

Chapter 21.20

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

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21.20.010 Purpose.

The purpose of this chapter is to:

- A. Implement the responsibility of the City under the state Growth Management Act to provide for housing opportunities for all economic segments of the community.
- B. Help address the shortage of housing in the City for persons of low and moderate incomes, helping to provide opportunities for low- and moderate-income persons who work in the City to live here, rather than in locations distant from employment that contribute to increased length and number of vehicle trips.
- C. Help facilitate an adequate affordable housing supply in the City by offsetting the pressure on housing costs resulting from high job growth and construction of high-end housing.
- D. Preserve and create opportunities for affordable housing as the City continues to grow.
- E. Encourage the construction of housing that is affordable to senior citizens of Redmond.

Effective on: 4/16/2011

21.20.020 Applicability.

A. This chapter applies to:

1. All new residential and mixed-use developments within the Downtown, Overlake, Bear Creek, Willows/Rose Hill, Grass Lawn, North Redmond, Southeast Redmond, and Education Hill Neighborhoods;
2. All new senior housing developments and congregate care dwelling units, not including nursing homes.



(Ord. 2753)

Effective on: 11/1/2014

21.20.030 General Requirements and Incentives.

- A. Pursuant to RCW [36.70A.540](#), the City finds that the higher income levels specified in the definition of “affordable housing” set forth in the definitions section of this Zoning Code are necessary to address local housing market conditions in the City. The income levels specified in the definitions section of this Zoning Code shall therefore be used in lieu of the “low-income household” income levels set forth in RCW [36.70A.540](#).
- B. Certain provisions in this section such as affordability levels and bonuses may not apply or may be superseded as otherwise specified in RZC [21.20](#), *Affordable Housing* or RMC Chapter [3.38](#) Multifamily Housing Property Tax Exemption.
- C. At least 10 percent of the units in new housing developments in those areas specified in RZC [21.20.020](#), *Applicability*, of 10 units or greater must be affordable housing units.
- D. At least one bonus market-rate unit is permitted for each affordable housing unit provided, up to 15 percent above the maximum allowed density. For example, if the maximum allowed density for the site is 20 units per acre, the density bonus shall not exceed three units per acre, yielding a total allowed density, with bonus, of 23 units per acre, or 20 units + 15 percent bonus

= 23 units. In areas where density limitation is expressed as a Floor Area Ratio (FAR), density bonuses will be calculated as an equivalent FAR bonus.

E. Each low-cost affordable housing unit provided counts as two affordable housing units for the purpose of satisfying the affordable unit requirement under subsection RZC [21.20.030.B](#) of this section. For purposes of computing bonus market-rate units under subsection RZC [21.20.030.D](#) of this section, two bonus market-rate units are permitted for each low-cost affordable housing unit provided, up to 20 percent above the maximum density permitted on the site.

F. The number of required affordable housing units is determined by rounding fractional numbers up to the nearest whole number from 0.5. In single-family zones, the required number of affordable housing units shall be calculated as a minimum of 10 percent of the greater of: (1) proposed dwelling units on the site, excluding cottage housing density bonus or other bonuses, or (2) net buildable area multiplied by the site's allowed density.

G. If applicable, any bonus market-rate units shall not be included in the total number of the housing units when determining the number of required affordable housing units.

H. If additional density is achieved as a result of a rezone per Comprehensive Plan policy HO-38, the determination of whether market-rate bonus units shall be permitted and the number of bonus units permitted will be determined on a site-specific basis. The number of bonus units, if any, shall be established in the ordinance adopting the rezone. Considerations for whether bonus units will be permitted include but are not limited to the following: (1) the number of total units as a result of the rezone and (2) the capacity of the site for development, taking into account the potential for adverse impacts such as to traffic, parking, or environmental issues.

I. Depending on the level of affordability provided, the affordable housing units may be eligible for the impact fee waivers described in RMC [3.10.070](#).

J. Multifamily properties providing affordable housing may be eligible for property tax exemption as established in RMC Chapter [3.38](#).

K. Measurement in square feet of floor area of all affordable units shall be defined by the gross leasable area within the unit.

L. Cottages, duplexes, and size-limited dwellings may be used to meet the requirements of this section.

M. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) shall not be used to meet the requirements of this section. (Ord. 2733; Ord. 2803; Ord. 2883; Ord. 2958; Ord. 2978)

Effective on: 4/27/2019

21.20.040 Implementation Provisions.

The following requirements shall be met for all affordable housing units created through any of the provisions of RZC [21.20](#), *Affordable Housing*:

A. Affordable housing units that are provided under this section shall remain as affordable housing for a minimum of 50 years from the date of initial owner occupancy for ownership affordable housing units and for the life of the project for rental affordable housing units. At the sole discretion of the Administrator, a shorter affordability time period, not to be less than 30 years, may be approved by the City for ownership affordable housing units, in order to meet federal financial underwriting guidelines.

