JEFFERSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

CONSENT AGENDA

TO:	**Board of Commissioners** **Mark McCauley, County Administrator**
FROM:	**Brent A. Butler, AICP, Chief Strategy Officer** **Phil Cecere, Certified Fire Marshal and Certified Building Official**
DATE:	**September 5, 2023**
RE:	**Status Update Briefing, re: Stock Plans**

STATEMENT OF ISSUE:

The purpose of this consent agenda is to update the Board of County Commissioners ("BoCC") on the joint partnership with the City of Port Townsend regarding an initiative underway to gauge the community's interest in the 34 different building plans posted on the county website with the eventual goal of using some of these as preapproved stock plans.

BACKGROUND:

Stock plans are used as an innovative tool to reduce permitting timelines, cost, and noncompliance with local state and federal regulations. They can be used for a primary house, accessory dwelling unit, or multifamily structure. Currently many jurisdictions throughout western Washington authorize stock plans. Some of these municipalities limit stock plans to accessory dwellings while others allow them for other housing types. Currently, the cities of Olympia, Lacey, Tumwater, Renton, Kent and Seattle, among others, have approved stock plan programs. The three cost categories include: 1) plan set, 2) plan engineering, 3) hourly support.

Benefits include:

- Expedite delivery of housing by eliminating the need for review and approval of the initial plan set
- Architect is available to assist the homeowners/builder for an hourly rate
- Reduced design costs
- Designs may be more appealing and offer cost competitive options to manufactured structures
- Pre-packaged designs are guaranteed to meet local and state building codes
- Applicant saves on the jurisdiction's Plan Review fees since the structural plans are already approved

- Reduced design costs. New structural single family designs average 8-12% of the total valuation of the construction cost. At an average of $300/sq ft of building cost for average grade construction, project valuations for these designs range from $86,400-$450,000. Typical design costs on a per project basis would therefore range between $8,600 and $45,000. However, this program enables the designer to skip several steps and lower costs on their designs similar to cheaper pre-designed plans available on the internet. Multifamily designs are typically more expensive; therefore, reduced plan costs may encourage more infill development within the Tri-Area where sewer is planned.

Site specific land use review is still required as some areas may have critical areas or other development constraints unique to the site.

Call for projects Update

Stock Plan Submittals for Selection: | Jefferson County, WA

The City and County announced a call for projects to supplement four plans selected by three community members serving on the county planning commission; one of these four is no longer available. As a result of the call for projects, the City/County joint project received three submittals from three western Washington architects/design professionals including GreenPOD (5 plans), Cascadia (11 plans), and Ross Chapin (15 plans). Currently, the City/County joint project has 34 different plan sets, all of which can be reviewed online. Collectively, these plans when included with those selected previously, as discussed below, may be more than what can be funded. The designs range from 288-1500 square feet. The Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) specifically requested information about numbers of individuals interested in the plans prior to selecting some for plans review funding.

Stock Plan Background

Initially Jefferson County Commissioners Kevin Coker, Matt Sircely, and Arlene Alen used the City of Seattle's call for projects and selected four plans that would be easier to construct for someone who is outside of the building trades. They also sought to identify plans that would be less costly to construct. Commissioners Alan and Coker studied architecture and Sircely is a committed housing advocate. Of the 140 plan sets submitted to the city of Seattle, ten were made available for City of Seattle residents. Of these, three are selected for consideration: Artisan Group (1 plan), Shape Arch (1 plan) and Urban Cottage (1 plan).

ANALYSIS:

After review and discussion with Wendy Davis, Communications Specialist, and the City of Port Townsend's project lead, Emma Bolin, Director, Planning and Development Services, the following next steps are in place.

Timeline and public engagement

- Additional time is now afforded to the project because the 2021 State Building Code was delayed until October 29, 2023.
- During the delay, staff will be working with Housing Solutions Network and professionals assisting home buyers and renters to identify people interested in a stock plan program. These individuals will be queried on which designs they are most interested in to help inform the joint committee.
- Formation of joint committee and kick off meeting in early October.

The joint committee will evaluate the interest in the submitted plans as well as discuss further selection criteria such as: a) Building efficiency, b) Cost, c) Design, d) Multifamily housing needs for Tri-Area/Port Townsend, and e) Single-family typologies. Currently, there are limited small-scale multi-family and attached residential infill builders operating within the city and the county future Port Hadlock urban growth area. How can this program incentivize and spur the proliferation of confident multifamily builders?

- Meeting/final recommendation of selected stock plans by Committee to BoCC in late October followed by a City Council briefing.
- Other ways to solicit feedback: Staff is targeting a specific audience that may be interested in building or living in buildings using these stock designs. Anyone can submit their feedback to the County or City by contacting Brent Butler bbutler@co.jefferson.wa.us or Emma Bolin ebolin@cityofpt.us

County Process

The County will piggyback the City's process wherever feasible.

