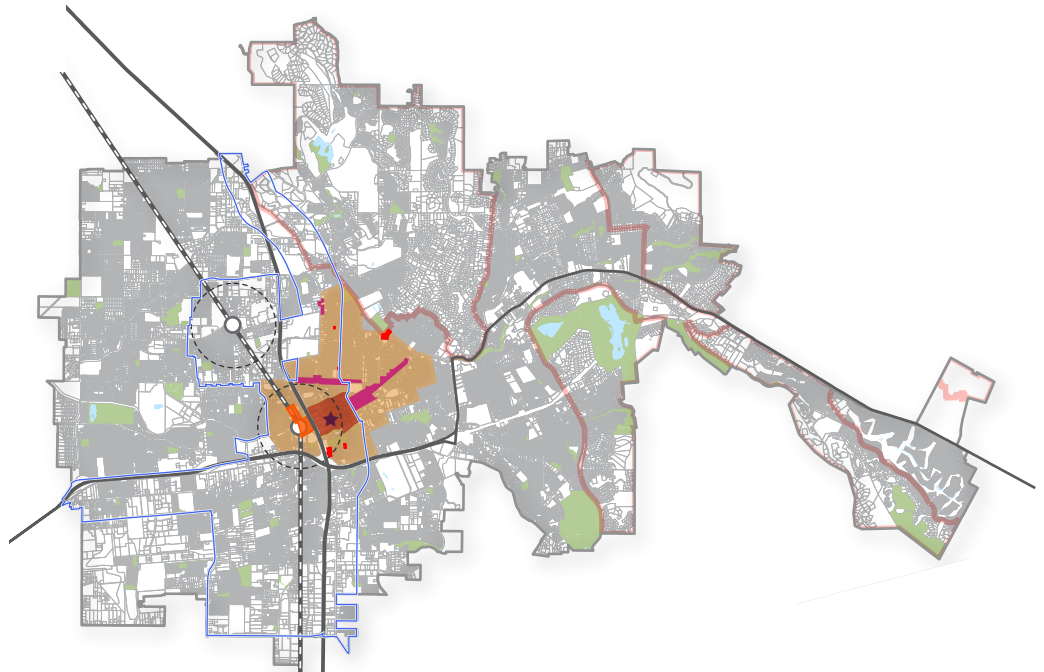


# Missing Middle Housing Combining District

Prepared for:  
City of Santa Rosa  
**October 2024**

## Guidance Document



The concept of Missing Middle Housing was conceived by Opticos Design, Inc. For further information, visit [www.missingmiddlehousing.com](http://www.missingmiddlehousing.com)



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# Purpose + Objectives

CHAPTER

1

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# 1.1 Guidance for Missing Middle Housing in Santa Rosa

See **§ 20-28.100 (MMH Combining District)** in Title 20, the City of Santa Rosa's zoning code

## Summary

**The intent of this Guidance Document is to provide additional information on key topics related to the proposed Missing Middle Housing (MMH) Combining District. The information in this document is intended to supplement, but not to be used in lieu of, the development standards provided in § 20-28.100 (MMH Combining District) of Title 20, the City of Santa Rosa's zoning code.**

## The Guidance Document for Missing Middle Housing (MMH)

The Missing Middle Housing Study is a citywide initiative, started by the City of Santa Rosa in 2021, to increase housing diversity in Santa Rosa with the aim of advancing housing attainability and to meet the changing housing needs of current and future residents of Santa Rosa. More information on the study is included on the facing page.

The Missing Middle Housing (MMH) Combining District is the implementation tool to regulate Missing Middle Housing (MMH) in Santa Rosa. The MMH Combining District is Section 20-28.100 of Title 20 of the City of Santa Rosa's zoning code and includes development standards that regulate key built form aspects of new MMH types to ensure compatibility in scale and form with existing residential buildings in the neighborhoods where MMH will be allowed.

For reasons of practicality, the development standards in Section 20-28.100 cannot include detailed explanation of underlying design concepts that form the basis for the MMH development standards. This Guidance Document, as the name suggests, is intended to supplement the development standards in Section 20-28.100 by providing additional

information on key MMH-related topics that are being regulated. While the intent is to guide and educate, the information included in this document is not intended to replace the development standards in Section 20-28.100. Ideally, residents and builders will use the MMH Combining District standards and this Guidance Document together to add more MMH types to Santa Rosa's housing stock.

In this chapter, the Guidance Document provides an overview of Missing Middle Housing (MMH) as a concept, its relevance to Santa Rosa, and the purpose and intent of the MMH Combining District. It provides an overview of the two new MMH zones, as well as a "quick code guide" that outlines the steps to be followed to design an MMH project. In subsequent chapters, three key topics related to MMH are described in more detail. References to the relevant sections of the MMH Combining District in the zoning code are included (in orange colored text boxes) for easy reference.

## The Missing Middle Housing Study for Santa Rosa



### Santa Rosa's Missing Middle Housing Initiative

The purpose of the Missing Middle Housing Initiative by the City of Santa Rosa is to **"amend or create policies, standards and fees to accommodate by-right construction, replacement or conversion of standard single-family homes and remodels to produce Missing Middle infill housing."**

The Initiative is intended to increase the production of housing units of varying types and affordability, and in areas generally within walking distance of transit and amenities. These are areas currently planned for Medium Density (8-18 dwelling units per acre) or Medium High Density (18-30 dwelling units per acre) residential development. The Initiative is aligned with the City's Housing Action Plan that has 31 programs under 5 program areas:

- Increase inclusionary affordable housing
- Achieve "affordability by design" in market-rate projects
- Improve development readiness
- Increase affordable housing investment and partnerships

For more information, refer to <https://www.srcity.org/3495/Missing-Middle-Housing>

### Why Should Santa Rosa Promote Missing Middle Housing?

In planning for housing for the coming decades, it is essential for changing demographics and household needs to be reflected in the housing choices that are being encouraged and enabled.

Demographic forecasts for Santa Rosa, mirroring national trends, indicate a reduction in average household size and an increasing number of elderly residents on a fixed income who need attainable age-friendly housing options as they downsize. Also increasing are the number of single-person households and households without children. As housing costs in the region continue to escalate, it is critical to provide more housing choices targeted at first-time homebuyers, "empty nesters" looking to downsize, single-person households, and other groups. MMH can allow the market to respond to these growing needs.

MMH can also provide opportunities for existing homeowners to build additional units on their property to house extended family, or for passive income. MMH also promotes compact infill development and more efficient use of available resources and infrastructure. Beyond increasing housing choice through the "gentle intensification" that MMH enables, it can also boost the local economy by increasing the number of households and residents to the minimum thresholds needed to provide neighborhood-serving retail, amenities, and high-quality transit.



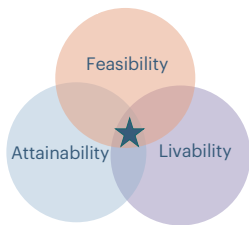
# 1.2 Missing Middle Housing: An Overview

See the **Santa Rosa Missing Middle Housing Initiative** report at <https://www.srcity.org/DocumentCenter/View/35327/Missing-Middle-Housing-Existing-Conditions--Recommendations>

**Missing Middle Housing is a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units, compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes, located in walkable neighborhoods."**

**Dan Parolek**

Founder of the Missing Middle concept, [www.missingmiddlehousing.com](http://www.missingmiddlehousing.com)

