



# Planning Commission Staff Report

Meeting Date: April 7, 2026

Agenda Item: 9E

DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENT

CASE NUMBER:

WDCA26-0001 (Small Unit Density Incentive)

BRIEF SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Amendments establishing a density incentive for small dwelling units (under 1,200 square feet).

STAFF PLANNER:

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**CASE DESCRIPTION**

For hearing, discussion and possible action to initiate an amendment and approve a resolution to amend Washoe County Code Chapter 110 (Development Code) within Article 336 Housing Incentives to add small unit density standards allowing increased density for dwelling units with a maximum unit size of 1,200 square feet and establishing requirements for utilizing the increased density; and all matters necessarily connected therewith and pertaining thereto.

If the proposed amendments are initiated, the Planning Commission may recommend approval of the proposed ordinance as submitted, recommend approval with modifications based on input and discussion at the public hearing, or recommend denial. If approval is recommended, the Planning Commission is asked to authorize the Chair to sign a resolution to that effect.

Development Code: Authorized in Article 818, Amendment of Development Code  
Commission District: All Districts

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**INITIATE AND RECOMMEND APPROVAL**

**DENY**

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**Development Code Amendments**

The Washoe County development code is Chapter 110 of the Washoe County Code (WCC). The development code broadly regulates allowable and permitted land uses, subdivision of land, planning permit requirements and procedures, signage, infrastructure availability, land use development standards, and other related matters. Because the development code covers so many varying aspects of land use and development standards, it is expected that from time to time it may be necessary to change or amend one or more portions of the Development Code to keep it up to date with the most current and desirable trends in planning and development.

The development code amendment process provides a method of review and analysis for such proposed changes. Development code amendments may be initiated by the Washoe County Commission, the Washoe County Planning Commission, or an owner of real property. Development code amendments are initiated by resolution of the Washoe County Commission or the Planning Commission. Real property owners may submit an application to initiate a development code amendment.

After initiation, the Planning Commission considers the proposed amendment in a public hearing. The Planning Commission may recommend approval, approval with modifications or denial of the proposed amendment. The Planning Commission records its recommendation by resolution.

The Washoe County Commission hears all amendments recommended for approval, and amendments recommended for denial upon appeal. The County Commission will hold a first reading and introduction of the ordinance (proposed amendment), followed by a second reading and possible ordinance adoption in a public hearing at a second meeting at least two weeks after the first reading. Unless otherwise specified, ordinances are effective 10 days after adoption.

**Background and Proposed Amendments**

Housing affordability and attainability are identified in strategic planning and vision documents as one of the most pressing issues in Washoe County. Currently, approximately 50% of renters in Washoe County are cost burdened (e.g. spend more than 30% of household income on housing costs). This statistic is one of many that demonstrates the well-supported fact that it is difficult for many citizens to afford to rent or buy a home in the region.

Many trends impact housing affordability, one of which is housing size. Between 1970 and 2022, the median size of a newly constructed home in the medium density suburban (MDS) regulatory zone has increased from 1,266 to 2,231 square feet (76% increase). In the same time period, the mean household size in the United States has decreased from 3.14 to 2.5 people per household (40% decrease). Residents in Washoe County, therefore, may pay for more space than they want or need because very few smaller units are on the market. Approximately 63% of households in Washoe County are 1 or 2 person households that would be well served by smaller units that are simply not being built.

Population projections indicate that the demand for smaller units will only grow. The Washoe County Consensus Forecast anticipates a 30,000-person increase in seniors by 2044. Average household size decreases with age, and so seniors looking to “downsize” will likely be seeking smaller dwelling units. Currently, seniors and other citizens do not

have many housing options available for small units, limiting abilities to “age-in-place” and stay in one’s community.

On November 14, 2023, the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) identified amendments to Washoe County Code to increase housing affordability and accessibility in Washoe County. To date, six separate packages of development code amendments have been heard by the Planning Commission. This package, WDCA26-0001 (Small Unit Density Incentive) directly incentivizes the provision of new dwelling units 1,200 square feet or smaller by providing a 25% density increase for such units. These proposed amendments are based on analysis of the housing trends described above and on policies in Envision Washoe 2040 supporting a variety of housing types and unit sizes (Population and Housing Policies 3.1 and 3.5). Further analysis of the master plan and of potential impacts of the proposed density incentive are included in subsequent sections of this staff report.

