

# Housing Related Policies Comprehensive Plan

Adopted March 5, 2018

*The following policies support the proposed amendments to the Municipal Code.*

## Land Use Element

The Land Use Element represents the community's policy plan for growth and change over the next 20 years.

### **Goal LU-4: Distribution of Land Uses**

The location of different land uses and housing densities shall reflect an efficient distribution of public infrastructure and accommodate future growth projections.

- LU-4.4** Higher density development is permitted in single family neighborhoods when integrated in a sensitive manner.
- LU - 4.6** A mix of land uses is supported where they are sensitively integrated including, for example, home occupations in residential areas, higher residential densities adjacent to lower residential densities, and combined retail/residential uses in the commercial areas.
- LU-4.8** Support innovative strategies that facilitate the development of a range of affordable housing options. Such strategies may include clustered residential developments, density bonuses for developments that include "affordable" units/lots, accessory dwelling units, cottage housing developments, multi-family as a conditional use in single family neighborhoods, and inclusionary zoning.
- LU-4.15** Higher density development is permitted in multi-family neighborhoods when integrated in a sensitive manner.

### **Goal LU-10: - History and Aesthetics**

Encourage the protection of special historic, architectural, aesthetic, and cultural resources through the designation of historic landmarks and districts and the adoption of appropriate incentives, and ensure that new development contributes aesthetically to the overall village character. Avoid negatively impacting archeological features.

- LU-10.4** Design new commercial development/redevelopment, multi-family, and other development in a manner that is compatible with the style of existing buildings, and that ensures aesthetically pleasing projects.



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## Housing Element

The Housing Element guides decisions making regarding housing issues in Langley, discusses current trends and introduces policies to address key initiatives for increased housing diversity and affordability.

### **Goal H-1: Innovative and Diverse Housing**

Work to provide a mix of housing in Langley and facilitate residential development in the form of single-family homes, duplexes, condominiums, apartments, townhouses, tiny homes, ADU's, housing that allows people to age in place, and other innovative forms of housing.

**H- 1.1** Include more flexible development standards to increase housing diversity and affordability including but not limited to:

- Reducing minimum lot sizes
- Increasing density on single family zoned lots
- Reducing lot lines to zero for attached multi-family housing
- Reducing maximum lot size for clustering
- Increasing lot coverage for small lots, accessory dwelling units, and multi-family lots
- Reducing setbacks
- Narrowing street widths
- Permitting shared or common parking between dwellings.

**H – 1.2** Encourage developers to design and build innovative housing options including creative housing alternatives for individuals at each stage of life.

**H – 1.3** Actively promote the 'missing middle' housing typology that includes row housing, townhouses and small-scale apartments.



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The Housing Element this element concentrates on describing the baseline for housing in 2016, discusses current trends in demographics, and introduces strategies to address key initiatives for increased diversity and affordability.

### **Goal H-2: Character and Density**

Seek opportunities to ensure that various types and densities of housing are permitted in sufficient numbers to meet projected housing needs, while maintaining the character of existing neighborhoods.

- H – 2.1**      **Expand the areas where multi-family residential housing is permitted.**
- H- 2.2**      **Encourage attached and detached ADUs in residential zones provided character, scale, and appearance are consistent with the existing dwelling unit.**
- H – 2.3**      **Encourage the distribution of various housing types throughout the city to provide a wide variety of neighborhood settings and avoid undue concentration in particular neighborhoods.**
- H – 2.4**      **Ensure that new development is sensitive to and reinforces the design character of existing neighborhoods, promotes the pedestrian orientation of neighborhood streets, and encourages street and development patterns that promote social interaction as well as privacy.**
- H – 2.5**      **Continue the conservation of housing through public investment in the infrastructure needed to service the community (water, sewer, storm drainage, streets, and pathways) and in development regulations necessary to prevent incompatible land uses.**



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### **Goal H-4: Housing Affordability**

Enable the opportunity for affordable housing for a diversity of residents within the city of Langley.

