

Joyce Phillips

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 14th Ave SW
Olympia, WA

Joyce Phillips

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

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

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

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

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.*

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 <johnsaunders@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.
- 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

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 30th.

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

For more information on middle housing, please visit 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

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

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Joyce Phillips

From: Jim Carroll <jcarroll@springwoodave.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 17, 2025 8:14 AM
To: Middle Housing
Subject: Middle housing comments

Hi Joyce, can the new code please address shadow (or ghost) platting? It would be great to be able to do partial subdividing of a large lot in Olympia. Other cities allow this.

Also, I wanted to express disagreement with having a maximum GFA limit of only 1000 Sq ft for ADUs. I vote for no limit, at least 1200 for footprint, not GFA. Or, some language that might allow planning staff and citizens some variance for unique situations, like my 5 acre parcel, with a 1106 square foot (footprint) house that I would like to treat as an ADU, and then build a larger main house.

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me about this yesterday.

Much appreciated,

Jim Carroll

360-486-4745



April 22, 2025

Joyce Phillip, Principal Planner
Community Planning and Development
City of Olympia
middle@ci.olympia.wa.us
jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us

RE: Comment Letter re Middle Housing Code Amendments – Party of Record

Dear Joyce:

Dimension Law Group provides strategic legal counsel for development projects throughout King, Pierce, Snohomish, Chelan, Grays Harbor, and Thurston counties. Our firm specializes in helping clients construct attached accessory dwelling units (AADUs) and detached accessory dwelling units (DADUs) and conversion of such units to condominiums for real property transfer. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this evolving area of long-range planning and land use regulation. We offer these comments on behalf of our diverse client base, who work tirelessly to provide affordable housing within Washington State.

House Bill 1337, adopted by the Washington State Legislature in 2023, amongst other important changes to state law, encourages the creation of new Accessory Dwelling Units. Most notably, HB 1337 requires jurisdictions to allow two AADUs or DADUs (or a combination thereof) per lot, within urban growth areas by six months after the next Comprehensive Plan periodic updates.

Construction of AADUs and DADUs is critical for diversity housing options and provision of affordable housing, which when properly constructed or redeveloped, harmonize and enhance the character of low density residential communities.

With implementation of HB 1337, jurisdictions must balance regulatory and process frameworks with economic viability for development. In respecting this balance, efficient process requirements and minimal site regulations are critical to allow for development. Specifically, we believe the below requests provide a framework for county and local governments to ensure responsible development and/or redevelopment of AADUs and DADUs. On behalf of our clients, we encourage implementation of the following principals:

- 1) The ability for AADUs and DADUs to be used as short-term rentals with allowance for owners to appropriately regulate parking, noise, and other important measures to maintain the character of low-density residential zones.
- 2) Reduce maximum size limits to avoid over-regulating sites to the extent development and construction are functionally and/or fiscally impossible.
- 3) Allowance for construction or redevelopment of AADUs and DADUs with sewer as permitted/allowed uses within critical areas and shoreline jurisdictions, provided implementation of reasonable environmental mitigation and that such structures and detached structures are not sited nor encroach in buffers.
- 4) Relaxed public health, building code and environmental permitting requirements, which do not constrain developers to the point construction is fiscally impossible.



- 5) Allowance of DADUs to be constructed at the closest feasible location to lot lines.
- 6) Authorization for construction of AADUs and DADUs regardless of physical proximity to utility infrastructure, to include sewerage systems.
- 7) Allow construction or redevelopment of AADUs and DADUs to be at least 24 feet in height and/or remove height restriction mirroring for that of the primary single-family structure.
- 8) Remove design standards that fiscally prevent development or redevelopment.
- 9) While HB 1337 allows for up to two AADUs or DADUs (or one of each) on all lots in zoning districts, which allow single-family homes, promotion of affordable housing warrants reduction or elimination of minimum lot size requirements for the principal units.
- 10) Reduce impact fees to AADU and DADU to a proportionate amount given square footage of these affordable housing types are typically smaller in size and impact from single family residences.
- 11) Eliminate or significantly reduce utility connection fees/charges, which are costs typically passed on to buyers or otherwise a fiscal imposition to developers.
- 12) Efficient process and land use regulations implementing HB 5258, which requires jurisdictions to adopt review processes for bifurcating ownership of a primary structure into separately owned unit lots or otherwise owned in common by the respective owners of the lots.
- 13) Reduce maximum requirements for parking or eliminate them entirely, which as applied, would prohibit construction or redevelopment of AADUs and DADUs.

In addition to the requests and considerations above, our clients request the allowance for tiny homes as a continued effort to expand affordable housing options. In doing so, we request prefabricated DADUs be permitted, provided they comply with state standards. Our clients have encountered multiple jurisdictions' land use codes, which do not define "tiny home" as a "use" and thus no zoning or process pathway exists for construction or siting of such as a permitted use or a conditionally permitted use. Alternative to treating tiny homes as a specified use in zoning charts, allowance of tiny homes as AADUs or DADUs would provide more certainty for developers during the design and review phase of construction.

In conclusion, our clients seek streamlined permitting processes where developers may act quickly and efficiently during all phases of construction. Efficiency reduces costs for developers and provides certainty, which in turn reduces costs for prospective buyers. All approvals for AADUs and DADUs, to include tiny homes, should be done administratively to avoid delay and reduce review costs. We also highly encourage you to consider incentives for construction or redevelopment of AADUs and DADUs as provision of diverse housing options is critical to Washington State's priority to increase housing affordability.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at this office. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Katy Sweeden,
Managing Partner, Land Use & Development
Dimension Law Group, PLLC
Office: 206-973-3500
Email: katy@dimensionlaw.com

CO-Comment Letter-Middle Housing Code Amendments – Party of Record

Joyce Phillips

From: hellocallie@comcast.net
Sent: Tuesday, May 6, 2025 8:43 PM
To: Middle Housing
Subject: I support going with tier 1 standards

You don't often get email from hellocallie@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Since buildings are years in the planning, financing and building, if we delay until we hit tier 1 population, we will be years behind the need. As a practical matter, we will see changes slowly. I like the idea of 3 stories.

Callie Wilson 3043 Central St SE, within ½ mile of transit.

Joyce Phillips

From: Peter Cook <pcook99@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 9, 2025 12:43 PM
To: Middle Housing
Subject: Very good process and data presentation

You don't often get email from pcook99@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Joyce and Team:

Excellent work in dealing with all the tricky issues and summarizing and presenting all the pertinent information to us as citizens. You are on the right track.

Keep up the good work!

Peter

Peter Cook

pcook64@alum.mit.edu

Joyce Phillips

From: Trish Gregory <TrishG@fscss.org>
Sent: Tuesday, June 24, 2025 2:57 PM
To: Joyce Phillips
Subject: Re: Olympia Zoning Code Amendments

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hi Joyce!

Thank you again for reaching out and requesting my feedback. It was a lot to read and to be honest, I started to glaze over part way through 🙄 but in general, I really appreciate and value the intentional strategies to increase housing stock that are reflected in this. There were a few thoughts that I had while reviewing it that I have submitted below for your consideration.

The document defines an assisted living dwelling unit but not the other types. I would add a short description to clarify... suggested language below.

