

Memo

DATE: April 23, 2019

TO: Ashland Planning Commission and Housing and Human Services Commission
Joint Study Session

FROM: Brandon Goldman, Senior Planner

RE: Ashland Housing Strategy Implementation Plan

In 2018 participating Regional Problem Solving (RPS) jurisdictions within the Rogue Valley examined local regulatory barriers and potential incentives to address needed housing. As part of this regional effort the Ashland Housing Strategies was drafted by ECONorthwest after working with City planning and housing staff to review our land use code and existing housing programs. The Ashland Housing Strategies document was presented to the Housing & Human Services Commission on [November 15, 2018](#), and to the Planning Commission on [November 27, 2018](#). This initial document identified several potential actions and regulatory reforms to be considered to address the following:

- Improve the efficiency of residential land use by increasing the concentration of housing under certain circumstances,
- Increase opportunity for development of housing types that are comparatively affordable, such as missing middle housing types (such as duplexes, townhouses, cottage housing, or garden apartments)
- Increase land use efficiency and provide opportunities for development of comparatively affordable housing.

To further evaluate the Ashland Housing Strategies, the City's Planning Division was fortunate to receive a technical assistance grant from the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD). The City Council approved a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with DLCD in October of 2018 to work with ECONorthwest to analyze and adopt a housing strategy implementation plan to facilitate the provision of needed housing within the community. In recognition of Ashland's need for multi-family rental housing the scope of work outlined in the MOU focused on those specific actions that encourage the development of new multifamily units through identifying barriers in the land use ordinance as well as considering other incentives.

Specifically, the DLCD technical assistance grant enabled the City and ECONorthwest to undertake the following:

- Conduct a code audit and evaluation of the impacts of potential increases to maximum residential density, building height and lot coverage, and potential decreases to parking requirements for multifamily housing types.
- Evaluate financial returns of for-sale versus rental housing to understand the market conditions necessary to facilitate production of rental housing.



- Evaluate the potential impact of the multiple-unit limited tax exemption program on the development feasibility of higher density rental housing types.
- Review the impact of Ashland's annexation policies and approval standards on multi-family residential land supply within the City Limits.
- Develop recommendations for code amendments that are most likely to be effective in both removing obstacles and identifying incentives to promote the construction of multifamily rental housing in R-2, R-3 and other multi-family zones.

The Ashland Housing Strategy Implementation Plan presented to the commissions this evening addresses each of the above stated objectives. ECONorthwest has completed a draft housing strategy implementation plan that provides an analysis of Ashland's unique housing market, an analysis of existing multifamily development standards, and explores tax abatement strategies available to promote the development of multifamily housing. The draft Ashland Housing Strategy Implementation Plan further provides preliminary recommendations that the City may consider as part of a legislative process. These recommendations (pg 36-38) outline specific amendments to existing development standards in multi-family zones (R-2, R-3), and discuss financial incentives through partial tax exemptions for multi-family housing development.

The draft Ashland Housing Strategy Implementation Plan will be presented to the City Council at a study session on May 6th, 2019. Housing & Human Services Commission and Planning Commission comments on the draft implementation plan will be relayed to the City Council at this upcoming study session. Following these study sessions, and in consideration of Commission and Council discussions, ECONorthwest will complete the final Ashland Housing Implementation Plan.

Any future amendments to the development code will be processed through a separate legislative adoption process including study sessions before the Planning and Housing & Human Services Commissions, public outreach, public notices, and ultimately public hearings for adoption of an ordinance and or resolution.