- H – 4.1** Explore innovative techniques that enable increased housing affordability including but not limited to long term rentals of accessory dwelling units (ADU), a housing trust fund, inclusionary zoning, density bonuses, smaller lot size, elimination of minimum lot size with appropriate open space, expediting permit processing, exempting Real Estate Excise Taxes (REET) to qualified sellers; incentives such as reduced or waived connection fees and reduced parking requirements and other provisions to be determined.
- H – 4.2** Work with Island County and other local governments to develop a regional housing trust fund.
- H – 4.3** Explore opportunities and mechanisms for workforce housing for residents with incomes between 80% to 120% of Area Median Income (AMI).
- H – 4.4** Encourage new Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) (both attached and detached) that provide long term rentals using incentives such as reduced connection fees and parking requirements, density bonuses, and permitting more than one ADU on the property that must be served by sewer.
- H – 4.5** Study the feasibility of developing an amnesty program to allow owners to regularize existing non-permitted ADU's (both attached and detached).
- H – 4.6** Consider establishing an inventory of old buildings that could be converted into affordable housing.



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### **Goal H-4: Housing Affordability**

Enable the opportunity for affordable housing for a diversity of residents within the city of Langley.

- H – 4.7**      **Work to preserve the existing affordable housing stock.**
  
- H – 4.8**      **Work with and support the efforts of nonprofit and governmental housing organizations, such as the Housing Authority of Island County, Saratoga Community Housing, and Habitat for Humanity to develop affordable housing.**
  
- H - 4.9**      **Review the impacts that vacation rentals (Air B&B, VRBO, etc) may be having on long term rentals and housing affordability and if necessary, develop a strategy in response.**
  
- H- 4.10**      **Allow increased density on existing affordable housing sites.**



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## **Sustainability Element**

The Sustainability Element ensures that all elements of the built environment, land use, transportation, housing, energy and infrastructure work together to provide sustainable green places for living, working and recreation, with a high quality of life.

### **GOAL 5 – 8 Livable Built Environments**

Ensure that all elements of the built environment, land use, transportation, housing, energy and infrastructure work together to provide sustainable green places for living, working and recreation, with a high quality of life.

**S-8.1** Focus development and redevelopment on infill sites to take advantage of existing infrastructure.

**S-8.2** Encourage design standards appropriate to the community context that serve to improve or protect both the function and aesthetic appeal of Langley and that enhance our sense of place.

## **Utilities and Capital Facilities Elements**

Utilities and Capital Facilities elements provides a link between the land use planning policies of the city and the development activities of utility providers, and describes how the various utilities plan to accommodate forecasted growth over the next 20 years.

**UCF – 3.4** The City may establish incentives, including for example reduced connection fees for sewer and water to encourage a mix of housing types and affordability.

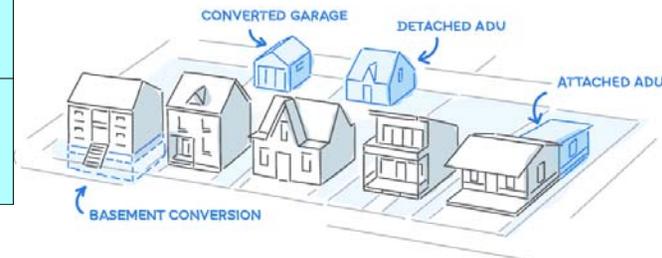


# Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

## 2018 Proposed Code Amendments

ADUs are a second, smaller dwelling units located on the same lot as a single-family house. They may be an internal conversion of a portion of the existing house or garage, added onto the existing house, or a separate detached structure (sometimes called backyard cottages). State law requires that ADUs be permitted in single family zone districts. The table below summarizes the City of Langley’s regulation and proposed changes.

Current Regulation	Proposed Change	Purpose of Change
One ADU allowed per residential lot. Can be either attached or detached.	Two ADUs. One attached and one detached.	Gives homeowners more options. May increase the availability of this type of housing.
Minimum size is 300 SF and maximum size is 1,000 SF.	Reduce minimum size to 150 SF	Clarifies that smaller units can be built and aligns with proposed Tiny Home code.
One parking stall required for ADU as well as parking required for the single-family home.	Remove requirement for one additional parking space for one ADU. But require one additional stall for two ADUs.	Provides greater flexibility and can decrease cost for property owners to build ADUs, which may increase the availability of this type of housing.
Approval process includes notice to neighbors and review by the Design Review Board.	Remove requirement for notice to neighbors and review by the Design Review Board.	Reducing the number of steps for an application may increase the availability of this type of housing. Building a single-family home does not require these steps.
The Code is unclear about allowing ADUs on a lot with a duplex.	Clarify that one ADU is permitted on a lot with an existing duplex.	May increase the availability of this type of housing.



