

City of Boulder
LIVABILITY STANDARDS
for PERMANENTLY AFFORDABLE HOUSING

BEST PRACTICES MANUAL
UPDATED JANUARY 2, 2020

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The City of Boulder's Comprehensive Plan deems affordable housing a "significant community benefit" and the City seeks to increase the proportion of permanently affordable housing units to 15% of the total housing stock.

Permanently affordable housing represents a substantial long-term public investment. As such, it is imperative that affordable housing produced be functional, meet the needs of a range of types and sizes of households, meet state and local code and property standards, and be constructed with quality materials and skilled installation consistent with industry standards.

The *Livability Standards* have been developed to assist developers during the planning and design process and are intended to provide clarity on what is considered an "adequate affordable unit" by The City of Boulder, for new construction.

THESE STANDARDS ARE NOT BUILD-TO DIMENSIONS AND SPECIFICATIONS but rather the *minimum* dimensions and specifications acceptable. It is expected that a majority of affordable units will exceed these minimum requirements.

PROCESS

Affordable units and/or projects may be subject to Land Use review including but not limited to: Concept Plan, Site or Form Based Code Review, Use Review, Annexation, and Technical Document Review. Affordable units provided through inclusionary housing as off-site units are also subject to Location Approval and either Site Review or the Off-site Affordable Housing Design Review.

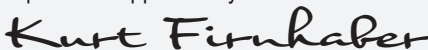
When possible, affordable unit floor plans and finish specifications will be reviewed by the City for conformance with the Livability Standards herein concurrent with a Land Use review. In cases where this is not possible, proposed affordable units must be reviewed prior to building permit submittal. Any such reviews must be completed and approved prior to submittal of a residential building permit and execution of any required documentation including the Permanently Affordable Housing Covenant. During Construction a City Housing Inspector will be retained to ensure compliance and conformance to these standards and to ensure the affordable units are constructed, installed and finished in a quality, workmanlike manner consistent with industry standards.

REMEDIES

Once the project and/or affordable units are constructed, any deviations from these standards ("deficiencies") which did not have prior approval by the City could result in the City Manager not accepting the unit as affordable. If construction of the unit has not been finalized, deficiencies must be rectified by bringing the unit into compliance. If construction is complete or near completion, the City Manager may require other remedies for deficiencies including but not limited to a reduction of the maximum allowable affordable sales price, rental income, or a monetary assessment per square foot to be paid prior to receiving a certificate of occupancy for the unit or building.

Any development subject to planning review that has submitted an application for site review, form based code review, or use review, or any by-right development that has submitted an application for a building permit as of the date these standards were approved and adopted may choose to comply with this update or the version of the livability standards in place at the time of submittal.

Adopted and Approved by:



Kurt Firnhaber
Director of Housing and Human Services
City of Boulder

1/2/20

Date

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1

INCLUSIONARY HOUSING (IH)

Inclusionary Housing can result in two configurations of affordable units; **dispersed**, and **concentrated**. The way in which a developer complies with the Livability Standards varies depending on the configuration.

- *Dispersed affordable units.* Affordable units provided on-site that are spread throughout a development, with no single building containing greater than 50% affordable units (any fraction to be rounded up). Single-family homes, or duplex residences containing two affordable units are considered on-site dispersed affordable units if they are scattered throughout a development as opposed to being concentrated in a specific area. For the items addressed in these standards, dispersed affordable units must be equivalent to the market-rate units or meet the Livability Standards. For example, if the market-rate units include smaller bedroom closets, the integrated affordable units may do the same.
- *Concentrated affordable units.* Affordable units provided off-site, or in a building on-site larger than a duplex, that contains more than 50% affordable units (any fraction to be rounded up), and which may

or may not be on a lot subdivided on the development that generated an inclusionary requirement. On-site single-family homes, or duplex residences with two affordable units, are considered concentrated if the buildings are aggregated in one area and not dispersed throughout a development. Concentrated affordable units shall meet the *Livability Standards* regardless of what is provided in the market-rate units.