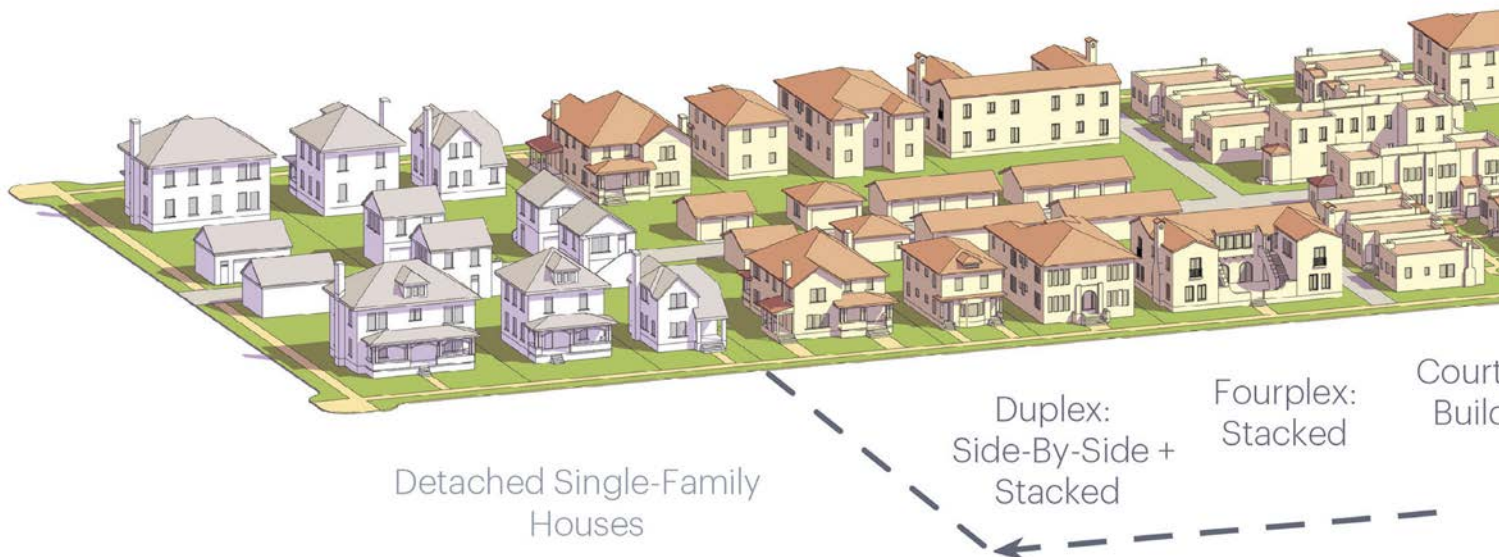


*Not all small-scale multifamily housing is Missing Middle. Three key metrics to assess the success of MMH are attainability, livability, and market feasibility.*

Missing Middle Housing (MMH) types offer a "middle" range of housing, both in terms of scale and form between that of single-family homes and larger residential or mixed-use buildings; as well as attainability for middle-income earners. While providing multiple units, MMH types look and feel similar to single-family homes. Even MMH types such as sixplexes and eightplexes look like larger homes. This "house-scale" character distinguishes MMH from other small-scale multifamily

housing and is carefully regulated through limits on building width, depth and height; as well as how the building "sits" on the lot.

With changing housing needs and preferences, the types and size of new dwelling types must evolve. MMH types include a variety of housing types that can cater to a wider variety of household types and sizes than conventional single-family or larger multifamily types.





## Typical Characteristics of Missing Middle Housing (MMH)

### ■ Small-footprint buildings

Missing Middle types typically have small- to medium-sized footprints, with a body width, depth, and height no larger than a single-family home. This size compatibility makes them a good tool for neighborhood infill.

### ■ Smaller, well-designed units

These multifamily housing types typically have smaller-sized units that can help keep development costs down. Well-designed smaller units can attract a different market of buyers and renters whose needs are currently not being met.

### ■ Create community

Missing Middle types integrate open spaces, typically shared, as in a Cottage Court or Courtyard building, which promotes a sense of community. These types also fit a wide variety of lifestyles.

### ■ Marketable to many

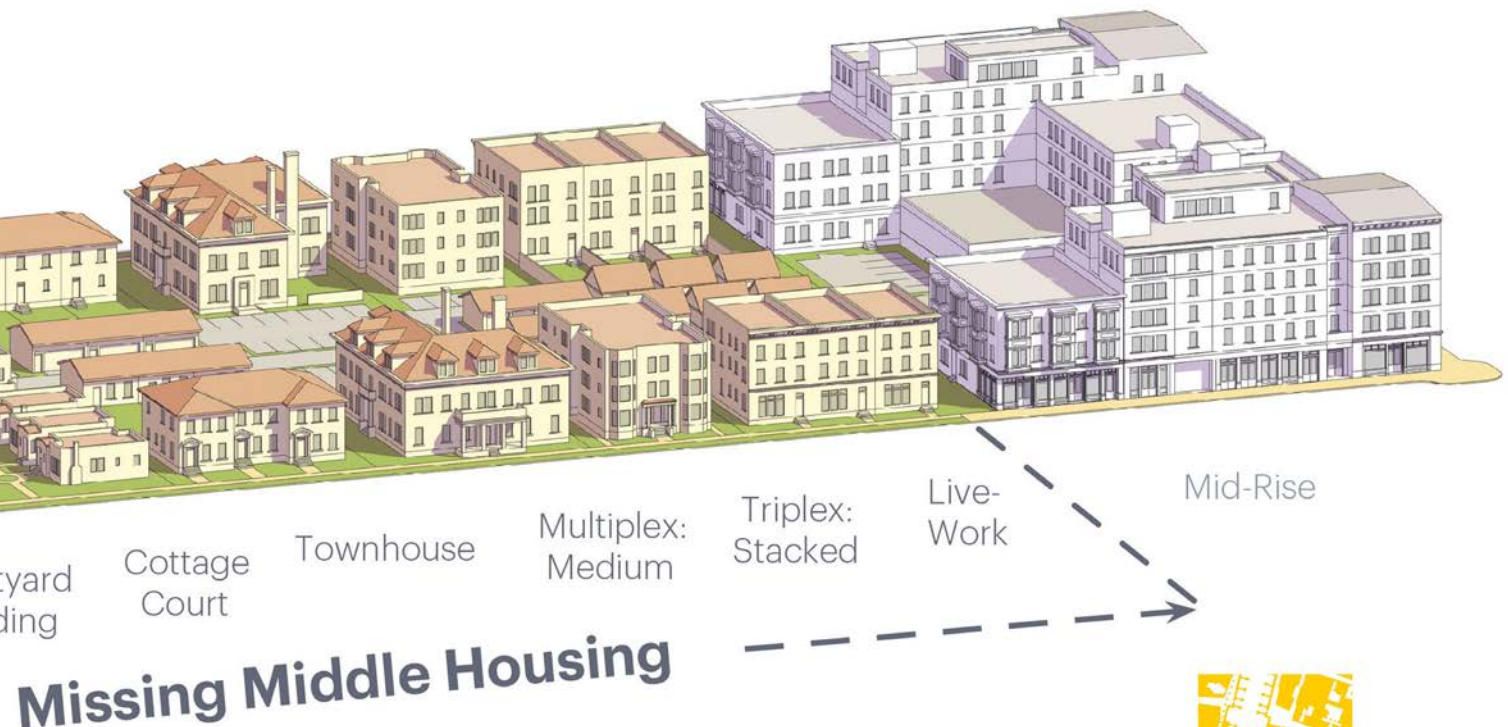
Missing Middle types look and feel like a house, not a large building, with features such as entrances off a street and not an apartment hallway. They provide a good fit for many groups looking for this "middle" scale of home.

### ■ Promote walkability

Missing Middle types work best in, and support, walkable environments where driving is a choice but not a necessity. They promote more active, healthy lifestyles and, with more pedestrians, safer neighborhoods.

### ■ Provide local benefits

These housing types are a way of gently and incrementally introducing more housing without drastic changes to neighborhood character. Missing Middle can be a way to empower local residents and builders to gain equity.



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## Why Are These Types "Missing"?

These types are said to be “missing” because very few of these housing types have been built since the early 1940s due to regulatory constraints, the shift to auto-dependent patterns of development, and the incentivization of single-unit homeownership by the federal government. Before the 1940s, they were a natural part of the housing mix, helping to provide housing choices to people at different life stages and income levels.

Even today, many jurisdictions do not allow multi-unit developments in many residential zoning districts. Even when allowed, General Plan density limits may be too low to allow all MMH types in all zoning districts. This is the case with Santa Rosa as well.

