

Spokane Countywide Planning Policies: Housing Affordability

The key to providing affordable housing stock is to **allow the construction of smaller homes on smaller lots**. This is a simple concept that has been lost in the discussion of affordability of housing. Most development codes in Spokane County jurisdictions have minimum lot size and dimensional standards that place serious limitations on the ability to develop smaller homes and subdivide small lots. It is not sufficient to simply allow duplex, triplex or four plex homes on a lot. This approach will result in most of these homes being rentals. Home ownership requires the creation of subdivided lots.

It is very important that affordable homes options include homeownership and not just rentals. By opening homeownership options, you are also able to better engage the private sector in the construction of homes affordable to a much wider economic range. Our experience is the private sector can build homes at a much lower cost than the public and nonprofit sector.

Our recommendation for improving infill and home ownership housing affordability would be to include the following housing policies:

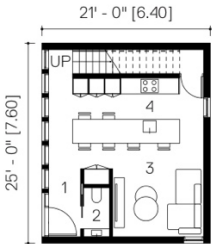
1. **Development codes should eliminate minimum lot sizes to allow the construction of smaller homes.** *Comment: A two-bedroom two bath home can have a footprint of about 500 SF. These homes can be detached or in the form of attached homes on individual lots. See attached exhibits.*
2. **Development Codes should eliminate the requirement of frontage on public streets.** *Comment: Small homes on small lots can be clustered and access provided by alleys or private drives where required. A requirement for street frontage for every home is a primary cost factor. See attached exhibits.*
3. **Development codes should eliminate site coverage and other dimensional standards that limit flexible housing design.** *Comment: Development can be controlled by the permitted density of the zone and allow flexibility in the layout and clustering of homes on a parcel.*
4. **Development codes should eliminate or significantly reduce parking requirements in residential zones.** *Comment: Parking can significantly increase the cost of housing development. Parking needs for a project are best addressed by the market not regulatory standards. Minimizing parking opens the door to housing affordability under many circumstances.*
5. **Development codes should include a simplified administrative process (not requiring a public hearing or notice) for infill development short plats.** *Comment: The State RCW 58.17.060 permits simplified process for short plats. This is very important to the encouragement of home ownership housing options. The current processes are complicated and expensive and play a significant role in suppressing affordable home ownership.*

By addressing lot size and dimensional standards opportunity is created for a wide range of flexible and creative housing options in all residential zones. The attached exhibits illustrate some of the possibilities that are currently not available in most jurisdictions in Spokane County.

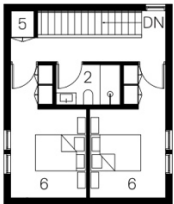
We offer the follow Exhibits to show what is possible is these recommendations are adopted.

Exhibit 1: Small 2 Bedroom Home

Floor Plans



Level 1



Level 2

Legend:

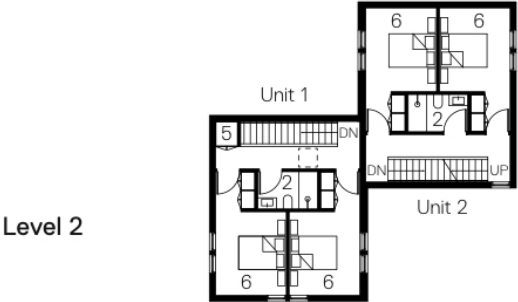
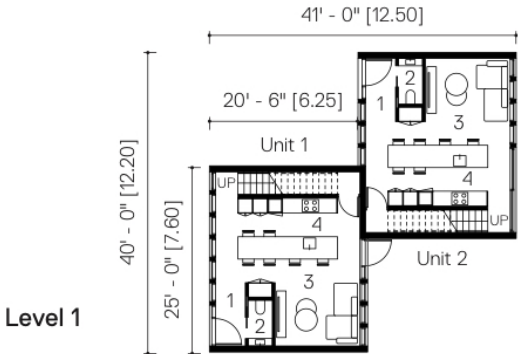
- 1. Entry
- 2. Washroom
- 3. Living Room
- 4. Kitchen/
Dining
- 5. Laundry
- 6. Bedroom



Typical Elevations



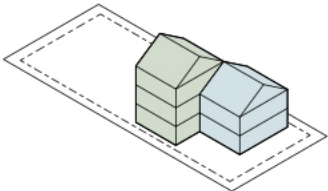
Exhibit 2: Small Home Clustered as Duplex



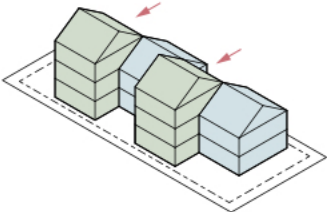
Duplex Elevation



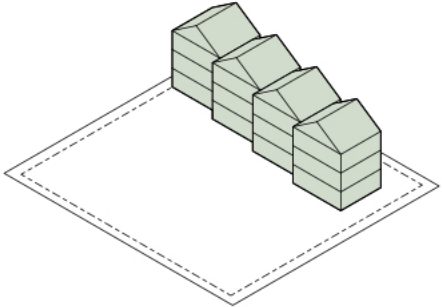
Exhibit 3: Small Homes Clustered at Townhomes



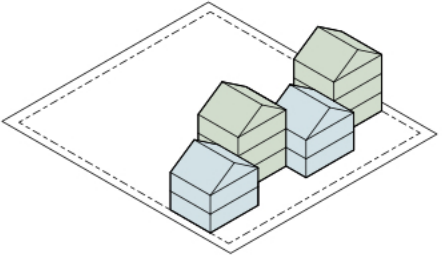
Offsetting the Building Blocks past one-another allows the configuration to suit a wide variety of site widths.



Staggering the Building Blocks creates a garden condition, where each unit gains a private courtyard.



Rotating a group of Building Blocks 90 degrees creates a bar scheme down the length of the site. The increased side-yard dimension allows greater flexibility in window options.



On larger sites, the Building Blocks can be lined up the width of the site to create a four-unit townhouse.

Townhome Elevations

