

MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING (MMH)

MMH Zoning Code Section and Guidance Document



Design Review and Preservation Board

July 17, 2025

AGENDA

1. Overview of Missing Middle Housing (MMH)
2. Characteristics of Santa Rosa's neighborhoods that would support MMH
3. Proposed Missing Middle Housing (-MMH) Code and Regulating Plan
4. MMH Objective Design and Development Standards

Overview of Missing Middle Housing

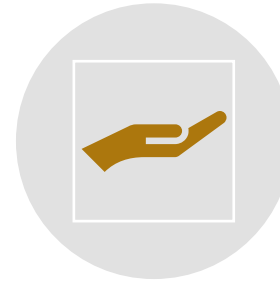


House-scale buildings with multiple units in walkable neighborhoods

Key Characteristics



Small Units/Walkable neighborhoods



'Gentle Density'



Density less important than form



Creates neighborhoods

Key Characteristics



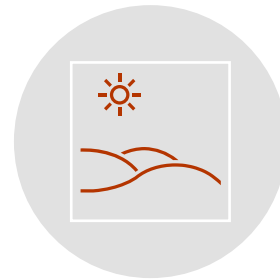
Minimal Parking



Public Realm



Shared Spaces



Livable Development

Local Examples of Missing Middle Housing





Mews in London, built during the 17th and 18th Centuries

**Why did
Missing
Middle
Housing go
missing?**



Why did MMH go missing?

- **Focus on Single Family Homes or Downtown Mid/High Rise over last 75 years**
 - **Automobile-centered growth**
-

**Why the
renewed
interest in
MMH now?**



MMH addresses Changing demographics

Shrinking household size—approximately, 30% of households are single person and approximately 85% of households do not have children

Less upkeep—many Millennials and Baby Boomers want to live in walkable neighborhoods with less upkeep of large houses and large yards

Retirees—10,000 Baby Boomers retire every day - many have limited or no savings and are looking for smaller, more affordable housing options

Key Benefits



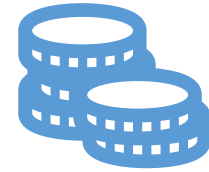
Walkable /
Bikeable
Neighborhoods



Sociability



Environmental
Stewardship



Economic
Benefits

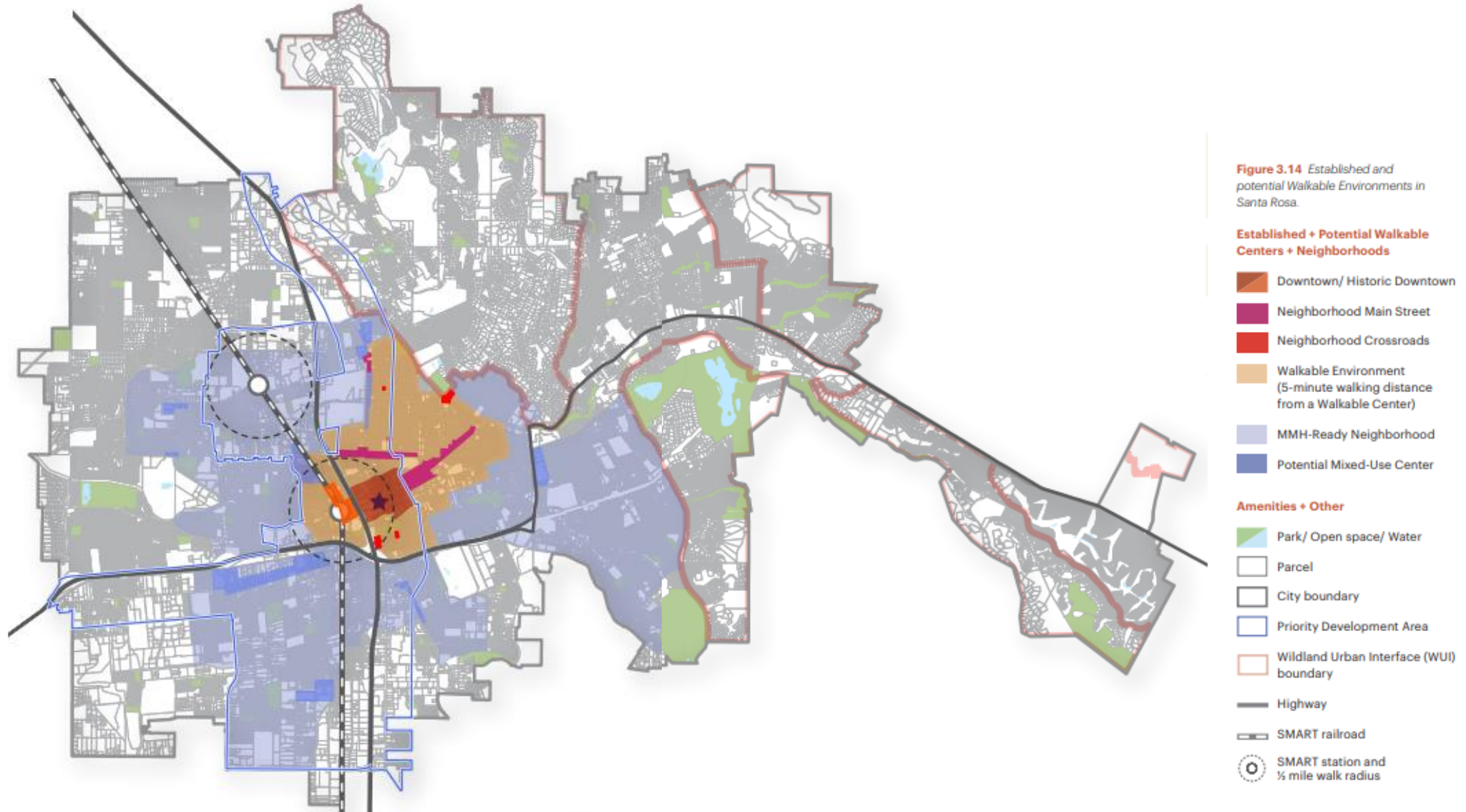
Supporting Missing Middle Housing in Santa Rosa

Figure 2.12 Missing Middle Housing in Santa Rosa.

