use and enjoyment of all people.

B. Application of Regulations. Property located within an overlay district as identified on the Land Use Maps, Chapter 23.32, is subject both to its zone classification regulations and to the additional requirements imposed for the overlay district. In any case where the provisions of the overlay district conflict with the provisions of the underlying zone, the overlay district provisions shall apply.

C. Pending the complete transition from Title 24 to Title 23, both Title 24 and this Part of Title 23 will contain certain overlay district regulations. (Ord. 115002 § 14, 1990; Ord. 110381 § 1(part), 1982.)

**Chapter 23.57  
COMMUNICATIONS REGULATIONS**

**Sections:**

**Subchapter I General Provisions**

**23.57.001 Intent.**

**23.57.002 Scope of provisions.**

**23.57.003 Nonconforming uses and structures.**

**Subchapter II Major Communication Utilities**

**23.57.005 Permitted and prohibited locations.**

**23.57.006 Council conditional use criteria.**

**23.57.007** Administrative conditional use criteria.

**23.57.008** Development standards.

**Subchapter III Minor Communication Utilities and Accessory Communication Devices**

**23.57.009** Development standards for freestanding transmission towers for minor communication utilities in all zones.

**23.57.010** Single Family zones.

**23.57.011** Lowrise, midrise and highrise.

**23.57.012** Commercial zones.

**23.57.013** Downtown zones.

**23.57.014** Special review districts.

**23.57.015** Industrial zones.

**Subchapter I General Provisions**

**23.57.001** Intent.

The intent of this chapter is to provide regulations and development standards for major and minor communication utilities and accessory communication devices. Development of communication facilities may also be subject to Title 25 of the Municipal Code (Chapter 25.05, SEPA Policies and Procedures; Chapter 25.10, Radio-frequency Radiation), in addition to the Land Use Code.

(Ord. 116295 § 25(part), 1992.)

**23.57.002** Scope of provisions.

A. The provisions of this chapter shall apply to communication utilities and accessory communication devices in all zones.

B. Lots located in the Shoreline District shall meet the requirements of the Seattle Shoreline Master Program in addition to the provisions of this chapter. In the event there is a conflict between the regulations of the Shoreline Master Program and this chapter, the provisions of the Shoreline Master Program shall apply.

(Ord. 116295 § 25(part), 1992.)

**23.57.003** Nonconforming uses and structures.

A. Existing communication utilities and accessory communication devices which are nonconforming uses may remain in use subject to the provisions of this chapter.

B. The following activities shall be permitted outright for existing communication utilities and accessory communication devices which are nonconforming structures: structural alteration to meet safety requirements, replacement on-site, maintenance, renovation or repair. The addition of new telecommunication devices to an existing tower shall be permitted outright, except as follows: no more than a total of fifteen (15) horn and dish antennas which are over four feet (4') in any dimension may be located on an existing tower, unless the applicant submits copies of Federal Communications Commission licenses, as provided in Section 23.57.008 G, showing that all of the existing fifteen (15) horn and dish antennas over four feet (4') in any dimension, plus any proposed additional such horn or dish antenna, are accessory to the communication utility. Physical expansion shall be prohibited, except as may be permitted by Council Conditional Use.

(Ord. 116295 § 25(part), 1992.)

**Subchapter II Major Communication Utilities**

**23.57.005** Permitted and prohibited locations.

A. Single Family, Lowrise, Midrise, Highrise, and Neighborhood Commercial 1, 2 and 3 Zones.

1. New major communication utilities shall be prohibited.

2. Physical expansion of existing major communication utilities may be permitted by Council Conditional Use under the criteria listed in Section 23.57.006 and according to development standards in Section 23.57.008.