# Boarding House

## 2018 Proposed Code Amendments

Boarding house is a form of shared housing. It is currently permitted but only as a conditional use. Allowing it as a permitted use would enable homes to be rented as a shared living accommodation where individual renters have their own room and share common facilities such as kitchens and/or bathrooms. This use is proposed for long term rental accommodation, i.e. monthly rentals. This is one form of affordable rental housing.



Current Regulation	Proposed Change	Purpose of Change
Permitted as a Conditional Use in NB, RM and all RS zones.	Allow as a permitted use in NB, RM and all RS zones.	Clearly allows people to live in a shared house. May increase the availability of this type of housing.
	Require applications to be subject to Administrative Approval.	Streamlines the process and removes barriers for property owners that want to provide this type of housing.
Only four roomers, lodgers or boarders are permitted.	Remove the number of roomers, lodgers or boarders.	There is no limit on the number of residents living in a single-family home as a 'family*'. Enforcing the numbers of people living in a single-family dwelling unit is almost impossible.
	Clearly state boarding house is only for long-term rentals.	Don't want to create a vacation rental.
	Clearly state sleeping rooms shall not have a kitchen.	The use is intended to be a shared home and self-contained units which changes building code requirements and can increase the costs.

\*Family means an individual or two or more persons customarily living together as a single housekeeping unit and using common cooking facilities.

# Small Accessory Dwellings AKA Tiny Homes

## 2018 Proposed Code Amendments

Langley’s Municipal Code currently does not have a separate definition of small ADUs or tiny homes; neither does the International Building Codes (IBC). The State of Washington permits tiny houses built on trailers with wheels as recreational vehicles. The proposed Code amendments intend to permit permanently-located (on a foundation) tiny houses as accessory dwelling units and in a multi-unit development context.

Proposed Code	Purpose of Change
Define small ADUs/ tiny homes as dwelling unit with a minimum size of 150 SF to less than 300 SF. They must be on a foundation and must be on sewer and water.	Gives homeowners more options. May increase the availability of this type of housing. Clearly require foundations for these units.
Permit a maximum of two tiny homes on a lot with a single-family home and one tiny home on a lot with a duplex provided the lot is 5,000 SF.	Aligns with proposed changes to ADU Code. Gives homeowners more options. May increase the availability of this type of housing.
Require one off-street parking space for two tiny homes as well as parking required for the single-family home.	Aligns with proposed changes to ADU Code. Gives homeowners more options. May increase the availability of this type of housing.
Remove requirement for notice to neighbors and review by the Design Review Board.	Reducing the number of steps for an application may increase the availability of this type of housing. Building a single-family residence or two-person (duplex) residence does not require these steps.



# Small/Tiny Home Multi-Unit Neighborhood

## 2018 Proposed Code Amendments

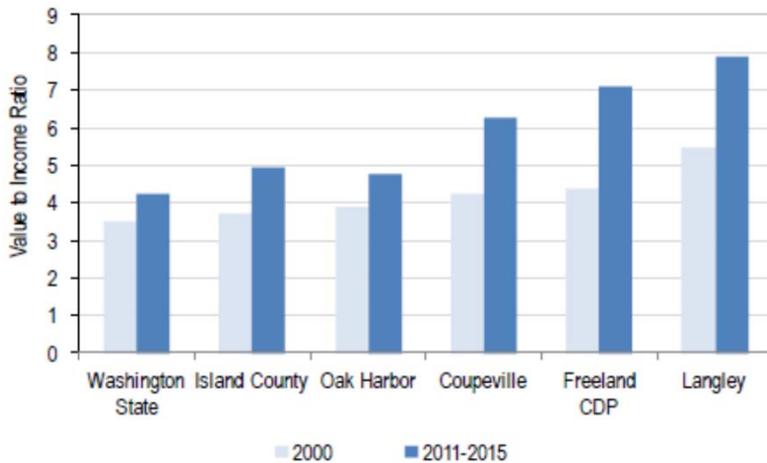
Smaller/Tiny Homes in a multi-unit development. The proposed code is intended to enable small home neighborhoods to be developed in Langley. It has been designed based on the existing cottage home code (Ch. 18.22.180) that was adopted in 1995. All units are required to be built on foundations and connected to sewer and water.



