

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL FACT SHEET | PUBLIC DRAFT – NOVEMBER 2024

Neighborhood Commercial

Return of the Corner Store

Across Washington, cities are exploring the reintroduction of small commercial uses like cafes and neighborhood grocery stores into residential neighborhoods after decades of land use segregation. Communities look to many potential benefits:

- Help people meet their daily needs for goods and services without relying as much on driving, which can improve public health, air and water quality, and traffic.
- Increase the local tax base.
- Encourage local entrepreneurship above the scale of a home-based business and below the cost of renting a large commercial property.
- Increase employment opportunities.
- Improve access to fresh food, especially for low-income neighborhoods.
- Provides residential neighborhoods a sense of place and community ownership.

Permitting neighborhood commercial uses goes hand-in-hand with increased allowances for residential density. Recent legislation requires many Washington jurisdictions to zone for middle housing and accessory dwelling units in traditionally low-density, single-family zoned neighborhoods. These neighborhoods will incrementally experience an

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increase in population. Neighborhood commercial uses give residents more walkable places to shop, meet neighbors, and help small local businesses thrive.[1]

Nationwide trends point to opportunities for reconsidering how commercial uses are distributed throughout cities and towns. The rise of e-commerce and home deliveries have reduced the cost advantage enjoyed by shopping malls and big-box stores and elevated the value of in-person experiences associated with supporting small businesses. At the same time, the post-pandemic increase in telecommuting and remote education means more professional workers and students are spending more time in their home neighborhoods. Climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies also highlight the importance of reducing driving distances and building local resilience by strengthening local services and social networks.

Background

State Law Requirements

Washington state law does not require local jurisdictions zone for neighborhood commercial land use, though it has been a topic of increasing interest at the local and state level.

History

Traditionally, many American neighborhoods were home to a range of limited scale commercial uses, with small groceries, barbers, restaurants, bars, and other storefront businesses peppered among residential blocks. These businesses sold small sundries, supplies, and services needed by nearby residents. Starting in the mid-1900's, the rise of automobile-centric planning and Euclidian zoning promoted separation of uses, steering commercial businesses to central shopping centers and prohibiting most kinds of non-residential uses in neighborhoods.

Some older businesses became grandfathered as non-conforming uses, but for decades expansions and new businesses have been prohibited in most residential neighborhoods. Buildings that housed these businesses were often demolished, converted to residential use, or still sit vacant today.

Challenges



Aside from zoning challenges, there are many hurdles to building and maintaining a commercial structure or starting up a business. Small developers and entrepreneurs must find investors, contract with suppliers and shippers, obtain permits, advertise their products and services, recruit and train employees, pay taxes, and comply with state and federal regulations. A successful corner store or other small scale neighborhood commercial use typically needs a sufficient number of homes within close proximity to help ensure a sufficient customer base. Many suburban residential neighborhoods do not have the density needed to support traditional corner stores. Further, the increasing prominence of e-commerce and retail consolidation trends are an added challenge. Increasing housing costs

[1] See more information about recent housing legislation such as HB 1110 and HB 1337 on the Department of Commerce "Planning for Middle Housing" webpage. https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growth-management/housing-planning/middle-housing/

also play a role, as business owners may not be able to compete with the going rental rates. Thus, permissive local zoning that legalizes neighborhood commercial uses is a necessary, but not the only step to unlocking neighborhood commercial opportunities.

Variety of Building Forms

Neighborhood commercial uses can take a variety of formats. Because neighborhood commercial uses have rarely been pursued by larger companies, their building form often reflects the ingenuity and resourcefulness of individual business proprietors who often design and/or build the spaces themselves. However, there are several typical arrangements:



An **Accessory Commercial Use** (ACU) is an arrangement with a small commercial space that shares a lot with, and is accessory to, a primary residential use. ACUs were typically built in the front yard of a home to create space for a small business that may also be owned by the homeowner. By avoiding stacking residential and commercial uses (and often physically separating these uses in separate buildings) ACUs can face fewer building code compliance issues than vertical mixed-use buildings.