D (a). Dwelling, Conventional- *intended for use as a person's permanent or long-term residence. Temporary or short-term accommodations, such as hotels, motels, vacation rentals, or other transient lodging (e.g., Airbnb-style rentals), are not considered dwelling units.*

D (b). Transient Dwelling Unit. A residential unit intended for short-term, non-permanent stays, typically rented on a daily or weekly basis.

Permanent Supportive Housing and Transitional Housing were moved to "Conventional Dwelling units" in the definitions, but are still listed under Assisted Living types in the Permitted and Conditional Use table. Should be consistent one way or the other. I support them being under conventional dwelling as folks in these projects are typically living independently with optional supportive services vs living with regular ongoing staffing required.

p23. #7- Is "Emergency Housing Facility" intended to be what is defined on p 7 (cii) as Emergency Shelter? If so the title should be changed to be Emergency Shelter for consistency.

p. 99 SVPA-

"When determining where to establish a required Soil and Vegetation Protection Area or retain trees when a Soil and Vegetation Protection Area (SVPA) is not required, locations with healthy soils, native understory vegetation, and mature trees in good condition shall have priority over development when there are feasible and prudent location alternatives on site for proposed building structures or other site improvements. This may require site redesign including, but not limited to: redesign of streets, sidewalks, stormwater facilities, utilities; changing the shape and size of the parking lot; reducing or limiting proposed site grading; and changing the locations of buildings or building lots."

Have you considered that this requirement sometimes conflicts with the city's value to reduce the barriers to increasing low income/affordable housing stock? The highlighted area can be extremely costly and potentially reduce the number of units that a low income housing developer can include in a project. I value SVPA's and ensuring strong environmental stewardship while developing and I don't think it should be an automatic waiver for all low income/affordable projects, but adding language allowing for consideration of a waiver when a project can demonstrate a significant value added (increased number of homes for our most vulnerable)... it should be an option that the city is expected to consider!

I think the updates are fantastic and support more housing options! I appreciate the language regarding the mix of housing types changing to **requiring a minimum** instead of enforcing a maximum % of units to consist of duplexes, triplexes, middle housing etc.

Additionally, THIS..... 👍 👍 👍 👍 👍 p. 90 A. Projects subject to review by the Design Review Board or Joint Design Review Committee, as described in OMC 18.76.180; **with the exception of affordable and Low Income Housing projects which are subject only to staff level review.** That is a very positive change and will hopefully prevent some of the "nit picky" things that sometimes come up in committee/board review. It is important to balance cost and aesthetics when developing low income housing :)

If you have specific questions that you would like for me to address please feel free to reach out!

Sincerely,

Trish Gregory (she/her)
Executive Director
Office: (360) 754-9297 x 206
Cell: (360) 628-7344



3545 7th Ave SW, Olympia WA 98502

www.fscss.org

On Wed, Jun 11, 2025 at 9:12 AM Trish Gregory <TrishG@fscss.org> wrote:

Hi Joyce,

Thanks for reaching out! I am happy to review it. I should have time to look through it early next week and I will reach out if I feel like meeting or further information would be helpful!

Sincerely,

Trish Gregory (she/her)

Executive Director

Office: (360) 754-9297 x 206

Cell: (360) 628-7344



3545 7th Ave SW, Olympia WA 98502

www.fscss.org

On Tue, Jun 10, 2025 at 3:02 PM Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us> wrote:

Hi, Trish.

I wanted to reach out to you because of your affiliation with Family Support Services of South Sound and your interest in housing issues.

I'm Joyce Phillips, a planner at the City of Olympia in the Community Planning and Economic Development Department. We are preparing for a public hearing, tentatively scheduled for Aug. 18th, on amendments to the Olympia Municipal Code. These zoning code amendments focus on new requirements for middle housing, accessory dwelling units, and co-living housing.

I would like to ask for your comments on the public hearing draft. It is lengthy, but here are some key highlights:

- Use “Unit Lot Density” - Allow 4 units per lot. This increases to 6 units per lot if at least 2 of the units are for affordable housing for at least 50 years, or if the property is located within a half mile of a frequent transit route (stops with 4 or more stops per hour, for 12 or more hours per day, for at least 5 days per week).
- Allow up to 2 Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) per lot with a principal residential unit on it. This includes single family homes, duplexes, townhouses, etc.
- Allow ADUs to be up to 1,000 square feet in gross floor area.
- Retain existing maximum building heights in various zoning districts but eliminate the maximum number of stories allowed. Most lower density residential zones allow a height of up to 35 feet but limit that to a maximum of 2 stories.
- Allow unit lot subdivisions for developed sites. This would allow ADUs and other units (e.g., a duplex or triplex) to be sold independently of the principal unit or other units on the “parent” lot.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the various provisions, answer questions, or to take any feedback about improvements to the draft that you’d like to share. Unfortunately, I will be out of the office through July 23rd – but I would be happy to meet with you once I return. You are also welcome to submit any written comments for staff, the Planning Commission, and ultimately City Council to consider. The project email address is middlehousing@ci.olympia.wa.us. This email address will be monitored while I am away.

The draft, community survey results, and background information can be reviewed at www.olympiawa.gov/middlehousing.

Thank you for considering reviewing and commenting on the draft.

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.

Joyce Phillips

From: Jennifer Finley <jjfinley55@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 8, 2025 10:24 AM
To: Joyce Phillips
Subject: Proposed Zoning Changes

You don't often get email from jjfinley55@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

To Whom It May Cincern,

I am writing to oppose the proposed blanket zoning change to allow multifamily units to be built on single family lots. There are areas in the city where this may be appropriate and other areas where it is definitely not appropriate. I live in the Ken Lake community. The proposed changes would have devastating impacts in this unique and fragile neighborhood. There is only one way in and out of the Ken Lake neighborhood. Potentially adding hundreds of residents and vehicles would be a nightmare for normal travel and a potential catastrophe in an emergency, such as a fire in the over 1,000 acres of timber that border the west side of Ken Lake. Would the city be liable for loss of life and property if the city knowingly increases the density of a neighborhood to a point where the city streets are not adequate to provide safe egress in an evacuation? The beauty and character of this community would be forever altered by the removal of hundreds of mature native evergreen trees to accommodate extra living units. Our surface water fed lake would certainly be negatively impacted by increasing impermeable surfaces adjacent to it. Though we have HOA covenants that address buildings and occupancy, we have been told that we would not be notified of permitted projects. To place the burden to protect our community from the impacts of this zoning change on our vigilance every time a contractor's vehicle comes into the neighborhood seems grossly unfair. Why can't the existence of an HOA be uploaded to a data base so that when someone seeks a building permit within that community a notification of a pending permit is sent to a person of record in the HOA? The claim that the city can't alert an HOA seems to me to be more of a like a lack of will than a lack of ability. I encourage you to go back to the drawing board when considering this change. There is a diversity of neighborhoods within the city and this one size fits all plan is not in keeping with that diversity.

Respectfully,
Jennifer Finley
Sent from my iPhone

Joyce Phillips

From: marti walker <mewalk22@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, August 8, 2025 1:22 PM
To: Joyce Phillips
Subject: Proposed Amendments at Aug 18th Meeting

I am opposed to the proposed amendments to the Olympia Municipal Code regarding ADUs that will be presented at the Aug 18th meeting.

