



Lynnwood Housing Action Plan

Summary of Listening Sessions 3 & 4: Policy and Development Regulations

July 15, 2020 | 2 – 3 pm | Zoom

July 17, 2020 | 10:30 – 11:30 am | Zoom

MEETING PURPOSE

- Gather perspectives from the Stakeholder Advisory Group and Council Policy Committee about housing policy and development regulations in Lynnwood.

STAFFING

City of Lynnwood

Kristen Holdsworth
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Consultant Team

Rebecca Fornaby, BERK Consulting
Lisa Johnson, BERK Consulting
Rachel Miller, MAKERS
Radhika Nair, BERK Consulting

PARTICIPANTS

Chris Collier, Affordable Housing Alliance
Faheem Darab, Zainab Center
Christine Frizzell, Lynnwood City Council President
George Hurst, Lynnwood City Council
Duane Landsverk, Landsverk Quality Homes
Bob Larsen, Snohomish County Planning Commission
Cami Morrill, Snohomish County Camano Association of Realtors
Nick Nowotarski, AvalonBay Communities, Inc.

Fred Safstrom, Housing Hope
Scott Shapiro, Eagle Rock Ventures (provided via email)

July 15, 2020 Session (Left), July 17, 2020 Session (Right)



WHAT WE HEARD

A facilitator led participants through a series of three questions about housing policy and development regulations in Lynnwood. Highlights from participants' responses are summarized below.

Lynnwood has enacted several polices and development regulations to encourage the supply of housing units. These efforts range from an ADU ordinance to the City Center incentives. What policies or development regulations are working well?

- Higher density multifamily.
- Large single family.
- Administrative review process is good/preferred (do not change to public hearings)
- Large development projects, especially around the City Center and Alderwood Mall.

What do you perceive as the greatest needs in local housing stock? Are there regulations or policies that act as a barrier to the production of these types of units?

Participants stated that the greatest needs in local housing stock include:

- Additional inventory/supply overall
- More diverse housing types
- Owner-occupied smaller housing units
- Additional ADUs and guest cottages
- Townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, and condominiums (“Missing Middle”)

Participants stated that barriers to these types of units include:

- Low-density zoning that does not permit missing middle housing types, particularly near transit

- Zoning does not allow townhomes, duplexes, triplexes, and condominiums in a majority of the residential zones. Zoning standards have not been substantially updated to reflect market demand in single family neighborhoods.
- Ground floor retail requirements
- Parking requirements
- Restrictive ADU regulations
- Not many incentives or requirements for subsidized/mandatory affordable units
- Limited flexibility for religious institutions to provide additional housing types
- Zoning does not offer opportunities for owner-occupied housing other than large lot single family
- Lack of well-planned open spaces for residents of multifamily developments
- No cottage housing codes
- Condominium liability at the state level

Over the past 7 years, most residential development in Lynnwood has been with larger (100+ units) multifamily buildings or single-family homes. The city doesn't have a lot of "missing middle" units (smaller/midsize multifamily, 2-4plexes, etc.). Is there demand for these units? What policies or regulations would encourage this type of development in Lynnwood?

Participants agreed there is a demand for "missing middle" units. Suggested strategies to encourage this type of development include:

- Zoning for increased density in areas across the city, particularly near transit, along bus lines, and within walking distance of parks and schools
- Incentivize construction of attached and detached dwelling units, especially small lot single-family
- Increasing diversity of ownership housing types can help increase affordability:
 - Smaller ownership units are well received by market
 - Small lot single-family housing, duplexes, and triplexes, may have a higher price point than townhomes, but are lower than existing, larger detached single-family housing
 - They will need some zoning refinements that adjust the standard platting process and other requirements.
- Amend zoning and the permitting process to simplify and encourage townhomes, duplexes, and triplexes. Adjust the level of City involvement to reflect the complexity or simplicity of the development – these smaller multifamily housing types are often simple buildings and the regulations and permitting should be simple as well.
- Reduce or eliminate ground floor retail requirements
- Reduce or eliminate parking requirements
- Reduce or eliminate ADU regulations, which are overly burdensome
- Allow cottages

- Increase required percent affordable units
- Increase flexibility for religious institutions to provide housing
- Expand allowable uses in certain zones
- Develop a thoughtful marketing campaign for affordable housing
- Implement form-based codes to allow for smaller, townhome-style development, home offices, etc.
- HOA and maintenance are important but can increase housing costs. The handoff between the developer and the new owners is tricky and needs to be better understood. There is a need to be mindful of baseline HOA fees can be costly and maintenance often ends up on individual homeowners.
- Evaluate ideas in the [PSRC Housing Innovations Program](#) including flexible zoning, land banking and others.

Questions

- “Can BERK or someone else to weigh in on where we’re going with absorption rates? If we’re going to create affordable housing, what is critical is understanding how much housing we need in all sectors so we have a number across all types of units.”
- “2040 vision talks about additional 40,000 people coming to the city. It won’t all be rentals. How much do we need for each housing type? Once we know what we need for the number of units needed, we can make better recommendations for incentives (such as density bonus).”
- “Does the city require certain types of multifamily? Bellevue is getting a lot of studio/1-br and need family sized housing units.”
- “Does city have inclusionary zoning?”