-  City boundary
-  Priority Development Area boundary
-  Historic District
-  Areas where exemplar Missing Middle Types exist
-  Highway
-  SMART railroad
-  SMART station and 1/4 mile walk radius
-  Parcels



Established Walkable Neighborhoods and MMH-Ready Neighborhoods and Potential Mixed-Use Centers










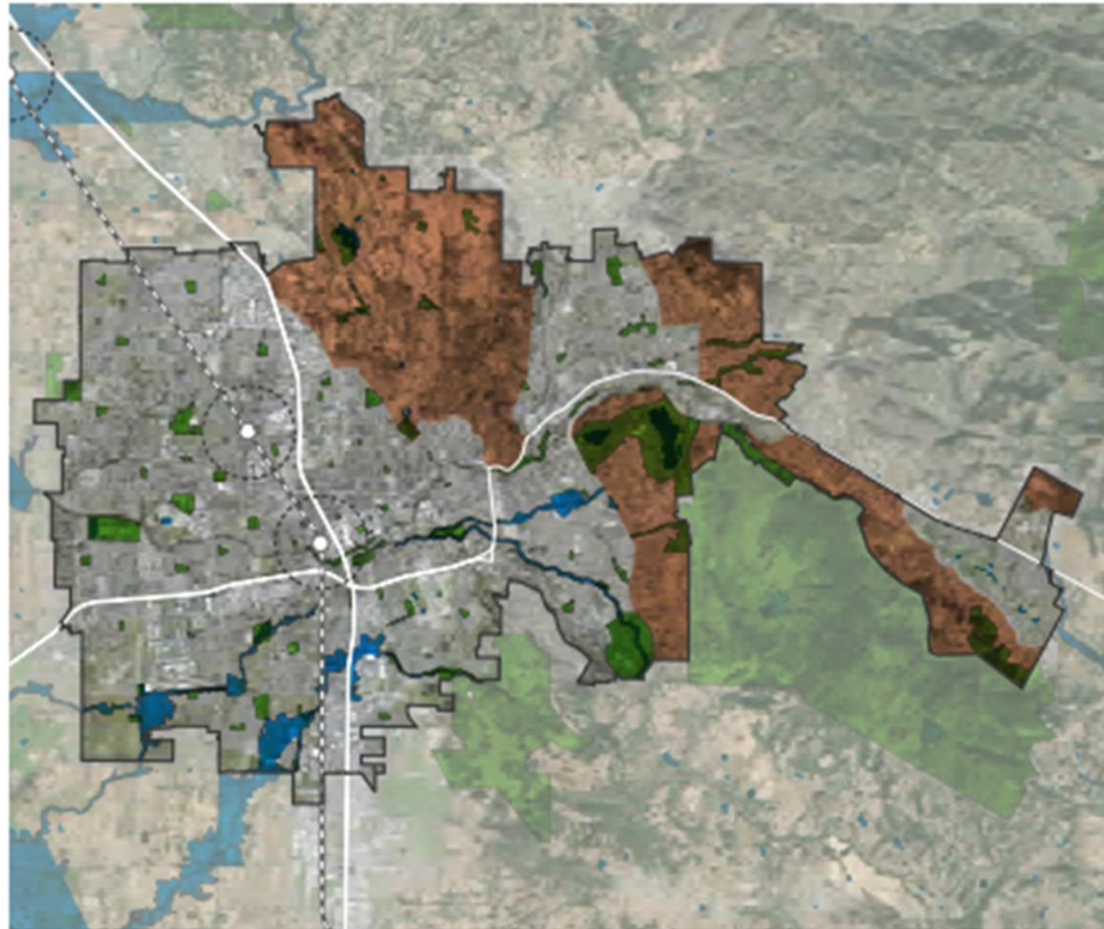
Environmental Hazards and Open Space Lands

