

Washoe County Board of County Commissioners



COMMUNITY
SERVICES DEPARTMENT

WDCA25-0001 (Housing Package 2.5a)

April 8, 2025

Housing Need



- The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) Housing Opportunity Index (% of population that can afford median priced home)
- In Q1 2014 **65%** could afford a median priced home and in Q3 2023 only **17.5%** could.

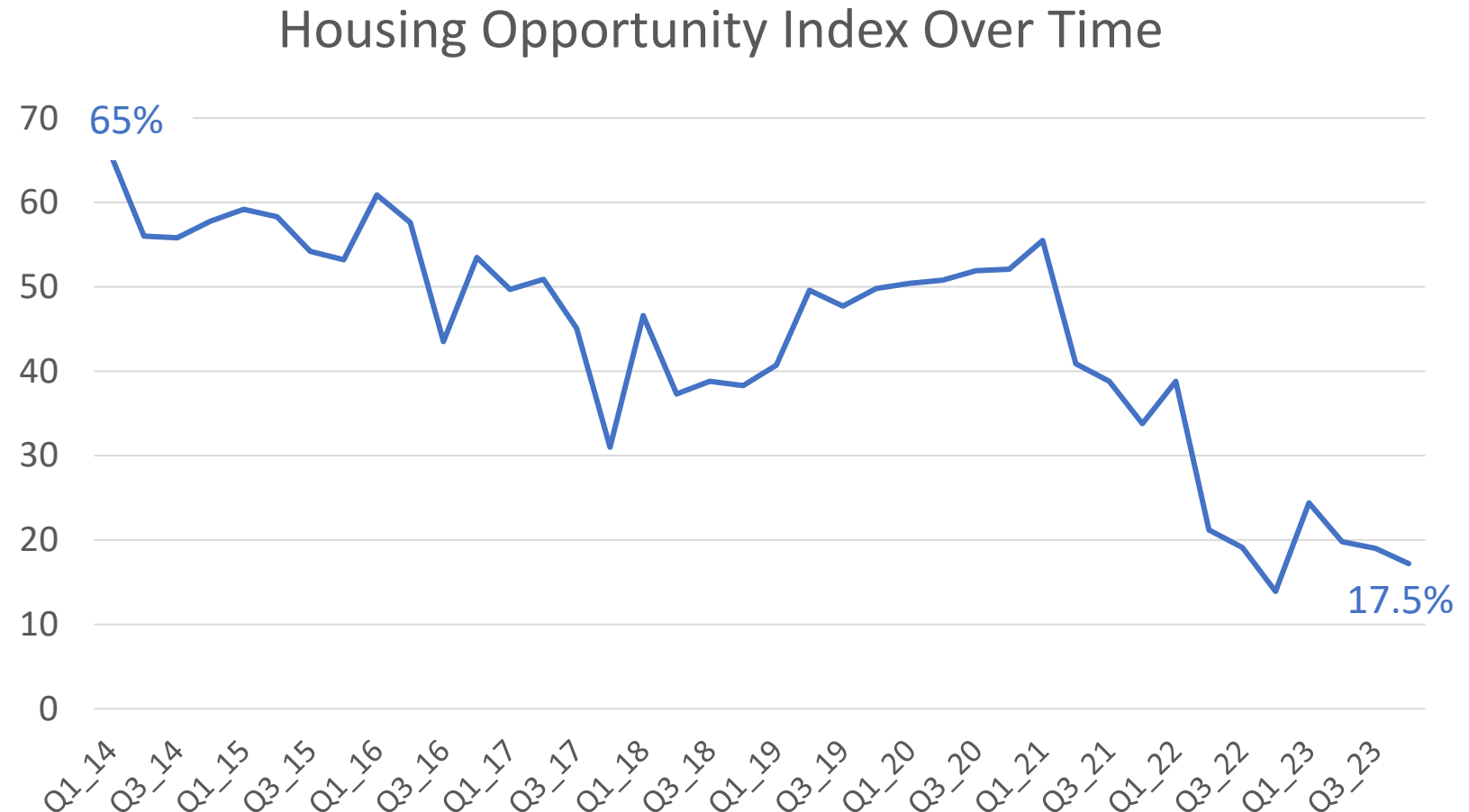


Figure 1: Housing opportunity index over time in Reno area.

