

LEWIS COUNTY CHAPTER OF OLYMPIA MASTER BUILDERS



More Buyers Seek Outdoor Features in New Homes



As the home building industry celebrated New Homes Month in April, recent research shows that the pandemic had long-term effects on buyers' expectations for their homes. One of the most lasting consequences is the desire to spend more time outside in the comfort and safety of porches and backyards.

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) asked recent and prospective home buyers about the top features they want in a new home. More than 50% of buyers ranked nearly a dozen outdoor features as essential or desirable in a home. Among the most popular outdoor features are a patio, exterior lighting, a front porch, landscaping, and a deck. The survey also found that between 2020 and 2023, outdoor fireplaces and outdoor kitchens increased in popularity.

Surprisingly, the desired

features varied across generations. Boomers are significantly less likely than younger generations to want outdoor features in their homes. Less than half (49%) of Boomers considered an outdoor fireplace essential or desirable, compared to a majority (70%) of Gen Z and Millennial buyers. A similar dichotomy exists for an outdoor kitchen; only 45% of Boomers want an outdoor kitchen compared to most younger generations.

Functional outdoor spaces are one of the many advantages of a newly constructed home. Builders in our community closely follow buyers' exterior needs and wants, so spring home buying season is a perfect time to find a home that fits modern lifestyles.

There are many other benefits of owning a new home that may be less obvious but just as valuable. For example,

builders generally construct homes in new neighborhoods, and when families move into a new community simultaneously, lasting bonds of friendship and neighborliness often form immediately. Many home builders host community block parties to help neighbors meet and connect.

Entertaining new neighbors, friends, or family outdoors or indoors is easier with newer homes. Older homes often have smaller rooms and therefore can be challenging to host gatherings with friends and family. Today's home builders are creating more open spaces with higher ceilings, oversized windows, and expansive great rooms for added convenience and modern living.

To find a licensed contractor in your area, please visit omb.org for the online searchable directory of OMB members in Lewis County.

The 25th Annual Tour of Homes on September 20-21

Join us for the Olympia Master Builders Tour of Homes on Saturday, September 20, and Sunday, September 21. Experience firsthand the finest craftsmanship and most innovative ideas in home building in the South Puget Sound Region – and interact with the builders, remodelers, and designers behind the magic.

Are you looking to build a new home or remodel an existing one? This free community event is just for you! Tour guides, complete with addresses, will be available for download the week of the event at omb.org.

For more information, visit omb.org.

Welcome to our new Lewis County Member: Evergreen Permitting and Consulting

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Evergreen Permitting and Consulting was founded in 2022 by Lynette Arhutick, a seasoned expert with nearly two decades of experience in the home construction industry. Lynette's journey began in 2005, working as an office administrator for a local builder in the Pacific Northwest. Over the years, she immersed herself in every facet of the construction process, from navigating the complexities of preconstruction and permitting to gaining hands-on experience alongside her husband in the field.

With a deep understanding

of the regional building landscape, Lynette founded Evergreen to help clients turn their home-building dreams into reality with minimal frustration or delay. Her mission is simple: to remove the stress from the permitting process, providing clients with clear guidance, reliable timelines, and unwavering support at every step.

Lynette's commitment to her clients and her community sets Evergreen apart. For her, each project is personal—a chance to help others build something meaningful in the place she calls home. Learn more at <https://www.evergreenpermitting.com/>

OMB Industry Advocacy Update for Lewis County

Countywide Lewis County

Comprehensive Plan Update Moving Forward

The County has begun the final push on its years-long Comprehensive Plan & Development Regulation update. Departments were briefed recently; zoning changes are being proposed. Final elements likely to be considered this fall.

Rural Housing Alternative (RHA) Proposal

The County is continuing to develop the Rural Housing Alternative to allow more middle-housing (duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes) in rural residential zones (RDD-5, RDD-10, RDD-20). Key constraints: minimum lot size, clustered units, footprint limits, septic/well systems, and caps per fire district. This could provide new housing options outside of Urban Growth Areas.

Comp Plan 2045 / Zoning Changes

Under the county's Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update, there are proposed land use designation changes (including on vacant lands) provided development aligns with the county's rural definition. This can impact which parcels are developable, particularly in rural and UGA fringe areas.

UGA / Urban Growth Area Regulation

The municipal and county interplay over UGAs is being closely watched; proposed zoning map changes will affect where growth must be accommodated vs where rural character is to be preserved. The County is encouraging affected citizens to use its GIS tool to review proposed UGA/zoning map changes.

