

Housing Code Updates

VANCOUVER
CITY HALL

CITY OF
Vancouver
WASHINGTON

March 8, 2022 Vancouver Planning Commission

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner

Becky Coutinho, Associate Planner

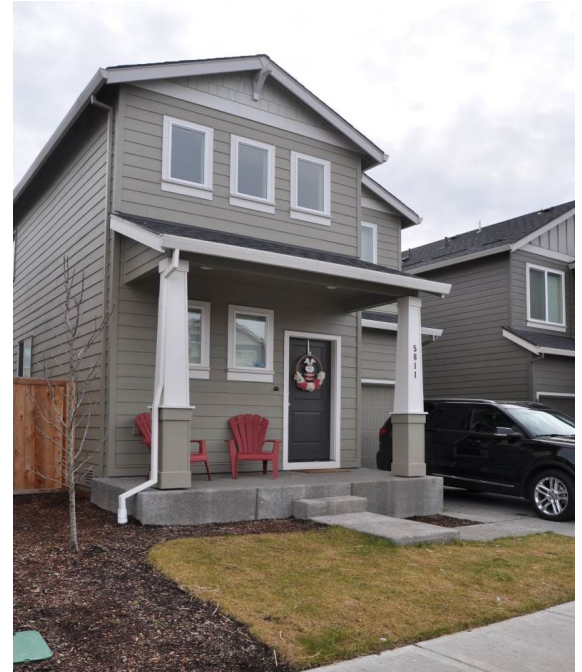
www.cityofvancouver.us/cdd/page/housing-code-updates

Project Goals and Context

- Part but not all of the City approach to attainable housing. City also makes programmatic investments in rent restricted affordable housing. Follows Council direction to increase flexibility in types and sizes of housing that the private market can build.
- Intended to increase options, particularly of smaller housing types which are less costly, with incremental change envisioned to overall housing supply.
- Two code changes pursuant to state mandates reference affordability thresholds. Density bonus for up to 80% AMI level specified by state. Proposals more affordable than this would also be eligible.
- Other components intended to allow new housing types but recognized as being less costly but not truly affordable, which private markets typically don't provide.

Project Components

- Eight zoning code text changes and one process change intended to expand housing choices and affordability
- Also intended to realize recommendations of the 2016 Affordable Housing Task Force, promote efficient development, maintain neighborhood livability with gradual rather than rapid change, and plan for the long term



Presentation Overview

Workshop intended to identify what additional information or code changes needed before hearings. Suggested order:

- R-17
- R-50 and mandated parking reductions
- Mandated AH density bonus
- Cottage cluster
- MFR to SFR setback
- Micro-housing,
- ADU
- Building permit review incentives for aging in place



Process thus far

- Nine Planning Commission and Council workshops
- Meetings with 8 individual neighborhoods associations and two neighborhood umbrella groups (Alliance and Leaders);
- Four developer meetings, one meeting with housing providers and advocates.
- On-line engagement through project website, neighborhood newsletter, Be Heard Vancouver



New Single-Family R-17 Zoning District Standards

- Requires rezone approval, and land division approval, with hearings.
- Limits garage widths to $\frac{1}{2}$ front façade or 10 feet, requires front door, limits housing repetition, and facilitates alleys, in the R-9 and R-6 districts in addition to R-17.
- Allows duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes as well as SFR
- New – requires compliance with existing city narrow lot standards, including provisions for utilities, parking, alley incentives
- New – alleys required unless unfeasible for lots below 3,000 square feet, encouraged otherwise
- New – Home fronts required to vary between adjacent two homes only, not those across a street



New R-17 – Compliance with Narrow Lots Standards

VMC 20.927, Narrow Lot Developments, requires

- On/off site improvement plans addressing utilities, driveways and street trees
- One guest parking space per 3 lots
- Solid waste/recycling access plan
- Alley standards
- Shared driveway standards



New Single-Family R-17

Pause for Commission questions, discussion, and identification of additional information needed to before hearings.

Proposed New Multi-Family R-50 Zoning District

- Requires rezone and public hearing to site
- Allow apartments of densities up to 50 units per net acre maximum
- Increase maximum lot coverage and building height to provide more flexibility
- Decrease minimum parking requirement from 1.5 to 1 spaces per unit to be consistent with Citywide SFR standard. Also apply to other MFR zones. Projects can provide more parking if desired.