Existing Context + Environmental Hazards

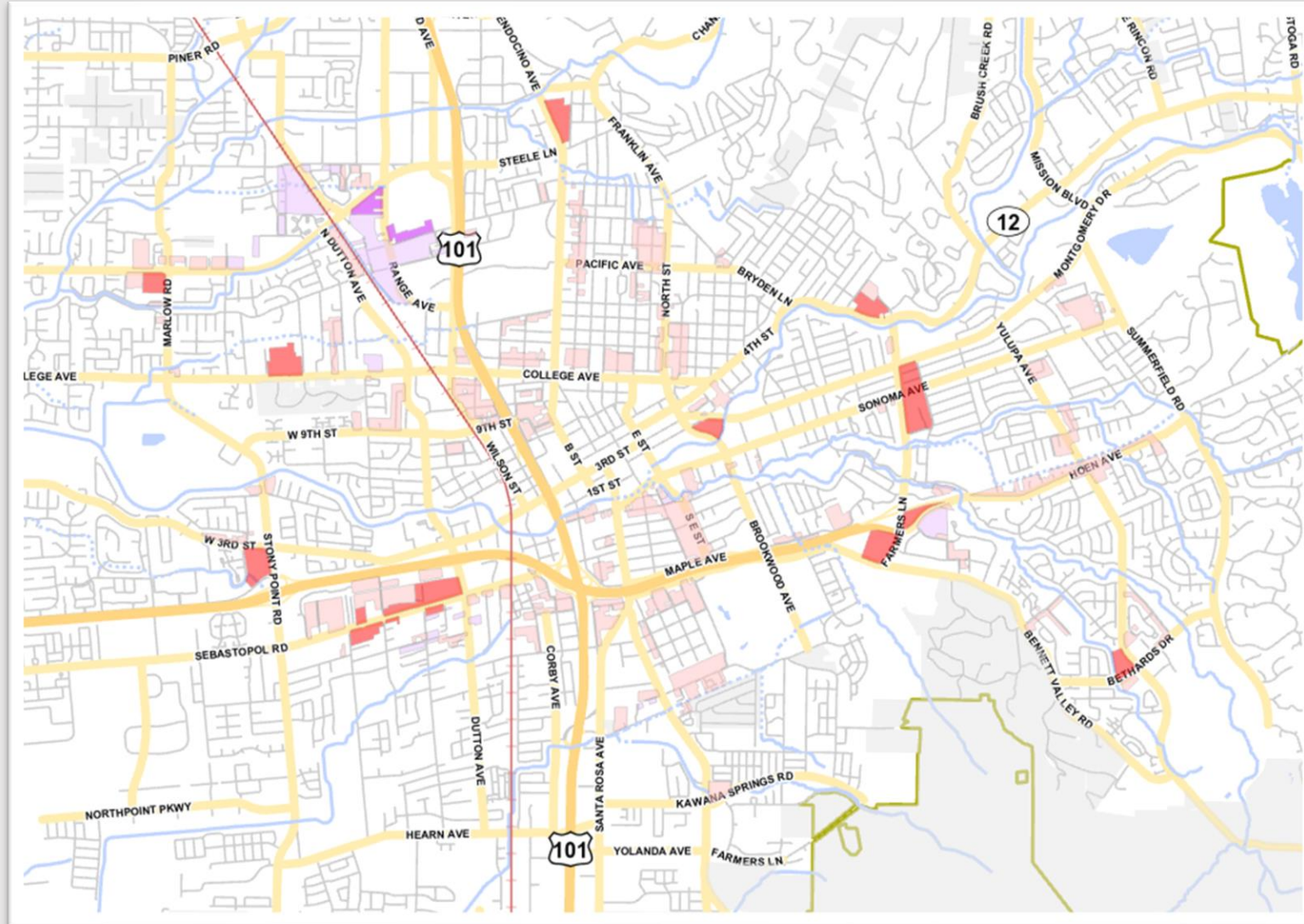
The map below shows existing urban areas within City limits. Shaped by its geography, parts of Santa Rosa are at increased risk from wildfire and flooding.

Figure 3.1 Existing urban context and environmental constraints within Santa Rosa.

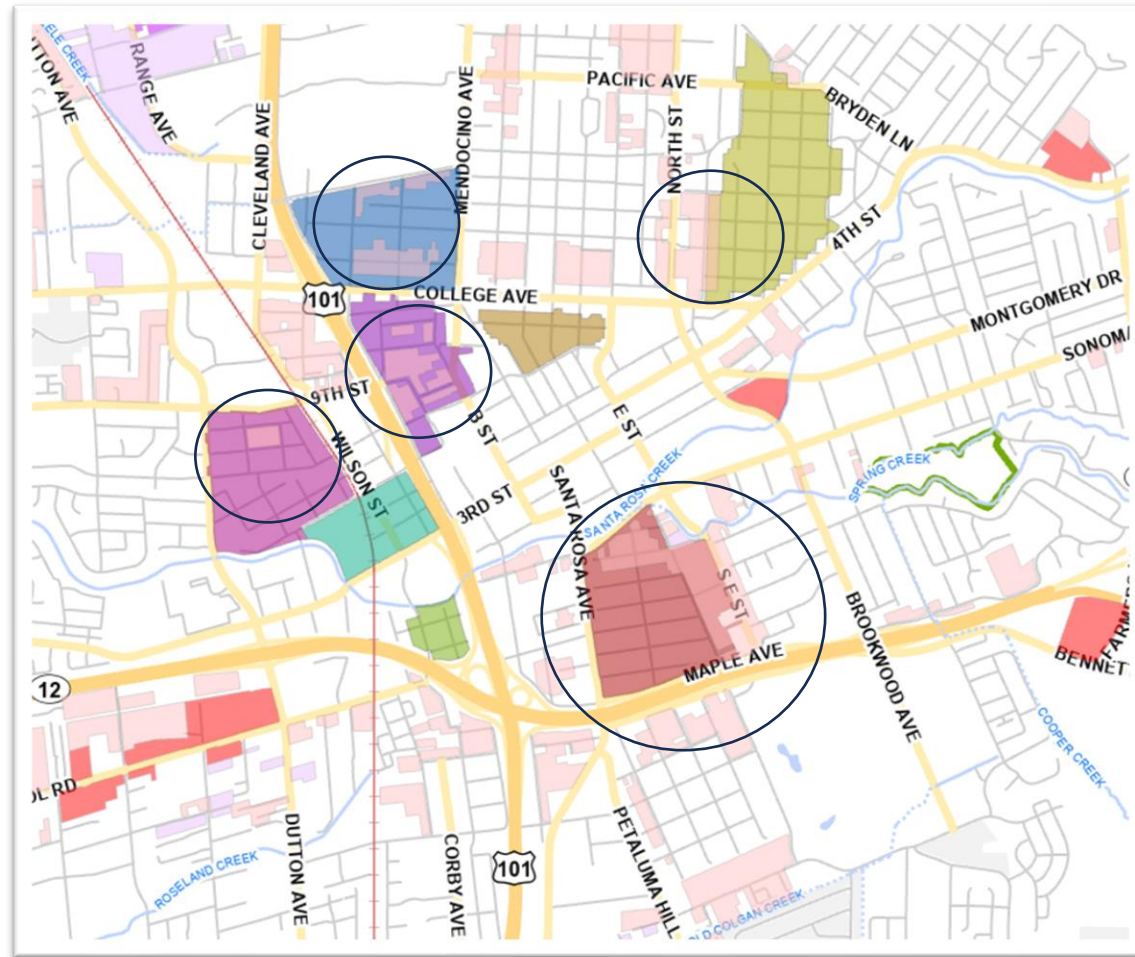
-  City boundary
-  Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) overlay
-  FEMA Floodplain Overlay
-  Open space/ parks
-  Highway
-  SMART railroad
-  SMART station and 1/4 mile walk radius