Centralia

Current Planning Projects

Several housing developments are in the pipeline:

- Sanctity Ridge: 3 townhomes, Byrd Street; approved and under construction.
- Nicki Way Townhomes: 31 units at Mt. Vista; approved.
- The Pond Townhomes: 42 units off Cooks Hill; approved by City Council earlier this year.

These signal ongoing multi-unit residential growth.

Housing Element & Land Use Code Changes Likely

The City's Housing Assessment & Action Plan (adopted 2023) is feeding into the 2045 Comprehensive Plan. The need for 925 new housing units, with proposed sites identified for 685 units plus buffer, means zoning/density changes, infrastructure planning, and permit process

demands are coming into clearer focus.

Chehalis

Evergreen Grove subdivision

A recently approved subdivision in south Chehalis is preparing ~65 new home lots on ~22 acres. This "Evergreen Grove" development is moving forward, with lots being readied for home construction.

New Home Market

Several new build communities are active in Chehalis. Homes in those communities span 3-5 bedrooms, 2-3 baths, priced from the low \$400,000s upwards. This signals a healthy demand for single-family homes in the area.

Rezoning Proposals

Residents along Brockway Road voiced concerns about a recent rezoning proposal in a Planning Commission hearing. Rezoning here may affect land outside the UGA or on the fringe, which could shift density or allowable uses.

Napavine

Zoning / Regulatory Update (HAP)

Napavine has been working on a Housing Assessment & Plan (HAP). The draft document (from 2023) noted that Napavine's development and zoning regulations are somewhat out-of-date; it suggested updating them to increase predictability and flexibility and to streamline processes. This could tie into current or upcoming amendments to buildability, lot splits, or residential lot development standards.

What to Watch / Possible Advocacy Moves

Engage with Rural Housing Alternative (RHA) Discussions
The RHA concept could create new rural middle-housing opportunities, but the current draft caps production and limits unit size and placement. Builders should advocate for:

- Flexible lot sizes and

clustering rules that reflect market realities.

- Septic/water feasibility standards that don't create unnecessary barriers.

- A review of the five-per-fire-district cap to ensure it doesn't choke supply in high-demand rural subareas.

Zoning Changes, Comp Plan Updates, and Rezoning (Centralia & Chehalis)

Both cities are in the middle of significant planning updates. Centralia is working to increase density and support adaptive reuse, while Chehalis is weighing rezones that could shift land availability (e.g., Brockway Road). Builders should:

- Track permitted uses, setbacks, and parking requirements in Centralia's Housing Element and zoning changes.

- Engage in Chehalis rezoning discussions to protect housing capacity and ensure rezones do not overly constrain fringe development opportunities.

Subdivision & Infrastructure Coordination (Chehalis Evergreen Grove)

With 65 lots now prepped for new homes in Chehalis, this project highlights the need for clear infrastructure phasing and fee alignment. Industry should push for:

- Transparent impact and connection fee schedules tied to unit type.
- Coordination between city utilities and private developers to prevent bottlenecks.

Permitting Timelines & Fee Transparency

In Centralia and Napavine, multiple projects are moving forward while Comp Plan updates are pending. The risk is inconsistent timelines and unpredictable fees. Advocacy should emphasize:

- Published permit timelines and service guarantees.
- Fee schedules that are proportional to housing type and scale.

- Consistency across jurisdictions, particularly in UGA fringe areas where builders work in both city and county permitting systems.

- Builders should engage now on housing capacity, infrastructure phasing, and fee proportionality to avoid post-adoption surprises;

advocate fee transparency by unit size and by-right approvals consistent with SB 5290.

Next meetings

- City Council: Aug 12 & Aug 26, 2025; Planning Commission: Aug 18, 2025.

Notes for builders

- Smaller jurisdictions often process short plats, boundary line adjustments, and utility extensions on these agendas - worth monitoring if you have active plats or rezonings queued.

Morton

Next meetings

- City Council: Aug 25, 2025

Notes

- Watch for water/sewer items and street projects that can affect frontage improvements or SDC-style charges.

Mossyrock

Next meetings

- City Council: 3rd Wednesday monthly at 6 pm (Community Center). Agendas/minutes archive on city site.

Notes

- Fee schedule updates and small code amendments have appeared periodically - track for any impact on lot splits, ADUs, or tree/critical-area rules.

Vader

Next meetings

- City Council: 1st & 3rd Wednesdays, 6 pm; city site posts agendas (example: Aug 20, 2025 meeting).

Notes

- Planning Committee meets 2nd Wednesdays - useful for early reads on zoning text tweaks and plat standards.

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