Explanations of proposed changes and redlines for each section of code are in the following subsections of the staff report. The proposed text additions are shown in **red bold**. All deletions are shown in ~~red strike-through~~. Only the modified subsections of code are shown.

### Article 336 Housing Incentives

All proposed amendments as part of WDCA26-0001 are in Article 336 Housing Incentives. A new section is proposed to:

- Establish a 25% density increase for units with a maximum size of 1,200 square feet in the suburban, urban, and commercial regulatory zones (the rural zones are excluded).
- Preclude previously approved tentative maps and specific plans from utilizing the allowed density incentive without obtaining a new review and approval.
- Establish other standards for the use of the density incentive.

A density increase of 25% was selected to incentivize small units without creating negative impacts to traffic and building bulk, an analysis of which is detailed in the following section of this staff report. Any development utilizing the small unit density incentive will still be required to get approval through other applicable planning processes, including any required subdivision review or discretionary permits.

The proposed changes to Article 336 are as follows:

**Section 110.336.30 Small Unit Density. To support the development of small dwelling units, the following density incentive can be used for single family, middle housing, and multifamily development in suburban, urban, and commercial zones outside of the Tahoe Basin, subject to the restrictions stated in this section.**

- (a) A 25% density increase above the base density is allowed for units that are 1,200 square feet or smaller. Base density is calculated based on the underlying housing type and regulatory zoning per Table 110.406.05.1.**

- (b) The density incentive in this section may be utilized for a portion of a development with units under the required maximum square footage.
- (c) Additional units permitted by density incentive in this section will be subject to the maximum unit size of 1,200 square feet or less.
- (d) Units limited to 1,200 square feet pursuant to the provisions of this section must be 1,200 square feet or smaller at the time of issuance of the initial certificate of occupancy.
- (e) Approved tentative maps seeking to utilize the incentives in this section will be required to receive a new tentative map approval pursuant to Article 608.
- (f) Approved specific plans seeking to utilize the incentives in this section will be required to receive a new specific plan approval pursuant to Article 821.
- (g) No variance may be requested or granted for any portion of this section.

### Impact Analysis

In order to determine the appropriate rate of density increase for a small unit development, staff conducted several analyses related to the potential impacts. This included analyses of traffic generation and building bulk. Traffic, in particular, is a concern for citizens in nearly all areas of Washoe County. Therefore, staff conducted two analyses of potential traffic impact and proposed a rate of density increase that is **not** anticipated to increase traffic above what would be generated by existing allowed densities.

Staff compared estimated traffic impacts between three different “model neighborhoods” based on two different traffic generation estimate techniques. The three model neighborhoods are:

- 1) A 100-unit “standard” neighborhood that receives no density bonus and is assumed to reflect the overall average demographics of Washoe County. Based on the Census average household size estimate of 2.49 people, a standard neighborhood would have **249 residents**.
- 2) A 125-unit “small unit” neighborhood that receives a 25% density increase over a base density of 100 units and is assumed to be composed of only 1 and 2 person households in a proportion reflective of Washoe County household size demographics according to 2024 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates (45% 1 person and 55% 2 person). These proportions capture the ratio of 1 person to 2 person households, not their overall proportions in Washoe County when also including 3 and 4+ person households. Based on an average household size of 1.55 people, this small unit neighborhood would have **155 residents**.
- 3) A 125-unit “small unit” neighborhood that receives a 25% density increase over a base density of 100 units and is assumed to be composed of 1 and 2 person households in a proportion reflective of average home square footage per household member (37% 1 person and 63% 2 person). These calculations were made based on an average square feet per household member of 736 for the

mountain west region in the 2020 Census. Based on an average household size of 1.63 people, this small unit neighborhood would have **203 residents**.

The traffic generation for each of these model neighborhoods was estimated using two different traffic generation estimate techniques:

- 1) Single family resident-based Institute of Traffic Engineers (ITE) traffic generation estimates. Washoe County currently uses dwelling-unit based ITE estimates in traffic analyses. The resident-based ITE estimates are similarly substantiated by traffic studies from across the country and allow a method to estimate traffic impact based on the anticipated number of residents.
- 2) The application of household size-based traffic generation data from the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) 2024 Washoe County Household Travel Survey. RTC conducted a household travel survey as part of an update to their travel demand model. This survey determined an average trip generation for Washoe County households based on household size. This data is recent, specific to Washoe County, and appropriately weighted to represent Washoe County demographics.

