



# City of Longview

1525 Broadway  
Longview, WA 98632  
www.ci.longview.wa.us

## Agenda

Join Zoom Meeting  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89240177116?pwd=c09jSFYuYkNFSTg4aml4VnpqVmpTd09>  
Meeting ID: 892 4017 7116      Passcode: 1923  
Or Dial in for audio: 1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma) 1 346 248  
7799 US (Houston) 1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose)

## Planning Commission

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Wednesday, April 7, 2021

7:00 PM

City Hall

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The City Hall is accessible for persons with disabilities. Special equipment to assist the hearing impaired is also available. Please contact the City Executive Offices at 360.442.5004 48 hours in advance if you require special accommodations to attend the meeting.

1. ROLL CALL

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

21-000671 MINUTES OF THE MARCH 3, 2021 REGULAR MEETING  
Recommended Action: Motion to approve.

3. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION OF CORRESPONDENCE

4. NON-PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

21-000672 PC 2021-1 WORKSHOP #1 ON INFILL HOUSING ZONING CODE AMENDMENTS

5. PLANNER'S REPORT

6. ADJOURNMENT



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## Minutes

### Agenda

Join Zoom Meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89240177116?pwd=c09jSFYuYkNFS  
Tg4aml4VnpqVmpTd09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89240177116?pwd=c09jSFYuYkNFS<br/>Tg4aml4VnpqVmpTd09)

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1. **ROLL CALL**

*Chairman Collins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.*

**Present:** Member Craig Collins, Member Trey Davis, Member Bill Josh, Member Ramona Leber, Member Kalei LaFave, Member Stacey Dalgarno

**Absent:** Member Shawn Marvin

**Staff Present:** Ken Hash, Public Works Director; Sam Barham, Engineer; Steve Schuman, Assistant City Attorney; Adam Trimble, Planner; Lisa Vertrees, Administrative Assistant

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**21-000600 MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 3, 2021 REGULAR MEETING**

*A motion was made by Member Ramona Leber, seconded by Member Stacey Dalgarno, to Approve the minutes of the regular Planning Commission meeting of February 3, 2021. The motion carried by the following vote:*

*Ayes: Member Craig Collins, Member Trey Davis, Member Bill Josh, Member Ramona Leber, Kalei LaFave, Stacey Dalgarno*

*Nays: None*

3. **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION OF CORRESPONDENCE**

*None at this time.*

**4. DECLARATION OF EX-PARTE COMMUNICATIONS AND APPEARNESS OF FAIRNESS**

*Read into the record.*

**5. PUBLIC HEARINGS****21-000601 PC 2020-5 PROPOSED CODE AMENDMENTS FOR MOBILE VENDORS AND FOOD TRUCKS**

**Recommended action: Hold a public hearing on the proposal. Make any changes to the draft code and motion to adopt the findings of the staff report and recommend the City Council adopt the proposed amendments to the Longview Municipal Code.**

*Mr. Trimble reviewed the staff report.*

*During discussion of the proposed draft, Member Bill Josh noted the overtime parking fees for food trucks should not be higher than the fees for service vehicles. Proposed fees for mobile vendors are \$75/one month, \$150/3 consecutive months. Fees for service vehicles are \$25/one month, \$60/3 consecutive months. Planning Commission members agreed.*

*Planning Commission asked for clarification of the amendment of zoning code 5.14.045, limiting parking lot events to 6 times per year without a Temporary Use Permit. Six times per year will be defined as "six times per year, not to exceed 48 hours per event".*

*Chairman Collins opened the public hearing.*

*Hearing no comments, Chairman Collins closed the public hearing.*

*A motion was made by Member Bill Josh, seconded by Member Kalei LaFave, to Adopt the staff findings as amended in discussion and recommend City Council adopt the subject zoning and related Code amendments. The motion carried by the following vote:*

*Ayes: Member Craig Collins, Member Trey Davis, Member Bill Josh, Member Ramona Leber, Kalei LaFave, Stacey Dalgarno*

*Nays: None*

**6. PLANNER'S REPORT**

*\* In-person meetings: Council is heading toward more in person meetings. Ken Hash clarified those meetings are semi-in person, with 5 members on the dias, two off in staff area. Staff attendance limited to two, with the rest of staff attending remotely. About 26 chairs, spaced apart, will be available for public attendance. Other groups are encouraged to follow their own direction. Planning Commission will continue with remote meetings for the time being.*

*\* Mt. Solo Place Ph I has 8 houses committed. The pre-load has been moved.*

*Public Works*

*\* Quite a bit of interest lately in Mint Farm properties.*

*\* Interest in the old Fishers Lane Treatment Plant, plus current rental there from a granite countertop contractor.*

*\* Upcoming projects include Station 82 improvements, the LPD Satellite office.*

*\* The Beech St. project will re-open soon.*

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

*The next regular Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for April 7, 2021.*

*With no further business to discuss. the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.*

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*Lisa Vertrees, Recorder*

**TO:** Longview Planning Commission

**FROM:** Adam Trimble, Interim Planning Manager

**MEETING DATE:** April 7, 2021

**SUBJECT: PC 2021-1 – Workshop on zoning code amendments to support infill**

The Longview Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2019 includes goals, objectives and policies to allow infill where homes or businesses are added in an established district on vacant or less developed lots, taking advantage of areas where infrastructure is already in place and where there are fewer environmental constraints.

An entire section is dedicated to infill on page 32:

**Neighborhood Preservation and Renewal**

**Goal LU-E** Maintain stability and improve the vitality of neighborhoods by adhering to and enforcing established land-use regulations.

**Objective LU-E.1** Develop regulations to govern infill in residential areas with large lots.

**Policy LU-E.1.1** Conduct substantial public outreach to assist in developing thoughtful, workable infill regulations designed to minimize adverse impacts.

**Policy LU-E.1.2** Identify areas characterized by lots with greater depth than width, where rear portions of property could host infill.

**Policy LU-E.1.3** Consider private road standards to facilitate infill development at the rear of already-developed properties.

**Policy LU-E.1.4** Encourage a variety of residential site and building designs that are compatible and consistent with surrounding development.

**Policy LU-E.1.5** Identify potential infill and redevelopment layouts that would be suitable for long, narrow properties in the vicinity of Ocean Beach Highway.

Related objectives and policies include:

- Amend the Longview Municipal Code Title 19 – Zoning to provide regulations and standards that allow for a wide range of housing choices to meet the changing needs of the community. Consider allowing for project phasing or “shadow plats” where the first use of the land is at very low densities but arranged in a manner to allow future development when the demand is there.

