

A wide-angle photograph of the Seattle skyline, featuring the Space Needle prominently on the left. The city is densely packed with various high-rise buildings. In the foreground, there are green trees and foliage, partially obscuring the lower part of the city. The sky is a clear, bright blue.

Rooftop Features Code Update Proposal

Photo by John Skelton



Seattle Department of
Construction & Inspections

Presentation to International District Special Review Board
May 24, 2022

SDCI PURPOSE AND VALUES

Our Purpose

Helping people build a safe, livable, and inclusive Seattle.

Our Values

- Equity
- Respect
- Quality
- Integrity
- Service

WHAT DOES THIS RELATE TO?

- Rooftops will need to host more equipment (like heat pumps) per Energy Code – reducing carbon in the air
- Coordinate Land Use Code limits with new Energy Code
- Simplify language
- Allow new enclosed space for Pioneer Square rooftop lodging, dining
- Chinatown/I.D.: Increase the roof coverage limit, including for greenhouses

EXISTING CODE APPROACH – HEIGHT

- Height limit is measured at the roof's surface.
- Features up to 4 feet over roof easily allowed
- Taller features: many can reach up to 15 feet over roof
- Elevators: up to 16-35 feet (varies) over roof
- Taller features limited to a certain % limit of roof coverage

ROOF PERCENT COVERAGE FOR TALLER ITEMS

- The code has limits on % coverage of taller features on roofs

PROPOSAL: Adjust maximums up to account for more mech. equipment

Max. rooftop coverage limit for features more than 4 ft. over roof	Proposed % increase
Percent-rooftop-coverage limit option	
Up to 30% in LR	+10%
Up to 35% in MR, HR, C, NC, Yesler Terrace	+10%
Up to 35% in SM and Industrial	+15%
Up to 75% for Downtown residential towers, and 50% for other Downtown buildings	+15-20%
Up to 25% for buildings in Pioneer Square and Chinatown/I.D. zones (& up to 35% or 45% with Board, DON recommendation)	+10%



IMPROVE CONSISTENCY IN ROOFTOP LIMITS

- More % coverage is needed for residential towers with limited floor sizes, and greater than 120 feet tall:
 - The roofs of these towers are smaller, because only thinner towers allowed
 - Downtown zones: Denny Triangle, Belltown, others with residential towers
 - Seattle Mixed zones: New SM zones; make the roof cover limit more consistent
- A second option also proposed to allow 75% coverage:
 - For Highrise, Seattle Mixed and tall buildings in Neigh. Commercial zones
 - Group taller features in middle of roof

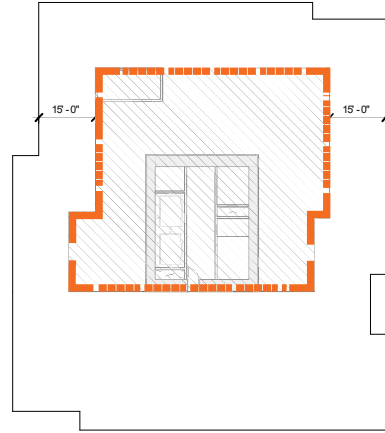
CHINATOWN/INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT

- Greenhouse allowance on rooftop is not clearly stated
 - Allow 10% more roof coverage for it
 - Limit would raise to 45% total roof coverage with Board, DON recommendation
- Increase allowable roof coverages by +10%;
 - Limit would raise to 25%, or 35% coverage with Board, DON recommendation.
 - This is most relevant to existing building rooftops, and other buildings that fit in with the neighborhood core's height scale

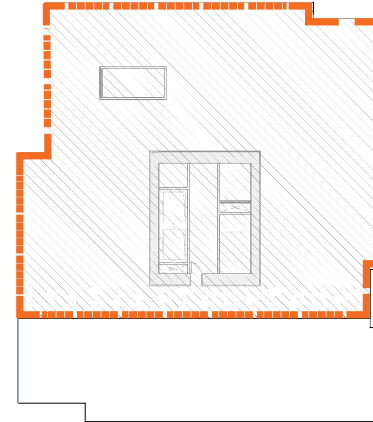
COMPARING RESIDENTIAL TOWER TYPES

- Physically, IDR zone residential towers have floor size limits like Downtown Mixed zones:
 - DMC zone: Average resid. floor size = 10,700 sq.ft. for a 440-foot-tall bldg.
 - DMR zone: Can cover only 35-45% of the lot, 100-ft. tower width.
- IDR zone: For towers taller than 170 ft., avg. resid. floor size = 9,000 sq.ft or 40% of lot, whichever is greater.
- So, buildings in all these zones are comparable in size.