Staff calculated a traffic generation estimate for the three model neighborhoods using the two different traffic generation estimation techniques. The results are included in Table 1 below. In all cases, a small unit neighborhood receiving a 25% density incentive would generate **less** traffic than a traditional neighborhood, generating anywhere from 78%-96% of typical traffic.

	Average Household Size	Overall Number of Residents	ITE Average Daily Trips	RTC Average Daily Trips
<b>100-unit Standard Neighborhood</b>	2.49 people	249 people	657 trips	770 trips
<b>125-unit Small Unit Neighborhood (WC Household Size)</b>	1.55 people	194 people	514 trips	710 trips
			<b>78%</b> of standard neighborhood	<b>92%</b> of standard neighborhood
<b>125-unit Small Unit Neighborhood (Mountain West sf-per-person)</b>	1.63 people	204 people	538 trips	737 trips
			<b>82%</b> of standard neighborhood	<b>96%</b> of standard neighborhood

*Table 1 Traffic Generation Estimates*

Averaging all the trip generation estimates for each neighborhood type suggests that small unit neighborhoods could potentially receive up to a 54% density increase without reaching the traffic impacts of a standard neighborhood. However, staff has proposed a more conservative rate of 25% to account for uncertainty in household size in a small unit neighborhood.

Staff conducted a similar analysis to understand impacts on overall building bulk from the proposed small unit density incentive. Once again, this analysis included three model neighborhoods:

- 1) A 100-unit “standard” neighborhood assumed to have an average home size of **1,865 square feet**, based on the average home size in the medium density suburban (MDS) regulatory zone for homes constructed from 1970-2024. This average home size was calculated based on Washoe County Assessor’s data.
- 2) A 100-unit “standard” neighborhood assumed to have an average home size of **2,261 square feet**, based on the average home size in the MDS regulatory zone for homes constructed from 2019-2024. This average home size was calculated based on Washoe County Assessor’s data.
- 3) A 125-unit “small unit” neighborhood assumed to have an average home size of **1,200 square feet**, which would be the maximum allowed utilizing the density incentive.

The resulting calculations reveal that the first neighborhood would have an overall building bulk of 186,500 square feet, the second 226,100 square feet, and the third 150,000 square feet. Compared to both standard neighborhoods, the small unit neighborhood would have **significantly less** building bulk, ranging from 66%-80% of typical building bulk. In this regard, a small unit neighborhood would therefore be less impactful than a typical neighborhood. Both the traffic and building bulk analyses show that the proposed small unit density incentive is a viable method to encourage small affordable-by-design homes in the County without creating negative impacts. Furthermore, these neighborhoods may have many positive impacts outside of affordability, including reduced traffic and increased air and space in the built environment.

### **Public Workshop**

Staff held a public workshop via Zoom on Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> and in person on Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 8 citizens attended. Planning representatives described the overall intent of the amendments and presented the draft changes. There was an opportunity for questions and discussion.

Questions and comments were related to deed restrictions, the need for smaller dwelling units, parking requirements, and more. Overall, attendees were supportive of the proposed amendments. Summaries of the meetings are attached as Exhibit B.

### **Findings**

Washoe County Code Section 110.818.15(e) requires the Planning Commission to make at least one of the following findings of fact. Staff provides the following evaluation for

each of the findings of fact and recommends that the Planning Commission make all four findings in support of the proposed Development Code amendment.

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.

Staff comment: *This finding can be made for the following reasons:*

- *The proposed amendments to establish a density incentive for dwelling units under 1,200 square feet conform with Population and Housing Policy PH3.1, which directs the county to enable more housing types to be built where adequate infrastructure exists, and PH3.5, which directs the county to require and/or incentivize a mixture of housing types.*
  - *The proposed amendments directly address one of the four cross-cutting themes of Envision Washoe 2040, which is diversifying housing. Incentivizing smaller units supports the creation of more types of housing in Washoe County, so that residents have accessible options at all stages in their lives.*
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.