Missing Middle Housing Overlay Areas



MMH in Historic Preservation Districts



- BURBANK GARDENS
PRESERVATION DISTRICT
- CHERRY STREET PRESERVATION
DISTRICT
- MC DONALD PRESERVATION
DISTRICT
- OLIVE PARK PRESERVATION
DISTRICT
- RAILROAD SQUARE
PRESERVATION DISTRICT
- RIDGWAY PRESERVATION
DISTRICT
- ST. ROSE PRESERVATION DISTRICT
- WEST END PRESERVATION
DISTRICT

Small, house scale buildings

The Palette of Missing Middle Housing Types

Source: Opticos Design, Inc.



Duplex Side-by-Side
2 units



Duplex Stacked
2 units



Cottage Court¹
5-10 units



Fourplex²
4 units

Larger multi-unit buildings



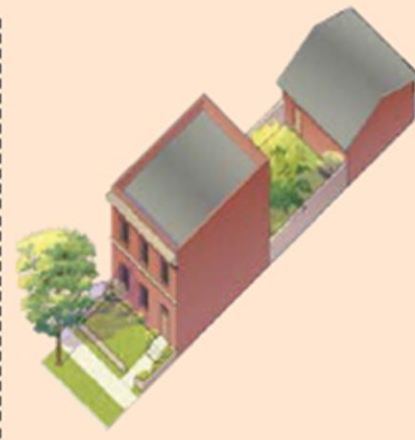
Multiplex Small
5-10 units



Multiplex Large
6-18 units



Courtyard Building
6-20 units





Townhouse
1 unit



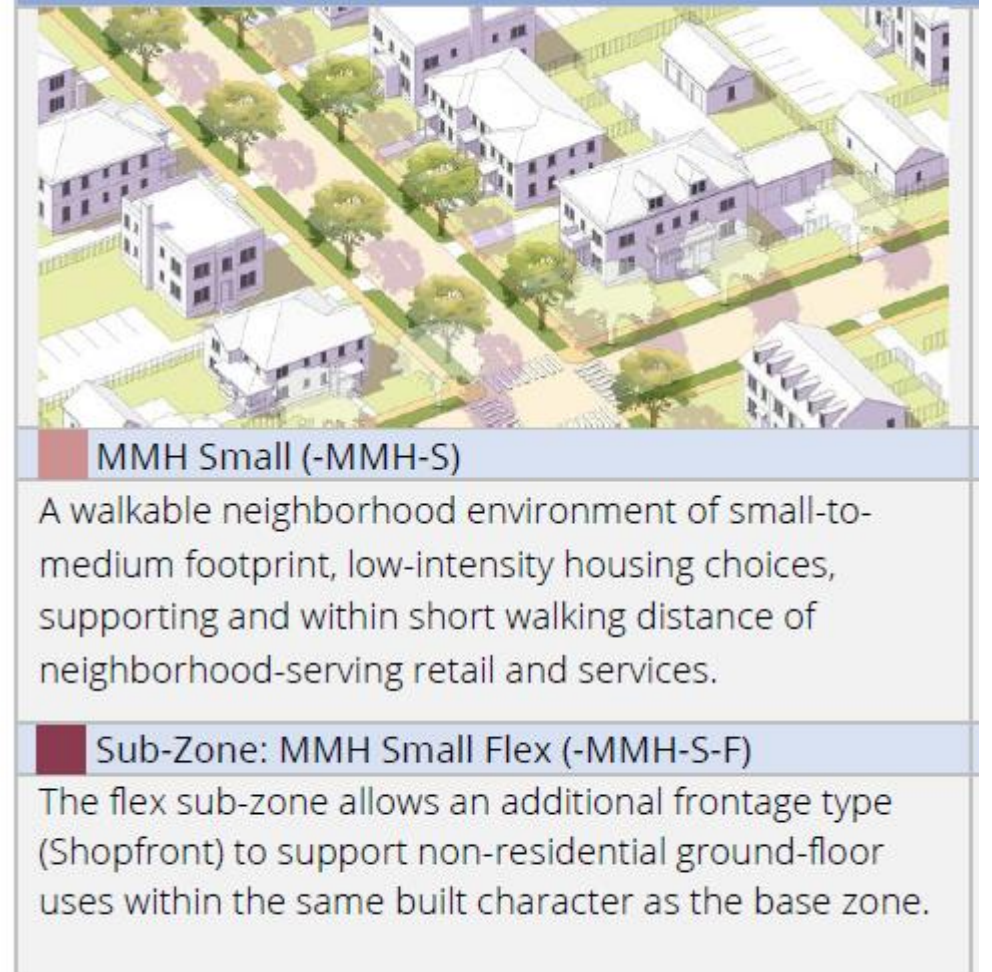
Live/Work
1 unit

TABLE 2-18—INTENT OF MMH ZONES

	
MMH Small (-MMH-S)	MMH Medium (-MMH-M)
A walkable neighborhood environment of small-to-medium footprint, low-intensity housing choices, supporting and within short walking distance of neighborhood-serving retail and services.	A walkable neighborhood environment of small-to-medium footprint, moderate-intensity housing choices, supporting and within short walking distance of neighborhood-serving retail and services.