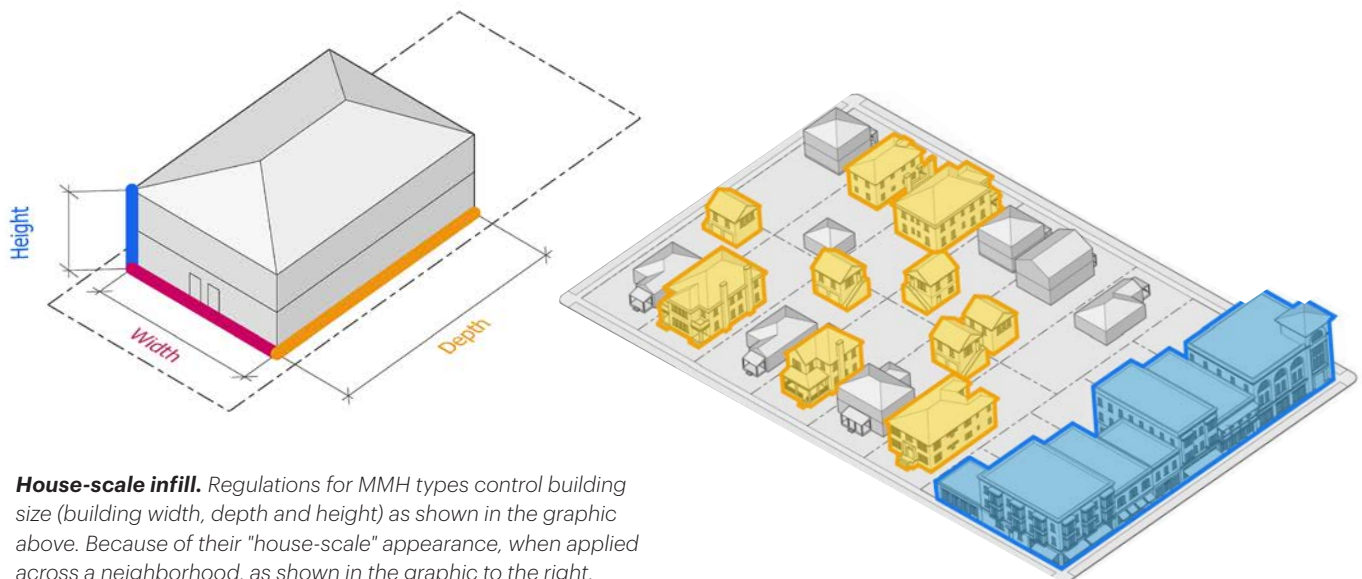
Too often, conventional zoning codes treat all multifamily development the same, and do not distinguish between larger multi-unit residential and mixed-use buildings and smaller Missing Middle ones. This enables much bigger buildings (taller and wider than MMH) to be constructed, often

in very close proximity to single-family neighborhoods, leading to community opposition. This may also encourage lot aggregation and large suburban garden apartment buildings. The environments created by these zoning districts are very different than what is intended by MMH.

## "Almost" Missing Middle

Not all smaller multi-unit buildings qualify as Missing Middle. MMH types include standards that emphasize building design to complement the public realm and promote walkability. The following are examples of “mistakes” often seen in multifamily developments, that work against creating pedestrian-oriented environments. MMH types, in comparison, are carefully regulated to avoid these:

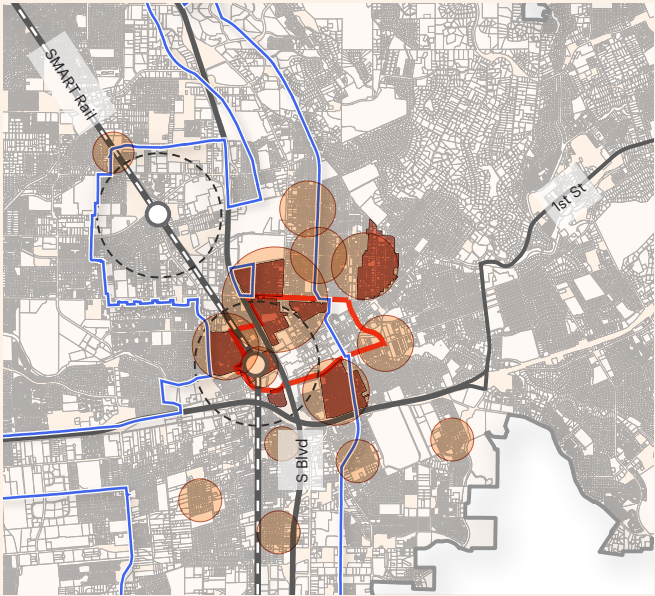
- Parking located at the front of the lot
- Lack of easily identifiable entrances, street-facing windows, and/or frontages such as porches or stoops
- Blank facades facing street/ sidewalk
- Lack of diversity of building types on a block or development



**House-scale infill.** Regulations for MMH types control building size (building width, depth and height) as shown in the graphic above. Because of their “house-scale” appearance, when applied across a neighborhood, as shown in the graphic to the right, MMH types (shown in yellow) are often indistinguishable from neighboring single-family homes (shown in gray) in building form and scale. This compatibility makes them a powerful infill tool.



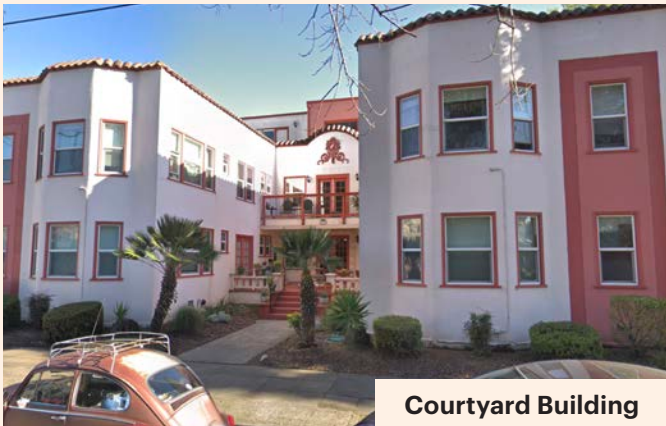
# Missing Middle Housing (MMH) in Santa Rosa



For more information, see the **Santa Rosa Missing Middle Housing Initiative** report at <https://www.srcity.org/DocumentCenter/View/35327/Missing-Middle-Housing-Existing-Conditions---Recommendations>

- City boundary
- Priority Development Area boundary
- Historic District
- Areas where exemplar Missing Middle Types exist
- Highway
- SMART railroad
- SMART station and 1/2 mile walk radius

Missing Middle is not a new concept for Santa Rosa - as shown in the map above, MMH types are seen in many of the city's established neighborhoods. Below are examples of MMH types in Santa Rosa.



Courtyard Building



Fourplex



Fourplex



Triplex

**Pedestrian Amenities****Bike Facilities****Neighborhood-Serving  
Retail + Amenities**

## Why Is Walkability Important for MMH?

MMH works best in, and in turn helps to support and enhance, walkable environments. MMH types have smaller but well-designed housing units that fit within house-scaled buildings. They also emphasize shared, rather than private, open space. For such units to work well, the number of parking spaces provided per unit should ideally be no more than one. This will ensure enough space on a typical lot for the additional units and open space. When located in a walkable environment, not all households need a car, and many (if not all) daily trips can be made by alternate modes such as walking and biking. For this reason, MMH and walkability are mutually symbiotic, and MMH can foster neighborhoods with an active, healthy lifestyle and a strong sense of community. The graphics on the left highlight some key aspects of a walkable environment.

## Established Walkable Centers + "MMH-Ready" Neighborhoods

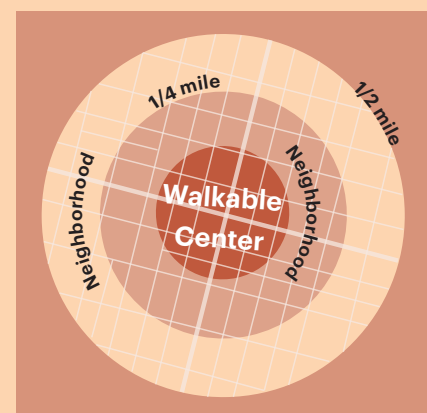
The map on the facing page shows the areas in Santa Rosa that can support MMH. This includes established walkable centers and adjacent walkable neighborhoods, and, in addition, areas of potential transformation. These "potential transition" areas have most of the attributes needed to support MMH, such as a finer-grained street and block pattern that offers high connectivity, the presence of amenities nearby, and nodes that have the potential to become mixed-use centers. This analysis has helped to inform the Regulating Plan for MMH, discussed in Section 1.3 of this chapter. For more information, refer to the Missing Middle Housing Initiative report.