- Policy LU-E.4.2 As appropriate to the district, support the development of incentives for mixing of housing types, clustering around open space, and infilling of vacant land.
- Encourage and promote flexible design techniques for residential developments such as lot clustering, flexible setback requirements, and mixing attached and detached housing to achieve design variety and housing choices.
- Facilitate lifecycle neighborhoods and community stability by providing for alternative living arrangements such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs), shared housing, cohousing, and smaller housing types; and by encouraging infill.

In a discussion of Land Consumption and Growth, on page 55, the comprehensive plan states “The need for new housing units can be met by using three basic strategies:

- Compiling and redeveloping existing low-density residential with a higher density (smaller single-family lots, increased height to allow extra stories in multi-family housing, etc.)
- Development of “leftover” properties in existing residential neighborhoods (infill)
- Annexation of additional area for residential development”

I would like our workshop to focus on reaching a consensus on what we mean and don’t mean by infill and what problem is being solved by the amendments to the zoning code. I tend to think of the CVG area for example. There are places where a traditional subdivision may occur and others where there is little chance that a full public road is going to be built to serve undeveloped areas behind homes. An infill development code could allow some property owners to develop those areas that simply do not have enough land or other obstacles to do a traditional subdivision. I will have a presentation at the meeting to examine the CVG and other areas in town.

There is a lot of guidance, examples and professional advice about infill describing many different forms of development from accessory dwelling units to multifamily. I have included some publications and references for you to review ahead of our meeting. If you find you are curious about something check this resource collection out:

<http://mrsc.org/home/explore-topics/planning/development-types-and-land-uses/infill-development-completing-the-community-fabric.aspx>

Two examples in Washington State:

[https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city\\_departments/planning\\_and\\_development\\_service/s/planning\\_services/residential\\_infill\\_pilot\\_program](https://www.cityoftacoma.org/government/city_departments/planning_and_development_service/s/planning_services/residential_infill_pilot_program)

<https://cob.org/gov/dept/pcd/infill-housing-toolkit>

# ZONING PRACTICE

APRIL 2019



AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

➡ ISSUE NUMBER 4

## PRACTICE INFILL HOUSING



# 4

# Standards for Contextual Infill Development

By Thomas P. Smith

Cities suffering housing shortages, a lack of housing choice, and a scarcity of affordable housing options are now examining existing neighborhoods to identify infill opportunities. The most difficult locations to promote infill development are in existing single-family zones. The promise of single-family zoning is often low density, peace and quiet, and a lack of congestion. Despite these expectations, many cities are looking at infill options such as accessory dwelling units, duplexes, cottages, town homes, and small apartment buildings in single-family neighborhoods. Ensuring that these new building types are consistent with the existing context has been a challenge.

A number of cities and their planning departments have initiated plans and zoning code revisions designed to expand housing choice within existing neighborhoods. Many of these code revisions focus on expanding housing options in single-family zones—a controversial idea. In September 2018, the Vancouver, British Columbia, city council approved a portion of the city's *Making Room Plan* that called for duplexes in all existing single-family zones. On December 19, 2018, the city council changed the zoning law allowing duplexes as a permitted use in the RS (single-family) zone on a trial basis for one year. In Minneapolis, the city council adopted the *2040 Comprehensive Plan* in December 2018, calling for a zoning change to allow duplexes and triplexes in single-family zoning districts. Some existing home owners and neighborhood organizations have promised to fight this change.

Planners need to look for opportunities to allow more intensive development of existing properties. In some cases, this will mean opening up single-family zoning districts to accessory dwellings, duplexes, triplexes, and other forms of housing. In others, it will mean making it easier to build apartments, town houses, and courtyard homes within multifamily or commercial zones, or reducing lot size requirements in order to reduce land costs. Generally, it will mean creating zoning incentives such as added building height, reduced parking requirements, and more

flexible density regulations to help stimulate housing development.

This issue of *Zoning Practice* focuses on communities that have adopted or are in the process of adopting infill housing standards to ensure that such development “fits” with the character of existing low-density neighborhoods.

## EXPANDING OPTIONS IN SINGLE-FAMILY DISTRICTS

It is no secret that home owners tend to resist adding density to single-family zones. Many home owners in high-growth single-family neighborhoods attribute the skyrocketing values of their homes to restrictive single-family zoning. Despite this, cities across the United States are trying to expand contextually appropriate forms of new housing to meet local demand.

### Portland, Oregon—Proposed Zoning for Small-Scale Infill

Portland is pursuing an aggressive effort to expand housing choice in most of its single-family zoning districts. The city planning department has proposed an “Additional Housing Options Overlay Zone” that applies to more than 95 percent of the city's R5, R7, and R 2.5 districts. These districts make up

the vast majority of single-family zoning districts in Portland. Within the overlay the city is proposing to allow more accessory dwelling units, duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes in order to increase the supply of housing. The major goal is not only to allow more multifamily housing, but also to control the building scale and height so that these buildings are contextual with neighboring single-family homes. In addition, the planning department is proposing to allow small clusters of cottage homes on larger lots within single-family districts.

The proposed ordinance calls for allowing multiple dwellings per lot, but with tight limits on floor area and building heights. The overlay would permit the following housing types: a house with an internal and a detached accessory dwelling unit; a duplex; a duplex with a detached accessory dwelling unit; a triplex; and a fourplex. It is interesting to note that the city planning staff's original proposal did not recommend including fourplexes in single-family zones. Additionally, triplexes were only suggested for corner lots.

Under the current proposal, the size of duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes would be guided by the size limitations in the table on page 3. Table 1 makes it clear that the sizes of



Ian Poellet, Wikimedia (CC BY-SA 3.0)



A historic duplex in Portland, Oregon. The city's “residential infill project” seeks to allow duplexes and other forms at a size and scale similar to older and smaller single-family homes.

**TABLE 1. PERMISSIBLE FARs FOR PORTLAND, OREGON'S  
PROPOSED ADDITIONAL HOUSING OPTIONS OVERLAY ZONE**

| # of Units                                                             | Allowed Housing Type                    | R7-FAR |            | R5-FAR |            | R2.5-FAR |            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------|------------|--------|------------|----------|------------|
|                                                                        |                                         | Base   | With Bonus | Base   | With Bonus | Base     | With Bonus |
| 1                                                                      | House                                   | 0.4    | NA         | 0.5    | NA         | 0.7      | NA         |
| 2                                                                      | Duplex or House + ADU                   | 0.5    | 0.6        | 0.6    | 0.7        | 0.8      | 0.9        |
| 3                                                                      | Triplex, Duplex +ADU, or House + 2 ADUs | 0.6    | 0.7        | 0.7    | 0.8        | 0.9      | 1.0        |
| 4                                                                      | Fourplex                                |        |            |        |            |          |            |
| Current allowed FAR (based on setbacks, height, and building coverage) |                                         | 1.1    |            | 1.35   |            | 1.75     |            |

new multiunit buildings would be substantially smaller than the current code allows for single-family homes. Even single-family homes would be downsized under the proposed revisions.