The **standalone store/café** layout consists of a small commercial building (or converted residential building), typically on its own corner lot, with or without a dedicated parking lot. Corner lots have long been preferred locations for businesses because of their high visibility and accessibility from multiple routes. Having two street frontages also eases vehicular access to the site for parking and/or deliveries.



Live/work units are a modern approach to mixing residential and commercial uses. These typically take the form of a high-ceiling or multi-story unit designed with both residential and commercial spaces. Such units are often included on the ground floor of podium apartment buildings, but they can be developed as a standalone building or attached side-by-side like townhouses. Live/work units are allowed in commercial and neighborhood center zones in many cities, often as a way to satisfy ground-floor retail requirements.



Mixed-use neighborhood stores are two to four story buildings with ground-floor retail space under multiple dwelling units. This building type was common in pre-WWII cities and towns, but there are modern examples as well. This building type is often desired by community members, but can be difficult to build due to barriers in zoning and building codes, minimum parking requirements, and the difficulty of securing financing. Buildings with up to four residential units may be easiest for small developers to finance, as underwriting standards allow up to 25% of the total area in a fourplex building to be non-residential space.

Difference From Home-Based Businesses

Neighborhood commercial uses are different than home-based businesses (also called home occupations). A home-based business is a commercial activity occurring on a residential lot or in a dwelling unit. This includes activities like running a sole proprietor accounting business out of a home office, selling homemade goods that are crafted in a basement workshop, or providing therapy services. Jurisdictions that regulate home-based businesses typically have limits on the size of the use and the amount of customer visits that may occur. If a home-based business needs to grow, neighborhood commercial spaces may be a comparable option close to home.

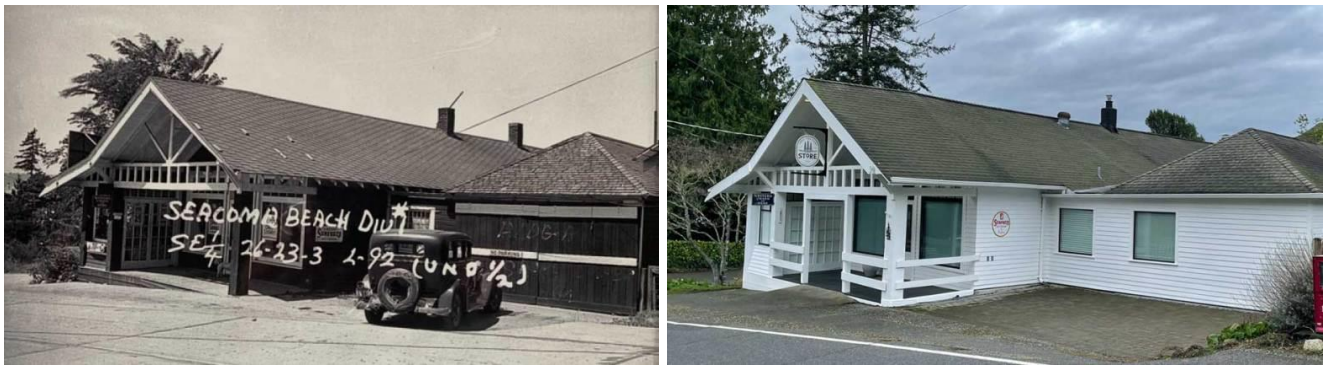
RCW 36.70A.450, effective in 2018, requires cities and counties to permit the use of a residential dwelling as a family day-care provider's home facility in residential and commercial zones.

Regulatory Approaches and Examples

Neighborhood commercial uses can serve many types of daily needs – ranging from grabbing a cup of coffee, dropping off children at daycare, mailing a package, meeting for pizza, or picking up dinner ingredients on the way home from work. They can also serve as “third places” for gathering with friends and neighbors outside of home and work.

