



Muddling through the Middle

APA WA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OCTOBER 8, 2025



framework

Nice to Meet You!



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Today's Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Approaches to Middle Housing
3. Story Time!
4. Lessons Learned
5. Lingering Questions and the Road Ahead



LYNNWOOD
WASHINGTON
Unified Development Code



Creating Housing Options

Approaches to Middle Housing

Lynnwood and Kent could have adopted the Commerce model ordinance, but chose to add local priorities into them

Background: What's in Each Ordinance?

	<u>Kent</u>	<u>Lynnwood</u>
Tier	Tier 1	Tier 2
Density	<p>4 units per lot OR 24 units per acre (scalable density)</p>	<p>3 units per lot + Transit/Affordability</p>
Priorities/ Incentives	<p>Preservation of tree or existing home More housing near transit</p>	<p>Preservation of existing housing. More housing near transit.</p> 
Other	<p>Adopted 1 large ordinance with 8 state laws Revised unit-lot-subdivision Consolidated and renamed zones</p>	<p>Consolidated residential zones Adopted a Unified Development Code 3 units per lot to include ADUs.</p>

A tale of two cities

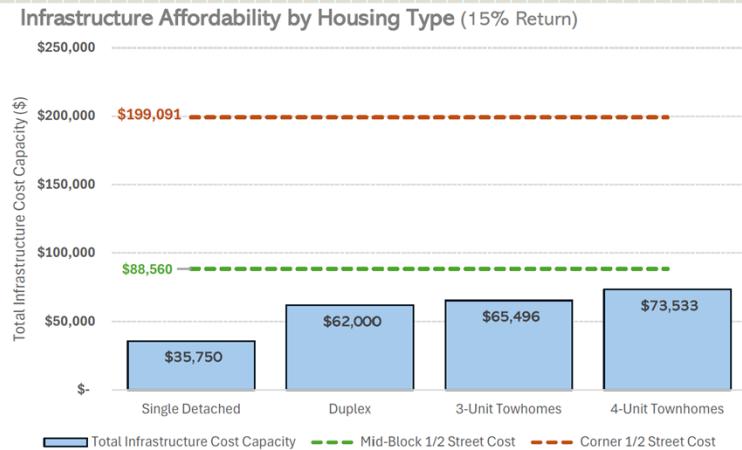
THE IMPLEMENTATION STORY



Outreach and Engagement

Kent

- Emphasize state requirements (and consequences for not meeting them)
- Use phases to bring people into the conversation- and a “parking lot” for ideas
- Work with builders and developers (and ask them where there are unintended consequences and assumptions)



Lynnwood

- Shared the bigger housing story
- Piece of the puzzle – today's housing is the next 20 years of Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing.
- Re-educate without renegotiating, especially Planning Commission and Council when election cycles don't align with the process.
- Embracing City Center



Realistic infill housing scenarios were used to illustrate how infrastructure costs can kill small projects and communicate the need to reevaluate standards to the PW department in Kent.



framework

The Road to Adoption

- ❑ Prepare a strategy for the “plus one” requests
- ❑ Set realistic expectations
- ❑ Don’t let perfect be the enemy of good
- ❑ Internal coordination



It takes a team! Be prepared for... anything

Implementation challenges

Updating electronic permit system

Kent:

- Bye bye Kiva, hello Amanda

Lynnwood:

- SmartGov

New submittal checklist/process

Kent:

- New site plan review with vesting

Lynnwood:

- Design Standards
- Frontage Improvements



Fact sheets/guides

Kent:

- Middle housing fact sheet
- Density guide

Lynnwood:

- ADU/DADU fact sheet update
- Design Standards
- Clarification Memos

Website

Kent:

Interactive Mapping Tool

- The new zoning districts
- Walksheds around major transit
- Urban separators
- Utility service areas

Lynnwood:

- Full scrub
- Zoning Map – done!

Story Time

Pause for Group Discussion

Possible discussion starters to ask the people near you:

- Did your city have a unique approach to middle housing?
- What were some of the unexpected impacts or interactions that middle housing had on other areas of the code?
- Did you have enough time and capacity for successful engagement? Why was it successful or not?
- What's in your "Parking lot" of good ideas for later? What are you looking forward to implementing next?
- How did your public meetings go? What positive comments did you hear? Negative comments or common fears?
- What were the concerns from other departments, such as public works? How are you addressing these concerns?