## Q CLOSER LOOK

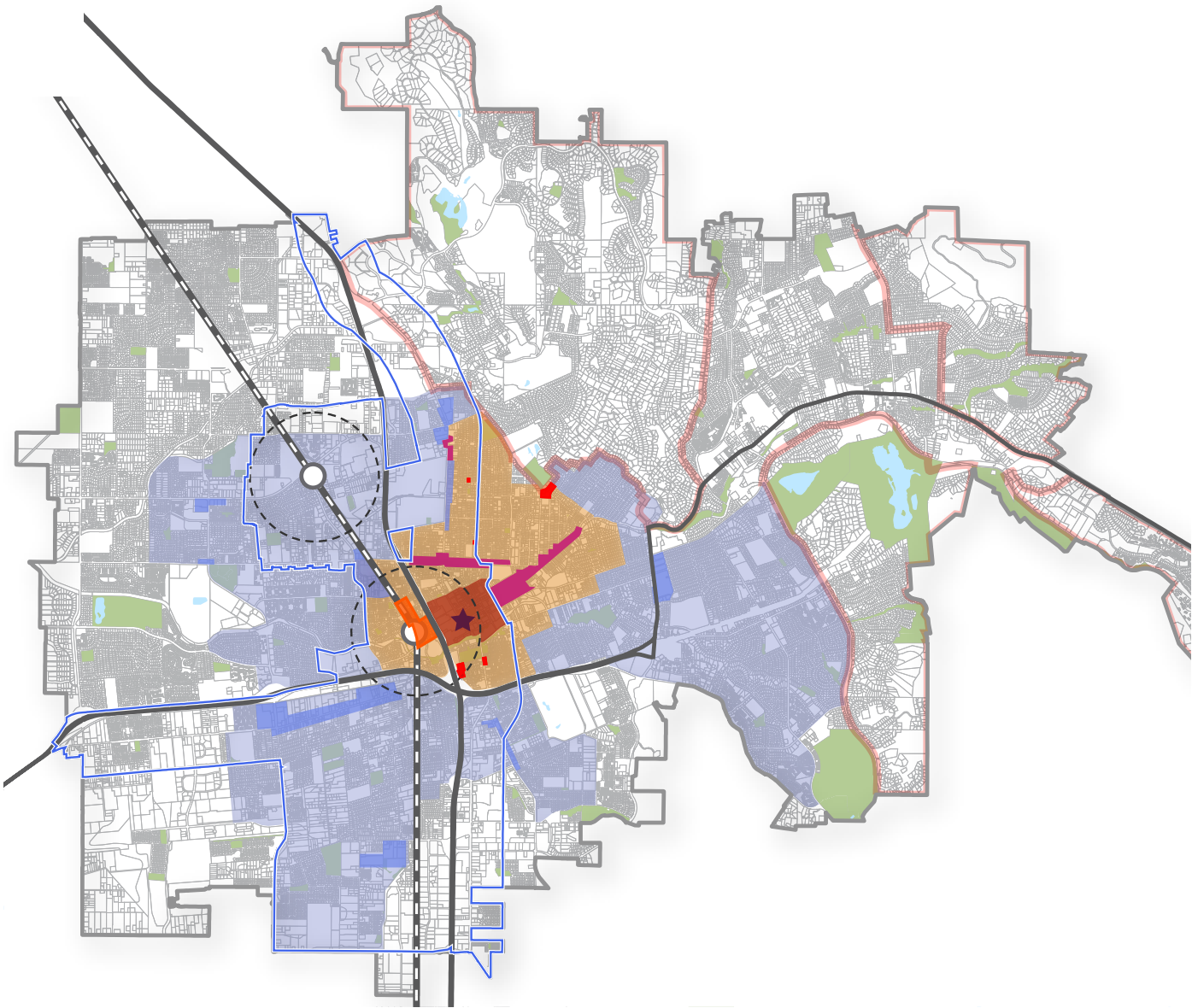
### What is a Walkable Neighborhood?

*These are places where you can easily walk or bike to home, work, or to fulfill most daily needs, including shopping and recreation. "Walkable" does not mean recreational walking such as on paths and trails, but rather walking to everyday destinations such as work, a coffee shop, restaurants, bars, entertainment, and other amenities. The compact form and mix of uses found in a Walkable Neighborhood*

*are anchored by "Walkable Centers" where neighborhood-serving retail, food, services, and employment are located in a pedestrian-oriented environment, affording multi-modal access throughout the area. These environments accommodate but do not depend on the use of automobiles for most daily needs. This was the standard model for urban living prior to the 1940s.*







**Established + Potential Walkable Centers + Neighborhoods in Santa Rosa**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Downtown/ Historic Downtown   | Parcel                                 |
| Neighborhood Main Street  | City boundary                          |
| Neighborhood Crossroads   | Priority Development Area              |
| Walkable Environment<br>(5-minute walking distance<br>from a Walkable Center) | Wildland Urban Interface boundary      |
| MMH-Ready Neighborhood  | Highway                                |
| Potential Mixed-Use Center  | SMART railroad                         |
| Park/ Open Space/ Water   | SMART station and 1/2 mile walk radius |

For more information on the citywide analysis, see the **Santa Rosa Missing Middle Housing Initiative** report at <https://www.srcity.org/DocumentCenter/View/35327/Missing-Middle-Housing-Existing-Conditions---Recommendations>

# 1.3 What is the MMH Combining District?

See **§ 20-28.100 (MMH Combining District)** in Title 20, the City of Santa Rosa's zoning code

## Summary

**The proposed Missing Middle Housing (MMH) Combining District is an overlay district that will enable and regulate MMH in Santa Rosa. The Regulating Plan shows where MMH will be allowed in Santa Rosa's residential zoning districts. Refer to § 20-28.100 (MMH Combining District) of Title 20, City of Santa Rosa's zoning code, for standards.**

## The Intent of the MMH Combining District

The MMH Combining District is intended to enable the development of Missing Middle Housing, described as multi-unit housing types, compatible in scale with single-unit houses, within Santa Rosa's walkable neighborhoods. While the base zoning will continue to apply across Santa Rosa's residential neighborhoods. The MMH Combining District, where applied, will function as an overlay—enabling more housing choices through MMH types, without the need to alter the underlying base zoning district.

It is important that the MMH types being encouraged are compatible in scale and form with existing residential buildings in these neighborhoods. The MMH Combining District includes development standards to regulate the built form, scale and massing of MMH types, to increase housing diversity without a drastic change to the existing built character of these neighborhoods.

For development standards, please refer to § 20-28.100 (MMH Combining District) in Title 20 (City of Santa Rosa's zoning code).

## Where Will the MMH Combining District apply?

Missing Middle Housing types work best in walkable neighborhoods, where at least some daily trips can be made by alternate transportation modes to the car. For this reason, the Santa Rosa MMH Study carried out a citywide analysis to identify residential neighborhoods that can be considered "walkable". It is in these areas that the MMH Combining District will apply (§ 20-28.100: (MMH Combining District).

As shown on pages 16-17, two MMH zones will apply: MMH Small (-MMH-S) and MMH Medium (-MMH-M). These MMH zones will allow a range of "small" and "medium" MMH types. In addition, the MMH Small Flex (-MMH-S-F) and MMH Medium Flex (-MMH-M-F) sub-zones are variations to support more flexibility in uses while retaining similar built form standards as -MMH-S and -MMH-M. The intent and key characteristics of these MMH zones are summarized in Tables 1A and 1B, in Section 1.4 of this chapter.



## MMH Combining District: Key Concepts



### Building Types [Chapter 2]

This chapter describes the importance of building types when regulating MMH. The resources in this chapter include:

- Palette of MMH types with information on typical lot sizes and other characteristics
- Descriptions of MMH building types with example photographs

For standards, see  
**§ 20-28.100.D  
(Building Types)** in the  
MMH Combining District

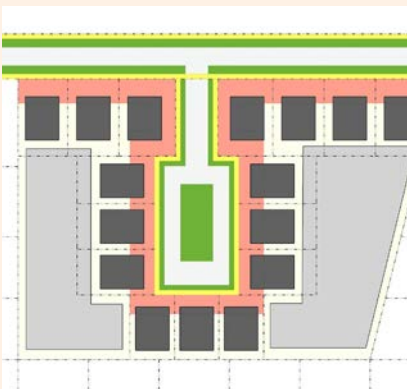


### Frontage Types [Chapter 3]

This chapter explains what a "frontage" is and why frontages are important. It includes guidance on the following:

- Why frontage types are important for MMH
- Descriptions of frontage types with example photographs

For standards, see  
**§ 20-28.100.E  
(Frontage Types)** in the  
MMH Combining District