Martha Walker
619 Central St SE
Olympia, WA 98501

Joyce Phillips

From: Michele Horaney <micheleephoea@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 8, 2025 12:49 PM
To: Joyce Phillips
Subject: JOYCE - Looking forward to Aug 18 hearing on MH, ADUs, cohousing

You don't often get email from micheleephoea@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi Joyce,
Look forward to the hearing on the 18th.

I know that I and thousands of others here in Olympia certainly are interested in advancing the DISCUSSION around new kinds and types and numbers of housing.

However, I cannot find and do not see any reference to LOT SIZE in any of the documents that are up or available. Nor is that addressed in the RCW.

And THAT can be, is, will be a major issue around this. I know I'm not the only person to ask about this.

If one lives in a house that is on a 2,000 square foot lot (for instance) and your house covers 1800 square feet, is it possible, feasible, allowable, legal to even THINK that you can or should or will install and ADU on the 400 square feet remaining?
And the state/city wants to allow ADUs that are actually the size of SMALL HOUSES, up to 1000 square feet.
How does that work?
Or does it?

In Evergreen Pointe, we have small lots - a lot like the one I just described - and we also have larger lots.
Our own house is 1850 square feet and it sits on a 4500 square foot lot. That means we have a larger lot.

But down the street at the corner of Hudson and Goldcrest, there is a 2200 square foot house that's all but wedged onto what looks to be a 2500 square foot lot.
There is no backyard. There is a tiny side yard and a very trim front yard.
You mean to say that the owner could put in an ADU? On that?

The entire Evergreen Pointe development is also a designated RLI due to very bad dirt, horrible soil and flooding issues.
We already face limits and the need for permits with approval from the City to install impermeable features in backyards like patios and walkways of concrete and

other solid materials due to drainage issues.

So how would applications for ADUs that would sit on bad soil with flooding issues that are known be handled?

We know the state law is currently written to be very encouraging, very, well, permissive about putting in more housing.

However, there are limits.

And good sense about lot size and other issues - like bad dirt and flooding - need to be recognized and info on all of it must be available and easily referenced in codes and ordinances as we all move together into this new place.

See you on the 18th.

Hope I can get my questions asked during that hearing.

Thanks. Michele

Joyce Phillips

From: Joyce Phillips
Sent: Friday, August 8, 2025 2:40 PM
To: Michele Horaney
Cc: Tim Smith
Subject: RE: JOYCE - Looking forward to Aug 18 hearing on MH, ADUs, cohousing

Hi, Michelle.

Thank you for submitting your comments and questions. I've responded below, in red text, to your questions. I will share your comments with the Planning Commission for its consideration.

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.

From: Michele Horaney <micheleephoe@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 8, 2025 12:49 PM
To: Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: JOYCE - Looking forward to Aug 18 hearing on MH, ADUs, cohousing

You don't often get email from micheleephoe@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hi Joyce,

Look forward to the hearing on the 18th.

I know that I and thousands of others here in Olympia certainly are interested in advancing the DISCUSSION around new kinds and types and numbers of housing.

However, I cannot find and do not see any reference to LOT SIZE in any of the documents that are up or available. Nor is that addressed in the RCW.

Minimum lot sizes are included in the Residential Districts chapter (Olympia Municipal Code "OMC" 18.04), in the Residential Development Standards Table (Table 4.04). Minimum lot size is on page 60 of the Public Hearing Draft. The minimum lot size varies by zoning district. There is no maximum lot size.

And THAT can be, is, will be a major issue around this. I know I'm not the only person to ask about this.

If one lives in a house that is on a 2,000 square foot lot (for instance) and your house covers 1800 square feet, is it possible, feasible, allowable, legal to even THINK that you can or should or will install and ADU on the 400 square feet remaining?

Any proposed future development will be reviewed for compliance with all zoning and other development requirements (building, fire, engineering). While certain uses may be allowed, the applicant will need to demonstrate that it will fit on the lot and satisfy requirements such as setbacks, lot coverage, building height, drainage, etc. Not all existing lots will actually be able to accommodate new attached or detached residential units. Some may choose to convert existing interior space, such as by converting a basement into an accessory dwelling unit (ADU).

There will continue to be a required amount of land that cannot be built on for lot in lower density areas. In most residential zones you would be required to retain more than 30% of your lot in a more undeveloped state. This is mostly to address stormwater issues. Small existing lots do not typically have engineered stormwater vaults or other flow control methods. Therefore, these pervious areas provide space for water to land onsite and then slowly infiltrate into the ground or flow off the site in a more natural (slower) rate than would occur if it were paved or impervious.

There are some areas in the City where we have known endangered species that require protection, like the Green Cove Basin where the area allowed to be covered is significantly less than other parts of the City. Here we have to carefully balance the needs of the environment with the need for additional housing. What you find in these areas is that the building heights permitted are typically taller to allow people to build up instead of out. The Residential Low Impact (RLI) zone allows up to 40 feet in height, whereas the Residential 4-8 and Residential 6-12 zones are limited to 35 feet in height (see page 64 of the draft).

And the state/city wants to allow ADUs that are actually the size of SMALL HOUSES, up to 1000 square feet. How does that work? Or does it?

Cities are not allowed to have a maximum size for ADUs that is less than 1,000 square feet. Our current maximum allowed size for ADUs is 850 square feet. The proposal is to increase it to 1,000 square feet to be in compliance with state requirements.

In Evergreen Pointe, we have small lots - a lot like the one I just described - and we also have larger lots. Our own house is 1850 square feet and it sits on a 4500 square foot lot. That means we have a larger lot.

But down the street at the corner of Hudson and Goldcrest, there is a 2200 square foot house that's all but wedged onto what looks to be a 2500 square foot lot. There is no backyard. There is a tiny side yard and a very trim front yard. You mean to say that the owner could put in an ADU? On that?

Under the proposal yes, the City would allow up to two ADUs on the lot. The property owner would need to show how those units would be added while also complying with all other development regulations. In most cases with an existing home that occupies most of the lot, it would not really be feasible to add an ADU unless converting existing interior space, such as through converting a basement or attic to an ADU, or by potentially adding a second story.

Evergreen Pointe is interesting because the lots were clustered together to help protect the sensitive environment surrounding the homes. The lots are mostly between 5,000 and 5,500 square feet (some are a little larger), giving it a more urban feeling. But the subdivision area includes tracts set aside for stormwater, tree and wetland protection, and open space. A significant amount of trees and open space surrounding the homes in your neighborhood is

included in the total area and is protected in perpetuity. The overall density of the subdivision is less than 4 units per acre.

The entire Evergreen Pointe development is also a designated RLI due to very bad dirt, horrible soil and flooding issues. We already face limits and the need for permits with approval from the City to install impermeable features in backyards like patios and walkways of concrete and other solid materials due to drainage issues. So how would applications for ADUs that would sit on bad soil with flooding issues that are known be handled?

The Residential Low Impact (RLI) zoning district has stricter requirements around impervious surfaces than other zones. It is currently limited to 2,500 sq ft or 6% of the lot, whichever is greater. This is not proposed to change (see page 65 of the August 5 draft). In addition, properties in the RLI zone are not eligible for the potential increase in the amount of impervious surface coverage proposed to be allowed upon approval of an engineered drainage design (see proposed amendments to 18.04.080(K) on page 82 of the draft).

