



**CITY OF BLACK DIAMOND
PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA
May 7, 2024
Council Chambers, 25510 Lawson St., Black Diamond**

THIS IS OFFERED AS A HYBRID MEETING AND MAY BE ATTENDED IN PERSON AT THE ABOVE NOTED ADDRESS OR BY JOINING VIRTUAL/TELEPHONICALLY. CALL IN AND JOINING INFORMATION FOLLOWS:

Zoom link to join meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/4254157187?pwd=RE9OV0VoU1RFc3psSHdjem9mMk9hdz09>

Meeting ID: 425 415 7187

Password: PC

Telephone dial in options:

+1 206 337 9723 US (Seattle)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 425 415 7187

Password: 941820

6:00 P.M. - CALL TO ORDER, FLAG SALUTE, AND ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- 1) Planning Commission Meeting of April 9, 2024

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Persons wishing to address the Planning Commission regarding items of new business are encouraged to do so at this time. Please use the "raise your hand" feature and once recognized by the Chair, you may unmute and state your name and city for the record. Please limit your comments to 3 minutes. For those dialing in, please press *9 to raise your hand and *6 to unmute yourself.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

STUDY/WORK SESSION:

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

- 2) Draft Introduction Element for the 2024 Comprehensive Plan
- 3) Survey Results with updated Word Clouds
- 4) Middle Housing Options

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT REPORT:

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

ADJOURNMENT:



CITY OF BLACK DIAMOND
PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 9, 2024, 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER, FLAG SALUTE, ROLL CALL

Chairperson Morgan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Present: Commissioner Steve Jensen
Commissioner Knut Syversen via Zoom
Commissioner Pam McCain
Commissioner Darcey Peterson
Chair/Commissioner Carol Morgan
Commissioner John Olson via Zoom
Excused: Commissioner Kelley Sauskojus
Staff: Community Development Director, Mona Davis
Deputy City Clerk, Carina Thornquist
IT Staff, Jake Kapsandy

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1) Regular Planning Commission Meeting of March 12, 2024 -

There were no changes to the March 12, 2024 minutes and they were approved as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT - None
PUBLIC HEARING - None
STUDY/WORK SESSION - None
UNFINISHED BUSINESS -

2) Draft Updated Sign Code -

Director Davis introduced Andrew Love and Wayne Carlson from AHBL. Mr. Love proceeded to give a PowerPoint presentation and went over the memo in the packet.

The highlights from the presentation were as follows:

- Do pole signs belong in Black Diamond?
- What signs to allow in each zone
- Illumination preferences
- Potential amortization

Director Davis stated that they would like to hear from stakeholders at a future meeting; most likely the end of April through early June. She would like to give an update at the June meeting.

Extensive back and forth discussion between the Commissioners and Director Davis took place.

NEW BUSINESS - none

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT REPORT -

Director Davis reported on the following items:

- Staff are still working through the 2024 Comprehensive Plan Work Schedule, which includes other items that will come before the Planning Commission this year. In addition to completing the periodic update to the Comprehensive Plan, we will also be updating development regulations necessary to comply with the goals and policies, particularly around middle housing regulations. Continuation of work on the sign code, update the zoning code around cannabis regulations and Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).
- A Formal Code Interpretation for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) was submitted to the city and went out for public noticing in February; Council adopted an emergency moratorium on 2/15 and held public hearings on 3/7 and 3/21 to take public comment and hear a presentation by the applicant. There will be a joint meeting/work session with City Council on 5/9.
- Director Davis gave a reminder of the April 30th Open House at the community gym which is to engage our community and provide updates on the draft Comprehensive Plan. This meeting will focus on the housing element, as well as the Future Land Use Map in the Comprehensive Plan, and the Zoning Map. Staff are working to launch a press release and social media to help engage our community and increase public participation.
- The transportation element of the Comp Plan is scheduled for the May meeting.
- On Friday, April 5th, there was a blessing of the old aid car as it returns into service. Director Davis also attended the ribbon cutting at Rolling Smoke BBQ restaurant.
- Director Davis advised that Roberts Dr. will be closed starting on 5/6 which is on the city's website.
- Public Works is working on getting the dock construction started at the Lake Sawyer Boat Launch Park as the contract was awarded at Council last week. The goal is to hopefully have it ready before Memorial Day holiday.

- The department has numerous project reviews in process.
- The position of Senior Planner remains unfilled. In addition, one of the permit technicians, Danielle, has resigned.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

ADJOURNMENT -

Commissioner McCain moved to adjourn, **second** Commissioner Jensen **Vote**, motion **passed** 6 - 0. Meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

These minutes were respectively recorded by Carina Thornquist, Deputy City Clerk

ATTEST:

Carol Morgan, Chairperson

Carina Thornquist, Planning
Commission Secretary

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Black Diamond is a beautiful and active city in the Puget Sound area. The City lies in the heart of the Green River region of south King County, Washington, about 25 miles from Seattle, as the crow flies. The picturesque city is surrounded by forested hills, mountain views, and multiple streams and lakes. Over the decades, Black Diamond has transformed from an industrious mining town to a growing city with a rich history and strong community identity.

Originally inhabited by the Bəqəlšut of the Coast Salish People, this region was defined by its thriving fish stocks and the aroma of smokehouses.¹ The late 1800s brought about a seismic shift when Black Diamond was developed to operate as a company coal town for almost fifty years. In the 1930s, its owner, the Pacific Coast Coal Company deeded the land and housing and gave the water system and roads to the community. By the early 1950s, the Pacific Coast Coal Company's remaining land holdings were acquired by the Palmer Coking Coal Company. Much of this land has since been retained for mining and investment purposes. The City of Black Diamond incorporated on January 20, 1959.

Over the years, the city's size and population have grown through several annexations and the community has focused on preserving many natural features and amenities. Significant growth is anticipated over the next twenty years. Black Diamond residents, together with stakeholders and other supporters, have affirmed they wish to continue to ensure that quality of life is maintained and enhanced, the future Vision and goals are upheld, and local government will continue to operate in a financially sound and responsible manner.

The Black Diamond Comprehensive Plan is founded on several key planning concepts to achieve the City's Vision. The Plan embodies a holistic approach to support sustainable growth and development by preserving open space, and protecting quality habitat including riparian corridors and wetlands when determining lands that are appropriate for development at different intensities.