3. The following activities shall be permitted outright for existing communication utilities and accessory communication devices: structural alteration to meet safety requirements, replacement on-site, maintenance, renovation, or repair. The addition of new telecommunication devices to an existing tower shall be permitted outright, except as follows: No more than a total of fifteen (15) horn and dish antennas which are over four feet (4') in any dimension may be located on an existing tower, unless the applicant submits copies of Federal Communications Commission licenses, as provided in Section 23.57.008

23.57.003 LAND USE CODE

G, showing that all of the existing fifteen (15) horn and dish antennas over four feet (4') in any dimension, plus any proposed additional such horn or dish antennas, are accessory to the communication utility.

B. Commercial 1 and 2 Zones.

1. New Major Communication Utilities.

a. Single-occupant major communication utilities may be permitted by Council Conditional Use under the criteria listed in Section 23.57.006 and according to the development standards in Section 23.57.008.

b. Shared-use major communication utilities may be permitted by Administrative Conditional Use under the criteria listed in Section 23.57.007 and according to development standards in Section 23.57.008.

2. Physical expansion of existing major communication utilities may be permitted by Council Conditional Use under the criteria listed in Section 23.57.006 and according to development standards in 23.57.008.

3. The following activities shall be permitted outright for existing communication utilities and accessory communication devices: structural alteration to meet safety requirements, replacement on-site, maintenance, renovation, or repair. The addition of new telecommunication devices to an existing tower shall be permitted outright, except as follows: No more than a total of fifteen (15) horn and dish antennas which are over four feet (4') in any dimension may be located on an existing tower, unless the applicant submits copies of Federal Communications Commission licenses, as provided in Section 23.57.008 G, showing that all of the existing fifteen (15) horn and dish antennas over four feet (4') in any dimension, plus any proposed additional such horn or dish antennas, are accessory to the communication utility.

C. Downtown Zones.

1. In Pioneer Square Mixed, International District Mixed, International District Residential and Pike Market Mixed Zones, new major communication utilities shall be prohibited.

2. In all other downtown zones, establishment or physical expansion of major communication utilities may be permitted, whether single-occupant or shared, by Administrative Conditional Use under the evaluation criteria listed in Section 23.57.007 and according to development standards in Section 23.57.008.

(Seattle 12-92)

3. The following activities shall be permitted outright for existing communication utilities and accessory communication devices: structural alteration to meet safety requirements, replacement on-site, maintenance, renovation, or repair. The addition of new telecommunication devices to an existing tower shall be permitted outright, except as follows: No more than a total of fifteen (15) horn and dish antennas which are over four feet (4') in any dimension may be located on an existing tower, unless the applicant submits copies of Federal Communications Commission licenses, as provided in Section 23.57.008 G, showing that all of the existing fifteen (15) horn and dish antennas over four feet (4') in any dimension, plus any proposed additional such horn or dish antennas, are accessory to the communication utility.

**D. Industrial Zones.**

Establishment or physical expansion of major communication utilities, whether single-occupant or shared, may be permitted by Administrative Conditional Use under the criteria listed in Section 23.57.007 and the development standards in Section 23.57.008. The following activities shall be permitted outright for existing communication utilities and accessory communication devices: structural alteration to meet safety requirements, replacement on-site, maintenance, renovation, or repair. The addition of new telecommunication devices to an existing tower shall be permitted outright, except as follows: no more than a total of fifteen (15) horn and dish antennas which are over four feet (4') in any dimension may be located on an existing tower, unless the applicant submits copies of Federal Communications Commission licenses, as provided in Section 23.57.008 G, showing that all of the existing fifteen (15) horn and dish antennas over four feet (4') in any dimension, plus any proposed additional such horn or dish antennas, are accessory to the communication utility.

(Ord. 116295 § 25(part), 1992.)