The reason for this limitation in the RLI zone is because of the known and direct effect stormwater runoff has on the adjacent Green Cove Creek wetland complex, where there are endangered species like the mud minnow (a small fish that is particularly susceptible to stormwater runoff contamination).

Additionally – several Homeowners Associations (HOAs) have private covenants that prohibit Accessory Dwelling Units from being constructed within the HOA boundary. It is my understanding that HOAs that had these provisions adopted prior to July 23, 2023 (the effective date of the State's Accessory Dwelling Units law, EHB 1337 from the 2023 Legislative Session) may continue to enforce such covenants.

We know the state law is currently written to be very encouraging, very, well, permissive about putting in more housing. However, there are limits. And good sense about lot size and other issues - like bad dirt and flooding - need to be recognized and info on all of it must be available and easily referenced in codes and ordinances as we all move together into this new place.

Thank you for sharing your comments. Staff agrees that all development, whether it is a single family detached home on a lot (with or without ADUs), duplex, or any other housing types, needs to meet the zoning and other development standards. Each application is reviewed for compliance with the standards of the zone (setbacks, lot coverage, building heights, etc.) as well as requirements related to building and fire safety and provisions around engineering issues like stormwater, access, and utility connections.

I know this proposal is lengthy and it can be hard to find the answer to a particular question. Please don't hesitate to reach out and I will do my best to respond promptly and with page numbers.

See you on the 18th.
Hope I can get my questions asked during that hearing.

Thanks. Michele

Joyce Phillips

From: Peter Cook <pcook99@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 13, 2025 4:18 PM
To: Joyce Phillips
Subject: Re: Notice of Public Hearing - Olympia Planning Commission, Aug 18, 2025

You don't often get email from pcook99@hotmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Joyce:

I want to congratulate your staff and others who worked on this draft Middle Housing proposal. I have read it in detail and the wording is very carefully selected to follow the fine line between creating sufficient opportunity for installation of ADUs and allowing existing property owners to enjoy uninhibited use of their land.

I am speaking as both a landowner in an area where middle housing options will be allowed and as an advocate for affordable housing.

I can't attend the hearing so I wanted you and your staff to hear this.

Good Work!

Peter

Peter Cook

pcook64@alum.mit.edu

From: Joyce Phillips <jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Sent: Friday, August 8, 2025 8:32 AM
To: Middle Housing <middlehousing@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Notice of Public Hearing - Olympia Planning Commission, Aug 18, 2025

You are receiving this email as a Party of Record for the Middle Housing/ADU/Co-Living Housing planning proposal.

If you no longer wish to receive updates for this planning proposal, please reply to this email and ask to be removed from this list.

Hearing Information

The Planning Commission will conduct a public hearing at or after **6:30 pm, Monday, August 18, 2025**, to receive public comments prior to making a recommendation to the City Council on proposed amendments to the Olympia Municipal Code to implement new housing requirements for middle housing, accessory dwelling units (ADUs), and co-living housing.

Virtual Hearing (Zoom webinar): https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_BOPDkDH1SG6I_gV20JRHsw

This hearing can be attended virtually or in-person at City Hall, 601 4th Ave East, Olympia, WA. To attend via Zoom, register using the link above. Comments will be accepted in writing, in person, or via Zoom – *all are equally acceptable*.

For more information contact City staff. Staff reports for the proposal will be posted on the City website, olympiawa.gov, Agenda and Minutes, under “Planning Commission” and the meeting date, no later than August 13, 2025. Anyone interested is invited to participate and comment. To assure consideration, written comments must be received by 5:00 p.m. on August 18, 2025. Written statements may be submitted to Planning Commission, PO Box 1967, Olympia, WA 98507-1967 or by email to jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us.

Proposal Information

See draft amendments for more details. Major parts of the draft include:

- Allow up to 2 Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) on residential lots.
- Increase the maximum size of most ADUs to 1,000 square feet.
- Allow at least 4 units per lot in most parts of the city.
- Allow up to 6 units per lot for lots within a certain distance of frequent transit or if at least 2 of the units are for affordable housing.
- Allow “unit lot subdivisions” for the individual sale of units on a “parent parcel” – each unit lot may not meet the minimum lot size or other zoning requirements but those standards were met overall for the parent parcel.
- Require administrative design review for middle housing when also required for single family homes.

To Learn More

The draft proposal is attached and is also available online. Please visit www.olympiawa.gov/middlehousing to find more information.

If you require special accommodations for this meeting, please contact the CPED Dept by 10:00 a.m., 48 hours in advance of the meeting, or earlier if possible; phone: 360.753.8110; e-mail: cpdinfo@ci.olympia.wa.us. For hearing impaired, please contact us by dialing the Washington State Relay Service at 7-1-1 or 1-800-833-6384. The City of Olympia is committed to the non-discriminatory treatment of all persons in the delivery of services and resources.

If you have any comments or questions please contact:

Joyce Phillips, Long Range Planning Manager, 360.570.3722, jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us

Here's the attachment as a link for your review:

[Public Hearing Draft 08052025.pdf](#)

Add your comments and collaborate with others in real time. You don't need to download Acrobat or sign up to access the file.



SOUTH CAPITOL Neighborhood Association

August 14, 2025

Joyce Phillips, Principal Planner
City of Olympia
jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us

RE: Comments regarding Proposed Changes to the Middle Housing Code

Dear Ms. Phillips and City of Olympia staff:

On behalf of the South Capitol Neighborhood Association (SCNA) Board, I would like to offer some comments on the latest proposed changes to the Middle Housing Code draft, dated June 5, 2025.

As you are aware, the South Capitol neighborhood is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm>. Most of our comments are related to preserving the historic character of our neighborhood while allowing some proportional increased residential density. We are supportive of increased housing in the South Capitol neighborhood – which is, in fact, already zoned for multiple units per lot – rather than simply single-family houses. We are eager to see the City implement the Middle Housing Code in a way that maintains the charm of the South Capitol neighborhood while increasing the ability for people from all walks of life to afford to live in it.

Tier 1 Versus Tier 2 City Designation

We have a diversity of views in our neighborhood about the City's decision to draft amendments for a Tier 1 city when Olympia is currently Tier 2. Many residents in the South Capitol neighborhood have lived here for 30+ years and have seen population projections come and go and never materialize. There is no guarantee that Olympia will actually become a Tier 1 city by 2030. Defining Olympia as a Tier 1 city means the base unit density increases from two units to as high as six units near frequent transit routes. This is a major leap in lot densities.

Some of our neighbors would like to see how the Middle Housing Code for a Tier 2 city works before jumping into Tier 1 requirements from the state. Many regulations benefit from adjustments in a five-year timeframe, which should not be overly onerous on staff time.

Other South Capitol residents support planning for a future, more urban Olympia, knowing that development to increase density takes time and will benefit from an earlier planning

horizon. These neighbors also support planning cooperatively with a wider area, which means taking the urban growth area (UGA) into consideration.

These divergent views are part of the reason that we request the City maintain the existing design review requirements for projects proposing to add five or more units per lot through 2030, assuming the city allows the density in our neighborhood to increase to six units per lot as proposed.