To be successful in drawing customers, neighborhood commercial uses need to be located in convenient and accessible locations. They also shouldn’t be located in areas that compete with more intensive commercial districts and larger businesses. There are different zoning approaches for neighborhood commercial uses:

1) **Allow neighborhood commercial uses in pre-existing commercial buildings.** This limited approach allows neighborhood stores built before zoning prohibited neighborhood businesses to reopen in surviving storefronts. This will affect a small number of parcels, but it can also be a popular first step towards expanding allowances for neighborhood retail. In 2021 the City of Burien enacted a legacy storefronts zoning code amendment allowing small retail uses in buildings that are documented to having retail uses prior to 1950 and where storefront design features remain in existence.



Three Tree Point store in Burien circa 1926 and 2021. Source: B-Town Blog.

2) **Allow neighborhood commercial uses in designated commercial zones, centers, or overlay zones.** The commercial designation might consist of a single parcel, or a small cluster of parcels, or a modest mini-center of 1-3 acres on strategic sites that are well-connected to the neighborhood via the street grid.

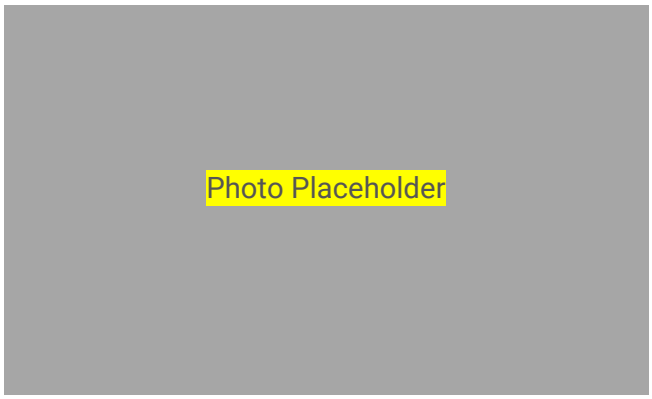




Left: The Summit/Mercer neighborhood center in Seattle has a bar, coffee shop, and several restaurants in several buildings, and is in a Neighborhood Commercial 1 zone (photo source: MAKERS). Right: Ray's Place in Hoquiam is a corner store on a single parcel in a C1 General Commercial zone (image source: Google).

3) **Allow neighborhood commercial uses in residential zone(s)**. Because residential zones make up the majority of most jurisdictions' land, this allows broad flexibility for the market to select the best location for these uses and provides a greater opportunity to repurpose existing buildings. A common approach is to limit neighborhood commercial uses to corner lots.





Left: Meeting House Café in Spokane is a commercial use in a Residential 1 zone(image source: Google).

Location

Any approach to allowing neighborhood commercial uses requires thoughtful siting, spacing, and sizing. Sites that are centralized and well-connected to the neighborhood are best. Also, walk-sheds of a half-mile (about 10 minutes walking or 5 minutes biking) are a reasonable upper range on how far people are willing to walk or bike for an errand or social meetup, especially with factors like inclement weather or carrying grocery bags.

The availability and proximity of customers is vital. Retail experts estimate a successful neighborhood grocery store needs to be within a quarter mile of 1,000 households.[2, 3] This equates to about 10-12 dwelling units per acre (net), or about 10,000 people per square mile, which represents a medium-density neighborhood with a variety of housing types including attached units and small apartment buildings. However, many neighborhood stores in Washington currently exist and thrive in lower density neighborhoods, and in some cases this may be because they can draw customers from outside the neighborhood. Other important factors that influence success will be neighborhood income levels, location and visibility of the store, safety of walking and biking on nearby streets, design and experience of the building, the type and price of products and services offered compared to the neighborhood's needs, and the regulatory environment.