**23.57.006 Council conditional use criteria.**

When evaluating an application for a new or expanded major communication utility, the Council shall weigh the potential benefits to the general public of improved broadcast communications against potential negative impacts. The following criteria shall be weighed and balanced to make this determination:

A. Whether the proposed major communication utility will be substantially detrimental to the pedestrian or retail character of the surrounding commercial area or the residential character of nearby residentially zoned areas. Detriment may include diminished street-level activity. The impacts considered shall include, but not be limited to, visual, noise, land use, safety and traffic impacts;

B. Whether the location provides topographic conditions which maximize the opportunity for the use and operation of the major communication utility;

C. If a single-occupant major communication utility is proposed, whether reasonable efforts have been made and the applicant has demonstrated that it is not practical to locate the proposed antenna(s) on an existing communication utility, determined in part by the ability to achieve equivalent broadcast performance, and that locations other than in Residential, Neighborhood Commercial or Commercial zones have been considered in good faith;

D. Whether the proposed new, expanded or replaced communication utility provides the opportunity for sharing of facilities, so that the demand for major communication utilities elsewhere is minimized;

E. The Federal Aviation Administration advises the City that the proposed major communication utility does not create a hazard to aviation.

(Ord. 116295 § 25(part), 1992.)

**23.57.007 Administrative conditional use criteria.**

When evaluating an application for the establishment of a proposed major communication utility or its physical expansion, the Director shall consider the following criteria:

A. Whether the public benefit is outweighed by the adverse impacts, which cannot otherwise be mitigated;

B. Whether the project will have substantial adverse impacts on residential development in the vicinity, including demolition of housing.

(Ord. 116295 § 25(part), 1992.)

**23.57.008 Development standards.**

A. In Single Family, Lowrise, Midrise, Highrise and Neighborhood Commercial zones, physical expansion of a major communication utility may be permitted only when:

1. The expanded facility will be a shared-use utility, and another broadcaster has contracted to relocate its transmitter to the expanded facility; and

2. A different existing tower of similar size in the immediate vicinity will be removed within six months of issuance of the certificate of occupancy.

B. Access to sites containing major communication utilities shall be restricted to authorized personnel by fencing or other means of security. This fencing or other barrier shall be incorporated into the landscaping and/or screening to reduce visual impact of the facility.

C. Setbacks and Landscaping.

1. Major communication utility structures, including accessory structures, shall be set back at least twenty feet (20') from all lot lines.

2. Landscaping in the required setback:

a. A five-foot (5') deep setback measured perpendicular to the property lines shall be planted with ground cover.

b. The area between five feet (5') and ten feet (10') in from all lot lines shall be planted with continuous vegetation consisting of bushes.

c. The area between ten feet (10') and twenty feet (20') in from all lot lines shall be planted with view-obscuring vegetation consisting of evergreen hedges, and evergreen trees which are a minimum of ten feet (10') tall at time of planting and are expected to reach at least thirty feet (30') at maturity.

d. All landscaping shall conform to the Director's Rule on Landscape Standards.

3. Exceptions to Landscaping and Setback Requirements.

a. The setback requirement of subsection C1 may be reduced for any particular frontage of the utility site which is adjacent to, or across a street or alley from, a commercially zoned lot and the Director finds that an alternate plan for screening and landscaping would result in the same screening and mitigation of visual impacts as would result from the provision of the requirements of subsections C1 and C2, and would result in an appearance compatible with the commercial area. Alternative screening devices could include decorative walls, fences or murals.

The screening may be provided by a structure if the appearance is compatible with the commercial area and if it results in the screening of the base of the transmission tower from adjacent uses.

b. The setback and landscaping requirements of subsection C shall not apply when the lot is adjacent to, or across a street or alley from, an industrially zoned lot.

c. Landscaping requirements of subsection C2 may be waived or reduced if the distance from the property line to the structure is far enough to substantially diminish the impact of the height of the structure or if the topography or existing vegetation provides a visual barrier comparable to the requirements of subsection C2.

D. The maximum height limit for all major communication utilities shall be one thousand one hundred feet (1,100') above mean sea level. These structures are also subject to Chapter 23.64, Airport Height District. Accessory structures are subject to the height limits of the zone.

