

Zoning Code 2018 Update

You may have heard that there is a new zoning code for the City of Walla Walla. You heard right! City Development Services staff formulated a new Comprehensive Plan that was adopted in June 2018 by City Council.

Our new zoning code which implements the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan was adopted by City Council on December 19, 2018, with an effective date of January 2, 2019.

This document is intended to be a high-level guide to the changes that are outlined fully in Ordinance 2018-53. Please consult City staff or the ordinance for additional detail.

The Changes

- Neighborhood Residential (RN) zone replaces former R-60, R-72, and R-96 zones
 - RN does not have a minimum lot size or lot dimensions
 - RN setbacks are 20 feet from front and rear property lines, 5 feet from either side (these are the same as former R-60 and R-72)
 - RN maximum lot coverage (how much of the lot can be covered with roofed structures, including home, garage, covered porches, sheds, etc) is 50%
 - RN maximum height is 35 feet (no change)
 - RN established a minimum density of 4 units per net acre (minus any critical areas and buffers and right of way to be dedicated)
 - RN allows for the development of: single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhomes, and cottage housing
 - Cottage housing means multiple detached dwelling units that share common areas
 - Cottage homes may not be larger than 1000 square feet
- Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) standards were relaxed
 - Maximum size of 800 square feet (no longer dependent on home size)
 - Removed owner occupancy requirement
 - Removed neighbor comment requirement for detached ADUs
 - ADUs are allowed only for single-family homes
- Multifamily Residential (RM) development potential was increased
 - Established density requirements with a minimum of 20 units per acre and maximum of 75 units per acre
 - Lot coverage for RM increased to 65%
 - Building height for RM increased to 60 feet
- Standalone multifamily development in Highway Commercial (CH) zone was made easier
 - Level II review (administrative) instead of Level III (public hearing)
- Parking code requirements were reduced
 - Bicycle parking requirement increased to ten percent of parking stalls
 - Reductions of the number of required stalls made easier to grant
 - Parking table stall requirements decreased for specific commercial uses

- Residential parking requirements based on specific use (all standards are per unit):
 - 2 stalls for single family residential
 - 2 stalls for duplex
 - 1.5 stalls for multifamily
 - 1 stall for studio apartment
 - 1 stall for ADU
 - 1 stall for cottage home
- Added connectivity requirement for new residential developments
 - Minimum block length is 200 feet, maximum length is 600 feet
 - Maximum block perimeter is 1,400 feet
- Restrictions on use of new cul-de-sacs except when environmental or topographical constraints, existing development patterns, etc preclude street extension
 - When cul-de-sacs are allowed, an access way at the end of the cul-de-sac to provide pedestrian and cyclist access to adjacent developable land is required
 - Maximum length for cul-de-sacs increased to 600 feet
- Private lanes are not allowed for developments of more than 9 lots, may not connect 2 public streets, and may only provide access to 9 units of housing or less
 - Private lanes may be up to 600 feet long
 - Private lanes which access 5 or more units shall provide sidewalks on one side
- Updated the Urban Planned Community zone – mixed use zone (new definitions and requirements rather than using the County’s standards)
- Landscaping requirements clarified
 - Street frontage landscaping required for redevelopments
- Fences on corner lots no longer require a setback on the secondary front yard side
- Adaptive Reuse of Nonresidential Buildings in Residential Zones
 - Limited to major and minor arterials and collector streets
 - Only for existing buildings, not new construction
 - Level II use – no hearing
 - Limited kinds of uses
 - Medical/dental offices
 - Convenience stores
 - Professional offices
 - Retail bakeries/coffee shops
 - Florists
 - Seamstress/tailor/similar

FAQs!

Q: Can I build a duplex? Is this lot big enough or zoned right for a duplex?

A: Yes! Duplexes are allowed in all residential zones. Be sure to meet setback, lot coverage, height, and parking requirements.

Q: Can I have a tiny home?

A: If it is site-built, yes. We do not currently allow for tiny homes built on wheels as they do not meet Washington State Building Codes.

Q: How many units can we put on this lot? How many lots can we split this lot into? What can I do with this lot?

A: It depends! The flexibility of the new zoning code means that it will depend on what will be a good fit for the neighborhood. Minimum density, setbacks, lot coverage, height and parking requirements must be met.