Corner Lots

"Corner stores" are not literally restricted to street corners because of the terminology, just like the concepts of "brick and mortar" stores do not require masonry construction and "mom and pop" businesses do not require ownership by parents. For this reason, this fact sheet mostly uses terms like neighborhood stores, neighborhood businesses, or neighborhood commercial uses.



Seven Coffee Roasters is located at the intersection of an alley and a street, which is not typically considered a "corner lot". Source: MAKERS

There are advantages to being located on a corner. Business that depend on walk-in or drive-by traffic seek locations with high visibility. Street intersections help meet that need because more people pass by at intersections than at midblock locations. Corner lots can also facilitate more commercial façade area for window displays and advertising signs. Corner lots can also benefit from more curb area for customers and deliveries to park.

However, restricting neighborhood commercial uses to corner lots can limit available sites. It also prohibits expansion of growing businesses on adjacent lots, unless code provisions allow for that. There are examples of successful midblock neighborhood commercial businesses around the state, such as Seven Coffee Roasters in Seattle and Roanoke Inn on Mercer Island.

Limiting commercial use to corner lots may work best in cities taking advantage of small blocks or seeking incremental change or pilot programs. Any map-based approach that creates zones or overlays centered on intersections should include all corners of the intersection to maximize opportunities for commercial development.

Co-Location

Co-location of neighborhood commercial uses with other amenities and services can leverage existing hubs of activity and create shared benefits between multiple uses. Consider allowing and encouraging neighborhood commercial development within a block or two of other non-residential and civic activities within neighborhoods. This includes parks, schools, libraries, schools, religious institutions, and bus stops.

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[2] "Corner stores can anchor a neighborhood." Congress for the New Urbanism. 2010. https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2020/02/10/corner-stores-can-anchor-neighborhood
[3] "The Corner Store Comeback." Bloomberg. 2024. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2024-10-02/corner-stores-mount-a-comeback-in-residential-neighborhoods?srnd=citylab-economy&sref=0IejgNtz

For example, the mini-center around Ken's Market in Seattle's Queen Anne neighborhood and the standalone San Francisco Street Bakery in Olympia are next to elementary schools. Sunny Hill Pizza in Seattle's Sunset Hill neighborhood and the South Perry mini-center in Spokane are near large parks.

Street Classifications

Washington cities and towns classify their streets by "functional classifications", which are based on American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards. The main classifications of city streets are arterials, collectors, and locals, with the former prioritizing vehicle throughput and the latter prioritizing access to adjacent land uses. Most cities have developed their downtowns and major commercial centers around arterial and collector streets, under the idea that commercial areas require high-capacity vehicle access.

One of the main purposes and benefits of neighborhood commercial uses is that they are located within walking and bicycling distance (roughly one-half to one mile) of many homes, which allows many employees and customers to reach the use without driving. Neighborhood commercial uses are intended to have limited automobile access and so do not require adjacency to arterial and collector streets, and may even be preferred and work best on local streets. Consider avoiding streets with four or more travel lanes. The most attractive neighborhood commercial centers enjoy a calm and quiet street environment, without the noise and safety concerns presented by high-volume or high-speed vehicle traffic.

Cities can consider avoiding neighborhood commercial uses near the terminus of dead-end streets and on cul-de-sacs, which have the low traffic and visibility and may be difficult for use by freight vehicles.

Permitted Uses

Neighborhood commercial uses can include a variety of retail shops and personal services that help people meet their daily needs. Examples of appropriate businesses may include:

Food and Beverage	Retail Sales	Services
• Restaurants • Coffee shops • Bakeries • Bars/pubs/taverns	• Grocery stores or food markets (the traditional "corner store") • Hardware stores • Bicycles and other sporting goods • Pharmacies • Boutique shopping (e.g. clothing, crafts, art, houseplants) • Artisan manufacturing (with on-site sales)	• Child care centers • Salons and barbers • Pet care, boarding, and veterinarian clinics • Physicians and dentists • Art gallery • Financial services, such as tax preparers • Florist shops

Zoning definitions and permitted uses should be flexible and allow for a mix of sales and services in a single business or building. Some businesses might need to offer two or more types of products and services to draw enough customers, especially in lower-density neighborhoods. For example, a bakery might also sell coffee, or a neighborhood grocery store might include a deli and pharmacy. Mixes can increase the convenience of neighborhood commercial uses by enabling residents to run multiple errands in a single location.

