



Building Opportunity for Housing Phase I

Project Description – Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Department of Planning & Economic Development

The City of Spokane is proposing various amendments to Chapter 3, Land Use of the City’s Comprehensive Plan with the intent of encouraging and easing development of middle housing in Spokane. Pursuant to the findings of the City’s Housing Action Plan, and as called for in Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 36.70A.600, the City intends to amend the Comprehensive Plan to increase the types of housing that may be accommodated and expected in residential land use plan areas throughout the City while accounting for and minimizing impacts to adjacent uses.

These proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan intend to better implement the numerous vision and values statements, policies, and other text already present in the Comprehensive Plan that call for efficiently using existing infrastructure, encouraging infill development, promoting a diversity of housing types and mixture of incomes throughout all parts of the City. The proposal intends to accomplish this by shifting the focus from a single housing type (detached single-family houses) to acknowledging that multiple housing types are appropriate in a low intensity neighborhood in a way that compliments, not disrupts, existing neighborhood communities. These efforts include language making it clear that “middle housing types,” those that incorporate up to six housing units per lot, are appropriate in low intensity neighborhoods and can integrate well into existing neighborhoods. Finally, the proposal intends to introduce guidance for the interpretation of the Land Use Plan Map to clarify the relationship between land use categories in the Comprehensive Plan and the City’s Zoning Map, ultimately allowing some choice and variation in zoning districts within a given residential Land Use Plan Map designation.

More specifically, the City of Spokane proposes to amend the text of Chapter 3, Land Use, as follows:

- 1) Update language in multiple value statements in section 3.2, Vision and Values, clarifying that a range of densities in every part of the city is important and should be considered, along with efforts to minimize incompatibility between existing and future uses. Also, changes would replace the term “single-family residential” and clarify that areas formerly designated as “single-family residential” include multiple home types and are not limited to single-unit, detached houses.
- 2) Update language for Policy LU 1.3 changing the title from “Single Family Residential” to “Low Intensity Residential,” making it clear that low intensity residential includes middle housing types and outlining topics which should be considered during any future land use or zoning changes that might increase the intensity of a given residential area in the city (e.g. adjacent to arterials, along transit lines, within the vicinity of Centers and Corridors, etc.).
- 3) Update language for Policy LU 1.4, changing the title from “Higher Density Residential” to “Higher Intensity Residential,” making it clear that a range of intensities in this area are acceptable, moving middle housing types from the discussion to Policy LU 1.3 where they are more appropriately discussed while leaving the door open for middle housing uses to be placed in higher intensity residential areas as well as low intensity.

- 4) Make other minor language changes throughout Chapter 3 to accommodate and ensure consistency with the updated land use descriptions and the allowance of middle housing types within lower intensity uses.
- 5) Update language for Section 3.4, Description of Land Use Designations, eliminating the density-based residential categories (Residential 4-10, Residential 10-20, Residential 15-30, Residential 15+) and replacing them with Low Intensity Residential, Moderate Intensity Residential, and High Intensity Residential and indicating that more than one zoning designation may be appropriate within those land use areas.
- 6) Update Map LU-1, Land Use Plan Map, to reclassify the various Land Uses with their new labels as described in Section 3.4, combining R 4-10 and R 10-20 into “Low Intensity Residential, R 15-30 into “Moderate Intensity Residential,” and R15+ into “High Intensity Residential.”