



Community Development Department

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MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission
From: Mona Davis, Community Development Director
Andrew Love, AICP, Contract Planner
Date of Memo: July 17, 2025
Date of Meeting: July 21, 2025
Subject: Historic Preservation Code Amendments
(Chapter 17.35 SMC, Historic Overlay Zones and Landmarks)

INTRODUCTION:

Updates are needed to Chapter 17.35 of the Snoqualmie Municipal Code (SMC). This was brought to our attention while coordinating with King County for feedback on the color palette overlay. The most recent amendment to this chapter of code was Ordinance 1273, adopted January 23, 2023.

Staff brought a memo to Planning Commission on May 5, 2025 and King County Historic Preservation staff provided a presentation, giving an overview of their services and our interlocal agreement (ILA) with them. Staff is now returning with materials to provide clarity on Snoqualmie's existing historic sites and to help foster discussion amongst Planning Commission and any interested members of the public regarding anticipated changes to the code and overlay zones.

BACKGROUND:

On April 10, 1995, City Council adopted Ordinance No. 744, which created Chapter 17.35 of the Snoqualmie Municipal Code, Historic Overlay Zones and Landmarks, and therefore two Historic District Overlay Zones ("Overlays"), the **Downtown Historic District Overlay Zone ("Downtown Overlay")** and the **Meadowbrook Historic District Overlay Zone ("Meadowbrook Overlay")**. Later on January 22, 2001, City Council adopted Ordinance No. 874, repealing Chapter 16.26 (Landmarks) and amending various sections of Chapter 17.35, including Section 17.35.090, which establishes the **Downtown Historic Commercial Landmark District ("Landmark District")**. These code changes were made in response to the Snoqualmie Landmarks Commission designating the Landmark District, a regulated area distinct from, but overlapping, Downtown Overlay. Given the similarity of the full names of the Landmark District and the Downtown Overlay, this has created significant confusion over the years.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION CODE AMENDMENTS:

The following list highlights planned updates to the code in order to address concerns brought to Planning Commission on May 5:

- **Renew connection to Chapter 20.62 of the King County Code (KCC):** Ordinance 1273 repealed Section 17.35.030, removing the connection to Chapter 20.62 KCC. This connection was established in the City's/County's interlocal agreement ILA in 1994, partnering with King County to provide preservation services to the Snoqualmie community. The purpose of the ILA and Ordinance 874 (2001) was to reference (and tailor) preservation code elements rather than recreate them. This will also make the code shorter and clearer.
- **Historic Design Review in the Landmark District will go through King County and the Snoqualmie Landmarks Commission in accordance with ILA:** Design review in the Landmark District, in addition to Snoqualmie Landmarks outside of the Landmark District (for example, the English-Peterson House, several railcars, and Snoqualmie Falls Lumber Company Power Plant), should be routed to the King County Historic Preservation staff and the Snoqualmie Landmarks Commission. This includes the Type I, Type II, and Type III historic design review outlined in Section 17.35.120 SMC.
- **Remove the Snoqualmie Historical Design Review Board:** Section 17.35.050 SMC establishes a dedicated Snoqualmie Historical Design Review Board (HDRB) since 2001. In 2018, Section 17.35.055 SMC was inserted into the code under Ordinance No. 1203, which routed historical design review to the Planning Commission in the absence of a Snoqualmie HDRB. The HDRB cannot designate new landmarks or review preservation tax incentive applications, including preservation grants available through 4Culture, the Washington State Historical Society, and the Washington State Special Valuation property tax program. This is solely done through the Snoqualmie Landmarks Commission. By itself, Snoqualmie's historic preservation program would not be eligible for grant funding and other benefits afforded to Snoqualmie Landmark properties or those within Snoqualmie's Landmark District, as it does not meet the professional qualification requirements state and county agencies require to access preservation incentives. In addition, alterations made to designated landmarks that do not follow the Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties – the review standards used by the ILA-based Snoqualmie Landmarks Commission – risk losing access to these incentive programs, and potentially their landmark designation under the ILA.
- **Make clearer distinction between Overlays and Landmark District:** Currently those within the Downtown Overlay and the Meadowbrook Overlay have to go through same standards as those historic properties within the Landmark District; however, they do not qualify for the grant funding, tax incentives, and technical assistance that are afforded to Snoqualmie Landmarks and contributing sites in the Landmark District. Staff recommend making several changes to these overlays to further clarify and finetune standards, including:

- **Shortening the names of the Downtown Historic District Overlay Zone and the Meadowbrook Historic District Overlay Zone** to Downtown Overlay and Meadowbrook Overlay, respectively. This removes the word “historic” from the title, which ends up getting confused with the Downtown Historic Commercial Landmark District (Landmark District).
- **Create a separate chapter in the Zoning Code for the Overlays:** Since the city will still oversee design review within these overlays and not King County/Snoqualmie Landmarks Commission. This will also allow the City to finetune the requirements of these overlays to be less strict as the Landmark District, while still keeping applicable guidelines that keep the neighborhood in conformance with desired aesthetics. This will make it easier on our business and property owners who reside in these overlays but do not benefits from the incentives afforded to Snoqualmie Landmarks.
- **Opportunity to change extent of Downtown Overlay and/or Meadowbrook Overlay:** Since its adoption, the overlays for the Downtown and Meadowbrook areas have not changed, yet conditions have. Since we are fixing this section of code, this gives the City a chance to potentially reimagine the extents of these Overlays and confirm the City still wants both of them.

DESIGN REVIEW:

NEXT STEPS:

Staff will need to meet with and solicit feedback from relevant stakeholders, for example those who live or work within the Overlays. At the same time, we will begin draft code amendments. Due to the anticipated outreach the timing to return is unclear, but it may be as soon as September.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Map of Downtown Snoqualmie, showing the Landmark District, Downtown Overlay, and location of Landmarks
2. Map of Downtown and Meadowbrook Zoning, showing Landmark District and Overlays
3. Table of Historic Sites in Snoqualmie