1.1 Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

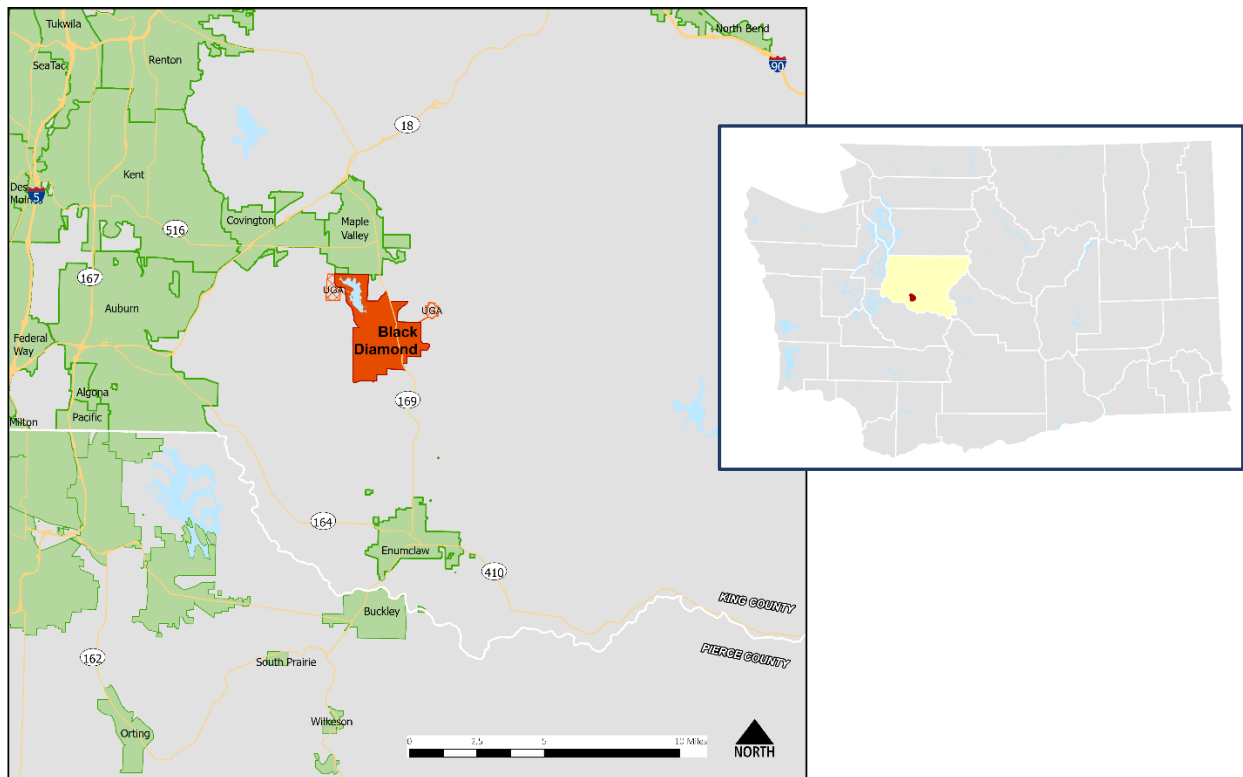
Many of the day-to-day decisions made by City officials can have a significant impact on how a community develops and functions. A comprehensive plan coordinates and guides individual decisions in a manner that moves the community towards its overall goals. Comprehensive plans are meant to be internally consistent, coordinated, and built on public input to create a solid basis for implementation.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a broad statement of the community's vision for the future. It contains policies primarily to guide the physical development of the city, as well as certain aspects of its social and economic character. Comprehensive Plans indicate how the community envisions the city's future and

¹ "Indians of the Pacific Northwest," 2012, Deloria Vine, Fulcrum Publishing.

sets forth strategies for achieving the desired vision. It does so by directing regulations and implementing actions and services that support the vision.



A plan has three characteristics. First, it is comprehensive: the plan encompasses all the geographic and functional elements that have a bearing on the community's physical development. Second, it is general: the plan summarizes the major policies and proposals of the City but does not usually indicate specific locations or establish detailed regulations. Third, it is long range: not only does this plan address some of the most pressing matters facing the community now, but it also plans for the next 20 years. Although the planning horizon for this plan is 20 years, many of its policies and actions will affect the City of Black Diamond well beyond that horizon.

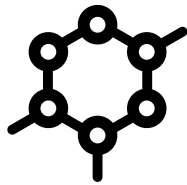
While a Comprehensive Plan is meant to provide a strong and constant vision for the future, it is also intended to be a living document that must accommodate change. Therefore, the plan is meant to be regularly updated to account for changing issues or opportunities that the City faces.

Plan Applicability

This Plan applies to the city incorporation limits of Black Diamond and the planned annexation areas (PAAs). The PAAs and city limits make up the Urban Growth Area (UGA) which was previously determined by King County. Black Diamond is unique in that a small, unconnected portion of the city limits near the Green River does not fall within the UGA. Figure 1-1 illustrates the city limits, PAAs, and UGA.

Functions of a Comprehensive Plan

Policy Determination



First, a Comprehensive Plan encourages City officials to look at the big picture, to step away from current pressing needs to develop overriding policy goals for their community. Second, it creates an environment for the City Council to guide its decision-making openly and democratically. The plan serves to focus, direct, and coordinate the efforts of the departments within City government by providing a general comprehensive statement of the City's goals and policies.

Policy Implementation



A community can move more effectively toward its goals and implement its policies after they have been agreed to and formalized through the adoption of a Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is a basic source of reference for officials as they consider the enactment of ordinances or regulations affecting the community's physical development (such as a zoning ordinance or a particular rezone), and when they make decisions pertaining to public facility investments (such as capital improvement programming or construction of a specific public facility). This ensures that the community's overall goals and policies are accomplished by those decisions.

Guidance



The Plan also provides a practical guide to City officials as they administer City ordinances and programs. Some of the plan's policies can also be implemented through administrative decisions during project review. This ensures that the day-to-day decisions of City staff are consistent with the overall policy direction established by the Council.

Communication/Education



The Comprehensive Plan is a document that communicates to the public and to City staff the policy of the City Council. This allows the staff, the public, private developers, businesspeople, financial institutions, and other interested parties to anticipate what the decisions of the City are likely to be on any particular issue. As such, the Plan provides predictability. Everyone is better able to plan activities knowing the probable response to their proposals, and how to protect investments made on the basis of policy. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan can educate the public, the business community, the staff, and the City Council itself on the workings, conditions, and issues within the City. This can stimulate interest about community affairs and increase citizen participation in government.

1.2 Accomplishments since the previous Comprehensive Plan Update

Black Diamond has experienced many exciting changes and developments since the last Comprehensive Plan Update. As a growing community, Black Diamond must invest in essential services for all residents.

Major achievements in the last several years include the following:

1. Groundbreaking of the Ten Trails MPD and continued construction of thereafter; the City's MDRT department was created in 2011 to manage development permitting within the MPDs and oversee the development agreement.
2. The Black Diamond Elementary School was constructed (2017) which currently serves about 400 students.
3. Black Diamond's first roundabout was constructed in 2017 at the intersection of Auburn-Black Diamond Road and Lake Sawyer Road. Additional roundabouts continue to be constructed as the buildout of the Master Planned Development grows, providing increased safety and efficiency at these important intersections.
4. The City adopted an updated Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) plan, including a new system for determining Level of Service for the parks. Having a PROS Plan allows the community to apply for grants through the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) for a 6-year period, with an update to the plan required at the end of the six-year period.
5. Improvements were made to Roberts Drive including a new water line, roadway improvements, and a pedestrian walkway. These improvements meet several Transportation policies by enhancing the safety, design, and connectivity of the road. The Oakpointe developers funded a portion of this project.
6. The City Secured grant funding for various park improvements and to foster business development, including improvements to the Gomer Evans, Jr. Memorial Park, future construction of a new skatepark, and providing recreational amenities to the Black Diamond gym (including new signage and lighting).

