



Multifamily Development

Multifamily housing refers to a broad range of residential development types that are characterized by multiple dwelling units contained in a single building or otherwise adjoined by shared walls. Multifamily development may be constructed at different scales (e.g., low-rise, mid-rise, high-rise) depending on the character of the district and can be developed as rental or ownership housing.

BACKGROUND

Multifamily housing is a key element to providing affordable rental or ownership housing through economical use of land and shared building infrastructure. Low-rise multifamily development may be established in transitional areas near single-family zones or may represent the established character in commercial centers. Downtowns in smaller cities often exhibit a low-rise multifamily character. Mid-rise multifamily becomes transit-supportive development at key commercial nodes and along corridors. High-rise development is most often implemented in large regional centers such as downtown Everett, Bellevue, Seattle, Tacoma, and Bremerton and areas well-connected by regional transit.

Multifamily housing is key to achieving appropriate density for transit-oriented development. Tools like [upzones and rezones](#), [minimum densities](#), multifamily tax exemption, and [parking reductions](#) can be used to encourage multifamily construction or conversion.

In designated urban centers or transit-oriented development areas, mid-rise and high-rise multifamily development can be a source of affordable housing and/or provide new housing choices. Multifamily development of any scale can be appropriate in expensive housing markets where developers can maximize the number of dwellings on high-cost land.

TOOL PROFILE

Objectives

[Housing in Centers and Near Transit](#)

[Housing Options in Expensive Markets](#)

[Missing Middle Density](#)

[Mitigate Residential Displacement](#)

Type of Tool

Development types

Project Type

Multifamily

Ownership

Rental

Affordability Level

Market-rate incentives and tools

**Most effective for units
<80% AMI**