In 2030, the required public meeting requirement could be lifted for projects proposing up to six units on a lot if the population estimates are realized and/or if Olympia annexes the UGA. The City should revisit the Middle Housing Code in 2030 to assess whether these conditions have materialized and adjust accordingly, if they have not. Given the varied opinions on this, we request more time and public involvement to figure out the tier.

One housing issue on which our neighborhood is united is our shared concern about the increase of businesses purchasing and renting homes in our neighborhood, most of which are then used only a few months of the year and sit vacant for the rest of the year. This is anti-housing, undermines the stated purpose of Middle Housing, and is detrimental to the neighborhood. With an increase of allowable units per lot, we do not want to see further establishment of residences for business purposes without rigorous code enforcement by the City.

City staff have said they are unable to enforce existing municipal code Chapter 18.04.060 L. Home Occupations, which states:

- a. Home occupations must be conducted within the principal residence of the permit holder, or within an accessory structure on the same property . . .
- c. No person(s) other than the family member(s) who resides in the residence shall participate in the home occupation. . . . Furthermore, the residence shall not be used as a place of congregation for work that occurs off the premises.

This lack of enforcement is despite the fact that Chapter 18.04.060 L. states:

- b. Home occupations are subject to inspections by City staff insofar as permitted by law. Permit holders shall execute a notarized affidavit agreeing to allow appropriate City staff the ability to conduct an inspection of the residence, after reasonable notice is given, to determine compliance with the home occupation permit.

In light of this ongoing, non-compliant use of housing in our neighborhood – and potentially more units per lot under Middle Housing amendments – we request that the City identify

steps necessary to enable it to enforce existing city code. We also encourage the city to create a task force to identify ways to incentivize businesses to purchase or rent smaller, multi-unit properties, including accessory dwelling units (ADUs). This could help preserve existing single-family homes for full-time neighborhood residents.

While not currently raised in the Middle Housing Code amendments, this issue is germane to this topic as our goal is to maintain existing housing in our neighborhood – particularly single-family homes – for families and full-time residents. Without immediate action by the City, our neighborhood is extremely concerned that current practices will erode any effort to increase residential housing stock through densification.

Major Transit Stop

Olympia has flexibility in this area of state requirements since we do not have any major transit stops. Yet the draft amendments appear to suspend some design requirements for projects within the chosen proximity of transit stops. It is of vital importance to our neighborhood that design requirements be maintained to allow for increased density in a way that supports the character of the South Capitol neighborhood as a National Register Historic District. See <https://www.thurstontalk.com/2018/09/11/neighborhood-notes-historic-south-capitol-neighborhood-maintains-its-charm/>.

If the City creates “frequent transit routes” and allows increased unit lot density to six units instead of two or four – no matter whether it’s a quarter or half mile from a transit route – this will encompass our entire neighborhood. We are concerned that fitting more than four units on many of our neighborhood lots will not allow for design standards that respect the historic nature of our streets and houses.

Before finalizing its plans, the City should provide a map of any lots that would be permitted to subdivide into six units that could be sold off separately. Given that the South Capitol Neighborhood is a historic district, similar to our request above – we request the design review requirements remain for projects proposing five or more units on a lot until 2030. This represents a compromise that allows for increased density while allowing members of the community to engage in a public design review process.

Our neighborhood is also concerned about existing parking issues on some heavily parked streets, particularly during legislative sessions. The option to require off-street parking should not be precluded by these amendments.

Current Residential Design Requirements

Already the design review process for the South Capitol neighborhood seems to be fairly non-functional. Residents have repeatedly commented on the recent ongoing construction of a

huge residence and garage on 17th Ave SW that covers virtually an entire lot with no room for trees, which seems inconsistent with Olympia's tree ordinance. Has the ordinance changed such that trees are no longer required? The residence is also not set back consistent with the historic homes on the street. If design review did occur, where is the enforcement of those standards?

Unfortunately, this is not the first time that developers or businesses buying properties in the South Capitol neighborhood have ignored design standards with no apparent accountability by the City of Olympia. If only administrative design review is required for all of these middle housing units, we are concerned that this will further weaken current requirements that preserve the historic character of the South Capitol neighborhood.

Are lot coverages/permeability, appropriate setbacks, and minimum tree density still part of administrative design review? If this is part of a separate site plan review, the two reviews need to be conducted together with public review and meeting requirements intact.

We request that Olympia dedicate city resources 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 individual units to be sold independently of each other. What provisions are in place to ensure that each of these units isn't bought and used primarily for business purposes? As noted above, unfortunately, when this happens, properties often are left vacant, except during legislative sessions. And when owners are present and properties are used for business purposes, parking can become an issue on congested neighborhood streets.

ADUs and Unit Lot Density

The proposal includes accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in counting towards the maximum number of units allowed on a lot. Please keep this as written.

Impact of Increased Density on Current Residents' Solar Panels

South Capitol residents previously raised concerns during the adoption of the Missing Middle regulations about structures potentially obstructing the many solar panels now in our neighborhood. These new Middle Housing amendments compound the potential for solar panel problems.

More density creates a greater chance of units being close to property lines. We urge the City to adopt protections for not obscuring 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 at least one

Joyce Phillips, Principal Planner
City of Olympia
jphillip@ci.olympia.wa.us
Page 5

street, several residences have panels on carports near property lines. Any structure built close to them will render them non-functional! This outcome would be at odds with the City's commitment to take action on climate change, and numerous programs the City provides to encourage solar installations.

https://www.olympiawa.gov/community/climate_change_response/index.php

New Allowance for Three Stories in 35-foot High Units

It sounds like this would allow additional apartments within the same building envelope of allowable units. Further increasing the density on a lot in this manner could lead to problematic parking congestion. How will the City address this potential issue?

Affordable Housing comment

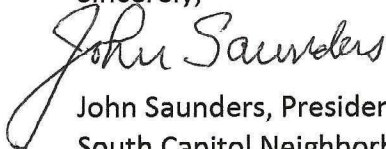
We do not believe that these amendments sufficiently address Olympia's need for affordable housing. Rentals in the South Capitol Neighborhood typically are not affordable for lower-income residents. It's most likely the City's hope that rents for smaller units in the South Capitol will be affordable. We understand that Middle Housing amendments are focused on allowing for more housing stock and choice outside of apartments and single-family houses. However, we would like to see more that incentivizes affordable units.

Conclusion

The South Capitol neighborhood is eager to support Middle Housing densification. We hope that the City of Olympia hears our neighborhood's concerns about the importance of careful implementation of these new policies. Implementation should be transparent, compliant, and historically sensitive. The implementation process should also provide opportunities for monitoring, feedback, and compliance enforcement. We believe that if implementation is conducted in this way, it can successfully accomplish housing density goals while further engendering trust between the City of Olympia and its neighborhoods.

Thank you for your work and your public outreach on these amendments. We look forward to your response to these questions and comments.

Sincerely,



John Saunders, President
South Capitol Neighborhood Association

cc: Olympia Planning Commission
Olympia City Council

Joyce Phillips

From: Kim Klein <ek1mm3r@icloud.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 17, 2025 9:12 AM
To: Middle Housing
Subject: Comments to be submitted to the Aug.18th hearing on Missing Housing City Code Revisions

Dear Planning Commission,

First, we would like to thank you for the time and effort you have invested in addressing our city's current housing issues thus far. And thank you for welcoming the public to weigh in upon this issue.

