



Planning Commission

Missing Middle Housing Analysis Update

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Title

Missing Middle Housing Analysis Update

Recommended Action

Receive the information. Briefing only; no action requested.

Report

Issue:

Whether to receive a status update on the Missing Middle Housing Analysis.

Staff Contact:

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Presenter(s):

Leonard Bauer, Deputy Director, CP&D

Background and Analysis:

The term 'Missing Middle' refers to a range of multi-unit housing types that are compatible in scale with single-family homes. In other words, they provide 'middle' density housing. There have been little of these types of housing constructed in Olympia (and nationwide) over the past 40 years - thus, they are referred to as 'missing.' Some examples of missing middle housing types include tiny houses, modular units, cottage homes, townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, small multi-family apartments, and accessory dwelling units.

The Missing Middle Housing Analysis is reviewing existing city regulations - such as zoning, permit fees, development standards, utility connection charges, etc. - for potentially disproportionate effects on the ability to provide for a variety of housing types in the City's low-density, residentially zoned areas. This implements Comprehensive Plan goals and policies regarding providing a variety of housing types and affordability levels, including:

Goal GL 16: The range of housing types and densities are consistent with the community's changing population needs and preferences.

PL 16.2: Adopt zoning that allows a wide variety of compatible housing types and densities.

PL 16.5: Support affordable housing throughout the community by minimizing regulatory review risks, time and costs and removing unnecessary barriers to housing, by permitting small dwelling units accessory to single-family housing, and by allowing a mix of housing types.

Goal GS 3: Affordable housing is available for all income levels throughout the community.

PS 3.1: Promote a variety of residential densities and housing types so that housing can be available in a broad range of costs.

Progress Report

The Land Use and Environment Committee approved the scope and schedule for public involvement and outreach for this project. The Committee also approved a charter for a Missing Middle Work Group which included diverse perspectives on housing and neighborhood issues. The Work Group met eight times from March - October 2017. The City Council also held a study session on the Missing Middle project September 19, 2017.

Two Missing Middle open houses were held in conjunction with Land Use and Environment Committee meetings on May 18 and 30. At these open houses, members of the public received information about the project and provided input on key issues they feel should be considered. A Missing Middle web page has been updated regularly to provide updated information and offer an on-going opportunity to provide comments. The City's planning e-newsletter also provides regular updates on the project.

The Work Group discussed specific issues for each type of Missing Middle housing. Staff developed issue papers for each of these issues, which served as the basis for Work Group's in-depth discussions and feedback. The issues papers are posted on the Missing Middle web page on the City web site. Based on input from the Work Group, public open houses, and other comments and research, staff developed a set of draft recommendations for revisions to existing codes, fees and standards that would better align with the City comprehensive plan policies above. The draft recommendations were reviewed and commented on by the Work Group. They are posted on the Missing Middle web page on the City web site (see attached).

Another public open house was held November 15, 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. at Olympia City Hall to gather public input on the draft recommendations. A public survey is available November 15 - 30, to gather additional comment. Comments received through the open house and survey will be reviewed by the Planning Commission at a future briefing as it considers its recommendation to City Council on the draft recommendations.

Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):

The Missing Middle Housing Analysis has garnered significant community and neighborhood interest. There is a large e-mail list of interested parties, and the Coalition of Neighborhood Associations has had regular briefings from its two members on the Missing Middle Work Group. Several individual neighborhood associations have also requested briefings at their meeting.

Comments from the November 15, 2017, Open House are included. In addition, comments received via email and the comments submitted by Mr. Phil Schulte at the November 20, 2017, Planning Commission meeting are also included.

Options:

Discussion only.

Financial Impact:

The analysis is included as part of the adopted City budget. Draft recommendations may have long-term impacts to property tax revenues for the City.

Attachments:

Missing Middle web page
Recommendations
Open House Comments
Email Comments
Schulte Comments