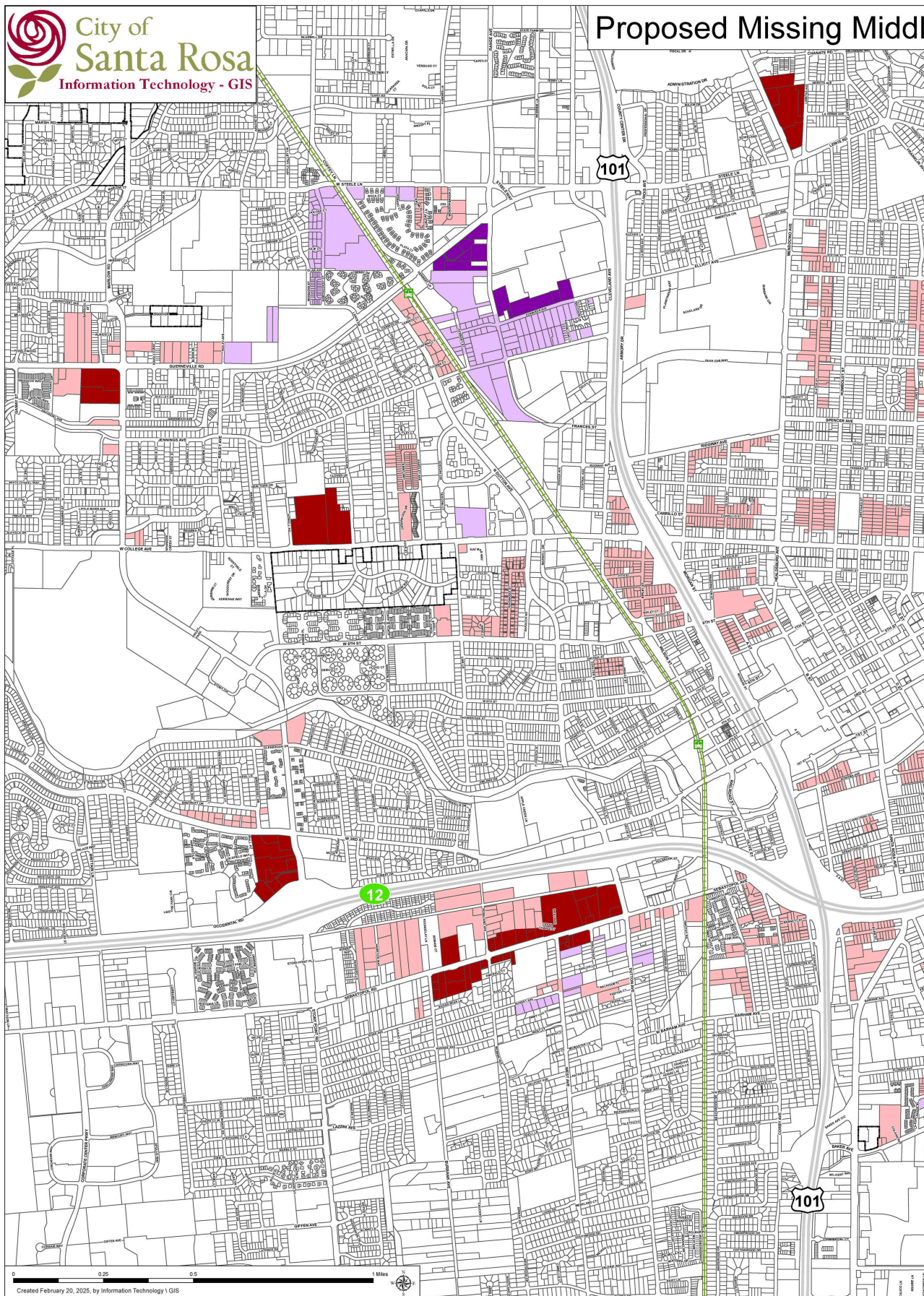


### Large Sites [Chapter 4]

This chapter discusses the topic of large sites and how multiple buildings, civic spaces, and thoroughfares are integrated within these sites. Key topics include:

- Concept of design sites
- Walkable neighborhood design standards
- Descriptions of civic space and thoroughfare types with example photographs

For standards, see  
**§ 20-28.100.C.5  
(Multiple Building Site  
Design)** in the MMH  
Combining District









# 1.4 Summary of MMH Zones

## MMH Small (-MMH-S) Zone

Table 1A | MMH Small



Zone Abbreviation
-MMH-S
Sub-Zone(s)
MMH Small Flex (-MMH-S-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.
Intent
A walkable neighborhood environment of small building footprint, low-intensity housing choices, supporting and within short walking distance of neighborhood-serving retail and services.
Desired Form
House-Scale Buildings
Primarily Detached Buildings
Small Building Footprints
Medium-to-Large Front Setbacks
Medium-to-Large Side Setbacks
Up to 2 Stories
Building Types: Duplex Side-by-Side, Duplex Stacked, Cottage Court, Triplex/Fourplex, and Townhouse Run

For development standards, see **§ 20-28.100.C.4 (MMH Zone Standards)** in Title 20, the City of Santa Rosa's zoning code

Less Urban

# MMH Medium (-MMH-M) Zone

Table 1B | MMH Medium



**Zone Abbreviation**

-MMH-M

**Sub-Zone(s)**

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

**Intent**

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

**Desired Form**

- House-Scale Buildings
- Primarily Detached Buildings
- Small-to-Medium Building Footprints
- Small-to-Medium Front Setbacks
- Small-to-Medium Side Setbacks
- Up to 3 Stories
- Building Types: Triplex/Fourplex, Multiplex, Townhouse Run, and Courtyard Building

For development standards, see **§ 20-28.100.C.4 (MMH Zone Standards)** in Title 20, the City of Santa Rosa's zoning code



# 1.5 Quick Code Guide

## Steps for Development in the MMH Combining District

The following graphic is intended as a summary guide for development in the MMH Combining District. Please refer to Santa Rosa's permit procedures and application standards in Title 20, Division 5 (Land Use and Development Permit Procedures) for all necessary information.

1

### Sites Under Four Acres: Identify Your MMH Zone(s) and Organize Your Site

#### Identify your MMH zone(s)

Identify which of the MMH zones apply.

**For multiple primary structures, apply design sites, see Subsection C.5**

- a. If your project proposes multiple primary structures, apply design sites to accommodate building types as allowed by the MMH zone(s), then follow steps 2 – 4 for each design site.
- b. If only one primary structure is proposed, the lot and the design site are identical. Continue to Step 2.

Subsection C.5 (Multiple Building Site Design)

1

### Sites of Four Acres or More: Identify Your MMH Zone(s) and Organize Your Site

#### Identify your MMH zone(s)

Identify which of the MMH zones apply.

**Design block structure and placement of public realm elements, see Subsections F, G, and H**

- a. Locate blocks and half-blocks.
- b. Place thoroughfares.
- c. Place civic space(s).

Subsection F (Requirements for Sites of Four Acres or More)

Subsection F (Requirements for Sites of Four Acres or More);  
Subsection H (Thoroughfare Types)

Subsection F (Requirements for Sites of Four Acres or More);  
Subsection G (Civic Space Types)

**Organize the private realm on individual blocks/half-blocks by applying design sites, see Subsection C.5**

Within each block or half-block, apply design sites to accommodate building types as allowed by the MMH zone(s), then follow steps 2 – 4 for each design site.

Subsection C.5 (Multiple Building Site Design)



## 2

Design Your Individual Design Site<sup>1</sup>

<b>Follow standards for your MMH zone</b> , see Subsection C	Identify which MMH zone applies and apply the standards.	Subsection C (MMH Zones);
<b>Determine building use(s)</b> , see Title 20, Division 2	Select from allowed uses.	Refer to the underlying zone for the allowed uses and standards
<b>Determine maximum zoning envelope</b> , see Tables 2-19, 2-20, and 2-21	a. Select your building type.	Table 2-19 (Building Types and Design Site Size)
	b. Identify buildable area of the site.	Table 2-20 (Building Placement)
	c. Apply building form and height standards.	Table 2-21 (Building Form)
<b>Place required parking and driveway(s)</b> , see Table 2-23	Apply parking standards.	Table 2-23 (Vehicular and Bicycle Parking)

<sup>1</sup> Developments that propose multiple design sites shall apply this process for each design site.