Housing Over a Lifetime



Starter Home (<34 yrs old)

Apartment, attached housing (townhomes, condos, middle housing), small home/small lot



21% Washoe County population

Peak Household (35-64 yrs old)

Larger single-family home



51% Washoe County population

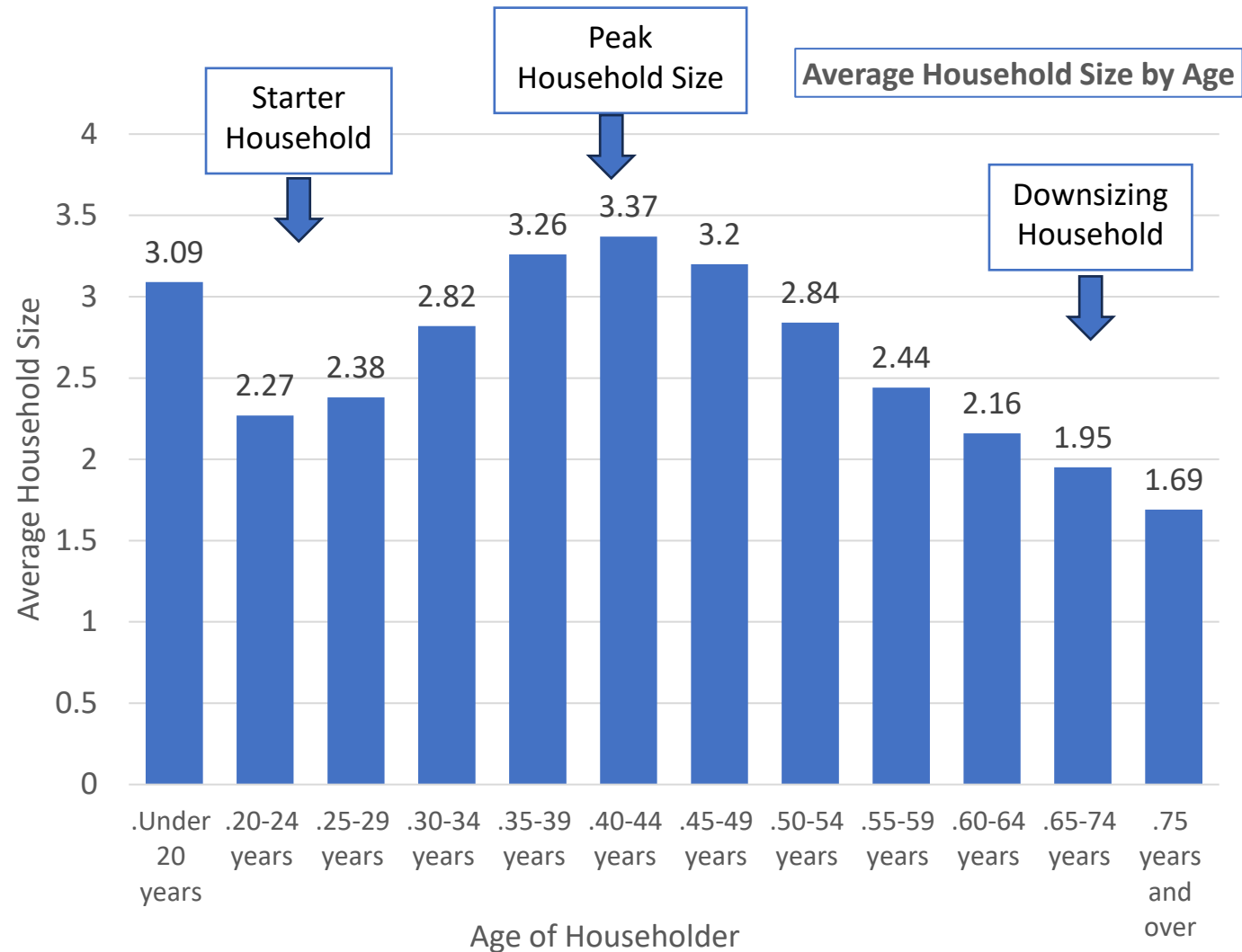
Downsizing (>65 yrs old)

Small home/small lot, attached housing (townhomes, condos, middle housing)



28% Washoe County population

*data include areas within cities



Housing Over a Lifetime (2)



Starter Home (<34 yrs old)

Apartment, attached housing (townhomes, condos, middle housing), small home/small lot

21% Washoe County population



Peak Household (35-64 yrs old)

Larger single-family home

51% Washoe County population



Downsizing (>65 yrs old)

