

Housing Code Updates

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February 3, 2022 Clark County Developers and Engineers
Advisory Board

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

Presentation Overview

- Brief summary of nine code changes proposed to expand housing choices and affordability. Most already allowed in local jurisdictions, or required by state law
- Recent feedback
- Next steps



Project Goals

- Expand housing choices and address changing demographic needs and consumer preferences
- Realize recommendations of the 2016 Affordable Housing Task Force
- Promote efficient development near existing services
- Maintain neighborhood livability, with gradual rather than rapid change
- Plan for the long-term



Process to-date

- Pre-pandemic Planning Commission and City Council workshops
- Research on best practices in other jurisdictions in Clark County and statewide
- Housing developer consultation, Neighborhood leaders meeting, Hough/Carter Park N.A.
- Project website, neighborhood newsletter, Be Heard Vancouver
- 2021 Commission and Council workshops



New Single-Family R-17 Zoning District Standards

- Requires zone change and public hearing to site
- Allows new subdivisions of detached and attached single-family homes on lots between 2,000 and 5,000 s.f.
- Increases flexibility for lot coverage and width, and street side setbacks.
- Uses parking strategies such as alley-loading and shared driveways, where possible.
- Includes streetfront function requirements limiting garage door widths, requiring a visible front door, and limiting multiple repetition of housing form.



New R-17 – Garage Width Limits

Would limit garages to 50% of front façade width, allowing at least 9 feet, in order to:

- Allow space for on-street parking
- Provide space for on-site utilities
- Encourage neighborhood pedestrian activity, as well as front yard and porch use



New R-17 – Visible Main Entry

Would require visible front door with awning or other feature in order to:

- Create street interest
- Facilitate security through eyes on street





New R-17 – Limit Repetition

Would limit repetitious front facades on homes in order to create street interest and variety. Similar and potentially simpler than “six pack” rule used in some local cities.





New R-17 – Rear Alley

Would require rear alley use unless demonstrated unfeasible in order to support on-street parking, high-quality pedestrian facilities, and streetfront activity.





R-17 - Follow On Recommendations for Existing Zones

- Existing Vancouver MFR zones allow SFR housing provided density requirements are met, sometimes resulting in SFR lots similar or smaller than what is being proposed for R-17. SFR development in these zones recommended to be subject to R-17 streetfront, access, and setback requirements. Loophole allowing for 50' high SFR homes in MFR zones also recommended to be eliminated.
- Denser existing SFR zones (R-9 and R-6 allowing lots of 5,000 and 7,500 sf) and narrow lots less than 40' wide in any SFR zone have some similarities with proposed R-17, and should be subject to R-17 streetfront and setback requirements

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 spaces if desired.



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 s.f. and duplexes to 3,000 s.f. both with 25' height limit, with allowances for 30' in project interior.



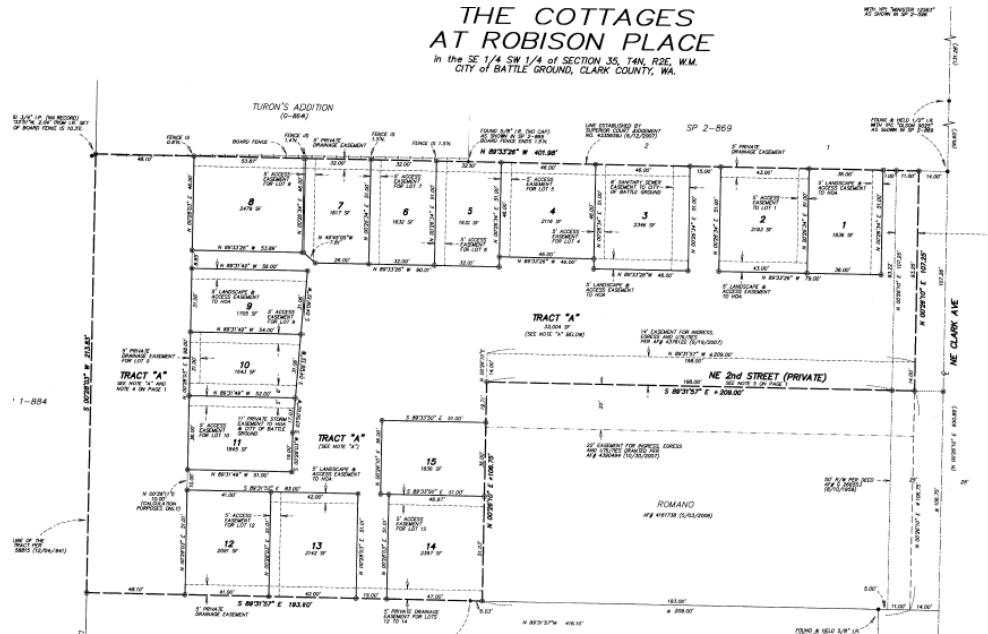
Cottage Cluster Housing (cont.)