“Functionally equivalent.” Finishes and appliances in affordable units may be functionally consistent to what is provided in the market-rate units without providing identical brand finishes, fixtures, and products. For example, market-rate units could include high-quality granite countertops, while the permanently affordable units may include a more cost-effective, yet reasonable quality laminate product that functions in the same manner as a countertop. The City will consider proposals by the applicant and/or may request variations to proposed functionally equivalent kitchen cabinets, countertops, faucets, appliances, flooring and/or other similar items which would result in an equivalent livability outcome. The goal is to achieve a balance between the construction cost of the affordable units and equivalency to the market-rate units.

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FUNDING & ANNEXATION

Any affordable units acquired all or in part with City funds, through a Colorado Housing and Finance Authority's (CHFA) Tax Credit Application, or through an annexation agreement, are required to meet the City of Boulder Livability Standards for Permanently Affordable Housing.

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LIVABILITY MATRIX

table 3.1

LIVABILITY MATRIX						
		MICRO	EFFICIENCY/ STUDIO	1 BR	2 BR	3+ BR
		< 300 FT ² W/O ADDITIONAL KITCHEN FACILITIES	301 - 475 FT ²	> 475 FT ²		
KITCHEN <i>MINIMUM</i> REQUIREMENTS (SEE SECTION 5 FOR ADDITIONAL EXPLANATION)						
C1	BASE CABINETS (COMBINED LENGTH)	3 FT	5 FT	5 FT	6 FT	7 FT
C2	UPPER CABINETS (COMBINED LENGTH)	3 FT	5 FT	5 FT	6 FT	7 FT
C3	30 IN. CONTINUOUS WORK SURFACE REQUIRED	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
ROOM <i>MINIMUM</i> DIMENSIONS/AREAS (SEE SECTION 4 FOR ADDITIONAL EXPLANATION)*						
R1	BEDROOM/SLEEPING AREA	9'-1" x 9'-1"	9'-1" x 9'-1"	9'-1" x 10'-1"	9'-1" x 12'-0"	9'-1" x 12'-0"
R2	ADDITIONAL BEDROOM(S)	N/A	N/A	N/A	9'-1" x 9'-1"	9'-1" x 9'-1"
R3	LIVING/DINING	N/A	102 FT ²	120 FT ²	180 FT ²	200 FT ²
STORAGE SPACES <i>MINIMUM</i> DIMENSIONS (SEE SECTION 6 FOR ADDITIONAL EXPLANATION)**						
S1	BEDROOM CLOSET*** (W)	4'-1"	4'-1"	6'-1"	6'-1"	6'-1"
S2	LINEN CLOSET (W)	N/A	N/A	2'-7"	2'-7"	3'-1"
S3	ENTRY CLOSET*** (W)	N/A	2'-1"	2'-1"	2'-7"	3'-1"
S4	STORAGE CLOSET	3'-1" x 4'-1"	3'-1" x 5'-1"	3'-1" x 6'-1"	5'-1" x 4'-1"	5'-1" x 6'-1"
APPLIANCE <i>MINIMUM</i> SIZE REQUIREMENTS (SEE SECTION 8 FOR ADDITIONAL EXPLANATION)						
A1	SINK	24 IN	24 IN	30 IN	32 IN	32 IN
A2	RANGE/OVEN	24 IN	24 IN	30 IN	30 IN	30 IN
A3	REFRIGERATOR	15 FT ³	15 FT ³	18 FT ³	20 FT ³	20 FT ³
A4	DISHWASHER	NOT REQUIRED	NOT REQUIRED	17 IN	24 IN	24 IN

UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED, DIMENSIONS ARE TAKEN FROM ROUGH FRAMING

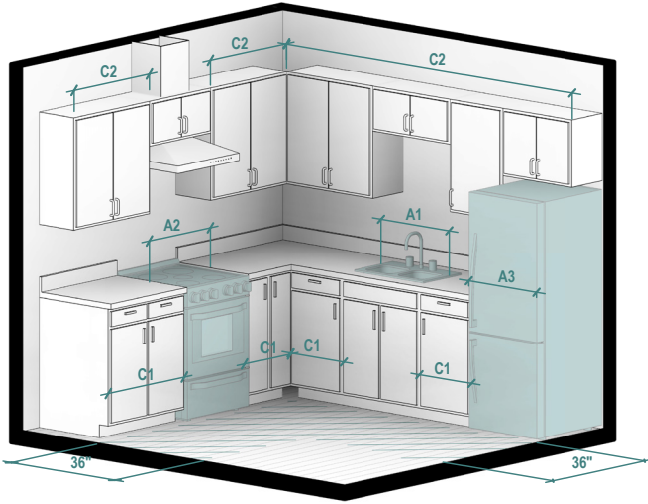
* THE ROUGH FRAMING DIMENSION SHALL BE NO LESS THAN 9'-1" IN ANY BEDROOM, AND NO LESS THAN 10'-1" IN ANY LIVING & DINING SPACES

** UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED, STORAGE SPACES REQUIRE A MINIMUM FINISHED HEIGHT (H) OF 7'-0" (5'-0" UNDER A STAIRWAY)

*** CLOSETS WITH A ROD AND SHELF REQUIRE A MINIMUM ROUGH FRAMING DEPTH (D) OF 23 IN.

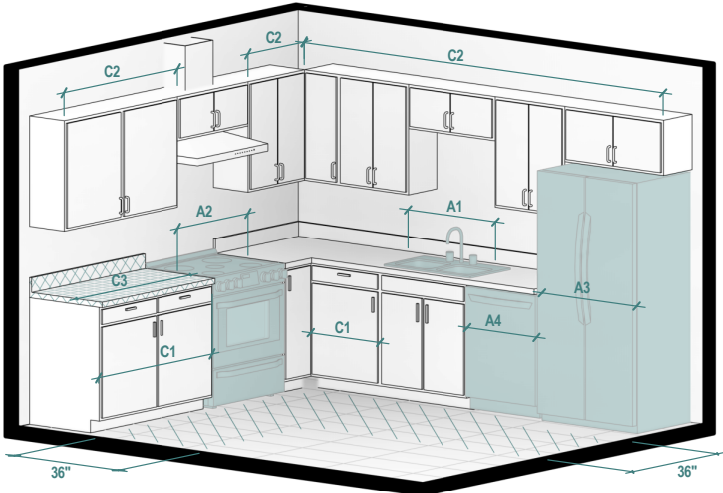
Table 3.1 lists minimum size and dimension requirements for each of the corresponding spaces/elements within an affordable unit. The listed values are based off research of affordable housing developments and the requirements necessary to maintain an acceptable standard of living for the occupants. The values listed represent the minimum affordable housing conditions required by The City of Boulder.

diagram 3.1



Kitchen layout diagram highlighting dimension measurement, appliance sizes, and the required clear floor access area in an efficiency/studio type unit

diagram 3.2



Kitchen layout diagram highlighting dimension measurement, potential location for the required work-surface, and the required appliance sizes and clear floor access area in a one-bedroom type unit