Under the plan, lot size requirements for triplexes or fourplexes in existing single-family districts would increase: The R7 district lot size would increase from a minimum of 4,200 square feet to 5,000 square feet; the R5 district lot size would increase from a minimum of 3,000 square feet to 4,500 square feet; and the R2 district lot size would increase from a minimum of 1,600 square feet to 3,200 square feet.

Table 1 shows that the number of units permitted is increased but the total floor area permitted is actually reduced when compared with the current floor area ratios for single-family homes. Bonus floor area is allowed for projects that include qualifying affordable units and for existing homes that add units without altering the existing home's front facade.

In March 2019, the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission voted 5–4 in favor of advancing the infill zoning amendment to the city council. The close vote is largely attributed to lingering concerns over displacement, especially in lower income and minority neighborhoods where the lower cost of land may reward teardowns of existing homes in favor of new three- and four-unit buildings.

#### **Seattle's Proposal for Expanding Urban Villages**

Seattle's city council recently approved a broad upzoning of commercial and multifamily districts citywide, as well as the incorporation of some single-family districts

into designated “urban village” areas. In exchange for taller and denser buildings, developers are required to include a certain level of “affordable housing” in their projects, or to pay the city a fee to fund construction elsewhere. Previously, allowances to exceed the base zoning were confined to the downtown and surrounding districts.

The most controversial aspect of the rezoning is the expansion of nine of the city's 27 urban village districts. Urban village districts are residential areas close to public transit centers and neighborhood services. The areas where the “urban village” boundaries have recently been expanded are all currently zoned for single-family homes. In effect, this meant a rezoning of about six percent of the city's single-family zoned area. Of the six percent, about two-thirds were bumped up to a zoning classification labeled “Residential Small Lot” where the new rules allow cottages or duplexes. About one third of the area was changed to a low-rise zone classification that allows town houses and small-scale apartment buildings.

Development in the upzoned areas would trigger the city's Mandatory Housing Affordability requirements, which require any new commercial and multifamily development to contribute to affordable housing. It follows a state-approved mechanism to enforce affordability requirements, requiring developers to either build new affordable units on-site or contribute to an affordable housing fund that can be used throughout the city. The housing created or funded would be affordable to a household at 60 percent of the area median income, which for a family of four is about \$57,000 per year.

Representatives of neighborhood organizations legally challenged the proposed

changes. In assessing these challenges, the city's hearing officer took 19 days of testimony (over a period of more than two months) that focused on whether the city's assessment for the environmental impact of the proposed ordinance changes was sufficient.

In November 2018, the hearing officer concluded that the city planning staff's assessment was sufficient, with a minor recommendation for added consideration of impacts on historically significant buildings. Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan said the “ruling is a step forward for more affordable housing in Seattle” and that her administration will “move quickly to do the minor work required so we can begin to build these much needed affordable homes.”

On March 18, 2019, the city council voted unanimously to approve the measure. The Seattle planning department has estimated that with the new legislation implementing the “mandatory housing affordability” requirements the city should “generate at least 6,000 new rent-restricted homes for low-income people over the next decade.”

#### **FINDING THE “MISSING MIDDLE” IN SINGLE-FAMILY AND MULTIFAMILY ZONES**

The concept of “missing middle housing” (developed by Dan Parolek of the consulting firm Opticos Design) refers to a range of multiunit or clustered housing types compatible in scale with low-density neighborhoods that are designed to help meet the demand for more affordable housing types.

Cities in Oregon and Washington have been particularly active in adopting ordinances promoting many of the “missing middle” housing types. Most of these communities adopted zoning amendments that allowed town houses, small apartment

buildings, courtyard buildings, and attached and detached cottages in both multifamily districts and in lower-density town house districts. Spokane, Washington, adopted an infill development code in 2012 and is considering a series of amendments that provide greater flexibility in lot sizes and lot area requirements, building heights, and parking regulations to make it easier to build infill housing. Bellingham, Washington, adopted an infill development ordinance for cottages, carriage houses, town houses, duplexes, shared courtyard housing, and garden courtyard housing. However, nearly all of this development is subject to some form of discretionary or design review.

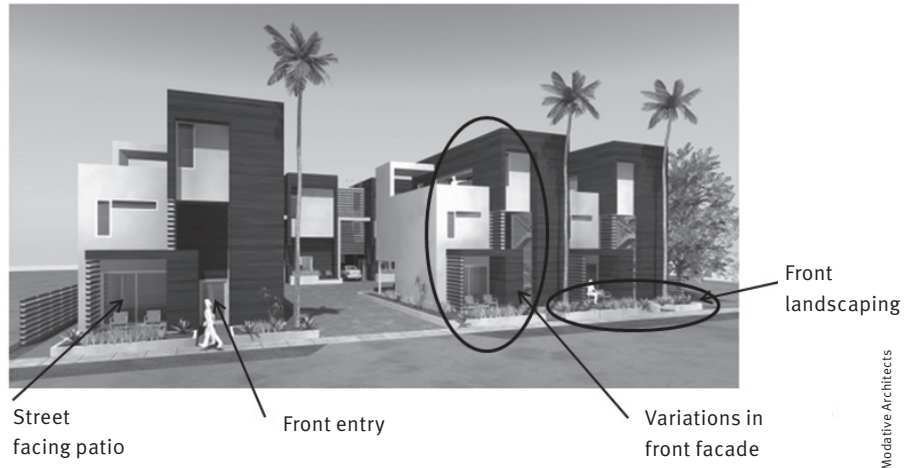
### Olympia, Washington's Missing Middle Ordinance

In November 2018, the Olympia city council adopted a broad set of amendments to its unified development code designed to promote a greater diversity of housing types consistent with the low-density, low-scale character of the community. The city's effort focused on expanding housing options consistent with the concept of the "missing middle" housing types.

Many of these housing forms were previously addressed in the Olympia development ordinance but had not been built because of limitations and restrictions. The new ordinance is intended to create some incentives for new housing and to clarify and simplify the locations and procedures for building courtyard housing, triplexes, and fourplexes.