- 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 s.f. per cottage
- One parking space per cottage unit required. On-street parking credited.
- Requires public hearing if subdivision involved



Cottage Cluster Housing

- As of 2020, one built example in Battle Ground, approvals in Ridgefield and Clark County



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. Increasing setback to 10 feet and further requirements for taller apartments being considered.



Apartments 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 historic garages with non-conforming setbacks

Adjust ADU standards to allow conversions or replacements of existing garages with non-conforming setbacks to be eligible if they meet building and ADU codes. Staff considering limiting second story add-ons or replacements to an additional 3-5 feet based on community feedback.





New home construction to allow aging in place

- Incentivize new home construction to supports aging in place through wide doorways, first floor bathrooms, and zero-step entries
- Ridgefield offers 10% permit fee reduction, but no applications received to date
- Staff considering expedited building permit review incentive





Density bonus for faith-based residential

- GMA requires allowing density bonus for long term affordable housing owned or controlled by faith-based organizations
- Local governments can develop policies following requests from applicants
- Staff considering allowing bonus for any entity providing long-term affordable housing



Parking reductions near transit

GMA requires reduced parking requirements for following housing types near frequent transit:

- Market rate MFR – No more than 0.75 spaces per unit or one per bedroom within ¼ mile of transit stops with 15-minute intervals
- Affordable housing – Same, but within ¼ mile of transit stops with 30-minute intervals
- Senior or disabled housing – No resident parking requirements within ¼ mile of transit stops with 15-minute intervals

Staff considering recommending affordable, senior and disabled parking reductions be applied citywide, not only near transit





Recent feedback

January 6, 2022 Developer Roundtable

- General agreement with direction; desire for less stringent garage door width limits, flexible alley requirements, and allowance for lots not directly accessed by a street in R-17
- Desire for larger home options in cottage clusters
- Desire for larger ADU allowances on properties with small main dwelling
- Desire to expand faith based density bonus to anyone providing long-term affordable housing
- Concerns about complications of implementing state mandated parking reductions in face of changing transit service over time.



Recent feedback (cont.)

January 12 Vancouver Neighborhood Alliance

- Concern about parking within small lot developments, and in general
- Desire for increased apartment building setback requirements
- Questions about impacts to park impact fees
- Desire for aging in place incentives for remodels, not just new construction
- Questions about rezone process and implications for R-17



Recent feedback (cont.)

January 18 Virtual Open House

- Concerns about R-17 rezones occurring on individual or small groups of homesites
- Questions about rezone process
- Concerns about parking in small lot developments, and generally
- Concerns about fire access and garbage pickup in small lot developments
- General concerns about implications for character of existing older neighborhoods
- Desire for more architectural standards
- Questions about short term rental of ADUs and cottages
- Question about determining eligible locations for state mandated parking reductions
- Questions about ADU second stories on historic garages



Next Steps – Housing Code Updates

- Continue to refine specific draft code language for public and stakeholder comment in winter 2022
- Continue meeting with Neighborhood Associations and other groups as requested
- Additional Planning Commission workshop February 22. Hearings not yet scheduled.



Questions and Discussion

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