B. Prior to the issuance of any permit(s), the Administrator shall review and approve the location and unit mix of the affordable housing units consistent with the following standards:

1. The location of the affordable housing units shall be approved by the Administrator, with the intent that they generally be intermingled with all other dwelling units in the development.
2. The tenure (ownership or rental) of the affordable housing units shall be the same as the tenure for the rest of the housing units in the development.
3. The affordable housing units shall consist of a mix of number of bedrooms that is generally proportionate to the bedroom mix of units in the overall development.
4. The size of the affordable housing units, if smaller than the other units with the same number of bedrooms in the development, must be approved by the Administrator. In general the affordable housing units may be as small as 500 square feet for a studio unit,

600 square feet for a one bedroom unit, 800 square feet for a two bedroom unit, or 1,000 square feet for a three bedroom unit. However, the Administrator has the discretion not to approve proposals for smaller units based on the criteria that rooms within the units provide adequate space for their intended use.

5. The exterior materials and design of the affordable housing units must be comparable with the other dwelling units in the development, with similarity in building finishes, rooflines and landscaping. The interior finish and quality of construction of the affordable housing units shall at a minimum be comparable to entry level rental or ownership housing in the City.

6. Renter-occupied housing: If the project has one or more residential parking spaces per dwelling unit (averaged across the entire project), the housing expense of every affordable unit shall include the market price of at least one parking space and at least one parking space shall be assigned to each affordable unit.

If the project has fewer than one residential parking space per dwelling unit (averaged across the entire project), the housing expense of every affordable unit shall include a parking allowance, which the Director shall establish from time to time. The parking allowance shall not exceed two-thirds the market price of a parking space as determined through a market study, and may be indexed for inflation.

C. Construction of the affordable housing units shall be concurrent with construction of market-rate dwelling units unless the requirements of this section are met through RZC [21.20.050](#), *Alternative Compliance Methods*. The Affordable Housing Agreement provided for in Section [21.20.080](#) shall include provisions describing the phasing of the construction of the affordable units relative to construction of the overall housing. This can allow for sequencing of construction of the affordable units to be interspersed with construction of the overall housing units.

D. The City reserves the right to establish in the Affordable Housing Agreement referred to in RZC [21.20.080](#), monitoring fees for the Affordable Housing Units, which can be adjusted over time to account for inflation. The purpose of any monitoring fee is for the review and processing of documents to maintain compliance with income and affordability restrictions of the Affordable Housing Agreement.

Effective on: 4/16/2011

21.20.050 Alternative Compliance Methods.

A. While the priority of the City is to achieve affordable housing on-site, the Administrator may approve a request for satisfying all or part of the affordable housing requirements with alternative compliance methods proposed by the applicant, if they meet the intent of this section.

B. The project proponent may propose one or more of the following alternatives, and must demonstrate that any alternative achieves a result equal to or better than providing affordable housing on-site. Housing units provided through the alternative compliance method must be based on providing the same type and tenure of units as the units in the project that give rise to the requirement.

1. Affordable housing units may be provided off-site if the location chosen does not lead to undue concentration of affordable housing in any particular area of the City. Preference shall be given for the location of the off-site affordable unit in the same neighborhood planning area, and the site must be within close proximity to employment opportunities and transit services. No individual property that receives off-site affordable housing units may have more than 25 percent of its units as affordable housing units, unless the property will be utilizing public funding sources for affordable housing.

2. Cash payments in lieu of providing actual housing units may be provided and will be used only for the subsequent provision of affordable housing units by the City or other housing provider approved by the Administrator. Payments in lieu shall be based on the difference between the cost of construction for a prototype affordable housing unit on the subject property, including land costs and development fees, and the revenue generated by an affordable housing unit. The payment obligation will be established at the time of issuance of building permits or preliminary plat approval for the project.

3. The Administrator may consider other options for satisfying the affordable housing requirements, as proposed by the project proponent.

4. In making a decision on alternative compliance, the Administrator will consider the value of any City incentives available to the project, such as property tax exemptions established in RMC Chapter [3.38](#).

C. *Timing.*

1. Application for and approval by the Administrator for alternative compliance must be made prior to issuing a building permit for the project, unless otherwise permitted by the Administrator.