E. The applicant shall use material, shape, color and lighting to minimize to the greatest extent practicable the visual impact, as long as these measures are not inconsistent with the requirements of the Federal Aviation Administration.

F. The applicant shall submit and follow a construction and maintenance plan to control or eliminate off-site impacts from construction or maintenance debris and icfall. This plan shall include a requirement to notify residents and business owners on properties immediately adjacent to or across a street or alley from the site when maintenance work such as sandblasting or painting is to occur.

G. When a horn or dish antenna over four feet (4') in any dimension is proposed to be added to an existing tower which already contains fifteen (15) such antennas, per Section 23.57.003 or 23.57.005, the applicant must submit copies of Federal Communications Commission licenses for auxiliary broadcast service, showing that all of the existing fifteen (15) horn and dish antennas which are over four feet (4') in any dimension, plus any proposed additional such horn or dish antenna, are accessory to the communication utility.

(Ord. 116295 § 25(part), 1992.)

**Subchapter III Minor Communication  
Utilities and Accessory Communication  
Devices**

**23.57.009 Development standards for  
freestanding transmission  
towers for minor  
communication utilities in all  
zones.**

Freestanding transmission towers for minor communication utilities shall be subject to the access, setback, screening and landscaping requirements for major communication utilities in subsections B, C and E of Section 23.57.008 in addition to the standards of each zone. (Ord. 116295 § 25(part), 1992.)

**23.57.010 Single Family zones.**

A. Amateur Radio Devices. Amateur radio devices accessory to a residential use which meet the development standards of subsection E are permitted outright.

B. Accessory Communication Devices.

1. Receive-only communication devices accessory to residential uses which meet the development standards of subsection E are permitted outright;

2. Communication devices on the same site as and accessory to institutions, public facilities, public utilities, and nonconforming residential uses, which meet the development standards of subsection E are permitted outright.

C. Uses Permitted by Administrative Conditional Use. When locating on the same lot as an existing utility or public facility, minor communication utilities may be permitted by Administrative Conditional Use, pursuant to the following criteria:

1. The proposal shall not result in a commercial intrusion which would be significantly detrimental to the residential character of the surrounding residentially zoned area.

2. If the proposed minor communication utility is proposed to exceed the permitted height of the zone or is a transmission tower, the applicant shall demonstrate the following:

a. The need for the proposed communication utility to be in a Single Family zone and a justification for the proposed height;

b. That the materials, shape and color of the proposed utility or device will minimize negative visual impacts on adjacent or nearby residential areas to the greatest extent possible;

c. That proposed communication utility will not be substantially detrimental to the residential character of an area, for example, through the demolition of residential dwelling units in a residential zone.

D. Uses Permitted by Council Conditional Use. The establishment or expansion of a minor communication utility other than as described in subsection C above, may be permitted as a Council Conditional Use, pursuant to the following criteria:

1. The minor communication utility shall not result in a commercial intrusion which would be substantially detrimental to the residential character of the surrounding residentially zoned area.

2. If the proposed minor communication utility is proposed to exceed the permitted height of the zone or is a transmission tower, the applicant shall demonstrate the following:

a. The need for the proposed communication utility to be in a Single Family zone and a justification for the proposed height;

b. That the materials, shape and color of the proposed utility or device will minimize negative visual impacts on adjacent or nearby residential areas to the greatest extent possible;

c. That proposed communication utility will not be substantially detrimental to the residential character of an area, for example through the demolition of residential dwelling units in a residential zone.

E. Development Standards.

1. Location.

a. Dish antennas are prohibited in the required front yard.

b. Dish antennas shall be set back a minimum of ten feet (10') from all lot lines, except as provided in subsection D5.

c. Dish antennas shall be counted in lot coverage and rear yard coverage calculations. Coverage shall be calculated with the dish in a horizontal position.

d. Dish antennas shall not be located on rooftops of principal or accessory structures containing residential uses, except as provided in subsection E5.

e. Accessory amateur radio towers may not be located in required front or side yards.



