

July 08, 2026

The LEWISTON PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION met in the Community Development Department Second Floor Conference Room at 215 "D" Street. Chair Iacoboni called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Gabriel Iacoboni, Chair; Cynthia Ball; Zach Battles leaving at 6:58 pm; Kyle Harris;

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED: Emily Wolf, Vice Chair; Maureen Anderson;

COMMISSIONERS UNEXCUSED: Shaunita Cable;

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Dawn Ortiz, Community Development Office Supervisor; Jennifer Tengono, City Attorney

II. CITIZENS COMMENTS

None

III. ACTIVE AGENDA

A. APPROVAL OF JUNE 24, 2026 MEETING MINUTES (ACTION ITEM)

Commissioners Ball and Battles moved and seconded, respectively, approval of the June 24, 2026, as written. The motion carried 4-0.

B. GEM STATE HOUSING ALLIANCE (PRESENTATION):

Hollie Conde from Gem State Housing Alliance provided a presentation regarding housing policy, addressing NIMBYism, and the importance of considering long-term implications in decision-making.

During the discussion, the Commissioners and Ms. Conde addressed several critical challenges and philosophical questions surrounding infill development, municipal regulation, and housing affordability:

- **Infill Strategy and Neighborhood Character:** The conversation highlighted a distinct shortage of smaller housing types. Addressing concerns about increased density potentially impacting neighborhood dynamics, it was noted that residents seeking strict control over neighborhood aesthetics and integrity might be better suited for communities governed by Homeowners Associations (HOAs).
- **Encouraging Development Without Public Funds:** To incentivize developers in the absence of municipal funding, the city should focus on

reducing regulatory burdens. Recommended strategies include lowering upfront costs, streamlining the approval process, and eliminating bureaucratic hoops.

- **Balancing Growth and Regulation:** A key challenge is finding the "happy medium" between reducing barriers and maintaining high-quality, presentable growth. Participants discussed the possibility of removing subjective requirements from the zoning and building codes, keeping regulations straightforward and easy to understand rather than overly complex.

- **Local Control vs. Government Overreach:** The discussion touched on the boundary of government intervention, emphasizing that regulations must respect the unique, specialized needs of individual states, cities, and towns. Furthermore, defining "affordable housing" remains a challenge, as its meaning varies significantly among citizens, developers, and local officials.

- **State-Level Protections:** A final inquiry was raised regarding whether current state legislation prevents large state entities (such as public universities) from purchasing single-family homes and converting them into student housing.

IV. STAFF-COMMISSION COMMUNICATIONS:

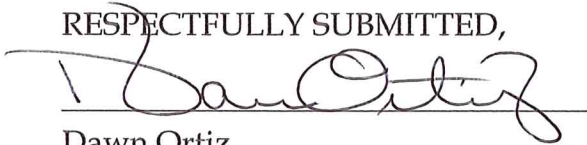
A. Query of Commissioners for the July 22, 2026, meeting.

All commissioners in attendance should be in attendance for the July 22, 2026, meeting. Staff Ortiz stated that there are two public hearings scheduled for the next meeting: a conditional use permit and rezone.

V. ADJOURN

There being no further business, Commissioners Harris and Ball moved and seconded, respectively, to adjourn. The motion carried 3-0, and the Planning and Zoning Commission adjourned at approximately 7:20 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,



