

20.37.520 Downtown district urban village – Uses.

A. Uses are established in Table 20.37.520, below. Land use classifications are listed on the horizontal axis. Downtown district land use areas are shown on the vertical axis.

1. If the symbol “P” appears in the box at the intersection of the column and row, the use is permitted subject to general requirements for the use and the use area.
2. If the symbol “C” appears in the box at the intersection of the column and the row, the use is permitted subject to the conditional use provisions specified in Chapter [20.16](#) BMC, and to general requirements for the use and the use area.
3. If the symbol “N” appears in the box at the intersection of the column and the row, the use is not allowed in that area, except for certain short-term uses (see BMC [20.10.040](#), Temporary uses).
4. If a (number) appears in the box at the intersection of the column and the row, the use may be permitted in the use area subject to the special limitations indicated in the corresponding “Note” at the end of the table.
5. *Use Determination.* In the case of a question as to the inclusion or exclusion of a particular proposed use in a particular use category, the planning and community development director shall have the authority to make the final determination. The director shall make the determination according to the characteristics of the operation of the proposed use as they relate to similar allowed uses within the use area, and the intent of the downtown district subarea plan.

Table 20.37.520 Permitted Uses

P = Permitted C = Conditional Use N = Not allowed (#) = See Notes When multiple symbols and notes appear in a box such as P(2) or (4), C, they are interpreted as (P) Permitted (2) when located in a main building(s) on a site existing as of September 23, 2014 OR (4) on corner lots; (C) conditional elsewhere.				
LAND USE CLASSIFICATION	AREA			
	CC (1) CT (1)	RT-1	RT-2	IT
A. Residential				
1. Attached Accessory Dwelling Unit per BMC 20.10.036	P	P	P	N
2. Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit per BMC 20.10.036	P	P	P	N
3. Short-Term Rentals, per BMC 20.10.037	P	P	P(2)	N
4. Co-Living Housing	P	P	P	P(3)

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LAND USE CLASSIFICATION	AREA			
	CC (1) CT (1)	RT-1	RT-2	IT
5. Co-housing Developments, per BMC 20.10.048	P	P	P	P(3)
6. Confidential Shelters, per BMC 20.10.047	P	P	P	N
7. Hotel, Motel, and Hostel	P	N	N	P
8. Infill Housing, per Chapter 20.28 BMC	P	P	P	N
9. Manufactured Home Park	N	N	N	N
10. Multifamily	P	P	P	P(3)
11. Single-Family, Detached Dwelling Unit with less than 5,500 square feet of total floor area	P	P	P	N
12. Single-Family Residence with 5,500 square feet or more total floor area, subject to BMC 20.16.020(M)(4)	P	C	C	N
13. Certain interim housing, per Chapter 20.15A BMC	P, C	P, C	P, C	P, C
B. Commercial				
1. Adult Entertainment	N	N	N	N
2. Commercial Recreation	P	N	N	P
3. Crematory	N	N	N	C
4. Day Care	P	C	C	N
5. Day Treatment Center	P	C	C	C
6. Drinking Establishment	P	N	N	P
7. Drive-Up Facilities such as bank tellers, food and beverage services, laundry pick up, and car washes	N	N	N	P
8. Eating Establishment	P	P	P(2) or (4), C	P

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	CC (1) CT (1)	RT-1	RT-2	IT
9. Food Membership Distribution, including Community Supported Agriculture (CSAs) and Food Buying Clubs	P	N	N	P
10. Live/Work Unit	P(5)	P(5)	P(5)	P(5)
11. Motor Vehicles Sales, limited to automobiles, motorcycles, scooters and recreational vehicles	P(6)	N	N	P
12. Offices	P	P	P	P
13. Repair of small equipment and items such as appliances, electronics, clocks, furniture, hand tools, and watches	P	N	N	P
14. Retail Sales, except as restricted in subsection (B)(11) above	P	P(4)	P(4)	P
15. Services, Personal	P	P	P(2) or (4)	P
16. Service Station and Gas Station	N	N	N	P
C. Health Care				
1. Doctor, Dentist, Medical, and Therapy Office and/or Laboratory	P	P	P	P
2. Medical Care Facility	P	C	C	N
3. Service Care	P	C	C	N
4. Veterinary Service, Animal Hospital and Small Animal Care Shop	P(6)	N	N	P(6)
D. Public and Semi-Public Assembly				
1. Interpretive Center, Library, and Museum	P	N	N	N
2. Art Gallery, Art School, and Commercial Art Studio	P	P	P(2)	N