Staff comment: *This finding can be made for the following reasons:*

- *The proposed amendments promote the original purpose of the Development Code as expressed in Article 918, Adoption of Development Code, which include “promote[ing] public health [and] safety” (WCC 110.918.10(a)).*
  - *The amendments will promote public health and safety by supporting the diversification of housing types and supporting the expansion of housing supply in Washoe County. It is well recognized that housing affordability is a social determinant of health; that is to say, unaffordable housing is linked to many negative health outcomes.<sup>1</sup> The proposed changes would support increasing the supply of accessible, quality, and safe housing by incentivizing small units that are sized to serve 1- and 2-person households, which account for 63% of Washoe County households. These changes lower barriers to “starter home” development while not adversely affecting public health and safety.*
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 amendments allow for a more desirable utilization of land within the regulatory zones.

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<sup>1</sup> Carolyn B. Swope, Diana Hernández. Housing as a determinant of health equity: A conceptual model. *Social Science & Medicine*, Volume 243, 2019.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7146083/#R199>.

Staff comment: *This finding can be made for the following reasons:*

- *As described within this staff report, the proposed amendments respond to an increased demand for more diverse and accessible housing options. They support and incentivize the creation of smaller housing units that can better serve Washoe County households, which continue to decrease in average size.*
  - *Unincorporated Washoe County is expected to absorb up to a 15,757-person population increase through 2044 and the proposed changes will provide for more attainable and affordable housing use types throughout unincorporated Washoe County. The changes will also incentivize smaller and easier to maintain housing units that can serve the senior population, which is expected to increase by approximately 30,000 people through 2044.*
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.

Staff comment: *This finding is able to be made for the following reasons:*

- *The Conservation Element addresses protecting sensitive and important lands, cooperation with other agencies to minimize wildlife conflicts, and considerations for air quality, among other policies. The Conservation Element does not prohibit development code amendments, nor does it prohibit the incentivization of certain housing types.*
- *The Population and Housing Element specifically identifies opportunities to enhance the ability for the population to age in place, including improved public transportation and expanded housing diversity and options. These amendments explicitly pursue these goals by encouraging small units, which can provide options for seniors to age-in-place in their communities.*
- *The following policies are outlined within the Population and Housing Element and supported by these amendments.*
  - *“3.1. Allow for more flexibility in the zoning and land use regulations to enable more housing types to be built throughout the community where adequate infrastructure exists.”*
  - *“3.4. Require and/or incentivize a mixture of housing types (i.e. product types, unit sizes, and price points) in large development applications and subdivisions.”*

### **Public Notice**

Pursuant to Washoe County Code Section 110.818.20, notice of this public hearing was published in the newspaper at least 10 days prior to this meeting.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Washoe County Planning Commission initiate and recommend approval of WDCA26-0001, to amend Washoe County Chapter 110 (Development Code) within Article 336. The following motion is provided for your consideration.

**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 initiate and recommend approval of WDCA26-0001, to amend Washoe County Chapter 110 (Development Code) within Article 336, Housing Incentives to add small unit density standards allowing increased density for dwelling units with a maximum unit size of 1,200 square feet and establishing requirements for utilizing the increased density; and all matters necessarily connected therewith and pertaining thereto. I further move to authorize the Chair to sign the resolution contained in Attachment 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 all of the following four findings in accordance with Washoe County Code Section 110.818.15(e):

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.

**Appeal Process**

An appeal of the Planning Commission's denial of a development code amendment may be made to the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners within 10 calendar days from the date that the Planning Commission's decision is filed with the Secretary to the Planning Commission, pursuant to Washoe County Code Section 110.818.26 and Washoe County Code Section 110.912.20.



## RESOLUTION OF THE WASHOE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

Initiating and recommending approval of an ordinance amending Washoe County Code Chapter 110 (Development Code) in Division Three—Regulation of Uses. These amendments include adding a section within Article 336 Housing Incentives to add small unit density standards allowing increased density for dwelling units with a maximum unit size of 1,200 square feet and establishing requirements for utilizing the increased density; and all matters necessarily connected therewith and pertaining thereto.

