

ORDINANCE NO. 1836

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES, WASHINGTON relating to the land use, implementing and regulating co-living housing, amending DMMC 18.01.050, 18.52.010A, and 18.52.010B, and adding a new chapter to Title 18 DMMC entitled "Co-living housing".

WHEREAS, in 2024 the Washington state Legislature passed Engrossed Substitute House Bill (ESHB) 1998 (chapter 180, laws of 2024), creating new section RCW 36.70A.535, related to co-living housing, and

WHEREAS, in passing ESHB 1998 the Legislature found that Washington state is experiencing a housing affordability crisis, and

WHEREAS, the Legislature further found that co-living housing is a type of housing that can provide rental housing affordable to people with moderate to low incomes without requiring public funding, and co-living housing historically provided a healthy inventory of rental housing until the mid-20th century when local governments began adopting restrictive zoning and other rules prohibiting or making it impractical to building or operate co-living housing, and

WHEREAS, On October 27, 2025, the City submitted the proposed amendment to the Washington State Department of Commerce for its expedited 30-day review and received documentation of completion of the procedural requirement (Submittal ID 2025-S-11051), and

WHEREAS, the changes proposed by this ordinance have been processed in accordance with the requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA), a final determination of non-significance was issued by the responsible official, and the appropriate comment has expired and is not subject to legal challenge under chapter 43.21C RCW, and

WHEREAS, the Des Moines City Council held a duly noticed public hearing on November 13, 2025, and

WHEREAS, based on the careful consideration of the facts and law, the City Council finds that the proposed amendments attached and incorporated herein should be approved as presented; now therefore,

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DES MOINES ORDAINS AS FOLLOWS:

Sec. 1. DMMC 18.01.050 and section 5 of Ordinance No. 1591 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1628 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1655 as amended by section 3 of Ordinance No. 1661 as amended by section 3 of Ordinance No. 1669 as amended by section 15 of Ordinance No. 1671 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1697 as amended by section 3 of Ordinance No. 1714 as amended by section 2 of Ordinance No. 1719 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1737 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1750 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1820 as amended by section 1 of Ordinance No. 1821 are each amended to read as follows:

Definitions.

As used in this Title, unless the context or subject matter clearly requires otherwise, the words or phrases defined in this section shall have the indicated meanings.

...

"Closed record appeal" shall have the meaning given such term in DMMC 18.20.240.

"Co-living housing" means a residential development with sleeping units that are independently rented and lockable and provide living and sleeping space, and residents share kitchen facilities, and may share bathroom facilities, with other sleeping units in the building.

"Commercial parking lot" means a building site, exclusive of public rights-of-way, or building dedicated to the parking of more than 10 passenger vehicles, serving patrons, occupants, and/or employees of a permitted use(s) not located on the site of the parking facility.

...

"Zone" means an area accurately defined as to boundaries and location on an official map and within which area only

described in the applicable zone)									
...									
Co-living housing		P/L [94]		P/L [94]	P/L [94]		P/L [94]	P/L [94]	
...									

1. Accessory Buildings and Uses. This regulation applies to all parts of Table 18.52.010A that have a [1].

...

94. Co-living housing. This regulation applies to all parts of Table 18.52.010B that have a [94].

Additional requirements for Co-living housing per sections 4 through 11 of this ordinance.

NEW SECTION Sec. 4. Title.

This chapter shall be entitled "Co-living housing".

NEW SECTION Sec. 5. Application.

Co-living housing is a permitted use on any lot located within an urban growth area that allows at least six multifamily residential units, including on a lot zoned for mixed-use development, excluding lots where six units are permitted only through an affordable housing density bonus, such as under RCW 36.70A.635(1)(b)(iii). Co-living is permitted use in the following zoning districts: RA-3,600, RM-2,400, RM-1,800, RM-900, RM-900A, RM-900B, PR-R, I-C, C-C, D-C, PR-C, and T-C.

NEW SECTION Sec. 6. Purpose.

The purpose in providing for co-living is to authorize the development of rental homes affordable to people with moderate to low incomes that do not require any public funding, and to be consistent with RCW 36.70A.535.

Co-living housing provides options for people who:

(1) Wish to lower their housing expenses by paying less for a smaller home;

(2) Prefer a living arrangement with shared community spaces that facilitate social connections; or

(3) Want a low-cost, more private alternative to having a roommate in a traditional rental;

Co-living housing supports workforce housing, reduces pressure on the limited amount of publicly-funded affordable housing, provides housing for seniors and other single-person households which reduces demand for family-sized rentals, and supports very low-income people, supportive and recovery housing, and "housing first" homes for the formerly homeless.

