

## Joyce Phillips

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**From:** Derek Pohle <ddpohle@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 30, 2025 10:47 AM  
**To:** Middle Housing  
**Subject:** Party of record request

We just started construction on a part remodel part addition to our house for the purpose of multi-generational living. My mother will be moving in with us and this project will provide her an attached apartment for semi independent living with out having to go into elder care in a facility that would drain her resources in less than a year and leave her living on Medicaid only. We unfortunately had to pay almost \$4000 in mitigation as the city determined the project was an ADU. This is an expansion of our home and is accessible and connected internally.

Derek Pohle & Melissa McFadden  
2016 14<sup>th</sup> Ave SW  
Olympia, WA

## Joyce Phillips

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**From:** Sandy Novack <snepointe@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 7, 2025 6:29 PM  
**To:** Middle Housing  
**Subject:** Proposal for more housing

No, no, no

I am all for middle housing but this is a seriously bad idea. Are you trying to pack us in like worms. And, whatever happened to worrying about permeable land? When our house flood because there is no where for the water to go it is the city that will be sued. And it will happen with climate change and this wet state.

Please, no. Find a better way

Sent from my iPad

## Joyce Phillips

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**From:** northbeachcomm@cs.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 25, 2025 6:04 AM  
**To:** Jay Burney; Councilmembers  
**Cc:** Joyce Phillips; Cari Hornbein; Tim Smith  
**Subject:** Tier 1 VS Tier 2 City issues; Olympia City Council

FEB 25

Hello Olympia City Council:

The City of Olympia is trying to giving a huge prize for the rich real estate developers, again!  
No one can afford to live in our city anymore. This is a city only for rich people (from CA?)

The City Council is now set to re-define our city through WA State Laws.  
The City only has a current population of 55,400 people, which is a Tier 2 City.

The City wants to call ourselves a Tier 1 City, which is a population of 75,000 people; this is a lie!

The City wants the WA state rules and regulations for a Tier 1 city to apply; but Olympia is a Tier 2 City!

The City wants to make it easier for real estate developers to go forward with what ever

they want in our city; we are not talking about 'LOW INCOME' Housing.

We are talking about expensive housing costs, which the City is now calling "Affordable Housing"(Market rate), this is a lie. This city has become one that is not affordable for low income, not affordable for middle income people. The City council people think that the expensive housing will help issues in our city. It will destroy our city. Wake up!

Thank you;

L. Riner  
2103 Harrison  
OLY., WA  
98502

## Joyce Phillips

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**From:** Sandy Novack <sanovack41@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 28, 2025 3:01 PM  
**To:** Joyce Phillips  
**Subject:** Proposed new housing rules

The city of Olympia and the state are planning and have planned new rules for housing that I strongly object to. Who knew that I, the Democrat, would find living in a Democratic state just as annoying as living in a Republican state.

About the proposals to address middle housing problems.

Your proposal. In a single house lot

1. 4 units or 6 or 6 plus 2 ADU's. You will certainly be succeeding in packing as many people as you can together. Most of us, even the poor or middle would like to walk a short distance to see a forest or a tree or a bit of sky. People are happier and better adjusted when they can do that. I suggest affordable housing go up but have space around it that is not developed. Or if developers can't afford to build smaller because they don't make enough money on a house, subsidize the building of smaller houses or build public housing. They have that in large cities all the country.
2. "Frequent transit routes" and parking. I had a hip replacement, could not walk a block much less half a mile. I had a hip replacement. For 2 years before that couldn't walk 3 blocks or half a mile, might have made one block. I can't take a bus to the grocery store and bring groceries home. My grandkids go to soccer in Tumwater. Guess that would be out in one of your new places.
3. ADU's. 1,000 sq ft. That's a house, but, I guess! That's what you want it to be.
4. No street parking required or little. See above.
5. Co-living. Yikes, with no parking. I am ok with co-living, in general, but the bigger the house, the more opportunity for disaster because it is uncontrollable. 30 people could live there, yes, illegally but it is very hard to prove it. Tried that, wasn't willing to stand on my front porch and take pictures all day long to show to police.