Changes to Code / Development Regulations

The Growth Management Act requires that local governments enact land development regulations that are consistent with and implement the Comprehensive Plan. To accomplish this, the City regularly reviews development regulations to ensure consistency with the comprehensive plan and identifies the need for amendments. The City has undertaken a great number of amendments since the Plan was adopted and the following list provides a snapshot of amended sections that have occurred in the past several years:

2019	Provided updated language and standards to several code sections regarding accessory uses, including accessory dwelling units (Ord. 1120) Adopted a periodic review (update) of the Shoreline Management Program (SMP) (Ord 1127)
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2020	Adopted school impact fees (Ord. 1146) Updated flood damage prevention measures and procedures (Ord. 1150)
2021	Updated sensitive areas code (Ord. 1158) Updated SEPA regulations and procedures (Ord. 1159) Created a definition for senior housing (Ord. 1163) Established transportation impact fees (Ord. 1165)
2022	Amended code language regarding SEPA appeals (Ord. 1176) Adopted updated Stormwater Management Regulations (Ord. 1178) Established the diversity and inclusion advisory committee (Ord. 1179) Amended zoning regulations and processes and created a Zoning Use Matrix (Ord. 1183)
2023	Updated building codes, including the International Building Code, the International Residential Code, and more. Repealed BDMC Chapters 20.04 and 20.08 (repealing prohibition of medical, recreational marijuana) - effective January 1, 2025

Expansion of City Services and Improvements

- The City created a new, updated website in 2021 to improve communication and citizen access to information.
- In 2022, City Hall was able to expand its office space, utilizing the entire Roberts Drive property and investing in updates to the building.
- In summer of 2023 a groundbreaking occurred for the new Lawson Hills Fire Station which was constructed in 2024. The new fire station will allow the City to significantly improve fire and other emergency response times.

Community Engagement and Communications

The City of Black Diamond has emphasized community connection and engagement in the past several years. A variety of annual community events helps to create a welcoming, connected community. The following list highlights ways in which the City has prioritized connecting and communicating openly with the community.

- “The City Connection” quarterly newsletter has been shared online since 2008, and helps keep citizens aware of changes, updates, and events going on in the city
- Black Diamond Labor Days – This annual event occurs over Labor day weekend, and brings the community together over activities like food, crafts, games, music, and a parade
- Miner’s Day – Celebrating the history of Black Diamond, this annual summer event includes antique sales, artists, crafts, food, and other family-oriented activities
- National Night Out – This is a nationwide event that promotes partnership between communities and their police and aims to build relationships between neighbors
- Town Hall Meetings are held twice a year and give the community an opportunity to talk directly with their City Council representatives
- Hometown Christmas is an annual holiday celebration held each December

1.3 Significant Changes since the last Update

Aside from the achievements above, it is important to acknowledge major changes since the last update, which was adopted in 2019.

By 2024, a portion of the Master Planned Developments has been built and plat applications continue to be vested. Parts of the built and/or vested MPD do not conform with any of the City's prior zoning districts, so the additional zones needed to be added. This includes one more medium density residential zone (MDR12) and two high density residential zones (HDR18 and HDR30). The new MDR12 zone conforms to the existing medium density residential (MDR) future land use, whereas a new future land use, high density residential (HDR), had to be created to allow HDR18 and HDR30 zones.

Other important updates to zoning and land use included the addition of an Open Space zone, fixing scrivener's errors, and ensuring consistency between the zoning map and the future land use map (also referred to as the FLUM). Previously, much of the current Open Space areas were a part of the MPD area and not yet formally set aside through its respective plat.

In addition to major changes within the city, the years 2021 through 2023 were characterized with profound and significant changes to the Growth Management Act, when the state legislature passed a series of bills addressing housing, climate change, and other legislative topics that guide or limit how cities plan for their communities. This had trickle-down effects on the requirements set out by the Puget Sound Regional Council and King County, especially related to housing. The section below further outlines the relationship between the Growth Management Act, PSRC, and King County in relation to this Comprehensive Plan.

1.4 Planning Framework

Growth Management Act

In 1990, the Washington State Legislature passed the Growth Management Act (GMA) to provide a basis for local, regional and state solutions to growth pressures. Since then, the GMA has been amended numerous times. The GMA is found in Chapter 36.70A of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and one section, RCW 36.70A.020, outlines fifteen goals with which this plan must comply. (See "Summary of GMA Goals")

Cities and Counties planning under GMA are required to prepare comprehensive plans to guide growth and development for a 20-year period and further must demonstrate the capacity to accommodate 20 years of forecasted growth. The GMA establishes mandatory "elements" (or chapters) for inclusion in local comprehensive plans. The mandatory elements include land use, housing, capital facilities, utilities, transportation, and climate. The state legislature added economic development and parks and recreation as additional required elements; however, those are not yet mandatory since no state funding was put in place to help cities develop them. Nonetheless, this Plan includes economic development and parks and recreation elements due to their importance for the overall well-being of

the City and its residents. No plan element is more important than another and each element is meant to complement the others.

Summary of the Growth Management Act Goals

1. **Urban Growth:** Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.
2. **Reduce Sprawl:** Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.
3. **Transportation:** Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled coordinated with other plans.
4. **Housing:** Plan for and accommodate housing affordable to all, promoting a variety of residential densities and housing types while preserving existing housing.
5. **Economic Development:** Promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and recruitment of new businesses.
6. **Property Rights:** Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation made; landowners' property rights shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions.
7. **Permits:** Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.
8. **Natural Resource Industries:** Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forestlands and productive agricultural lands and discourage incompatible uses.
9. **Open Space and Recreation:** Retain open space and green space, enhance recreational opportunities, enhance fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.
10. **Environment:** Protect and enhance the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water.
11. **Citizen Participation and Coordination:** Encourage citizen involvement in the planning process, including the participation of vulnerable populations overburdened communities.
12. **Public Facilities and Services:** Ensure public facilities and services supporting development are adequate to serve such development without decreasing current service levels below standards.
13. **Historic Preservation:** Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures, which have historical or archaeological significance.
14. **Climate Change and Resiliency:** Address ways to adapt to and mitigate the effects of a changing climate; support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and per capita vehicle miles traveled; prepare for climate impact scenarios; foster resiliency to climate impacts and natural hazards; protect and enhance environmental, economic, and human health and safety; and advance environmental justice.
15. **Shorelines of the State:** The goals and policies of the Shoreline Management Act are included in a city's comprehensive plan.

Regulatory Measures

The GMA requires that local governments enact land development regulations that are consistent with and implement the Comprehensive Plan. In order to accomplish this, the development regulations should be regularly reviewed to ensure consistency with the Comprehensive Plan in order to identify the need for amendments. In particular, the zoning code and zoning map must be consistent with the future land use map and policies established in the plan. The future land use map and land use policies in the Comprehensive Plan establish the use, density, and intensity of future development within the City.

Concurrency Management

Comprehensive plan policies also meet the GMA requirements for concurrency by establishing level of service (LOS) standards for capital facilities. The concurrency management system sets forth the procedures to be used to determine whether public facilities have adequate capacity to accommodate a proposed development. The concurrency management system also identifies the responses to be made by the City when it is determined that the proposal will exceed the LOS established, thereby exceeding the defined capacity, and failing to maintain concurrency. This includes the criteria the City uses to determine whether development proposals are served by adequate public facilities and establishes monitoring procedures to enable periodic updates of public facilities and services capacities. Under the GMA, concurrency management must be established for transportation; however, jurisdictions may establish concurrency for any public services or facilities for which they have established LOS standards in their comprehensive plan. LOS standards may be established for fire and emergency facilities, police, schools, sewer and water, transportation, and parks and recreational facilities and services.