Co-living housing is well-suited for the conversion of office buildings to housing, because it typically requires less plumbing and fixtures for kitchens and bathrooms, while meeting the state building codes for modern health and safety standards.

Co-living housing, because the units are small, is inherently more energy efficient than standard apartments, both saving residents money and reducing the state's energy demand.

When located near transit hubs, employment centers, and public amenities, co-living housing helps achieve greenhouse gas reduction goals by increasing walkability, shortening household commutes, curtailing sprawl, and reducing the pressure to develop natural and working lands.

NEW SECTION Sec. 7. Authority.

This chapter is adopted pursuant to the provisions of RCW 36.70A.535 and other applicable laws.

NEW SECTION Sec. 8. Definitions.

As used in this chapter, unless the context or subject matter clearly requires otherwise, the words or phrases defined in this section shall have the indicated meanings.

(1) "Co-living housing" means a residential development with sleeping units that are independently rented and lockable and provide living and sleeping space, and residents share kitchen facilities, and may share bathroom facilities, with other sleeping units in the building.

(2) "Major transit stop" means:

(a) A stop on a high capacity transportation system funded or expanded under the provisions of chapter 81.104 RCW;

(b) Commuter rail stops;

(c) Stops on rail or fixed guideway systems, including transitways;

(d) Stops on bus rapid transit routes or routes that run on high occupancy vehicle lanes; or

(e) Stops for a bus or other transit mode providing actual fixed route service at intervals of at least 15 minutes for at least five hours during the peak hours of operation on weekdays.

(3) "Sleeping unit" means an independently rented or owned and lockable unit that provides living and sleeping space.

(4) "Kitchenette" means a room or part of a room which is used, intended, or designed to be used for basic food preparation, with a sink and at least one 120v electrical outlet.

(5) "Kitchen" means a room or part of a room which is used, intended, or designed to be used for preparing food. The kitchen includes facilities, or utility hookups for facilities, sufficient to prepare, cook, and store food, and wash dishes, including, at a minimum, countertops, a kitchen-style sink, space and utilities sufficient for a gas or 220/240v electric stove and oven, and a refrigerator.

(6) "Shared kitchen" means a kitchen that is used, intended, or designed to be used by residents of multiple dwelling or sleeping units for preparing food simultaneously.

NEW SECTION Sec. 9. General Standards.

Room dimensional standards shall minimally meet the Washington State building code, including dwelling unit size, sleeping unit size, room area, and habitable space;

(1) Co-living units may be provided in a mix of sizes and number of rooms;

(2) Co-living developments are not required to include other types of land uses;

(3) For purposes of calculating dwelling unit density, a sleeping unit in co-living housing is no more than one-quarter of a dwelling unit.

(4) Sleeping units may include kitchenettes, but shall not include kitchens;

(5) Where open space standards are applied based on the number of dwelling units, one half of the open space requirement will be required for sleeping units that is required of dwelling units.

NEW SECTION Sec. 10. Parking.

(1) Off-street parking shall be provided at a rate of 0.25 off-street parking spaces per sleeping unit;

(2) No off-street parking is required for co-living units within one-half mile walking distance of a major transit stop as defined in RCW 36.70A.030;

(3) Parking requirements may be defined by an empirical study, approved by Commerce.

(4) Parking requirements of the underlying zoning district apply, if the project site is located within a mile radius of the Sea-Tac Airport.

NEW SECTION Sec. 11. Processing and Administration.

(1) The review, notice, or public meeting requirements for co-living housing shall be the same as those required for other types of multifamily residential uses in the same location, unless otherwise required by state law.

(2) Co-living housing development may be included in an affordable housing incentive program, such as RCW 36.70A.540.

(3) For purposes of calculating sewer connection fees, a sleeping unit in co-living housing is no more than one-half of a dwelling unit, unless a finding, based on facts, is made that the connection fees should exceed the one-half threshold.

Sec. 12. Codification. Sections 4 through 11 of this ordinance shall be codified as a new chapter in Title 18 DMMC.

Sec. 13. Severability - Construction.

(1) If a section, subsection, paragraph, sentence, clause, or phrase of this ordinance is declared unconstitutional or invalid for any reason by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance.

(2) If the provisions of this ordinance are found to be inconsistent with other provisions of the Des Moines Municipal Code, this ordinance is deemed to control.

Sec. 14. Effective date. This ordinance shall take effect and be in full force five (5) days after its passage, approval, and publication in accordance with law.

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PASSED BY the City Council of the City of Des Moines this 4th day of December, 2025 and signed in authentication thereof this 4th day of December, 2025.



M A Y O R

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

/s/Tim George
City Attorney

ATTEST:

Jaia Keane
City Clerk

Published: December 9, 2025