We humbly ask that our comments be submitted to the announced Aug.16th hearing and put our comments on the record.

To date, the focus on housing has only been about density, demonstrating no other vital considerations such as public health & safety; air, water & soil quality; issues of sustainability & community viability; quality of life impacts; social inequities; and the ever increasing challenges of climate change.

Put more simply, there are serious consequences to density that are not being fully addressed. It's not that we are against density, it the side-effects we are concerned about.

Here are only a few examples we are aware of that are worthy of your full consideration:

1. Less open land means there less water/runoff that will be absorbed which leads to drier soil, higher risk of drought and fire, less water absorption and filtration which will lesson the recharging of water resources (aquifers & wells). And will rapidly degrade soil biomes. Thereby increasing risk of flooding, degradation of plant life including the viability & quantity of tree canopy & home gardens. Greater density means higher heat absorption from buildings & impervious surfaces. For example, Oregon has learned that to protect the spread of fire, saving property and lives, 30 feet of space is necessary between houses. They have more guidelines proven to save lives and property.
2. Increased density per lot will increase the energy usage per lot 2-6 times more. This means greater heat and emission concentrations per lot, further altering the local environment already challenged by climate change. And creating ever greater strain on the city's energy grid.
3. Increased density restricts light availability, impacting occupants health. Less light increases the need for artificial light, further increasing energy usage and artificial light pollution. Less access to natural daylight and nightlight disrupts circadian rhythms for all life forms, thus, compromising occupants, wildlife and flora health.
4. High density increases noise levels as sounds reverberate off hard surfaces. Eliminates the needed space for sound to dissipate and disrupts wildlife communications.
5. High density reduces space for flora to thrive & air to flow, reducing air quality by trapping in heat and green house emissions.

6. High density impedes public safety by reducing access and reduces traffic flow. Increasing the risks & complexity for larger scale emergencies such as fires, contamination exposures, flooding, earthquakes, tsunami, industrial accidents, etc, especially when evacuations are necessary. High density restricts access to emergency responders coming in and to evacuees going out. High density also increases exposure risks of communicable diseases-both inside and outside.

7. Adding greater density compromises our existing aging infrastructure by overloading sewer systems, energy grids, water systems, waste management, public transit systems and emergency responses. Increasing the risks for loss of life and property. And erosion of quality of life. Without greater expertise from engineers, architects, civil designers to develop a comprehensive plan for our city to transition as a whole, plans will prove shortsighted. High density may be new for Olympia, but it is not new elsewhere. Hard lessons have been learned elsewhere, why not learn from other's mistakes rather than underestimating the process of transition as simply a concentration of real estate development.

8. By using greater density as a ploy to incentivize the inclusion of low income units, this only deepens the existing inequities of both income and quality of life issues. Especially considering there are no such restrictions against large tracts of land being occupied by a single household.

9. High density is predicated upon public transit, yet our public transit has yet to be fully developed and viable. Consequently there is a transition period that has been not been planned or accounted for. Where will occupants park the cars that will be necessary before the transition is completed.

10. What about the immediate impacts against existing homeowners like the loss of surrounding tree canopies and vistas or the blocking of sunlight their fertile gardens thrive upon? Do they not deserve some protections for the quality of life they have built for themselves and invested into their property? High density could unfairly plummet or inflate property values too fast, unfairly destabilizing neighborhoods and households.

The failure to consider the full complexity of housing by rushing & forcing high density will only ensure these solutions will be at best short-sighted, at worse, will create devastating side effects that will exasperate and spread the existing challenges of climate change and societal inequities already embedded in our current housing and economy.

Thank you, Kim Klein & Desiree Taylor, fellow residents of Olympia

Joyce Phillips

From: Esther Grace Kronenberg <wekrone@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 17, 2025 8:43 PM
To: Middle Housing
Subject: Comments for hearing on middle housing code revisions

You don't often get email from wekrone@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello,

I appreciate the City's efforts to density instead of building out.
However, I am concerned about 2 suggested provisions.

We are already facing aquifer down draws and this will continue as the effects of climate change accelerate. The quality of our water resources is also being compromised by pollution from increased development, traffic and chemicals, like PFAs. A study by Thurston County found that water entering the McAllister aquifer has several chemical contaminants.

The new rules should put the protection of our water resources first.
Allowing more impervious and hard surfaces and eliminating open space requirements further threatens and compromises our water. These should be rejected. Open space offers many benefits besides cleaning water runoff. It provides physical and mental health benefits from trees and natural spaces, it provides habitat, enhances aesthetics and creates gathering spaces to build community.

The City can look into encouraging, or better yet, requiring designs that increase open space and use permeable surfaces. Would the City consider requiring or at least allowing rain catchment systems, composting toilets, and rain gardens?

The future is here. We need to adapt. We must not continue to build over our watershed without suffering serious consequences.

Thank you for ensuring we'll have clean and ample drinking water 15 years hence.

Esther Kronenberg
Olympia WA

•

Joyce Phillips

From: JUDITH BARDIN <judybardin@comcast.net>
Sent: Monday, August 18, 2025 1:09 PM
To: Casey Schaufler; Joyce Phillips
Subject: My Comments for the OPC Hearing on Middle Housing

Casey,

Can you please send these comments to the OPC for tonight's hearing on the Middle Housing Code Amendments.

Comments on the Middle Housing Code Amendments

The City said that it was doing the Middle Housing code amendments to come into compliance with recent legislation. However, these extreme changes go way beyond what the State is requiring.

The revisions have a number of less apparent code changes that are buried in the text, for example:

- Both front and rear setback are being reduced.
- Front yard setback decreases from 20 ft. to 10 ft. - a fifty percent reduction
- Rear yard setback decreases from 20 ft. to 5 ft. - an amazing, seventy-five percent reduction. This means a triplex or fourplex could be built almost to the backyard property line, cutting out most of a neighboring house's backyard light
- Water Runoff is another potential problem- Hard surface limits increase from 65% to 75% (five years ago they were around 55%). Impervious surface limits in R 4-8 zones also increase. Worse, additional bonuses for hard and impervious surfaces are available if specific criteria are met.
- Minimum open space requirements are eliminated for Low-Density Neighborhoods

The City is also stretching legislative definitions and requirements to allow much greater density:

- The City is considering itself a Tier 1 City with a population of at least 75,000 or greater, even though it is presently at a Tier 2 level (a population between 25,000 - 75,000). Olympia's population is currently 55,400. It is also including its urban growth area in the population counts, instead of just the population of the city as required, by state regulations.

- The City does not meet the legislation definition of having a Major Transit Stop, but instead the City is using the state definition of frequent transit stop
- The City is expanding the area allowing for higher density near a Major Transit Stop from the required $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to a $\frac{1}{2}$ mile. A half a mile takes in very large areas of existing neighborhoods.

These changes will have bearings on livability, greenspace, and future impacts of climate change such as, heat and stormwater. Please stick to the revisions that are only required by state law. A New York Times article today covers what Paris is preparing to do for future heat of 122 degrees F. They are planting trees as one measure. We should follow their lead and not have regulations that decrease the urban tree canopy.