Main Takeaways

LESSONS LEARNED &
WHAT'S NEXT

Things We Know.. and Need to Keep Telling Ourselves

- There's no such thing as a planning emergency
- You're not alone
- Plagiarism is flattery – there is a lot of good work out there that applies to our own communities.
- This is creating job security and lots of learning opportunities
- Consultants are helpful and essential – outside perspectives, added capacity, scapegoats if needed.
- This is all new and a big experiment
- There is chasm in the roles/goals of planners and engineers
- Politics, internal buy-off, and “not planning” tasks are delegated to planners
- This is important, impactful work that will help provide homes for future community members! Our work matters, no wonder it's hard.

Lingering Questions and the Road Ahead

- Meters per building/unit
- Permit processing mechanisms
- Review of other ordinances and standards (driveway access, curb cuts, traffic, stormwater)
- Utilities
- Working with public works/engineers
- New legislation - TIF vs TOD, lot splitting (unintended consequences);



Incentivizing Small-Scale Development: Reduced Frontage Improvements

KENT'S NEXT BIG MOVE



Kent's Housing Needs + Priorities

Figure H-4: Kent Housing Needs Allocations by % AMI (King County Department of Community and Human Services)

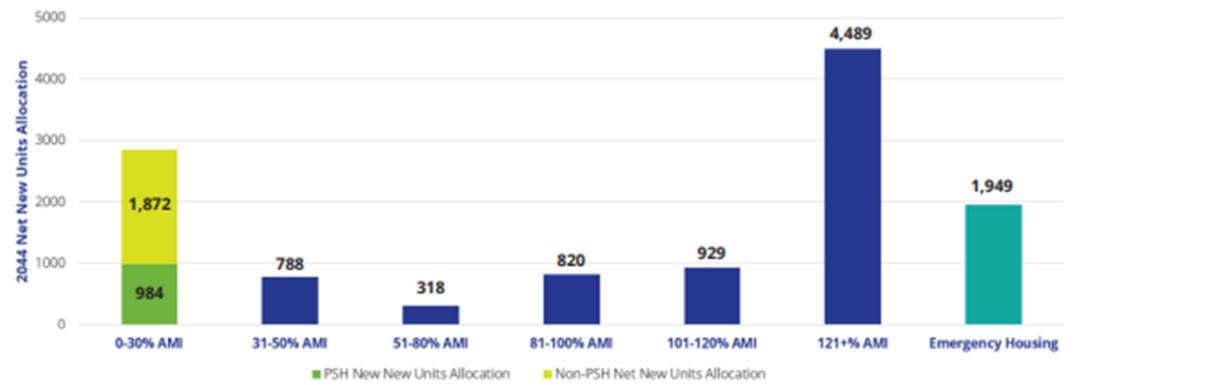
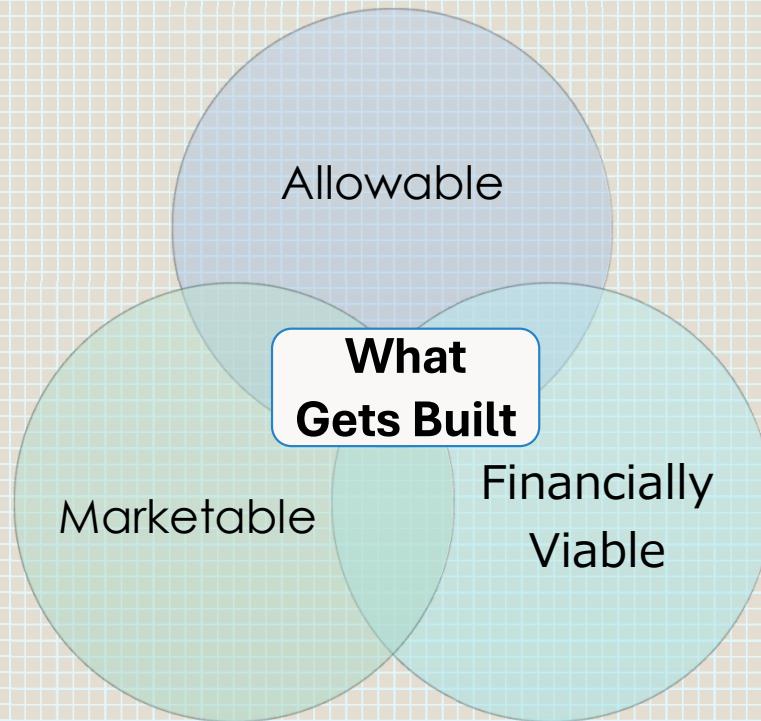


