

# Housing Options Plan Comparisons

Housing codes in Olympia's single-family neighborhoods are about to be changed during City Council meetings in a few weeks. These changes, called the Housing Options Plan, are drastic, and will basically eliminate single-family zoning. Realize that "single-family" zoning really isn't an accurate name for the way things are now, because tiny houses, ADUs, cottages, manufactured homes and 4-unit townhouses are also **already** allowed.

On the next pages are tables that compare our neighborhood zoning **currently**, and then shows the initial **City** recommendations, and then the new **Planning Commission** recommendations to the Council.

Just for background, our neighborhoods are either:

- R-4-8, meaning a minimum of 4 and maximum of 8 housing units per acre
- R-6-12, meaning a minimum of 6 and maximum of 12 housing units per acre

See the City Zoning Map to see what zone your house is in. This map blows up to very high detail. <http://www.densitydoneright.org/resources/2020ZoningOfficial.pdf>

**Density** Measuring housing units per acre is called unit density. But there are two ways density is measured: **net** density and **gross** density.

**Net Density** is found by dividing the number of housing units by the acres of private property (lot area) they sit on. The area doesn't include streets, sidewalks, alleys, or other public domain.

**Gross Density** is found by dividing the number of housing units by ALL the property in the neighborhood, including streets, sidewalks, alleys, and other public domain.

So, net density is larger than gross density for the same neighborhood. They are related by:

$$\text{Net density} \times .71 = \text{Gross Density}$$

The City uses gross density when talking about R-4-8 or R-6-12 zones

Finally, the State Law that allows Washington Cities to make these Housing Options zoning changes, HB2343, only requires that **cities try to reach a net density of 6 units per acre** in their residential neighborhoods. **This is a gross density of about 4 units per acre.** However, this same law says that duplexes, triplexes, four-plexes and six-plexes can be put on any single-family lot. In R-4-8, single family lots can be as small as 4000 sf, and in R-6-12, 3500 sf.

**Olympia's average neighborhood gross density is a little over 5 units per acre right now.** Is introducing large multifamily buildings to neighborhoods really necessary?

**Abbreviations used in the tables below:**

**Minimum lot Size = MLS                      Minimum Lot Width = MLW**

**Planning Commission = PC                      Square Feet = sf**

**Housing Units must still meet City requirements for set backs, and the lot percentage of impervious and hard surfaces**

### Residential-4 - 8

Type of Unit	Units /Bldg	Allowed Currently	Recommended City Staff	Recommended Planning Commission	Current MLS / MLW	City Staff' & Planning Commission MLS/MLW	City Staff' & PC Net Densities
ADU Structure	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Proportional to house/ Max 800 sf	Staff = 800 sf PC = 850 sf	ADUs not counted in density
Single Family House	1	Yes	Yes (not up for review)	Yes (not up for review)	4000 sf / 45 ft	4000 sf / 45 ft	11
Duplex	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	7200 sf / 80 ft	4000 sf / 45 ft	22
Triplex	3	No (except small area)	No	Yes	7200 sf / 80 ft	4000 sf / 45 ft	33
Fourplex	4	No	No	Yes	9600 sf / 80 ft	4000 sf / 45 ft	44
CYA	5-12	No	No	No	NA	Unspecified	?
Sixplex	6	No	No	No	None	4000 sf / 45 ft	Not Allowed

## Residential-6-12

Type of Unit	Units /Bldg	Allowed Currently	Recommended City Staff	Recommended Planning Commission	Current MLS/MLW	City Staff' & Planning Commission MLS/MLW	City Staff' & PC Net Densities
ADU Structure	1	Yes	Yes	Yes	Proportional to house/ Max 800 sf	Staff = 800 sf PC = 850 sf	ADUs not counted in density
Single Family House	1	Yes	Yes (not up for review)	Yes (not up for review)	3500 sf/ 40 ft	3500 sf/ 40 ft	12
Duplex	2	Yes	Yes	Yes	7200 sf/80 ft	3500 sf/40 ft	25
Triplex	3	No (except small area)	Yes	Yes	7200 sf/80 ft	3500 sf/40 ft	37
Fourplex	4	No	No	Yes	9600 sf/80 ft	3500 sf/40 ft	50
Courtyard Apartments	5-12	No	Yes	Yes	NA	Unspecified	?
Sixplex	6	No	No	Yes	None	3500 sf/40 ft	75

Although hard surface and impervious surface could make some of these net densities impossible, what is certain is that, multifamily buildings will be as tall as possible (35 feet) to fit in the newly-legalized number of units.

### And Another Thing About Density

The Housing Options plan intends to monitor density each year by zone. We have over 4 square miles of R-4-8 zone and 2 square miles of R-6-12 zone. **This means a huge density increase in a neighborhood would create a very-small increase in average density for a zone.**

OSD&LN recommends monitoring density by the Sub-Area which the City itself created in 2016 (at right, A - K).

