

MEMO

DATE: August 16, 2018

TO: Development Services Department

FROM: Daniel Martinez, Assistant Planner

SUBJECT: Rooftop Mechanical Equipment Screening

BACKGROUND

This interpretation is being written to ensure:

- A. the requirements for the screening of rooftop mechanical equipment are more clearly described for the benefit of both City staff and applicants,
- B. options for compliance with the screening requirements are made clear to applicants, and
- C. the implementation of these requirements is fairly and consistently applied by City staff.

CODE LANGUAGE

Central Issaquah Development and Design Standards (CIDDS)

- **14.6.10** Mechanical, electrical, and communication equipment, satellite dishes, Utilities, infrastructure housing, HVAC, but excepting renewable energy appurtenances, shall be screened from views above and at ground level, surrounding streets and surrounding buildings. The devices shall be screened in a method that is integrated with the architectural character of the building.
- **14.6.12** Equipment that is incorporated into a rooftop terrace or garden shall screen large equipment with architectural elements and/or landscaping to include the top and all sides. At maturity, the plant screening shall be at least the height of the equipment being screened.

Costco Development Agreement

- See provisions of the **CIDDS**.

Issaquah Highlands Development Agreement

- Expired. See provisions of the **CIDDS**.

Issaquah Municipal Code (IMC)

- **18.07.135 Mechanical screening.** Mechanical equipment including, but not limited to, HVAC, electrical transformer vaults, and satellite dishes must be significantly screened. Screening of ground-mounted equipment shall be through appropriate fencing, landscaping, or a

combination of the two (2). The screening shall be effective in both winter and summer. Rooftop equipment shall be screened in a manner and material that is architecturally compatible with the building. Examples of appropriate screening include, but are not limited to, lattices, parapet walls or rooftop plantings. (Ord. 2670 § 2 (Exh. A), 2013; Ord. 2462 § 22, 2006; Ord. 2301 § 2, 2001).

Rowley Development Agreement

- Whether actively or passively used, rooftops that can or will be seen, should be designed to be attractive. Utilities, infrastructure housing, HVAC, etc. should be screened with architecturally compatible elements from all reasonably visible vantage points.

Talus Development Agreement

- **Chapter 3 Office Campus Architectural and Site Design 4.e** All rooftop elements such as HVAC units and vents should be screened in a manner that is architecturally consistent with the building design and blocks views from adjoining properties.

CONCLUSION

In every case, the codes cited above require:

- A. the screening be integrated with the architectural character of the building, and
- B. screening be provided to account for views from various vantage points, including views above and at ground level.

APPLICATION

To comply with the requirement that the screening be integrated with the architectural character of the building, all screening elements must be painted a primary accent color of the building on which the screening is being installed.

To comply with the requirements that screening be provided to account for various vantage points, the following options are available:

- A. For new projects:
 1. all screening devices shall be well integrated into the architectural design through such elements as parapet walls, false roofs, roof wells, clerestories, or equipment rooms or enclosures; and,
 2. the developer/architect may elect to group the rooftop mechanical units in order to consolidate the amount of necessary screening, but this is not required.
- B. For existing buildings:
 1. The applicant may elect to screen mechanical equipment on a per-unit basis as depicted in Figure 1. With this approach, the top of the screening element must be a minimum of two (2) feet above the top of the equipment being screened. However, if the equipment is not grouped, then separate screening may be necessary for each piece or geographically proximate group of equipment to achieve the purpose of the screening.
 2. The applicant may elect to provide perimeter screening to mitigate views of all units when they are closely clustered as depicted in Figure 2. With this approach, the top of the screening element must be a minimum of two (2) feet above the top of the

equipment being screened. In some cases, the Designated Official may determine that overhead screening (a cover) may also be required.

3. The applicant may elect a “packaged unit”, such as those depicted in Figures 3 and 4. These units are essentially self-screened and include a cover. However, the cover must be either be obtained or painted in a color to complement the overall architecture.
4. Other solutions may be presented by the applicant or their professional contractor and will be considered by the Designated Official.



Figure 1. Individual Unit



Figure 2. Perimeter Screening



Figure 3. Packaged Unit



Figure 4. Packaged Unit

BONDING

For emergency situations (e.g. unforeseen circumstances in which units that have failed), as determined by the Designated Official, a bond equal to 150 percent of the fair market value of the project may be issued so that installation of air condition units may proceed. The permitting and installation of screening elements must follow within 60 days of permit issuance.