Community Development Code ASSESSMENT

Community Open House

Community Development Code Assessment

March 17, 2026

CASCADIA PARTNERS

Washington County Oregon

Department of Land Use & Transportation

Welcome & Tonight's Agenda

1. **Why we're here**

   A quick overview of the CDC Assessment and what we've been looking at.

2. **The 7 topic stations**

   Each poster board covers a specific finding, and we'll frame them briefly.

3. **Your role tonight**

   Browse the boards, weigh in on what matters, ask questions.

4. **Q&A**

   We want to hear from you.

What is the Community Development Code?

The Rulebook for Land Use in Washington County

What it governs

How land is used, what can be built, where buildings can be located, and what they look like.

Who it affects

Property owners, developers, neighbors, and community members across the county.

Why it matters

The CDC shapes how land is developed in all areas of the County, from housing to businesses to agricultural land.

What We've Done

Over the past several months, Washington County conducted a detailed review of the Community Development Code —focusing on three key areas:

Legal Compliance

Ensuring the CDC is up to date with recent Oregon laws across housing, childcare, and more.

Remove Barriers

Identifying where CDC requirements make housing harder or more expensive to build.

Easier to Use

Streamlining the CDC so owners, developers, and residents can easily navigate it.

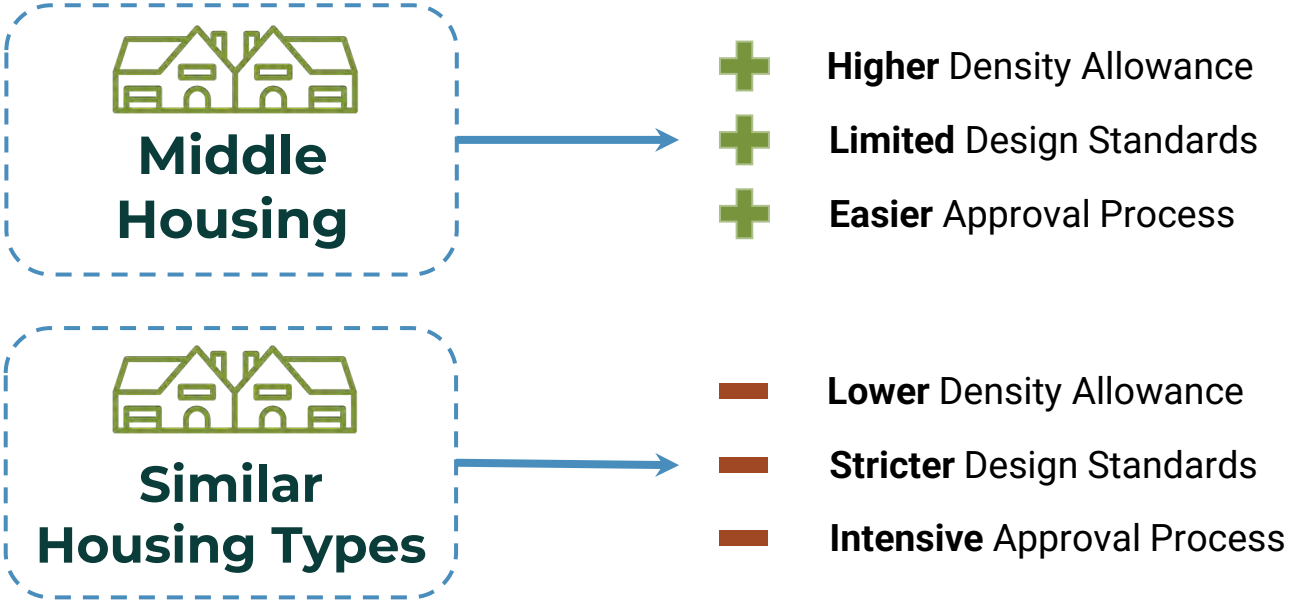
Tonight's 7 Topic Stations

Each poster board presents a specific finding and stations 1 -5 ask for your input.

1. Leveling the Playing Field Between Housing Types
2. Aligning Development Standards with Housing Goals
3. Making Affordable Housing Incentives Work for More Developers
4. Neighborhood Meeting Requirements
5. Streamlining & Simplifying the Code
6. More Housing Opportunities in Mixed-Use Areas
7. Keeping Up with State Law
8. Share What You Think Is Important!

Station 1: Leveling the Playing Field

State law requires Middle Housing (duplexes, triplexes, etc.) to face no stricter rules than single-unit homes, but similar housing types outside that category face inconsistent standards. We're looking at how to level the playing field.



Station 2: Aligning Multi-Unit Standards With Housing Goals

In zones designed for dense housing near transit, overlapping density limits, setbacks, and other requirements can actually prevent the housing those areas were planned for, including:

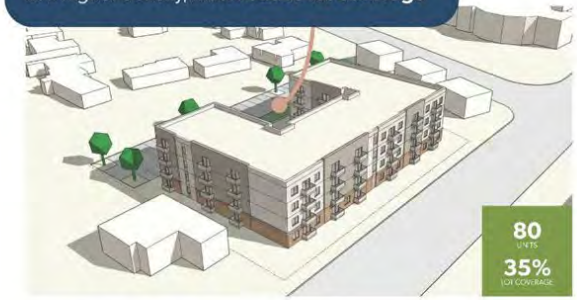
1. **Unclear density limits:** multiple overlapping rules make it hard to know how much housing can be built
2. **Space constraints:** lot coverage limits, setbacks, and landscaping all reduce buildable area
3. **Height step-downs:** building height must shrink near district boundaries, limiting housing capacity

Station 2: Aligning Multi-Unit Standards With Housing Goals

1. Low density, **high lot coverage allowed**

Low density of 32 units/acre may not be economically feasible

2. If higher density, must **reduce lot coverage**



More units allowed, but constrained by lot coverage → limits feasibility

3. If next to low density, must **step down height**

Height step down reduces density, adds costs → limits feasibility

4. Next to low density, **deeper setback**

Can place building outside step-down area, but only gain 4 units → limits feasibility

Station 3: Affordable Housing Incentives

Current incentives require 100% income-restricted units, which only works for nonprofits. Allowing partial affordability requirements and raising the Area Median Income (AMI) threshold could open the door to more developers and more affordable homes.