Sub-Zone: MMH Small Flex (-MMH-S-F)	Sub-Zone: MMH Medium Flex (-MMH-M-F)
The flex sub-zone allows an additional frontage type (Shopfront) to support non-residential ground-floor uses within the same built character as the base zone.	The flex sub-zone allows additional frontage types (such as Terrace and Shopfront) to support non-residential ground-floor uses within the same built character as the base zone.

Missing Middle Small (MMH-S)

- Small to Medium building footprints
- Primarily detached buildings
- Low intensity buildings



Missing Middle Housing Medium (MMH-M)

- Medium building footprints
- Primarily detached buildings
- Moderate intensity buildings



MMH Medium (-MMH-M)

A walkable neighborhood environment of small-to-medium footprint, moderate-intensity housing choices, supporting and within short walking distance of neighborhood-serving retail and services.

Sub-Zone: MMH Medium Flex (-MMH-M-F)

The flex sub-zone allows additional frontage types (such as Terrace and Shopfront) to support non-residential ground-floor uses within the same built character as the base zone.

MMH Objective Design and Development Standards

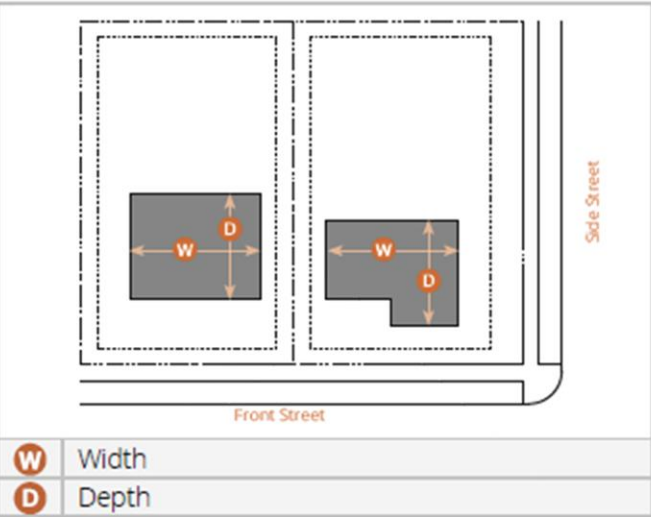


Figure 2-57 – Measurement of Main Body

TABLE 2-37—TERRACE

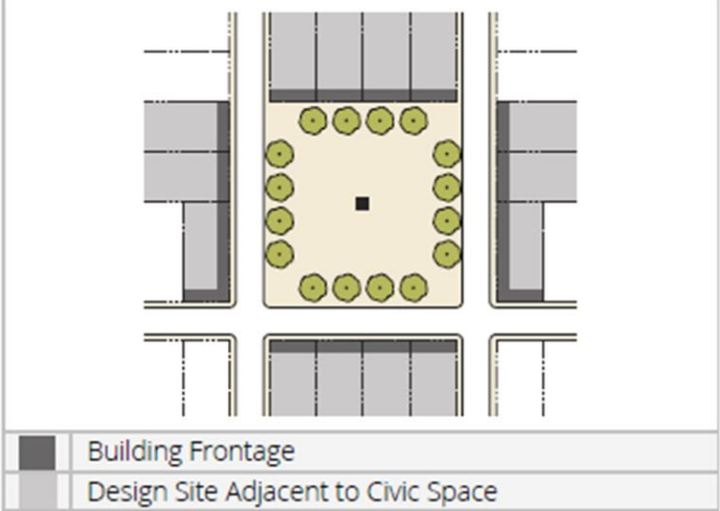
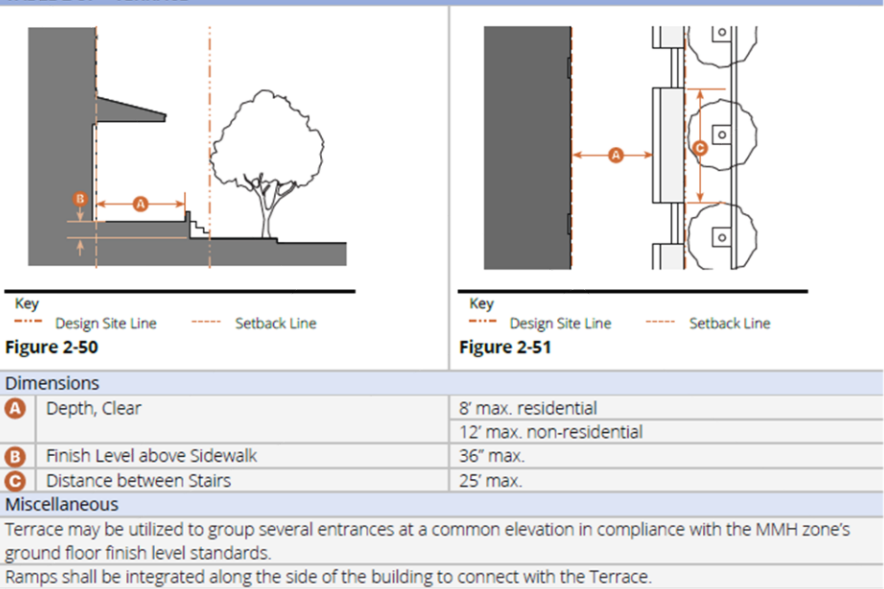


