

Washoe County Planning Commission



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**COMMUNITY  
SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

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**WDCA24-0002 (Affordable Housing Package 2)**

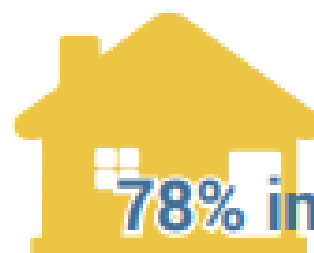
May 7, 2024

# Overview

- Amendments cover seven different topics:
  - Making Spanish Springs use table consistent with the rest of the County
  - Multi-family parking minimums
  - Bike parking
  - Sun Valley story limit removal
  - Turf requirements
  - Common and private open space requirements
  - Updating definitions

# Housing—Background

- Housing affordability and attainability are identified priorities in Washoe County
  - Envision Washoe 2040
  - 2023 Strategic Plan
- Amendments initiated by BCC on November 14, 2023



**78% increase in Median Home Value  
from 2010 to 2019**



**42% increase in Median Household  
Income from 2010 to 2019**

**FIGURE 6. WASHOE COUNTY MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME AND  
MEDIAN HOME VALUE**

*Source: US Census Data. 2010-2019 ACS 1-Year Estimates*

# Housing—Background (2)

- This housing package focuses on items that have historically been challenges for housing developers
- Spans 6 articles within the Washoe County Development Code
- Many of the codes being amended have not been updated since the 1990's
- Changes proposed are not applicable in Tahoe Planning Area

# Article 216 – Spanish Springs Area



- Article 216, Table C-1 modifies allowed residential uses in the Spanish Springs Area
  - Prohibits residential development in the neighborhood commercial (NC) regulatory zone
  - Limits opportunities to apply for discretionary permits for various housing types in certain regulatory zones
  - Currently the table requires a special use permit for detached ADUs
- Amendments to eliminate Table C-1 to bring the Spanish Springs Area in line with the rest of Washoe County
- Article 302 would then apply as it does in other areas of the County

# Article 218 – Sun Valley Area



- Sun Valley is the only planning area with a building story limit
  - Established in 1993, when the community modifiers were adopted.
- Limit has served as a barrier to the development of diverse housing types, and investment in the Sun Valley downtown corridor
- The 2-story height limit is counter to many goals for the Sun Valley planning area.
  - Balancing of single-family homes with higher density housing
  - Increasing a mix of housing supply
- Sun Valley properties would still be subject to the height limit of the underlying zoning, the majority being 35 feet
- Makes no changes to zoning, density, and does not increase multi-family allowances in Sun Valley

# Article 410 – Parking and Loading

- Staff reviewed local and national jurisdictions parking requirements. Proposed minimums in Washoe County are high for the region, and in the middle for national requirements.
- Many larger municipalities are moving towards eliminating parking minimums entirely
- Reno and Sparks have 1 parking space per unit, regardless of unit size.

# Article 410 – Parking and Loading

- Washoe County has not updated the parking standards for multi-family, or bike storage/parking requirements since 1993.
- Under package 2, multi-family is the only parking standard being updated.

	<b>Current</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
1 Bedroom	1.6 Spaces	N/A
2 Bedrooms or Fewer	2.1 Spaces	1 Space
3 Bedrooms	N/A	2 Spaces
4 or More Bedrooms	N/A	2.5 Spaces
Covered Parking	1 covered parking space is required for every unit	1 covered parking space is required for every 2 units