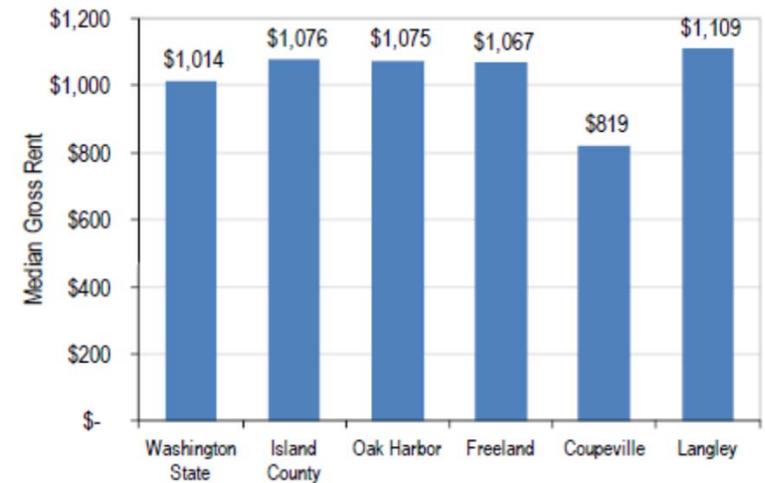
Proposed Code	Purpose of Change
<p>Permit a minimum of 3 to a maximum of 12 tiny homes on one lot.                      1200 SF of land area is required per tiny home                      5000 SF is the minimum lot size for a tiny home multi-unit development.</p>	<p>Gives property owners options to develop a multi-unit development for small homes.                      May increase the availability of this type of housing.</p>
<p>Require one parking space per tiny home.                      For a development with six or more tiny homes require one additional parking stall per six tiny home units.</p>	<p>Smaller units are typically one or two-person households and require fewer parking stalls.                      One-bedroom units require one parking space.</p>
<p>Require 100 SF of usable common open space per unit.</p>	<p>Usable open space is necessary to create a healthy livable neighborhood.</p>
<p>Prohibit short term rentals (less than 30 days) in this type of development.</p>	<p>This use is intended for workers housing not vacation rentals</p>
<p>Clearly allow a single connection to sewer main in street is allowed, with lateral connections to each cottage on-site.</p>	<p>Clarifies requirement. Provides decreased cost for sewer connections in some cases, which may increase availability of this housing type.</p>
<p>Allow in Residential Mixed (RM) and Neighborhood Business (NB) zones as a permitted use.                      Allow in RS zones as a conditional use.</p>	<p>Multi-family developments are permitted in RM and ND zones. Establishes greater oversight for approving this use in a single-family neighborhood.</p>
<p>Require applications to be reviewed by the Design Review Board.</p>	<p>This is consistent with all multi-unit housing developments.</p>

# Langley Housing Affordability

Ratio of Median Housing Value to Median Household Income, Island County, WA State, and Urban Areas, 2000 to 2011-2015



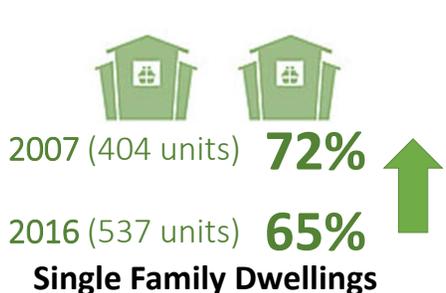
Median Gross Rent, Island County, WA State, and Urban Areas, 2000 to 2011-2015



Since 2000, housing costs in Island County have increased faster than incomes compared to the WA State average. The decrease in housing affordability was greatest in Langley.

