



Technical Memo

To: City of Lake Forest Park Staff
From: SCJ Alliance
Date: January 10, 2025
Project: Lake Forest Park Middle Housing Code Updates
Subject: Gap Analysis and Recommended Code Amendments

The City of Lake Forest Park is in the process of updating its zoning code to align with Washington’s recently enacted middle housing legislation. The legislation, aimed at increasing housing diversity and affordability, requires cities of a certain size to permit middle housing types in all zoning districts predominantly zoned for residential use.

Middle housing types include duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, fiveplexes, sixplexes, courtyard apartments, cottage housing, and townhomes. These building types are typically compatible in scale, form, and character with detached single-family houses.

Key legislation shaping the current middle housing requirements include:

- **HB 1110**, one of the primary pieces of legislation that mandates cities with populations over 25,000 to allow middle housing types in all areas primarily zoned for residential uses, including single-family zones.
- **SB 5287**, which complements HB 1110 by providing additional guidelines on how cities should implement middle housing, including considerations for parking, infrastructure, and design standards.
- **HB 1337**, which aims to increase the supply of affordable housing across Washington by making it simpler and more financially feasible for homeowners to build accessory dwelling units (ADUs). While not explicitly a “middle housing” bill, ADUs represent an important component of addressing the state’s housing needs.
- **HB 2321**, passed in 2024, modifies HB 1110 by providing clarification to the middle housing requirement, with changes reflected in the October 2024 Draft Model Ordinances and associated User Guide.

As a Tier 3 city (with a population less than 25,000 and contiguous with the UGA of the largest city in a county with population greater than 275,000), Lake Forest Park must meet Tier 3 middle housing requirements as provided in state legislation. This memo provides a summary of recommended updates to Lake Forest Park’s zoning and development regulations to ensure compliance with this legislation. In doing so, it follows the guidance provided by the Department of Commerce (as provided for in RCW 36.70A.636) in a model ordinance titled “Tier 3 Cities Middle Housing Model Ordinance”¹.

Summary of Key Updates

A gap analysis was performed to identify sections of Lake Forest Park’s zoning and development regulations that require revisions to align with state requirements and support the development of middle housing. The analysis identified several areas for which updates are required or recommended. Key updates include:

- Update definitions (Section 17.04.050, Chapter 18.08) to include middle housing types and clarify terminology.
- Re-classify “Single-Family Residential” districts (Chapters 18.16, 18.18, 18.20, 18.21, 18.22) as simply “Residential” to ensure middle housing types are not excluded from these districts.
- Modify permitted uses language in all predominantly residential district chapters (Chapters 18.16 through 18.30) to ensure middle housing types (at a minimum, duplexes, stacked flats, cottage housing, and courtyard apartments) are permitted in all residential zones.
- Review and revise lot and density standards in all predominantly residential district chapters to ensure a minimum of two units are allowed on all residential lots and that middle housing types are not regulated any more strictly than single-family units.
- Review and update chapters outlining development standards, off-street parking standards, and landscaping standards (Chapters 18.50, 18.58, and 18.62) to ensure standards for middle housing are not more restrictive than those for detached single-family housing.

A detailed gap analysis identifying all recommended updates is attached.

Next Steps

SCJ will use the recommendations identified in this gap analysis to develop draft language for the necessary amendments. The updated language will integrate feedback received from stakeholders, staff, and the public to date, ensuring the draft development regulations and design guidelines align with the community’s vision for middle housing while also meeting state requirements.

¹ <https://deptofcommerce.app.box.com/s/iik8a7qrb7wkh76obfxpbgs9hzv8ctzy>



Work sessions will also be scheduled with the Planning Commission and City Council as needed to discuss development of the draft amendments. Once finalized, formal adoption of the proposed amendments is anticipated before June 30, 2025.

Attachments:

- *Gap Analysis in Word*
- *Code Amendments in Word*