

Outreach to Developers

Developers in Baker City were asked about existing and proposed housing standards, incentives, and review processes. The survey, which took place in August, explored what local builders see as barriers to housing development and where there may be opportunities to improve the Baker City Development Code. Respondents highlighted where costs, regulations, or processes may be slowing housing production.

Key Takeaways

These themes highlight developers' views on challenges and opportunities for housing in Baker City, pointing to code sections that may need additional refinement. How can these perspectives be balanced with local priorities like liveability, affordability, and neighborhood design?

Process & Requirements

- Complex or unclear requirements contribute to unpredictable review processes, slowing projects down and adding cost
- *Suggestion:* simplify and clarify requirements, standards, and guidelines to improve efficiency and create a more predictable approval process

Costs & Fees

- High construction costs limit housing development
- Fees for utilities and public works are significant drivers of cost
- *Suggestion:* reduce, defer, or waive utility connection fees, traffic studies, and other public works fees for higher-density or affordable projects

Design Standards

- Unclear or rigid standards add time and cost to housing development
- General support of existing standards, but simplification and more clarity would be helpful
- *Suggestion:* provide greater clarity and flexibility in design standards to reduce project cost and delays

Affordability Incentives

- Support and interest in affordable housing incentives
- Concerns that reporting requirements are overly complex or will complicate development and property management
- *Suggestion:* create clear, streamlined requirements and focus incentives on financial feasibility, such as reduced or waived fees and increased density/height. Limit restrictions on rental terms and reporting paperwork.

Housing Options

- Support for increasing size of ADUs (up to 1,000 sq. ft.), increased height, and reduced setbacks
- Interest in making a range of housing types more feasible through increased flexibility and density, especially for cottage clusters and smaller lots
- *Suggestion:* make standards more flexible to expand feasible development options