I have lived in more than a couple of large cities. Businesses need parking places for customers, residents drive around for hours to find spaces and when they do find them leave their cars there for weeks. And, it works better in big cities because they have lots of mass transit and a central city where most people work. It can't work here because we need our cars. If we are talking about poor and middle housing, Uber everywhere is not an option.

So, no, no, no to your big ideas

Sent from my iPad

## Joyce Phillips

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**From:** Lorie Hewitt <bradleyhewittoly@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 23, 2025 8:32 AM  
**To:** Joyce Phillips  
**Cc:** John Saunders  
**Subject:** Comments on Code Amendments for Middle Housing

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Dear Ms Phillips and City of Olympia staff:

Thank you for your presentation last Wednesday March 19th for the South Capital Neighborhood (SCN). Based on your presentation, various Code Amendment and Design Review fact sheets, and FAQs, I have some comments and questions on the proposal. As you know the SCN is a National Historic neighborhood. Most of the following comments are related to preserving the historic heritage and character of our neighborhood, while allowing some proportional increased density needed for housing.

- **Tier 1 versus Tier 2 city designation:** The decision to draft these amendments for a Tier 1 city when Olympia is a Tier 2 city is problematic. Doing so increases the base unit density to 6 in areas near a “major transit stop”, a pretty drastic density leap. There is no guarantee that Olympia will actually be a Tier 1 city by 2030. I have lived here 40 years and seen many population projections come and go and not ever materialize. Moreover, the city appears to be using the Urban Growth Boundary, not the City limits, as the basis to estimate future population. I fail to see the benefit of “redefining “ the city limits this way to potentially reach a Tier 1 level of population. Why intentionally reduce the flexibility to design a program for a Tier 2 city and see how it works before jumping right into Tier 1 requirements from the State? Many regulations benefit from adjustments in a 5 year timeframe, which should not be overly onerous as far as staff time. Just review the regulations in 2030 and amend them, if needed.
- **Major Transit Stop:** Olympia has complete flexibility in this area of State requirements since we do not have any major transit stops. Yet the draft amendments box us in to untested densities and probably suspend some design requirements for projects within the 1/4 or 1/2 mile (whichever is chosen) of these non existent transit stops. If the city insists on using its own creation of “frequent transit routes” and allowing increased unit lot density to 6 units instead of 4, no matter whether it’s 1/4 or 1/2 mile from the transit route this will encompass our entire SCN. Has anyone actually looked at our neighborhood lots? Fitting 6 units on them will certainly not allow for design standards that respect the historic nature of our streets and houses. Not to mention parking issues on some heavily parked streets. The option to require off street parking should not be precluded by these amendments. In addition, where is the data that show that residents routinely walk 1/2 mile in the rain to the bus stop? Even 1/4 mile is probably stretching it.

- ADUs and Unit lot Density: The proposal includes ADUs in counting the maximum number of units allowed on a lot. Please keep this as written.
- Current Residential Design requirements: One of your fact sheets says "If applying Design Review for middle housing, only administrative design review can be required" What does this mean? Already the Design review process for SCN seems to be pretty non functional. Residents have repeatedly noted the recent ongoing construction of a huge house and garage on 17th Ave SW that covers virtually an entire lot (no trees on it—were any required?). Also, it is not set back to be consistent with the historic homes on the street. If design review happened, where is the enforcement of the standards? Unfortunately this is not the first time developers or lobbyists buying properties in the SCN have ignored the design standards with no apparent City of Olympia accountability. If only administrative design review is required for all these middle housing units, is this a further weakening of requirements that preserve the historic character of the SCN? Are lot coverages/permeability, appropriate setbacks, and minimum tree density still part of administrative design review? Please also include provisions for stringent enforcement of residential design standards on these new units.
- Selling individual units on a lot to other owners: If a development is approved on a parent lot, these amendments allow for the individual units to be sold independently of each other. What provisions are in place to make sure each of these units isn't bought and used primarily for business purposes? Unfortunately, when that happens it's likely they will frequently be left vacant due to absentee ownership. And when owners are present and properties are used for business purposes, parking can become an issue on congested SCN streets. The SCN already has a large share of houses whose owners are operating businesses and leave them vacant for most of the year. We don't need more of these situations arising with extra units on our properties!
- Impact of increased density on current residents' Solar Panels: I have raised concerns about structures potentially obstructing the many solar panels in our neighborhood previously during the adoption of the Missing Middle regulations. These new middle housing amendments compound the potential for solar panel problems. With more density there is a higher chance of units close to property lines. Where are protections for not obscuring the current residents' solar panels on roofs close to the property line? A 24 foot or 35 foot tall unit will easily obscure solar panels. On our street alone two of us have panels on our carports near property lines. Any structure close to them will render them non functional!
- Question about new allowance for 3 stories in the 35 foot high units: What is the purpose of this allowance? If it's just to increase the inside space of the allowed 4 units on a lot, I don't see any problem with this. But if it's to allow for an additional apartment in each of the allowed units, I am

