

AB 6697

Public Hearing on Interim Regulations related to Objective Design Review Standards (HB 1293) in Title 19 MICC

First Reading Ordinance No. 25C-11

June 3, 2025

Community Planning and Development

Jeff Thomas, CPD Director

Adam Zack, Principal Planner



Agenda

- Provide an overview of recent state legislation
- Summarize Ordinance No. 25C-11
- Complete a first reading of Ordinance No. 25C-11



House Bill 1293

- WA Legislature amended the Growth Management Act (GMA) to change how cities planning under the act may regulate building design.
- Mercer Island must adopt regulations to comply by June 30, 2025 (RCW 36.70A.630(5)).
- Design standards must be “clear and objective” (RCW 36.70A.630(2)).



RCW 36.70A.630: Clear and Objective Standards

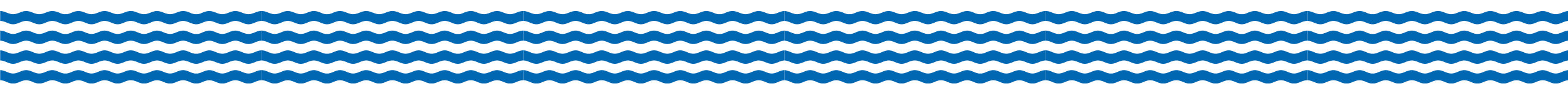
Clear and objective design standards **must include one or more ascertainable guideline, standard, or criterion** by which an applicant can determine whether a given building design is permissible under that development regulation [emphasis added] (RCW 36.70A.630(2)(a)).



RCW 36.70A.630: Clear and Objective Standards

Clear and objective design standards **may not result in a reduction in density, height, bulk, or scale below the generally applicable development regulations** for a development proposal in the applicable zone.

[emphasis added] (RCW 36.70A.630(2)(a))



RCW 36.70A.630: Review and Public Meetings

Any design review process must be conducted concurrently, [...] and **no design review process may include more than one public meeting.** [emphasis added](RCW 36.70A.630(4)).



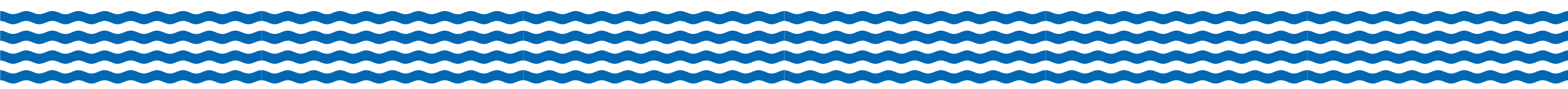
Ordinance No. 25C-11

- Interim Ordinance to comply with state requirements by June 30, 2025, deadline. This ordinance will be effective for one year unless renewed or replaced.
- A draft of the code amendments was made publicly available through Let's Talk Mercer Island on May 2, 2025.
- Would amend 25 sections of the Mercer Island City Code (MICC).



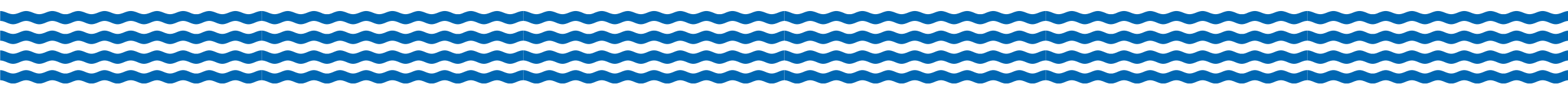
Ordinance No. 25C-11

- **Exhibit A** – Work Plan
- **Exhibit B** – Amendments to MICC 19.06.120 – Criteria for Approval – Design Review
- **Exhibit C** – Amendments to Chapter 19.11 MICC – Town Center Design Standards
- **Exhibit D** – Amendments to Chapter 19.12 MICC – Design Standards for Zones Outside Town Center
- **Exhibit E** – Amendments to MICC 19.15.060 – Application and MICC 19.15.220 – Design Review and the Design Commission
- **Exhibit F** – Amendments to MICC 19.16.010 - Definitions