Judy Bardin
3129 Hoadly St SE
Olympia, WA 98501
360-401-5291

Joyce Phillips

From: Jim Lazar <jim@jimplazar.com>
Sent: Monday, August 18, 2025 1:35 PM
To: Middle Housing
Subject: Comment on higher density housing

You don't often get email from jim@jimplazar.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

1) Olympia is NOT at the 75,000 population level, and will not be for a decade or more at our current rate of growth. Two studies by the City have shown that the SE Annexation is a terrible deal, and the Council voted to NOT pursue that annexation. So the City should NOT adopt the "Tier 1" designation at this time.

2) The Buildable Lands Study shows that there is a surplus of available developable land in each of the jurisdictions in Thurston County. There is no need to consider changing densification to assure housing availability.

3) There may be opportunities to achieve lower cost housing in some locations with densification, but that only makes sense where the infrastructure is adequate. In some places, there is road, water, sewer, school, and other infrastructure available. In others there is not. Development should be encouraged IN THOSE LOCATIONS where infrastructure is adequate.

4) The first step should be to use the City GIS system to map areas where there is adequate:

- a) Water main capacity
- b) Sewer capacity
- c) Roadway capacity without congestion
- d) Adequate On-street parking availability
- e) Schools within non-bus travel distance that have available classroom capacity
- f) Stormwater retention and infiltration capability
- g) Neighborhood parks
- h) Curb, gutter, street trees, sidewalks

Once these locations are identified, the City should then adopt denser zoning for those nodes, **but not for other parts of the City**. It should also reduce both development impact fees (Parks, Transportation) and Utility General Facilities Charges (Water, Sewer,

Stormwater) for those nodes. It should also INCREASE these fees in the areas that DO NOT have adequate infrastructure. That will help concentrate growth in areas that have the needed infrastructure, and insure the funding is available for any development that occurs in areas that do NOT have adequate infrastructure.

Jim Lazar

1907 Lakehurst Dr. SE.

Note: My own neighborhood has adequate water, sewer, street, walkable to 3 schools, park and stormwater capacity; it is missing sidewalks. This would be a pretty good place to increase density. By contrast, Thurston Avenue NE is too narrow, no sidewalks, only one walkable school, and other deficiencies.

Zoning and development regulations need to be very carefully designed down to the individual street level. It makes no sense at all to adopt uniform regulations citywide when the infrastructure is not citywide.

Joyce Phillips

From: northbeachcomm@cs.com
Sent: Monday, August 18, 2025 3:39 PM
To: Middle Housing
Subject: AUG 18.....COMP PLANS FOR THE CITY OF OLY.....

You don't often get email from northbeachcomm@cs.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Aug 18

Hello.....City of Olympia;

I am against the proposed OLYMPIA COMP PLAN.

I have attended zoom meetings on this issue, read the literature.

Regarding the City of OLy. COMP PLAN;

- Both front and rear setback are being reduced....THIS IS UNREASONABLE. IT IS WRONG! PEOPLE NEED SOME SPACE AWAY FROM BUSY STREETS. TRAFFIC IS DANGEROUS. STREETS HAVE DUST AND DEBRIS, THE AIR QUALITY IS AWFUL, EVEN INSIDE THE DWELLING.
- Front yard setback decreases from 20 ft. to 10 ft. – a fifty percent reduction...THIS IS BAD. SAME REASON.
- Rear yard setback decreases from 20 ft. to 5 ft. – an amazing, seventy-five percent reduction. This means a triplex or fourplex could be built almost to the backyard property line, cutting out most of a neighboring house's backyard light. This means no garden. No place to relax behind the house. Neighbors cut erect a huge building there, according to city rules. That means no privacy, no quiet, no space. THIS IS A NIGHTMARE.
- Water Runoff is another potential problem- Hard surface limits increase from 65% to 75% (five years ago they were around 55%). Impervious surface limits in R 4-8 zones also increase. Worse, additional bonuses for hard and impervious surfaces are available if specific criteria are met. Storm water issues are huge Many of our neighborhoods are near water bodies.....they will be effected by storm water. We cannot have blanket rules that will effect our water bodies, the stormwater will kill ponds. The stormwater will kill salt water bodies.....like Puget sound. Like Budd Inlet.
- Minimum open space requirements are eliminated for Low-Density Neighborhoods. This is bad. This is wrong. We will destroy neighborhoods. But the city Planning Dept does not care, they want "density"...no matter if you kill neighborhoods, no matter if you kill pond life, or life in Budd Inlet. The CITY DOES NOT CARE. BOTTOMLINE.

FYI,

I Riner
2103 Harrison
OLY., WA
98502

Joyce Phillips

From: jnewman <nwsurveyqc@cs.com>
Sent: Monday, August 18, 2025 5:12 PM
To: Middle Housing
Subject: Comments for Middle Housing and Comprehensive Plan Update.

You don't often get email from nwsurveyqc@cs.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Unregulated increased density is not a healthy idea for Olympia. There should be areas of proclaimed apartments to meet housing needs. The City needs low income affordable housing. Not more market rate housing.
Ban ideas are:

- Both front and rear setback are being reduced....THIS IS UNREASONABLE. IT IS WRONG! PEOPLE NEED SOME SPACE AWAY FROM BUSY STREETS. TRAFFIC IS DANGEROUS. STREETS HAVE DUST AND DEBRIS, THE AIR QUALITY IS AWFUL, EVEN INSIDE THE DWELLING.
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Joyce Phillips

From: northbeachcomm@cs.com
Sent: Saturday, August 23, 2025 1:32 PM
To: Jay Burney; Councilmembers
Cc: Thurston County Planning Department
Subject: City of Olympia Rental Registry...AUG 20

AUG 20

Hello Olympia City Council ;

The Olympia City Rental Registry is flawed.

The Olympia Rental Registry should apply to multifamily dwellings of 8 units or more. The City should re-considered NOT applying these rules, to smaller landowners. There are many reasons for this;

Keep in mind that the smaller landowners are still subject to the [International Property Maintenance Code \(IPMC\)](#), and still have to fix things that are deficient. No city action other than adopting the IPMC was required to do that, and they adopted it in 2007 ([OMC 16.06](#)).

The City "rental registry" requirements are similar to the IPMC. Please check this out. Local landlords with less than 5 units are not the the problem in the City of Oly. Many local small landlords invested in rental housing as a part of their "retirement" financial plan; living on social security is very difficult. Do not hurt the small landlord.

BUT, if rental housing and the "rental Registry" was only for multiple rental units, then the owners would bring in a professional manager. The rental manager will raise rents to market. The new Olympia regulations are making it hard for small landlords to "balance the books" what with City and state fees regarding this. So currently every land owner is pressured to move to professional management and thus higher rents. Olympia is an expensive place to live;

because of these and new rules. Think about this;

YOU ARE DRIVING UP THE COSTS TO LIVE IN OLYMPIA.

There are only a couple of ways to drive down rents.

Build a lot of government-subsidized housing to glut the market. This won't work very well, because the COST of building housing is high, and it would take a mountain of subsidy money.

Make low interest financing available for affordable housing construction and purchase. This is a more complicated idea. Right now, the affordable housing builders (the few that there are) are getting 12-year MFTE, MULTI FAMILY TAX EXEMPTIONS. That costs local residents money. Olympia is an expensive place to live; Because of you.