very opposed to this allowance. Doubling the number of resident families on a lot brings unaddressed parking congestion and possibly other issues.

- Diagram issue in FAQs document: Under “What is a unit lot subdivision?” there is a helpful diagram with 4 examples of lots with units on them. The 3rd one presents a design for townhouses. This one presents an issue regarding how the street facing townhouse would fit in with the design of many neighborhoods. It is unclear how the side of a townhouse would be designed to include windows and entries that fit in with surrounding houses. Obviously a bare wall facing the street should not be an option!
- Affordable Housing comment: I do not believe that these amendments address Olympia’s need for affordable housing. Rentals in the SCN typically are not affordable for lower income residents. It’s probably the city’s hope that rents for smaller units in SCN will be affordable. But I don’t see much in here that incentivizes affordable units.

Thank you for your work and your public outreach on these amendments. I look forward to, at some point, your response to these questions and comments.

Lorie Hewitt  
401 18th Ave SE  
Olympia 98501

## Joyce Phillips

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**From:** Joyce Phillips  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 25, 2025 2:04 PM  
**To:** Lorie Hewitt  
**Cc:** John Saunders; Brittany Gillia; Tim Smith  
**Subject:** RE: Comments on Code Amendments for Middle Housing

Hi, Lorie.

Thank you for your patience as I prepared a response. Please see my responses below, in red text. Feel free to ask follow up questions or provide additional comments.

Joyce

Joyce Phillips, AICP, Planning Manager (she/her)  
City of Olympia | Community Planning & Economic Development  
601 4th Avenue East | PO Box 1967, Olympia WA 98507-1967  
360.570.3722 | olympiawa.gov

**Note:** *Emails are public records and are eligible for release.*

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**From:** Lorie Hewitt <bradleyhewittoly@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 23, 2025 8:32 AM  
**To:** Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>  
**Cc:** John Saunders <johnosaunders@me.com>  
**Subject:** Comments on Code Amendments for Middle Housing

Dear Ms Phillips and City of Olympia staff:

Thank you for your presentation last Wednesday March 19th for the South Capital Neighborhood (SCN). Based on your presentation, various Code Amendment and Design Review fact sheets, and FAQs, I have some comments and questions on the proposal. As you know the SCN is a National Historic neighborhood. Most of the following comments are related to preserving the historic heritage and character of our neighborhood, while allowing some proportional increased density needed for housing.

- Tier 1 versus Tier 2 city designation: The decision to draft these amendments for a Tier 1 city when Olympia is a Tier 2 city is problematic. Doing so increases the base unit density to 6 in areas near a “major transit stop”, a pretty drastic density leap. There is no guarantee that Olympia will actually be a Tier 1 city by 2030. I have lived here 40 years and seen many population projections come and go and not ever materialize. Moreover, the city appears to be using the Urban Growth Boundary, not the City limits, as the basis to estimate future population. I fail to see the benefit of “redefining “ the city limits this way to potentially reach a Tier 1 level of population. Why intentionally reduce the flexibility to design a program for a Tier 2 city and see how it works before jumping right into Tier 1 requirements from the State? Many regulations benefit from adjustments



in a 5 year timeframe, which should not be overly onerous as far as staff time. Just review the regulations in 2030 and amend them, if needed.

