SEATTLE'S SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ZONES

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

THIS ZONING SUMMARY IS FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY

This document describes development that is generally be permitted in single-family residential zones. For specific regulations and exceptions, please refer to Chapter 23.44 of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC). If you have additional questions, you may email a Land Use Planner at http://web6.seattle.gov/dpd/LUQnA/, or stop in to the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections (SDCI) Applicant Services Center (ASC) for a free 20-minute coaching session. For more detailed or project-specific information, please call the ASC at (206) 684-8850 to arrange for a paid appointment. Due to the complexity of the code, questions cannot be answered by phone.

Regulations common to all single-family residential zones

Housing Types

Single-Family Dwelling Unit is a detached single-family structure containing one dwelling unit, commonly known as a house.

Cottage Housing includes more than one single-family dwelling unit situated around a shared open space. It may include carriage houses, which are dwelling units above an enclosed garage.

Rowhouses include more than one dwelling unit in a single structure that faces the street. Each dwelling unit shares at least one common wall with another dwelling unit. No dwelling unit is located above or beneath another, or between another dwelling unit and the street.

Townhouses include more than one dwelling unit in a single structure. Each dwelling unit shares at least one common wall with another dwelling unit and no dwelling unit is located above or below another dwelling unit.

Apartments include more than one dwelling unit in a single structure. It is not a cottage housing, rowhouse, or townhouse development. Stacked flats are included in this housing type.

Accessory Dwelling Units

An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is a dwelling unit accessory to a principal dwelling unit (single-family house) located on the same lot. There are two types of ADUs in Seattle: attached, which are inside the principal home, or detached, which are known as backyard cottages or detached accessory dwelling units (DADUs). There are specific development standards for both types of ADUs. For more information see Tip 116A for attached ADUs and Tip 116B for backyard cottages. Building permits are required for all ADUs.

Household Size

Households may include up to eight unrelated people or any number of related people in a single-family zone. Up to twelve unrelated people may reside on a lot with two ADUs. Some exceptions apply.

Home Occupations

Under certain circumstances, a person residing in a dwelling unit may operate a home-based business provided that the business is clearly incidental to the use of the property. Appointments, deliveries, parking, signage and other business activities may be limited in order to maintain neighborhood character.

Accessory Structures and Additions

Accessory structures and additions to existing houses are allowed in single-family residential zones subject to specific development standards. For more information on lot coverage, height and yard standards, see Tip 220.

Conditional Uses

Conditional uses are land uses that are not permitted outright by the underlying zone, but may be allowed when specific criteria are met. Institutions, such as schools, churches, and childcare centers; public facilities, such as police and fire stations; and cluster housing developments are examples of conditional uses that may be allowed in single-family residential zones.

Trees

Exceptional trees must be retained except when removal is necessary to achieve allowed development. Trees must be planted or preserved when new development is proposed. Trees may not be removed from undeveloped lots.
Areas characterized by houses, also known as detached single-family dwelling units, on lots of a compatible scale and character. The SF 5000, SF 7200, and SF 9600 zone designations correspond to the minimum lot size required for each single-family dwelling unit.

### SF 5000, SF 7200, SF 9600

#### Single-Family

**Housing Type**
- Single-family dwelling unit with up to two attached ADUs within the same structure or up to one attached ADU and one detached ADU.

**Lot Size**
- Minimum area in square feet (sf)
  - SF 5000: 5,000 sf
  - SF 7200: 7,200 sf
  - SF 9600: 9,800 sf

**Exceptions**
- May allow for smaller lots, typically when other existing lots on the street are also undersized.

**Density**
- 1 single-family dwelling unit per lot

**Floor Area Ratio**
- 0.5 FAR or 2,000 sf of total floor area for lots less than 4,000 sf
- Maximum 35%, or 1,000 sf plus 15% of lot area for lots less than 5,000 sf

**Lot Coverage**
- Maximum 35%, or 1,000 sf plus 15% of lot area for lots less than 5,000 sf

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### RSL Residential Small Lot

**Housing Type**
- Single-family dwelling unit, apartments, carriage houses, cottage housing developments, rowhouse developments and townhouse developments. Each principal unit may have one ADU within the same structure or detached in the backyard.

**Lot Size**
- No minimum lot area

**Density**
- 1 dwelling unit per 2,000 sf

**Dwelling Unit Size**
- Maximum 2,200 sf, with exceptions for expanding existing single-family dwellings

**Floor Area Ratio**
- 0.75 FAR

**Height Limit**
- Maximum 30'; pitched roofs may exceed maximum height limit by 5' with a minimum 4:12 slope.

**Parking Quantity**
- One parking space per dwelling unit. No parking required for ADUs. No parking required on lots less than 3,000 sf or 30' wide.

**Parking Location**
- Within the structure, rear or side yards. Garages and carports have specific regulations, including appearance standards.

**Parking Access**
- Same as SF 5000, SF 7200, and SF 9600

**Tree Preservation and Planting**
- The planting of street trees is required when adding one or more principal dwelling units.
- Point system designed to encourage preservation of existing trees and planting of conifers and large trees. The planting of street trees is required when adding one or more principal dwelling units.

**Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA)**
- Requires new construction to include affordable housing or contribute to a City fund for affordable housing. New construction on lots in an RSL zone with an MHA suffix of M, M1 or M2 may be required to participate. The MHA suffix determines the participation or performance amount.

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### RSL Design Scenarios

#### Attached Housing
- Two attached homes are arranged back-to-back on a 4,000 sf lot. New homes are 1,400 and 1,600 sf. Parking for three vehicles.

#### Cottage Style Housing
- Fix stand-alone cottage style homes with shared open space on a 10,000 sf lot. New homes range in size from 1,050 to 1,800 sf. Parking for three vehicles with frequent transit reduction.

#### Stacked Flats
- One single structure with three stacked dwelling units on a 6,000 sf lot. Each unit is 1,400 sf, one unit on each level. Development type works with new construction or conversion of an existing single-family structure. Parking for three vehicles.

#### Preservation Incentive
- Existing single-family home is preserved with a new single-family home constructed at the rear of the 5,000 sf lot. The existing home is 1,900 sf and the new home is 2,200 sf. Parking for two vehicles. Development type takes advantage of the FAR preservation incentive.