



**MASTER BUILDERS
ASSOCIATION**
of King and Snohomish Counties

2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



The Puget Sound Regional Council estimates our four-county region (King, Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap counties) will add 1.8 million more people by 2050. For both those who have lived here for decades and those just arriving, we share the same concern: future generations will not be able to buy or rent a home in our community. As our population grows, there must be a clear plan for building new housing that works for current residents while ensuring that the region is affordable for newcomers and future generations.

Following is the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties' (MBAKS) 2020 Legislative Action Plan, identifying key policy changes that can be taken now to help provide more diverse, more affordable housing for our growing population. In the year ahead, MBAKS will be advocating for these changes. We invite you to join us in advancing these and other common sense housing solutions.

With nearly 2,800 member companies, MBAKS is proud to represent those who have helped build homes of all types across our region for more than a century. We are the professional homebuilders, architects, remodelers, tradespeople, planners, engineers, and other professionals in your community who believe everyone deserves access to a healthy and productive place to call home.

In addition, our members and government affairs team regularly supply data and insights for policymakers, regulators, and community members as we all work together to build a stronger, more equitable region.

For more information, or to contact our advocacy team at MBAKS, please visit mbaks.com/advocacy.



Bonnie Geers
2019 Board
President



Brian Holtzclaw
2020 Board
President

Accessory Dwelling Unit Bill

Enable Accessory Dwelling Units as a housing option

During the 2019 legislative session, MBAKS and our allies elevated debate around the importance of cottages as a tool for expanding housing opportunities in our state. Our association supported the expanded role of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in single-family zones within designated urban growth areas. Despite a strong effort to advance an ADU bill, the final version of ESSB 5812 considered by the 2019 legislature fell short of meeting MBAKS' legislative priority of expanding ADU opportunities and ultimately did not pass.

ADUs (both attached and detached) offer significant community benefits and should be allowed throughout our region and state. They are a sought-after housing choice for retirees who want to age in place and young adults looking for their first home, as well as college students, extended family, and others. ADUs also give homeowners a way to earn rental income. Furthermore, by offering an affordable housing choice in cities, ADUs are critical tools for accommodating growth in the very places where it makes sense—near job centers and existing infrastructure.



ADUs are an environmentally friendly housing option, given their small size and the fact that residents tend to drive less, resulting in lower carbon emissions. ADUs represent just one of many tools needed to address our housing affordability crisis, but they are an important part of the solution.

The changes we seek would allow two accessory dwellings per lot and eliminate off-street parking, owner-occupancy, and minimum lot size requirements, among other things.

Supporting this legislation would help to increase housing choices in the very places where many families want to live and would benefit our communities by adding a much-needed, affordable housing option.



Missing Middle Housing

Re-legalize a variety of home choices that best fit every residents' needs

Not having enough housing or housing diversity is a statewide problem requiring a range of solutions—including more housing of all types.

Starting around the 1920s, code changes in many cities resulted in more areas zoned exclusively for single-family homes. Today more than half of a typical Washington city's residential areas allow only single-dwelling houses. This is inconsistent with the significant population growth we've experienced over the years.

Many people who want to live in our cities are finding it harder and harder to attain housing there. As our population continues to grow, there must be a clear plan for building new housing that accounts for the lives of our current residents and ensures that Washington is affordable for newcomers and future generations.

MBAKS supports legislation that would allow more than one home on a parcel. This change would enable property owners in urban areas, if they so choose, to build a duplex or add an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) on parcels where currently only single-dwelling houses are permitted. Cities

could choose to go further and legalize other home choices, such as triplexes and fourplexes. Duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes are more affordable than detached, single-dwelling houses because land costs, which account for a significant portion of a home's value, can be shared across several households. Furthermore, construction costs for ADUs and "plexes" are lower per square foot than taller apartment buildings.

Allowing more modest homes as an option would create more affordable home choices in neighborhoods close to jobs, transit, schools, parks, and other amenities. It would also help more families to remain in their desired communities.



HB 1923 Expansion

Expand the list of options in HB 1923 to increase residential building capacity and housing affordability

On May 9, 2019, Governor Jay Inslee signed into law E2SHB 1923, landmark legislation to increase residential building capacity in cities. The bill, supported by MBAKS, is designed to address the statewide housing shortage by encouraging cities planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) to facilitate new housing.

Under the new law, which went into effect on July 28, 2019, cities planning to take at least two specified actions to increase residential building capacity prior to April 1, 2021 are eligible to apply for planning grant assistance from the Department of Commerce. HB 1923 also contains language

protecting local governments from certain legal appeals under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and GMA for a limited time when they adopt any of the actions specified in the new law to accommodate new housing.

MBAKS is asking the legislature to build upon HB 1923. New options could include an extension of the time period during which ordinances and regulations developed in accordance with the new law would be exempt from appeals under SEPA and GMA.



WUCIOA

Technical Changes

Clarify Common Interest Community Act to help reduce the cost of housing

On March 27, 2018, legislation was signed into law that resulted in significant changes to the laws governing Common Interest Communities, including condominiums, housing cooperatives, and subdivisions. The new law, called the Washington Uniform Common Interest Ownership Act (WUCIOA), imposes many detailed paperwork requirements on virtually every homebuilder involved in for-sale residential development, and it establishes significant new requirements for homeowner associations (HOAs) affecting homeowners in these types of communities.

While technical in nature, the changes MBAKS is seeking are intended to better focus the applicability of the new law to its original intent, which was never meant to regulate smaller projects or create an added burden on new homeowners in these projects. Our goal is to streamline processes and save costs associated with compliance, in order to reduce these cost pressures on new housing.

New homebuyers in these smaller communities would benefit because the changes would remove the burden of belonging to an HOA and paying unnecessary dues. Specific proposed changes include:

- *Raising unit threshold from 12 to 30 units as being exempt from most of WUCIOA's provisions.*
- *Increasing the level of annual assessments from \$300 to \$1,201 per unit that are exempt from most of WUCIOA's provisions.*
- *Eliminating the reserve study requirement for projects of 30 or fewer units.*