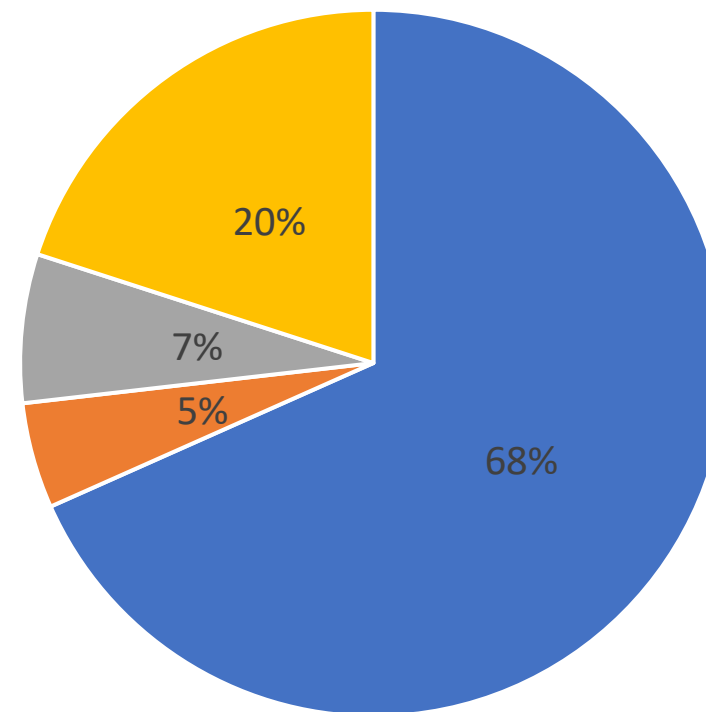
Small home/small lot, attached housing (townhomes, condos, middle housing)

28% Washoe County population



*data include areas within cities

Housing Types in Washoe County (Occupied)



■ Single Family detached ■ Townhomes/Condos
■ Duplex/Triplex/Quadplex ■ Apartments

Housing Over a Lifetime (3)



- **Future trend:** aging population
- Washoe County consensus forecast for seniors:
 - Currently 19.1% of population (96,472 people)
 - In 2044, 21.1% of population (126,396 people)
- Increase in senior population of approximately **30,000 people** (31% increase), and decrease in average household size



Source: AARP Making Room-Housing for a changing nation

Strategic & Long-Range Planning



	SERVICE LEVELS: Complete a fundamental review of service needs and programs to provide for the current community.
Meet the Needs of Our Growing Community	HOUSING SUPPLY/STREAMLINE PROCESSES: Streamline planning and permitting processes and soften standards that create unnecessary barriers.
	INCENTIVES: Explore voluntary pathways using incentives to spur the creation of affordable housing.

Figure 3: Washoe County Strategic Plan

- Washoe County Strategic Plan identifies **expanding appropriate housing options** across the community by **creating incentives** and **streamlining the planning and permitting processes**.
- Identified priority implementation item of Envision Washoe 2040: “Allow for more flexibility in the zoning...to **enable more housing types...**” (PH3.1)
 - Requirement of Regional Plan to provide for a diverse range of housing types and to increase workforce housing stock (PG 4)

Overview



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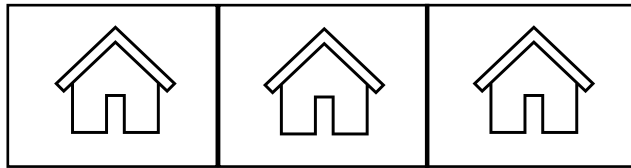


- Focused on “missing-middle housing”: a range of house-scale buildings with more than one unit that are compatible in scale with detached single-family housing.
- New uses proposed to be allowed in suburban areas of Washoe County are largely represented on the left end of the image above.