2. Size.

a. The height limit of the underlying zone shall apply to transmission towers. Exceptions to the height limit may be authorized through the approval of an Administrative Conditional Use (see subsection C above) if located on an existing utility or public facility, or a Council Conditional Use (subsection D above).

b. The maximum height for dish antennas shall be twelve feet (12') above finished grade, except as provided in subsection E5.

c. The maximum diameter of dish antennas shall be twelve feet (12').

d. The maximum height of an accessory amateur radio tower shall be no more than fifty feet (50') above existing grade. Cages and antennas may extend to a maximum additional fifteen feet (15'). The base of the tower shall be located at a distance from any lot line at least one-half (1/2) the height of the total structure, including tower, cage and antennas.

3. Visual Impacts. Antennas four feet (4') or more in any dimension shall be screened from any public park or residentially zoned lot located adjacent to or across a street or alley from the lot as follows:

a. A screen for freestanding antennas shall be six feet (6') tall and may be a view-obscuring fence, wall or hedge and shall be maintained in good condition.

b. For an antenna located on a rooftop, screening shall be provided to a height equal to two-thirds (2/3) the height above the rooftop of the installed antenna.

c. Exceptions. No screening shall be required in the following circumstances:

(i) As provided in subsection E5;

(ii) If the antenna is set back from the property line a distance of at least five (5) times its diameter or height, whichever is greater, from any residentially zoned lot or public park;

(iii) For amateur radio towers, whip antennas, antennas attached to sides of structures, and antennas attached to freestanding transmission towers;

(iv) If the antenna is adjacent to or across a street or alley from a designated major institution, no screening is required on that frontage.

d. The visibility of a minor communication utility on a rooftop shall be minimized by painting it the same color as the building upon which it is located.

4. Access and Signage. Access to transmitting accessory communication devices and to minor communication utilities shall be restricted to authorized personnel by fencing or other means of security. If located on a residential structure or on a public utility, warning signs at every point of access to the transmitting antenna shall be posted with information on the existence of radiofrequency radiation.

5. Special Exceptions for Dish Antenna. When adherence to all development standards would result in reception window obstruction in all permissible locations, a special exception, according to provisions of Chapter 23.76, may be permitted from development standards of subsections E1b, E1d, E2b and E3 of this subsection. The first waiver to be considered will be from the requirement for a ten-foot (10') setback; the second, reduction, then waiver from screening; and the third from the maximum permitted elevation up to a maximum of eighteen feet (18'). Only if these waived regulations would still result in obstruction shall rooftop location be considered. Approval of a special exception shall be subject to the following criteria:

a. The applicant shall demonstrate that the obstruction is a result of factors beyond the property owner's control, taking into consideration potential permitted development on adjacent and neighboring lots with regard to future reception-window obstruction.

b. The applicant shall be required to use material, shape and color to minimize visual impact.

c. If a special exception is sought to permit a rooftop location, the maximum permitted height of the device shall be four feet (4') above the existing roofline or four feet (4') above the zone height limit, whichever is higher.

(Ord. 116295 § 25(part), 1992.)

**23.57.011 Lowrise, Midrise and Highrise.**

A. Accessory Communication Devices. Communication devices accessory to residential or institutional use are permitted outright when they meet the development standards of subsection C.

B. Uses Permitted by Administrative Conditional Use. Minor communication utilities may be permitted as an Administrative Conditional Use when they meet the development standards of subsection C and the following criteria:

1. The minor communication utility shall not result in a commercial intrusion which would be substantially detrimental to the residential character of the surrounding residentially zoned area.

2. If the minor communication utility is proposed to exceed the zone height limit or is a transmission tower, the applicant shall demonstrate the following:

(i) The need for the proposed communication utility to be in a residential zone and a justification for the proposed height;

(ii) That the proposed materials, shape and color of the proposed utility or device will minimize negative visual impacts on adjacent or nearby residential areas to the greatest extent possible;

(iii) That the proposed communication utility will not be substantially detrimental to the residential character of an area, for example, through the demolition of residential dwelling units in a residential zone.