Table H-3: Housing Capacity by Income Ranges (reported as % of Area Median Income or AMI)

INCOME RANGE SERVED	HOUSING TYPES	TYPICAL FLU DESIGNATIONS	AGGREGATE NEED	PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (FUTURE LAND USE MAP)
120% + AMI	Detached Single Family, Some Middle Housing, and Multifamily	R1-R4, MU, UC, TOC, US	4,489	4,767
80-120% AMI	Some Middle Housing and Multifamily	R1-R4, MU, UC, TOC	1,749	3,513
<80% AMI	Multifamily, Mixed Use, and Manufactured Homes	R4, MHP, MU, UC, TOC	3,962	4,409
TOTAL			10,200	12,688

- Increase opportunities for **homeownership**, especially if it increases likelihood of **entry level** opportunities and **youth being able to stay in the Kent community**.
- Council's direction during ReCode Kent Phase 1: Find opportunities **to retain existing housing** and **promote smaller scale development** that contributes to existing neighborhoods.

Who Does Small-Scale Unit Infill Development?



Kent Permit Data (2010-2025)

	Prelim Plat Applications	Civil Applications	Final Plat Applications	Final Plats Approved
Long Plat (10+)	92	72 (78%)	67 (73%)	64 (70%)
Short Plat (2-9)	163	80 (49%)	59 (36%)	52 (32%)

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

- There is a **mismatch** between the expectations set by **existing policy** and the actual ability of projects to **support desired small-scale development**.
- A lack of economies of scale and high fixed costs for infrastructure hinder the viability of small infill projects, which will essentially incentivize and lead to larger projects.



Permitting Priorities

1. Clear Expectations
2. Identify Project Killers Early
3. No Surprises (or new requests)
4. Transparent Decision Making
5. Predictable Outcomes

BEFORE Recode Kent Phase 1: Project Killers
Zoning

NOW: Project Killers
Stormwater
Utilities
Access
Parking
Environmental Constraints
Frontage/Right-of-Way



“Sneaky” High-Cost Infrastructure

High-Cost Items	Who is Requiring It?
Stormwater	NPDES (State and Federal)
Utilities	Some Utility Discretion (External Utilities and State)
Access	Some City Discretion
Parking	Some City Discretion (State already overrides many decisions)
Environmental Constraints (Critical Areas, Flood, Shoreline)	State and Federal
Frontage/Right-of-way	Some City Discretion

Right-of-Way Improvements

Wider street

Parking

Access

Street Trees

Storm Drain

Curb and Gutter

Sidewalk



Right-of-Way Improvements



New Policy: “Right-Size” Frontage Improvements

- DRAFT-
Work In
Progress

When should the City require frontage improvements?

- **High Capacity Transit (TOD)** locations
- Scale of development: When **FIVE or more units** are proposed
- Lots along **Major Roadways**
- Lots that abut a roadway designated on the **Pedestrian Network**
- Lots that abut a roadway designated on the **Planned Bicycle Network**
- Connections to **Schools**