Next Steps

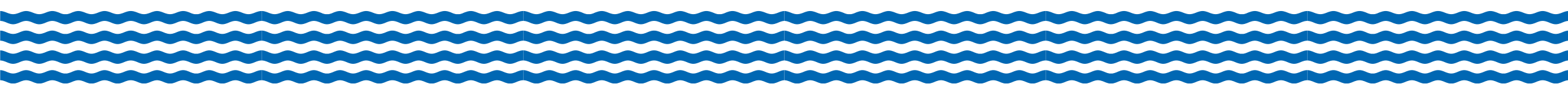
- Second reading – June 17, 2025.
- Ordinance No. 25C-11 would be effective June 30, 2025.
- Work on permanent regulations will follow based on the work plan in Ord. No. 25C-11 Ex. A.



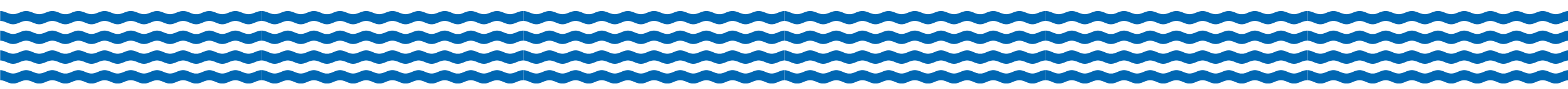
An aerial photograph of a cityscape featuring a prominent golf course in the foreground, surrounded by dense greenery and residential areas. In the background, a large body of water is visible, with a city skyline and distant mountains under a clear blue sky.

Additional Reference

MICC 19.11.040(D)(4)

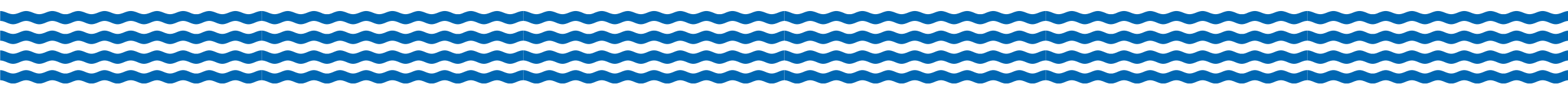
4. ~~Affordable units may not be smaller than other units with the same number of bedrooms in the development, unless the code official determines that rooms within the affordable units provide adequate space for their intended use. In no case shall the affordable units be more than ten percent smaller than the market-rate units having the same number of bedrooms in the development, or less than 500 square feet if a studio unit, 600 square feet if a one-bedroom unit, 800 square feet if a two-bedroom unit, 1,000 square feet if a three-bedroom unit, or 1,200 square feet if a four-bedroom unit; whichever is less shall have at least 90 percent of the square footage of the corresponding market-rate units with the same number of bedrooms in the development, and shall not be smaller than the following minimum unit sizes, whichever results in the larger unit: 500 square feet for studio units; 600 square feet for one-bedroom units; 800 square feet for two-bedroom units; 1,000 square feet for three-bedroom units; and 1,200 square feet for four-bedroom units.~~
- 

MICC 19.11.040(D)(4)

4. ~~Affordable units may not be smaller than other units with the same number of bedrooms in the development, unless the code official determines that rooms within the affordable units provide adequate space for their intended use. In no case shall the affordable units be more than ten percent smaller than the market-rate units having the same number of bedrooms in the development, or less than 500 square feet if a studio unit, 600 square feet if a one-bedroom unit, 800 square feet if a two-bedroom unit, 1,000 square feet if a three-bedroom unit, or 1,200 square feet if a four-bedroom unit; whichever is less shall be of a minimum size equal to the average size of market rate units for the same bedroom count. For example, if the average size of market rate one-bedroom units in a development is 650 square feet, each affordable one-bedroom unit in the development shall be a minimum of 650 square feet.~~
- 

Ordinance No. 25C-11 Ex. A

- Cities are required to establish a work plan for developing permanent amendments when adopting interim regulations.
- The Work Plan in Ordinance 25C-11 Exhibit A expects the City to adopt permanent regulations by Q3 2026.
- Ordinance 25C-11 may need to be renewed if the City has not adopted permanent regulations before the interim regulations expire on June 30, 2026.



