

What Is Missing Middle Housing?

For the past several decades, housing has primarily consisted of single-family homes and apartment buildings. “Missing Middle” is a term used to describe a range of housing between those two types. Allowing for a variety of housing options is essential to help ensure housing availability for all. Single-room occupancies, in which residents share bathroom facilities and possibly kitchen facilities, are one type of Missing Middle housing.



What Are Single-Room Occupancies (SROs)?

Olympia’s Municipal Code currently defines a SRO as “a housing type consisting of one room with cooking facilities and with shared bathroom facilities.”

What Are Proposed Changes Regarding SROs?

The table below summarizes the primary existing regulations of SROs in Olympia, and proposed changes.

Current Regulation	Proposed Change	Purpose of Change
SROs defined as having cooking facilities in room, with shared bathroom facilities.	Define SROs as having shared cooking or bathroom facilities, or shared bathroom and cooking facilities.	Clarify definition and provide flexibility in design for this type of housing.
SROs permitted in downtown zoning districts, or as conditional uses in higher-intensity commercial districts.	Add SROs as a permitted use in R6-12 and higher-density residential zones.	Create the opportunity to locate SROs in larger areas of the City, particularly in areas where services are nearby.
Where permitted, SROs must meet height restrictions within zoning district.	Limit SROs in R6-12 zoning district to two stories. Apply existing building height limits in other residential districts.	Limit visual impact to neighboring properties from SRO buildings.
SROs are subject to multi-family residential design guidelines, as well as any other applicable design guidelines.	Apply Infill Residential design guidelines to SROs in R6-12 zoning districts.	Infill Residential design guidelines are focused on compatibility within a neighborhood.
SROs don’t have specific parking requirements stated.	Clarify SRO units require one off-street parking space.	Clarifies SROs require same parking as studio apartments.