Table 1: Jefferson County Process		
Typical Building Fees	**What the fee covers**	**Stock Plan program**
Base building permit fee, (based on fee valuation)	Inspections	Fee still required
Plan Review fee, 20% of building permit fee (reduced from 65%)	Site Plan review, structural plan check no less than 4 hrs. of review time.	Plan review for specific site
Special reports $107/hr consistent w/ RCW82.02.020	Additional review for site specific issues if required beyond 4 hrs. of review.	Fee required if site specific complications exist.
State fees $6.50	Mandatory state fee on all building permits funds State Bldg. Council	Fee still required
Technology scan fee $26.75	Permit Database Maintenance Fees	Fee still required
Other County department reviews (EH, PW, etc.)	Potable water, Septic, Road approach, Addressing, Etc.	Fee still required
SDR, LLOR (varies)	Site development review, Legal lot of record review	Fee or exempt

City of Port Townsend Process - As part of the City's 2023 Workplan objective to inspire and deliver zoning code changes to unlock dense and affordable infill housing, the city is partnering with Jefferson County to design and implement a stock plan program with public input. The City's Planning Commission nominated two of its members to serve on the stock plan joint committee with Jefferson County. Once the committee and BoCC settle on final recommended plans, the county will conduct a structural and energy code review. The city will review the stamped plans to ensure consistency with City adopted building code. Because both jurisdictions adopt the International Residential Code and State Building Code, the city expects the consistency review for the selected plans to not require much staff resources. The city has already adopted a reduced fee list for stock ADU and single-family residence plans. The reduced fees in the form of a "Site Plan Adaptation Fee" pay for planning and engineering staff review to ensure that the site plan will work for the chosen stock plan set and to ensure conditions relating to setbacks, critical areas, and infrastructure are incorporated into the building permit. This fee covers time for co-problem-solving when the building plans do not fit on the site. City staff does not recommend waiving this fee or the "Building Permit Fee" which pays for inspections. Moreover, other jurisdictions that have implemented similar stock plan programs reported charging similar fees due to the considerable amount of time needed to assist customers with this project.

As part of a building permit application, all new residential applicants must pay typical building fees described in the table below. Differences in the typical fees versus stock plan program are noted in the far-right column.

Table 1: City of Port Townsend Process		
Typical Building Fees	**What the fee covers**	**Stock Plan program**
Base building permit fee, (based on fee valuation, typical $1,430)	Inspections	Fee still required
Plan Review fee, 65% of building permit fee (typical $1,000)	Site Plan review, structural plan check	Site Plan Adaptation Fee charged instead as follows: $242: Single Family Dwelling $192: ADU
Energy Code Fee ($96)	Structural plan review for energy code compliance and air quality code.	Fee not required
State fees $6.50	Mandatory state fee on all building permits funds State Building Code Council	Fee still required
Technology fee 2%	Permit Database Maintenance Fees	Fee still required
Records fee 5%	Administrative requirements for records management and retention.	Fee still required

The City has not developed a reduced site plan adaptation fee for multifamily structures. Some of the design submittals are multifamily designs. Should any of these designs be selected by the County for funding plan review, the City will need to evaluate if a multifamily site plan adaptation fee is appropriate.

Users of these plans as multifamily or single-family units may qualify for further City subsidy. The City has a low-income housing fee deferral program (PTMC 3.36.011), which allows **private** or **nonprofit** organizations constructing low income housing units at or less than 80% Area Median Income adjusted by family size to defer building fees and utility connection charges for up to four units per applicant per year and system development charges (SDC) up to any limit on deferred amount. Multifamily units meeting the income criteria may apply to defer building fees and utility connection charges up to $10,000 per project and no limit on system development charges.

This program does not extend to accessory dwelling units; however, ADU's are exempt from paying SDC's because they can connect to the existing home's side sewer.
Finally, additional low-income multifamily unit subsidy is available for property tax exemption via the City's multifamily tax exemption program per Chapter 3.15 Port Townsend Municipal Code. Multifamily designs, if selected for plan review subsidy, can cumulatively lower project costs; however, city and county staff will coordinate polling local small builders to determine if these multifamily infill designs are within reach of our local builders and their capacity and if the designs will be adaptable for a wide variety of sites.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The BoCC would need to allocate funds for plan review, and the Chief Strategy Officer continues to work on this project, and estimates that an additional 40 hours of his time will be required to bring this project to conclusion.

RECOMMENDATION:

None other than to acknowledge the information provided.

REVIEWED BY:

Mark McCauley, County Administrator   Date 8/31/23