Figure 2-53 – Building Frontage Adjacent to a Civic Space

Key Development Standards

Lot size / Design site

Building size / type

Massing and height

Frontage type

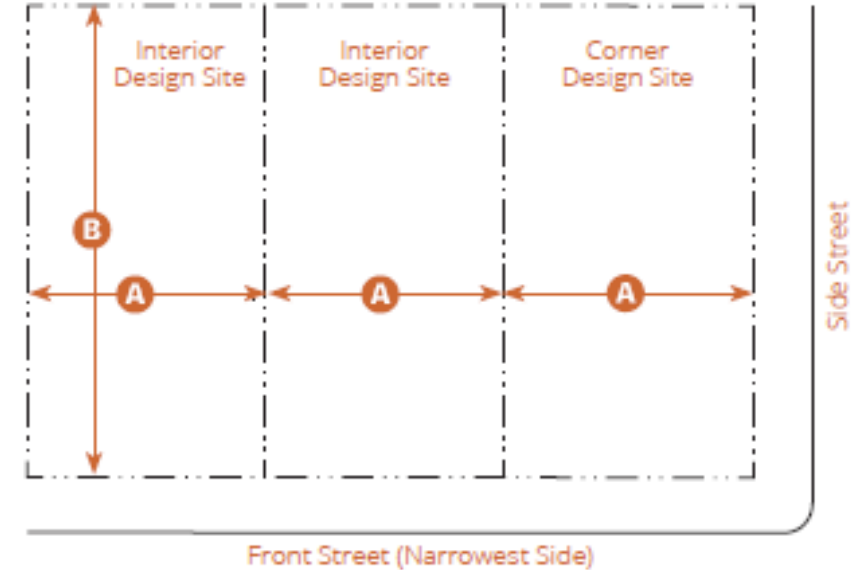
Vehicle access and parking

On-site Open Space or Civic Space

Design Sites

- Area designated for a single building type
- Treated as separate lot for setbacks and standards
- Must front a street, paseo, or open space
- Enables multiple small-scale buildings to activate public space

TABLE 2-19—BUILDING TYPES AND DESIGN SITE SIZE



Key

---- Design Site Line/Property Line/
Public Realm Boundary

Figure 2-19

Lot Width and Depth Housing Type

Allowed Primary Building Types	Standards	Design Site Dimensions		MMH Small (-MMH-S)	MMH Medium (-MMH-M)
		Width A	Depth B		
Duplex Side-by-Side	Table 2-24	40' min.	100' min.	•	
Duplex Stacked	Table 2-25	35' min.	100' min.	•	
Cottage Court	Table 2-26	80' min.	120' min.	•	
Triplex/Fourplex	Table 2-27	50' min.	100' min.	•	•
Multiplex	Table 2-28	50' min.	100' min.		•
Townhouse Run	Table 2-29	65' min.	100' min.	•	•
Courtyard Building	Table 2-30	80' min.	120' min.		•
• = Building type is allowed in the indicated MMH zone.					
Accessory and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units					
See Section 20-42.130 (Accessory dwelling units) for standards.					

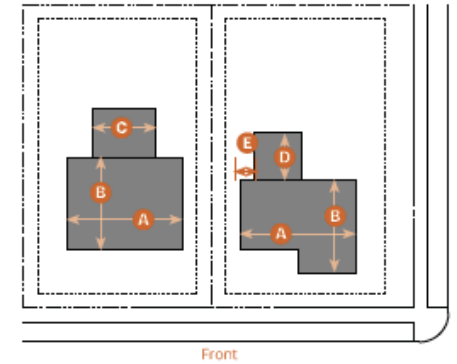
Development Form

Standards for:

- Setbacks
- Height
- Massing
- Frontage Types
- Driveways and on-site parking

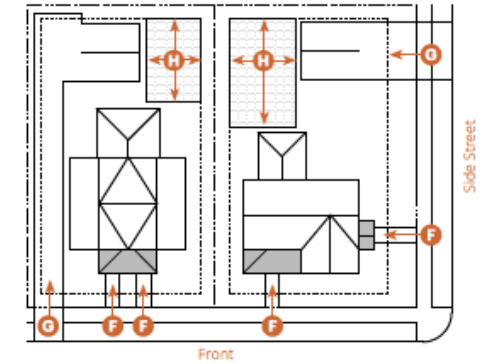
TABLE 2-25—DUPLEX STACKED

Number of Units	
Units per Primary Structure	2 max.
Primary Structures per Design Site	1 max.



