

Chapter 17.45

C-1 DOWNTOWN DISTRICTS

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17.45.010 Overall intent.

The intent of this chapter is to establish and preserve the city's historic downtown and downtown-adjacent neighborhoods having a wide range of retail uses and businesses, housing options, public open space, government and professional offices and places of amusement in a setting conducive to safe, convenient, comfortable, and attractive pedestrian use. (Ord. 3749 § 3, 2018).

17.45.020 Subdistricts and more detailed intent.

The C-1 zone consists of three distinct subdistricts identified and illustrated below:

A. C-1a. That area bound by Division Street on the north, Broadway Street on the south between South 1st Street and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad right-of-way and Kincaid Street on the south between the BNSF railroad right-of-way and Interstate-5, the Skagit River on the west, and Interstate-5 on the east.

1. This subdistrict emphasizes pedestrian-oriented retail shopping on the ground floor. The area is required to include a high level of pedestrian amenities, including continuous storefronts with awnings, and pedestrian sidewalks wider than those found in other commercial zones. This subdistrict is composed of pedestrian-friendly streetscapes intended for shoppers walking from merchant to merchant, open spaces, courtyards, trails, benches, appropriate lighting, and street trees. The design principles for buildings and streets are taken from traditional small towns not oriented to automobile travel.

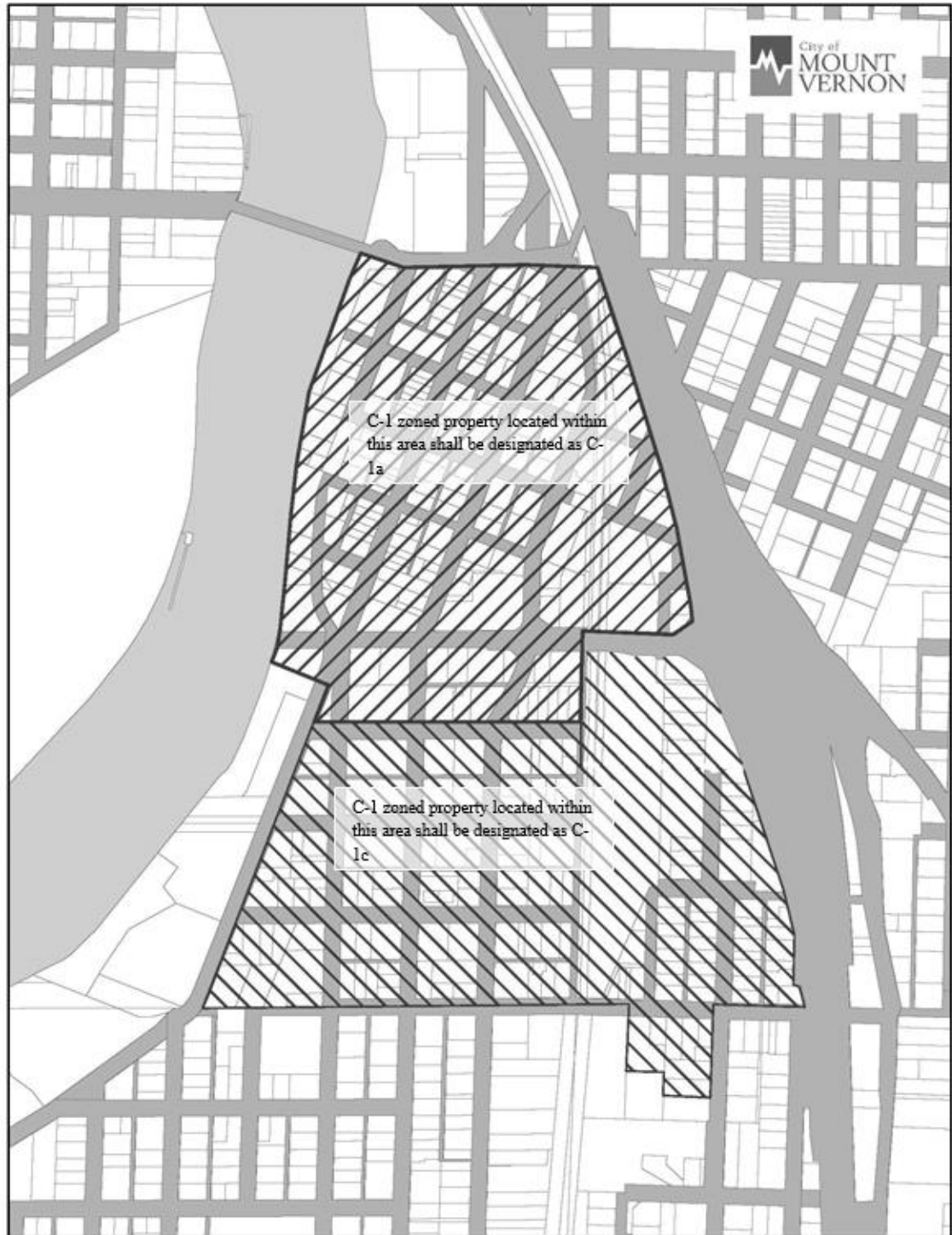
B. C-1b. All areas lying outside subdistricts C-1a and C-1c.