Ordinance No. 25C-11 Ex. B & C

- **MICC 19.06.120** to be struck because this section establishes criteria for approval of design review that are not necessary given the amendments made elsewhere.
- **MICC 19.11.010 – General**, amended for consistency with other proposed changes
- **MICC 19.11.020 – Land Uses**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards
- **MICC 19.11.030 – Bulk Regulations**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards
- **MICC 19.11.040 – Affordable Housing**, amendments for clarity

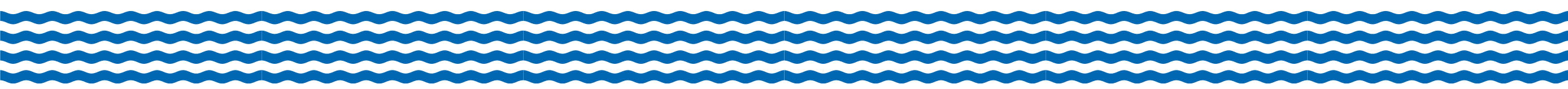


Ordinance No. 25C-11 Ex. C

- **MICC 19.11.060 – Site Design**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards
- **MICC 19.11.070 – Greenery and Outdoor Spaces**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards
- **MICC 19.11.080 – Screening**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards and establish consistent screening standards in both Chapters 19.11 and 19.12 of the MICC
- **MICC 19.11.090 – Lighting**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards
- **MICC 19.11.100 – Building Design**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards

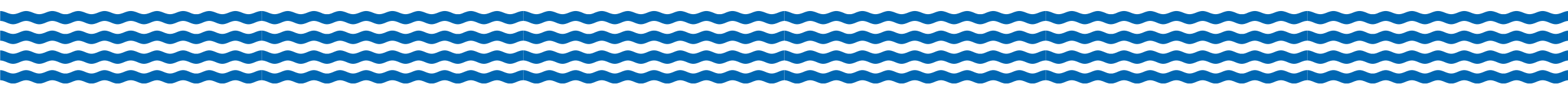


Ordinance No. 25C-11 Ex. C

- **MICC 19.11.110 – Materials and Color**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards
 - **MICC 19.11.120 – Street Standards**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards
 - **MICC 19.11.130 – Parking, Vehicular and Pedestrian Circulation**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards and clarify screening requirements consistent with changes proposed elsewhere
 - **MICC 19.11.140 – Signs**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards
 - **MICC 19.11.150 – Administration**, amendments to remove the “shall/should” section
- 

Ordinance No. 25C-11 Ex. D

- **MICC 19.12.010 – General**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards.
- **MICC 19.12.020 – Site features and context**, section struck to remove variable or subjective standards.
- **MICC 19.12.040 – Landscape design and outdoor spaces**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards.
- **MICC 19.12.050 – Vehicular and pedestrian circulation**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards.



Ordinance No. 25C-11 Ex. D

- **MICC 19.12.060 – Screening of service and mechanical areas**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards.
- **MICC 19.16.070 – Lighting**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards.
- **MICC 19.12.080 – Signs**, amendments to remove variable or subjective standards.



Ordinance No. 25C-11 Ex. E & F

- **MICC 19.15.060 – Application**, amended to remove design commission study session, consistent with other changes.
- **MICC 19.15.220 – Design review and the design commission**, amended to remove design commission study session, consistent with other changes.
- **MICC 19.16.010 – Definitions**, adopts definitions of “blank wall” and “building façade modulation” for consistency with other changes.

