



# PROPOSED CODE CHANGES

TO ENCOURAGE MORE DIVERSE HOUSING



## WHY ARE CHANGES BEING PROPOSED?

Household demographics and market needs have changed dramatically since the White Salmon zoning code was first developed. Community feedback indicates that many people recognize we are experiencing a housing affordability crisis and that current zoning restrictions are playing a role. Last summer, City Council adopted a Housing Action Plan that called out the need to consider code changes to encourage more diverse housing that would support a range of income levels. This first round of proposed code changes was determined to be "low hanging fruit" and aim to: reduce redundancies, make requirements more clear and objective, and change requirements that have proven ineffective or to no longer be best practices.



## THE PROPOSED CODE CHANGES INCLUDE:

- Increasing opportunities for accessory dwelling units and cottages
- Eliminating minimum widths (meant to prohibit smaller homes)
- Reducing minimum sizes (to allow smaller homes)
- Raising allowable heights in R-3 zone (to accommodate small apartments)
- Reducing front yard setbacks (to allow porches)
- Streamlining the permitting process, allowing more uses



## HOW WOULD THESE CHANGES BECOME LAW?

Changes to City Code require a public hearing. Changes like this to zoning codes also require a public hearing and review by the Planning Commission. The council will hold a public hearing to seek input on Dec. 6, when they will also have a First Reading of the proposed draft ordinance. Council will have a Second Reading as early as their Dec. 20 meeting, or at a later date, depending on outcomes at the Dec. 6 meeting. Council could take action to adopt all, some, or revisions to the proposed changes as early as Dec. 20. New ordinances would not go into effect until 5 days after adoption.





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## HOW DO THESE CHANGES ADDRESS THE LACK OF HOUSING?

Development in our region is expensive, whether it's a single property owner building their home along with an ADU, or a developer adding multi-family housing. The proposed changes address established cost barriers by:

- **Allowing more units on lots as well as smaller units**
- **Allowing more ADUs per lot as well as ADUs on lots where they are currently restricted**
- **Increasing opportunities to develop apartments and rowhomes in zones where they are allowed**
- **Expanding options and opportunities for developers, land trusts, and housing authorities for the types of housing that can be developed.**

## HOW DOES THIS SUPPORT QUALITY DEVELOPMENT IN OUR CITY?

Many housing policy proposals devolve into either "Not in My Backyard" or "Yes in My Backyard." There are valid reasons why some community members would be concerned about changes to city code, which is why we are aiming for these changes to be community informed. This means that in addition to these first code changes, the city is also pursuing:

- **Implementing Form-Based Code to focus on the visual form of new development before its function**
- **Supporting pre-approved plans to reduce property owners' building costs and ensure visual adherence**
- **Maintaining clear and objective design guidelines**
- **Supporting future neighborhood design charrettes to consider changes to various planned development code requirements**

## HOW DID WE GET HERE AND WHAT ELSE IS BEING DONE?

This work is the activation of many years of studies, adopted plans, public input, and council action that all reinforce addressing the lack of affordable housing as the City's top priority.

City Council declares a Housing Emergency and implements a moratorium on new development; though the moratorium is upended by Covid, public hearings testify to the emergency and MH Zone code changes are adopted.

STR regulations are implemented following an 8-month moratorium, during which public comments raise concerns about STR impacts on housing.

Council passes the Housing Action Plan and directs City Hall to begin undertaking code changes.

Sept. '19

Jan-July '20

July '21-Nov.'21

Mar. '22

May-Sept. 2023

June '23

Vision 2040 Comprehensive Plan Surveys. Top rated community feedback: Lack of housing.

Council passes 2021 Comprehensive Plan as well as an Urbanization Study undertaken by Klickitat County and White Salmon. Both identify a lack of housing to support anticipated demand.

Public hearings are held to determine what tenant protections may help to address the concerning trend of higher rental costs from fees and annual increases.

*In addition to changes to the MH Zone, STR requirements, and increased notification timeline for rent increases over 10%, the City also acquired land to develop 10 townhomes for affordable home ownership, and is also pursuing development of multi-family rental housing on publicly owned land.*