State Mandated Parking Reductions Near Transit

Housing Type	Current City	State Mandate	Recommended New City
Market Rate MFR	1.5 spaces/unit	0.75 spaces/unit within ¼ mile of transit stop with 15-minute service	0.75 spaces/unit within ¼ mile of transit line with 35-minute service intervals, 1.0 spaces/unit elsewhere
Very affordable housing (50% AMI)	1.5 spaces/unit	0.75 spaces/unit within ¼ mile of transit stop with 30-minute service	0.75 spaces/unit for affordable (60% AMI) housing citywide.
Senior housing	1.0 spaces/unit	Zero spaces/unit within ¼ mile of transit stop with 15-minute service. Can require guest and staff parking	0.75 spaces/employee plus one visitor space per 10 residents citywide.
Disabled	1.5 spaces/unit	Zero spaces/unit if within ¼ mile of transit stop with 15-minute service. Can require guest and staff parking.	0.75 spaces/employee, plus one visitor space per 10 residents, citywide

R-50 and State Mandated Parking Requirements

Pause for Commission questions, discussion, and identification of additional information needed to before hearings.

Density Bonus for Affordable Housing

- GMA requires allowing density bonus for long term affordable housing (defined in this case at 80% AMI for 50 years) owned or controlled by faith-based organizations
- Proposal would expand eligibility to any party providing a guarantee of meeting the threshold, with density bonus of:
 - 25% in R-2, R-4, R-35, and R-50
 - 50% in R-6, R-9, and R-17
 - 100% in R-18, R-22 and R-30
- Bonus would not authorize structures or building heights not allowed by underlying zone



Density Bonus for Affordable Housing

Pause for Commission questions, discussion, and identification of additional information needed to before hearings.

Cottage Cluster Housing

- Allow clusters of small cottages around common courtyards in single-family zones
- Limit density to twice underlying zoning.
- Allow 4-12 cottages with sloped roofs and porches. Limit single units to 1,600 sf and duplexes to 3,000 sf both with 25' height limit, with allowances for 30' in project interior.



Cottage Cluster Housing (cont.)

- At least 75% of cottage units must be oriented to common courtyard that is generally square or round, and connected to it by pedestrian path
- Courtyard must be sized at 200 sf per cottage
- One parking space per cottage unit required. On-street parking credited.
- Requires public hearing if subdivision involved, site plan review with notice otherwise.



Cottage Cluster Developments

Pause for Commission questions, discussion, and identification of additional information needed to before hearings.

Setbacks for New Apartments Next to Existing 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.
- Proposal is to require additional one foot setback for every three feet of proposed building height over 35 feet, up to a maximum setback of 15 feet.



Setbacks for New Apartments next to Existing Homes

Pause for Commission questions, discussion, and identification of additional information needed to before hearings.

Micro-housing – MFR with shared Kitchen and Bathroom

- Allow apartments with shared kitchen or bathroom facilities in multi-family zones
- Currently allowed only in medical or recovery context with on-site staff. Proposed to allow for apartments without staff.
- No density bonus – only what's allowed by zoning



ADUs in Existing Garages within Setbacks

- Existing historic garages in setbacks can't be converted to ADUs.
- Proposal would allow replacement or conversion to ADUs provided building and planning standards met, and height within setback limited to 18 feet.



New Homes to allow Aging-in-Place

- Incentivize new home construction to supports aging in place through wide doorways, first floor bathrooms, and zero-step entries
- Proposal would expedite building permit review timelines, provide information for applicants, and designate a staff contact.



Micro-housing/ADU/Aging-in-Place

Pause for Commission questions, discussion, and identification of additional information needed to before hearings.

Next Steps – Housing Code Updates

- Continue to refine specific draft code language for public and stakeholder comment in winter 2022
- Continue meeting any neighborhood, developer or other groups requesting presentations.
- April 12 Planning Commission hearing



Questions and Discussion

Bryan Snodgrass, Principal Planner, bryan.snodgrass@cityofvancouver.us,
360-487-7946

Becky Coutinho, Associate Planner, becky.coutinho@cityofvancouver.us,
360-487-7899

www.cityofvancouver.us/cdd/page/housing-code-updates