Cities can customize the mix of permitted neighborhood commercial uses depending on a variety of factors. These include:

- Existing neighborhood commercial uses.

- Historic neighborhood commercial uses that closed due to previous economic conditions or regulations.
- Distance between the residential neighborhood and major commercial centers.
- Market studies and gap analyses that identify the most in-demand or viable businesses.
- Characteristics of the neighborhood population that affect shopping needs and purchasing power, such as income level, age, racial or ethnic groups, and rates of vehicle ownership.
- Trends in e-commerce, which competes with brick-and-mortar commercial businesses.
- Community preferences, as discovered through equitable engagement methods.

Permitting Approach

Most neighborhood commercial uses should be permitted outright. Conditional use permits should be avoided to encourage predictable and timely application processing. Small business operators have small margins and face risk in time, costs, complexity, and appeals with conditional use permits. The adoption of objective performance standards can give confidence to applicants, the community, and decisionmakers around the compatibility of commercial uses in residential neighborhoods.

Balancing Permitted and Prohibited Uses

The permitted types and sizes of neighborhood commercial uses need to strike a balance. They must draw enough customers to have sustainable sales and create an active place that people enjoy visiting. But they must also avoid generating so much vehicle traffic and nuisances (like noise and odors) that they replicate more intense commercial districts that are more appropriate outside of lower density residential neighborhoods.

Uses to avoid, for example, are gas stations, any type of drive-through businesses, and stores selling heavy or bulky goods like furniture, appliances, motor vehicles, dimensional lumber, and landscaping materials. Depending on a community's goals and needs, specific types of retail businesses may also be incompatible in residential areas, such as pawn shops, antique stores, firearms dealers, and smoke shops.

Office

One of the benefits of larger neighborhood commercial centers is they create lively activity lively at the street level. Offices, including banks and other professional services, should be carefully considered. Many types of office-based businesses draw little or no foot traffic, especially post-pandemic as video calls have started replacing in-person client visits. However, a limited amount of traffic may be desired in some types of neighborhoods. There can be co-benefits between office employees and nearby establishments offering food, coffee, and businesses services. Co-working spaces can be a benefit for neighborhood commercial centers, especially if it attracts people who would otherwise be working from home.

One potential balance for jurisdictions wanting to allow office uses in neighborhood commercial centers or on individual lots is to require offices to be on upper floors of multi-story buildings, or limit the size of office space. This can preserve valuable ground-floor space for more active types of commercial uses.

Performance Standards

Performance standards (supplemental use standards) may be appropriate for neighborhood commercial uses. This is especially important for public health matters such as noise and light which affect the sleep environment. Performance standards should also be thoughtfully crafted, as each additional layer of regulation can discourage development or make some development infeasible. Standards should have a clear rationale and connection to the impact they are seeking to mitigate.

Potential standards might include any combination of:

- Maximum amount of commercial floor area (gross or net square feet) per use or per building, depending on the type of use, minimum space needed for viable businesses, the neighborhood context, and typical lot sizes. See more information below in the Bulk Standards section.
- Prohibiting incompatible activities such as outdoor product storage, outdoor animal runs, and amplified sound at night.
- Limitations on nighttime operating hours, particularly for bars and entertainment venues.
- Maximum number of animals at animal-related uses (veterinary clinics, boarding, etc.)
- Stricter sign regulations than in general commercial zones, including limitations on sign quantity, size, lighting, and digital displays (example: the Everett sign code for Category B signs).