## 3

Design Your Building(s)<sup>1</sup>

<b>Create a conceptual design for your building type(s)</b> , see Subsection D (Building Types)	a. Determine building footprint and massing.	Building Size and Massing standards for selected building type (Tables 2-24 through 2-30)
	b. Distribute units/tenant spaces within building and provide access to each according to the standards.	Number of Units and Pedestrian Access standards for selected building type (Tables 2-24 through 2-30)
<b>Place required open space</b> , see Subsection D (Building Types)	c. Apply open space standards.	Open Space standards for selected building type (Tables 2-24 through 2-30)

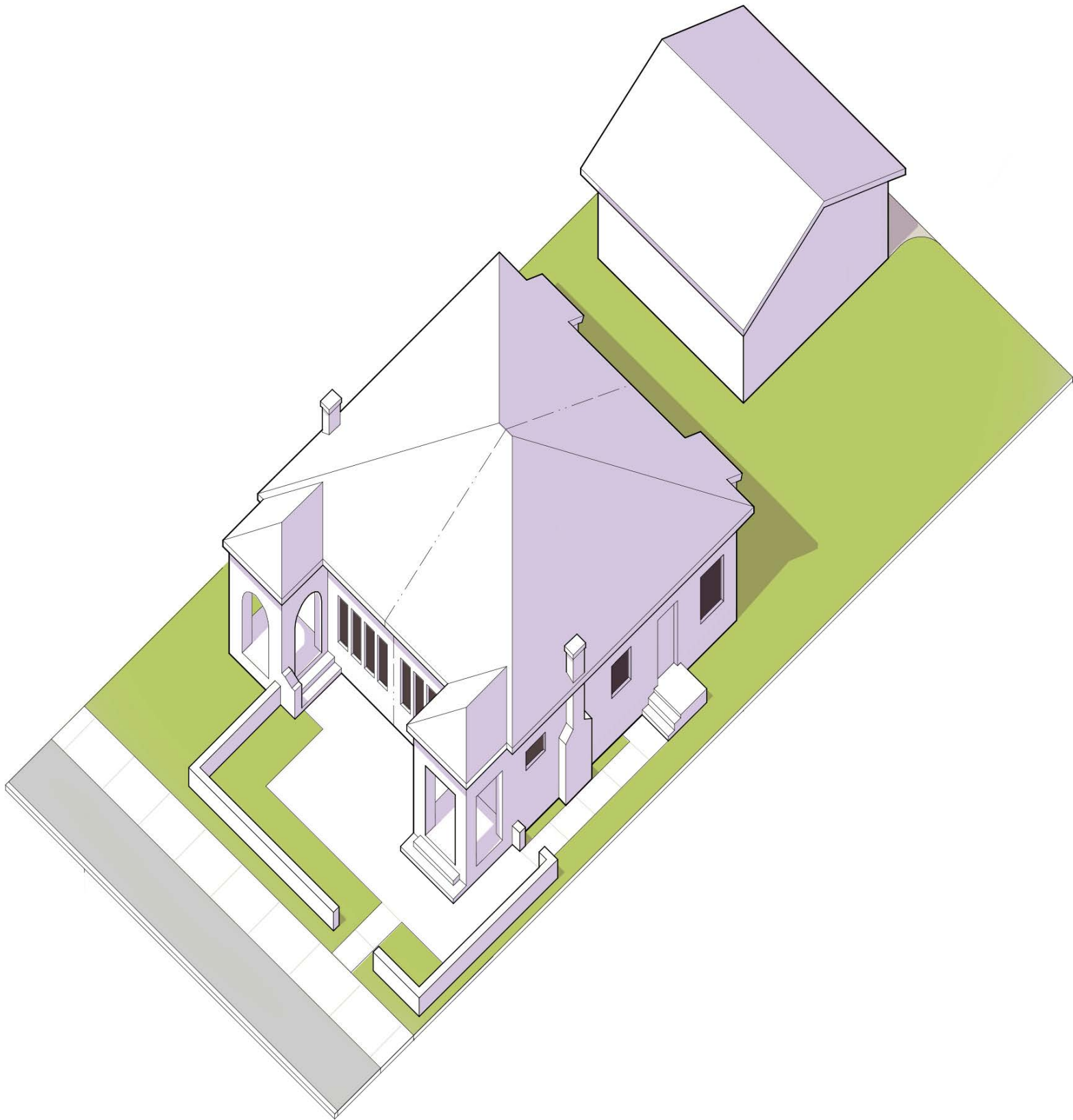
<sup>1</sup> Developments that propose multiple design sites shall apply this process for each design site.

## 4

Connect Ground Floor to Adjacent Streetscape<sup>1</sup>

<b>Apply your private frontage type(s)</b> , see Subsection E (Frontage Types)	a. Select your private frontage type(s).	Table 2-22 (Private Frontages)
	b. Apply the standards to each unit/building entrance.	Standards for selected frontage type(s) (Tables 2-31 through 2-37)

<sup>1</sup> Developments that propose multiple design sites shall apply this process for each design site.



# Building Types

CHAPTER

# 2

## In this chapter

<b>2.1</b> What are Building Types?	24
<b>2.2</b> Building Types for Missing Middle Housing	26
<b>2.3</b> Palette of Missing Middle Housing Types	28

## 2.1 What are Building Types?

See § 20-28.100.D (Building Types) in the MMH Combining District for Standards

### Summary

**The intent of Building Types is to generate predictable, context-appropriate building forms for new housing, especially in contexts where the scale of individual buildings is geared toward single-unit houses. This enables a neighborhood to incorporate both single-unit and multi-unit buildings while maintaining a consistent vision for the overall streetscape.**

### Building Type Origins

Prior to the 1940s, many neighborhoods throughout America were developed by selling off individual lots—each large enough to accommodate an individual house—to a multitude of different buyers. In the absence of zoning restrictions regulating the number of homes per lot, many of these buyers chose to develop a house for one family on their lot, while others chose to develop a building with multiple units on a similarly-sized piece of land. Occasionally, a buyer would purchase two or more adjacent lots for the purpose of offering even more units—but overall, these neighborhoods became defined by a consistent pattern of "house-scale" buildings, giving rise to a set of "building types" that can still increase housing choices in neighborhoods characterized by single-unit houses if regulations allow.

### What Building Type Standards Do

Building Types offer a nuanced approach to building size and scale, either within a development or between adjacent lots with existing buildings. Predictability about the intended form and site plan is provided by addressing five basic topics for each building type: its description and intent;

building size, massing and lot coverage; pedestrian access; vehicle access and parking; and on-site open space. Massing is expressed in terms of a main body and (optional) wings. This approach lends predictability to the maximum building footprint and the resulting housing yield.

### Why Use Building Type Standards?

Building type standards offer predictability in built outcomes and can be used to generate building forms that conventional zoning does not—encouraging the delivery of small, multi-unit buildings that offer more abundant and attainable housing in house-scale neighborhoods.

### Where Is it Appropriate to Use Building Type Standards?

Building type standards are most effective in walkable neighborhoods with house-scale buildings. In these environments, buildings are mostly detached and there is an expectation for each building to be perceived as an individual building on its own lot. Building type standards can also be effective in areas such as small town main street environments, where buildings may be either attached or detached, but still combine with other buildings to make up a block.



Examples of MMH in Santa Rosa



## 2.2 Building Types for Missing Middle Housing



MMH walking tour (top) and example documentation of a MMH type (bottom).

### Why Building Type Standards Are Important for Missing Middle

Building design matters because the way each individual building interacts with the public realm plays a key role in reinforcing walkability, and also in shaping the identity of a place. However, many buildings today fail to contribute to the public realm in a positive way. Common planning metrics such as FAR and density make it difficult to predict built outcomes. This is where regulating by building type can be very useful.

By using building types, the standards can provide a higher degree of specificity which produces a predictable built outcome. This predictability benefits developers, planners, and neighbors because everyone is aware of the desired built outcome. The building type standards ensure that new projects will be

house-scaled and have a similar character to adjacent neighborhood buildings.

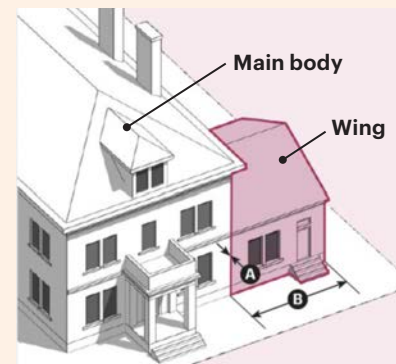
In Santa Rosa, allowed building types for each MMH zone are specified based on the context and intended physical character to address compatibility with existing buildings.

### Q CLOSER LOOK

#### Massing Features: "Main Body" and "Wings"

MMH types maintain their house-scale character by regulating the size of the building in the form of a "main body" and additional "wings" where needed. The size, particularly width, of the building's main body is restricted to be compatible with adjacent house-scale buildings. To accommodate additional buildable area without increasing the size of the main body, wings are used.