The amendment provides some incentives for building different housing types. For example, in the case of detached accessory dwelling units, the new ordinance allows greater building height (from 16 feet to 24 feet) and removes the existing requirement that the principal home be owner-occupied. The new ordinance also waives parking requirements for an accessory dwelling unit if the existing home currently has two parking spaces.

In establishing the parking reduction, the city recognized that on-street parking is available and that some of the missing middle housing forms need less parking than the city typically requires. Only one parking space per unit is required for cottage homes, courtyard apartments, duplexes,



➞ Fay Avenue Arts District dwellings include seven homes on seven lots. Front units include entryways, patios, and landscaping consistent with city requirements.

town homes, triplexes, and fourplexes when on-street parking is available. The city anticipates that the one-space-per-unit standard will apply to most cases, since on-street parking is not restricted in most of Olympia's neighborhoods.

The ordinance amendments require courtyard apartments, triplexes, and fourplexes to be located in areas mapped as "high density corridor transition areas," and the city's development code provides a map of areas where the residential infill standards apply.

In residential districts, most of the "missing middle housing" types are subject to design review, with the remainder subject to the city's "infill residential development standards." The city's design review board criteria are detailed in Chapter 18.175 of the unified development code. The criteria for neighborhood scale and character address building orientation and entries, building modulation and articulation, windows, and garage design.

### REDUCING LOT SIZE REQUIREMENTS

Land is an important component of housing costs. The National Association of Homebuilders' most recent construction cost survey (conducted in September 2017) shows that, on average, 21.5 percent of the cost of a new home was associated with the cost of a finished lot (Ford 2017). The term "finished lot" refers to a lot that has access to required

utilities, access to improved roadways, and that the lot meets all local subdivision and zoning requirements for a developable lot.

In high-growth communities the cost of land often exceeds national averages. By reducing lot size requirements, local governments can reduce the costs of building homes in these areas.

### Los Angeles Promotes Small-Lot Subdivisions

Los Angeles has considerable experience with infill housing through the administration of its small-lot subdivision ordinance. The small-lot subdivision ordinance was first adopted in 2005 and was comprehensively updated in September 2016 with final urban design standards adopted in March 2018.

The city's ordinance allowed for the creation of detached town homes on land zoned for commercial and multifamily housing. Most of the projects look like town house projects, but the units are not attached—they do not have shared sidewalls. The small-lot ordinance eliminated side-yard setbacks, reduced other front and rear-yard requirements, and substantially reduced minimum lot area requirements. Home buyers may benefit from small-lot subdivisions because they avoid the home owner association fees common to town house developments.

The small-lot ordinance created incentives for infill residential development in areas zoned for multifamily and commercial

uses to spur more fee-simple housing production. Small-lot subdivisions are an attractive alternative in Los Angeles. An August 2016 staff report noted that since the city adopted the ordinance, approximately 331 small-lot subdivision projects had been approved, yielding a total of 3,412 homes.

In 2016, the city amended the ordinance to extend the small-lot subdivision option to owners of existing cottage home developments, allowing these homes to be sold to individual owners. This option for older cottage homes should encourage their preservation and rehabilitation. The city has a significant number of small clusters of cottages, and these homes are often the most affordable homes in many existing single-family neighborhoods.

However, the ordinance and the design of small-lot homes were sharply criticized by neighbors and neighborhood organizations concerned about density, scale, massing, and the lack of compliance with the city's advisory *Small Lot Design Standards: An Illustrated Guide*. To address these concerns, the department of city planning made a wide variety of changes to the code requiring more attention to design details, especially when small-lot homes are built next to more traditional housing types. In particular, the March 2018 amendments translate portions of the city's *Small Lot Design Guidelines* into new mandatory design standards. The 2018 amendment establishes a code-required process whereby projects must be reviewed and a determination of compliance must be made. Adoption of the design standards was necessary in order to make the small-lot subdivision approval process more straightforward and reduce the number of appeals and disputes that arose in the subdivision approval process.

The city's *Small Lot Design Standards* addresses building design, pedestrian connectivity and access, landscaping, mixed use small lots, and bungalow courts and existing structures. Notably, it includes design standards governing the appearance and orientation of primary entrances to protect the public realm and views from the street; the appearance, massing, and clustering of buildings to avoid visual monotony; and the articulation of upper-story facades and orientation of rooftop decks to protect privacy and provide adequate light and air.

### Denver Addresses 'Slot Homes'

In 2010, Denver adopted a form-based code that created new opportunities for infill housing within the city's existing neighborhoods. For example, the new code allowed more mixed use development and permitted new housing types. While these changes were generally well received, some applicants found loopholes and used creative ordinance interpretations to build housing forms that city residents and neighborhood organizations felt violated the purpose and intent of the ordinance.

"Slot homes" are one of the more problematic new housing forms identified by the city. They are a particularly aggressive form of infill housing where developers maximize the amount of development on small lots by building a multiunit residential structure consisting of attached dwelling units arranged side-by-side and primarily perpendicular to the street. Numerous slot homes were built without the benefit of design review or design guidelines or standards.

Developers found that they could use form-based criteria for "general building forms," "shopfront building forms," "garden court building forms," and "apartment building forms" to build slot homes. For example, developers were able to successfully apply for the "garden court building form" where the garden court was simply a driveway or narrow pedestrian walkway between the two rows of town homes.

Generally, developers built slot homes in low-intensity mixed use, multiunit, and row house zones. These zones, however, are characterized by a mix of housing types with many single-family homes and small apartment buildings. None of the zones are considered high-density districts, and the row house zone is typically described as low density.

Denver neighborhood organizations reacted strongly to the presence of

noncontextual slot homes. The planning department's Slot Home Task Force took testimony on slot homes in all the neighborhoods where these homes had been constructed. Generally, the task force found that neighbors identified the following problems:

- Slot homes often orient their front doors, windows, and most active facade areas toward adjacent properties, leaving blank walls facing the street and sidewalk.
- Slot homes often incorporated driveways, parking areas, and garage doors that were clearly visible from the street.
- Some slot homes used exceptions and allowances to build roof decks and other roof enclosures that gave the building an appearance of being four stories in zoning districts where the limit had always been three stories.

