



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



With more than 2,700 members, the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties has built homes of all types across our region for over a century. As our population grows, there must be policies in place to support a clear plan for building new housing that accounts for the lives of current residents and ensures that our region is affordable for both newcomers and future generations.

HB 2780/SB 6536—MORE HOUSING CHOICES—SUPPORT

Many people who want to live in our cities are finding it harder and harder to find a home that fits their lives and budget. Allowing more home choices, such as duplexes and triplexes, in addition to single-detached homes, would create more housing choices for Washington families in neighborhoods close to jobs, transit, schools, parks, and other amenities.

KEY FACTS

- More than half of a typical Washington city's residential areas, and those in large cities nationwide, allow only single-dwelling houses.¹
- Duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, sixplexes, stacked flats, townhomes, and courtyard apartments 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.²
- Construction costs for "plexes," stacked flats, townhomes and courtyard apartments are lower per square foot than taller apartment buildings.³
- HB 2780 is not a new idea. The legislation would re-legalize housing types that used to be allowed without question.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does HB 2780 do if passed?

If adopted into law, HB 2780 would:

- Allow duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, townhouses and courtyard apartments in areas zoned for detached single-family residences in cities planning under the Growth Management Act with a population of 15,000 or more.
- Requires cities with a population of fewer than 15,000 to allow the development of duplexes, with the option to provide higher-density housing options in lots or parcels zoned for detached single-family residences.

When was this type of housing legal and why was it changed?

Since the 1940s, many municipal zoning codes, ordinances and regulations across the United States have prioritized detached single-family homes and mid-rise to high-rise apartment buildings. Excluding certain housing types was often done for a specific purpose: prioritizing single-family neighborhoods was a way for cities and towns to legally redline communities. Because of this zoning, housing could not meet population growth and prices rose. This resulted in those who were less affluent, often people of color, being excluded from many neighborhoods and pushed farther away from jobs, good schools, parks, transit, and other amenities.

¹Badger, Emily and Quoctrung Bui, "Cities Start to Question an American Ideal: A House With a Yard on Every Lot," – The New York Times, June 18, 2019: [nytimes.com/interactive/2019/06/18/upshot/cities-across-america-question-single-family-zoning](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/06/18/upshot/cities-across-america-question-single-family-zoning)

² Anderson, Michael, "Who Would Live in "Missing Middle" Housing? The Middle Class," Sightline Institute, Feb. 13, 2019: [sightline.org/2019/02/13/who-would-live-in-missing-middle-housing-the-middle-class/](https://www.sightline.org/2019/02/13/who-would-live-in-missing-middle-housing-the-middle-class/)

³ Chandler, Jenna, "Report: To become affordable, LA needs to build duplexes—not just tall towers," Curbed Los Angeles, Nov. 21, 2019: [la.curbed.com/2019/11/21/20974688/los-angeles-market-rate-affordable-housing-report](https://www.la.curbed.com/2019/11/21/20974688/los-angeles-market-rate-affordable-housing-report)



Won't this compromise the character of my neighborhood?

This bill would allow property owners to build more housing in accordance with the vision of the Growth Management Act while also maintaining the architectural look and feel of these neighborhoods. Enabling a spectrum of home choices helps to foster welcoming, affordable and vibrant communities. The development of new housing also helps support community amenities, generating revenue for schools, parks and basic transportation infrastructure.

Shouldn't we just leave it up to cities to adopt these kinds of changes?

While some cities have pro-actively adopted local codes allowing more housing choices in areas zoned for single family – specifically, making it easier to add accessory dwelling units -- many others have opted not to act. Some local jurisdictions still resist new housing, limiting home choices in precisely the places where Washington's Growth Management Act calls for it and pushing housing far out of reach for many renters and buyers. This bill doesn't require duplexes or triplexes everywhere, but rather, it allows property owners to build an additional home on their existing property if they so choose, in compliance with local building regulations.

Doesn't building more housing hurt the environment?

Allowing only single-family zoning reduces density, limits the number of people who can live in a city and raises carbon emissions as people are forced to drive farther to work and other destinations. By allowing more housing choices, people will be able to live closer to jobs and transit, thus reducing the amount of carbon emissions from driving and protecting forests and farmland.

Founded in 1909 and headquartered in Bellevue, Washington, the Master Builders Association of King and Snohomish Counties (MBAKS) is the nation's oldest and largest local homebuilders association. Like our founders, our members continue to take a leading role in all facets of homebuilding and support the planning for a growing region. From new technology to advances in sustainability, from collaborative public policy efforts to investing in our communities, our commitment to a thriving, inclusive and well-planned region never wavers. We are the professional homebuilders, architects, remodelers, tradespeople (carpenters, framers, roofers, plumbers, electricians), planners and engineers, suppliers, manufacturers, and sales and marketing professionals in your community who believe everyone deserves access to a healthy and productive place to call home.

Want to learn more? We'd love to hear from you. Please contact Allison Butcher at abutcher@mbaks.com or 425.460.8223.