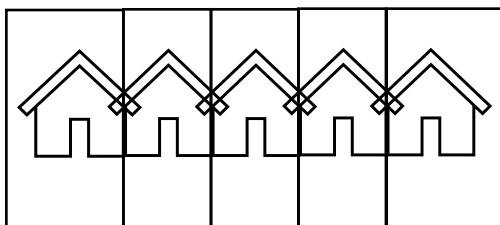
Density (# of Homes per acre)

- Housing types still must comply with underlying density
- **Maximum number of homes does not change**
- Density limited by Regional Plan designations
- Example: Medium Density Suburban (MDS). Existing code allows 3 per acre for detached homes and 5 per acre for attached homes

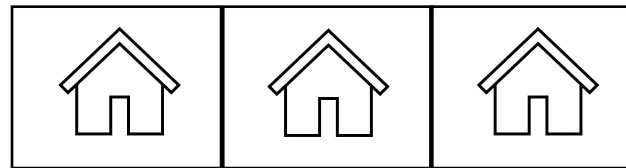
Currently



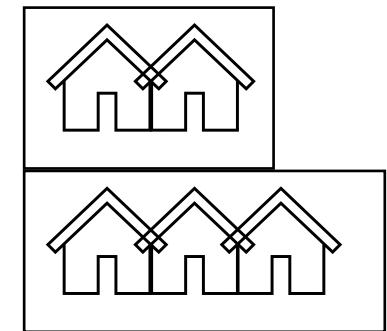
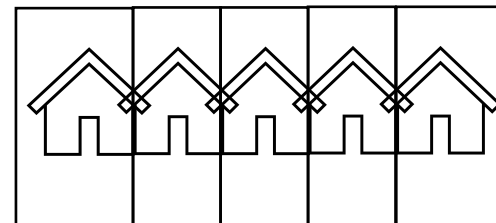
OR



Proposed



OR



Amendments Do NOT



- Allow apartment complexes throughout the County
- Increase the number of houses that can be built in residential areas
- Change the zoning of any property
- Propose any developments

Article 302—Allowed Uses



- Add categories for triplex, quadplex, cottage court, guest quarters, minor ADU, and employee housing
- Split multi family category into multi family and multi family minor (over 20 and 20 and under total units respectively)
- Change permitting process for duplexes and minor multifamily

Residential Use Types (Section 110.304.15)	LDR	MDR	HDR	LDS/ LDS 2	MDS/ MDS 4	HDS	LDU	MDU	HDU	GC	NC	TC	I	PSP	PR	OS	GR	GRA
Family Residential																		
Multi Family, Minor	--	--	--	--	--	--	PA	PA	A	--	S ₂	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Multi Family	--	--	--	--	--	--	S ₂	S ₂	A	--	S ₂	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Single Family, Attached	--	--	--	A	A	A	A	A	A	--	S ₂	--	--	--	P	--	--	A
Single Family, Detached	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	S ₂	S ₂	--	S ₂	--	--	--	P	--	A	A
Middle Housing																		
Duplex	--	--	--	P	AR	A	A	A	A	--	A	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Triplex	--	--	--	--	AR	A	A	A	A	--	A	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Quadplex	--	--	--	--	AR	A	A	A	A	--	A	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Cottage Court	--	--	--	P	AR	A	A	A	A	--	A	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Accessory Residential																		
Attached Accessory Dwelling	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	A	A
Detached Accessory Dwelling	A ¹	A ¹	A ¹	A ¹	AR	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	A ¹	A ¹
Minor Accessory Dwelling	A ¹	A ¹	A ¹	A ¹	AR	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	A ¹	A ¹
Detached Accessory Structure	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	--	A	--	--	--	--	--	A	A
Guest Quarters	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	A	A

Figure 5: Proposed Code (changes are in red)

Allowed Uses (2)



- Employee housing: dormitory style and traditional dwelling units
- Add regulations for existing use type, requiring a special use permit to ensure compatibility and allow only in commercial zones

Residential Use Types (Section 110.304.15)	LDR	MDR	HDR	LDS/ LDS 2	MDS/ MDS 4	HDS	LDU	MDU	HDU	GC	NC	TC	I	PSP	PR	OS	GR	GRA	
Non-municipal Air Strips and Glider Ports (Accessory Use)	S ₂	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	S ₂	S ₂	S ₂	--	--	S ₂	--	
Personal Landing Field (Accessory Use)	S ₂	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	S ₂	S ₂	S ₂	--	--	S ₂	--	
Manufactured Home Parks	*	*	*	*	*	S ₂	S ₂	*	*	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	*	--	
Group Home	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	--	S ₂	--	--	--	P	--	A	A	
Short-Term Rental (see Article 319)	Note: All of the below STR Tiers require the issuance of an STR permit, regardless of required review process.																		
Tier 1	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	--	--	--	--	A	A	
Tier 2	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	A	AR	A	--	--	--	--	AR	AR	
Tier 3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	S ₁	S ₁	S ₁	--	--	--	--	--	--	
Employee Housing	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	S₂	S₂	S₂	--	--	--	--	--	--	

Figure 6: Proposed Code Cont. (changes are in red)

Changes to support middle housing



- Updates to establish regulations for newly-defined housing types
 - Parking
 - Landscaping
- Updates to ensure high quality development
 - Common open space standards
- Updates to development standards to enable middle housing types
 - Changes to some setbacks, minimum lot widths, and minimum lot size

- Adds “Guest Quarters” use type, an accessory structure for semi-separate habitation without a kitchen.
 - Supports aging in place
- Direct response to public feedback.