Resolution Number 26-07

### WHEREAS;

- A. Washoe County Code Section 110.818.05 requires that amendments to Washoe County Code Chapter 110 (Development Code) be initiated by resolution of the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners or the Washoe County Planning Commission; and
- B. The Washoe County Planning Commission initiated amendments to the Washoe County Code at Chapter 110 (Development Code) within Article 336 Housing Incentives on April 7, 2026, as fully described in Exhibit A-1 to this resolution; and
- C. Development Code Amendment Case Number WDCA26-0001 came before the Washoe County Planning Commission for a duly noticed public hearing on April 7, 2026; and
- D. The Washoe County Planning Commission gave reasoned consideration to the information it received regarding the proposed Development Code Amendment; and
- E. Whereas, pursuant to Washoe County Code Section 110.818.15(e), the Washoe County Planning Commission made at least one of the following findings to support its recommendation for adoption of the proposed Development Code Amendment Case Number WDCA26-0001:
  1. Consistency with Master Plan. The proposed 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.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Washoe County Planning Commission recommends approval of the ordinance attached hereto as Exhibit A-1.

A report describing this amendment, discussion at this public hearing, this recommendation, and the vote on the recommendation will be forwarded to the Washoe County Board of County Commissioners within 60 days of this resolution's adoption date.

ADOPTED on April 7, 2026.

WASHOE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

ATTEST:

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Trevor Lloyd, Secretary

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Daniel Lazzareschi, Chair

DRAFT: March 19, 2026

WORKING COPY  
INFORMATION ONLY

REGULAR TEXT: NO CHANGE IN LANGUAGE

~~STRIKEOUT TEXT: DELETE LANGUAGE~~

**BOLD TEXT: NEW LANGUAGE**

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Notice: Per NRS 239B.030, this document does not contain personal information as defined in NRS 603A.040

**Summary: Amendments establishing a density incentive for small dwelling units (under 1,200 square feet).**

BILL NO. \_\_\_\_\_

ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Title:

An ordinance amending the Washoe County Code at Chapter 110 (Development Code), Article 336 Housing Incentives to add small unit density standards allowing increased density for dwelling units with a maximum unit size of 1,200 square feet and establishing requirements for utilizing the increased density; and all matters necessarily connected therewith and pertaining thereto.

WHEREAS:

A. This Commission desires to amend the Washoe County Development Code (Chapter 110 of the Washoe County Code) in Article 336 Housing Incentives to add small unit density standards allowing increased density for dwelling units with a maximum unit size of 1,200 square feet and establishing requirements for utilizing the increased density; and,

B. The Washoe County Planning Commission initiated the proposed amendments to Washoe County Code Development Code (Chapter 110), Article 336 by Resolution Number 26-07 on April 7, 2026; and,

DRAFT: March 19, 2026

- C. The amendments and this ordinance were drafted in concert with the District Attorney's Office, and the Planning Commission held a duly noticed public hearing for WDCA26-0001 on April 7, 2026, and adopted Resolution Number 26-07 recommending adoption of this ordinance; and,
- D. Following a first reading and publication as required by NRS 244.100 (1), and after a duly noticed public hearing, this Commission desires to adopt this Ordinance; and,
- E. This Commission has determined that this ordinance is being adopted pursuant to requirements set forth in NRS Chapter 278; and therefore, it is not a "rule" as defined in NRS 237.060 requiring a business impact statement.

THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF WASHOE COUNTY DOES HEREBY ORDAIN:

SECTION 1. Chapter 110 of the Washoe County Code is hereby amended adding a new section which shall be labeled Section 110.336.30 Small Unit Density and shall read as follows:

**Section 110.336.30 Small Unit Density. To support the development of small dwelling units, the following density incentive can be used for single family, middle housing, and multifamily development in suburban, urban, and commercial zones outside of the Tahoe Basin, subject to the restrictions stated in this section.**

- (a) **A 25% density increase above the base density is allowed for units that are 1,200 square feet or smaller. Base density is calculated based on the underlying housing type and regulatory zoning per Table 110.406.05.1.**
- (b) **The density incentive in this section may be utilized for a portion of a development with units under the required maximum square footage.**
- (c) **Additional units permitted by density incentive in this section will be subject to the maximum unit size of 1,200 square feet or less.**
- (d) **Units limited to 1,200 square feet pursuant to the provisions of this section must be 1,200 square feet or smaller at the time of issuance of the initial certificate of occupancy.**

**DRAFT: March 19, 2026**

- (e) Approved tentative maps seeking to utilize the incentives in this section will be required to receive a new tentative map approval pursuant to Article 608.**
- (f) Approved specific plans seeking to utilize the incentives in this section will be required to receive a new specific plan approval pursuant to Article 821.**
- (g) No variance may be requested or granted for any portion of this section.**

SECTION 2. General Terms.