Dawn Ortiz,
Recording Secretary



Chairperson or Acting Chairperson
Planning and Zoning Commission

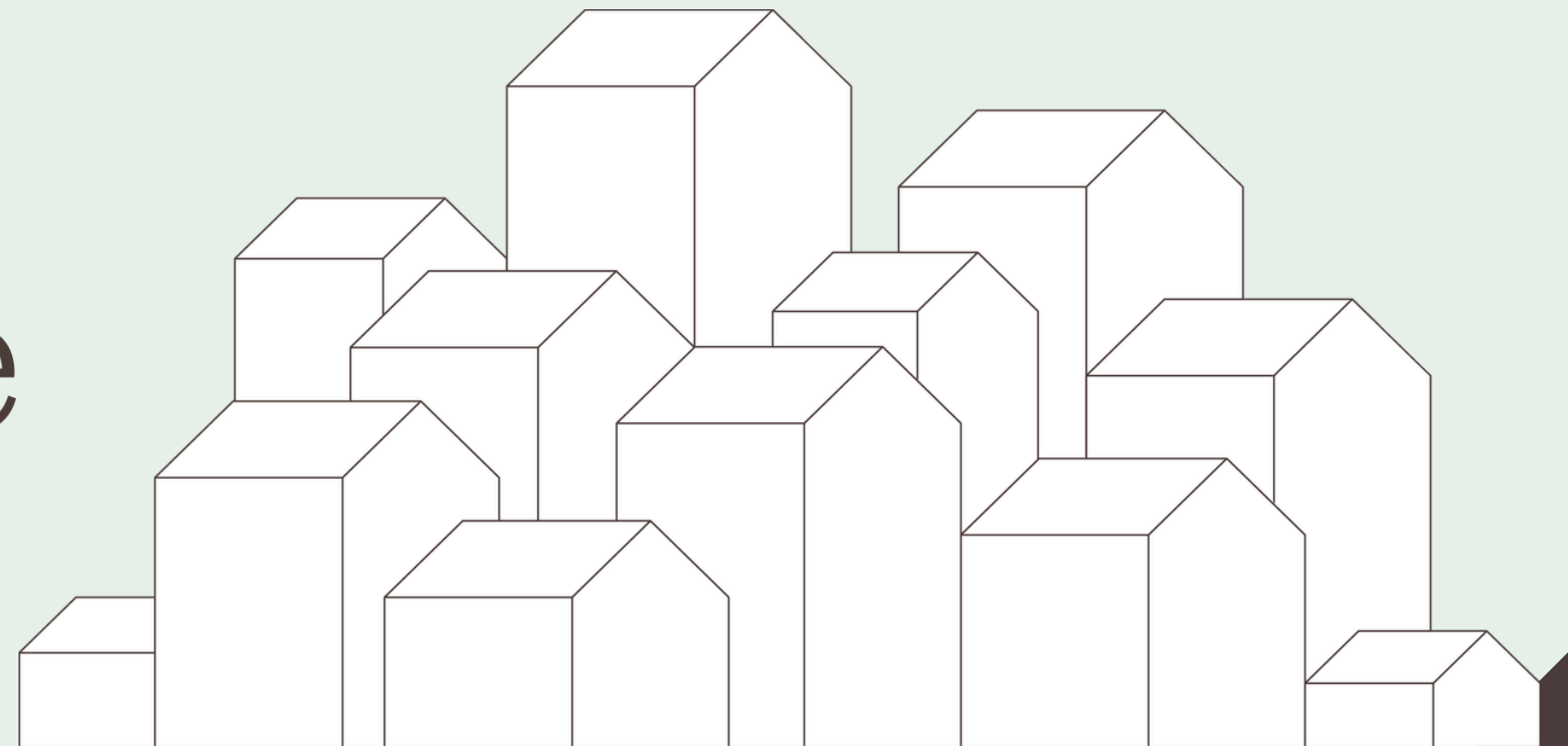
Approved this 22nd day of July, 2026.

Building Lewiston

housing supply needs, growing pains, and tools
to keep Lewiston a wonderful place to live



Gem State
Housing Alliance



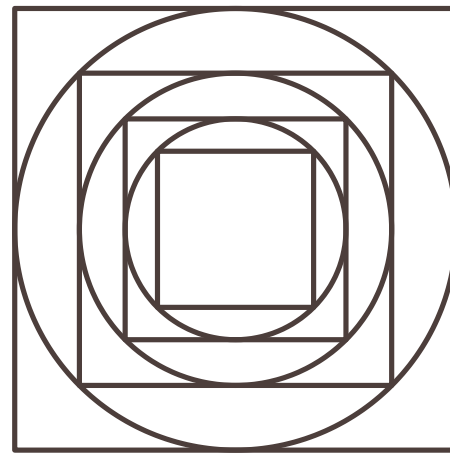
A g e n d a



1. About Gem State
2. Housing snapshot: Lewiston
3. Why homes are so expensive
4. Ways to lower costs
5. Public engagement: challenges and solutions
6. How to talk about housing
7. Discussion

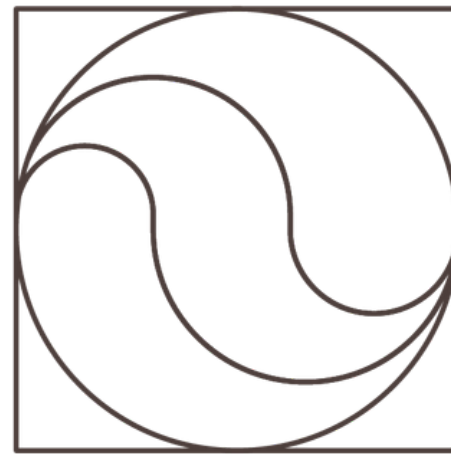
About Gem State Housing Alliance

Idaho's first and only pro-housing advocacy group, making it easier to build more homes for Idahoans.