Article 313 – Employee and Cottage Court Housing



- Newly established regulations for cottage courts and employee housing.
- **Cottage Court** regulations include:
 - Max dwelling unit square footage (1,000 sf)
 - Parking and common open space standards
- **Employee Housing** regulations include:
 - Requirement for on-site property managers
 - Specifications for essential facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms
 - Common open space requirements



Cottage Court

Industry & Agency Outreach



- Engaged with professionals involved in housing development:
 - Sierra Nevada Realtors
 - National Association of Home Builders
 - Professional Planning and Land Use Development Consultants
- Met with infrastructure agencies
 - Regional infrastructure planning based on zoning and master plan designations/maximum densities, which are not changing
 - All agencies had no concerns about amendments

Community Meetings



- **Meeting Schedule and Attendance**
 - **June 24, 2024** – Hybrid (In person/Remote via Zoom)
 - **Attendance:** 71 online; 14 in-person
 - **June 26, 2024** – Zoom Meeting Only
 - **Attendance:** 55 Online
 - **July 1, 2024** – In-person meeting at County Complex
 - **Attendance:** 41 In-Person
- **Survey Results**
 - 38 Residents completed the survey on Washoe County’s Neighborhood Meeting HUB page
 - Respondents were generally not in favor of the proposed code amendments

Changes Related to Public Input



- **Key Concerns:**
 - **Height Limit Removal:** Significant concerns in Spanish Springs
 - **Infrastructure:** Widespread concerns regarding the impacts on infrastructure
 - **Concerns regarding densities and apartments in rural areas:** Concern regarding increases to densities and allowances for apartments in rural areas
 - **Size of Package 2.5a:** Considerable feedback that the package was too large to be considered under one set of amendments
- **Staff Response:**
 - **Amendments removed:** Articles 208, 214, 216, 310, and 402 were removed from package 2.5a

Changes Related to Public Input (2)



● **Additional Changes:**

- Added minor ADUs to Article 302
- Renamed "bunkhouse" to "employee housing" for clarity regarding its use and character.
- Specified that cottages within a cottage court are located on a single parcel.
- Removed the term granny flats from ADU definitions
- Revised guest quarters definition to match the language in other ADU definitions
- Removed redundant language within ADU standards
- Aligned the maximum square footage for guest quarters with ADU's
- Broadened parking placement options for cottage court developments.
- Required that cottage court developments be served by sewer.
- Removed Spanish Springs specific changes from the proposed DCA.
- Removed North Valleys and Southwest Truckee Meadows planning area changes from the proposed DCA.

Changes Since November



- The **guest quarters definition** has been modified to require a “bedroom **and** bathroom” rather than a bedroom or bathroom.
- The **guest quarters regulations** have been modified to specify the maximum square footage allowances for parcels with duplexes, triplexes, or quadplexes, mirroring regulations for accessory dwelling units.
- The **definition of employee housing** has been modified to more clearly state that employee housing is provided as a benefit of employment, rather than “for compensation.”
- An **additional code standard for employee housing** has been added to require a deed restriction be recorded to limit use of the housing as employee housing.
- An **employee housing code standard has been modified** to provide a process to determine the common living and recreation space amenities required when there is no special use permit required (in the High Desert Planning Area modifiers).
- **Typographical errors and the accidental omission of the single-family attached housing use type in the Table 110.406.05.1 notes** have been fixed and text added to clarify densities and setbacks.
- **Various definitions in Art. 902 have been further modified.**
- **Various grammatical and typographical corrections** have been made to provide consistent punctuation and more clarity in code provisions.

Planning Commission



- Planning Commission on February 4th, 2025 voted 5-1 to recommend approval.
- The Planning Commission could make all four findings.

Must make one (1) 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.

Recommendation



- **Planning Commission recommendation:** Hold a second reading and adopt the ordinance.

Thank you

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