



WASHINGTON GOVERNOR

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Addressing Washington's housing crisis

Washington's housing crisis has squeezed many would-be homeowners and renters out of the market and contributed to our state's homelessness problem. From 2010 to 2019, the United States built fewer detached single-family homes than in any decade since the 1960s. In September, the nationwide home deficit was 3.8 million. From 2000 to 2015, the housing supply in Washington failed to keep pace with growth by about 225,000 units. That is due in large part to most cities in Washington enacting restrictive zoning ordinances. These ordinances drastically limit the areas where duplexes, triplexes and other types of 'middle housing' are allowed, and limit equitable opportunity for homeownership. This means we see more closed-in neighborhoods reserved for only the largest and most expensive housing. According to the Biden administration, local zoning regulations contribute to the racial wealth gap and place unnecessary impediments on lower and moderate-income housing opportunities.

How to increase housing options statewide

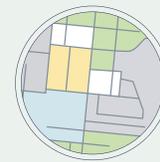
The governor will request a bill in the 2022 legislative session to increase housing options in our cities and help more middle- and low-income Washingtonians access homes in the communities where they work.

Sponsored by Rep. Jessica Bateman and Sen. Mona Das, this legislation focuses on creating more 'middle housing' and is one of the most impactful things we can do to restore housing supply in Washington. Not only will this concept create more opportunities for renters, but it will also help people who might never otherwise have the chance to buy a home.

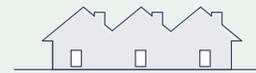
More middle housing will make it easier for seniors to age in place, give workers the chance to live in the communities they serve, cut carbon emissions by encouraging efficient development and transportation, and help dismantle local land-use and zoning laws rooted in inequity and racism.



From 2000 to 2015, the housing supply in Washington failed to keep pace with growth by about 225,000 units.



Restrictive zoning ordinances drastically limit areas where middle housing is allowed, and limit equitable opportunity for homeownership.



More housing options will help middle- and low-income Washingtonians access homes and restore the housing supply.

What is middle housing?

Middle housing is an umbrella term to describe the housing types and needs for aging populations, first-time homebuyers, middle- and low-income populations who can't afford to live where they work, and other similar individuals. Examples of middle housing types include duplexes, triplexes, quads, sixplexes, stacked flats, townhouses and courtyard apartments.

The legislation would prevent cities from blocking middle housing in certain areas. It would mainly affect cities with a population above 20,000 whose local transit services meet a certain threshold. Under the legislation, local zoning laws would be required to allow middle housing within one-half mile of major transit stops in those cities, and fourplexes, triplexes, and duplexes could be built on most other lots throughout the city. Cities with a population above 10,000 would also have to allow duplexes to be built on most lots.

The legislation requires cities to take certain actions, it gives them flexibility with local siting and design, it offers cities additional time and other options to implement the law (if necessary), and it directs the agency to provide technical assistance to cities as they implement new requirements.