1. All actions, proceedings, matters, and things heretofore taken, had and done by the County and its officers not inconsistent with the provisions of this Ordinance are ratified and approved.
2. The Chair of the Board and officers of the County are authorized and directed to take all action necessary or appropriate to effectuate the provisions of this Ordinance. The District Attorney's Office is authorized to make non-substantive edits and corrections to this Ordinance.
3. All ordinances, resolutions, bylaws and orders, or parts thereof, in conflict with the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby repealed to the extent only of such inconsistency. This repealer shall not be construed to revive any ordinance, resolution, bylaw or order, or part thereof, heretofore repealed.
4. Each term and provision of this Ordinance shall be valid and shall be enforced to the extent permitted by law. If any term or provision of this Ordinance or the application thereof shall be deemed by a court of competent jurisdiction to be in violation of law or public policy, then it shall be deemed modified, ipso facto, to bring it within the limits of validity or enforceability, but if it cannot be so modified, then the offending provision or term shall be excised from this Ordinance. In any event, the remainder of this Ordinance, or the application of such term or provision to circumstances other than those to which it is invalid or unenforceable, shall not be affected.

**DRAFT: March 19, 2026**

Passage and Effective Date

Proposed on \_\_\_\_\_ (month) \_\_\_\_\_ (day), 2026.

Proposed by Commissioner \_\_\_\_\_.

Passed on \_\_\_\_\_ (month) \_\_\_\_\_ (day), 2026.

Vote:

Ayes:

Nays:

Absent:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clara Andriola, Chair  
County Commission

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Jan Galassini, County Clerk

This ordinance shall be in force and effect from and after the \_\_\_\_\_ day of the month of \_\_\_\_\_ of the year \_\_\_\_\_.



## WDCA26-0001 (Small Unit Density Incentive)—3/4/26 Neighborhood Meeting Summary

Kat Oakley from the Washoe County Planning Division conducted a neighborhood meeting on WDCA26-0001 (Small Unit Density Incentive) via Zoom from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. Approximately 6 members of the public attended. Planning representatives gave a presentation which covered background and an overview of draft amendments. The following topics were discussed and/or commented on:

- Suggestion that accounting for lesser traffic demand for housing near job sites would be worth exploring as a secondary benefit to small units.
- Questions about the requirements related to deed restrictions.
- Questions about whether development fees such as traffic impact fees, sewer connection fees, etc. would be modified for small units.
- Comment that there is a demand for smaller homes as demonstrated by the local success of that product.
- Comment that the lack of an income-related deed restriction makes the proposed density incentive usable.
- Suggestion of using a deed-restriction or some sort of mechanism to prevent small units from being bought by investors.
- Questions regarding enclosed/covered parking requirements.
- Questions regarding the applicability of the density incentive in Incline Village/Crystal Bay. Staff clarified that this density incentive could not be utilized in the Tahoe Basin.
- Discussion of why certain people might want to live in a smaller single-family dwelling, including building equity, having their own land, and having a yard for pets.
- Suggestion to reach out to City of Reno staff to discuss if any challenges have come up in the development of small unit neighborhoods in their jurisdiction.
- Question about whether there is an estimate of what a small unit would cost.

If people have further questions or comments, please reach out to Kat Oakley at [koakley@washoecounty.gov](mailto:koakley@washoecounty.gov).



## WDCA26-0001 (Small Unit Density Incentive)—3/5/26 Neighborhood Meeting Summary

Kat Oakley from the Washoe County Planning Division conducted a neighborhood meeting on WDCA26-0001 (Small Unit Density Incentive) at the Washoe County Complex from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Three members of the public attended. Planning representatives gave a presentation which covered background and an overview of draft amendments. The following topics were discussed and/or commented on:

- Comments regarding how the need for small dwelling units exists in the community and is demonstrated by statistics and data.
- Discussion of some existing recent housing developments, including some that have a minimum unit size around 1,400 square feet and some that have a maximum unit size around 1,400 square feet.
- Discussion of community land trusts and their potential use in creating more attainable housing.
- Discussion of parking requirements for small units and for the various housing types.
- Comments regarding the need to keep units “affordable” over time, not just for a short initial period.
- Discussion of how young people sometimes feel that they will never be able to afford a home.
- Comments in support of the proposed amendments.

If people have further questions or comments, please reach out to Kat Oakley at [koakley@washoecounty.gov](mailto:koakley@washoecounty.gov).