2. Application for off-site alternative compliance must document the timing that off-site affordable housing units will be made available and provide assurances to ensure completion of the off-site affordable housing units. The intent is for affordable housing units to be provided before or at the same time as the on-site market rate housing. (Ord. 2883; Ord. 2978)

Effective on: 6/17/2017

21.20.060 Supplemental Requirements.

A. *Willows/Rose Hill Neighborhood.*

1. As provided for in Comprehensive Plan policy N-WR-E-7, the allowed density shall be seven units per acre for a demonstration project in which at least 20 percent of the total dwelling units are affordable. Other bonuses allowed by the RZC may be used in addition to this bonus.

2. Consistent with Comprehensive Plan policy HO-38, new development in the Northwest Design District shall provide affordable housing as follows:

a. At least 10 percent of new dwelling units that are ground-oriented containing exterior ground level access to the outside with one or more shared walls and without any unit located over another unit must be affordable to a household having an annual income of 80 percent of the area median income, adjusted for household size.

- b. At least 10 percent of new dwelling units within a multifamily or mixed use structure and which are not ground-oriented, as described above, must be affordable to a household having an annual income of 70 percent of the area median income, adjusted for household size.
- c. The provisions of RZC [21.20.030.C](#), [D](#), [E](#), and [H](#) shall not apply in the Northwest Design District.

B. *Southeast Redmond Neighborhood.*

1. Consistent with policy HO-38 and N-SE-22, properties rezoned from GC or R-12 to R-30 as part of the Southeast Redmond Neighborhood Plan Update (Ord. [2753](#)) shall be required to provide 10% of units in developments of 10 units or more as low-cost affordable housing units. The bonus provisions of RZC [21.20.030.E](#) shall apply.
2. *Marymoor Design District.*
 - a. *MDD3 Zone.*
 - i. At least 10 percent of the units in new housing developments of 10 units or more must be affordable units.
 - ii. Pursuant to RZC [21.20.030.H](#), the bonus for required affordable housing is an additional FAR of .09 above the base FAR. No other density bonuses shall be given for affordable housing.
 - b. *Other Zones in the Marymoor Design District.*
 - i. At least 10 percent of the units in new owner-occupied housing developments of 10 units or more must be affordable to a household having an annual income of 70 percent of the area median income, adjusted for household size.
 - ii. At least 10 percent of the units in the new renter-occupied housing developments of 10 units or more must be low-cost affordable units.
 - iii. The provisions of RZC [21.20.030.C](#), [D](#), [E](#), and [H](#) shall not apply.

C. *Education Hill Neighborhood.*

1. Consistent with policies HO-38 and N-EH-15, properties rezoned from R-5 to R-18 shall be required to provide 10% of units as affordable housing units if eight or fewer homes are developed. If more than eight homes are developed, 10% of units shall be low-cost affordable units. The bonus provisions of RZC [21.20.030.E](#) shall not apply. (Ord. 2786)

D. *Urban Centers.*

1. In portions of Overlake where density limits are expressed as a Floor Area Ratio, the bonus above the maximum residential FAR expressed in RZC [21.12](#), *Overlake Regulations*, is two times the equivalent floor area for each affordable unit provided. The bonus residential floor area may be used to increase building height by up to one story above the base standards shown in RZC [21.12](#), *Overlake Regulations*. The bonuses granted under this provision are in addition to any bonuses granted for senior housing under RZC [21.20.070](#), *Affordable Senior Housing*.

2. *Downtown.* Development in Downtown will receive a square footage density credit equal to the square footage of the affordable housing units provided on-site, or the square footage of the affordable housing units provided off-site pursuant to RZC [21.20.050](#), *Alternative Compliance Methods*. This square footage credit can be converted to TDRs pursuant to RZC [21.48.010.G](#), *Affordable Housing Bonus*. The bonus is subject to the limitations of RZC [21.10.110.B](#), *Downtown Height Limit Overlay*. (Ord. 2733; Ord. 2753; Ord. 2786; Ord. 2883; Ord. 2951; Ord. 3028)

Effective on: 2/27/2021

21.20.070 Affordable Senior Housing.

A. Except for Retirement Residences developing under RZC [21.08.370.C.3.b](#), the affordable senior housing bonus may be used in any zone that allows retirement residences or multifamily housing. The bonus shall be part of any land use application. Where the affordable housing bonus was requested in an earlier land use application, the bonus does not have to be requested in subsequent land use applications provided that the number of bonus units is included in the subsequent land use applications. If the bonus is approved, the land use shall comply with the requirements of this section for the life of the use.