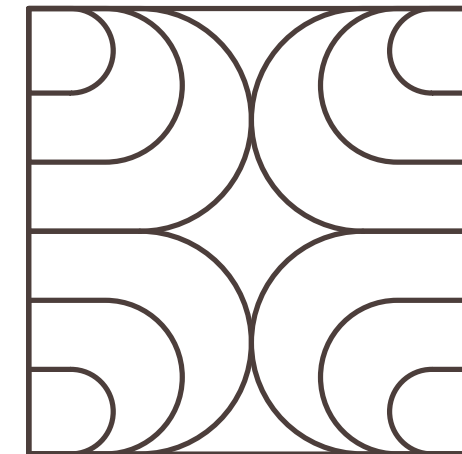
Advocate

For more homes by engaging decision-makers and shaping policy.



Educate

Idaho communities on the benefits of new housing.



Organize

Partners across Idaho to turn care into action.



Lewiston housing snapshot



~35K Lewiston residents and growing

\$397K Median home value

\$1,100 Median gross rent

Source: US Census Bureau

What Idahoans think



Housing is #1

The high cost of housing is Idahoans' #1 concern.

Not enough homes

8 in 10 Idahoans say there are not enough homes to rent or buy in their area.

Want action

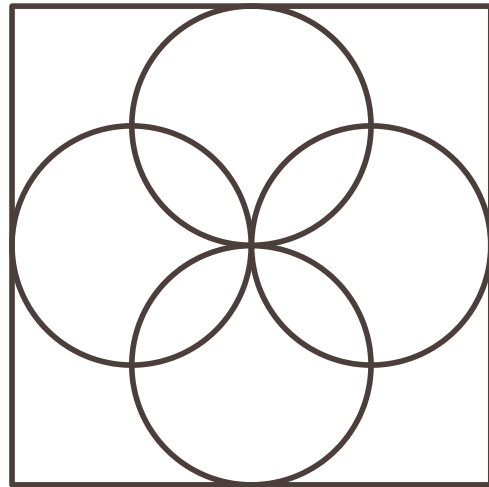
72% of Idahoans say their city or town is not doing a good job at addressing affordability.

Source: Idaho Policy Institute, Change Research

Why housing is so expensive

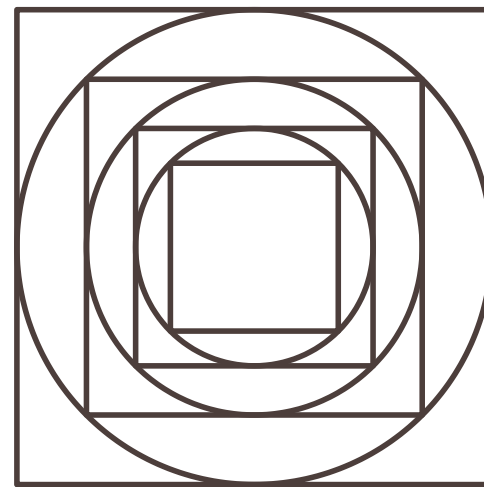


High *costs*



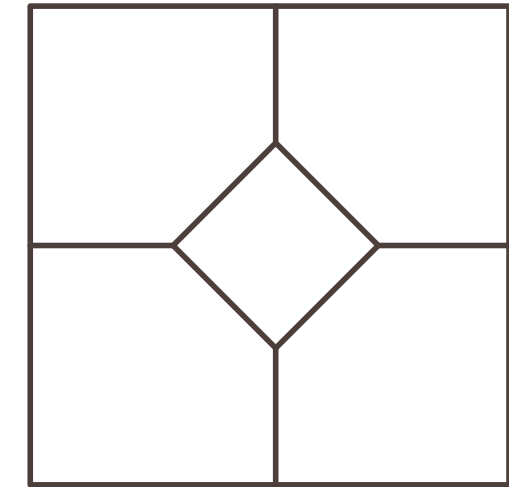
Rising land, labor, and material costs are passed directly to consumers.

Regulation *& red tape*



Industry estimates put regulation at roughly 25% of development costs, including policies, delays, and paperwork.

Lack of *supply*



Supply hasn't kept up with demand. Meanwhile, many resist local housing development, stalling projects and policy alike.

Discretionary review adds to the final price tag



Cost & Time

Extra hearings add months and thousands of dollars before a shovel hits the ground. Many small builders can't absorb that risk.



Valuation Problem

Uncertain approvals make land nearly impossible to value accurately, leading projects to fall apart before they can even begin.



