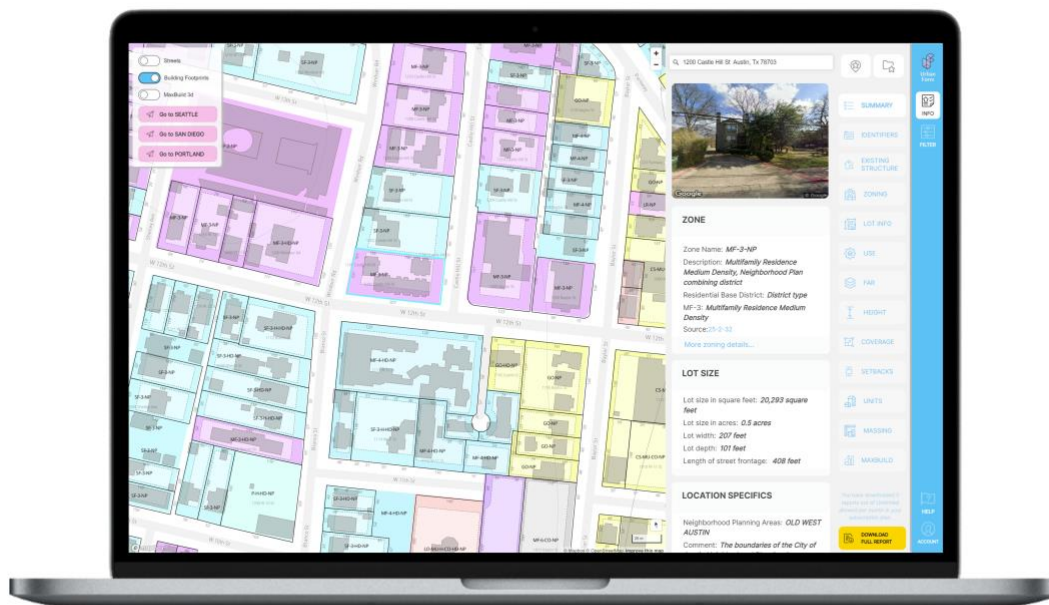


## Case Study: Streamlining the zoning and permitting processes to advance workforce housing development in Yamhill County

**Summary:** A first-of-its-kind partnership between private, public, and non-profit sectors has created an online zoning navigation platform covering 41,500 parcels in all 11 jurisdictions of Yamhill County, Oregon. The initiative improves access to zoning regulations for any parcel in the county and saves time in the permit application process. This project represents a fast-to-market solution that can impact housing development opportunities at scale. Total implementation time was under two months, with a two-month quality assurance process that followed.



**Background:** This project was born out of the collaboration between the Strategic Economic Development Corporation (SEDCOR), a three-county economic development agency; the Newberg Workforce Housing Consortium (NWHC), including employers such as A-dec, George Fox University, and Providence Health; and the Missing Middle Housing Fund (MMHF), a workforce housing catalyst non-profit. The partnership has been working to identify opportunities to reduce the time and cost to build more workforce housing in Newberg to serve middle income households earning 80-120% of the area median income. The group established a Workforce Housing Investment Fund (WHIF) with a \$3M grant from



February 2025

the state of Oregon, awarded with the leadership of Oregon State Representative Anna Scharf to support the region's efforts.

Improving zoning and development processes was prioritized in a Let's Build workforce housing solutions summit organized by the MMHF and SEDCOR in Newberg in 2023. After the event, the MMHF introduced UrbanForm and their capability to digitize zoning to a Mayors' Working Group launched by Newberg Mayor Bill Rosacker, with support from SEDCOR. The team set out to implement this technology across all 11 jurisdictions within Yamhill County, including the Cities of Amity, Carlton, Dayton, Dundee, Lafayette, McMinnville, Newberg, Sheridan, Willamina, and Yamhill, and Yamhill County itself.

UrbanForm's online web app instantly presents key zoning regulations for any given parcel, points precisely to the relevant sections of code, and summarizes everything in an easy-to-use report. This improves transparency and accessibility, enhances permit application quality, and saves time and reduces errors for applicants and reviewers. Since its founding in 2020, UrbanForm has digitized nearly 2 million parcels in cities such as Seattle and Bellevue, Portland and Beaverton, San Diego, Los Angeles, and Austin.

**Project Objectives:**

- Digitize Yamhill County's 41,500 parcels so that they can be accessed and evaluated more easily by developers, architects, and others
- Add capacity for planning staff by enabling them to focus on higher value planning activities and more meaningful customer engagement
- Enhance customer service for cities and citizens to work together in a more collaborative fashion
- Encourage collaboration and transparency across jurisdictions
- Ultimately support increases in housing development efficiency

**Jurisdiction Response to Date:**

The UrbanForm Yamhill County platform was rolled out to the jurisdictions for evaluation at the end of 2024. Over a 2-month quality assurance (QA) process, the jurisdictions had the opportunity to engage with the platform and provide direct feedback to UrbanForm to ensure that the zoning codes were accurately reflected and relevant information was provided. Some of the feedback during the QA process included the desire to make special overlay districts available for the first time and foregrounding pertinent development regulations, such as parking and landscaping requirements and wetland delineations. Ongoing feedback will continue to improve the service.

Engagement with the platform has been increasing and the feedback thus far remains very positive. Some of the feedback includes:



February 2025

- *"This tool has the potential to be a gamechanger for city planning. The real estate and development communities will find the tool beneficial in conducting site analysis and code assessment opportunities. Urban Form helps streamline the zoning research and permitting process and ultimately advance the receipt of completed permitting applications."* – **Doug Rux, The Rux Group (10 years + experience providing land use services in Yamhill County)**
- *"It's been so nice to have UrbanForm available when I answer questions from interested parties, so I don't have to run back and forth from my desk to the maps and codes. It's been something I've already been using daily to help in my work."* – **Staff Member, Yamhill County Jurisdiction**
- *"UrbanForm will streamline processes for city planners and permitters, while also simplifying the experience for contractors and developers by providing easy access to zoning information. This will free up staff time, increase capacity, and ultimately improve customer service for citizens."* – **Staff Member, Yamhill County Jurisdiction**

The platform will be maintained with the ongoing cooperation between the jurisdictions and UrbanForm. A feedback loop will ensure that the information is up to date and reflects the latest known conditions about property and regulations.

### **Conclusion:**

We believe this is the first time every jurisdiction in an American county has had all of their zoning maps and codes digitized on one single access platform. Eleven jurisdictions in Yamhill County worked collaboratively with leadership from SEDCOR, MMHF, NWHC, the Yamhill County Mayoral Housing Group, and UrbanForm to address a key accessibility challenge. The platform can enable greater speed and accuracy of the zoning and permitting processes for anyone who uses it.

A brief, four-minute demo of the Yamhill site from UrbanForm Founder, Quang Truong, can be watched [HERE](#). The Yamhill County UrbanForm platform can be explored online at <https://yam.urbanform.us> With specific questions about UrbanForm's platform, contact Quang Truong at UrbanForm @ [quang@urbanform.us](mailto:quang@urbanform.us)

To learn more about how UrbanForm can successfully be applied to advance zoning and permitting processes in your region, reach out to Nate Wildfire at the MMHF @ [nathan.wildfire@missingmiddlehousing.fund](mailto:nathan.wildfire@missingmiddlehousing.fund).