



Middle Housing

Implementing New Requirements

City Council
November 18, 2025

Webpage Resources

Legislation and Background

First Draft and Public Hearing Drafts

Policy Decision Points Used in Draft

Q&A Session Recording + FAQ

Survey Results – 46 pages

Survey Summary and How Input Used –
14 pages

olympiawa.gov/middlehousing

Home Government Codes, Plans & Standards Missing Middle

Middle Housing

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Documents

- Model Ordinance for Cities 25,000 and Over
- Unit Lot Subdivision fact sheet
- Harmonization Report
- Community Engagement Plan
- Middle Housing Info Sheet
- Accessory Dwelling Units Info Sheet
- Co-Living Housing Info Sheet
- House Bill 1110 - Middle Housing Bill
- House Bill 1337 - Accessory Dwelling Unit Bill
- House Bill 1998 - Co-Living Bill

What's happening?

The City of Olympia is proposing zoning code amendments for housing. This is directly related to the State of Washington amendments to the Growth Management Act, which contains specific requirements for cities to implement for a variety of "middle" housing types. Related amendments also include Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Co-Living Housing.

The first draft was issued for public review and comment in January. Two revised drafts have been issued, which include revisions and clarification in response to public and staff comments. A public hearing was held on August 18, 2025.

The Planning Commission completed its review and recommended approval, with revisions, at its meeting on September 15, 2025. Council's Land Use and Environment Committee is scheduled to consider the Planning Commission recommendation at its meeting on October 23. City Council is scheduled to consider this proposal at a meeting on Tuesday, November 18.

- [Planning Commission recommendation to City Council](#)
- [Revised Public Hearing Draft \(August 5, 2025\)](#)
- [Public Hearing Draft \(June 5, 2025\)](#)
- [Survey summary & How input is used](#)
- [Survey results with all comments](#)
- [Policy Decision Points used in Draft](#)
- [FAQ - March 2025](#)

Q&A Session

On March 31, 2025 we held an online Q&A session to answer questions about the proposed Middle Housing amendments. [Watch the recording](#)

What is Middle Housing?

Middle Housing refers to a range of housing types that can provide more than one housing unit per lot in a way that is compatible in scale with single-family houses and contain two or more attached, stacked, or clustered homes including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, fiveplexes, sixplexes, townhouses, stacked flats, courtyard apartments, and cottage housing. Middle Housing is a key component of the City's housing strategy, as it supports housing affordability for households across all income level - a key community vision in Olympia's Comprehensive Plan and Housing Action Plan.

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olympiawa.gov/subscribe

General Timeline

- ✓ Webpage, Info Sheets, Bills (Aug 2024)
- ✓ First Draft: Jan 28, 2025
- ✓ Public Outreach and Comments: Jan – May
- ✓ Q&A Session – March 31st
- ✓ Survey – April 1st - May 15th
- ✓ Planning Commission Briefing: April 21, 2025
- ✓ Public Hearing Drafts: June 5, 2025 & August 5, 2025
- ✓ Public Hearing – August 18, 2025
- ✓ Planning Commission Recommendation – Sept 15, 2025
- Council Review & Decision Making – October-December

Due Dec 31, 2025
- or state law
supersedes local
codes

Public Process & Information

Phase 1 – Harmonize ordinances (2023-2024)

Phase 2 – Address new legislation (2024-2025)

- Invitation to past participants
- Enewsletters (8) and Email to Parties of Record (9)
- Information Sheets and FAQ
- Utility Billing Insert (May 2025)
- Community Survey (open 6 weeks)
- Social Media Posts
- Public Meetings (OPC, OHC, LUEC, CNA, Q&A Session)

Background

Amendments to the Growth Management Act

- HB 1110 and 2321 – Middle Housing
- HB 1337 – Accessory Dwelling Units
- HB 1998 – Co-Living Housing

Related Amendments in State Subdivision Law

- SB 5258 – Unit Lot Subdivisions
- SB 5559 – Unit Lot Subdivisions (*adopted in 2025*)

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

What is changing?

- Allow 2 per lot
- Allow with all housing types, not just single family detached
- Each ADU can be up to 1,000 square feet in size
- Impact fees - no more than 50% of those of principal unit

What stays the same?

- Max height (24 feet) if detached
- Paved, well lit pathway required
- Parking allowed but not required
- Design Review in Infill Design District
- Historic Preservation Standards, where applicable

Co-Living Housing

What is changing?