#### C. Location.

a. Minor accessory communication devices and amateur radio towers may not be located in a required front or side setback.

b. Minor communication utilities other than freestanding transmission towers, accessory communication devices and amateur radio towers may be located in a required rear setback.

c. In all Lowrise zones, dish antennas shall not be located on rooftops of principal or accessory structures, except as provided in subsection C5.

d. In Midrise and Highrise zones, minor communication utilities and accessory communication devices may be located on rooftops and may exceed the zone height limit by a maximum of four feet (4').

e. In all Lowrise, Midrise and Highrise zones, minor utilities and accessory communication devices are prohibited on the outside, except rooftops, of buildings containing the residential units.

#### 2. Size.

a. The height limit of the underlying zone shall apply for transmission towers except as may be permitted in subsection B of this section.

b. The maximum height above finished grade for freestanding dish antennas shall be twelve feet (12'), except as provided in subsection C5.

c. The maximum diameter of dish antennas shall be twelve feet (12').

d. The maximum height of an amateur radio tower shall be no more than fifty feet (50') above existing grade. Cages and antennas may extend to a maximum additional fifteen feet (15'). The base of the tower shall be located at a distance from any lot line at least one-half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) the height of the total structure, including tower, cage and antennas.

3. Visual Impacts. Antennas four feet (4') or more in any dimension shall be screened from any public park or residentially zoned lot located adjacent to or across a street or alley from the lot as follows:

a. A screen for freestanding antennas shall be six feet (6') tall, may be a view-obscuring fence, wall or hedge, and shall be maintained in good condition.

b. For an antenna located on a rooftop, screening shall be provided to a height equal to two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) the height above the roof of the installed antenna.

c. Exceptions. No screening shall be required under the following circumstances:

(i) As provided in subsection C5;

(ii) If the antenna is set back from the property line a distance of at least five (5) times its diameter or height, whichever is greater, from any residentially zoned lot or public park;

(iii) For amateur radio towers, whip antennas, antennas attached to sides of structures, and antennas attached to freestanding transmission towers;

(iv) If the antenna is adjacent to or across a street or alley from a designated major institution, no screening is required on that frontage.

4. Access and Signage. Access to transmitting accessory communication devices shall be restricted to authorized personnel by fencing or other means of security. Warning signs at every point of access to the rooftop or common area shall be posted with information on the existence of radio frequency radiation.

#### 5. Special Exceptions for Dish Antenna.

a. When adherence to all development standards would result in reception window obstruction in all permissible locations, a special exception, according to the provisions of Chapter 23.76, may be permitted from the development standards of subsections C1c, C2b, and C3. The first waiver to be considered will be from the

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requirement of subsection C2b, and the second from C3. Only if these waived regulations still result in obstruction shall rooftop location requirements of subsection C1c be considered. Approval of a special exception shall be subject to the following criteria:

(i) The applicant shall demonstrate that the obstruction is due to factors beyond the control of the property owner, taking into consideration potential permitted development on adjacent and neighboring lots with regard to future reception-window obstruction.

(ii) The applicant shall use material, shape and color to minimize visual impact.

b. If a special exception is sought to permit a rooftop location, the maximum permitted height of the device shall be four feet (4') above the roofline or four feet (4') above the zone permitted height, whichever is higher.

c. If a special exception is sought from subsection C2b, the maximum permitted height shall be eighteen feet (18').

(Ord. 116295 § 25(part), 1992.)

**23.57.012 Commercial zones.**

**A. Uses Permitted Outright.**

1. In Neighborhood Commercial zones, minor communication utilities and accessory communication devices shall be permitted outright when meeting the development standards of subsection C and the height limit of the zone.