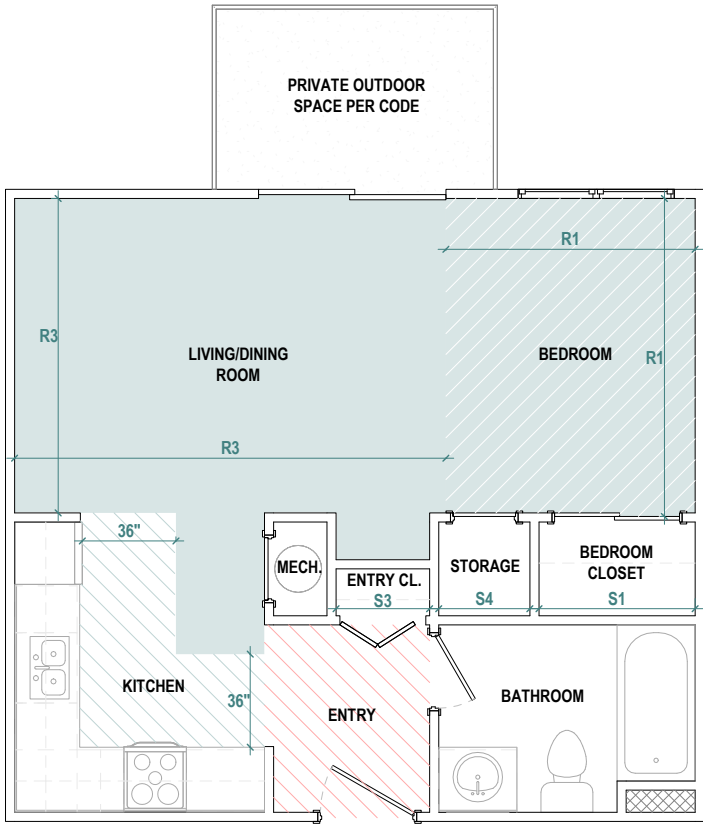


diagram 3.3

Efficiency/Studio unit floor plan illustration demonstrating the minimum room dimensions and floor area requirements

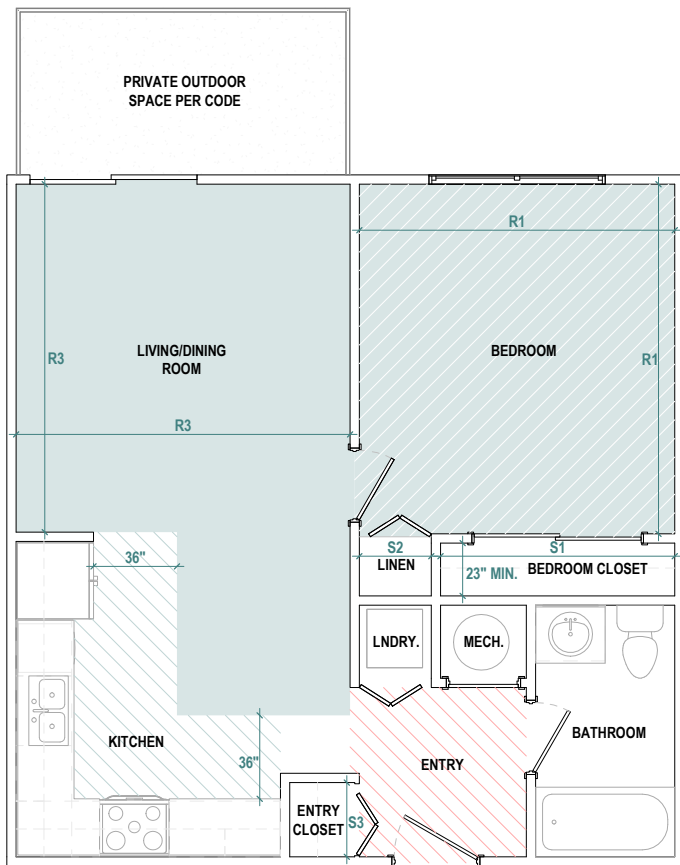


diagram 3.4

One-bedroom unit floor plan illustration demonstrating the minimum room dimensions and floor area requirements

