



Affordable Housing on Religious Organization Property

To address displacement and support community resilience, the City of Seattle is developing land use policies for faith communities creating affordable housing.

With these policies, religious organizations would have more opportunity and flexibility to redevelop their land with long-term, income-restricted affordable housing.

These policies respond to [Substitute House Bill 1377](#) adopted by the Washington State Legislature in 2019 requiring cities to allow additional density for affordable housing developed on property owned or controlled by a religious organization. The affordable housing must be reserved for low-income households with incomes under 80 percent of area median income (AMI) for at least 50 years.

Through summer and fall 2020, we are engaging with stakeholders, including faith-based organizations and nonprofit affordable housing developers, to inform a proposal for development standards that support this type of redevelopment. We anticipate sharing our draft and environmental analysis later this fall.

Interested in how faith-based organizations can support affordability and address displacement? Are you involved in or know of a religious group interested in community development? We would love to hear from you. Please email Nick Welch (nicolas.welch@seattle.gov) and Daniel Murillo (daniel.murillo@seattle.gov) to connect with us.

2019	Summer 2020	Fall 2020	Early 2021
Washington State Legislature adopts SHB 1377	Stakeholder outreach and engagement	Policy development	Legislative process
		Environmental review	Possible Council discussion and adoption of legislation
	Ongoing public engagement and input		

Update: In September 2021, City Council adopted [Council Bill 120157](#) and in October 2021 signed these revisions into law in [Ordinance 126445](#).

How it works

With this policy, additional development potential will be available for long-term, income-restricted affordable housing on land owned or controlled by a religious organization.

What projects are eligible?

- The land must be owned or controlled by a religious organization as defined under state and federal law. Eligible organizations engage in religious teaching, practice, worship, or some other form of religious exercise.
- One hundred percent of the housing developed must be affordable for households whose income is less than 80 percent of AMI for at least 50 years.

Income limits (2019)	
Family size	80% AMI
1 person	\$61,800
2 people	\$70,600
3 people	\$79,450
4 people	\$88,250

Affordable rent with utilities	
Unit size	80% AMI
Studio	\$1,545
1 bedroom	\$1,655
2 bedrooms	\$1,986
3 bedrooms	\$2,295

Current rent and income limits available from the [Office of Housing](#).

What policy options are we considering?

IN MULTIFAMILY AND MIXED-USE ZONES

We are considering increasing height and floor area limits to encourage construction of more affordable homes than allowed under current zoning. On sites near frequent transit, we may provide flexibility to build even more homes. Additional incentives may encourage childcare, family-size housing, and other community benefits.

For example, a 7,000-square-foot church property in a Lowrise 1 zone could be developed with 15 apartments under current zoning. Under this proposal, the site could have 20-24 affordable one- and two-bedroom apartments, plus a ground-floor childcare space.

IN SINGLE-FAMILY ZONES

We are considering increasing the number of homes allowed on large sites associated with a religious facility, like an underutilized parking lot, with siting and clustering requirements.

For example, a 12,000-square-foot parking lot for a mosque could be developed with 1-2 large detached houses under current zoning. Under this proposal, the site could have 8-10 affordable townhomes sold to low-income families.

Resources

Faith-based organizations interested in developing affordable housing can learn about potential funding and resources from the City of Seattle's [Office of Housing](#) and the [Office of Planning and Community Development](#). Development training, technical assistance, and funding for faith-based organizations are also available through [Enterprise](#), a national nonprofit.

Learn more and get involved

Follow our work on this policy by visiting seattle.gov/OPCD/ongoing-initiatives/affordable-housing-on-religious-organization-property.

[Scan here to read the full Director's Report >>](#)

