

RCW 36.70A.600 Cities planning under RCW 36.70A.040—Increasing residential building capacity—Housing action plan authorized—Grant assistance. (1) A city planning pursuant to RCW 36.70A.040 is encouraged to take the following actions in order to increase its residential building capacity:

(a) Authorize development in one or more areas of not fewer than five hundred acres that include at least one train station served by commuter rail or light rail with an average of at least fifty residential units per acre that require no more than an average of one on-site parking space per two bedrooms in the portions of multifamily zones that are located within the areas;

(b) Authorize development in one or more areas of not fewer than two hundred acres in cities with a population greater than forty thousand or not fewer than one hundred acres in cities with a population less than forty thousand that include at least one bus stop served by scheduled bus service of at least four times per hour for twelve or more hours per day with an average of at least twenty-five residential units per acre that require no more than an average of one on-site parking space per two bedrooms in portions of the multifamily zones that are located within the areas;

(c) Authorize at least one duplex, triplex, quadplex, sixplex, stacked flat, townhouse, or courtyard apartment on each parcel in one or more zoning districts that permit single-family residences unless a city documents a specific infrastructure of physical constraint that would make this requirement unfeasible for a particular parcel;

(d) Authorize a duplex, triplex, quadplex, sixplex, stacked flat, townhouse, or courtyard apartment on one or more parcels for which they are not currently authorized;

(e) Authorize cluster zoning or lot size averaging in all zoning districts that permit single-family residences;

(f) Adopt a subarea plan pursuant to RCW 43.21C.420;

(g) Adopt a planned action pursuant to RCW 43.21C.440(1)(b)(ii), except that an environmental impact statement pursuant to RCW 43.21C.030 is not required for such an action;

(h) Adopt increases in categorical exemptions pursuant to RCW 43.21C.229 for residential or mixed-use development;

(i) Adopt a form-based code in one or more zoning districts that permit residential uses. "Form-based code" means a land development regulation that uses physical form, rather than separation of use, as the organizing principle for the code;

(j) Authorize a duplex on each corner lot within all zoning districts that permit single-family residences;

(k) Allow for the division or redivision of land into the maximum number of lots through the short subdivision process provided in chapter 58.17 RCW;

(l) Authorize a minimum net density of six dwelling units per acre in all residential zones, where the residential development capacity will increase within the city. For purposes of this subsection, the calculation of net density does not include the square footage of areas that are otherwise prohibited from development, such as critical areas, the area of buffers around critical areas, and the area of roads and similar features;

(m) Create one or more zoning districts of medium density in which individual lots may be no larger than three thousand five hundred square feet and single-family residences may be no larger than one thousand two hundred square feet;

(n) Authorize accessory dwelling units in one or more zoning districts in which they are currently prohibited;

(o) Remove minimum residential parking requirements related to accessory dwelling units;

(p) Remove owner occupancy requirements related to accessory dwelling units;

(q) Adopt new square footage requirements related to accessory dwelling units that are less restrictive than existing square footage requirements related to accessory dwelling units;

(r) Adopt maximum allowable exemption levels in WAC 197-11-800(1) as it existed on June 11, 2020, or such subsequent date as may be provided by the department of ecology by rule, consistent with the purposes of this section;

(s) Adopt standards for administrative approval of final plats pursuant to RCW 58.17.100;

(t) Adopt ordinances authorizing administrative review of preliminary plats pursuant to RCW 58.17.095;

(u) Adopt other permit process improvements where it is demonstrated that the code, development regulation, or ordinance changes will result in a more efficient permit process for customers;

(v) Update use matrices and allowable use tables that eliminate conditional use permits and administrative conditional use permits for all housing types, including single-family homes, townhomes, multifamily housing, low-income housing, and senior housing, but excluding essential public facilities;

(w) Allow off-street parking to compensate for lack of on-street parking when private roads are utilized or a parking demand study shows that less parking is required for the project;

(x) Develop a local program that offers homeowners a combination of financing, design, permitting, or construction support to build accessory dwelling units. A city may condition this program on a requirement to provide the unit for affordable home ownership or rent the accessory dwelling unit for a defined period of time to either tenants in a housing subsidy program as defined in RCW 43.31.605(14) or to tenants whose income is less than eighty percent of the city or county median family income. If the city includes an affordability requirement under the program, it must provide additional incentives, such as:

(i) Density bonuses;

(ii) Height and bulk bonuses;

(iii) Fee waivers or exemptions;

(iv) Parking reductions; or

(v) Expedited permitting; and

(y) Develop a local program that offers homeowners a combination of financing, design, permitting, or construction support to convert a single-family home into a duplex, triplex, or quadplex where those housing types are authorized. A local government may condition this program on a requirement to provide a certain number of units for affordable home ownership or to rent a certain number of the newly created units for a defined period of time to either tenants in a housing subsidy program as defined in RCW 43.31.605(14) or to tenants whose income is less than eighty percent of the city or county median family income. If the city includes an affordability requirement, it must provide additional incentives, such as:

(i) Density bonuses;

(ii) Height and bulk bonuses;

(iii) Fee waivers or exemptions;

(iv) Parking reductions; or

(v) Expedited permitting.

(2) A city planning pursuant to RCW 36.70A.040 may adopt a housing action plan as described in this subsection. The goal of any such housing plan must be to encourage construction of additional affordable and market rate housing in a greater variety of housing types and at prices that are accessible to a greater variety of incomes, including strategies aimed at the for-profit single-family home market. A housing action plan may utilize data compiled pursuant to RCW 36.70A.610. The housing action plan should:

(a) Quantify existing and projected housing needs for all income levels, including extremely low-income households, with documentation of housing and household characteristics, and cost-burdened households;

(b) Develop strategies to increase the supply of housing, and variety of housing types, needed to serve the housing needs identified in (a) of this subsection;

(c) Analyze population and employment trends, with documentation of projections;

(d) Consider strategies to minimize displacement of low-income residents resulting from redevelopment;

(e) Review and evaluate the current housing element adopted pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070, including an evaluation of success in attaining planned housing types and units, achievement of goals and policies, and implementation of the schedule of programs and actions;

(f) Provide for participation and input from community members, community groups, local builders, local realtors, nonprofit housing advocates, and local religious groups; and

(g) Include a schedule of programs and actions to implement the recommendations of the housing action plan.

(3) The adoption of ordinances, development regulations and amendments to such regulations, and other nonproject actions taken by a city to implement the actions specified in subsection (1) of this section, with the exception of the action specified in subsection (1)(f) of this section, are not subject to administrative or judicial appeal under chapter 43.21C RCW.

(4) Any action taken by a city prior to April 1, 2023, to amend its comprehensive plan or adopt or amend ordinances or development regulations, solely to enact provisions under subsection (1) of this section is not subject to legal challenge under this chapter.

(5) In taking action under subsection (1) of this section, cities are encouraged to utilize strategies that increase residential building capacity in areas with frequent transit service and with the transportation and utility infrastructure that supports the additional residential building capacity.

(6) A city that is planning to take at least two actions under subsection (1) of this section, and that action will occur between July 28, 2019, and April 1, 2021, is eligible to apply to the department for planning grant assistance of up to one hundred thousand dollars, subject to the availability of funds appropriated for that purpose. The department shall develop grant criteria to ensure that grant funds awarded are proportionate to the level of effort proposed by a city, and the potential increase in housing supply or regulatory streamlining that could be achieved. Funding may be provided in advance of, and to support, adoption of policies or ordinances consistent with this section. A city can request, and the department may award, more than one hundred thousand dollars for applications

that demonstrate extraordinary potential to increase housing supply or regulatory streamlining.

(7) A city seeking to develop a housing action plan under subsection (2) of this section is eligible to apply to the department for up to one hundred thousand dollars.

(8) The department shall establish grant award amounts under subsections (6) and (7) of this section based on the expected number of cities that will seek grant assistance, to ensure that all cities can receive some level of grant support. If funding capacity allows, the department may consider accepting and funding applications from cities with a population of less than twenty thousand if the actions proposed in the application will create a significant amount of housing capacity or regulatory streamlining and are consistent with the actions in this section.

(9) In implementing chapter 348, Laws of 2019, cities are encouraged to prioritize the creation of affordable, inclusive neighborhoods and to consider the risk of residential displacement, particularly in neighborhoods with communities at high risk of displacement. [2022 c 246 s 1; 2020 c 173 s 1; 2019 c 348 s 1.]