2. In Commercial zones, minor communication utilities and accessory communication devices shall be permitted outright when meeting the development standards of subsection C. The height limit of the underlying zone shall not apply unless the lot is adjacent to a Single Family zone.

**B. Uses permitted by Administrative Conditional Use.**

1. In Neighborhood Commercial zones, an Administrative Conditional Use shall be required for minor communication utilities and accessory communication devices, other than whip antennas, to exceed the height limit of the underlying zone, which includes the rooftop provisions of subsection C1c. Approval shall be pursuant to the criteria of subsection B3.

2. In Commercial zones, an Administrative Conditional Use shall be required for minor communication utilities and accessory communication devices proposed to be located on lots adjacent to Single Family zones to exceed the

height limit of the underlying zone. Approval shall be pursuant to the criteria of subsection B3.

**3. Administrative Conditional Use Criteria.**

a. The applicant shall use material, shape and color to minimize adverse visual impacts on the neighboring residential zone.

b. The proposal shall not result in a significant change in the pedestrian or retail character of the commercial area.

c. The applicant shall demonstrate that compliance with the height limit is not feasible and that the proposed height will deviate to the least practicable extent from this standard.

**C. Development Standards.**

**1. Location.**

a. Minor communication utilities, other than transmission towers, and accessory communication devices may not be located within ten feet (10') of any lot line.

b. Minor communication utilities and accessory communication devices may be located on rooftops and may exceed the zone height limit by a maximum of four feet (4') except as permitted in subsection C1c; whip antennas are exempted from the zone height limit.

c. Minor communication utilities and accessory communication devices located on rooftops may extend up to fifteen feet (15') above the zone height limit if the combined total of communication utilities and accessory communication devices in addition to the roof area occupied by rooftop features listed in Section 23.47.012 G4 does not exceed twenty percent (20%) of the total rooftop area or twenty-five percent (25%) of the rooftop area including screened mechanical equipment.

d. Minor communication utilities and accessory communication devices shall be prohibited on the outside, except for rooftops, of a building containing residential units.

2. Access and Signage. Access to minor communication utilities and transmitting accessory communication devices shall be restricted to authorized personnel by fencing or other means of security. Warning signs at every point of access to the rooftop or common area shall be posted with

information on the existence of radiofrequency radiation.

3. **Size of Amateur Radio Tower.** The maximum height of an amateur radio tower shall be no more than fifty feet (50') in zones where the maximum height limit does not exceed fifty feet (50'). Cages and antennas may extend to a maximum additional fifteen feet (15'). In zones with a maximum permitted height over fifty feet (50'), the height of the amateur radio tower shall not exceed the maximum height limit of the zone.

4. **Visual Impact.** Antennas four feet (4') or more in any dimension shall be screened from any public park or residentially zoned lot located adjacent to or across a street or alley from the lot as follows:

a. The screen for a freestanding antenna shall be six feet (6') high, and may be a view-obscuring fence, wall or hedge maintained in good condition.

b. For an antenna located on a rooftop, screening shall be provided to a height equal to two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) the height of the antenna.

c. Exceptions. No screening shall be required under the following circumstances:

(i) As provided by subsection C5;

(ii) If the antenna is set back from the property line a distance of at least five (5) times its diameter or height, whichever is greater, from any residentially zoned lot or public park;

(iii) For amateur radio towers, whip antennas, antennas attached to sides of structures, and antennas attached to freestanding transmission towers;

(iv) If the antenna is adjacent to or across a street or alley from a designated major institution, no screening is required on that frontage.

5. **Special Exceptions.** When adherence to all development standards would result in reception window obstruction in all permissible locations, a Special Exception may be permitted from the development standards of subsection C4, subject to the following criteria:

a. The applicant shall demonstrate that obstruction of the reception window is due to factors beyond the control of the property owner, taking into account potential permitted development on adjacent and neighboring lots with regard to reception window.

b. The applicant shall use material, shape and color to minimize visual impact. (Ord. 116295 § 25(part), 1992.)