Figure T-1: City of Kent Local Functional Roadway Classifications

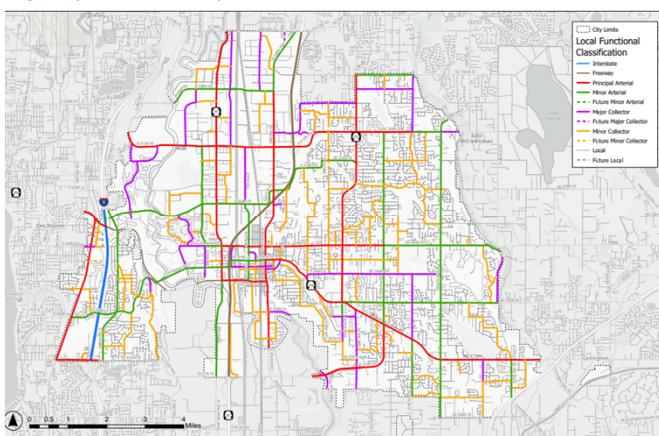


Figure T-6: Pedestrian Network

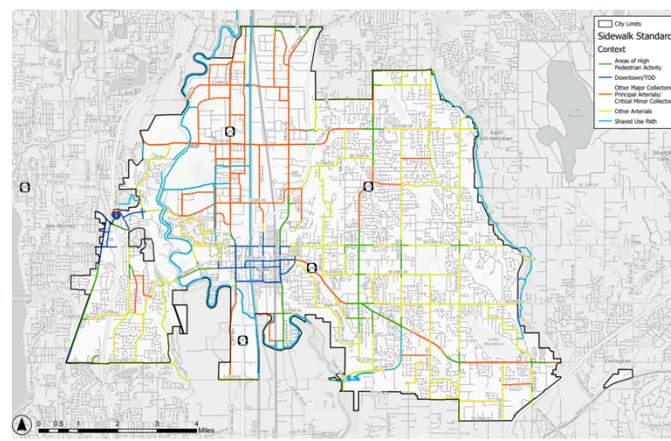
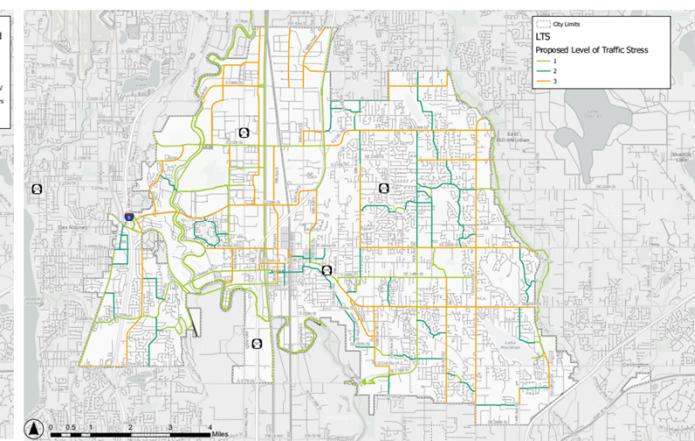


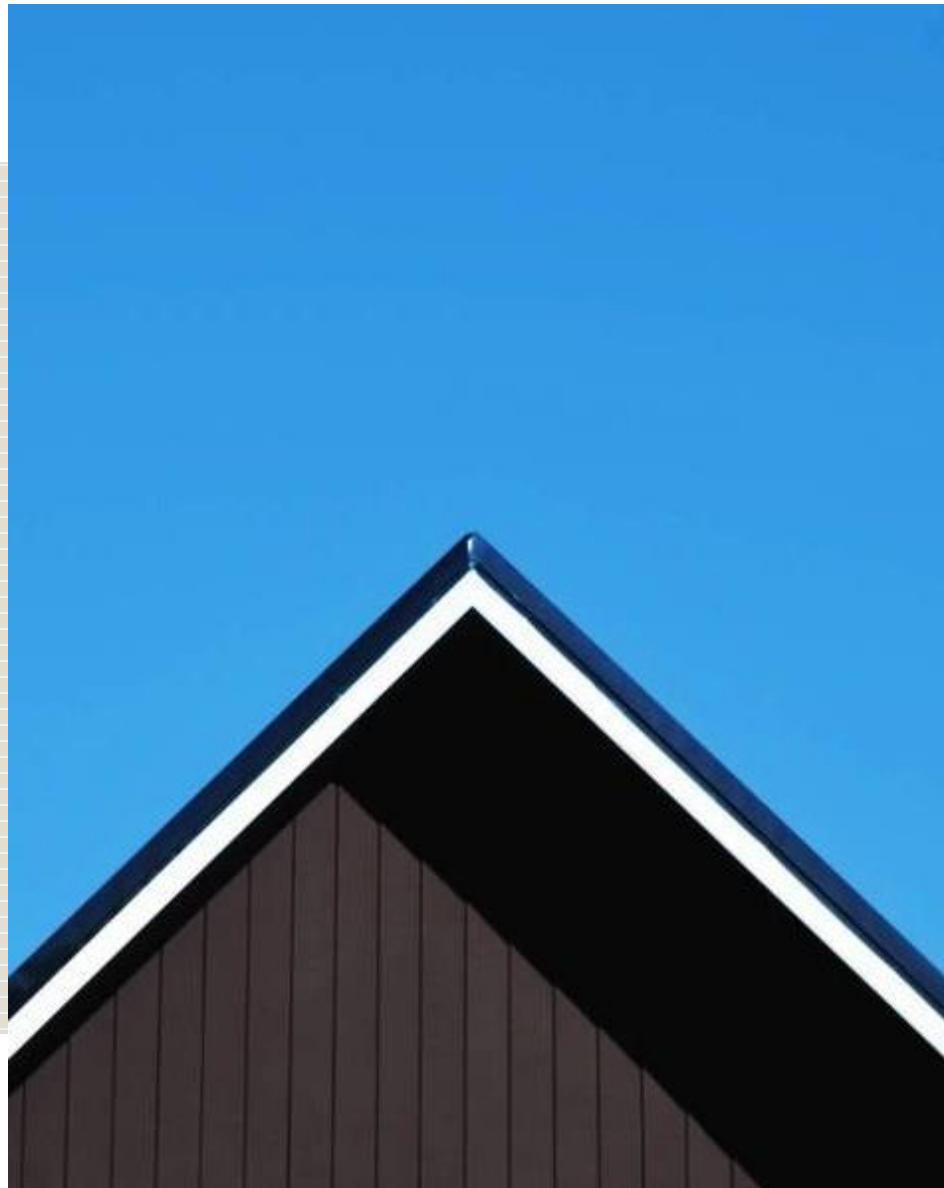
Figure T-8: Planned Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress and Rider Categories Network



