



Staff Report

October 6, 2025 Council Workshop Meeting

Middle Housing and Accessory Dwelling Unit Code Updates

Presenter: Alan Peters, Community Development Director

Time Estimate: 30 minutes

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BACKGROUND: The Washington Legislature adopted two major housing bills during the 2023 legislative session that the City of Camas is required to address through code amendments by December 31, 2025 – HB 1337 addressing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) and HB 1110 addressing middle housing. HB 1337 primarily requires that cities allow at least two ADUs per lot, but also includes requirements to relax development standards, prohibits owner-occupancy requirements, and allows for ADUs to be sold as independent units. HB 1110 requires cities to allow certain minimum densities for middle housing in all residential zones. Camas is required to allow at least two dwelling units per lot, and four dwelling units per lot if at least one unit is affordable.

Staff have prepared draft code updates for review, informed by the Camas 2035 Comprehensive Plan, the Camas Housing Action Plan, the Our Camas 2045 Comprehensive Plan update in process, and Department of Commerce guidance. The timing of these updates is driven by a deadline established by the Legislature, but the changes are supported by existing planning policies in the City's comprehensive plan and Housing Action Plan which support the development of a variety of housing choices and allowing middle housing in zones traditionally dedicated to single-family housing.

SUMMARY: The proposed code amendments would be housed in Title 18 of the Camas Municipal Code. While located in separate chapters, the amendments would work together to expand the range of housing choices allowable in residential zones and bring the City into compliance with state law by the December 31st deadline. Staff intends to bring these amendments to Council later this year as part of a consolidated package of development code amendments. These amendments will be brought back to Council at the November 3, 2025, Council Workshop and then for a public hearing on December 1, 2025.

Middle Housing Code Amendments

Middle housing includes the range of housing options between single-family homes and large apartment buildings. To comply with HB 1110, Camas must allow at least two dwelling units per lot (or four if affordability requirements are met) and must allow at least six of the following nine types of middle housing units: duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes,

fiveplexes, sixplexes, townhouses stacked flats, courtyard apartments, cottage housing. Cities can also count ADUs towards the required unit density per lot.

The proposed draft code amendments would bring Camas into compliance with HB 1110's requirements by establishing a new "Middle Housing" chapter under Title 18 – Zoning, adopting new definitions for middle housing terms, establishing provisions for unit lot subdivisions, and amending the land use tables to ensure that at least six of the required middle housing types are allowed in Camas's residential zones.

New Chapter

The proposed new Chapter 18.25 would include provisions for unit density, development and design standards and parking standards.

- **Permitted Unit Densities:** At least two units are permitted on all residential lots, with allowances for up to four units per lot if at least one unit is dedicated to affordable housing or if located within ¼ mile of a major transit stop (there are no major transit stops within ¼ of any location in Camas.) The draft code would count ADUs toward these unit densities.
- **Types of Middle Housing Allowed:** The draft allows duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhouses, stacked flats, courtyard apartments, and cottage housing, consistent with the minimum six housing types required under HB 1110 for Tier 2 cities.
- **Design and Development Standards:** Standards are included for building form, open space, articulation, porches, and entries to ensure compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Parking Requirements:** The code would require one space per unit for lots smaller than 6,000 square feet and two spaces per unit for lots larger than 6,000 square feet.

Definitions

The draft text amendments include new definitions for the following middle housing related terms: cottage housing, courtyard apartments, duplex, fourplex, major transit stop, middle housing, stacked flat, triplex, townhouses, parent lot, unit lot, unit lot subdivision, and unit density.

Land Use Table

The draft adds middle housing unit types to the land use table and makes each middle housing unit type a permitted use in all residential zones, subject to compliance with the requirements of draft Chapter 18.25.

Unit Lot Subdivisions

The draft provides for the development of unit lot subdivisions, a new type of land division process that would allow for "parent lots" to be divided into individual "unit lots." These would allow for middle housing units to be sold as individual fee simple units.

Accessory Dwelling Unit Code Amendments

ADUs are secondary housing units on the same lot as a primary residence. They are self-contained units with their own kitchens, bathrooms, and sleeping areas, but are usually smaller and subordinate to a primary dwelling. In Camas currently, one ADU is allowed per lot, provided the lot is owner-occupied and certain design requirements are met.

