

# CITY OF SPOKANE



## PROCLAMATION

**WHEREAS**, the City of Spokane offers an exceptional quality of life for families seeking a work-life balance, and historically, Spokane's housing market has plugged along at a slow, affordable growth rate that has kept demand relatively manageable and housing attainable; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Association of REALTORS® has determined that Spokane will be among the top 10 housing markets in the United States as a Top-10 Post-COVID Real Estate Market, yet, Spokane County has had a housing inventory reduction of 94% since January of 2010 and is currently suffering from the lowest level of housing supply in history while home sales prices escalated by 47% in that same period of time; and

**WHEREAS**, as home prices continue to escalate at record levels, more and more buyers are being squeezed out of the marketplace, especially for those seeking to buy their first home or transition down to a smaller home; and

**WHEREAS**, Spokane City's housing stock mostly consists of single-family detached homes and lacks housing diversity, specifically, Spokane has a low supply of middle housing (town homes, triplexes, and duplexes) which is a critical need among various homeowners in various stages of homeownership; and

**WHEREAS**, Spokane County's apartment vacancy rates have been declining gradually since 2018, and as of March 2021, are at an all-time low of just 0.6%, which has prompted an unprecedented rise in rental rates during a time when many tenants are seeing a decrease in wages due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

**WHEREAS**, Washington State Governor Jay Inslee declared an eviction moratorium on March 18, 2020 in response to the state of emergency due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and following extensions, the state-wide moratorium expired on June 30, 2021, placing significant stress on a large number of tenants who have fallen behind on rent payments; and

**WHEREAS**, a key initiative of my administration is ensuring there are a variety of housing types in sufficient quantity that are safe and affordable for all income levels to meet the diverse housing needs of current and future residents; and

**WHEREAS**, the City of Spokane has developed a Housing Action Plan to consider actions that will promote greater housing diversity, affordability, and access and providing guidance for City staff, elected officials, and decision-makers; and

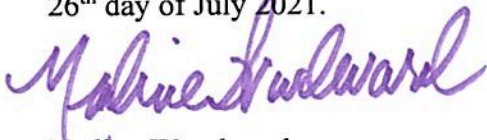
**WHEREAS**, as part of the plan to address housing and affordability issues, the City will examine historical context that has contributed to patterns of inequity and ensure that all new strategies, policies, and practices are aligned to reduce inequality and build an inclusive housing market; and

**WHEREAS**, it is critical to maximize the effectiveness of scarce public resources in improving housing opportunities throughout the region with coordination and management programs across jurisdictional boundaries:

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Nadine Woodward, Mayor of the City of Spokane, on behalf of the citizens of Spokane, do hereby proclaim that there exists a housing emergency and direct the City to pursue the actions and recommendations as outlined in the attached addendums in accordance with the following goals.

- Explore and expand allowed housing types to encourage missing middle housing through Spokane's neighborhoods
- Reduce overall development costs and target efforts to increase the development of affordable housing through the City
- Shorten the development cycle and reduce municipal barriers
- Keep vulnerable populations housed

I, Nadine Woodward, Mayor of Spokane,  
do hereunto set my hand and  
cause the seal of the City of Spokane  
to be affixed this  
26<sup>th</sup> day of July 2021.

  
Nadine Woodward  
Mayor



## ADDENDUM TO PROCLAMATION ADDRESSING HOUSING EMERGENCY

The following priority actions to address the current housing emergency are hereby proclaimed, with the effect of prioritizing City resources to rapidly achieve the actions set forth. The actions and recommendations below can be reasonably achieved this calendar year. This addendum is compiled from and supported by complimentary plans, policy recommendations, and experts, such as the Housing Action Plan, the City Council's Resolution Address Housing and Homelessness, as well as the Mayor's Advisory Council on Housing. This addendum will be supplemented with additional recommendations and actions as the various stakeholders evaluate and consider subsequent response strategies to meet this fast-moving crisis.

