

# Housing Code Updates



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**Vancouver City Council Workshop**  
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# Presentation Overview

- Housing Code Updates project background
- Project components and work to date
- Next steps, including short term rental issues to be addressed separately



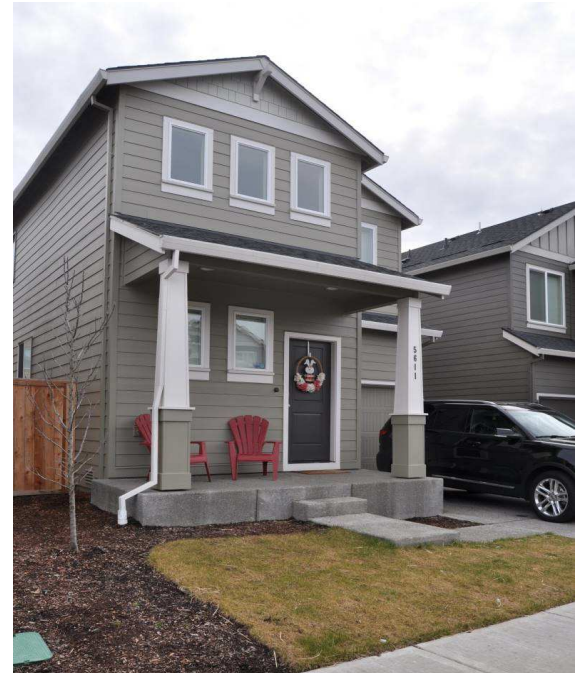
# Presentation Purpose

- Update Council on status and progress of Housing Code Updates project and its components
- Council feedback and confirmation of direction in advance of bringing forward new code language for Council review and public and stakeholder comment
- Update on recent raised issues related to short-term rentals, and Council direction on how to proceed. Note that this is a separate project from housing code updates.



# Project Goals

- Expand housing choices and address changing demographic needs and consumer preferences
- Implement recommendations of the 2016 Affordable Housing Task Force
- Facilitate efficient development near existing services
- Maintain neighborhood livability, with gradual rather than rapid change
- Plan for the long-term



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# Project Background – Recent Related Initiatives

Other Affordable Housing Task Force recommendations adopted by Council:

- Created Affordable Housing Fund
- Strengthened Multi-family Tax Exemption program
- Strengthened Impact Fee Waiver program
- Increased flexibility for ADUs
- Allowed affordable housing on ground floor in commercial zones



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## Process to-date

- Initial City Council and Planning Commission workshops
- Research on best practices in other jurisdictions in Clark County and statewide
- Technical feedback from developers
- Be Heard Vancouver, project website and neighborhood newsletter notice
- Neighborhood leaders meeting, Hough/Carter Park N.A. meeting before pandemic.



# New Single Family R-17 Zoning District

- Require zone change and public hearing to implement
- Allow detached and attached single-family homes on lots between 2500 and 5000 s.f.
- Increase flexibility for lot coverage and width, and street side setbacks.
- Use parking strategies such as alley-loading and shared driveways, where possible
- Include streetfront function requirements limiting garage door widths, requiring a visible front door, and limiting multiple repetition of housing form



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## New R-17 – Garage Width Limits

Would limit garages to 50% of front façade width in order to:

- Facilitate space for on-street parking
- Provide space for on-site utilities
- Avoid discouraging neighborhood pedestrian, front yard and porch usage





## New R-17 – Visible Main Entry

Would require visible front door with awning or other feature in order to:

- Create street interest
- Facilitate security through eyes on street



## New R-17 – Limit Repetition

Would limit repetitious front facades on homes in order to create street interest and variety



## New R-17 – Rear Alley

Would require rear alley use  
where feasible in order to  
support on-street parking



## Follow On Recommendations for Existing Zones

- Existing Vancouver MFR zones allow SFR housing provided density requirements are met, sometimes resulting in SFR lots similar or smaller to proposed R-17. SFR development in these zones recommended to be subject to requirements of R-17. Allowance for 50' high SFR homes in MFR zones also recommended to be eliminated.
- Denser existing SFR zones (R-9 and R-6 allowing lots of 5,000 and 7,500 sf) and narrow lots less than 40' wide in any SFR zone have some similarities with proposed R-17, and should be subject to more flexible side yard setbacks and streetfront function requirements



# Proposed New Multi-Family R-50 Zoning District

- Require rezone and public hearing to implement
- Allow apartments of densities up to 50 units per net acre maximum
- Increase maximum lot coverage and building height to provide more flexibility
- Decrease parking requirement from 1.5 to 1 space per unit to be consistent with City SFR requirement. Also apply to other MFR zones.