King County Countywide Planning Policies

As part of the GMA, King County adopted Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs) which provide a consistent planning framework to guide each city's plan. The CPPs also address the need to plan outside of city boundaries by establishing urban growth areas (UGAs) and in the City's case, potential annexation areas (PAAs). CPPs focus on planning issues that are regional in nature such as housing, employment, essential public facilities, and critical infrastructure demands for issues like transportation and energy. Driven by recent changes to the GMA, the CPPs have taken on a greater role, especially in relation to housing. This is to ensure that cities within King County make adequate provisions for housing in their Comprehensive Plans, including housing for all income levels at various densities, emergency housing, and permanent supportive housing.

Puget Sound Regional Council

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) works to ensure a healthy and prosperous future in the Central Puget Sound region. PSRC membership includes the four counties of King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish, most of the cities they contain, including Black Diamond, and several federally recognized Tribes. The PSRC helps the region in multiple ways, including planning for growth and helping communities secure federal funding for transportation projects.

VISION 2050

PSRC's VISION 2050 is a long-range plan for our region's future which attempts to better manage growth over the coming decades. The document includes Multicounty Planning Policies (MPPs), which focus on the promotion of regional growth strategies to address land use, economic development, transportation, public facilities, and environmental issues. This Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) forecasts the geographic distribution of people, residential units, and jobs resulting from population growth. The MPPs serve as the regional guidelines and principles used for the Regional Council's certification of policies and plans.

The City's comprehensive plan sets out a vision and policies for how Black Diamond will accommodate forecasted growth until 2044 while meeting the regional objectives expressed in VISION 2050. The City recognizes the need for regional planning and is therefore committed to keeping its policies and actions consistent with the VISION 2050 Plan.

Internal Consistency

All plan elements must be consistent with each other. For example, if the Housing Element requires us to support additional housing density, then other elements like Land Use or Transportation should include improvements to also support this outcome.

Public Involvement

For the Plan to remain relevant, the citizens of the community must remain in touch with its implementation. As conditions and community priorities change, there will be a need for annual opportunities to make amendments to the Plan. As the community matures, the vision of the future will change, and new needs and priorities will emerge. Continued public involvement and communication is crucial to keeping the process fresh and engaging .

On December 18, 2014, Black Diamond City Council passed Ordinance No. 14-1044 which repealed outdated comprehensive plan regulations and added Chapter 16.10, Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Development Regulations. Exhibit A of this Ordinance is an adopted "City of Black Diamond Growth Management Act (GMA) Public Participation Program Handbook" (or simply the City's GMA PPP).

On April 6, 2023, the Council passed Resolution No. 23-1540, which acknowledged the kick-off for the 2024 Periodic Update and created an addendum to the GMA PPP which outlines the Public Participation Plan for the 2024 Periodic Update specifically. This addendum specified that underrepresented groups will be specifically targeted for outreach.

GMA requires that Public Participation Plans outline efforts to engage vulnerable populations, overburdened communities, and those who may have been disparately impacted by housing policies. It will be important for the City of Black Diamond to continue to engage with a wide range of people in future updates.

The 2024 Periodic Update process included robust public engagement to meet the City’s goals and ensure a fair and transparent planning process, including:

- A 20-question online and paper survey, which was heavily advertised on digital platforms and posted around town
- Engagement booths at multiple events, including Miner’s Day, Labor Days, and two Ten Trails events, where the survey was heavily promoted, and staff were available to answer questions, hear feedback, and add people to the list of interested parties
- Multiple workshops, including a kickoff/visioning meeting, land use workshop, multimodal transportation workshop, and an open house
- Monthly email updates to a large “interested parties” list
- The creation of a webpage to keep the public up to date, including draft documents and other useful information like workshop and survey results

Two of the survey questions asked respondents what Black Diamond needs *more of* and *less of*. The following images depict the most common themes expressed by respondents, with the larger words representing the most numerous responses.

What does Black Diamond need more of?



What does Black Diamond need less of?



1.5 Black Diamond Vision

Vision Statement

A Vision Statement is a concise description of what the community sees for itself in the future, even if part of that includes existing conditions. The vision statement forms the backbone of this plan. Black Diamond's Vision Statement has remained largely unchanged since 1991, remaining relevant and fresh through the years and many changes though a lot of growth since including multiple annexations and the approval of two Master Planned Developments (Ten Trails and Lawson Hill). During the 2024-2044 Periodic Update, members of the community were asked to contemplate changes to the Vision Statement but there was general consensus to retail the language.

In the year 2044, Black Diamond will be a beautiful, active, friendly community based on a rich historic heritage and exceptional natural setting, with a small-town atmosphere. Forested areas and open space remain, while development maintains a healthy balance of moderate growth and economic viability.

The economic base will be a mix of retail, industrial/business park, office, tourist, and local cottage industries. Residential development will be a mix of types, sizes, and densities, clustered to preserve maximum open space and to access a system of trails/bikeways/greenbelts which connect housing, shopping, and employment with nearby regional parks and recreational facilities.

Citizens actively participate in an effective and open government decision making process that reflects community values. There will be good cooperation among nearby jurisdictions, as well as adequate public services and environmental protection to provide a safe and healthy quality of life for all citizens, from children to seniors.

Vision Goals

The Vision Statement is amplified with the following Vision Goals set out for each Element, which direct the more specific goals and policies of their respective element.

~~Community Character Vision Goal 1: Preserve and encourage the “small town” atmosphere.~~

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Vision Goal 1: Support the stewardship of natural resources and amenities throughout the community in the form of parks, trails, open space, and recreation al opportunities.

Natural Environment Vision Goal 1: Retain the City’s ~~natural environment and~~ scenic beauty and exercise-

~~Natural Environment Vision Goal 2: Conversion of natural of spaces to developed land is discouraged or occurs only in areas where natural systems present the fewest environmental constraints while exercising~~ responsible stewardship over natural resources and amenities.

Land Use Vision Goal 1: Establish a pattern of development that ~~maintains and enhances a safe and healthy quality of life within the community, from children to senior~~ the community’s quality of life and respects the City’s heritage.

Housing Vision Goal 1: Make housing available to all economic and social segments of the community.

Transportation Vision Goal 1: Establish and maintain a transportation system that provides safe and cost-efficient movement of people and goods.

Transportation Vision Goal 2: Minimize the environmental and social impacts of transportation to critical areas.

Transportation Vision Goal 3: Provide a transportation system that has adequate financing for necessary transportation improvements.

Transportation Vision Goal 4: Maintain a transportation system that is consistent with Puget Sound Regional Council’s forecasts and vision.

Capital Facilities Vision Goal 1: Ensure that public services are available to support development and future developmentgrowth.

Utilities Vision Goal 1: Utility facility planning will be consistent to meet public service obligations for future growth.

OR

Capital Facilities and Utilities Vision Goal: Ensure that public services and utilities are available to support future growth.