- The name
- How sewer connection fees are calculated
- How density for co-living housing is calculated
- Parking (0.25 spaces per unit)
- Land Use Review Process and Type of Tree Protection (varies by number of units proposed)

What is not changing?

- Design Review in Infill Design District
- Historic Preservation Standards, where applicable

Middle Housing

Zoning Code

- Definitions
- Unit Lot Density – Tier 1 or Tier 2 City

Process Changes

- Administrative Design Review
- Must allow Unit Lot Subdivisions
- State guidance preempts local code if not addressed
- New private covenants cannot preclude
- Limited appeals

Unit Lot Density

Middle Housing (HB 1110 and HB 2321)

- Definitions
- Unit Lot Density – Tier 1 or Tier 2 City

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) (HB 1337)

- ADUs are not identified as a type of middle housing
- Cities should identify if ADUs are counted in Unit Lot Density

Unit Lot Subdivisions (SB 5258)

- Units can be subdivided as long as “parent” lot meets all zoning requirements

Policy Choices

- Meet Tier 1 City Standards – 4 or 6 units per lot
- Use Frequent Transit Routes – with Half-Mile Distance
- Count ADUs toward Unit Lot Density
- Keep a Maximum Size for ADUs
- Eliminate Maximum Number of Stories
- Reduce Setbacks in some zones
- Increase lot coverage in some zones

Tier 1 vs. Tier 2 Requirements

Unit Lot Density	Tier 1 City (population of 75,000+)	Tier 2 City (25,000-75,000)
Number of units allowed per lot	4	2
Number of units allowed per lot if within ¼ mile of Major Transit Stop*	6	4
Number of units allowed per lot related to affordable housing	6, if at least 2 units are for affordable housing for at least 50 years	4, if at least 1 unit is for affordable housing for at least 50 years