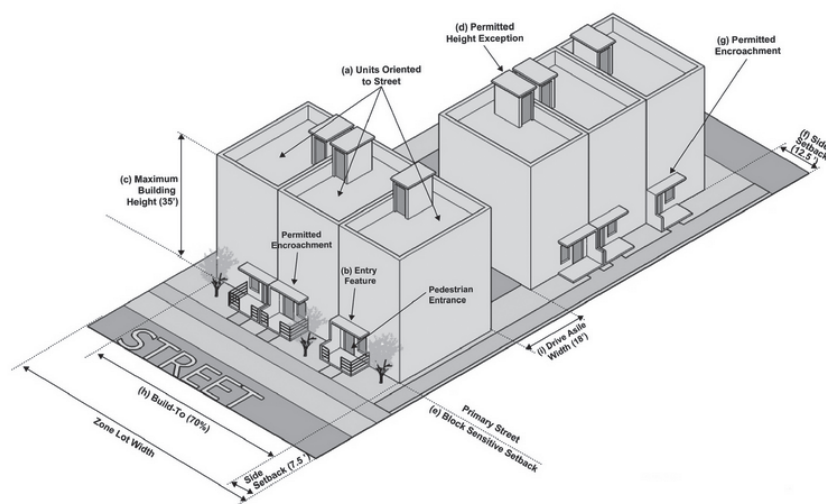
In March 2018, the city adopted a comprehensive revision of the zoning ordinance for slot homes. It created a new "townhouse building form" and set of criteria for this form. It eliminated the option of zero front yard setbacks for residential projects in "mixed use" zones. It required that town houses face the street if these homes are located proximate to the street. In the higher intensity zoning classifications (mixed use zones and multiunit zones) town houses may be located behind the homes facing the street but in the lower intensity zone (row house zones) town homes



Christine G. H. Franck|STUDIO



Many slot homes had no front doors and few windows facing the street, and many placed water and electrical meters adjacent to the sidewalk.



➡ This illustration shows the “slot home” solution for multiunit zones or mixed use zones such as the residential/office zone. The town homes closest to the street face the street and the rear units face a pedestrian walkway that connects to the sidewalk. Front entrances include awnings, windows, and other details to make the development compatible with the street orientation of surrounding buildings.

may not be built behind the street-facing units. The new code defines and illustrates details that are required as part of the building frontage—porches, stoops, entryways, front steps, windows—and it allows these features as encroachments within front yards. The illustration above highlights a zone-specific “slot home” solution.

#### Asheville, North Carolina, Reduces Lot Size Requirements

In August and October of 2017, the Asheville city council adopted changes to the city’s unified development ordinance aimed at addressing the city’s housing supply gap and to provide more housing variety in a primarily single-family market.

Historically, Asheville’s zoning ordinance had allowed a more diverse range

of housing types. According to Vaidila Satvika, AICP, city planner with the Department of Planning and Urban Design, when Asheville neighborhoods were more pedestrian oriented and relied on the city’s streetcar system, “it had a greater mix of housing types including single-family homes, duplexes, and small apartment buildings.” As the city expanded, “the predominant housing type became single-family homes on large lots and the diversity of housing types was greatly diminished.”

In single-family and multifamily zoning districts, the planning department suggested reducing the minimum lot width and minimum lot size in order to encourage property owners to split their lots and create opportunities for infill homes. A city study found numerous neighborhoods where

single-family lot sizes were 30–300 percent larger than required by the city unified development ordinance. Table 2 highlights three Asheville neighborhoods where it appears there may be opportunities to subdivide existing lots in order to build more housing.

The city council reduced both the lot width requirements and the lot area requirements by 20 percent for all residential districts except for those covered by the city’s steep slope restrictions. For example, in the city’s RS-8 Single-Family District, the lot width requirement was reduced from 50 feet to 40 feet and the minimum lot area was reduced from 5,000 square feet to 4,000 square feet.

City surveys found that the reduction in lot area requirements would permit the subdivision of almost 10 percent of all single-family zoning lots in the city. This subdivision would create the opportunity to build more homes in existing neighborhoods.

The 2017 amendments also allowed for duplexes on any multifamily zoning lot. They also greatly reduced the minimum lot area requirements for each dwelling unit within a multifamily structure. In the previous code, each dwelling unit was subject to the district’s minimum lot area requirements. For example, in the RM-8 district, a developer was required to have 5,000 square feet of land for a single-family home, but 10,000 square feet for a duplex. Each unit in a structure triggered the minimum lot area requirement.

The new ordinance states that in multifamily zones, an added unit is allowed for each 1,000 square feet of land in excess of the minimum lot area. For example, in the RM-8 district the new ordinance allows a duplex on a 4,000-square-foot lot, a triplex on a 5,000-square-foot lot or a fourplex on a 6,000-square-foot lot.

Since the city’s previous code had been so restrictive, few multifamily structures had been built outside of the city’s downtown districts in several decades. In anticipation

**TABLE 2. COMPARISON OF PERMITTED LOT SIZE AND DENSITY VERSUS ACTUAL LOT SIZE AND DENSITY FOR THREE NEIGHBORHOODS IN ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA**

| Neighborhood Name         | Required Lot Size | Permitted Density | Actual Average Lot Size | Actual Density |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| Haw Creek (RS-4 zone)     | 10,000 sq. ft.    | 4 units/acre      | 30,000 sq. ft.          | 1.9 units/acre |
| Oak Forest (RS-4 zone)    | 10,000 sq. ft.    | 4 units/acre      | 27,000 sq. ft.          | 1.2 units/acre |
| Beverly Hills (RS-4 zone) | 10,000 sq. ft.    | 4 units/acre      | 16,000 sq. ft.          | 2 units/acre   |

of more multifamily dwellings being constructed, the city council also adopted design standards to make new multifamily buildings compatible with existing neighborhoods. These standards include:

- The front (front door and front windows) must be oriented to face the primary access street.
- There should be no more than one ground level entrance per street facing facade.
- Front facades must have windows (at least two) and the window area must represent at least 15 percent of the total area of the building's front facade.
- There must be breaks (recesses or projections) in the horizontal plane of any front facade that exceeds a length of 50 feet.
- Roof lines must be varied, and flat roofs must use special cornice treatments or roof banding and some variation in the vertical elements of the roof.
- Parking must be located at the rear or side of the lot, no closer than the street facing facade of the structure.

- Structures must comply with the height limits of the zoning districts.

## CONCLUSION

Most cities have opportunities for infill housing development. Many planning departments have good inventories of vacant properties, abandoned properties, and underused properties in existing residential and commercial districts. The critical step in promoting infill for these locations is an analysis of zoning tools that might encourage reuse and redevelopment.