An alternative would be for the state housing finance authority to make direct loans for affordable housing developers. Instead of having a 7% mortgage, they'd have a 4% mortgage. That would take the \$2,400/month cost down to about \$1,500/month. But they'd have to commit to affordable rents for the life of the mortgage. Because buildings last longer than the initial mortgage, they could still make more money at the end of the mortgage, moving to market rates then. But a 30-year mortgage is a lot longer than the 12-year MFTE requirement.

fyi,

L. Riner

2103 Harrison

OLY., WA 98502

Joyce Phillips

From: Casey Schaufler
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 9:31 AM
To: Joyce Phillips
Subject: FW: Code Update for ADUs (Re: +Municipal Code: +Title 18 Unified Development Code: +18.04 Residential Districts: +Setbacks: H.5.a: Encroachment Into Setbacks)

Comment re: Middle Housing updates sent to the Planning Commission. I can respond unless you prefer to do so.

Kind regards,
Casey Schaufler (he/him)
Associate Planner
City of Olympia | Community Planning & Economic Development
601 4th Avenue East | PO Box 1967, Olympia WA 98507-1967
360.753.8254 | cschauf@ci.olympia.wa.us

Please note all correspondence is subject to public disclosure.

From: Gregory Quetin <gquetin@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Sent: Monday, September 8, 2025 7:00 AM
To: Casey Schaufler <cschauf@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Subject: Fw: Code Update for ADUs (Re: +Municipal Code: +Title 18 Unified Development Code: +18.04 Residential Districts: +Setbacks: H.5.a: Encroachment Into Setbacks)

Passing along a public comment.

From: Ann M. Vandeman <amvandeman@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 7, 2025 5:26 AM
To: Aaron Sauerhoff <asauerho@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Daniel Garcia <dgarcia@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Gregory Quetin <gquetin@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Jason Taellious <jtaellio@ci.olympia.wa.us>; jessica@jessicagrubb.com <jessica@jessicagrubb.com>; Raphael Garcia <rgarcia@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Shawna Mershon <smershon@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Tammy Adams <tadams@ci.olympia.wa.us>; Zainab Nejati <znejati@ci.olympia.wa.us>
Cc: Krupp Erika <erika1lily@earthlink.net>; Bethany Weidner <bethanyweidner@gmail.com>; Kara Walk <kara@swallingwalk.com>; Jeremy <jeremy@northwestconstruction.coop>
Subject: Code Update for ADUs (Re: +Municipal Code: +Title 18 Unified Development Code: +18.04 Residential Districts: +Setbacks: H.5.a: Encroachment Into Setbacks)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from amvandeman@gmail.com.
[Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Commission Members,

I am writing to urge you to approve code changes that would allow for building ADUs in existing structures without the currently required side yard setbacks. I understand that you are considering such a change for 2026. This is a

personal issue for me, and also for many of my neighbors on the South Westside. We all know we need more housing and more density in our neighborhoods, and we could be part of the solution with this code update.

I am a 70 year old widowed single mother and sole caregiver for my adult daughter, Geraldine, with Down Syndrome. Geraldine and I live at the corner of 6th Ave SW and Decatur St., a house my late husband and I purchased in 2001. Geraldine loves her home and her neighborhood. We always planned to continue living in our home through our lifetimes, and for Geraldine's if she chooses. To bring this aspiration to reality, we would remodel our existing garage (built about 15 years ago) to include a caregiver apartment, allowing us to age in place with whatever support we may need in the future to live as independently as possible. But the existing code restrictions on setbacks are preventing Geraldine and I from realizing this dream.

After investing in a design, permit application, and a contractor, I learn that we can't remodel the garage because it is too close to the property line, even though the carport on the neighboring lot is more than 14 feet away, and the house is even farther. But the update currently being considered offers a solution.

Please adopt this code change as quickly as possible. It helps the city to achieve its goals, it is reasonable, it poses no increased risk, and it encourages upgrades to existing structures that can actually reduce risks.

I would be happy to provide testimony or discuss the code change and its impact with you if it would help. I will be away from home for 2 weeks, but I am available any time after September 21.

Thank you for your consideration.

Ann

Ann M. Vandeman (she/her), PhD, CPA
1609 6th Ave SW
Olympia, WA 98502
360-402-3748
amvandeman@gmail.com



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September 15, 2025

Olympia Planning Commission
c/o Community Planning & Economic Development
City of Olympia
601 4th Avenue East
Olympia, WA 98501

Re: Middle Housing Code Amendments and Tier 1 Standards

Dear Commissioners,

On behalf of Olympia Master Builders and the hundreds of housing professionals we represent across Thurston County, I write in support of Olympia's efforts to adopt Tier 1 city standards for housing and land use planning.

As you know, Olympia faces a severe housing shortage that directly impacts affordability for working families, seniors, and young people. Moving proactively to Tier 1 standards, even before the City's official population crosses 75,000, is a responsible and necessary step to keep pace with this need.

Why Tier 1 Standards Benefit Olympia

- **Proactive Planning:** Housing projects take years to entitle, finance, and build. Waiting until Olympia officially meets the Tier 1 threshold ensures we will already be years behind actual demand.
- **Housing Supply & Affordability:** Tier 1 standards make "missing middle" housing - duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and small multiplexes - financially viable. This expands the range of housing choices and helps stabilize costs across the market.
- **Affordability Tools:** Tier 1 allows for additional units in exchange for long-term affordability covenants (50 years). That is a stronger affordability tool than what Tier 2 offers.
- **Alignment with Real Growth:** The Urban Growth Area and pending annexations mean Olympia is effectively already operating at Tier 1 scale. Sewer infrastructure expansion reinforces this trend.
- **Transit-Oriented Growth:** Encouraging density near frequent bus routes builds ridership for Intercity Transit and reduces long-term reliance on cars.

Addressing Concerns

We recognize that some residents have raised concerns regarding density, aesthetics, and

parking. We believe these can be addressed without stalling much-needed reforms:

- **Design Quality & Compatibility:** Olympia's design review process, historic preservation requirements, and tree protections remain in place. These tools ensure that new housing blends appropriately with existing neighborhoods without being used as a pretext to exclude growth.
- **Parking:** Parking flexibility reduces costs but does not prohibit developers from including spaces where they are needed.
- **Population Thresholds:** While Olympia's official count remains below 75,000, combined city and UGA populations and active annexations justify proactive Tier 1 planning.
- **Affordability:** Expanding supply and providing long-term affordability covenants ensures that growth is not just for "high-end" development but supports working families.

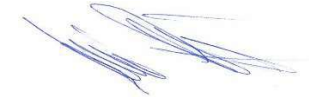
Conclusion

Olympia has a choice: plan for Tier 1 standards now and get ahead of the housing crisis, or wait until population projections catch up and fall further behind. We urge the Planning Commission to recommend adoption of Tier 1 standards as part of the middle housing code amendments. Doing so will support the city's housing goals, provide more opportunities for families, and strengthen Olympia's ability to meet demand at all income levels.

Thank you for your consideration and your work on this critical issue.

For further information or questions please contact our Government Affairs Director, Jessie Simmons, at ga@omb.org or (360)754-0912 ext. 102.

Sincerely,



Jessie Simmons
Government Affairs Director
Olympia Master Builders