Wings, always secondary in building footprint and height to the main body, provide for physical transitions in scale while enabling additional floor area for housing. Strategies to emphasize the main body include recessing the wing from the facade of the primary building or limiting the wing to be at least one story less than the primary building.





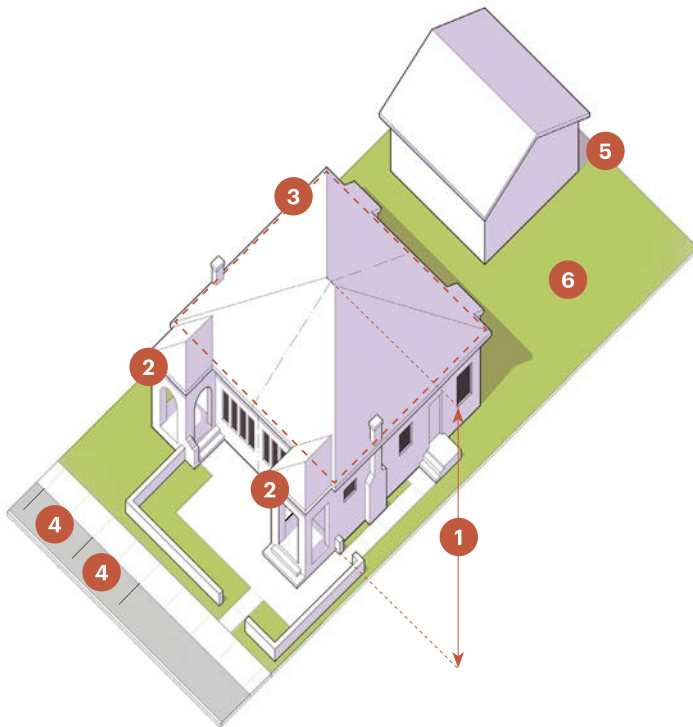
## Built Form Characteristics of Missing Middle Housing Types

Missing Middle Housing (MMH) is not a new type of building. It is a range of house-scale building types that exist in cities and towns across the country<sup>1</sup>. These types were a fundamental part of pre-1940s neighborhoods, and many examples exist in Santa Rosa's more historic neighborhoods. All MMH types share the following characteristics:

- **Height.** Two to two and a half stories maximum (third story as an exception; only to be allowed with careful consideration of form and scale impact)
- **Multiple units per building.** Maximum of nineteen units per building, typically twelve units or less per building.
- **Footprint.** Typical main body width of 50 to 60 feet along the street and can be up to 80 feet overall when secondary wings are included.
- **Off-street parking.** No more than one off-street parking space per unit should be required. This is viable where close to services, retail, and the availability of on-street parking. Detached parking structures can help to maintain a house-scale primary building in neighborhoods with narrower houses.
- **On-site open space.** Private open space is not needed and should not be required. Shared open space exists in the form of a rear yard, sometimes as a wide side yard, or a courtyard.
- **Driveways.** Generally, driveway design for MMH types should match the neighborhood context on a per-lot basis. If no alley is present, single-wide driveways are recommended when possible to avoid building frontages dominated by parking.

### Sources

<sup>1</sup>Missing Middle Housing, *Thinking Big and Building Small to Respond to Today's Housing Crisis*, Dan Parolek, Island Press



### Important built form characteristics regulated for MMH types

- 1 Maximum height
- 2 Number of units (minimum 2)
- 3 Footprint/main body dimensions
- 4 On-street parking
- 5 Off-street parking (if any) at rear of lot
- 6 On-site open space

## 2.3 Palette of Missing Middle Housing Types

### Missing Middle Housing Palette

The palette of Missing Middle Housing (MMH) types below identifies the ideal lot characteristics for each MMH type. Detailed versions of these types are shown on the following pages.

The minimum dimensions shown are what each building type needs in order to provide a high quality living environment for residents, and the maximum is the size beyond which the lots become too large to deliver the type of compact development that supports walkable environments.

### The Palette of Missing Middle Housing Types

Source: Opticos Design, Inc.



**Duplex Side-by-Side**  
2 units



**Duplex Stacked**  
2 units



**Cottage Court<sup>1</sup>**  
5-10 units



**Fourplex<sup>2</sup>**  
4 units

### Recommended Characteristics of Missing Middle Housing Types

Vehicular Access	Front	Rear	Front	Rear	Front	Rear	Front	Rear
Max. Height (Stories)	2.5		2.5		1.5		2.5	
Lot Width (ft)	50' - 75'	40' - 70'	40' - 75'	30' - 70'	100' - 160'	90' - 150'	55' - 80'	50' - 70'
Lot Depth (ft)	100' - 150'	100' - 150'	100' - 150'	100' - 150'	100' - 150'	100' - 150'	100' - 150'	100' - 150'
Area of Lot (sf)	5,000 - 11,250	4,000 - 10,500	4,000 - 11,250	3,000 - 10,500	10,000 - 24,000	9,000 - 22,500	5,500 - 12,000	5,000 - 10,500
<b>Resultant Density<sup>3</sup></b>								
Without ADU	8 - 17	8 - 22	8 - 22	8 - 29	18 - 22 <sup>3</sup>	19 - 24 <sup>3</sup>	15 - 32	17 - 35
With ADU	12 - 26	12 - 33	12 - 33	12 - 44	n/a	n/a	18 - 40	21 - 44

Assumptions: 15' front setback, 5' side setback, 12' driveway width

<sup>1</sup>Variation: Pocket Neighborhood. The lot for this variation is the size of most of a block or up to an entire block, and the shared court is much larger, or there are several shared courts. The individual cottages are expanded to include a mix of duplex and fourplex buildings.

<sup>2</sup>A triplex has the same built form characteristics as a fourplex but contains only three units.

The resultant density is the number obtained from designing units that reasonably fit within each MMH building type. This is different from density regulations that predetermine how many units are allowed without regard for what can actually fit well. In addition, the results vary depending on front or rear vehicular access to parking.

Similarly, although lot area can be used as a regulating factor, it should not be the primary factor. Instead, lot width and the resulting building width should be the primary regulating factors, as these provide more targeted regulations that have a greater impact on the quality of

the public realm and help to deliver more predictable building form.

The density ranges for each type correspond to the lower number of units for each with its smaller lot dimensions, and the higher number of units with its larger lot dimensions.

The dimensions shown in the palette below and on the subsequent pages are the result of years of on-the-ground research and design work for private and public sector clients by Opticos. These dimensions are meant to be employed as a starting point, and should be calibrated for each community's existing conditions, lot patterns and desired community form.



Example of existing townhouses in Santa Rosa



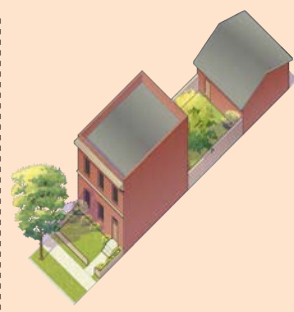
**Multiplex Small**  
5-10 units



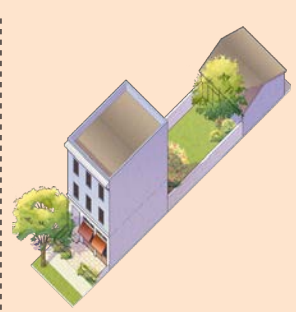
**Multiplex Large**  
6-18 units



**Courtyard Building**  
6-20 units



**Townhouse**  
1 unit



**Live/Work**  
1 unit

Front	Rear	Front	Rear	Front	Rear	Front	Rear	Front	Rear
2.5		2.5 (3 <sup>3</sup> )		2.5 (3 <sup>3</sup> )		2.5 (3 <sup>3</sup> )		2.5 (3 <sup>3</sup> )	
55' - 80'	50' - 70'	70' - 120'	60' - 110'	95' - 150'	85' - 140'	n/a	16' - 45'	n/a	16' - 45'
100' - 150'	100' - 150'	100' - 150'	100' - 150'	110' - 175'	110' - 175'	n/a	85' - 120'	n/a	85' - 120'
5,500 - 12,000	5,000 - 10,500	7,000 - 18,000	6,000 - 16,500	10,450 - 26,250	9,350 - 24,500	n/a	1,360 - 5,400	n/a	1,360 - 5,400
36 - 40 <sup>3</sup>	41 - 44 <sup>3</sup>	37 - 44 <sup>3</sup>	44 - 48 <sup>3</sup>	25 - 33 <sup>3</sup>	28 - 36 <sup>3</sup>	n/a	8 - 32	n/a	8 - 32
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	16 - 64	n/a	16 - 64

<sup>3</sup>In more intense neighborhoods, this type can be designed to have a third story, or a portion of a third story, depending on the intended physical character of the neighborhood.