Cities trying to encourage infill development in single-family zones have concluded that duplexes and small apartment buildings will only succeed if there are tight controls on floor-area ratios, building heights, and other bulk controls. Cities allowing building forms such as town houses, courtyard housing, and cottage homes have determined that these forms must provide some substantial orientation of the housing toward the street, that these housing forms cannot tower over the adjacent homes, that these forms

should respect the existing pattern of front-yard setbacks, and that these forms should not allow parking to dominate the home's appearance along the street front. With these considerations in mind, cities can help to ensure that higher density development in existing single-family neighborhoods is contextual, appropriate, and advances local housing goals.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas P. Smith is an adjunct lecturer at the College of Urban Planning and Public Administration at the University of Illinois at Chicago. For 15 years, he worked for the city of Chicago as an assistant commissioner in the planning department and as the zoning administrator in the zoning department.

Cover: iStockphoto©

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## VOL. 36, NO. 4

The American Planning Association provides leadership in the development of vital communities for all by advocating excellence in planning, promoting education and resident empowerment, and providing our members with the tools and support necessary to ethically meet the challenges of growth and change.

Zoning Practice (ISSN 1548-0135) is a monthly publication of the American Planning Association. Joel Albizo, FASAE, CAE, Chief Executive Officer; David Rouse, FAICP, Managing Director of Research and Advisory Services; Joseph DeAngelis, AICP, and David Morley, AICP, Editors.

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## **ZONING PRACTICE**

AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

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# IS YOUR COMMUNITY PRIORITIZING INFILL HOUSING?

# 4

## **Infill Development: Missing Middle Housing**

What is “missing middle” housing?

Missing middle housing refers to a variety of housing types that are typically constructed in low density single-family residential zones. Examples of missing middle housing units include duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage-style clusters, and townhomes. Missing middle housing units should be compatible with single-family homes to best integrate these housing types into existing neighborhoods.

Growth Management Act housing goal (RCW 36.70A.030(4)-summarized):

- Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state.
- Promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and
- Encourage preservation of existing housing stock.

[https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/\\_1976/Documents/HB1923-Presentations-Webinar/WA%20Missing%20Middle%20Slides%20from%202020%20WA%20OR%20APA%20Conference.pdf](https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1976/Documents/HB1923-Presentations-Webinar/WA%20Missing%20Middle%20Slides%20from%202020%20WA%20OR%20APA%20Conference.pdf)

Longview Middle Housing Goals:

- Determine areas where clusters of middle housing may currently exist in Longview.
- Determine the amount of middle housing that may be needed in the coming years.
- Determine the types of middle housing that will be best suited to Longview’s needs.
- Examine how potential middle housing development can be incorporated into existing neighborhoods.
- Collect public feedback/opinions on middle housing and where (zoning districts) it will best be located.
- Identify Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code sections that will need to be updated to allow for middle housing development.

### **Examples**

#### **Ridgefield**

<https://ridgefieldwa.us/government/city-planning/development-updates/housing-code-update/>

The scope of work includes the following required actions:

Authorize a duplex on each corner lot within all zoning districts that permit single-family residences. (Note: Duplexes are already allowed in Ridgefield’s residential zoning districts, though density restrictions make them more difficult to build.)

Authorize at least one duplex, triplex, or courtyard apartment on each parcel in one or more zoning districts that permit single-family residences unless a city documents a specific infrastructure or physical constraint that would make this requirement unfeasible for a particular parcel.

- Updates to Zoning Code include allowing cottage housing in low density and medium density residential zones.

- Duplexes and triplexes outright permitted in low density and medium density residential zones.
- Townhouses permitted-limited (P-L?) in low density and medium density residential zones and mixed-use zones.

## **Bellingham**

<https://cob.org/gov/dept/pcd/infill-housing-toolkit>

Implemented Chapter 20.28 Infill Housing (the “Infill Toolkit”), which represents seven (7) traditional housing forms that use a limited amount of residential space. In general, these forms include small homes that provide low-impact housing options. Each toolkit housing type includes design standards that are intended to help them architecturally blend into existing neighborhoods through careful attention to building design, parking and landscaping. Their flexible design and smaller size make them suitable for a variety of households, from graduates to aging parents.

The toolkit includes these seven housing forms:

- Small and smaller lot detached single-family houses
- Cottages
- Duplexes
- Triplexes
- Shared courtyard housing
- Garden courtyard housing
- Townhouses

Allowances:

- All forms are allowed in multi-family zones, except that only small houses, smaller houses, cottages, and duplexes are allowed in multi-family zones with a “duplex” qualifier.
- All forms are allowed in cluster preliminary plats in single-family zones with a “cluster”, “cluster detached”, “cluster attached”, “mixed”, or “planned” qualifier pursuant to BMC Title 23 (Land Divisions).
- All forms are allowed in areas that were annexed after 1995 with a “mixed” qualifier that allows multi-family residential.
- Limited forms are allowed in Area 8 of the Sunnyland Neighborhood.
- Most forms are allowed in all other zones that allow residential uses, including most commercial zones and certain areas within urban villages.
- All forms are allowed in multi-family zones, except that only small houses, smaller houses, cottages, and duplexes are allowed in multi-family zones with a “duplex” qualifier.

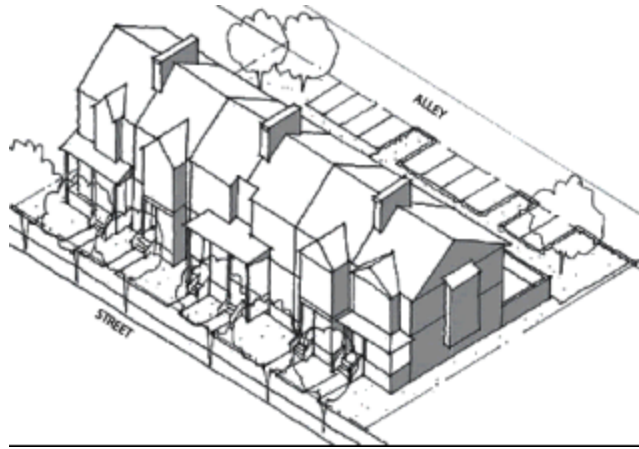


Figure 1: 20.28.140(C) Annotated Illustration of Townhouse

## Sultan

<https://www.codepublishing.com/WA/Sultan/html/Sultan16/Sultan1634.html>

Zoning Code updated to include section 16.34.020- Standards for residential infill development.