Source: City of Kent, 2024

Source: City of Kent GeoPortal, 2024

Source: City of Kent, 2024



SPOTLIGHT ON LYNNWOOD- WHAT'S NEXT!?!

◦ R E V I S I O N S +

Lynnwood – Next Steps

Refining the UDC

- Design standards – good start but implementation is shaking pinch points lose
- Old code in a new format = gaps and contradictions
- Additions to the UDC – first up is Critical Areas Ordinance.

Programmatic Improvements

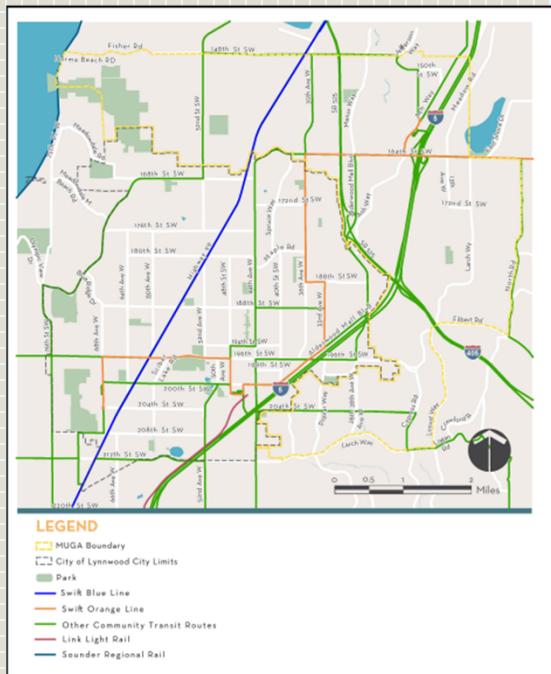
- Economic Development + Planning = Success
- Continued developer outreach
- Legislative work

Citywide Design Guidelines

- Update needed to align with Middle Housing and City Center and Highway 99 corridor projects

Lynnwood - Next Steps

Highway 99/TOD

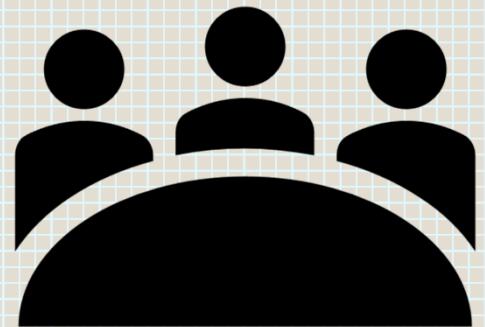


Mobile Home Parks

Table 8.30.24.

Existing Manufactured Home Parks		
Name	Address	Units/Acre
Candlewood Mobile Estates	3832 164th St. SW	8
Kingsbury West Mobile Home Park	5220 176th St. SW	8
Alpine Ridge East	17408 44th Ave. W	9
Alpine Ridge South	4515 176th St. SW	9
Meadowdale Mobile Home Park	17410 52nd Ave. W	9
Royalwood Mobile Estates	18501 52nd Ave. W	10
Lynnwood Park	5717 186th Place SW	11
Mark's Mobile Park	6324 212th St. SW	12
Medo-Lyn Mobile Ranch	6208 202nd St. SW	12
Bearden's Mobile Home Park	6020 202nd St. SW	13
Spacette MHP	7028 208th St. SW	13
Center Mobile Home Park	5920 200th St. SW	15
J & L Mobile Home Court	5907 202nd St. SW	15
Tally Ho Mobile Park	5001 180th St. SW	15

TBD – New Council





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