**There are currently no transit stops in Thurston County that meet the state's definition of a Major Transit Stop.*

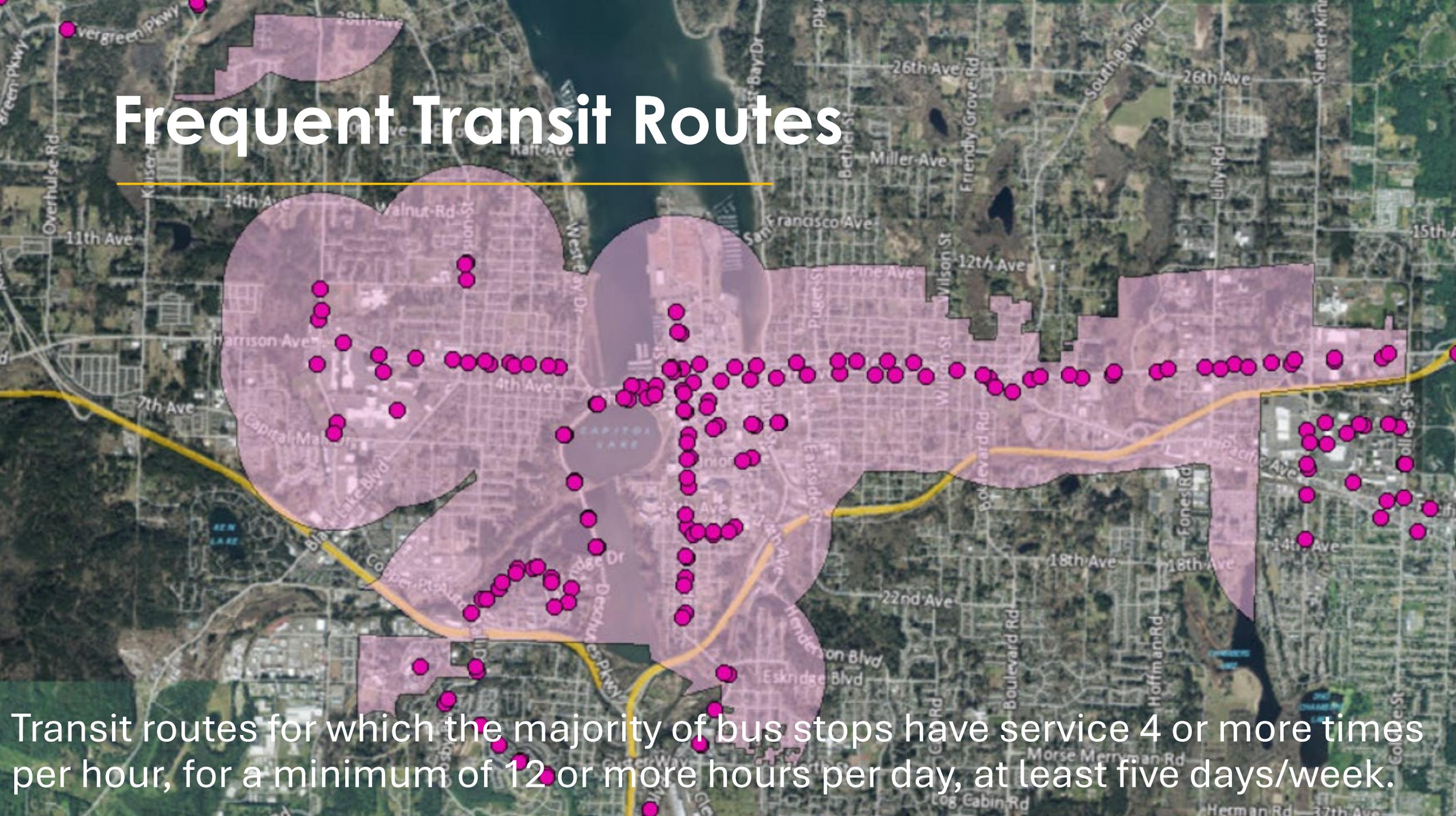
Olympia's Population

Olympia	2024 Estimate	2030 Projected*	2035 Projected*	2040 Projected*	2045 Projected*
City Limits	57,450	62,980	66,960	69,760	72,040
UGA	13,410	13,390	13,730	14,610	15,610
Total	70,860	76,370	80,690	84,370	87,650

**TRPC Forecast adopted 2018, updated in 2024. Source: TRPC The Profile*

Frequent Transit Routes

Transit routes for which the majority of bus stops have service 4 or more times per hour, for a minimum of 12 or more hours per day, at least five days/week.



OPC & LUEC Recommendations

- Recommend approval, with revisions:
 - Strike design review requirement outside Infill Design Review District
 - Increase maximum building height in lower density residential zones from 35 feet to 40 feet
 - Update rear setbacks for structures to 10' (5' for ADUs)
 - Reduce minimum site size for Manufactured or Mobile Home Parks
 - Add notes to plat map for unit lot subdivisions

Note: Planning Commission recommendation letter is included in the meeting packet.

Making it Work

Applicants will need to show that the development proposal fits on the lot and meets all zoning requirements

- Setbacks
- Lot Coverage
- Building Height
- Tree Protection
- Design Review (where applicable)
- Historic Preservation (where applicable)

Proposed Motion

- Move to adopt the middle housing code amendments

Questions

middle@ci.olympia.wa.us

olympiawa.gov/middlehousing

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Long Range Planning Manager





APPENDIX

The following material is provided as reference information only and is not intended as part of the presentation.

Infill Design Review (Summary)

