

Multifamily Housing Design Project

We've taken a second look at our multifamily housing design standards.

The Multifamily Housing Design project intended to update Salem's design standards for multifamily housing, which is development with three or more dwelling units. The project aimed to help meet our community's housing needs by removing barriers to the development of multifamily housing and ensuring that new development is compatible with our neighborhoods.

To accomplish this, the project resulted in a proposed code amendment that:

- Provides greater flexibility in how multifamily design standards can be met
- Creates new design standards for small multifamily housing projects

Currently, there are more than 60 multifamily design standards. They regulate open space, landscaping, parking design, site access, building mass, facade design, recycling, and more.

Here are highlights of the proposed changes:

The complete list of proposed changes can be found on the project website: www.cityofsalem.net/Pages/Updating-multifamily-housing-design-requirements.aspx

Topic	Current	Proposed
3- and 4-unit Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered "multiple family development" • Must meet the same 60+ design standards as very large multifamily developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excluded from the definition of "multiple family development" • Must generally meet the same standards as single-family homes (e.g., maximum height of 35 ft, rear setback of 14 ft or 20 ft in the multiple family zones) • Must meet minimal design standards (e.g., building entrance faces a street or common open space, roof is pitched, etc.)
5 to 12-unit Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered "multiple family development" • Must meet the same 60+ design standards as very large multifamily developments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must meet limited design standards such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A primary entrance faces the street - No parking between buildings and streets - 20% of site is open space - Pedestrian connections to sidewalks, common open spaces, and parking - Reduced setbacks for smaller buildings



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Topic	Current	Proposed
13+ unit Development: <i>Open Space</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% of the site must be common open space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Up to 50% can be in setbacks - Up to 30% can be indoor or covered - At least one common open space must be of a minimum size (<i>proposed to remain</i>) • Private open space (e.g., balconies, patio) must be provided for every unit • Projects with 20+ units must provide a play or recreation area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 30% of the site must be a mix of common or private open space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can be indoor, covered, and in setbacks - Requirement can be reduced by 50% if within ¼ mile walking distance of a public park - Square footage of a play or recreation area is counted twice toward the requirement • Project with 20+ units must provide at least 20% of units with private open space
13+ unit Development: <i>Setbacks and Compatibility</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings next to single-family zones must be set back 1 ft for every 1 ft of building height, with minimums (<i>proposed to remain</i>): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1-story: 14 ft setback - 2 or more-story: 20 ft setback • Setbacks must be landscaped and have a 6-ft tall fence or wall (<i>proposed to remain</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-ft reduction in setback allowed if an 8-ft tall fence is provided • Balconies facing properties zoned single family must have fully sight-obscuring railings
13+ unit Development: <i>Building Mass and Articulation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every two attached units must be offset from the next unit by at least 4 feet • Buildings cannot be more than 150 ft long (<i>proposed to remain</i>) • Common entrances can serve up to 4 units (<i>proposed to remain</i>) • Rooflines cannot exceed 100 ft without a 4-ft change in elevation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vertical face of long buildings must incorporate design elements such as covered decks, offsets, or covered balconies • Rooflines cannot exceed 100 ft without a 4-ft change in elevation <i>or cross gable</i> • Base of multi-story buildings must be distinguished through color, material, or molding
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 units: 2 spaces per unit • 4+ units: 1.5 spaces per unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-12 units: 1 space per unit • 13+ units: Based on bedroom size of unit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Studio or 1-bedroom: 1 space per unit - 2+ bedrooms: 1.5 spaces per unit - Allow up to 25% parking reduction for transit access, on-site car share, or more covered bike parking - Allow parking reduction for affordable housing • 3+ units in downtown or within ¼ mile of Cherriot's Core Network: No minimum
Review Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project meets all standards: Staff review with no public notice (<i>proposed to remain</i>) • Project <i>cannot</i> meet all standards: Public hearing with public notice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project <i>cannot</i> meet all standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apply for an adjustment to specific standards (<i>public notice/comment and staff review</i>) - Adjustment decisions can be appealed to the hearing officer - City Council can call up decisions that have been appealed (<i>Class 2 adjustments</i>)

Learn more

- **Contact:** Eunice Kim, Planner III, ekim@cityofsalem.net or 503-540-2308
- **Visit the project page:** www.cityofsalem.net/Pages/updating-multifamily-housing-design-requirements.aspx