- Must meet dimensional standards in place for the surrounding area.
- If recorded plats, approved master (site) plans, or other documentation are available to provide information on previous standards, such documentation shall be used to determine applicable development standards for the proposed infill development. These may include, but are not necessarily limited to the following:
  - a. Minimum lot dimensions and area;
  - b. Minimum building size (gross floor area and building height);
  - c. Minimum yard setbacks on front, sides, and rear;
  - d. Accessory uses, such as storage buildings;
  - e. Off-street parking requirements;
  - f. Dwelling unit type (single-family detached, two-family, etc.);
  - g. Stormwater retention;
  - h. Dedication or reservation of easements, rights-of-way, or recreation areas;
  - i. Landscaping and sight barriers; and
  - j. Sidewalks.
- If no documentation is available:
  - All developed lots or parcels that abut the property proposed for development shall be considered in determining the average standards for development.
  - The average standards for these abutting properties shall be the minimum standards for the proposed development. Average standards shall not include lot area nor lot dimensions.

## Vancouver

[https://www.cityofvancouver.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/vmc/titles\\_chapters/020.920.pdf](https://www.cityofvancouver.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/vmc/titles_chapters/020.920.pdf)

### *Infill tiers 1 & 2*

There are two levels of infill standards and incentives: Tier 1 and Tier 2. The Tier 2 infill standards offer greater incentives but require compliance with design standards and a neighborhood meeting. Application of either the Tier 1 or Tier 2 infill provisions of infill development chapter is an option available for parcels that meet the eligibility criteria.

#### *Tier 1*

No parcel shall be smaller than the minimum parcel area identified in each residential district below:

| <b>Table 20.920.050-1</b>                              |                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Minimum Parcel Area for Single Family Dwellings</b> |                                                                  |
| <b>Zoning District</b>                                 | <b>Minimum Parcel Area<br/>Single Family Detached (sq. feet)</b> |
| R-9                                                    | 4,000 sf                                                         |
| R-6                                                    | 6,000 sf                                                         |
| R-4                                                    | 8,000 sf                                                         |
| R-2                                                    | 16,000 sf                                                        |

Minimum Parcel Width and Depth: Within a Tier 1 infill land division, the minimum parcel width and minimum parcel depth standards of Table 20.410.050-1 (Development Standards in Low-Density Residential) may be reduced by up to twenty-percent (20%).

Setbacks: should comply with Low Density Residential District standards, except that front yard and side yard setbacks in all zones shall be as follows:

#### 1. Minimum Front Yard.

- Eighteen (18) feet for garage or carport structures or other similar vehicular shelter.
- Ten (10) feet for all other structures

#### 2. Minimum Side Yard.

- Side yard shall comply with the standard side setbacks of the applicable zoning district.

#### *Tier 2*

Duplexes and single family attached dwellings are allowed on infill parcels, subject to the following standards:

- Infill developments of three (3) or fewer parcels may have a duplex on a maximum of one (1) parcel.
- Infill land divisions which result in more than three (3) parcels may have duplexes on a maximum of one-third of the parcels.
  - When the one-third calculation contains a fraction of a housing unit, the applicant must round down to the nearest whole unit.
  - Minimum parcel size area requirements must be met (Table 20.920.060-1).

- Maximum parcel size area standards do not apply to duplex development (Table 20.410.040-1).
- Duplex development is not allowed on an infill parcel if it would result in less than the minimum density for the parcel.
- Single-family attached dwellings- maximum shall not exceed 4 attached units.
- Minimum parcel width and depth standards shall not apply within a Tier 2 land division. However, subsequent development on infill parcels that were created with less than the minimum width and depth required by Table 20.410.050-1 (Development Standards In Lower-Density Residential) shall not be eligible for a variance to the minimum setback or frontage requirements.
- Maximum Lot Coverage may be increased by 20%.

| <b>Table 20.920.060-1</b><br><b>Minimum Parcel Area for Single Family Dwellings</b><br><b>(Detached, Attached and Duplexes)</b> |                                                       |                                                       |                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Zoning District                                                                                                                 | Minimum Parcel Area Single Family Detached (sq. feet) | Minimum Parcel Area Single Family Attached (sq. feet) | Minimum Parcel Area Per Duplex (sq. feet) |
| R-9                                                                                                                             | 4,000 sf                                              | 3,000 sf                                              | 6,000 sf                                  |
| R-6                                                                                                                             | 5,000 sf                                              | 4,000 sf                                              | 8,000 sf                                  |
| R-4                                                                                                                             | 7,000 sf                                              | 5,000 sf                                              | 10,000 sf                                 |
| R-2                                                                                                                             | 14,000 sf                                             | 10,000 sf                                             | 20,000 sf                                 |

| <b>Table 20.920.060-2</b><br><b>Maximum Building Coverage</b> |                                    |                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Zoning District                                               | Current Building Coverage Standard | Building Coverage Standard with 20% Increase |
| R-9                                                           | 50%                                | 60%                                          |
| R-6                                                           | 50%                                | 60%                                          |
| R-4                                                           | 50%                                | 60%                                          |
| R-2                                                           | 50%                                | 60%                                          |

Setbacks: setback requirements of Table 20.410.050-1 must be met, except that minimum front, side and rear yard setbacks shall be as follows:

1. Minimum Front Yard.

- Eighteen (18) feet for garage or carport structures or other similar vehicular shelter.

- Ten (10) feet for other buildings.

## 2. Minimum Side Yard.

- Single family attached dwellings – interior side yard between attached buildings may be zero (0) feet.

All other uses shall comply with the standard side setbacks of the applicable zoning district.

- Rear Yard. The minimum rear yard setback shall be ten (10) feet when the rear yard of the proposed infill development abuts parcels with existing single-family dwellings.

## Spokane

<https://static.spokanecity.org/documents/projects/infill-housing-strategies-infill-development/2019-02-20-dimension-revisions-summary-updated-guidesheets.pdf>

Infill code revisions address the following (:

- Lot width- Allows for smaller required distances around homes and fewer driveways across sidewalks.
- Height- Allow greater building height to allow a full third story.
- Attached Housing- Remove the requirement to double the distance between the building and the side lot line, as well as other changes to encourage townhouses.
- Parking- Allow additional parking spaces near residential zoning, along the side lot line. Reduce minimum parking requirements for small townhouse projects.



Code changes per ORD C35730, C35731, and C35732 included:

**Building height in RMF and RHD zones.** Allow buildings in multifamily zones up to 50 feet with pitched roofs, and 35 feet for flat roofs. Maintain a 30-foot wall height in the RMF zone within 40 feet of a Residential Single-

Family zone. Other incentives are included for rooftop use and parking in the structure.

**Attached house standards in RMF and RHD zones.** Switch the design standards applied to attached housing to match the design standards for multifamily development.

**Change minimum parking requirements for attached houses in RMF and RHD zones.** Normally, one space is required for each unit, plus one space per bedroom over three. Reductions to these minimums apply when on-street parking is available or when requested because of transit proximity. Within these zones, a 30 percent reduction now applies, or a 50 percent reduction if the project is within ¼ mile of a Center or Corridor.

