



Residential Development Code Initiatives Duplexes in Residential Zones

Possible changes related to **duplexes in Residential Single-Family (RSF) zones** were suggested in the Spokane [Housing Action Plan \(HAP\)](#) Strategy A1 (pp. 22-24); [HAP Implementation Plan](#) Strategy III.3; and [Housing Emergency Proclamation](#) Action Item 2.i.

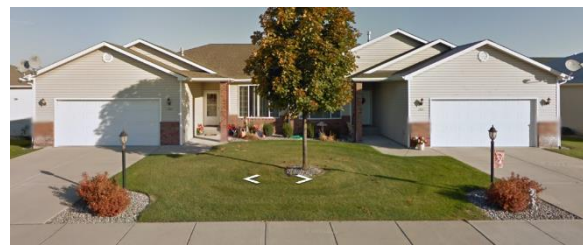
Topic	Duplexes in Residential Single-Family zones
Code	SMC Section 17C.110.115 and Section 17C.110.310
Proposed Changes	Permit duplexes in RSF and RSF-C zones; update design standards

What is a duplex?

A duplex is a building that contains two separate dwelling units, contained on one lot. The units share a common wall or common floor/ceiling, and they are also referred to as stacked flats or side-by-side houses. Duplexes, and other -plexes, differ from attached housing like townhomes or rowhouses which are separate units on individual lots that share common walls and lot lines.



Side-by-side duplex with rear vehicle access



Duplex example, front vehicle access | Google

How will this change the character of my neighborhood?

Changes to neighborhoods would be dependent on developers constructing duplexes on undeveloped lots, renovating existing housing stock to create two units, or redeveloping lots with duplexes. Effects to Spokane neighborhoods may be minor, partially due to lag between code changes and the construction of units, but more importantly because a duplex will be converted from an existing single-family home or

built new with design features to promote scale and function similar to a single-family home.

What are the benefits of duplexes for Spokane’s housing supply?

Across the US there is growing interest in smaller homes, walkable neighborhoods, multi-generational living, aging in place, and shorter commutes. Yet, this growing demand for walkable housing isn’t limit to living in a downtown. Walkability is a spectrum ranging from the more dense downtown, to less intense density around commercial centers, and “neighborhood living” in areas like Perry, Monroe, and Garland. Neighborhood living is the ability to enjoy amenities—parks and trail connections, transit stops, schools, and neighborhood-scale retail and commercial— within walking distance of the home in your unique Spokane neighborhood.

Gently increasing the density of residential zones in Spokane increases housing choice, both in the types and location of housing, and also in affordability. And there are economic ripple effects. More housing creates activity in other areas: hardware and nursery purchases, work for skilled trades like electricians or plumbers, and more rooftops means more customers to support Spokane businesses. In addition, increasing the density of housing utilizes tax dollars more efficiently, plus added customers increase sales tax revenue.

Where we live is about more than just shelter. Our location connects us with family, friends, community, transportation, employment and more. When there are no housing options we can afford in the neighborhood we want to live in, we lose out on those opportunities. Increasing housing options in residential zones increases opportunities for all residents.



Duplex example with garage, driveway and main entrances on opposite streets.

How are they currently regulated in Spokane?

With rare exceptions on lots adjacent to other zones, duplexes are currently not permitted in the RSF, or RSF-C zoning districts. Where they are permitted, and in other districts, here’s a brief overview of the development standards:

- A duplex must meet the lot development standards for the base zone (see [Table 17C.110-3](#)).

Zoom into
[Map Spokane](#)
for your
zoning
district.

- The maximum height is limited in the same way as a single-family unit.
- Design standards ensure the unit is compatible with the character of the existing neighborhood (see [Section 17C.110.310\(E\)](#) SMC).

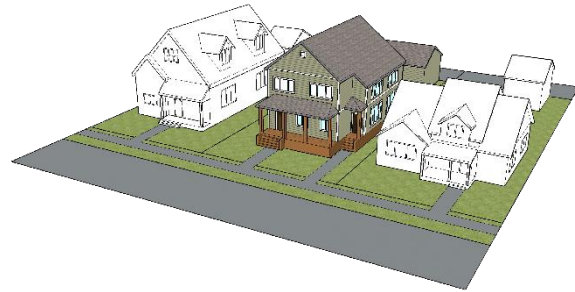
What are the proposed changes to regulations?

The City is proposing updates to design standards for duplexes to ensure they fit into a detached single-family area. Additionally, the City is evaluating how to integrate duplexes as permitted uses into the Residential Single-Family (RSF) and RSF-Compact zoning districts.

Draft text is being developed and will be added at the end of this document.



Side driveway by duplex with detached garage



Duplex accessing alley, with single-family design elements

How can I comment on the proposed changes?

You can email public comment to developmentcode@spokanecity.org, or contact the project staff listed on the project webpage. Members of the public are encouraged to attend the upcoming open house on the proposed text amendment, and also to testify at public hearings both before Plan Commission and City Council.

Virtual Open House

January 25, 2022

12:00 – 1:15 p.m.

Virtual and call in info to be announced

January 27, 2022

4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Virtual and call in info to be announced

Please check back on the [project webpage](#) for additional information and more public meeting dates once they are scheduled.