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UNIT SIZE & ROOM LAYOUT

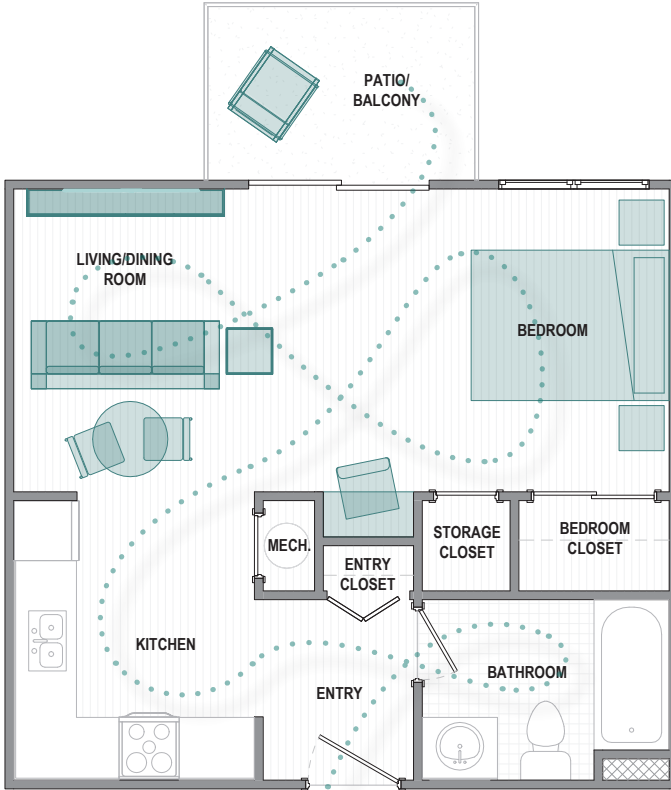


diagram 4.1

Efficiency/Studio unit floor plan illustration demonstrating a functional layout and furniture configuration with integrated circulation

Permanently affordable units are expected to have a functional and design-oriented/logical floor plan that efficiently utilizes the space. It is especially important to maximize square footage in studio, efficiency, and micro units. Each affordable unit must meet or exceed the minimum floor area requirements set by Inclusionary Housing, a Colorado Housing and Finance Authority's (CHFA) Tax Credit Application, and/or other executed agreement. Unless a calculation for measuring floor area is included in an executed agreement, affordable unit floor area should be measured based on the requirements stated in B.R.C. 9-16; Floor area for attached dwelling units or Floor area for detached dwelling units.

While designing affordable homes and making decisions regarding the layout, include adequate space for circulation throughout the unit. The integration of (at least) one reasonable furniture configuration which doesn't obstruct pathways, or negatively impact the overall circulation, must be successfully demonstrated and identifiable.

All units must include appropriately sized and functional rooms. Generally, successful projects have been those with rectilinear rooms and floor plans. Rooms and areas with awkward spaces and significant unusable square footage are not acceptable.

The following is a list of Best Management Practices that should be adhered to when making overall design and layout decisions:

- Minimum room dimensions will be taken from the rough framing and measured between the narrowest points in the space
- The ability to adequately furnish a space should not be compromised by interior circulation; including interior doors and entryways, and/or exterior doors and windows
- Furniture layouts should be used to set critical room dimensions
- In units where the layout includes a combined living/dining space, and/or the kitchen overlaps with other program areas, a 36 IN. “buffer-zone” is required in order to maintain accessibility and ensure functionality. Any program area that overlaps and/or infringes on this space **CANNOT** be calculated into the minimum floor area requirement

1, 2 & 3+ BEDROOM UNITS

- All bedrooms shall have rough framing dimensions of no less than nine feet, one inch (9'-1")
- All living & dining rooms (or combination) shall have rough framing dimensions of no less than ten feet, one inch (10'-1")
- A minimum of one furniture configuration must be easily identifiable and demonstrated through a layout containing; a 6 FT sofa, side and/or coffee tables, an entertainment center with enough wall space to house a television that is visible from a majority of the seating. Ample leg room must be maintained without obstructing circulation in-to, out-of, and/or around the space
- Units must include designated dining space able to accommodate a sit-down meal for 4+ people, and must **NOT** obstruct any doorways and/or impede circulation

MICRO, EFFICIENCY & STUDIO UNITS

- Studio/efficiency, and micro units, and any other unit less than 475 FT², must have efficient floor plans, appropriately sized rooms (generally rectilinear), and allow for at least one functional furniture configuration
- These affordable units must contain a designated sleeping area able to accommodate one twin-sized bed (or larger)
- The living area must be able to accommodate a 5 FT sofa
- The unit must contain a designated dining space able to accommodate 2+ people for a sit-down meal without obstructing doorways and/or circulation

**It is highly recommended to include an additional 1-2 in. in the room dimensions as a margin for error in order to accommodate any discrepancies in the framing*