Economic Development Vision ~~Goal 1~~Goal: Encourage job creation by making the community a better place to live, work, and ~~do business~~visit.

PROJECT MEMO



TO:	Mona Davis	DATE:	March 25, 2024
FROM:	Nicole Stickney Tri-Cities - (509) 380-5883	PROJECT NO.:	2220914.30
		PROJECT NAME:	Black Diamond 2024 Comprehensive Plan Update
SUBJECT:	Updated Word Clouds – Survey Results Correction		

BACKGROUND

This memo supplements our original memo and presentation (from October 2023) regarding the results of the online survey supporting the 2024 Comprehensive Plan periodic update. In the survey we asked, “What does Black Diamond need **more of**?” and “What does Black Diamond need **less of**?” These questions were open-ended; rather than providing a list of choices the people taking the survey could write in a response.

To present the results, we created “word clouds” for each answer which was a computer-generated graphic showing the most frequently given responses. The size of different words varied, with bigger words indicating a higher frequency of usage as compared to the smaller words in the graphic. Earlier this month we provided the word clouds again and included them in a slide in our presentation to the Planning Commission about housing. Our purpose was to remind the group about the extensive community feedback that was given relating to housing and development in general.

It was at the March Planning Commission meeting, when one of the members asked some questions about the word clouds, we discovered we hadn’t done a suitable job of presenting the information. In short, all of the responses had been put into a computer program without any human adjustment beforehand. As a result, subtle differences in wording (such as “development” and “developments”) were treated as different topics (and as a result not weighted correctly) and words lacking context as single words weren’t correctly sorted (for example, “lanes” has a different meaning than “bike lanes” and we want to be sure to capture the meaning in the best way possible).

NEW WORD CLOUDS

We have used the survey response to generate new word clouds to replace the old ones. The new graphics can be used as we proceed with this project, to better and more accurately reflect community sentiments. While the new word clouds are still computer generated (and accordingly show more frequently used words or phrases in a larger font) we first organized the information to improve the end result:

- Rather than inputting all words from every answer individually, we tabulated and grouped responses. To do this, we assigned each open-ended response to one or more category. This allows multiple answers that are phrased differently, to all be counted together to ensure the meaning is clear. (For example, responses saying, “*thoughtful urban plans*” and “*careful planning so it’s not urban sprawl*” are joined with “*professional planning in the best interest of the community*” into a common phrase for tabulation purposes: “Good Planning.”)
- We also adjusted the input given to the computer to use two-word phrases where necessary (i.e., “open” and “space” doesn’t convey the same meaning as “open space.”)
- We identified and corrected spelling errors (i.e., “*resturants*” and “*polution*”) so that a response from a survey taker wouldn’t be tossed out.

The different responses are better organized and are easier to understand for the casual reader. The updated word clouds are shown on the following page. We have incorporated these new graphics into the initial draft Introduction of the Comprehensive Plan.



What does Black Diamond need more of?



What does Black Diamond need less of?



NS/ajl

c: Scott Hanis, Andy Williamson – City of Black Diamond
Wayne Carlson, Andrew Love – AHBL

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PROJECT MEMO



TO: Mona Davis, Community Development Director
FROM: Nicole Stickney, AICP
Seattle - (206) 267-2425
SUBJECT: Middle Housing Options Memo (HB 1110)

DATE: April 10, 2024
PROJECT NO.: 2230833.30
PROJECT NAME: Black Diamond Middle Housing

Introduction

In 2023 the Washington State Legislature passed [E2SHB 1110](#) ("HB 1110") which amended the Growth Management Act (GMA)¹ and requires cities make it easier to build middle housing. Middle housing is an umbrella term that refers to buildings or groupings of buildings that are similar in size and style to single-family homes but include multiple units on one lot.

HB 1110 defines "Middle housing" as:

"buildings that are compatible in scale, form, and character with single-family houses and contain two or more attached, stacked, or clustered homes including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, fiveplexes, sixplexes, townhouses, stacked flats, courtyard apartments, and cottage housing."

Cities subject to HB 1110 are required to implement the requirements no later than 6 months following the next periodic Comprehensive Plan update due date. For the City of Black Diamond, compliance with HB 1110 will be required by June 30, 2025.

Under HB 1110, Black Diamond is considered a "Tier 3" city, which are cities with a population under 25,000 that are contiguous with a UGA that includes the largest city in a county with a population over 275,000 (HB 1110, Sec. 3(1)(c)). **As a Tier 3 city, the City must allow for a minimum of two middle housing units per lot on all lots that are zoned predominantly for residential use.**² In the City of Black Diamond, this is likely to apply to the R4, R6, and MDR8 zones.

To accommodate the density of middle housing and account for the differences between it and single-family homes, the City may establish objective design and development standards that differ from those for single-family homes. However, these standards cannot be more restrictive than those for single-family homes. Alternatively, the City may employ an administrative design review process to apply these design standards.

The City of Black Diamond received a grant from the Department of Commerce to help cover the costs associated with adopting regulations to plan for and accommodate middle housing. This memo provides the community and elected officials with background information on HB 1110, as well as some ideas and issues that the City may consider as it develops its middle housing regulations.

Understanding Middle Housing

Washington State is facing a significant housing crisis due to its growing population and deficit of housing stock. To combat this, the state estimates that 1.1 million new homes will need to be constructed over the next 20 years.³ According to the Department of Commerce, over half of these homes will need to be affordable to low-

¹ The main provisions of HB 1110 are codified in RCW 36.70A.635 through RCW 36.70A.638. HB 1110 has been amended by a trailer bill, [ESHB 2321](#), which alters some of its requirements for Tier 3 cities.

² Some exceptions apply, including lots or portions of lots that contain critical areas or their buffers and lots that were created through the splitting of a single residential lot.

³ <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/news/washington-state-will-need-more-than-1-million-homes-in-next-20-years/>



income households, or those who earn below 50% of the area median income (AMI). Another 25% of these homes will need to be affordable to those who make between 50% to 120% AMI. Continuing to build new single-family homes would not satisfy these needs. Instead, building middle housing at higher densities can help accommodate this need by providing more affordable homes as well as providing diverse housing types that meet the needs of different family sizes and income levels.

Middle housing is a category of housing types that are designed to be compatible in scale and form with single-family houses. These types offer a variety of attached, stacked, or clustered homes and are intended to bridge the gap between single-family homes and mid-rise apartment buildings.



Source: Opticos Design, Inc

Middle housing comes in different shapes and sizes. "Small" middle housing types are equal to or similar in size to a typical single-family house footprint. They include duplexes (two units), triplexes/fourplexes (3-4 units), and cottage housing (3-10 units).



Duplex Stacked
2 units



Duplex Side-by-Side
2 units



Cottage Housing
3-10 units



Triplex/Fourplex
3-4 units

Source: Washington State Department of Commerce, Opticos Design, Inc.

"Medium" middle housing types are slightly larger than "small" types but still similar to a typical house in building footprint size, and they have heights up to 2.5 stories. These include medium multiplexes (5-10 units), courtyard apartments (6-16 units), and townhouses (multi-story units with shared walls).



Multiplex Medium
5-10 units



Courtyard Medium
6-16 units



Townhouse Medium
1 unit



Stacked Triplex
3 units

Source: Washington State Department of Commerce, Opticos Design, Inc.