Bulk Standards

Thoughtful attention is needed for how bulk standards (also called dimensional, form, or intensity standards) apply to neighborhood commercial uses.

Floor Area Limits

Floor area limits are most common where neighborhood commercial uses are allowed in residential zones, with the intent to preserve the predominantly residential nature of a zone. Floor area limits are not needed in designated commercial zones where neighborhood commercial development is being directed.

Jurisdictions that adopt floor area limits should ensure their regulations allow viable businesses and growth opportunities, as adequate floor area is needed for stocking a minimum amount of product and supporting utilitarian functions like back offices and storage. Ample floor area limits can also support opportunities for indoor customer seating and a variety of other retail and service businesses.

Neighborhood grocery stores typically range in size from 1,500 to 3,000 square feet of floor area. Jurisdictions seeking to adopt a size limit in residential zones could adopt a hard maximum per use or per building. The number could be set based on existing commercial uses or case studies, the type of allowed uses, typical lot sizes, and other neighborhood context. Another method is to regulate a maximum size based on the lot size – for example, a 0.50 FAR limit would allow 2,500 square feet of commercial use on a 5,000 square foot lot.

Other Standards

Neighborhood commercial uses should have flexibility on other typical bulk standards like minimum setbacks and maximum lot coverage. This is especially the case where neighborhood commercial uses are not limited to conversions of existing residential structures. Traditional neighborhood commercial structures and accessory commercial units are located near or at the street property line and may cover most of the lot. This provides a high level of visibility needed for businesses and a good visual draw for customers.

Parking

Parking is a special consideration for neighborhood commercial uses. Most small-scale neighborhood commercial uses should have reduced or no off-street parking requirements based on the following:

- One of the main purpose and benefits of neighborhood commercial uses is that they are located within walking and bicycling distance (one-half to one mile) of many homes. This allows many employees and customers to access the use without driving.

- The type of business desired in residential neighborhoods (discussed under the Permitted Uses section above) sell products that can be carried home by hand, like a cup of coffee or bag of groceries, or they offer services and not products that need to be transported.
- Some people will drive. For small buildings, on-street parking is usually sufficient to provide customer parking, especially if the building is located on a corner lot and/or the on-street parking is time-limited.
- Small commercial buildings might occupy one or two residentially-sized lots. Small sites balance a variety of space needs and have potentially limited or no space available for off-street parking. Surface parking lots average 400 square feet per parking space for the actual parking spaces and vehicle maneuvering areas. Requirements for even a single off-street parking space could make it physically infeasible to develop a new building or repurpose an existing building.
- Off-street parking lots create gaps between buildings and come with large paved areas, stormwater facilities, and lighting that can disrupt the urban design pattern or fabric of a residential neighborhood.

Design Standards

Some limited design standards could be appropriate for neighborhood commercial uses, such as:

- Storefront design like maximum street setback, minimum façade transparency, minimum weather protection coverage, and restricted parking locations
- Quality of exterior building materials and treatment of blank walls
- Design of outdoor seating areas, particularly when on or adjacent to public sidewalks
- Screening and landscaping for parking
- Design of service and utility areas, such as trash storage, utility meters, and rooftop equipment
- Exterior lighting shielding, color temperature, automated timers, and lighting for signs

If the establishment of corporate businesses in neighborhoods is a concern, building design standards in particular may discourage them. However, small neighborhood commercial projects are also generally more sensitive to construction costs than larger projects, so design standards should balance public interests with fostering commercial success. Some jurisdictions' existing design standards may be geared toward large commercial developments and shopping centers, and these will warrant re-evaluation for applicability and appropriateness to small neighborhood commercial developments.

Applicability of design standards will also need special consideration for renovations and expansions of historic storefront buildings and where homes are converted to a commercial use.





