

YAKIMA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 11 at 5:30 PM

Location: Yakima Valley College

1704 W. Nob Hill Boulevard, Yakima, Washington, 98902

and

Microsoft Teams Meeting

- I. **Call to Order:** Chair – Doug Mayo called the meeting to order at 5:37 PM and requested the roll call.

A. **Roll Call.** A quorum was present at roll call:

1. **Planning Commission Members Present:** Doug Mayo, Mike Shuttleworth, Holly Castle, and Jerry Craig
2. **Planning Commission Members Absent:** Raul Martinez (unexcused) and Isidra Sanches (unexcused)
3. **Yakima County Planning Staff Present:** Olivia Story, Aaron M. Cohen, Phil Hoge, and Keith Wolf
4. **Other Staff Present:** HOME Investment Partnership Program, Brian Hedengren and Ester Magasis – (Yakima County Human Services).
5. **Public Present:** - Celina Sanchez (Teams)

B. **Approval of the May 14, 2025 minutes.** Mike moved to approve the minutes for the May 14, 2025 meeting, as presented, Jerry seconded, & the motion was approved 4-0.

II. **Public Comments.** None.

III. **New Business.**

A. **HOME Investment Partnership Program**

Brian Hedengren and Ester Magasis presented the county's affordable housing program:

- **Housing Need:** 10,000 additional units needed between 2020-2029; currently at 3,800 units (about halfway)
- **Funding:** \$4 million in federal HOME dollars plus ~\$3 million in local funds over 5 years
- **Programs:** Housing rehabilitation assistance (40 homeowners), down payment assistance (~\$1 million)
- **Challenge:** True affordable housing need requires ~\$100 million annually in subsidies - far beyond current capacity
- **Costs:** Multifamily affordable housing now costs \$300-350k per unit to develop

B. Comprehensive Plan Housing Element (LRN2025-00001/LRN2025-00007) Update

Olivia presented required updates to comply with new state laws:

- **Trigger:** House Bill 1220 requires more proactive affordable housing accommodations
- **Suggested Changes:** Adding specific policies for duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and ADUs; addressing displacement and racial equity
- **Process:** Working through Washington State Department of Commerce (DOC) checklist items A-G
- **Commission Input:** Agreed to add ADUs and modular housing to various policy lists

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Major discussion on state-required ADU policy changes:

- **State Requirement:** Must allow 2 ADUs per lot in Urban Growth Areas
- **Current Policy:** County allows 1 ADU in rural areas as well as in the UGAs.
- **Suggested Change:** Commission favored allowing 2 ADUs in Limited Areas of More Intense Rural Development (LAMIRDS) to match UGA standards.
- **Subdivision Rules:** Clarified the difference between ADUs on single parcels vs. subdivision requirements

During the ADU discussion, there were some informal consensus that more than one per lot was reasonable, with two being the consensus, within the UGAs and LAMIRDS. Other informal consensus items included adding ADUs and modular housing to H.3.11 & H.3.12. It was also noted that modular housing is a type of construction rather than a type of DU for land use purposes.

- **Suggested Changes** to add ADUs to policy lists alongside duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes throughout the document
- **Consensus to include modular housing** in addition to manufactured housing in capacity and policy sections
- **Discussion of implementation challenges**, including the distinction between ADUs and duplexes in the county's development code

Commerce Department Checklist Items A-G:

- **Item A (Goals and Policies):** Adding specific language throughout the document to include duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and ADUs as moderate-density housing options. New policy language emphasizes that "within Urban Growth Areas, moderate-density housing types such as duplexes, triplexes, and townhomes should be prioritized to support affordability and proximity to services." Staff also added recognition of the importance of locating housing near employment centers to reduce commute times.

- **Item B (Housing Needs Analysis):** Incorporating the Housing for All Planning Tool (HAPT) data showing projected housing needs by income level through 2046, including permanent supportive housing categories and specific allocations for each jurisdiction in the county.
- **Item C (Land Capacity):** New policies ensuring "sufficient land capacity is available to accommodate a diverse range of housing types," specifically listing government-assisted housing, moderate/low/very low/extremely low-income housing, manufactured housing, multifamily housing, group homes, foster care facilities, emergency housing, shelters, and permanent supportive housing.
- **Item D (Adequate Provisions):** Enhanced purpose statements requiring the county to "identify and document barriers to housing development, including regulatory constraints, infrastructure limitations, and market conditions," with strategies for addressing these barriers through zoning revisions and streamlined permitting.
- **Items E&F (Racial Equity):** Entirely new Goal H8 addressing racially disparate impacts, including policies to "eliminate discriminatory zoning practices, promote reinvestment in underserved areas," and require "equity-focused community engagement in housing policy decisions." This includes anti-displacement measures and infrastructure investments in historically disinvested neighborhoods.
- **Item G (Displacement Risk):** New policies (H 3.15) to "identify and monitor areas at higher risk of displacement due to market forces, zoning changes, and public capital investments," with coordination between county departments to assess vulnerable populations including low-income households, renters, seniors, and communities of color.

Process: Working systematically through DOC's checklist items A-G, with each proposed text change directly tied to meeting specific state requirements. Staff emphasized that while the exact language can be modified, the intent of each requirement must be met to achieve state compliance.

Additional Commission Input:

- **Questions about coordination** with other comprehensive plan elements and timing of development code updates

Implementation Timeline: The housing element must be adopted before development code changes can be made, as the comprehensive plan drives development regulations. A public hearing is tentatively scheduled for January 2026, with final adoption needed before ADU policy changes (required within 6 months of comp plan adoption per state law).

Technical Considerations: Staff noted that while the county already allows many of these housing types, the new requirements demand more explicit policy support and proactive planning to ensure adequate land capacity and removal of regulatory barriers. The update also requires better coordination between land use planning and infrastructure investments to support affordable housing development.

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3 **Outcomes & Next Steps**
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- 5 • A public hearing is tentatively scheduled for January 2026 on housing element
6 updates along with the other elements.
7 • Staff will draft language incorporating tonight's feedback
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10 **IV. Unfinished Business.**
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- 12 **A.** LRN2025-00001/LRN2025-00004 – Economic Development Element. Aaron
13 updated the Planning Commission on the employment numbers presented in
14 May. He confirmed from the Yakima County Development Association that they
15 receive their numbers from when they meet with those companies.- There was
16 some discussion about where the boundaries of the data collection occurs, with
17 many companies having satellite employment centers either outside of the
18 county or in towns and cities.
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20 **V. Communications**

- 21 **A. Reports from subcommittees and study groups.** None.
22 **B. Special Meetings Follow Up.** Additional special meeting planned for July 23rd
23 (virtual). Mike and Doug have conflicts with the August and September meetings,
24 so those meetings may need to be rescheduled.
25 **C. Status report of cases before the BOCC.** None.
26 **D. Secretary's Report.** None.
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28 **VI. Adjournment or continuance to a date, time, and place.** Mike made a motion to
29 adjourn, Holly seconded, the motion was passed 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:16
30 PM.
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32 Minutes approved by the Planning Commission on _____.
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34 Signed: _____
35 Planning Commission, Chair