"Large" middle housing types are taller (3-4 stories) and slightly wider and deeper than "small" and "medium" types, but they can still fit on the typical lot sizes found in residential neighborhoods. These include large multiplexes (7-18 units), large courtyard apartments (20-28 units), and large townhouse developments. However, "large" middle housing types require more care to ensure that they are articulated and fit with the scale of surrounding smaller-scale residential buildings.



Multiplex Large
7-18 units



Courtyard Large
20-28 units



Townhouse Large
1 unit

Source: Washington State Department of Commerce

What About Accessory Dwelling Units?

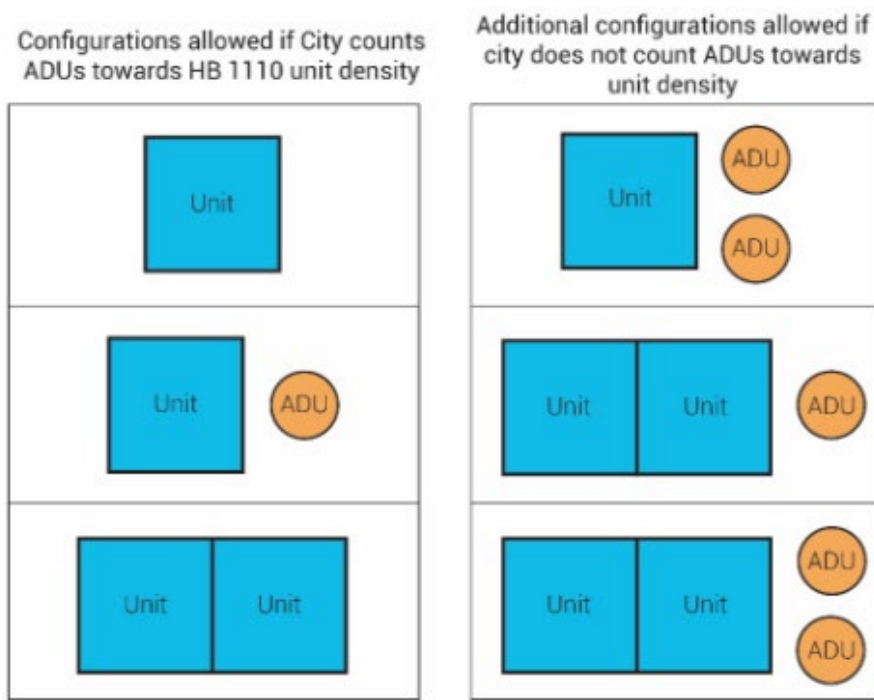
In addition to passing HB 1110 last year, the Washington State Legislature also passed HB 1337 which focuses on ADUs. HB 1337 requires cities and counties within urban growth areas to allow at least two ADUs on all lots zoned for single-family homes.

To meet the requirements of both laws, the City must allow up to two ADUs on all lots zoned for single-family homes. Additionally, the City must allow middle housing to achieve the required unit count. ADUs may help to achieve the required unit count, but they alone cannot be used to meet the requirements of HB 1110 (meaning the City must allow middle housing but can satisfy the unit count with ADUs).

Because the City is only required to allow two units per lot, if the City chooses to count ADUs towards the unit count, it could result in a situation where ADUs were not permitted on a lot that already includes two units of middle housing. This could conflict with the requirements in HB 1337. **The City should consider carefully if it**



would like to count ADUs towards the unit count and consult with the City Attorney to make sure the City's middle housing regulations comply with HB 1337.



*Configurations allowed in the Model Ordinances where the base unit density is two units on lots zoned predominantly for residential use.
Source: MAKERS*

Source: MAKERS

Benefits of Middle Housing

The City's housing supply is comprised primarily of single-family homes, though this is changing. According to the OFM Postcensal Estimate of Housing Units (2023), approximately 82.4% of the City's housing supply is single-family housing. However, the City has experienced an increase in the development of multi-family housing in the last few years through the Master Planned Developments (MPDs). The MPDs will add around 1,520 multi-family units to the City, according to the City's Housing Action Plan. Additionally, there are two manufactured home communities in the City providing about 150 homes. One of these communities is owned by the King County Housing Authority and reserved for low-income seniors (age 55+).

Despite the gains in multi-family housing that will be made through the MPDs, the City could still benefit from the addition of middle housing types. The multi-family units built under the MPDs often feature premium interior and exterior finishes and amenities, which drives up the cost of housing. This makes these units unaffordable for individuals with lower incomes.

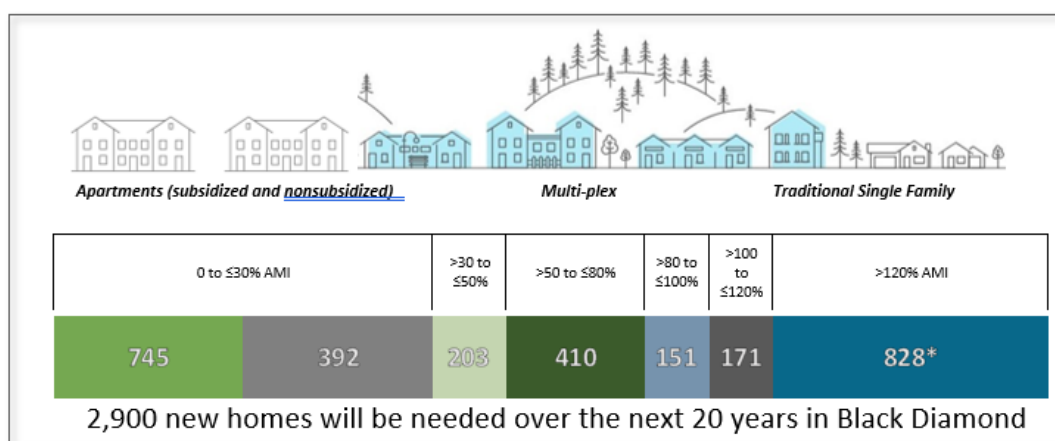
Middle housing (particularly if it is built with affordability in mind) can provide more options for low-income earners who face limited availability due to the market being geared towards higher-cost, detached homes. By offering a variety of housing types, Black Diamond can attract and retain a diverse population, including professionals who may work in industries with comparatively lower incomes but are essential to the community, such as teachers, police officers, firefighters, and others.



Meeting the City's Growth Targets

Black Diamond is expected to plan for an increase of 2,900 housing units by 2044, as per the King County Countywide Planning Policies (CPPs). The CPPs assign population and housing growth targets to the City, based on population projections provided by Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC), which are further broken down to identify housing unit needs by income level.

The City has sufficient capacity within its existing zoning classifications to accommodate the anticipated new housing units over the next two decades, in fact, the City is expected to exceed its growth targets due to previously approved MPD growth. The City may however face challenges in providing enough affordable housing to meet the needs of individuals from different income groups. Addressing middle housing may help to meet the needs of those who make less than the income required to afford traditional single-family homes without being cost-burdened.



Source: Figure 6-5 of the City's Draft Comprehensive Plan Housing Element

The City also faces a lack of jobs, with most residents commuting to their jobs outside of the City. The MPDs are expected to bring in over 2,000 new jobs through the development of new office and commercial space. Increasing housing options for different income groups may also help to address the City's low jobs-to-housing ratio, increasing quality of life for all residents by reducing commute times and decreasing traffic congestion.