1. This subdistrict provides for those downtown support services such as banks, offices, motels, gas stations and print shops which are not as pedestrian-oriented but are essential to the life of the downtown businesses.

C. C-1c. That area bound by Broadway Street to the north between South 1st Street and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad right-of-way and Kincaid Street on the north between the BNSF railroad right-of-way and Interstate-5, South 1st Street to the west, Interstate-5 to the east, West Section Street (and a straight line projection of West Section Street from Harrison Street to South 1st Street) to the south with a projection of property extending approximately 630 linear feet to the intersection of West Section Street and the BNSF railroad right-of-way then extending east along the north right-of-way of East Hazel Street to where it intersects South 6th Street, then north to a point where South 6th Street intersects with West Section Street.

1. This subdistrict is intended to be a diverse and pedestrian-friendly neighborhood with a mix of housing, civic uses, and workplaces all within a short walk of each other. The retail and entertainment uses found within the C-1a subdistrict are intended to be supported by the C-1c subdistrict.

D. C-1 zoned property located within the areas mapped below shall have the subdistrict designation that is shown.



(Ord. 3749 § 3, 2018).

17.45.030 Permitted uses.

Permitted uses in the C-1 subdistricts include:

	Subarea C-1a	Subarea C-1b	Subarea C-1c
A. Retail stores.	Yes	Yes	Yes
B. Personal services.	Yes	Yes	Yes
C. Office uses with 500 square feet or less at ground level.	Yes	Yes	Yes
D. Office uses with more than 500 square feet at ground level.	No*	Yes	Yes
E. Banks and financial institutions.	Yes	Yes	Yes
F. Hotels.	Yes	Yes	Yes
G. Eating and drinking establishments.	Yes	Yes	Yes
H. Theaters.	Yes	Yes	Yes
I. Art galleries and museums.	Yes	Yes	Yes
J. Laundry and dry cleaning businesses.	No	Yes	Yes
K. Day nurseries.	Yes	Yes	Yes
L. Commercial or public parking garages and/or commercial or public surface parking.	Yes	No	No
M. Single-family, duplex, and multifamily residential uses with ground-level residential units of 35 units or less.	No*	No*	Yes
N. Single-family, duplex, and multifamily residential uses without ground-level residential units of 35 units or less.	Yes	Yes	Yes
O. Printing operations.	Yes	Yes	Yes
P. Upholstery shops.	Yes	Yes	Yes
Q. Private and vocational schools.	Yes	Yes	Yes
R. Civic uses.	Yes	Yes	Yes
S. Mixed use and live-work buildings.	Yes	Yes	Yes
T. Public parks, plazas and other open spaces.	Yes	Yes	Yes
U. Emergency shelter for the homeless; provided an emergency shelter for the homeless shall not be located within a 1,000-foot radius of any other emergency shelter for the homeless and an existing shelter shall not expand the existing square footage of their facility to accommodate additional homeless, except that the hearing examiner may approve a location within a lesser distance or an increase in square footage of the existing facility to serve additional homeless if the applicant can demonstrate that such location will not be materially detrimental to neighboring properties due to excessive noise, lighting, or other interference with the peaceful use and possession of said neighboring properties; and provided further, an emergency shelter for the homeless shall have its occupancy set by the fire marshal and building official; and provided further, an emergency shelter for the homeless shall have any and all licenses as required by state and local law.	Yes	Yes	Yes

* Use possible with approved conditional use permit, see MVMC [17.45.050](#)

(Ord. 3749 § 3, 2018).

17.45.040 Accessory uses.

Permitted accessory buildings and uses in the C-1 district include:

A. Residence for watchman, custodian, manager or property owner of permitted use provided it is located within the same building as the principal use. This residence can be located on the ground floor so long as it is not visible from the street.

B. Each primary structure is permitted to have one accessory structure that can be used as a shed to store tools or other items as long as it complies with the following requirements:

1. The total building area of the accessory structure shall be no more than 120 square feet.

2. The accessory structure is required to be a single story and is not allowed to be taller than the primary structure on the site.