HB 1337 requires all GMA municipalities to allow at least two ADUs per lot in all urban growth areas for lots that meet the minimum lot size required for the principal housing unit. Local regulations must also permit ADUs to be attached, detached or a combination of both types. The bill also includes several other requirements for ADUs, as follows:

- Maximum ADU size standard: Cities must allow ADUs to be at least 1,000 square feet in size and cannot set a maximum height of less than 24 ft. (ADUs in Camas are currently limited to 40% of the size of the principal unit, up to a maximum of 1000 sq. ft.)
- Owner occupancy: A local government may not require owner occupancy for a principal unit or ADUs. (Owner occupancy is a current requirement in Camas)
- Allow separate sale of ADUs: Local governments may not prohibit the sale or other conveyance of a condominium unit independently of a principal unit solely on the grounds that the condominium unit was originally built as an ADU.
- Development standards and design review: Local governments may not impose aesthetic standards or requirements for design review, or setback requirements, yard coverage limits, tree retention mandates, or restrictions on entry door location that are more restrictive than those required for the principal unit.
- Impact fees: Impact fees for ADUs are limited to no more than 50% of those assessed to the principal housing unit.

The proposed draft code amends CMC Chapter 18.27 to implement the requirements of HB 1337.

Two ADUs per lot

The draft code allows up to two ADUs per lot in conjunction with a principal unit. ADUs would count towards the new middle housing unit densities, meaning that two ADUs are allowable only if a lot is improved with only one principal dwelling unit.

Configurations

The draft code establishes the configurations and conditions in which ADUs can be developed, including attached ADUs, detached ADUs, or a combination thereof. It also establishes that ADUs can be converted from existing legal accessory structures and that they can be sold as individual units as condominiums or through a unit lot subdivision process.

Owner occupancy

The draft code removes any owner occupancy requirement.

Size, Height, and Setbacks

The draft code establishes a maximum size of 1,000 sq. ft. and removes the requirement that ADUs be no more than 40% of the size of the principal unit. It also provides an option for the Community Development Director to approve an increase to this size when the ADU is completely located on a single floor within a building in order to allow for efficient use of existing floor area within an established structure.

Height is limited to 24 ft. for detached ADUs.

The draft code establishes the following setback requirements for detached ADUs.

- Front yard: ADUs must match meet the front yard setback for a property. Under the current code, ADUs cannot project in front of the front building line.
- Side and rear yard: ADUs must comply with the setbacks for accessory buildings. Where there is a public alley there is no rear lot setback required.

The code also allows ADUs to be established in existing buildings that are nonconforming as to setback and lot coverage requirements.

Parking

The draft code requires one off-street parking space per unit.

Design

The draft code regulates design compatibility by requiring that ADUs incorporate design elements from the principal unit. ADUs would be required to include at least two items from a menu of the following elements.

- Roof overhang of the same depth
- Same roof pitch
- Trim of the same dimension and style
- Matching window proportions, grille patterns, and color
- Same primary paint color
- Same roofing material and color
- Similar porch or entryway detailing
- Same primary siding material

The ADU code carries over new privacy standards that were established with the current interim ADU ordinance which requires ADUs to be designed and located to minimize disruption of privacy and outdoor activities on adjacent properties.

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY: The proposed updates expand housing choice, align local regulations with state law, and support Camas's long-term housing goals under the Camas 2035 Comprehensive Plan, Housing Action Plan, and the Our Camas 2045 Plan in progress. ADUs and middle housing can provide more options for families, seniors, and diverse income levels through incremental change within existing neighborhoods.

STRATEGIC PLAN: The proposed updates support the Strategic Plan Economic Prosperity priority by streamlining development review requirements and processes and supporting additional housing options.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES: The proposed updates may increase the pace and quantity of middle housing and ADU projects in Camas which may lead to community concerns about increased density in existing neighborhoods or impacts to parking supply. New middle housing and ADUs may stress infrastructure in older Camas neighborhoods.

BUDGET IMPACT: No immediate budget impacts are anticipated beyond staff time. Future costs may include outreach, permit administration, and potential updates to infrastructure standards and plans.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that Council review the draft ADU and Middle Housing code amendments.