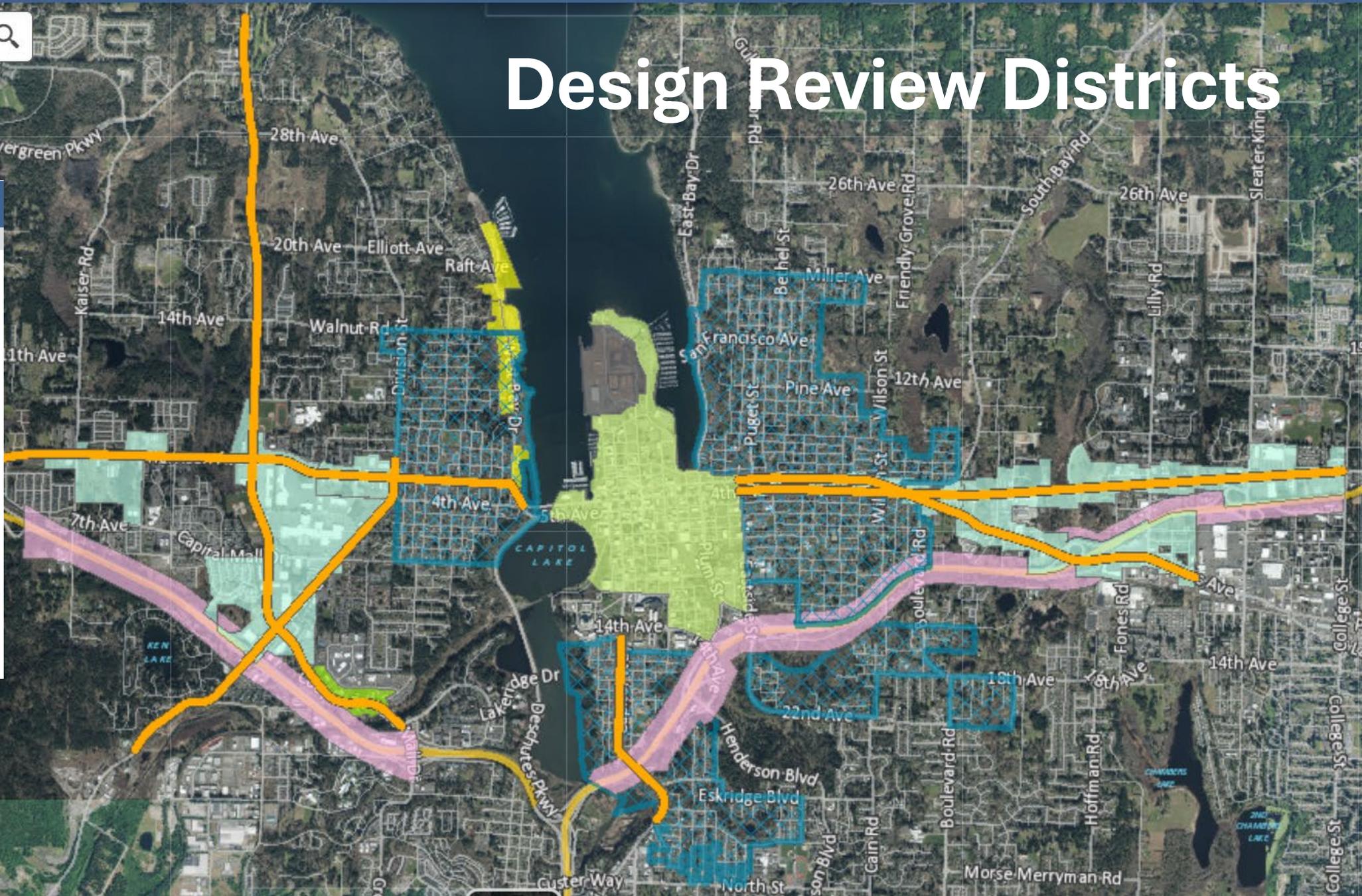
- Minimize appearance of building scale differences. Reflect the architectural character of neighboring residences through building features.
- Provide clearly defined building entry from the primary street.
- Use building and roof modulation & articulation to reduce appearance of large buildings.
- Provide relief, detail, and visual rhythm on the facade with well-proportioned windows.
- Design garages and carports so they do not dominate street facade.
- Use building materials with texture and pattern and a high level of quality and detailing. Reserve brightly saturated colors for accent or trim features.
- For ADUs:
 - Reflect the architectural character of the primary residence through use of related building features.
 - Provide a clearly defined building entry that is easily accessible from the street or the existing residence. Provide a well-lighted, paved sidewalk to the building entry.

address or place



Design Review Districts

- List
- Design Review Corridors
 - Design Review Districts
 - AUTO ORIENTED DISTRICT
 - DESIGN REVIEW CORRIDOR
 - DOWNTOWN DISTRICT
 - FREEWAY CORRIDOR
 - HIGH DENSITY CORRIDOR
 - INFILL REGULATIONS
 - MARINE TERMINAL
 - PEDESTRIAN OVERLAY STREET A
 - PEDESTRIAN OVERLAY STREET B
 - RESIDENTIAL SCALE CORRIDOR
 - WEST BAY DRIVE DISTRICT





Find address or place

Historic Districts & Properties

Layer List

- Sign Code Boundaries
- Historic Properties (+)
- Historic_Shoreline
- Historic_Districts
- Historic_Properties
 - Individually Listed: National
 - Individually Listed: State
 - Individually Listed: Local
 - District: Contributing
 - District: Non-Contributing
- HOA Tree Tracts (City Limits)

Unit Lot Subdivision

The examples illustrate how setbacks apply to a parent lot and unit lots.

1. Preserved single-family house with three attached units built in the back yard.
2. A cottage cluster development with a shared open space.
3. A townhouse development with a shared driveway.
4. A duplex with an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) on its own unit lot.

