



# Building Opportunity and Choices for All Initiative Frequently Asked Questions

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## Building Opportunity and Choices for All Pilot Program

Mayor Nadine Woodward, Council President Breean Beggs, Council Member Betsy Wilkerson, and Council Member Michael Cathcart are proposing a pilot program to modify residential zoning to accelerate more housing in neighborhoods. The Building Opportunity and Choices for All pilot program would allow more housing options to be built within the next year.

We understand you may have questions, here are some answers!

## What are the benefits of the Building Opportunity and Choices for All pilot?

- *Increased flexibility for desired housing types*
  - Development regulations are important to ensure the quality of life and safety standards that lead to a thriving community. However, sometimes regulations can have unintended consequences. For instance, the current regulation for townhomes discourages their construction due to lot size requirements and unit limitations. Reducing the lot width and removing the unit cap can encourage the development of this housing type that is popular for **young professionals** and **retirees** alike and give **first-time home buyers** an opportunity to establish roots and connect with the community.
- *Walkable infill*
  - Development infill allows residents to live near services, while also taking advantage of existing infrastructure like water, sewer and solid waste services. This **creates walkable neighborhoods** and **responsible use of resources**. Research also indicates that infill development is largely done by smaller companies, **supporting small business** along the way.
- *Continued community feedback*
  - Feedback heard from the community during development of the [Housing Action Plan](#) and [Shaping Spokane Housing](#) code amendments have generally been positive towards promoting townhomes and allowing duplexes and fourplexes to increase Spokane's housing supply and housing variety. The Building Opportunity and Choices for All pilot program is **turning community feedback into immediate action**.
- *Transit Oriented Development*
  - Residential opportunities near high-capacity STA transit routes can provide affordable and convenient housing options. Infill development helps make existing neighborhoods into ones where **residents of all ages** can walk, bike, or take transit to enjoy public spaces like parks or libraries, access daily services, or commute to work conveniently and reliably.

### How long will this temporary code amendment be in place?

- The **interim zoning ordinance will last for one year** from Council's approval, during which time City staff will track the pilot program's progress and feedback. At the end of the one year, City Council will have the opportunity to extend the pilot another six months if it is needed to complete the necessary work associated with making permanent code changes. Developers who wish to build under the pilot program will be vested for up to one year from the pilot program's end to complete reviews and permitting.

### How will this program affect my neighborhood?

- The pilot program is **designed to allow for small-scale development that compliments the residential nature of our neighborhoods**. If development occurs in your neighborhood, you may see new buildings that provide more housing choices. There is a chance you may not even know a building has multiple units until you meet your new neighbors!
- New housing constructed under the Building Opportunity and Choices for All pilot will be required to **maintain current off-street parking requirements**.
- The pilot program **includes design standards** that will ensure these low-scale residential housing types feature high quality architectural elements that add curb appeal and elevate newly constructed units.

### How many units are likely to be built throughout this pilot program in the City?

- The City has not established expectations for exact numbers of units built through the pilot program at this time. **The success of the program will be determined by the ability to identify any additional barriers to housing development** and ensuring appropriate integration of housing choices into our neighborhoods. However, the timing of the pilot program **takes advantage of part of the 2022 and 2023 construction seasons**. It is expected that development will be underway before the year-long program ends.

### Will this give current homeowners incentive to demolish their homes and build multi-family units?

- Due to the **costs associated with demolition and construction, it is unlikely we will see homes in good condition being demolished** for multi-family development. In addition to the cost of buying the property, demolishing a house can cost between \$15,000 and \$40,000 depending on the property, and that is before taking into account the cost of designing and physically constructing the new building. **New housing provided through the pilot program is expected to occur largely on vacant lots, underutilized lots that have additional land, and dilapidated properties.**

### What can these new housing options look like?

- Housing proposed under the interim zoning pilot **must still meet development regulations**, including building codes, stormwater review, setbacks and height limits, and design standards. In fact, the interim zoning includes design standards specifically included for the scale of housing types within the pilot, to support the residential patterns that create walkable and enjoyable neighborhoods.

### How do I learn about requirements to develop my property through the pilot?

- If you're interested in developing your property under the Building Opportunity and Choices for All pilot program, please [contact the Development Services Center to schedule a Pre-Development Conference](#). This is an optional meeting between a project applicant and City departments and other governmental agencies involved in the plan review process. These meetings help applicants determine project feasibility and provide an overview of requirements to prepare for the application submittal process.

### **What happens if the City identifies needed corrections before the year is up?**

- The City will be tracking development proposed under the pilot program and engaging the public throughout the one-year process. During periodic check points, if are identified areas of the interim zoning ordinance that require adjustment, **City Council will have the opportunity to amend the ordinance to better reflect the intended outcomes of the pilot.**

### **What happens when the pilot program is over?**

- After the pilot program ends, the **City intends to enact permanent code changes to address our housing needs.** The permanent code changes will be based off feedback from the community and lessons learned from the pilot.

### **How can I weigh in on the program?**

- During the year-long pilot program, the city will **actively engage the community** to create permanent housing code changes. The public can expect periodic updates, workshops, requests for feedback, and public hearings, with the first public hearing scheduled for the Monday, **Sept. 12, 2022**, City Council meeting.

### **How can I stay informed about the progress and activity of the program?**

- You can find updates by visiting the [Building Opportunity and Choices for All page](#) on the City's website.