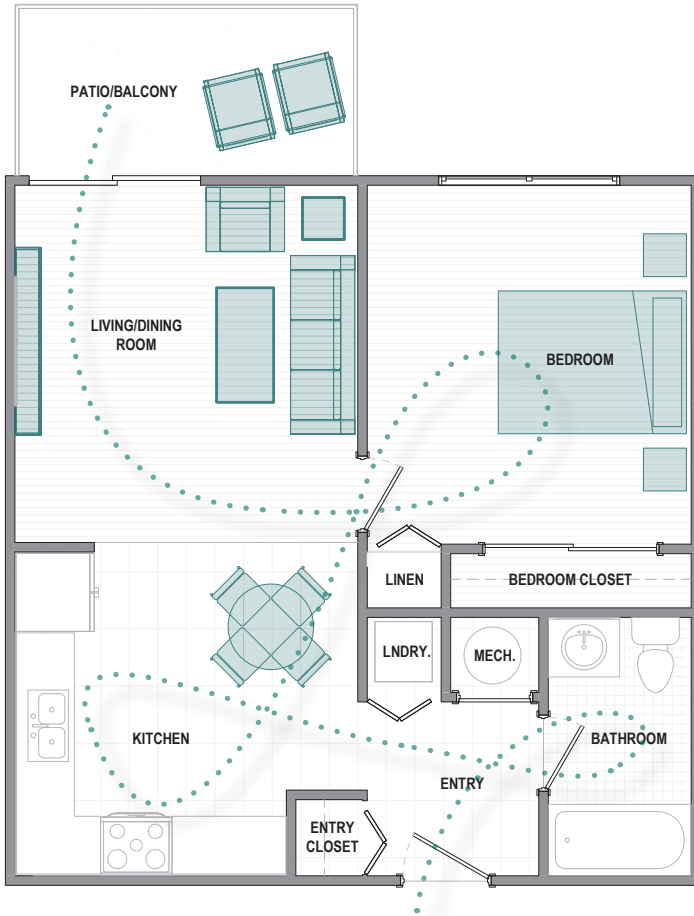


diagram 4.2

One-bedroom unit floor plan illustration demonstrating a functional layout with a standard furniture configuration and an efficient circulation

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KITCHENS

CABINETS

- Affordable units are required to have kitchen cabinets and/or other additional kitchen storage areas (pantries/dry storage, etc.) proportional to the size and anticipated occupancy of that unit type
- Additional kitchen storage, above and beyond the minimum requirement is desirable and recommended
- In certain situations, where the installation of required cabinetry is physically restrictive and/or prohibitive, a 10% substitution of either base cabinets for uppers, or uppers for base cabinets will be allowed to make up the difference, in order to meet the minimum requirement for that unit type
- Sink bases, cabinetry housing range vents, and cabinet spaces less than 12 IN. *CANNOT* be counted toward the minimum cabinet requirement for that unit type

WORK SURFACE

- One, two, and three+ bedroom units are required to provide a 30 IN. minimum countertop work surface; suggested location adjacent to a cooktop or sink
- Work surface *CANNOT* include any interior corner countertop space, or surface(s) of the stove and/or sink

ACCESSIBILITY

- A minimum 36 IN. clear and open floor space - directly adjacent to all kitchen cabinetry, appliances, and/or work surfaces - is required, in addition to the overall circulation within the unit, in order to maintain the accessibility and functionality of the space

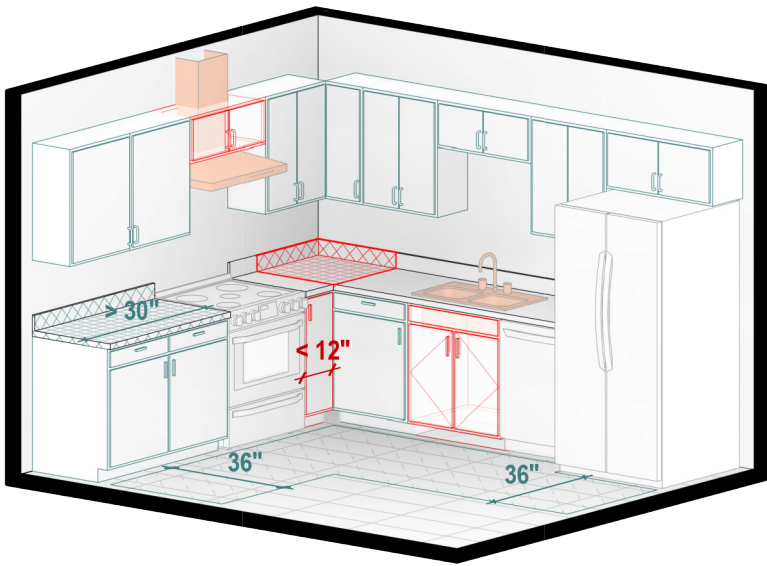


diagram 5.1

Diagram illustrating adequate accessibility, work-surface area and spaces not counted toward cabinetry in a one-bedroom type unit