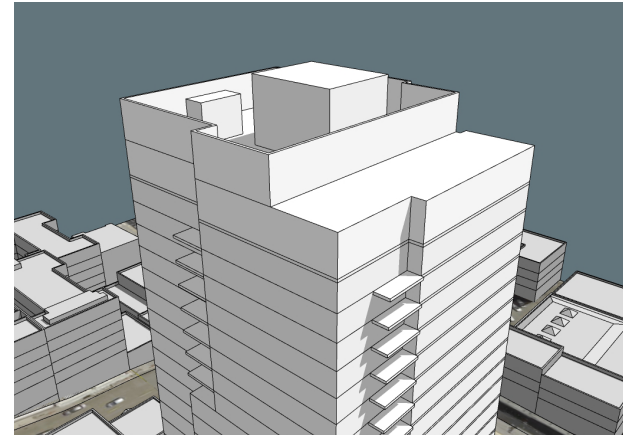
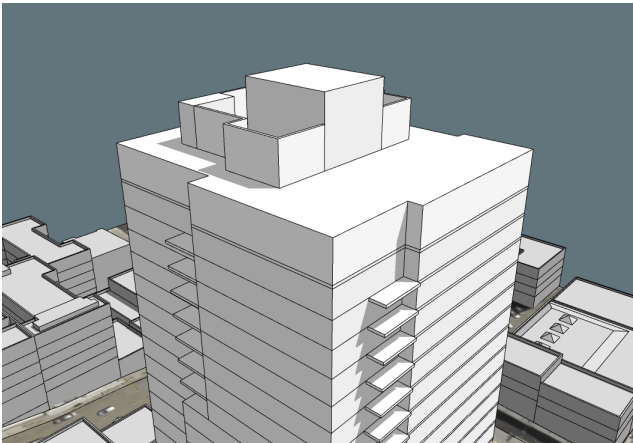
VISUAL ILLUSTRATIONS: % ROOF COVERAGE