# Article 410 – Parking and Loading

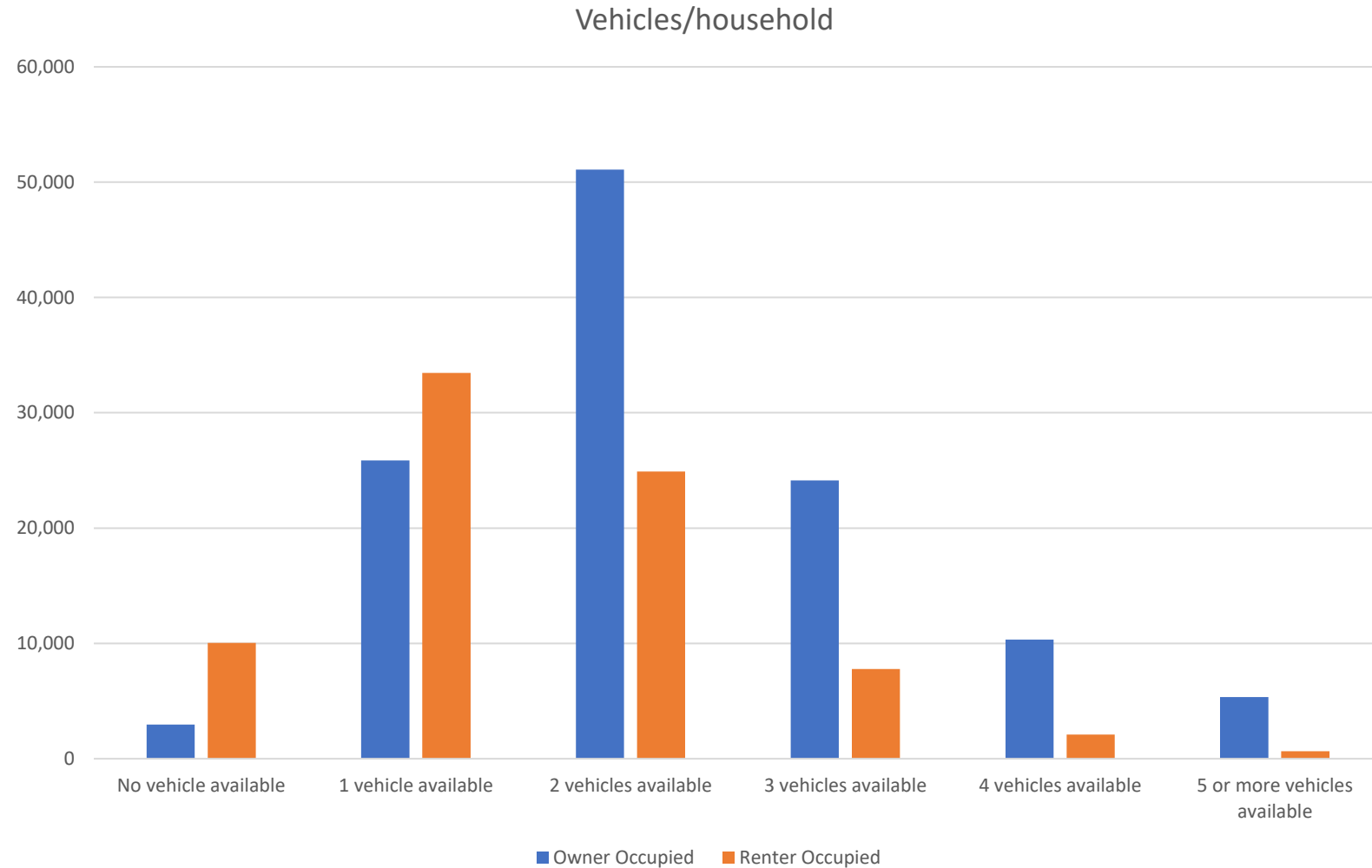


- Intended to reduce number of required parking spaces.
- Parking appears small on its own (150sf at the smallest) but the cost of parking, construction, operation, and maintenance is significant and often hidden within the cost of housing.
- Suburban off-street surface parking has an annualized cost of over \$1000 and urban surface parking has an annualized cost of over \$2000 per a 2023 parking study by VTPI
- The impact on rent can be significant due to the increased parking.

# Article 410 – Parking and Loading



- Existing trends in Washoe County indicate current minimum parking is higher than what is necessary.
- Household size has decreased.
- In Washoe County most rental households use 1 or less vehicles
- Less demand for parking in rental households



# Article 410 – Parking and Loading

- Bicycle storage and bicycle rack standards have been added to the Washoe County code to ensure bicycle storage is a primary consideration instead of an afterthought
  - Type of bicycle racks developers should use
  - Requirements for installation
  - Secure location
  - Covered areas
  - Additional requirements outlined for short-term and long-term bicycle parking.
- It is important for Washoe County to continue supporting multimodal transportation as affordable housing code updates continue, to support residents who may not have access to a vehicle and provide an overall alternative to driving.