B. The development shall be restricted to persons 55 years of age or older and handicapped persons as defined by federal law. At least 80 percent of the total housing units shall be occupied by at least one person who is 55 years of age or older. Owners of affordable senior housing units shall be required to verify annually that the occupancy requirements of this section are met as provided for in the Affordable Housing Agreement pursuant to RZC [21.20.070](#). It is the intent of this section to promote the provision of housing for older persons in compliance with the Housing for Older Persons Act (HOPA) [42](#) U.S.C. sec. [3607](#), as the same now exists or is hereafter amended, by providing a density bonus for affordable housing that meets the requirements of HOPA.

C. No conversion of occupancy to persons other than those specified by subsection RZC [21.20.070.B](#) shall be allowed without first complying with the underlying zoning and site requirements. The bonus shall not apply to the property if it is no longer occupied by those persons specified by subsection RZC [21.20.070.B](#), and the bonus housing units shall be eliminated unless otherwise authorized by the applicable development regulations.

D. If an affordable senior housing bonus application is approved, developments may exceed the allowed density of a zone by as much as 50 percent, provided that 50 percent of the bonus units are low-cost affordable housing units.

E. The bonus shall only be used in the multifamily or retirement residence development for which it is approved. The bonus application shall be made as part of the first land use application made for the project. The decision maker for this application shall decide the request for the bonus.

F. All site requirements and development standards of the Zoning Code shall apply to uses that obtain an affordable senior housing bonus with the following exceptions:

1. The site requirements that shall apply to the development (see applicable zone use charts in RZC [21.08.020](#) through [21.08.140](#)) shall follow the zone which most closely matches the approved density of the use including density bonuses and not the density of the underlying zone. This subsection shall not apply to retirement residences.
2. Developments shall be designed to project a residential appearance through architectural design, landscaping, and building materials.

Effective on: 4/16/2011

21.20.080 Affordable Housing Agreement.

Prior to issuing any building permit or final plat approval, an agreement in a form approved by the City that addresses price restrictions, home buyer or tenant qualifications, phasing of construction, monitoring of affordability, duration of affordability, and any other applicable topics of the affordable housing units shall be recorded with King County Department of Records and Elections. This agreement shall be a covenant running with the land and shall be binding on the assigns, heirs and successors of the applicant. The City may agree, at its sole discretion, to subordinate any affordable housing regulatory agreement for the purpose of enabling the owner to obtain financing for development of the property, consistent with any applicable provision of the Redmond Zoning Code in effect at the time of the issuance of the land use permit(s). (Ord. 2803)

Effective on: 10/17/2015

The Redmond Zoning Code is current through Ordinance 3074, passed February 1, 2022.

Disclaimer: The City Clerk's Office has the official version of the Redmond Zoning Code. Users should contact the City Clerk's Office for ordinances passed subsequent to the ordinance cited above.

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Chapter 21.78 DEFINITIONS

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A Definitions.

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Affordable Housing Unit. Housing reserved for occupancy by eligible households and ~~affordable to households whose annual income does not exceed~~ having housing expenses no greater than 30 percent of 80 percent of area median income, adjusted for household size, ~~and no more than 30 percent of the monthly household income is paid for monthly housing expenses. (Housing expenses for ownership housing include mortgage and mortgage insurance, property taxes, property insurance, and homeowner dues. Housing expenses for rental housing include rent and appropriate utility allowance.) (Ord. 3028)~~

Effective on: 2/27/2021

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H Definitions.

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Housing Expenses. The sum of an occupant's costs associated with an affordable housing unit. For owner-occupied affordable units, housing expenses include, but are not limited to, mortgage principal and interest, homeowner insurance premiums, homeowners' association dues, on-site parking for motor vehicle, utilities, and property taxes. For renter-occupied affordable units, housing expenses include, but are not limited to, rent payments, renter's insurance premiums, motor vehicle parking, utilities, and any expenses required by the owner as a condition of tenancy.

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L Definitions.

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Low-Cost Affordable Housing Unit. Housing reserved for occupancy by eligible households and ~~affordable to households whose annual income does not exceed~~ having housing expenses no greater than 30 percent of 50 percent of area median income, adjusted for household size, ~~and no more than 30 percent of the monthly household income is paid for monthly housing expenses. (Housing expenses for ownership housing include mortgage and mortgage insurance, property taxes, property insurance, and homeowners dues. Housing expenses for rental housing include rent and appropriate utility allowance.)~~ (Ord. 3028)

Effective on: 2/27/2021

Low-Income and Moderate-Income Housing. Housing affordable under federal standards to households with annual incomes at or below 80 percent of the area median income. (Ord. 3028)

Effective on: 2/27/2021

The Redmond Zoning Code is current through Ordinance 3074, passed February 1, 2022.

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