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STORAGE

CLOSETS

- Bedroom closets must have a minimum rough framing depth of 23 IN. and contain a shelf over rod (can be substituted with multiple stacked shelves)
- Linen closets must contain at least 4 fixed, or adjustable shelves
- Entryway closets are intended to be used for coat and shoe storage and should be located near an exterior door when possible. Entry closets must contain a shelf over rod and have a minimum rough framing depth of 23 IN.
- Closets must be built and installed so that any and all doors (sliding, bi-fold, swing, etc.), do *NOT* obstruct or restrict the accessibility of the space while in the open position
- If the closet doors must open into the space, the closet must be large enough and possess a layout which accommodates the door swing without obstructing usable space or being counted toward the space requirement
- Walk-through closets that include a central area for circulation and/or other entrances, are allowed, given the closet storage functional space is *NOT* negatively impacted or compromised by this layout, and closet space requirements are met absent the circulation area

The standards stated above and outlined in the Livability Matrix are applicable to *each* closet within a unit and are not intended to be combined. Please refer to Table 3.1 in Section 3 for additional information and requirements.

GENERAL STORAGE GUIDELINES

- Mechanical rooms are *NOT* considered storage areas and will *NOT* be counted toward the storage space minimum requirements
- All closets and storage areas, with the exception of storage space located under a stairway, must have a minimum finished height of 7'-0"
- If a storage area or closet will be located under a stairway, only the space with a minimum finished height of 5'-0" will be counted toward the required minimum
- The dimensions of closets and storage spaces must be taken from the rough framing

ADDITIONAL STORAGE

- An additional space for storage is required for each unit, above and beyond the unit's minimum closet requirement. This additional storage space must be enclosed in a dry area and have the ability to be individually locked and controlled by each tenant
- The intent of this space is to store items less-frequently used and/or accessed, that wouldn't otherwise fit in a typical unit's interior closets without obstructing or restricting access
- For space planning purposes only - examples of these items include, but are not limited to: miscellaneous recreational equipment, coolers, strollers, holiday/seasonal items, and luggage. This space is *not* intended to store bicycles

Additional storage must be provided in one of the following ways:

OPTION 1

The additional storage space may be provided as an external shed, unit, or locker, located outside, in a basement, carport, multi-car garage, or aggregated in a separate room in the building where the affordable units are located. Additional storage space may be provided in cages in any of the above locations as long as the cages are in an enclosed and dry area.

OPTION 2

The additional storage space may be provided as an individual closet adjacent to, or within the unit, and be accessed from the hallway directly outside the unit, or from the interior of the unit. The space will *not* be counted toward the minimum dwelling unit floor area required by IH, or as otherwise indicated in a Colorado Housing and Finance Authority's (CHFA) Tax Credit Application, funding application, or annexation agreement. If provided interior to the unit, an effort should be made to locate the space near an exterior door so the stored items can be easily accessed by the tenant.

OPTION 3

The additional storage space may be provided by enlarging the interior closet spaces. The enlarged closet space will be counted as additional storage only after all other interior closet storage space requirements have been met. The additional storage provided by enlarging required closets will *not* count toward the minimum dwelling unit floor area required by IH, or as otherwise indicated in a Colorado Housing and Finance Authority's (CHFA) Tax Credit Application, funding application, or annexation agreement.

