



CITY OF TUALATIN

Staff Report

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Sherilyn Lombos, City Manager

FROM: Steve Koper, AICP, Assistant Community Development Director
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DATE: May 27, 2025

SUBJECT:

Continued conversation on Tualatin's draft code amendments to comply with state-mandated Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) rulemaking for walkable communities.

BACKGROUND:

The City of Tualatin is updating its Development Code to meet state requirements and further the goals of the Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) program. Requirements in Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) 660-012-0330 (referred to as "Rule 0330") are intended to promote walkable and bike-friendly design in new residential and commercial development throughout the city by promoting pedestrian-oriented site design, connectivity, and compact development. Successful outcomes of walkable design standards would include:

- **Comfortable, direct, and convenient access** for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit riders equitably provided throughout areas, and reduced reliance on the automobile;
- **Neighborhoods that are comfortable** for families (people young and old), inclusive, sociable, and that offer safe, direct connections to surrounding destinations; and
- **Mixed-use districts that orient activity and entrances to the pedestrian realm** and that are designed for climate resilience and better health outcomes.

During the February 10, 2025 work session presentation, City Council reviewed the preliminary findings of a code audit, heard stakeholder feedback, and reviewed "Code Concepts" which served as the recommended potential solutions. This staff report summarizes the draft code amendments proposed to comply with the Rule 0330 requirements.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Below is a summary of the draft code amendments organized by sections from Rule 0330. Overall, the TDC already complies with many of the Walkable Design Standards requirements. However, the code audit did identify gaps in the code where modifications are needed. Many of the proposed amendments draw on examples and code language provided in DLCD's *Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities Walkable Design Standards Guidebook*, and the accompanying *Model Code*.

Neighborhood Connectivity

This section of Rule 0330 applies to neighborhood-scale development (i.e., land divisions which include new streets), and calls for pedestrian-friendly and connected neighborhoods. Specific topics and code updates are summarized below.

Block Length / Connectivity:

Rule 0330 requires local governments to “set block length and block perimeter standards at distances that will provide for pedestrian network connectivity.” The amendments proposed for consistency with these requirements include:

- Reducing maximum block length from 530 feet to 400 feet and adding a maximum block perimeter standard that is consistent with four times the block length.
- Allowing block length and perimeter standards to be met with public streets, pedestrian/bicycle accessways, or private alleys.
- Requiring redevelopment of existing sites that are larger than 2 acres to add connections that meet the block length standards, as long as the improvements are proportional to the development’s impacts.
- Adding a requirement for cul-de-sacs to provide pedestrian/bicycle connectivity if a public pedestrian facility is close by.

Alleys:

Tualatin has had some residential development that included access from private alleys; however, there are no specific standards in the TDC to address these facilities. The draft amendments include alleys as an option to meet connectivity and access standards in new development, and provide a new set of standards to promote predictable and functional designs.

Mid-Block Accessways:

Mid-block pedestrian and bicycle accessways can be used to meet the connectivity standards discussed above. However, accessways will not serve the neighborhood if they do not feel safe and comfortable for users. City Council members shared concerns about adequate lighting and other safety measures for accessways. Revisions to Tualatin’s existing accessway standards are proposed to account for adequate width, lighting, and accessibility.

Residential Neighborhoods

This section of Rule 0330 applies to new residential construction in residential and mixed-use zoning districts and call for “efficient and sociable development patterns.” The rules specifically require local regulations to address building setbacks, lot size and coverage, building orientation, and access.

Minimum Setbacks:

Minimum setbacks limit how much of a site can be built on, and larger setbacks can inhibit the relationship between the sidewalk and the building. The TDC requires relatively large minimum front setbacks throughout residential zones, and structures with taller building heights are subject to stricter setbacks. The draft amendments reduce front setback requirements to further promote walkable design in all residential zones except for the Low Density Residential (RL) zone.

Maximum Setbacks:

The draft amendments add maximum setback requirements in higher-density zones to promote development that is oriented towards the street and that promotes a pedestrian-friendly street environment. These standards would apply in the High Density Residential (RH) zone and the High Density High Rise (RH-HR) zone, which staff proposes to rename as the “High Density Corridor (RH-C)” zone to better reflect the purpose and location of this designation.