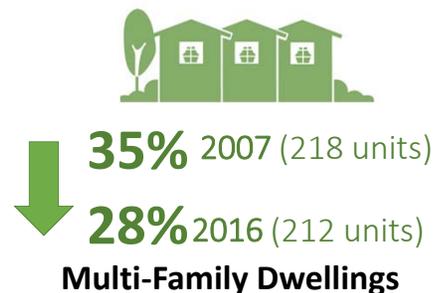
Rent in Island County are higher than the WA State average. Rents are highest in Langley

# Langley Housing By Type

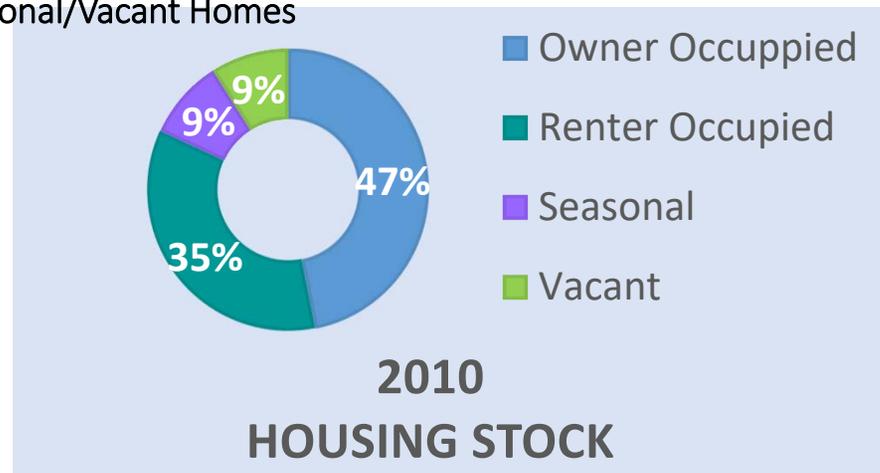
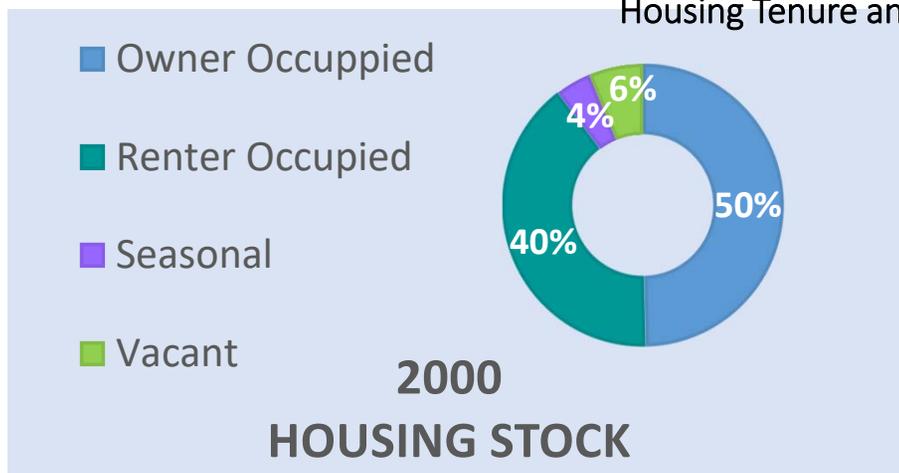


In **Langley** from 2007 to 2016 the number of multi-family housing units **dropped by 7%**

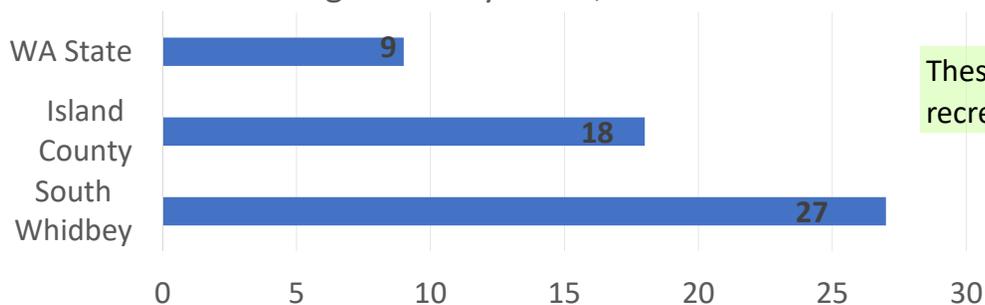
Source: City of Langley Permit Log



## Housing Tenure and Seasonal/Vacant Homes



## Average Vacancy Rates, 2011-2015



These units tend to be used as seasonal, recreational and occasional dwellings.

In Island County just over **one percent** of all housing units are 'for rent' vacancies.