35%

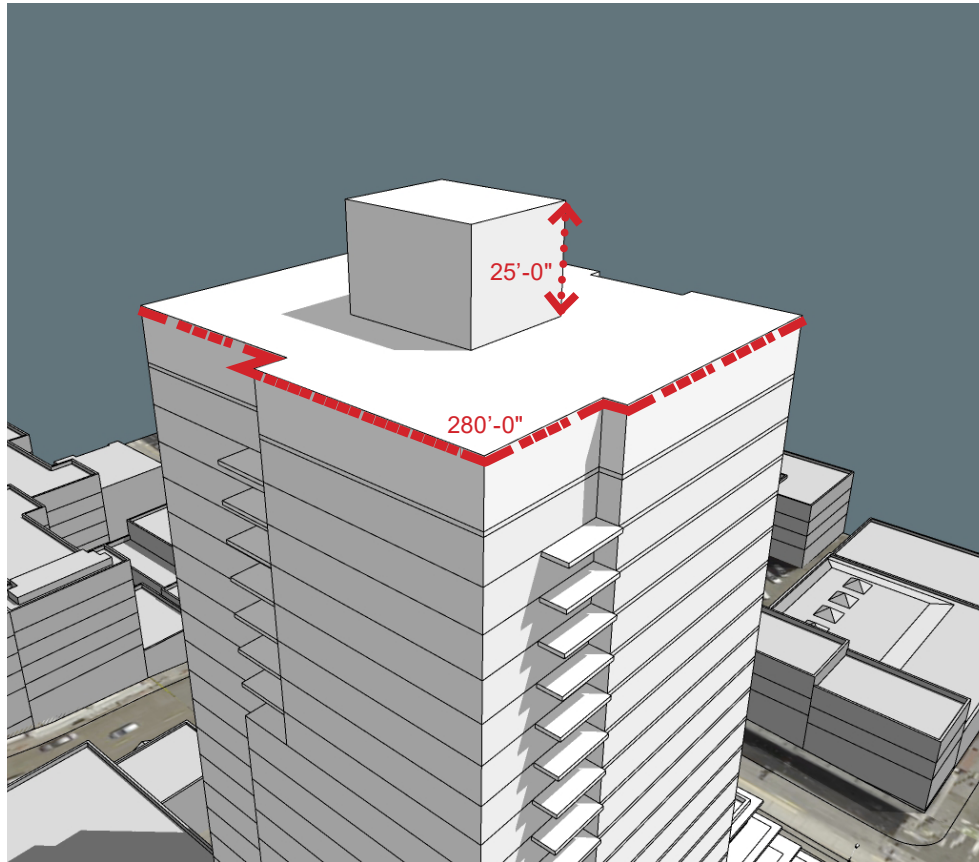


75%

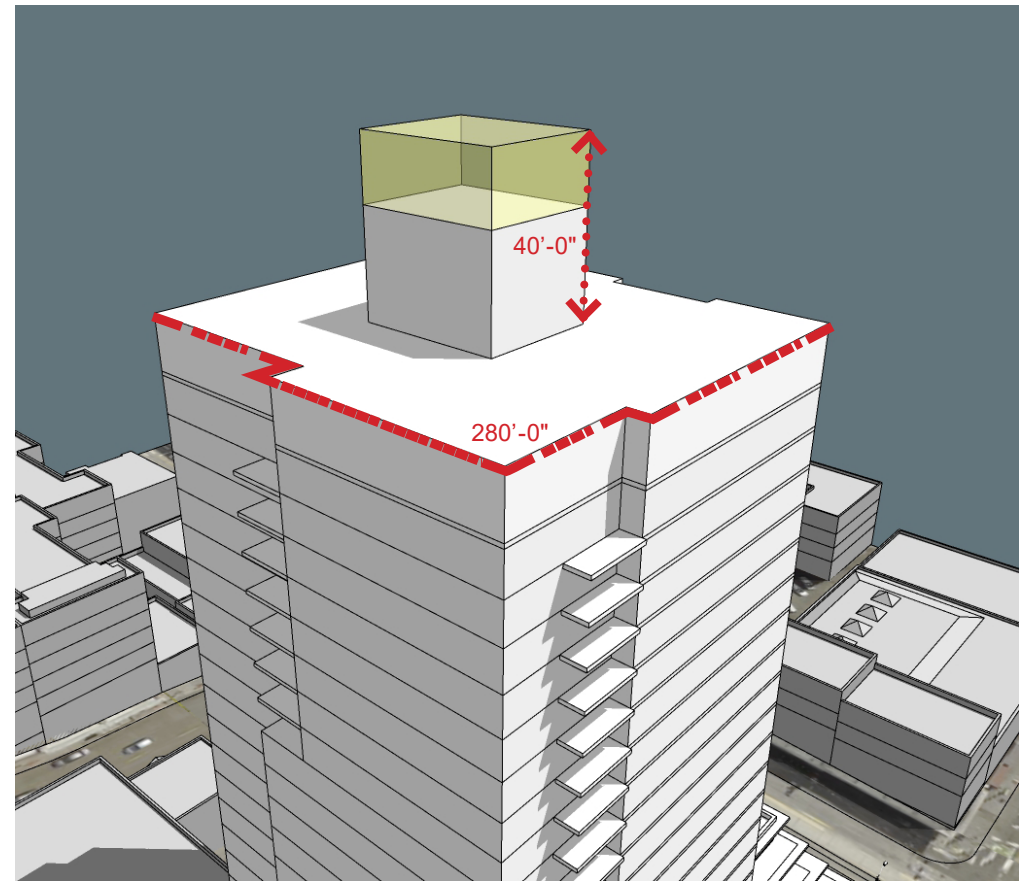


Source: Weber Thompson

VISUAL ILLUSTRATIONS: ELEVATOR HEIGHT



CURRENT CODE MAXIMUM: 25FT ABOVE BUILDING HEIGHT LIMIT



QUESTIONS?

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PIONEER SQUARE

- Add lodging and eating and drinking establishments as new kinds of “penthouse” uses on rooftops in Pioneer Square zones. And allow enclosed recreation spaces retrofits on roofs of non-historic buildings.
 - On buildings at least 40 feet tall
 - Coverage limit = 50%
 - Expands choice from long-time allowance for office or residential use on roof
 - Allow recreational spaces to be added to existing buildings built since 2008, up to 45% roof coverage (this space + other tall features).
- Pioneer Square has lower limits on roof coverage; this proposal fits with that more sensitive set of limits; subject to Board, DON recommendation.