Key	
--- Design Site Line	■ Building Footprint
--- Setback Line	

Figure 2-26



Key	
--- Design Site Line	■ Frontage Type
--- Setback Line	□ Open Space

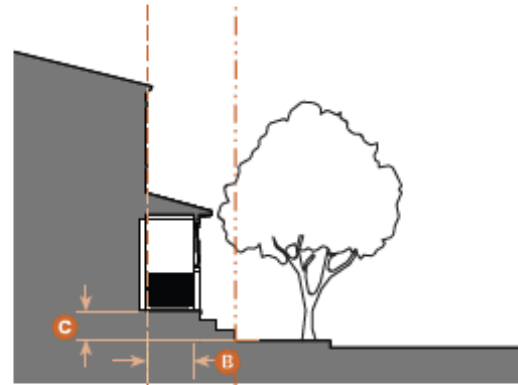
Figure 2-27

Building Size and Massing		Main Body		Wing(s)	
Height (Stories)		2 max.		1 max.	
Width		A	36' max.	C	15' max.
Depth		B	50' max.	D	20' max.
Separation between Wings		N/A		15' min.	
Offset from Main Body		N/A		E	2' min.
Pedestrian Access					
F	Primary Entrance Location		Front Street or Side Street		
Each unit shall have an individual entrance.					
Vehicular Access and Parking					
G	Driveway and parking location shall comply with standards in Table 2-23 (Vehicular and Bicycle Parking).				
Common Open Space					
H	Width		15' min.		
H	Depth		10' min.		
Open space not required if building is located within an 800-foot walking distance of a public park or other civic space.					
Required setbacks and driveways do not count toward open space.					
Required open space shall be located behind the main body of the building.					

Frontage Type

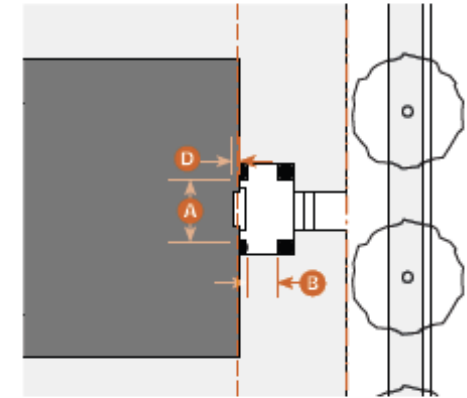
- Entrances facing the street must include frontage types such as stoops, projecting or engaged porches, dooryards, and forecourts.
- Terraces and shopfronts are permitted for non-residential uses.

TABLE 2-34—STOOP



Key
 - - - Design Site Line - - - Setback Line

Figure 2-44



Key
 - - - Design Site Line - - - Setback Line

Figure 2-45

Dimensions

A	Width, Clear	4' min.
B	Depth, Clear	3' min.
C	Finish Level above Sidewalk	12'-0" max.
D	Depth of Recessed Entrances	8'-0" max. from face of exterior wall

Miscellaneous

Each Stoop shall provide access to only one ground floor entrance.

Gates are not allowed.

Civic Spaces

- Pocket Parks/Plazas, Playgrounds, Passages, or Greenways
- Public or Shared Spaces
 - Public – recorded easement granting perpetual access; maintained at no public expense
 - Shared – an outdoor space shared by residents of parcel
 - Provided in developments that are generally over 4 acres