*Thank you for your comments. The majority of the population in the urban growth area (UGA) is in the southeast area. This portion of the UGA has been under consideration for potential annexation and may be considered again within the next few years. If annexed, it will add to the population of the city limits. Additionally, there is an application in for a sewer lift station in this general area that would significantly expand development opportunities in this part of the City and its UGA. Because the City and the County have joint planning agreements, the same or similar development regulations apply within the City Limits and UGA. We strive to plan cooperatively for the entire area, not just one or the other. This is the reason the Council's Land Use and Environment Committee encouraged the first draft be drafted for our expected population in 2030.*

- Major Transit Stop: Olympia has complete flexibility in this area of State requirements since we do not have any major transit stops. Yet the draft amendments box us in to untested densities and probably suspend some design requirements for projects within the 1/4 or 1/2 mile (whichever is chosen) of these non-existent transit stops. If the city insists on using its own creation of "frequent transit routes" and allowing increased unit lot density to 6 units instead of 4, no matter whether it's 1/4 or 1/2 mile from the transit route this will encompass our entire SCN. Has anyone actually looked at our neighborhood lots? Fitting 6 units on them will certainly not allow for design standards that respect the historic nature of our streets and houses. Not to mention parking issues on some heavily parked streets. The option to require off street parking should not be precluded by these amendments. In addition, where is the data that shows that residents routinely walk 1/2 mile in the rain to the bus stop? Even 1/4 mile is probably stretching it.

*It is true that the City does not have any transit stops that meet the state's definition of a Major Transit Stop. To be clear, the increased number of units per lot associated with the use of frequent transit routes in this draft does not suspend or alter any design requirements or impact where the Infill & Other Residential design guidelines apply. The design requirements apply to all housing types in the Infill Design District, whether for a single family home or middle housing. The historic preservation provisions also apply to all housing types in Historic Districts.*

*Even though the code may allow 6 units per lot, that does not mean 6 units will actually fit. There are a lot of variables to be considered, which are even more complex when there are existing structures on a lot to take into account. Each applicant will need to demonstrate that the number of units proposed will fit and meet all requirements that apply to the property (zoning, design review, historic preservation, tree protection, etc.).*

*The use of frequent transit routes (rather than Major Transit Stops) and 1/2 mile instead of a 1/4 mile are policy decisions suggested by members of the Land Use and Environment Committee, and do go beyond the minimum requirements of the state law. This is a proposed approach to help address the housing crisis locally and these parts of the code amendments may, or may not, be adopted in the final action taken by City Council.*

- ADUs and Unit lot Density: The proposal includes ADUs in counting the maximum number of units allowed on a lot. Please keep this as written.

