



MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Policy Commission
FROM: Christen Leeson, Senior Planner
RE: Title 18 Update – IMC 18.404 Form & Intensity
DATE: May 12, 2022

Meeting Purpose

The purpose of the May 12th, 2022 Plan Planning Policy Commission (PPC) meeting is to provide comments and feedback pertaining to IMC 18.404 Form & Intensity.

Background

The Council Ad Hoc Committee's Title 18 Update Desired Goals and Outcome document identifies the following priority relevant to this topic:

Goal 8: *Neighborhoods retain their charm and distinctive character, pattern, and setting that includes both built and natural environments. Update codes and standards to retain and protect essential characteristics in established neighborhoods.*

Desired Outcome: Neighborhoods retain their charm and distinctive character, pattern, and setting that includes both built and natural environments.

Goal 13: *Modernize code and incorporate best practices.*

Desired Outcome: Create a well-organized, clear code that improves public access to information; provides tools that address community needs; and helps create the kinds of places the community expects.

These draft chapters consolidate development standards that govern Form and Intensity into a new chapter. Form and Intensity collects standards for height, setbacks, minimum lot size or width, density/ Floor Area Ratio (FAR), and impervious surface. Except where noted, existing standards are maintained to preserve neighborhood character. To create this chapter, sections from the following existing chapters are consolidated:

- IMC 18.06 – Establishment of Zoning Districts
- IMC 18.07 – Required Development and Design Standards

- IMC 18.19A – Central Standards Chapter 4, District Standards
- IMC 18.19B – Issaquah Highlands Replacement Regulations
- IMC 18.19C – Talus Replacement Regulations

The packet includes a summary of substantial changes, which focus on improvements to organization of code, process or implementation of direction from the Administration or the Commission. The following Summary describes the notable changes made.

Summary of Changes for IMC 18.404 Form & Intensity

The following summarizes the substantive changes made to develop the proposed **18.500 Land use Standards** chapter and the reasoning behind it. The changes are based on the gaps analysis, previous discussions with the Planning Policy Commission, a Staff evaluation of existing code and feedback from the City attorney’s office.

CHANGE	REASON
1. Article I and II provide applicability and overall standards related to setbacks, impervious surfaces, building height and density.	Consolidates zoning and district standards chapters from IMC 18.06, 18.07, 18.19B, 18.19C and Central Standards Chapter 4 into one chapter.
2. Article III provides the District Standards tables, consolidated across Central Standards, Talus, Issaquah Highlands, and Issaquah Municipal Code.	
3. Article IV establishes additional subarea and overlay standards for Central Issaquah, Talus, and Issaquah Highlands.	Reconciles differences and maintains existing characters of those areas.
4. New standards were added establishing which side of a lot is the front, sides, and rear for setback purposes. Graphics were added to communicate these standards.	Establishes clarity for odd lots, which Staff and the public often confront.
5. This draft presents an alternative Administrative Adjustment of Standards (AAS) process which more narrowly defines which standards can be changed through a “deviation” process. In setbacks, for example, an applicant may request a deviation to establish which side of the lot is the front, rear, or sides, but may not deviate from the setback width standards. Applicants seeking to change the setback standards further must use the Variance Process (in forthcoming IMC 18.200).	Existing code uses an Administrative Adjustment of Standards (AAS) section to provide code flexibility. However, the approval criteria for an AAS are vague.
6. This draft consolidates these tables into a single chapter with a new format that is easier to read.	Existing code tables related to setbacks, height requirements, impervious surfaces are currently

CHANGE	REASON
	spread throughout different chapters and section of code.
7. Where standards applying to zones that appear across multiple neighborhoods (e.g. in Central Issaquah, as well as outside of Central Issaquah), the lower standard was adopted as a minimum citywide. Neighborhood-specific standards are maintained through Article IV standards in the code, which provide the specific subarea standards to ensure neighborhood characters are continued.	This achieves consistency across the City.
8. When the Replacement Regulations were adopted, Issaquah Highlands and Talus relied on the Central Issaquah standards for much of their standards. The new code makes that consolidates the former Urban Villages with Central Issaquah for many of the Form and Intensity Standards. This includes adding build-to standards for Issaquah Highlands and Talus.	Creates clarity for the former Urban Villages.

Previous Meetings

- October 28, 2021 – Joint Meeting Planning Policy Commission with Development Commission: Zoning and Uses, ([agenda](#) / [video](#) / [minutes](#))

Timeline

- May 12th, 2022 – Public Hearing: IMC 18.300 Subdivisions, IMC 18.400 Zones, IMC 18.402 Permitted Uses, IMC 18.404 Form and Intensity, and IMC 18.500 Land Use Standards.
- May 26th, 2022 – Deliberation: Title 18 – IMC 18.400 IMC 18.300 Subdivisions, IMC 18.400 Zones, IMC 18.402 Permitted Uses, IMC 18.404 Form and Intensity, and IMC 18.500 Land Use Standards
- September 2022 – Public Hearings: Consolidated Draft Title 18 Update

Attachments

- Summary of Public Comments

A. Summary of Public Comments

No.	Source	Date	Commentor Name	Comment	Response Notes
Z-14	Email	7/26/2021	Kristi Tripple	18.07.020 (Maintain existing historic design/scale) seems this section needs more context; could potentially be at odds w/CIP by using the word "existing". .040 (Setbacks) transparency w/ pertinent info from traffic studies? .105 (Essential Public Facilities) #7 separation should be 1000'. .210 (parking/storage vehicles boats) Address transient vehicles/overnight parking. .240 (undeveloped property - habitation) Expand hours to 8p-7a. .355 (Building Height Adjustments) C1B - does 25% step-back still make sense? #6 tree clusters not conducive to urban/mixed setting - flexibility in implementation?	This chapter has been rewritten to resolve out of date language but there have been no significant changes to the way Form and intensity are regulated. Additional policy discussion on these topics may be appropriate during the forthcoming Comprehensive Plan update.
Z-17	Email	10/28/2021	Susan Neville	The Land Use Code changes for zoning, land use and forms & intensity will have one of the largest impacts on Issaquah future. Maintaining our low-density neighborhoods on Cougar, Squak and Tiger foothills are a high priority. Meeting our 2040 growth projection of 3200 units can be easily done on the valley floor.	No changes have been made to zoning or development densities in this code update. Minor changes to form and intensity rules are meant to clarify currently confusing standards.