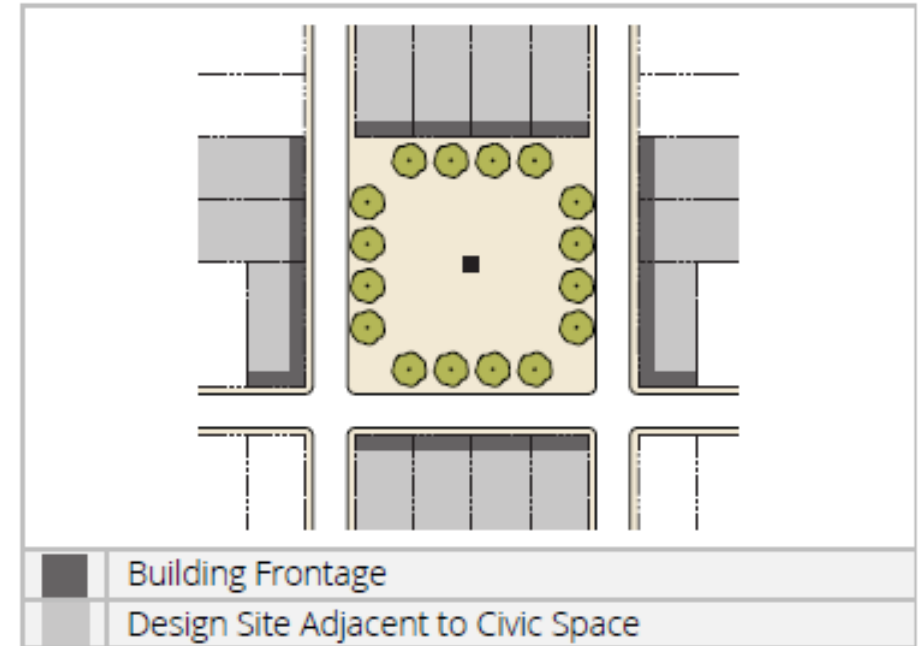


Figure 2-53 – Building Frontage Adjacent to a Civic Space

Design standards for the creation of new blocks

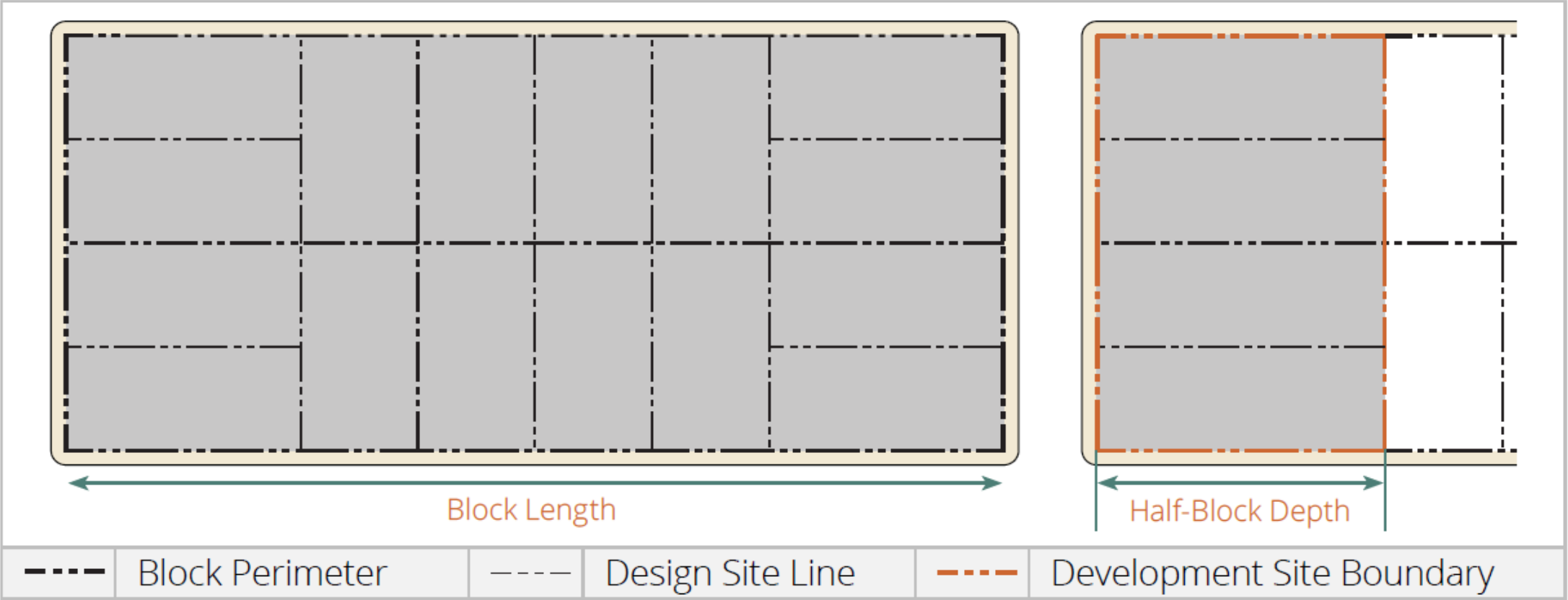





Figure 2-52 – Block Size Standards

Thoroughfares

TABLE 2-42—THOROUGHFARE TYPES			
	Minor Street	Main Street	Paseo
			
	Figure 2-54	Figure 2-55	Figure 2-56
Street Classifications			
Equivalent City of Santa Rosa Street Classification ¹	Minor Street	Main Street	N/A
Application			
Movement Type	Slow Vehicles		Pedestrian, Bicycle, Emergency Vehicle Access
Design Speed	20 to 25 mph		15 mph max.
Lane Assembly ²			
Travel Lanes	10' min./max. ³		Min. 10' clear shared use path with 5' min. paving and/or landscaping on each side (total 20' min.)
Bicycle Lanes (Optional)	5' min. ⁴		
Parking Lanes	8' min. ⁴		
Center Median			
Where included, the center median shall be at least eight feet in width and planted to match the landscaping of the planting strips. Turn lanes shall comply with City standards.			
Public Frontage			
Sidewalks	5' min.; 4' around obstructions	10' min. (inclusive of curb)	See Lane Assembly
Planting Strips (back of curb to front of sidewalk)	6' min.	N/A	No min.
Tree Grates	N/A	5' x 5' min.	4' x 4' min.
¹ The standards in this table are presented as optimal for Missing Middle Housing environments. All new streets accommodating private vehicles shall comply with City of Santa Rosa Street Design and Construction Standards.			
² Clear width of pavement shall comply with applicable fire department regulations where thoroughfare is to be used for emergency vehicle access.			
³ Travel lane width may increase to 12' where adjacent to curb, in compliance with City standards.			
⁴ Where bike lane is adjacent to parking lane without physical separation or marked buffer, combined width of parking lane and bike lane shall be no less than 14 feet.			

Public Comments

Historic Preservation: Potential impacts on the Preservation Districts

Parking Requirements: One parking space per unit may be insufficient

Notification & Transparency: Property owners in the area should be notified
- development results in impacts

Support for Family Housing: Some residents eager to build additional units to support multigenerational housing due to rising rental costs.

Condominium Development: City should encourage streamlined process and reduce costs to facilitate condominium construction

Next Steps

- Meetings on MMH Code and MMH Guidance Document scheduled for Planning Commission and Council in July/September 2025
 - Comments from the Design Review and Preservation Board and public will be forwarded to Planning Commission and Council
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Questions & Comments

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