3. The accessory structure shall be located in the rear yard and is required to maintain a minimum five-foot setback from all property lines and all other structures.

4. The accessory structure shall not have a permanent heat source.

5. The accessory structure is intended to be for storage of tools or other household items and is not to be a space that is slept in.

6. The accessory structure is not allowed in critical areas or their associated buffers regulated under Chapter [15.40](#) MVMC.

C. Accessory dwelling unit subject to the requirements outlined in MVMC [17.73.110](#).

D. Card room.

E. Indoor storage. (Ord. 3802 § 30, 2019).

17.45.050 Conditional uses.

A. Uses permitted by a Type III conditional use permit in the C-1 subdistricts are as follows:

	Subarea C-1a	Subarea C-1b	Subarea C-1c
1. Single-family, duplex, and multifamily residential uses without ground-level residential units of 36 units or more.	Yes	Yes	Yes

	Subarea C-1a	Subarea C-1b	Subarea C-1c
2. Single-family, duplex, and multifamily residential uses with ground-level residential units of any number subject to the following additional conditional use criteria:	Yes	Yes	NA, an outright permitted use
a. The ground-level multifamily units shall be set back a minimum of 10 feet from any abutting right-of-way except for alleys.			
b. The ground-level entry to the multifamily units shall be elevated to provide visual separation from the abutting pedestrian way into the living space of the dwelling unit.			
3. Office uses with 500 square feet or more at ground level subject to the following additional conditional use criteria:	Yes	NA, an outright permitted use	NA, an outright permitted use
a. Ground-level window displays are provided to create pedestrian interest.			
4. Commercial or public parking garages and/or commercial or public surface parking subject to the following additional conditional use criteria:	NA, an outright permitted use	Yes	Yes
a. Curb cuts shall be minimized.			
b. Surface parking shall have internal landscaping meeting the parking lot requirements found within Chapter 17.93 MVMC.			
c. Surface parking shall be screened from streets and pedestrian ways.			

(Ord. 3749 § 3, 2018).

17.45.060 Prohibited uses.

Uses prohibited in the C-1 district include:

A. Outside sales of vehicles, boats, mobile homes, RVs and all other similar types of merchandise in the C-1a and C-1c subdistricts only.

B. Drive-in and drive-through uses are prohibited in the C-1a and C-1c subdistricts.

C. Automobile service and repair, fuel stations, car washes and all other similar services in the C-1a and C-1c subdistricts only.

D. Outdoor storage and mini-storage facilities.

E. Hazardous material storage, self-service storage, warehousing and distribution.

- F. Manufacturing, assembly or packaging of products from previously prepared materials.
- G. Warehouse and distribution uses.
- H. Sales of inoperable vehicles or used parts.
- I. Vehicles or vehicle parts recycling sites.
- J. Towing businesses and their associated temporary impound lots.
- K. Wrecking yards or junk vehicle storage.
- L. Storage yards for items that are not displayed for sale. (Ord. 3749 § 3, 2018).

17.45.070 Development standards.

The following development standards apply to all C-1 zoned properties:

A. Minimum lot area and lot width: unrestricted.

B. Minimum Setbacks and Lot Coverage.

1. None for nonresidential and mixed-use buildings except they must comply with applicable building and fire codes.
2. All single-family, duplex, and multifamily buildings shall comply with the setbacks outlined within Chapter [17.70](#) MVMC.

C. Building Height.

1. Unrestricted for nonresidential and mixed-use buildings except they must comply with applicable building and fire codes.
2. Single-family and duplex buildings shall comply with the building height requirements in Chapter [17.15](#) MVMC.
3. Multifamily buildings shall comply with the building height requirements in Chapter [17.24](#) MVMC.

D. Density requirements: unrestricted.

E. Design standards: requirements found in Chapter [17.70](#) MVMC.

F. Parking requirements: requirements found in Chapters [17.70](#) and [17.84](#) MVMC.

G. Signage requirements: requirements found in Chapters [17.70](#) and [17.87](#) MVMC.

H. Landscaping requirements: requirements found in Chapters [17.70](#) and [17.93](#) MVMC. (Ord. 3846 § 5, 2022).



The Mount Vernon Municipal Code is current through Ordinance 3891, passed April 30, 2024.

Disclaimer: The City Clerk's office has the official version of the Mount Vernon Municipal Code. Users should contact the City Clerk's office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

City Website: <https://www.mountvernonwa.gov/>

City Telephone: (360) 336-6211

[General Code](#)