# Article 412 – Landscaping

- Turf requirements have not been updated since the early 1990's.
  - Current language requires multi-family developments to have a turf area equal to a minimum of 50% of the total landscaped area.
- Northern Nevada climate, requirements for permanent irrigation, and continued maintenance of turf areas creates an unintended burden on multi-family housing.
- The current language is counter to the goals of Envision Washoe 2040 which prioritizes water-wise landscaping.
- Removing the minimum requirement does not prevent future development from creating turf areas for their residents.

# Article 432 – Open Space Standards



- Residential private open space standards have not been updated since 1996.
- County staff reviewed various jurisdictions nationally to bring the County's balcony and deck standards more consistent with regional and national standards.
- Reduction in the minimum size of ground floor rear yards, ground floor patios, and upper-level decks/balconies were identified as an item that can lower the cost of construction of certain housing types.
  - Current requirements can have significant increases on engineering costs for development
- The development code will provide an option to forgo decks, patios and balconies entirely and instead increase the square footage of required common open space

# Article 432 – Open Space Standards (2)



- Residential common open space standards have also not been updated since 1996.
- 110.432.15 identifies types of common open space that can be used within residential developments.
- One of the options is large turf areas
  - Have added standards for turf area, dimensions, square footage, and locations.
- The intent is to ensure any turf areas provided are a usable amenity for residents.

# Article 902 – Definitions



- With the addition of more defined bicycle storage standards and the different bicycle parking requirements, definitions for bike parking facility, short-term bicycle parking, and long-term bicycle parking have been added to Article 902.

# Community Meetings



- Meetings held on April 1<sup>st</sup> and April 3<sup>rd</sup> from 5:00-6:00 pm
- April 1<sup>st</sup> meeting attended by approximately 5 people
- April 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting attended by approximately 7 people
- Questions related to the removal of the story limit in Sun Valley, density allowances changing, and changes to the balcony and patio sizes
  - Sun Valley community members had serious concerns on the removal of the story limit
- Have had subsequent conversations with commentors about their questions and concerns
- Planning provided an update to the Sun Valley CAB on May 4, 2024. Approximately 30 people attended



## Must make one of the following findings:

1. Consistency with Master Plan. The proposed Development Code amendment is in substantial compliance with the policies and action programs of the Washoe County Master Plan;
2. Promotes the Purpose of the Development Code. The proposed Development Code amendment will not adversely impact the public health, safety or welfare, and will promote the original purposes for the Development Code as expressed in Article 918, Adoption of Development Code;
3. Response to Changed Conditions. The proposed Development Code amendment responds to changed conditions or further studies that have occurred since the Development Code was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, and the requested amendment allow for a more desirable utilization of land within the regulatory zones; and,
4. No Adverse Affects. The proposed Development Code amendment will not adversely affect the implementation of the policies and action programs of the Conservation Element or the Population Element of the Washoe County Master Plan.

# Recommended Motion

I move that, after giving reasoned consideration to the information contained in the staff report and information received during the public hearing, the Washoe County Planning Commission recommend approval of WDCA24-0002, to amend Washoe County Chapter 110 (Development Code) within Articles 216, 218, 410, 412, 432, and 902 as reflected within the proposed ordinance contained in Exhibit A-1. I further move to authorize the Chair to sign the resolution contained in Exhibit A on behalf of the Washoe County Planning Commission and to direct staff to present a report of this Commission's recommendation to the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners within 60 days of today's date. This recommendation for approval is based on the ability to make all of the following four findings in accordance with Washoe County Code Section 110.818.15(e):

# Thank you

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# Article 410 – Parking and Loading



- Most renter-occupied units in Washoe County contain 1 person per 2 rooms
- The data suggests that requiring more than 1 parking space per 2br unit is not necessary.
- Data led to staff's recommendation of 1 space per 2br units