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LAND USE CLASSIFICATION	AREA			
	CC (1) CT (1)	RT-1	RT-2	IT
3. Auditorium, Stadium, and Theater	P	N	N	P
4. Church and House of Worship	P	C	C	C
5. Community Center	P	C	C	N
6. Convention Center	P	N	N	P
7. Institution of Higher Education and School	P	C	C	P
8. Neighborhood Club/Activity Center	P	C	C	P
9. Park, Trail, and Playground	P	P	P	P
10. Passenger Terminal	P	N	N	P
11. Private Club and Lodge	P	C	C	P
E. Industrial				
1. Automobile Services for the washing, lubrication, and minor repair of automotive vehicles	N	N	N	P
2. Automobile Wrecking	N	N	N	N
3. Commercial Electric Power Generation, per BMC 20.36.030(C)	N	N	N	P
4. Construction and storage yards	N	N	N	P
5. Hazardous Waste Treatment and Storage Facility	N	N	N	N
6. Manufacturing and Assembly except as allowed in subsection (E)(7) below	P(6)(7)(8)	N	N	P(7)
7. Manufacture, bottling, and distribution of beverages, including breweries, distilleries, and wineries	P(8)	N	N	P
8. Mini Storage Facility	P(6)(9)	N	N	P

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LAND USE CLASSIFICATION	AREA			
	CC (1) CT (1)	RT-1	RT-2	IT
9. Monument and Stone Works	N	N	N	P(7)
10. Repair of large equipment such as vessels, vehicles, and floor-based tools	N	N	N	P
11. Warehousing, Wholesaling, and Freight Operation	N	N	N	P(10)
F. Miscellaneous Uses				
1. Adaptive Use for Historic Register Buildings, per BMC 17.90.080 and 20.16.020(A)(1)	C	C	C	C
2. Community Gardens	P	P	P	P
3. Community Public Facilities, per BMC 20.16.020(K)(4)	P	C(11)	C(11)	P
4. Jail and Correctional Facilities, provided the location is limited to those properties bound by Prospect and Flora Streets, Grand Avenue, and Whatcom Creek	P	N	N	N
5. Parking Facility (Nonretail)	P	C(12)	C(12)	P
6. Parking Facility (Retail)	P	N(12)	N(12)	P
7. Public Utilities on private property	P(13)	C	C	P
8. Public Utilities when located within a public right-of-way	P	P	P	P
9. Recreational Vehicle Park	N	N	N	N
10. Recycling and Refuse Collection and Processing Center, subject to additional standards per BMC 20.16.020(L)(2) .	C	N	N	P, C(14)
11. Wireless Communications Facility, per Chapter 20.13 BMC	P, C	P, C	P, C	P, C

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	CC (1) CT (1)	RT-1	RT-2	IT
12. Certain temporary homeless shelters, per Chapter 20.15 BMC	P	P	P	P

NOTES:

- (1) Ground floor commercial uses are required in certain locations as shown in the urban village design guidelines contained in BMC [20.25.020\(C\)\(3\)](#).
- (2) Permitted when located in a main building(s) on a site existing as of September 23, 2014.
- (3) Permitted when in conjunction with other permitted uses, provided the residential use is located on or above the 2nd floor.
- (4) Permitted on corner lots. The gross floor area of a corner store may not exceed 3,000 square feet unless approved by a conditional use permit. A corner store may not be approved within 600 feet of another corner store.
- (5) The “work” component in live/work is limited to those permitted and conditional uses listed under the applicable zoning subarea in Table 20.37.520.
- (6) When entirely enclosed within a structure.
- (7) The manufacture, compounding, processing, refining, and treatment of significant quantities of the following materials, products or operations is prohibited. For the purpose of this section “significant quantities” consists of a barrel or more at a single time. Acetylene, asphalt and tar, brick, tile, terra cotta, concrete, cement, lime, gypsum, and plaster of Paris, fats, oils and soap, fertilizer, garbage, offal, bones, and the reduction of dead animals, forging or smelting of metal, lampblack, stove and shoe polish, lumber and planing mills, oilcloth and linoleum, paint, shellac, turpentine, lacquer and varnish, paper and pulp, petroleum processing and storage, any explosive or highly inflammable material, slaughtering and processing of meat or fish products, tannery and curing of raw hides, chemicals such as acid, ammonia, bleach, chlorine, dye stuff, glue, gelatin and size, automotive wrecking, or junk yards.
- (8) Permitted when in conjunction with retail sales of the same product on site.
- (9) Permitted when the floor area is less than 50 percent of the floor area of other permitted use(s) on site.

- (10) Excluding the storage and handling of explosives, ammonia, chlorine, and any other similarly dangerous or toxic substances.
- (11) Conditional except for those uses permitted in (D)(9) above.
- (12) Permitted as shared parking pursuant to BMC 20.37.540(D)(2)(e).
- (13) Exclusive of storage yards.
- (14) Conditional for facilities that collect recycling or refuse imported from outside the district.

[Ord. 2025-12-033 § 11; Ord. 2023-01-001 § 3 (Att. 3); Ord. 2020-02-002 § 13; Ord. 2019-09-029 § 9; Ord. 2019-09-028 § 9; Ord. 2018-11-024 § 15; Ord. 2018-10-019 § 13; Ord. 2018-05-009 § 22; Ord. 2014-09-049 § 52 (Exh. F)].

The Bellingham Municipal Code is current through Ordinance 2026-06-015, passed June 1, 2026.

Disclaimer: Users should contact the Deputy City Clerk for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

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