Left: The Scoop in Spokane is an example where off-street parking occupies a lot that would otherwise have an adjacent home. Spokane does not require off-street parking for neighborhood commercial uses because the community feels it disturbs the fabric of neighborhoods. (image source: Google). Right: Dusty's Hideaway is located in converted single-family residence in Tacoma (photo source: MAKERS).

Definitions

Jurisdictions have the authority adopt related definitions. The following definitions are provided for consideration.

- "Accessory Commercial Unit: A commercial use that is subordinate to the principal use and contained within, attached to, or detached from a residential structure on a residential-zoned lot and is open to customers, clients, or patrons.
- “Live/Work unit” means a single unit (e.g., studio, loft, or one-bedroom) consisting of a commercial or office space and a residential component occupied by the same resident.
- “Neighborhood retail” means a small-scale retail use that provides consumers limited goods and/or services to meet their daily needs.

Beyond Zoning

Jurisdictions have other tools to support neighborhood commercial uses, including:

- Small business grants for starting up businesses, such as purchasing equipment, or rehabilitating facades on older buildings.
- Reduced or waived fees for minor permits like signage and outdoor lighting.
- Partnering on right-of-way management, such as setting curbside parking rules that work with adjacent business’ needs or providing streamlined standards for outdoor sidewalk seating.

Planning for Health

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, food deserts are a serious problem. These are residential areas without easy access to a full-service grocery store, and their definition can also incorporate measurements like household income and transportation availability. Food insecurity makes it harder for some people to eat a healthy diet and increases vulnerability to obesity and other health conditions.

Neighborhood stores can help improve access to healthy food, however it can be difficult for small businesses to stock and market fresh healthy food products. Some cities and community organizations around the country have worked to the leverage the potential of neighborhood stores for community health:

- The Philadelphia-based nonprofit Food Trust runs the Healthy Corner Store Initiative that provides stores with training, equipment, and marketing materials to store and display healthy items.
- In Denver, local and state public health funding helped pilot an increase in healthy food options at five stores, with an intent to expand to 50 stores. Part of the program included signage with nutritional information and ideas for healthy recipes.
- In Kenton County, Kentucky (home to Covington), grant funding from the American Planning Association helped increase access to fresh food in four neighborhoods. Store owners were able to establish partnerships with fresh food suppliers, purchase refrigeration equipment and reconfigure their floor layouts, and advertise new food offerings in multiple languages.

As one Covington columnist put it, “We are faced with dozens of health choices each day. Customers of the Covington stores now have more options – maybe it’s a banana rather than a candy bar for that late afternoon snack, or a bag of frozen vegetables rather than potato chips for the last-minute side dish for dinner. When it’s easier to be healthy, people tend to do so. It’s one way we can all plan for health."

Curb Management

The interaction between private space and public space can be important for the success of neighborhood commercial uses. Especially when no off-street parking is required, consider these ideas for management of the curb adjacent to businesses:

- For retail and food/beverage businesses, an on-street loading zone for commercial deliveries may be helpful to ensure deliveries are easy and timely. Loading zones could be made available for general parking use outside of scheduled delivery times.
- General on-street parking could be time-limited during certain times of day to encourage turnover of customer parking. Time limits of 15-30 minutes may be appropriate for retail uses, and 1-4 hours may be appropriate for restaurant and personal service uses.
- If there is no requirement for off-street parking, an on-street parking space designated for handicap placard holders may be appropriate, depending on characteristics of the neighborhood population.
- If there is no requirement for off-street parking and availability of parking is still a concern, on-street parallel parking could be reconfigured to angled or perpendicular, depending on the available space and safety factors.
- Permitting outdoor seating on sidewalks and/or in parking spaces can help businesses expand and foster a more active street environment.
- Permitting food trucks to use on-street parking could help foster startup food businesses and create shared energy between adjacent mobile and permanent businesses.

The design and use of the public right-of-way is not permanent. Cities can be adaptable and experiment collaboratively with businesses to see what works over time.

Resources

Example codes and informational resources from Washington cities and beyond.