To allow flexibility for meeting the maximum setback standards, the draft standards allow a pedestrian plaza or other amenity space to meet a portion of the requirement. This would allow some of the building to be set further back if there are amenities such as benches, hardscaping, and landscaping near the street.

Building Orientation:

It is recommended to add new entry orientation standards focused on multi-family development – specifically those with frontage on local streets. Developments on higher-traffic streets may benefit from being set further back from the street, with trees and landscaping providing privacy and noise buffering. However, orientation to lower-traffic, local streets would promote a pedestrian-friendly environment on those streets. The draft entry orientation standards are adapted from the *Walkable Design Standards Model Code*.

Site Design Standards for Commercial and Mixed-use Districts

This section of Rule 0330 applies to new development in commercial and mixed-use districts and calls for compact development patterns, easy ability to walk or use mobility devices, and direct access to pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation networks.

Maximum Setbacks:

Similar to the standards discussed above for higher-density residential zones, maximum setback requirements are proposed in two of the City's commercial zones – Neighborhood Commercial (CN) and Central Commercial (CC). The Mixed Use Commercial (MUC) zone already has maximum setback provisions. Similar flexibility is proposed by allowing pedestrian plaza spaces to count toward the requirements.

Building Orientation:

Rule 0330 requires the following: "Primary pedestrian entrances to buildings must be oriented to a public pedestrian facility and be accessible to people with mobility disabilities." The draft design standards for non-residential development require the main entrance of new buildings in commercial zones to:

- Orient towards the street or be within 25 feet of the street;
- Provide architectural details to distinguish the main entrance;
- Remain unlocked during business hours, unless impractical for the operations of the proposed use; and
- Provide a safe and convenient pedestrian connection to the sidewalk.

In addition, the standards prohibit parking areas between the building and the street.

Exceptions:

To enable additional flexibility in meeting the non-residential design standards (including building orientation and parking location), new "Exceptions" language is proposed that mirrors existing language in the MUC regulations. These exceptions would allow alternative design approaches if it is not practical to meet the standards given site constraints, or if the proposed design would equally or better meet the purpose of the standard.

Auto Oriented Uses

This section of Rule 0330 applies to auto oriented uses, including drive-through facilities and uses related to the operation, sale, maintenance, or fueling of motor vehicles. The rules are intended to ensure auto-oriented uses are compatible with walkability and the use of mobility devices.

Drive-Through Standards

Drive-through facilities can conflict with walkability by creating uncomfortable spaces for pedestrians. They can also make it difficult to access businesses' services without a vehicle.

The TDC has some existing drive-through standards, but additional standards are proposed to improve access and safety for pedestrians. The standards address walk-up service areas, location of service areas and stacking lanes, and spacing of drive-through entrances from street intersections.

Rule 0330 does not require cities to prohibit drive-through uses in any zones. However, the *Walkable Design Standards Model Code* prohibits new drive-through facilities in the “downtown” and “main street” districts – i.e., the priority pedestrian districts. Therefore, it is recommended to consider prohibiting new drive-throughs in the MUC zone, which is one of Tualatin’s pedestrian-oriented districts.

The project team is seeking direction from City Council on this policy question. There are two main options for how to address drive-through facilities in the MUC zone:

- **Option 1:** Prohibit new drive-through facilities in the MUC zone.
- **Option 2:** Allow drive-through facilities with new standards and restrictions as required by Rule 0330.

OUTCOMES OF DECISION:

The state rulemaking provides development regulations for pedestrian-friendly and connected neighborhoods. An urban form that focuses on walkability reduces dependence on driving, lowers transportation pollution, and promotes more active lifestyles.

ALTERNATIVES TO RECOMMENDATION:

The state rulemaking is mandatory for metropolitan areas in Oregon.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The City was awarded direct assistance for this work by DLCD under an Intergovernmental Agreement authorized by Resolution No. 5813-24. No direct financial expenditures will be incurred.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Presentation