



Converting Your House to a Duplex

December 5, 2018

Are you thinking about converting your existing single family residence to a duplex? Each situation can be unique depending on the floor plan, desires of the homeowner, lot size and shape, etc. We're here to help, as questions arise: 360.753.8314 or cpdinfo@ci.olympia.wa.us. Here are some things to think about or issues to be aware of:

PLANNING

- Make sure duplexes are an allowed use in the applicable zoning district. They are in most zones within the city limits.
- Does your lot meet the minimum lot size needed for a duplex in your zoning district?
- Does the property meet parking requirements for a duplex or will additional parking be required? New parking must be paved.
 - Parking requirement: One space per unit if there is paved on-street parking available adjacent to the lot, 1.5 spaces per unit otherwise.
- If an addition is planned as part of the conversion, will the project meet the minimum setbacks and maximum lot coverages for building footprints, impervious surface coverage, and hard surface coverage?
- Can the project be designed so that Infill & Other Residential design review standards can be met? See [OMC 18.175](#). Garage placement standards also apply, see [18.04.060\(EE\)](#).
- Is the property in a historic district or a designated historic property? If yes, additional restrictions may apply.
- Impact fees for transportation, parks, and schools will be charged for the second dwelling unit at the time the building permit is issued.

ENGINEERING

- Water: Each unit must be served by a separate water service. An additional water meter and water connection will be required. This will include payment of a new general facility charge (water connection) fee.
- Sewer: The units can be served by the same or separate sewer connections. One new general facility charge (GFC) and LOTT CDC will be charged for the new unit, regardless of whether a shared sewer connection is used.
- Any new additions or parking areas may require improvements to address stormwater.
- Driveway: Any modification to the driveway location must be approved by the city. All new driveways must be an approved surface.
- Utility Billing: Each unit will be charged waste collection, water, sewer, and stormwater fees.

Note: Private utilities are the responsibility of the property owner. The property owner will need to work directly with the applicable private utility providers to meet their requirements.

FIRE

- Fire Suppression: Both units must include a fire suppression (sprinkler) system. This could trigger the need for a larger water meter and/or service lines.

BUILDING

- Permits: Building permits, including electrical, plumbing, and mechanical will be needed.
- Fire Wall Separation: The units must be separated by a 1 hour fire wall from the foundation to the roof. This pertains to walls and floors, depending on the configuration of the units.
- Each unit must be separate and distinct from the other. This means there can be no openings (e.g. doors, windows) or penetrations (e.g. pipes) between the two units, with only a few exceptions allowed under the building codes.
- Electrical: Each unit must have access to its electrical panel.