



Code Alignment Project

Improving codes for more efficient permitting



Origin

- Codes can be unclear and challenging to implement.
- Conflicting or unclear requirements create permitting delays, add costs to resolve.
- Development codes are not fully aligned, as each bureau manages their own set of rules.



Project Overview

Two Components

Small code package

- Limit to technical code changes
- Benefit small businesses and small-scale development projects.

Long-term program

- Start building the CAP program foundation for ongoing regulatory improvements.
- Establish a unified code issue database.





Project Team

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Transportation Policy

Transportation Policy

Urban Forestry Policy

Urban Forestry Policy

Land Use Planning

Permitting Review

Code Compliance

Public Works Review

Public Works Review

Public Infrastructure Review

Public Infrastructure Review

Building Code Policy

Engineering Plan Review

Land Use Review



Start with upgrade thresholds

1. T11, T17, T24, T33 all have upgrade thresholds based on project value.
2. Challenging for staff and applicants to mutually agree upon project value.
2. Cost threshold triggers are different for each code.
3. Often a surprise to applicants.
4. Can lead to significant increases in project and permit expenses.
5. Lead to multiple review rounds.
6. The improvement requirement can outsize the proposed project.



Intended Amendment Outcomes

1. Right Size requirements for small businesses and small-scale development
2. Improve cost transparency
3. Create predictability so applicants can anticipate costs and requirements
4. Establish a consistent methodology
5. Simplify the process



Thresholds we are focused on

- Street Tree Planting (T11)
- Seismic Evaluation (T24)
- Non-conforming Site Upgrades (T33)
- Frontage Improvements (T17)



Summary of Existing Upgrade Thresholds

Requirement	Threshold	Escalator	Excludes	Max
1. Street Improvements (T17) (significant alteration)	Project value $\geq 35\%$ improvement value	Improvement assessment value	Mandatory life/safety and ADA	None
2. Street Trees (T11)	Project value $> \$25,000$ (est 1990)	None	Demolition, ROW only work	10% of project value
3. Seismic Evaluation (T24)	Project value $> \$175,000$ (est 2004) $> \$362,000$ (current 2024)	% change in RS Means Construction Index each year	Mechanical, electrical, plumbing, fire, site improvements, ecoroof, finish work, painting	Cost of a single ASCE 41 evaluation
4. Site upgrades (T33)	Value of proposed alterations $> \$10,000$ (est 1993) $> \$356,000$ (current 2024)	Each March 1 per annual national average of the CCI published in the 2 nd January edition of the Engineering News-Record	MFD replacement Fire L/S agreement ADA, seismic, stormwater, wellfield protection, energy efficiency, hazmat, river landscaping, electric vehicle chargers.	Option 1: 10% of project value w/permit Option 2: None full compliance w/in 2-5 years (based on site size)



Concept Summary

	New Construction		Additions & Alterations	
Requirement	Existing	Proposed	Existing	Proposed
Street Tree Planting Title 11, Trees	\$25,000	Add new construction threshold	\$25,000	Suspend* 2029
Site Improvements Title 33, Zoning Code	N/A	N/A	\$356,300	Suspend 2029
Seismic Evaluation Title 24, Building Code	N/A	N/A	\$362,000	Suspend 2029
Street Improvements (Significant Alterations) T17, Public Improvements	N/A	Add new construction threshold	PV >35% IV	Suspend** 2029

*Street trees may still be required when street improvements are required.

**Street improvements may be required if a project increases daily trips by $\geq 15\%$ or ≥ 250 trips, and for institutional uses.



Early Feedback

- This could be hugely beneficial to creating opportunities for development and revitalizing Portland-based projects. (BOMA/NAIOP)
- This will save time and money on small projects for customers and staff. (Permitting Services)
- This could really help property owners who are currently at risk of losing their buildings. (DRAC)
- I really appreciate you taking on this work. (Housing Bureau)
- Glad you are taking a bite out of making our regulations better. We can't have a simpler process until we have streamlined requirements. (Property Compliance)

Key Dates

April

April 4: Code and Admin Rule edits due

April 7-11: Hold follow-up meetings as needed

April 11: Post concept and report on CAP webpage

April 14: April 25: Hold stakeholder Meetings

May

May 5: Post proposed amendments on CAP webpage

May 15: Public Hearing Urban Forestry Commission (T11)

June

June 10: Public Hearing Planning Commission (T33, T11)

TBD: Council Committee Review

July/August

TBD: City Council Public Hearing (T33, T24, T17, T11)



Community and Economic Development