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FINISHES & FIXTURES

COUNTERTOPS

- Countertop surfaces shall be constructed of new, durable materials
- Countertops should require minimal maintenance and upkeep

FLOORING

- New carpet, wood, tile, vinyl, or linoleum floors must be provided in each unit
- Water-resistant, durable flooring is required in all kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms, and/or other spaces that will be exposed to moisture

WINDOWS & COVERINGS

- Window coverings and/or shades must be installed on every window
- Drapes/blinds/shades, and/or curtains are acceptable and must be operable
- The window covering will allow the maximum amount of natural light into the space and still maintain privacy
- In first floor units where the interior of the unit is visible from an exterior public area, the window covering must function to maintain privacy while, to the extent possible, allowing natural light enter the room. For example, top-down bottom-up shades and blinds, or two-tier curtains - both provide privacy and light

NOISE MITIGATION

- In developments where affordable units are proposed to face roadways and streets with a speed limit exceeding 35 MPH, and/or train tracks are located within 100 YDS, windows and doors exposed to these conditions are required to meet a 32 STC (Sound Transmission Class) Rating for noise mitigation
- The City Manager may also require any affordable units to have central air conditioning, or unit air conditioners installed where external noise could potentially cause a disturbance, allowing the tenant the option of keeping the windows closed at all times



APPLIANCES & WARRANTIES

WASHERS & DRYERS

UNITS > 475 FT²

- Affordable units shall provide washing machines and dryers within each unit unless otherwise required by Inclusionary Housing and/or stated in the annexation or funding agreement

WASHING MACHINES AND DRYERS LOCATED INSIDE A BEDROOM CLOSET WILL BE ACCEPTED ONLY IF AND WHEN THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS ARE MET:

- PLACEMENT OF W/D WILL NOT COUNT TOWARD THE MINIMUM CLOSET SPACE SQUARE FOOTAGE REQUIREMENT, INCLUDING THE SPACE OCCUPIED BY THE APPLIANCE DOORS WHEN THEY ARE IN THE OPEN POSITION
- CIRCULATION AND ACCESSIBILITY MUST BE MAINTAINED WITHOUT OBSTRUCTING ACCESS TO W/D
- ACCESSIBILITY OF W/D MUST BE MAINTAINED WITHOUT OBSTRUCTING ACCESS TO THE CLOSET

UNITS < 475 FT²

- Affordable units may provide a washer/dryer inside each individual unit or as a common laundry area on-site, unless otherwise stated in an Inclusionary Housing annexation or funding agreement

KITCHEN APPLIANCES

Refer to **Section 5 - Kitchens**, and **Section 3 - Livability Matrix**, for additional kitchen appliance information and unit-specific requirements.

GARBAGE DISPOSALS

- Garbage disposals are required in for-sale affordable units
- Garbage disposals are not required in for-rent affordable units, although providing them is encouraged and recommended

SMALL APPLIANCES

- Providing microwaves and/or other small appliances is optional

WARRANTIES

- All appliances provided in an affordable unit must be new, UL (Underwriters Laboratories Standards for Safety) listed and approved, and of sound quality at the time of installation
- Although not required, Energy Star rated appliances are encouraged
- All appliances are required to come with a warranty that covers the appliance for the minimum term listed in Table 8.1 below:

table 8.1

APPLIANCE	REQUIRED MIN. WARRANTY (YEARS)
WASHING MACHINE	1
CLOTHES DRYER	1
REFRIGERATOR & FREEZER	1
DISHWASHER	1
OVEN/STOVE/RANGE	1
HOT WATER/HEATING UNIT	5
AIR CONDITIONER/COOLING	5
FLOORING	10

9

MECHANICAL

HEATING

- Mechanical heating units **CANNOT** not be located on any patio or deck used to meet open space requirements, or interior of the unit in a way that reduces the minimum required floor area
- A 5-YEAR minimum warranty is required on any new furnace, boiler or hot water heater (Table 8.1)

COOLING

- Air conditioning units and/or other cooling methods/elements - such as ceiling/door/attic fans, and evaporative coolers - must be provided and installed as new appliances and supply any room that lacks cross-ventilation
- Cooling units may not be located on any patio or deck used to meet open space requirements, or interior of the unit in a way that reduces the minimum required floor area
- A 5-YEAR minimum warranty on the compressor, condenser and evaporator coils is required when installing air conditioning units (Table 8.1)

City of Boulder

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