*Comment noted.*

- Current Residential Design requirements: One of your fact sheets says “If applying Design Review for middle housing, only administrative design review can be required” What does this mean? *This means that design review must be completed without requiring a public meeting, that it will be handled as part of the building permit review process. Our code currently requires Design Review be completed by the Design Review Board and in a Public Meeting if there are 5 units or more proposed. Since middle housing includes 6-plexes, we propose to require Board level review for 7 units or more.* Already the Design review process for SCN seems to be pretty non functional. Residents have repeatedly noted the recent ongoing construction of a huge house and garage on 17th Ave SW that covers virtually an entire lot (no trees on it—were any required?). Also, it is not set back to be consistent with the historic homes on the street. If design review happened, where is the enforcement of the standards? Unfortunately this is not the first time developers or lobbyists buying properties in the SCN have ignored the design standards with no apparent City of Olympia accountability. If only administrative design review is required for all these middle housing units, is this a further weakening of requirements that preserve the historic character of the SCN? *These comments seem to be more about the historic preservation aspects of review than the design review aspects of the structure. My understanding is that the home has not yet received final approval and that there will be four trees planted on site (per the approved site plan).* Are lot coverages/permeability, appropriate setbacks, and minimum tree density still part of administrative design review? *Setbacks, lot coverage, and tree density are part of review of the site plan, not the design review (of the building) or the historic preservation review aspects of review.* Please also include provisions for stringent enforcement of residential design standards on these new units. *I suggest that the SCNA may want to work with the Historic Preservation Planner to review what is in the code, how the review is conducted, and see if there is a desire to propose or request any text amendments to the historic preservation sections of the code. If this is done, it would apply to all historic districts in the city, not just the South Capitol district.*
- Selling individual units on a lot to other owners: If a development is approved on a parent lot, these amendments allow for the individual units to be sold independently of each other. What provisions are in place to make sure each of these units isn’t bought and used primarily for business purposes? Unfortunately, when that happens it’s likely they will frequently be left vacant due to absentee ownership. And when owners are present and properties are used for business purposes, parking can become an issue on congested SCN streets. The SCN already has a large share of houses whose owners are operating businesses and leave them vacant for most of the year. We don’t need more of these situations arising with extra units on our properties!

*Any resident (renter or property owner) of a residential unit can apply for a Home Occupation to operate a business from their residence. The requirements they are to comply with are included in Olympia Municipal Code (OMC) [18.04.060\(L\)](#). The purpose of the home occupation provisions is to allow for the use of a residential structure for a non-residential use which is clearly an accessory use to the residential use and does not change the residential character of the neighborhood. Home occupations meeting the requirements in the code section noted above are allowed in any district in which residential uses are permitted. If you believe a home occupation is being used in violation of those standards, please contact Code Enforcement 360.753.8487 or [cpdce@ci.olympia.wa.us](mailto:cpdce@ci.olympia.wa.us).*
- Impact of increased density on current residents’ Solar Panels: I have raised concerns about structures potentially obstructing the many solar panels in our neighborhood previously during

the adoption of the Missing Middle regulations. These new middle housing amendments compound the potential for solar panel problems. With more density there is a higher chance of units close to property lines. Where are protections for not obscuring the current residents' solar panels on roofs close to the property line? A 24 foot or 35 foot tall unit will easily obscure solar panels. On our street alone two of us have panels on our carports near property lines. Any structure close to them will render them non functional!

*The provisions to protect anyone's solar access rights remain unchanged with the amendments as drafted, but over time, as more infill occurs, it is quite possible that actions of an adjacent property owner could impact someone else's solar panel access to sunlight, either by adding an addition to their existing home or adding a new unit that shades the panels. This could also occur as existing trees grow and get taller or if new trees are planted.*

*The best legal way to protect existing solar access that I am aware of is by securing a solar access easement from adjacent property owner(s). The City of Olympia does not currently address solar access in its codes. I will share your comments with our climate staff and building department staff on this issue.*

- Question about new allowance for 3 stories in the 35 foot high units: What is the purpose of this allowance? If it's just to increase the inside space of the allowed 4 units on a lot, I don't see any problem with this. But if it's to allow for an additional apartment in each of the allowed units, I am very opposed to this allowance. Doubling the number of resident families on a lot brings unaddressed parking congestion and possibly other issues.

*This proposed change would allow someone to either have 1, 2, or 3 stories in a building, as long as the building height does not exceed the current limit of 35 feet (as measured to the midpoint of the roof pitch). This would pertain to single family residences, duplexes, triplexes, etc. It would not pertain to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) which have a maximum building height of 24 feet. There are many variables for how this may be applied. As an example, a triplex could be 3 units side-by-side-by-side or it could be three units, one on top of the other (or stacked). The code is drafted to apply to the zoning district(s) for this portion of the code. The historic preservation provisions of the code would also apply, which may mean additional design mitigations could be requested or required to reduce the mass/scale/appearance of the building.*

- Diagram issue in FAQs document: Under "What is a unit lot subdivision?" there is a helpful diagram with 4 examples of lots with units on them. The 3rd one presents a design for townhouses. This one presents an issue regarding how the street facing townhouse would fit in with the design of many neighborhoods. It is unclear how the side of a townhouse would be designed to include windows and entries that fit in with surrounding houses. Obviously a bare wall facing the street should not be an option!

