

# City of Tacoma Affordable Housing Action Strategy

Rental Housing Code (TMC 1.95) Update – Feb. 2021



## Summary of potential updates

TMC 1.95, the City of Tacoma Rental Housing Code, passed in Nov 2018. Most provisions are now matched by 2019 RCW updates, and in response to our 2020 survey and the housing affordability and eviction crisis exacerbated by the pandemic, Action 3.1 is exploring TMC 1.95 updates related to standards for:

- **Just Cause Eviction**
- **Shared Housing**
- **Late fees**
- **Notice of proposed sale of low-income housing**
- **Restrictions on filing evictions without a COT business license**

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## Policy objective

Considering the impacts of the pandemic and the wave of evictions anticipated at the expiration of the Governor's moratorium, the intended objectives of these standards include:

- Fewer community members evicted and forced into homelessness
- Ensuring community members have safe and habitable housing
- Ensuring landlords and tenants understand their rights and responsibilities

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## Policy standards being explored

**Establish Just Cause Eviction (JCE) standards: issues and impacts**

- No-cause evictions disproportionately impact BIPOC Communities
- Investors purchasing property that traditionally house vulnerable populations, evicting and pushing people into homelessness
- Pending SB 5160, which will limit the types of evictions a housing provider can do for two years
- If SB 5160 passes, COT cannot implement JCE with less restrictions than State law
- Pending Just Cause Eviction at State level

**Establish Shared Housing (e.g. Transitional, Clean and Sober, Renting Rooms) standards: issues and impacts**

- Becoming only housing option for vulnerable populations
- Disproportionally impacting BIPOC communities
- Potential violations of code: occupancy standards and zoning
- Negative impacts on neighborhood structures
- Potential for unlawful evictions pushing people into homelessness
- HUD has approved the use of Section 8 Vouchers for shared housing as a way to address homelessness

**Establish Late Fee standards: issues and impacts**

- Disproportionally impacting low-income tenants
- RLTA allows retroactive charges of late fees without a cap on the amount charged
- Potential barrier to finding housing, pushing people into homelessness

**Notice of proposed sale of low-income housing: issues and impacts**

- Property sale is not considered “change of use” under the RHC, therefore tenants do not qualify for relocation funds
- Potential of another Tiki Apartment crisis
- Allows COT to ensure tenants have access to available resources

**Restriction on filing evictions if housing provider does not have COT Business License: issues and impacts**

- Not all housing providers obtain the required COT Business License
- Allows tracking of housing in COT
- Ensures housing providers know and comply with all COT housing related codes and resources available to them