## Potential New R-50 MFR Zone – Other Jurisdictions

Maximum units/acre in jurisdiction's densest baseline multi-family zone

Jurisdiction	Max. Density (units/acre)
Portland	100
Everett	58
Tacoma	58
Clark County	43
Kent	40
<b>Vancouver</b>	<b>35</b>
Bellevue	30
Olympia	30
Spokane	30



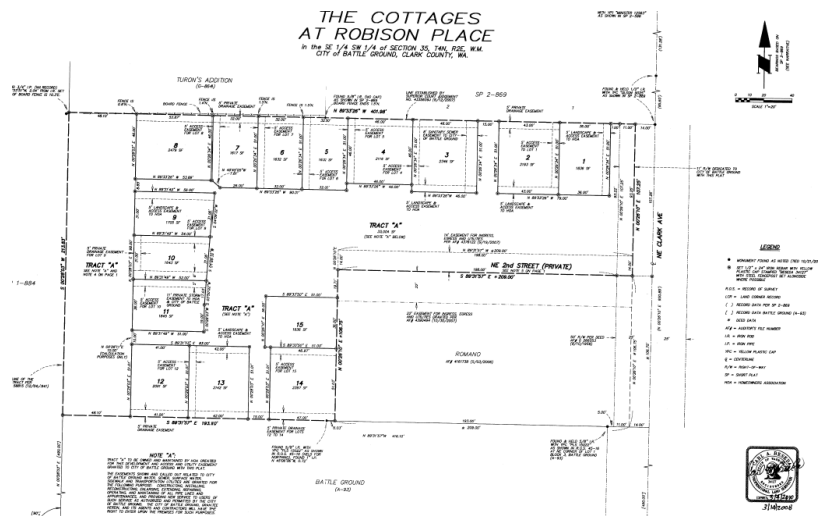
# Cottage Cluster Housing

- Allow clusters of small cottages around common spaces in single-family zones
- Use best practices statewide, particularly locally
- Allow 4-12 cottages with sloped roofs and porches. Limit units to 1,600 sf and 25' height. Limit density to twice underlying zoning.
- Require subdivision or site plan review with enhanced public notice.



# Cottage Cluster Housing

- One built example in Battle Ground, approvals in Ridgefield and Clark County





# Apartments with shared kitchen and bathroom

- Allow apartments with shared kitchen or bathroom facilities in multi-family zones
- Often called “cohousing”
- Currently allowed in Vancouver if there is on-site staff to provide care or treatment
- Propose to allow without on-site staff



## ADUs in historic garages with non-conforming setbacks

- Adjust ADU standards to allow conversions of historic garages with non-conforming setbacks to be eligible if they meet building and ADU codes



## New home construction to allow aging in place

- Incentivize new home construction that supports aging in place through wide doorways, first floor bathrooms, and zero-step entries
- Ridgefield offers 10% building permit reduction



## Setbacks for new apartments next to homes

Current code requires new development in high density residential zones abutting lower density zones to be setback 5 feet from the property line, with 6-foot high shrub screen or fence





## Density bonus for faith-based residential

- GMA requires allowing density bonus for affordable housing owned or controlled by faith-based organizations
- Local governments can develop policies following requests from applicants



# Parking reductions near transit

GMA requires reduced parking requirements for following housing types near frequent transit:

- Market rate MFR – No more than 0.75 spaces per unit or one per bedroom within ¼ mile of transit stops with 15-minute intervals
- Affordable housing – Same, but within ¼ mile of transit stops with 30-minute intervals
- Senior or disabled housing – No resident parking requirements within ¼ mile of transit stops with 15-minute intervals



## Next Steps – Housing Code Updates

- Develop draft code language for public and stakeholder comment in fall 2021
- Bring forward proposals for Planning Commission and Council workshops and hearings in winter 2021 and early 2022
- Continue to monitor housing changes in other jurisdictions, and continue participation in Clark County process for unincorporated Vancouver UGA
- Explore options for low-density MFR in SFR zones in 2022.



## Short-term housing rentals

- Vancouver numbers increasing steadily but still low relative to larger cities and vacation destinations. Complaints remain low.
- 80% of local listings are for full single family homes, spread throughout City.
- Inconsistent with Vancouver residential use definitions unless approved as a Bed and Breakfast. Not allowed in residential zones, although enforcement complaint driven.
- Allowed with limits in most comparable jurisdictions statewide



## Short-term rentals – Regulatory options

- Maintain status quo, enforce on complaint-driven basis. Probably not tenable over long term given increasing numbers.
- Enforce existing standards more aggressively. Likely to be resource intensive, and potentially contentious.
- Begin developing new regulations now. Will require additional resources to develop new standards, conduct public outreach, and potentially in administration and enforcement. Likely to require shifting of work priorities.
- Monitor and report back next year. Recommended option.

# Questions and Discussion

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