*These examples are from a statewide handout and meant to be for illustrative purposes about unit lot subdivisions. Townhouses are already allowed in almost all residential zoning districts, including R 6-12 that applies to your neighborhood. Development of townhouses would be subject to the applicable standards of that zoning district, the Historic Preservation codes, and the Townhouses chapter ([OMC 18.64](#)).*

- Affordable Housing comment: I do not believe that these amendments address Olympia's need for affordable housing. Rentals in the SCN typically are not affordable for lower income residents. It's probably the city's hope that rents for smaller units in SCN will be affordable. But I don't see much in here that incentivizes affordable units.

*The opportunity to get additional units in exchange for 1 or 2 of the units being "affordable" are tied to the property owner recording a covenant stating the homes will be affordable for a period of at least 50 years. This is typically recorded prior to the issuance of the building permit(s). We have done something similar in the past for a period of 20 years but the new time period is 50 years. However, because the current draft includes your neighborhood in the area that could get the additional units because of its proximity to frequent transit routes (as locally defined), the additional units would be allowed with or without the affordable housing covenant.*

*Affordable Housing is defined as housing affordable to households with an income not greater than 80 percent of the median income for Thurston County as determined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Affordable housing should cost no more than 30 percent of gross household income (including utilities).*

Thank you for your work and your public outreach on these amendments. I look forward to, at some point, your response to these questions and comments.

Lorie Hewitt  
401 18th Ave SE  
Olympia 98501

## Joyce Phillips

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**From:** northbeachcomm@cs.com  
**Sent:** Saturday, April 5, 2025 3:28 PM  
**To:** Middle Housing  
**Subject:** comments.....: City of Olympia -" Middle Housing" Survey Now Open

April 5

Hello City of OLY.....

These are comments for this city survey, below:

MY ANSWER; "No " tier 1. Oly is not forecast to exceed 75000 population for 20 years. We have heard the city presentation on this issue. The city staff is ignoring certain facts. Population numbers are important. You cannot "fake" them! Stop pushing for something that does not exist. Stop pushing your own agenda; Allow rich developers to build anything that they want; no rules.

City does not seem to care about public comment. The city council only cares about rich developers; giving them MFTE'S. The city council is making the city for rich people only; others cannot afford the huge taxes. Others cannot afford all the rules and regulations that only the rich developers can afford; where is the "low cost HUD housing?" It is no where.

fyi,

L. Riner

2103 Harrison

OLY., WA 98502

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Middle Housing <middlehousing@ci.olympia.wa.us>

**To:** Middle Housing <middlehousing@ci.olympia.wa.us>

**Sent:** Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at 11:10:22 AM EDT

**Subject:** Olympia - Middle Housing Survey Now Open

You are receiving this email as an identified Party of Record for the Middle Housing Code Amendments proposal.



## **Middle Housing Code Amendments**

### **Community Survey Now Open**

The first draft is issued for public review and comment – and we want to hear from you! Some parts of the proposal are required in order to meet state law but in other parts there is more discretion about how we proceed. We're soliciting feedback on the parts of the proposal where there is more than one way to decide how to move forward.

### **Get involved**

Take the short survey to tell us what you think about the proposed code amendments for housing. The survey will close on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

- [Middle Housing Survey](#) on Engage Olympia

For more information on middle housing, please visit [www.olympiawa.gov/middlehousing](http://www.olympiawa.gov/middlehousing)



Thank you!

Joyce

Joyce Phillips, AICP, Planning Manager (she/her)

City of Olympia | Community Planning & Economic Development

601 4th Avenue East | PO Box 1967, Olympia WA 98507-1967

360.570.3722 | [olympiawa.gov](http://olympiawa.gov)

***Note: Emails are public records and are eligible for release.***

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