### 23.57.013Downtown zones.

A. **Permitted Uses.** Minor communication utilities and accessory communication devices shall be permitted outright when meeting development standards of the zone in which the site is located, except for heights limits, and subsection B.

B. **Development Standards.**

1. Access to transmitting accessory communication devices shall be restricted to authorized personnel when located on rooftops or other common areas. Warning signs at every point of access to the rooftop or common area shall be posted with information on the existence of radiofrequency radiation.

2. The height limit of the zone shall not apply.

3. Antennas four feet (4') or more in any dimension shall be screened from any public park or residentially zoned lot located adjacent to or across a street or alley from the lot as follows:

a. The screen for a freestanding antenna shall be six feet (6') tall, and may be a view-obscuring fence, wall or hedge maintained in good condition.

b. For antennas located on rooftops screening shall be provided to a height equal to two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of the height of the antenna.

c. Exception. No screening shall be required under the following circumstances:

(i) As provided by subsection C;

(ii) For amateur radio towers, whip antennas, antennas attached to sides of structures and any antennas attached to freestanding transmission towers.

d. Antennas shall be prohibited on the outside, except for rooftops, of a building containing residential units.

C. **Special Exceptions.** When adherence to all development standards would result in reception window obstruction in all permissible locations, a special exception, according to the provisions of Chapter 23.76, may be permitted from subsection B3, subject to the following criteria:

1. The applicant shall demonstrate that the obstruction is due to factors beyond the control of the property owner, taking into account potential permitted development on adjacent and neighboring lots with regard to future reception-window obstruction.

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2. The applicant shall use material, shape and color to minimize visual impact. (Ord. 116295 § 25(part), 1992.)

**23.57.014 Special review districts.**

In the Pioneer Square Mixed, International District Mixed, International District Residential, and Pike Market Mixed zones, new minor communication utilities are prohibited. (Ord. 116295 § 25(part), 1992.)

**23.57.015 Industrial zones.**

A. Permitted Uses. Minor communication utilities and accessory communication devices shall be permitted outright when meeting the standards of subsection B.

B. Development Standards. Antennas four feet (4') or more in any dimension shall be screened from any public park or residentially zoned lot located adjacent to or across a street or alley from the lot as follows:

1. The screen for a freestanding antenna shall be six feet (6') tall, may be a view-obscuring fence, wall or hedge, and shall be maintained in good condition.

2. For an antenna located on a rooftop, screening shall be provided to a height equal to two-thirds (2/3) the height of the antenna.

3. Exceptions. No screening shall be required under the following circumstances:

a. As provided by subsection C;

b. For amateur radio towers, whip antennas, antennas attached to sides of structures and any antennas attached to freestanding transmission towers.

c. If the antenna is set back a distance of at least five (5) times its diameter or height, whichever is greater, from any residentially zoned lot or public park.

C. Special Exceptions. When adherence to all development standards would result in reception-window obstruction in all permissible locations, a special exception, according to the provisions of Chapter 23.76, may be permitted from subsection B, subject to the following criteria:

1. The applicant shall demonstrate that the obstruction is due to factors beyond the control of the property owner, taking into account potential permitted development on adjacent and neighboring lots with regard to future reception-window obstruction.

2. The applicant shall use material, shape and color to minimize visual impact. (Ord. 116295 § 25(part), 1992.)

**Chapter 23.60**

**SHORELINE DISTRICT**

**Sections:**

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**23.60.002 Title and purpose.**

**23.60.004 Shoreline policies.**

**Subchapter II Administration**

**Part 1 Compliance**

**23.60.010 Shoreline District established.**

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**Seattle Municipal Code**

COMMUNICATIONS REGULATIONS 23.57.013

**March, 1995 code update file**  
**Text provided for historic reference only.**

**See ordinances creating and amending sections for complete text, graphics, and tables and to confirm accuracy of this source file.**

**For current SMC, contact the Office of the City Clerk**

23-360h

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