Confidentiality Risk

Hearings force early disclosure of business plans — tenants, financing, unit mix — before a developer is ready. Competitors benefit. Projects die.



LLUPA's Answer:

LLUPA explicitly allows by-right permitting. Cities can set standards through the zoning code — design, scale, setbacks — and then approve conforming projects administratively.

Research is clear: more homes means lower costs

5-7%

decrease in nearby rents from new market-rate buildings

Philadelphia Federal Reserve, 2020

17%

lower displacement risk for renters within 100 meters of new construction

UC Berkeley, 2021

+0.9%

property value increase for homes near housing developments

Urban Institute, 2021

19%

reduction in rent costs in Austin, Texas after building boom

Pew Charitable Trusts





OUR WORK ▼ INSIGHTS & PERSPECTIVES ▼ ABOUT ▼

Pew

TOPICS: IMPROVE ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT | STRENGTHEN STATE GOVERNMENT

PROJECTS: HOUSING POLICY

Building Homes Near Jobs, Stores, and Transit Saves Public Dollars

New research shows advantages of adding housing in established areas

Authors: [Seva Rodnyansky](#), [Tushar Kansal](#), Ben Holland, Justyn Huckleberry, Jyot Chadha, Ian Carlton, and Natalie Walker



- Ongoing infrastructure maintenance costs 50% less when homes are built near existing jobs, stores, and transit.
- Those same areas generate 13% more property tax revenue per acre.
- Infrastructure in outlying areas takes 50% longer to pay off.

Challenges with public hearings



The loudest voices at public hearings often don't reflect the broader community.



Hyper-local focus

Development-focused meetings skew toward those who oppose change in their neighborhoods.



Bad timing

Meetings held when only retired people or those with flexible schedules can attend. Attendees are more likely to be homeowners, older, and wealthier.



In-person

It's harder to participate with written or online comments which excludes working families and other more busy residents.



Requiring people to come to you

Advocates for new housing are less organized than opponents making turnout harder.

Addressing challenges in public engagement

- 1 Cast a wide net to hear from residents near proposed developments. Opponents will show up — supporters need to be invited.
- 2 Engage the public to help shape your community's future in a way that serves locals. Frame it as "how" you grow, not "if" you grow. Use your position to educate the public while acknowledging the change.
- 3 Celebrate public engagement efforts and communicate how much community input you have gathered on housing, generally.
- 4 Emphasize to the public that developments that meet code technically should be approved due to state law (LLUPA) and your quasi-judicial role during hearings.

Common objections at public hearings



COMMON OBJECTION

WHAT THE EVIDENCE SAYS



"This will change the character of our neighborhood."



Missing middle IS the historic character of most American neighborhoods built before 1975. Character comes from design standards, setbacks, and scale.



"Neighbors should have a say."



Public input belongs at the comp plan and zoning level, not on individual projects that follow the rules.



"Property values will drop."



Research shows missing middle and multifamily don't reduce adjacent property values when design standards apply. Scarcity drives prices up, not supply, and high prices hurt homeowners trying to sell.



"We don't have the infrastructure."



Infill uses existing roads, water, and sewer, which is far cheaper per unit than sprawl. Blocking it doesn't protect infrastructure; it just pushes growth further out.

How to talk about housing



AVOID

"Increase density"

"End single-family zoning"

"Units"

"Single-family" / "multi-family"

Abstract descriptions of housing types

USE INSTEAD

"Homes of all shapes and sizes, for all types of people"

"Legalize [housing type]" or "remove the ban on [housing type]"

"Homes"

"Single-detached" / "workforce housing"

Visuals showing what these homes actually look like in Idaho neighborhoods

Based on research by the Sightline Institute, tested in focus groups and refined across the Mountain West.



Show Idaho neighbors what these homes actually look like.

- Use photos of existing duplexes, cottages, and ADUs in Idaho neighborhoods, not renderings of towers.
- Show the scale: a fourplex that looks like a large single-detached home is not scary.
- Avoid abstract diagrams - use street-level photos that feel familiar and comfortable.

Lean on visuals



Recap



Idaho has a housing shortage

We are the fastest-growing state, and we need homes of more types and sizes, especially those that are harder to build under code.



Engagement must be representative

Use multiple strategies to reach average community members, while recognizing the limits of what can be considered or used to shut down a development.



City leaders can educate

Focus on messaging that works and “how” we grow, not “if” we grow.



Words matter

"Homes of all shapes and sizes." "Legalize."
"Workforce housing." Use language that opens minds, not closes them.

www.gemstatehousing.org

We make it easier to build more homes for Idahoans.



Gem State
Housing Alliance