Middle Housing Development Regulation Options

The City of Black Diamond, like other cities in Washington State, has two primary options to comply with the requirements of HB 1110:

Option 1: Adopting the Model Ordinance Prepared by the Department of Commerce

The Department of Commerce published a model ordinance that cities can adopt to meet the requirements of HB 1110. This model ordinance includes common development standards that the City can adopt to facilitate middle housing developments. The model ordinance sets out which parts are mandatory and which parts are optional. Cities are allowed to adjust any optional standards contained within the model ordinance based on local preferences. The model ordinance can be applied to existing zones by either amending the allowed uses to allow for middle housing or by creating a "middle housing overlay zone."

By adopting the model ordinance, the City would ensure compliance with HB 1110 as the ordinance has already been crafted to meet state requirements. This may also make it easier for developers to create



middle housing as it provides consistency with other cities that have adopted the model ordinance. The ordinance has already been reviewed by a technical committee comprised of local government staff and has gone through outreach to stakeholder groups and the public. The City would still need to go through a public engagement process prior to adoption.

Following adoption of the model ordinance, the language would be codified into the Black Diamond Municipal Code and be a stand-alone section in the City's zoning regulations.

Option 2: Amending the City's Development Regulations to Allow for Middle Housing

Alternatively, the City can choose to amend its development regulations to allow for middle housing pursuant to RCW 36.70A.636(3). This approach would involve reviewing and revising the City's existing zoning code and development regulations to meet the requirements of HB 1110 in a substantially similar way to the model ordinance but integrated into the city's existing codes.

The City's existing zoning code and development regulations include many barriers to the production of the middle housing types discussed above. These range from a lack of definitions and allowed uses for middle housing types, to required setbacks that would preclude zero lot line short subdivisions such that units can be sold separately. Amending the City's zoning code and development regulations would require more time and resources and could pose a risk that the City's amendments may not fully comply with HB 1110, leading to potential legal challenges.

The first step that the City should take in addressing the middle housing requirements of HB 1110 is determining if the City can amend its development regulations by the required deadline of June 30, 2025. **If the City does not amend its development regulations to comply with HB 1110 by the deadline of June 30, 2025, the model ordinance will automatically go into effect.**

Required Elements for Middle Housing Regulations

The City must address certain required elements in its middle housing regulations as specified in HB 1110.

Definitions

The City must include definitions for "Middle housing" as well as the housing types that it chooses to allow. HB 1110 specifies nine housing types and includes definitions for four of the housing types ("cottage housing", "courtyard apartments", "stacked flat" and "townhouses"). The remaining housing types have been defined in the model ordinance, though these can be altered by the local jurisdiction. The City should also address other definitions that may create confusion with these added terms if amending development regulations and not adopting the model ordinance.

Allowed Uses

As a Tier 3 city, the City must allow some middle housing types on all lots that are zoned predominantly for residential use. The middle housing types specified by HB 1110 include the following:

- **Duplexes**
- Triplexes
- Fourplexes
- Fiveplexes
- Sixplexes
- Townhouses
- **Stacked flats**
- **Courtyard apartments**
- **Cottage housing**

As the City is classified as a Tier 3 city, it is required to allow two units per lot. Therefore, we recommend that the City permits the four middle housing types which are shown above in boldface, as they allow for two units per lot.



Additionally, the City should consider the allowed densities of the R6 and MDR8 zones to determine which other middle housing types may be appropriate to allow.

The City already allows for duplexes in the R4 and R6 zones but requires that the lot size be one and one-half times that required for a detached single-family residence. This requirement would not comply with HB 1110. Within the MDR8 zone, the City permits multifamily housing and cottage housing, subject to design requirements contained in Chapters 18.74 and 18.88 of the Black Diamond Municipal Code (BDMC), respectively. These requirements will need to be reviewed to ensure they are not more restrictive than those applied to detached single-family homes.

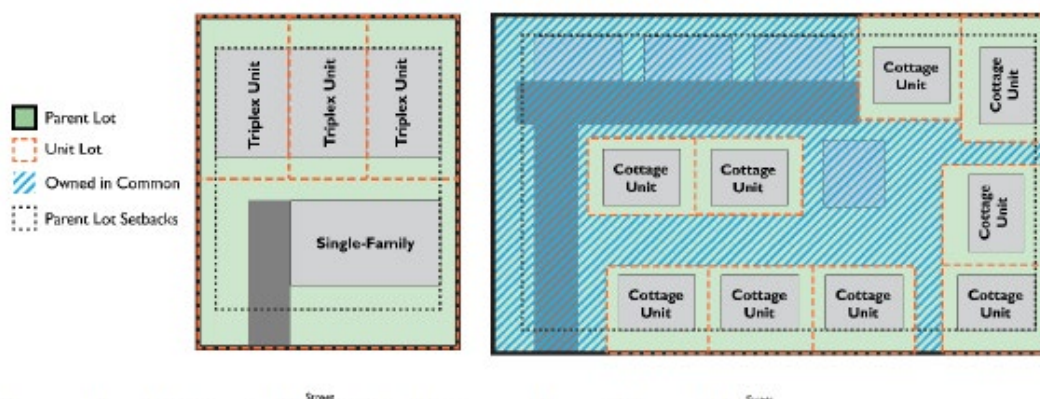
Unit Density

The City must allow for a unit density of at least two middle housing units per lot. The City may allow ADUs to count towards the minimum unit density, such that a single-family residence with an ADU would be considered a unit density of two. The concept of unit density differs from the traditional calculation of density based on acreage, meaning that a minimum of two units is required to be allowed on a lot, regardless of lot size. If the City chooses to allow a maximum unit density of two units per lot, the City must also take care to ensure that ADUs required by HB 1337 are not precluded from being developed if the ADUs count towards unit density and the lot is already developed with two units of middle housing.

Land Divisions

SB 5258, passed in 2023, amends RCW 58.17.060 and requires that cities incorporate into their short plat regulations procedures for unit lot subdivisions. Unit lot subdivisions are used to divide a parent lot into two or more lots, allowing for the sale of each unit and facilitating the development of middle housing. **By adopting a unit lot subdivision process through the model ordinance or into the City's short subdivision chapter, the City would apply the dimensional standards of the zoning districts to the development as a whole on the parent lot, rather than to each unit lot.**

The diagram shown below illustrates how unit lot subdivisions are used to create lots for middle housing units that can be sold individually. The parent lot is subject to dimensional standards such as setbacks, building and impervious surface coverage. To ensure that common elements such as garages, parking and vehicle access areas, bike parking, solid waste collection areas, underground utilities, common open space, and shared walls, façade or roofs on the parent lot are adequately maintained, access easements, joint use and maintenance agreements, and covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) may be executed and recorded.