# Encouraging Neighborhood-Friendly, Residential Infill Development

May 31, 2018 by [Steve Butler](#)  
Category: [Development Types](#)



If your community is experiencing a moderate or high rate of residential development activity, you have probably grappled with the question of how to accommodate the new growth. Or perhaps you want to create a diversity of housing options to accommodate the differing needs and household income levels of your residents.

For communities with lots of vacant land within its boundaries, it is primarily an issue of proper zoning

and finding a way to pay for the needed infrastructure. For a city or town that is more built-out, however, the focus often shifts on how to accommodate the new growth within its existing borders.

While upzoning of land is always one tool that can be used by a local government, it is often a **very** controversial approach due to the public's concern about the compatibility of multifamily next to single-family homes. As an alternative, several communities are looking at "gentler" methods to encourage residential infill development that is smaller scale and more compatible with adjacent properties.

## The Missing Middle

This gap between single-family residences and mid-rise, multifamily development is often referred to as "[Missing Middle Housing](#)." This concept includes accessory dwelling units, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, townhouses, and other types of low-scale development that could occur within single-family areas and along the edges of commercial/mixed use areas, thereby serving as a transition between those districts and single-family residential neighborhoods.

But encouraging infill residential development carries its own challenges. It is critical that the reasons for considering actions to encourage this type of development be clearly articulated and explained to the public in order to address citizens' concerns about changes to their neighborhood. Olympia created a useful [Missing Middle Housing webpage](#),

which has links to a lot of information, including numerous photographs and visual examples of hypothetical cases.

It is also very important that infill development regulations be paired with some type of design standards/guidelines in order to ensure that new infill development enhances the physical and visual character of a neighborhood or community.

Taking a phased approach may be appropriate in some cases. For example, Tacoma has established a [Residential Infill Pilot Program](#) to test out how regulations will work for a limited number of infill development projects before deciding whether to have them apply citywide.

If you are interested in promoting neighborhood-compatible infill development in your community, the following options are some different approaches to consider.

## Accessory Dwelling Units



Encouraging construction of accessory dwelling units, sometimes referred to as “ADUs” or “mother-in-law apartments,” is one approach used by several communities to add additional dwelling units in single-family, residential areas. State law (see [RCW 43.63A.215](#) and [RCW 36.70A.400](#)) requires that certain cities and counties adopt ordinances to encourage the development of ADUs in single-family zones, but there is some latitude about how to do so.

Attached ADUs — when the extra unit is within or attached to a primary residence — is the most common approach taken by Washington cities, towns, and counties. Detached ADUs, sometimes referred to as “backyard cottages,” are increasingly being allowed by local governments such as [Ferndale](#), [Bellingham](#), and [Portland, Oregon](#).

Many of the issues and details related to the regulation of ADUs may be found in my prior blog post, [Accessory Dwelling Units under the Microscope](#), and MRSC’s publication, [Accessory Dwelling Units](#).

## New Houses on Small, Existing Lots

In most communities, there are always some existing, small lots that were created prior to current minimum lot size standards, with the result being that they are now nonconforming lots.

Instead of having those small lots stand vacant, some cities have taken steps to encourage development on them. Portland has been evaluating its standards for infill development, including those on small, skinny lots (see Portland’s [Residential Infill Project Summary](#)). Some cities, such as [Spokane](#), allow for housing units on individual lots to be built with their frontage on a private drive, rather than a street, which allows for a more compact development pattern.

## Duplexes, Triplexes, and Fourplexes

Many people think of multifamily development as mid-rise buildings of 3-5 stories, with 10-60 dwelling units, but



there is a lot of opportunity for smaller-scale, residential development (such as duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes) to fill in the gaps between this mid-rise type of multifamily development and single-family residential areas.

Good design can soften the visual impact of the extra number of dwelling units. As demonstrated in the photograph above, this is an example of a well-designed, residential fourplex that would visually fit in and be accepted within most single-family neighborhoods. Gig Harbor's [Design Manual](#) includes design standards for duplexes, as does Sammamish's [development regulations](#) (which also address townhouses, cottages, and multifamily dwellings).

## Townhouses

In certain parts of the U.S., a large percentage of a city's multifamily dwelling units are made up of townhouses. Until recently, this housing type has not historically been as popular in Washington State.

Townhouses are usually individual dwelling units that share walls with other residential units but have their own front stoop/porch and backyard, and are usually owner-occupied. To maximize a positive connection with the surrounding neighborhood, it is important that townhouses be oriented towards the public street: For



example, having the primary entrance doors face the street and not towards an interior parking area.

SeaTac has some good [townhouse regulations](#).

## Cottage Houses



Cottage housing usually consists of a grouping of small, single-family dwelling units clustered around a common outdoor space and developed as part of a master site plan. Early successful examples of this development type in Washington State may be found in the cities of Langley, Shoreline, and Redmond. Spokane recently amended its development regulations to encourage the development of cottage housing.

## Courtyard Housing



Some cities allow the development of “courtyard apartments,” which consist of several attached dwelling units (either rentals or owner-occupied) arranged on two or three sides of a central courtyard or lawn area. This type of housing is usually one or two stories in height and sometimes serves as a buffer between arterial roadways and single-family neighborhoods.

## Conclusion

Taking steps to increase options for infill development by a local government may sound easy, but that is usually not the case. Neighborhood concerns about density, increased traffic, and parking impacts are likely to be voiced. Development costs for these new types of infill development may be greater than expected, resulting in a low number of units being constructed.

However, if you have want to diversify your housing options and/or accommodate new residents into your community, exploring ways to achieve well-designed infill development is an important task to undertake.

If you are interested in hearing more about this topic, be sure to register for Encouraging Neighborhood-Compatible, Residential Infill Development. This webinar is scheduled for June 21, 2018, from 12:00-1:00 p.m., and will feature the cities of Ferndale and Olympia as case studies.

## Questions? Comments?

If you have thoughts about this blog post, please comment below or email me. If you have questions about this or other local government issues, please use our Ask MRSC form or call us at (206) 625-1300 or (800) 933-6772.

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## About Steve Butler

Steve joined MRSC in February 2015. He has been involved in most aspects of community planning for over 30 years, both in the public and private sectors. He received a B.A. from St. Lawrence University (Canton, New York) and a M.S. in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Steve has served as president of statewide planning associations in both Washington and Maine, and was elected to the American Institute of Certified Planner's College of Fellows in 2008.

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