



Community Development Department

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STAFF MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission
From: Andrew Levins, Land Use Planning Consultant
Date: February 3, 2025
Subject: Washington State Housing Regulations and Draft Amendments

Introduction

The 2024 Washington State Legislature enacted housing numerous amendments to chapters of the Revised Code of Washington (“RCW”) that require cities to allow co-living housing, the conversion of non-residential buildings to residential use, and increased density bonuses on religious organization property used for affordable housing. Additionally, new regulations limit parking requirements for housing developments near transit stops and mandate more flexible off-street parking options.

Background

In 2021, with the passing of [House Bill 1220](#) the Washington Legislature began directing cities to plan for housing. This amendment to the Growth Management Act (GMA) instructed local governments to “plan for and accommodate” housing affordable to all income levels. The city fulfilled its statutory requires of HB 1220 with the development of a Housing Element and policies (moderate, low, very low and extremely low income), as well as regulations for emergency housing and permanent supportive housing and identifying racially disparate impacts, displacement, and exclusion. These recent mandates continue the trend of the State Legislature requiring local jurisdictions to adopt specific development standards aimed at addressing housing affordability issues and requires jurisdictions to update their development regulations within one year of the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan.

Analysis

These changes affect all code cities and cities planning under the Growth Management Act, including Snoqualmie. The Snoqualmie Municipal Code must be revised to implement these changes, which are summarized below:

- [RCW 35A.21.440](#): Cities must not prohibit conversion of existing non-residential buildings to residential uses in any commercial or mixed-use zone for redevelopments that occur entirely within the envelope of an existing building. This section of the RCW also restricts the types of development standards cities can impose on these residential conversions.
- [RCW 36.70A.535](#): Cities must allow Co-living housing development as a permitted use on any lot where at least 6 multi-family units could be built. "Co-living" is a residential development like dormitory-style housing where multiple independent units share common kitchen facilities, laundry rooms, etc.

- [RCW 36.70A.545](#): Cities must allow increased density bonuses for affordable housing located on property owned by a religious organization. The development must be 100% affordable, and all fees and mitigation costs required by the City must still be paid to accommodate the development.
- [RCW 36.70A.620](#): WA State changes to minimum parking requirements for housing development near existing transit stops. This change limits the amount of parking a city can require for affordable, special needs, or multifamily housing that is located within one-quarter mile of a qualifying transit stop. Snoqualmie is not currently served by a qualifying transit route, which is defined as service occurring at least four times per hour, 12 hours per day; however, these requirements are still proposed for adoption as transit agencies adjust route service over time.
- [RCW 36.70A.622](#): WA State changes to limit requirements for parking. This change affects what types of requirements cities can impose for required off-street parking. For example, prior to RCW 36.70A.622, cities could require off-street parking to occur within a garage or carport. After enacting the requirements of RCW 36.70A.622, cities must allow any kind of off-street parking space (garage, carport, or unenclosed) to satisfy parking requirements.

NEXT STEPS

No action needed at this time. Staff will prepare proposed draft amendments, a requirement crosswalk matrix, SEPA, and an additional analysis as needed to aid City implementation of changes needed for compliance with State regulations.