Two examples of situations in which unit lot subdivision would be used. Source: MAKERS

Source: MAKERS



Dimensional Standards

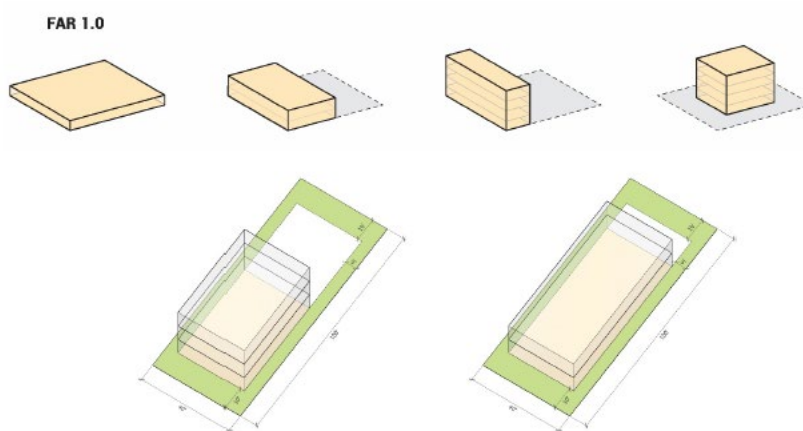
The City cannot impose stricter standards for middle housing than those required for detached single-family homes. However, it can enforce objective regulations that are also mandatory for single-family homes. This implies that the City can apply its existing building height, setbacks, building and impervious coverage, landscape, and tree preservation requirements to middle housing. For unit lot subdivisions, the setbacks and building coverage would be applied to the parent lot, not the individual unit lots.

The City should still consider whether these requirements would conflict with certain middle housing types. For example, the City allows a maximum building height of 32' in the R4 and R6 zones, while the model code employs a maximum height of 35' to accommodate three stories for stacked flats, which is consistent with the definition in HB 1110. The City's maximum height may encourage structures to utilize flat roofs, rather than pitched roofs, to comply with the City's calculation of building height. Increasing the allowed building height for structures that use a pitched roof could facilitate more compatible middle housing development.

The City currently regulates building and impervious surface coverage in the R4, R6, and MDR8 zones. However, a maximum floor area ratio (FAR) is not specified. **In adopting the middle housing regulations, the City could consider incorporating a FAR requirement to ensure compatibility with middle housing and existing detached single-family homes.** FAR helps to address a building's size and shape and can help two- or three-story buildings better fit into residential neighborhoods without impacting unit count. If the City chooses to employ FAR in addition to lot coverage, the City must apply the FAR standard to detached single-family homes per HB 1110 Sec. 3(6)(b):

[the City] "...shall not require through development regulations any standards for middle housing that are more restrictive than those required for detached single-family residences, but may apply any objective development regulations that are required for detached single-family residences..."

The graphic below illustrates how FAR can impact building massing and character as compared to simply regulating building and impervious surface coverage:



Source: Washington State Department of Commerce User Guide for Middle Housing

The City may not apply its maximum density requirements if they invalidate the minimum number of units per lot that the City must allow.



Parking Requirements

HB 1110 restricts the amount of on-site parking that the city can require for middle housing based on lot size. For lots no greater than 6,000 square feet, the city can require one parking space but no more. For lots greater than 6,000 square feet, a maximum of two parking spaces may be required.

Optional Elements for Middle Housing Regulations

HB 1110 provides cities with the flexibility to incorporate optional elements into their middle housing regulations, allowing them to tailor their regulations to local needs and preferences.

Design Standards

While design standards for middle housing are not required by HB 1110, the bill provides the City with an opportunity to use administrative design review or apply objective design standards to ensure compatibility with detached single-family homes. The model ordinance includes design standards for cottage housing and courtyard apartments to reflect the objectives of the housing types defined in HB 1110. Additional design standards are provided for pedestrian and vehicle access, carports, garages, and driveways to accommodate middle housing without significantly impacting the character of residential neighborhoods. Tier 3 cities also may utilize design standards for entries, windows, and doors. Utilizing the design standards provided in the model ordinance ensures that the City has design standards for middle housing in place that comply with HB 1110 by the deadline of June 30, 2025.

The City may choose to adopt additional design standards to ensure compatible development of middle housing. The City currently includes development standards for cottage housing in BDMC Chapter 18.88 and design review requirements for multi-family housing in BDMC Chapter 18.74. These standards will need to be reviewed to ensure they do not conflict with the requirements of HB 1110.

For example, RCW 70A.681(1)(f) states that the maximum gross floor area for accessory dwelling units must not be less than 1,000 square feet. According to the Department of Commerce's User Guide for Middle Housing, cottage housing floor area limits should be set above 1,000 square feet to be considered reasonable. However, the City currently mandates the maximum floor area for cottage housing to be no more than 975 square feet for at least 50% of the units, and no more than 1200 square feet for the remainder (BDMC 18.88.040).

The City currently regulates open space as part of the dimensional requirements applied to the lot, including setbacks, and building and impervious surface coverage. These standards may not be enough to ensure that an adequate amount of open space is provided for the increased density of middle housing. The City could integrate additional open space requirements into the regulations for middle housing. This could involve requiring a percentage of the parent lot area as open space and ensuring minimal dimensions for usable open space.

If the City applies design review to middle housing, only administrative design review may be used, and the process must follow the standards of RCW 36.70A.630 which was established in 2023 under HB 1293.

Discussion Items and Next Steps

HB 1110 requires that the City allow middle housing on all lots zoned predominantly for residential use. It sets forth clear requirements for middle housing regulations, including minimum unit densities, maximum parking restrictions, and administrative design review processes that the City must comply with. It also allows for optional elements that the City can adopt to align with local preferences, such as specific design standards and open space requirements.

The City is required to adopt middle housing regulations by June 30, 2025. This memo serves as a summary of the bill's requirements and aims to initiate a discussion with the community and elected officials on how to best



address these requirements in Black Diamond. The following discussion prompts will help to formulate a work plan for adopting middle housing regulations:

- Should the City modify the model ordinance to reflect local preferences or revise its development regulations to allow for middle housing on all lots zoned predominantly for single-family housing?
- The City must allow for at least two units of middle housing on all lots zoned predominantly for single-family housing. Should the City consider ADUs required by HB 1337 in the calculation of unit density?
- As a Tier 3 city, the City can allow any of the middle housing types that it deems appropriate for meeting the unit density and adding additional housing types to the City's housing stock. Which of the middle housing types should the City permit?
- Regardless of the City's choice to adopt the model ordinance or modify its development regulations, the City should incorporate objective design standards for middle housing that ensure compatibility in residential zones where single-family homes are the predominant use. What types of design standards would help to ensure compatibility with existing single-family homes?

HB 1110 presents an opportunity for the City of Black Diamond to address its growing housing needs across all income levels. The City's Comprehensive Plan emphasizes providing "a range of housing choices for all income levels with opportunities for people to live in close proximity to work." Middle housing offers the potential to provide more affordable and varied housing options within existing neighborhoods of the City.

Additional Information and Resources

The Washington State Legislature in enacting HB 1110 directed the Department of Commerce to provide technical assistance to cities subject to the bill. The following resources can be used by the City in enacting its middle housing regulations and provide additional information on the bill's requirements and middle housing.

- [Department of Commerce User Guide for Middle Housing Ordinances](#)
- [Final Model Ordinance for cities under 25,000](#)
- [Middle Housing Building Types](#)
- [Middle Housing Lot and Block Models](#)
- [General Middle Housing FAQ](#)

NS/bp

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