1. **All-or-nothing rule**: every unit must be income-restricted, which doesn't work for most for-profit projects
2. **Income threshold:** the 80% AMI cap limits which projects and developers can participate
3. **Untapped potential:** broader eligibility could result in more affordable homes overall

Station 4: Neighborhood Meeting Requirements

The County requires a neighborhood meeting before most housing applications can even be submitted, which is a broader requirement than most nearby cities.

1. **Broader scope:** the requirement applies to most projects, including smaller, straightforward ones.
2. **Uncertain outcomes:** meeting feedback can result in expectations that can shape approval conditions, increasing uncertainty for applicants
3. **Room to refocus:** a more targeted approach could concentrate input where it matters most

Overview of Stations 5-7

Streamlining & Simplifying the Code

(Station 5)

- Application requirements, review steps, and definitions are scattered throughout
- Adding visuals, tables, and consolidated rules would benefit everyone

Housing Opportunities in Mixed-Use Areas

(Station 6)

- Often require businesses on the ground floor and cap density at as few as 15 units/acre
- Adding housing in these zones triggers additional approval steps

Keeping Up with State Law

(Station 7)

- Oregon's recent housing legislation requires clear and objective development standards
- Some requirements are already met; others are in progress or planned

Your Role Tonight

Your input - alongside feedback from County staff, the Technical Advisory Committee, the Planning Commission, and the Board of County Commissioners - will inform future code amendments.

1

Browse the boards

Poster boards cover each of the topics. Read the findings at your own pace.

2

Rate each issue

Use the rating stickers/forms at each board: Very Important, Important, Not At All Important, or Unsure.

3

Share your top 2 important issues

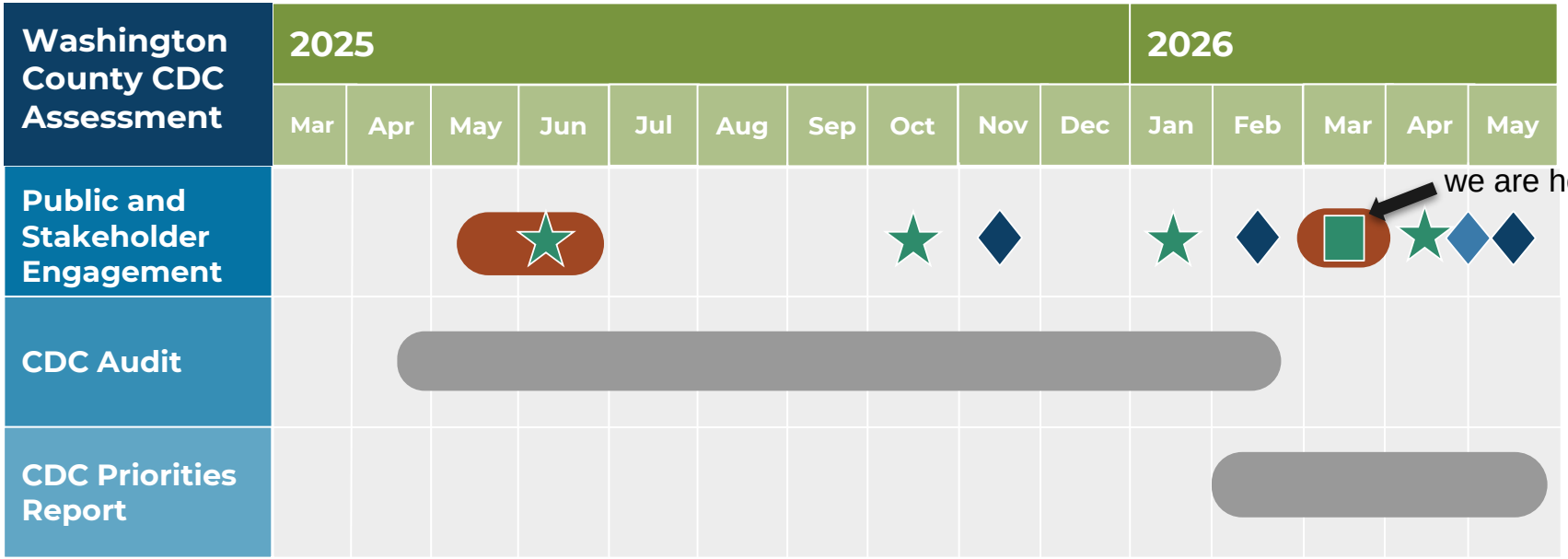
At Board 8, tell us the two issues most important for the County to address.

4

Ask questions

Staff are here to help - talk directly with the team.

What Happens Next



Questions?

We want to hear from you!

After Q&A, please explore the poster boards and share your priorities before you leave.

https://www.washingtoncountyor.gov/lut/planning/cdc-assessment