### Section 1: Administrative Actions Ordered by the Mayor to Address the Housing Emergency

- a. Proclaim a Municipal Housing Emergency
- b. Reduce the plan review timeline for residential projects from 6 weeks (current) to 2 weeks by September 30.
- c. Prioritize hiring, where able within the Civil Service process and not to the detriment of public safety hiring needs, where current vacancies may negatively impact the City's work on delivering the work outlined in this addendum.
- d. Expand the use of consultants, and seek additional appropriations as necessary, to augment Development Services staff to meet the record amount of development and building activity.
- e. Develop a Commercial Building Conversion (Adaptive Reuse) framework that streamlines and incentivizes the transformation of office and commercial spaces into residential and mixed-use, and recommend policy or appropriation actions that would accelerate this work.
- f. Develop a City Utility bill (Water, Wastewater, Solid Waste) relief program targeted at COVID impacted residents and recommend sufficient appropriations for 2021 operations. (need to highlight: shutoffs, COVID catchup)
- g. Develop new / refresh existing incentive programs funds in the 2021 budget and deploy development incentives targeted at commercial building conversion, catalytic residential projects, and preservation through re-use of historic buildings. Request additional appropriation as needed.
- h. Engage Neighborhood Councils and the Community Assembly to ensure frequent and robust communication on housing and development needs in the community.
- i. Accelerate actions that lead to the creation of a land trust or land bank and, if so required, advocate for actions and/or funding in support of a vetted partner-owned and operated proposal.



- j. Develop and deploy locally appropriate strategies that promote the Single Family Tax Exemption program.
- k. Publish Development Toolkits and provide enhanced concierge service in support of ADU's, Pocket Residential, and Infill Housing programs.
- l. Develop a scope of work and resource plan to inform the 2022 budget process, which if funded, will result in the generation of a annual housing report.
- m. Continue work on implementing programs to leverage local affordable housing funds (aka 1590, 1406) efficiently, transparently, and aligned to policy objectives.
- n. Engage stakeholders to evaluate MFTE program expansion in accordance with new options adopted by the state legislature. Evaluation must include policy, financial, and operational analysis and consider the long-tail impacts of revenue deferrals.
- o. Assess perceived and real barriers to those wishing to access City housing programs and develop mitigation strategies, implementation timeline, and resource needs.

Section 2: In concert with the administrative actions directed above, the following are opportunities for Legislative branch action are recommended, in addition to or in support of complimentary Council considerations.

- a. Request sufficient appropriation in the 2021 budget to add two full time employees to Development Services as Permit Coordinators, supporting complex residential and mixed-use projects. Estimated cost: \$220,000 (salary and benefits of 2 employees).
- b. Consider amending SMC 17C "Land Use Standards" to increase the number of attached residential units to greater than two outside of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) with appropriate and complimentary dimensional standards, parking standards, setbacks, site coverage, and frontage requirements in place.
- c. Reduce fee for Simple Short Plats in SMC 8.02.066 to \$250 and make a administrative permit.
- d. Adopt the State standard SEPA categorical exception thresholds for residential and mixed-use standards, as the City's codified standard is more restrictive than the state recommendation.
- e. Appropriate sufficient program funds in the 2022 budget to continue/expand 2021 incentive programs and to meet evolving strategic investment needs.
- f. Expand current program MFTE boundaries to include identified sites where targeted infill and increased density aligns with the City's goals.

- g. Amend SMC Section 17C.300 related to Accessory Dwelling Units to permanently or on an interim basis:
  - a. Reduce parking requirements from 1 stall per ADU to none
  - b. Remove the owner-occupancy requirement and related requirement to file a County covenant to that effect.
  - c. Add flexibility into the size and dimensional standards
  - d. Reduce the permit fee from \$650 to \$0 provided that the owner-occupancy requirement is removed (this cost is attributed to the cost of the covenant requirement in (b)).
  - e. Expand permitted zones from current RA – RHD zones to all zones where residential units can be built.
- h. Recommend additional flexibility or eliminate altogether the transitional lot requirements outlined in SMC 17C.110.200.
- i. Explore the use of Interim Zoning Ordinances to achieve immediate goals and objectives, such as allowing duplex's to be constructed on corner lots in the RSF and RSF-C zones and increased densities at transit stops, street frontage requirements.