



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

1011 Plum Street SE • PO Box 42525 • Olympia, Washington 98504-2525 • (360) 725-4000

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January 07, 2021

Ms. Taylor Jones
Associate Planner
City of Fife
5411 23rd Street East
Fife, Washington 98424

Dear Ms. Jones:

Thank you for sending the proposed amendments to Fife's development regulations; we received them on December 18, 2020, and assigned them material ID No.2020-S-2155. These amendments also represent deliverables for the HB 1923 grant to address housing availability and affordability. We appreciate that your jurisdiction chose to use this grant to expand your range of housing choices, and to encourage the development of available and affordable housing in Fife. This should help the ability of your housing supply to meet the needs of all economic segments of your population. The objectives of the grant with Fife were to:

- **Authorize a duplex on each corner lot within all zoning districts that permit single family residences.** Before this grant, we understand duplexes were allowed in all residential zones except for the single-family zone. Fife is now allowing duplexes on corner lots in the single family zone, this should allow this zone to maintain character but add an additional unit on corners as a way to absorb new population in ways that maintain quality of life and provide more affordable housing options.
- **Allow for the division or redivision of nine lots through the short subdivision process.** Fife has increased the number of lots that can be processed under a short plat subdivision from four to nine. This approach should help to streamline opportunities for development and allow a builder to move more quickly from application to construction for up to nine lots. We encourage you to keep the grant program's goal of a streamlined development process as you finalize these amendments.
- **Authorize at least one duplex, triplex, or courtyard apartment on each parcel in one or more zoning districts that permit single-family residences, unless a city documents a specific infrastructure or physical constraint that would make the requirement unfeasible for a particular parcel.** Since duplexes are now to be allowed throughout Fife's residential zones, we see that you are amending the code to allow triplexes in all zones outside of the single family zone in order to meet this grant objective. A triplex can be an effective way to provide attached, attractive and affordable

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housing within your community, particularly within the context of a planned development. We see that many of your residential zones also allow multifamily housing, so a triplex will add to the range of allowable housing choices, and make most efficient use of a limited supply of land.

- **Permit both attached and detached accessory dwelling units (ADU) on all parcels containing single-family homes, provided lots are at least 4,350 feet in size, and adopt square footage requirements that are less restrictive than existing requirements.** Fife already allowed ADUs all zoning districts, but has used this opportunity to increase the size cap on ADUs to 900 square feet and removed the additional lot size requirement for attached ADUs. Coupled with the new three-year property tax exemption in [RCW 84.36.400](#), this should help to inspire property owners to invest in ADUs. Though implementation is often gradual, the ability to add an ADU will help a homeowner to earn additional income while providing a more affordable housing option. We like that the ordinance will allow manufactured units, as they are attractive and energy-efficient units that can be quickly and cost-effectively be added to a property. We also applaud the city's amendments to reduce impact fees for ADUs to be set at half the fee of single family housing. Some communities are also considering ways to reduce the number of impact fees for ADUs as a way to reduce the cost to homeowners, based on reduced impacts. We also have questions about monthly water and sewer fees and suggest no monthly fees be charged if the main residence and ADU share a single connection, or reduced fees if each unit has its own meter.

Congratulations to you and your staff for the good work these amendments represent. We encourage you to monitor progress and consider ways to add new, amend, or implement existing housing policies to enable the development of more and a greater variety of housing types. The next round of comprehensive plan updates is due by June of 2024, which should give the city an opportunity to see how these amendments are working, and consider options for meeting the housing needs for the next planning period. If you have any questions or concerns about our comments or any other growth management issues, please contact me at (360).259-5216. We extend our continued support to the City of Fife in achieving the goals of growth management.

Sincerely,



Anne Aurelia Fritz, AICP
Senior Planner
Growth Management Services

AAF:lw

cc: David Andersen, AICP, Managing Director, Growth Management Services
Steve Roberge, Deputy Managing Director, Growth Management Services
Ben Serr, AICP, Eastern Region Manager, Growth Management Services
Laura Hodgson, Associate Housing Planner, Growth Management Services