



# Small Dwelling Units

## Scenarios under which Small Dwelling Units can be constructed in Island County

Small dwelling units are allowed, through several methods but always require a building permit and/or a land use permit.

### Small, “Stick-Built” Houses

These homes need to meet the International Residential Building Code which sets minimum size requirements for rooms. Under this code, the smallest room size for a habitable room is 70 square feet and no less than 7 feet in any horizontal direction. For bedrooms occupied by more than one person, a minimum of 50 square feet per person is required. Following these standards, the minimum home size would be similar to a studio apartment where the bedroom and living room are the same room, with a small kitchen and bathroom. This small style of home still needs to meet the maximum density requirements for the applicable zone.

If someone wished to build several small “stick-built” homes on a single lot, this would be considered cottage housing and would be allowed in the Freeland Non-Municipal Urban Growth Area, under the new proposed development regulations due to be adopted by the beginning of 2020.

### Prefabricated Small House

If someone wishes to bring in a prefabricated house on a truck bed and place it on a lot, this would be considered a manufactured home which needs to be certified by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) rather than meeting the International Residential Building Code. It would also need tie-downs, or be placed on a foundation, and skirting, whether the wheels are left on or not. Manufactured homes are permitted in the same zones as single family “stick-built” homes, (doublewide required in Rural Residential and on lots <2.5 acres in the Rural Zone).

If someone wished to locate multiple prefabricated small houses in a community, they could do this under the County’s manufactured home park provisions. Each home would be certified by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In the Rural zone, manufactured home communities are permitted up to a density of 30 units per 20 acres.

### Small House on Trailer/Wheels

If someone wished to have a tiny home on wheels, and tow it behind their vehicle it would have to meet the standards for an RV or travel trailer, regulated by the Department of Transportation to ensure safety on the road. In Island County they would be permitted in designated RV parks for a temporary period of time, but are not considered a permanent “dwelling unit.”