Neighborhood Commercial Use Inventory

Explore a map of existing corner stores and other neighborhood commercial centers across Washington. Have something to add? Fill out the form here.

Map: [LINK TO BE ADDED]

Legacy Storefronts

- Burien Municipal Code 19.17.320 – Code provisions allowing legacy retail storefronts that were used for business prior to 1950 and are still structurally intact to operate as businesses in residential zones.[4] See also an article covering the code update.
- Spokane Municipal Code 17C.370 – Code provisions allowing neighborhood commercial uses in pre-existing commercial structures in residential zones.



Before and After: Pre-existing neighborhood commercial building in Spokane after rehabilitation. Source, left: Google Maps Street View © Google.

Neighborhood Commercial Nodes

- Everett Municipal Code 19.05.090 - Permitted uses and special regulations in the Neighborhood Business (NB) zone).
- Spokane Municipal Code 17C.120 – Permitted uses and other standards in the Neighborhood Retail (NR) zone.

Commercial Uses in Residential Zones

- Anacortes Municipal Code 19.41.120(E) – Allows neighborhood grocery stores as a conditional use in most residential zones. Neighborhood grocery stores are limited to 1,200 square feet and must be located at least ¼ mile from other neighborhood grocery stores. See also 19.41.040 (permitted uses).
- Los Angeles County Municipal Code 22.364.070(A)(2)(a) – Allows accessory commercial units in certain zones for certain types of commercial uses.

[4] "Burien Paves the Way for Legacy Cornerstores in Residential Neighborhoods." The Urbanist. 2021. https://www.theurbanist.org/2021/02/05/burien-paves-the-way-for-old-cornerstores-in-residential-neighborhoods/

- Aberdeen Municipal Code 17.40.030(A) and (B) – Allows certain small commercial businesses (cafes, retail, office) on corner lots in Residential Low and Residential High zones. Businesses must be closed by 10 pm and commercial use is limited to 2,000 square feet in Residential Low and 4,000 square feet in Residential High. [Code adopted November 13, 2024 – not yet available online.]
- Burien Municipal Code 19.25.015.1 – Allows certain small commercial uses on the ground floor of mixed use buildings in multifamily residential zones. Businesses may operate between 6 am and 10 pm and are limited to 2,000 square feet. [Up for adoption November 18, 2024]

Further Reading

- "Updating Your Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code? Consider Corner Stores." Municipal Research Service Center. November 7, 2024. https://mrsc.org/stay-informed/mrsc-insight/november-2024/corner-stores
- "Corner Store Comeback", Bloomberg. October 2, 2024. https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2024-10-02/corner-stores-mount-a-comeback-in-residential-neighborhoods
- "The Death of Corner Stores and Neighborhood Businesses", flurfdesign on Youtube. September, 21, 2024. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUekuCIKvkI
- "Can the 'ghost corner stores' of Seattle's past rise from the dead?", KUOW. March 25, 2024. https://www.kuow.org/stories/chasing-the-ghost-corner-stores-of-seattle
- "The Invasion of the Corner Stores", Publicola. December 19, 2023. https://publicola.com/2023/12/19/the-invasion-of-the-corner-stores/
- "Opinion: Bring back the Neighborhood Corner Store", Planetizen. July 11, 2021. https://www.planetizen.com/news/2021/07/113974-opinion-bring-back-neighborhood-corner-store
- "Storefront Stagnation: Coping With Neighborhood Retail's New Realities", Governing. April, 16, 2021. https://www.governing.com/assessments/storefront-stagnation-coping-with-neighborhood-retails-new-realities.html
- "Creating Walkable Neighborhood Business Districts." Gregory Easton and John Owen. 2009. https://www.makersarch.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/NC-Walkable-Districts-Article.pdf. Note: While this research predates the COVID-19 pandemic, it remains relevant and provides rare in-depth analysis of the demographic and physical characteristics needed to support local retail services.