<sup>4</sup>In order to calculate the resultant density for types that have a range of dwelling units, we paired the minimum number of dwelling units with the smallest lot area and the maximum number of dwelling units with the largest lot area.



## Duplex Side-by-Side



*A distinct gable roof gives variety to this Duplex Side-by-Side.*

See **Table 2-24 (Duplex Side-by-Side)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

### Description

A small-to-medium-sized detached building with small-to-medium setbacks and a rear yard. The building consists of two side-by-side units, both facing the street and within a single-building massing. This type has the appearance of a small-to-medium single-family home and is scaled to fit within lower-intensity neighborhoods.



*This Duplex's raised porch sits between two bay windows.*



*Example of a Duplex Side-by-Side.*

*General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.*



Duplex Stacked



Example of a Duplex Stacked

See **Table 2-25 (Duplex Stacked)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

Description

A small-to-medium-sized detached building with small-to-medium setbacks and a rear yard. The building consists of two stacked units, both facing the street and within a single building massing. This type has the appearance of a small-to-medium single-family home and is scaled to fit within lower-intensity neighborhoods.



Example of a Duplex Stacked



Example of a Duplex Stacked

General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.



## Cottage Court



*Example of a Cottage Court*

See **Table 2-26 (Cottage Court)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

### Description

A group of three to nine small, detached, house-scale buildings arranged to define a shared court open to and visible from the street. The shared court is common open space becoming an important community-enhancing element. The type is scaled to fit within low-to-moderate-intensity neighborhoods and in non-residential contexts.

Synonym: Bungalow Court



*Example of a Cottage Court*



*Example of a Cottage Court*

*General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.*



Triplex/Fourplex



Example of a Fourplex

See **Table 2-27 (Triplex/Fourplex)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

Description

A small-to-medium-sized, detached, house-scale building that consists of three to four side-by-side and/or stacked units, typically with one shared entrance or individual entrances along the front. The type has the appearance of a medium-sized, single-unit house and is scaled to fit within low- to moderate-intensity neighborhoods.



Example of a Fourplex



Example of a Fourplex

General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.



## Multiplex



*Example of a Multiplex*

See **Table 2-28 (Multiplex)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

### Description

Description. A medium-to-large-sized, detached, house-scale building that consists of 5 to 12 side-by-side and/or stacked units, typically with one shared entrance. The type is scaled to fit within moderate-intensity neighborhoods.

Synonym: Mansion Apartment



*Example of a Multiplex*



*Example of a Multiplex*

*General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.*



## Townhouse Run



*Example of a Townhouse Run*

See **Table 2-29 (Townhouse Run)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

### Description

A small-sized, house-scale building consisting of up to four townhouses side-by-side. Each townhouse consists of one to three units (stacked vertically), as allowed by the zone, and the townhouses that are attached to form a single building constitute a run. The type is typically located within low-to-moderate-intensity neighborhoods.

Synonym: Rowhouse Run



*Example of a Townhouse Run*



*Example of a Townhouse Run*

*General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.*

## Courtyard Building



*Example of a Courtyard Building*

See **Table 2-30 (Courtyard Building)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

### Description

A detached, house-scale building that consists of up to 18 attached and/or stacked units, accessed from a shared courtyard. The shared court is common open space and takes the place of a rear setback. The type is typically integrated as a small portion of lower-intensity neighborhoods or more consistently into moderate-intensity neighborhoods.

Synonym: Courtyard Apartment



*Example of a Courtyard Building*



*Example of a Courtyard Building*

*General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.*

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# Frontage Types

CHAPTER

## 3

### In this chapter

<b>3.1</b> What are Frontage Types?	40
<b>3.2</b> Frontage Types for Missing Middle Housing	42

## 3.1 What are Frontage Types?

See § 20-28.100.E (Frontage Types) in the MMH Combining District for Standards

### Summary

**The intent of Frontage Types is to provide an appealing transition between the public realm (streetscape, including the sidewalk) and individual building facades adjacent to the streetscape. Frontage types are an essential part of how buildings relate to the public realm.**

### The Importance of Frontages

**Building Frontage** is the component of a building that provides a transition and interface between the public realm (street and sidewalk) and the private realm (building interior), helping building occupants transition between these two realms. In addition, frontages provide an indoor-outdoor space where people can pause or rest—whether conversing, reading, greeting passersby, opening umbrellas, waiting for their hosts or for a ride, etc. The interface between a building and the public realm it faces is key to balancing privacy and connection, owing to the frontage’s dual role as a boundary between the public and private realms and as a seam and visual link connecting them.

These observations demonstrate the benefits of a space which is not completely private, but not completely public; one that is open to the street, but also sheltered, and separate from the main paths of travel; one that provides occupants with a range of options regarding how close of a connection with the outside world they desire.

### What Frontage Type Standards Do

**Frontage Types** are a means of providing clear, objective standards to ensure that

building frontages can fulfill the functions outlined above. By providing a menu of frontage type options and specifying the crucial dimensions and required features for each, the standards establish a predictable process for guaranteeing the benefits of good frontage design to new buildings and the surrounding neighborhoods.

### Why Use Frontage Type Standards?

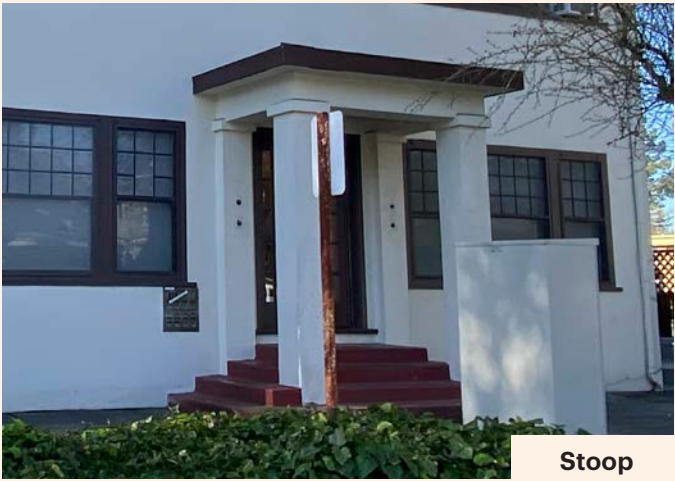
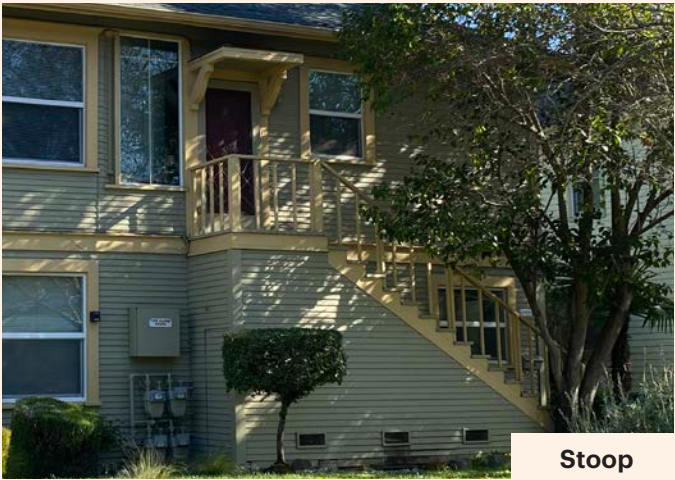
Without objective standards for frontages, there is a risk that these transitional spaces may be absent or that their functionality may be impaired. For example, a porch that is too shallow will, at best, serve as pure decoration rather than as an occupiable space. Frontage type standards ensure that fully-functional frontages will be provided where needed.

### Where Is it Appropriate to Use Frontage Type Standards?

Frontage type standards are most effective in neighborhoods that see significant foot traffic along the public right-of-way. When people experience and/or enter the building from the sidewalk, the treatment of the public/private transition becomes highly important.



Examples of Frontages in Santa Rosa



## 3.2 Frontage Types for Missing Middle Housing

See **Table 2-22 (Private Frontages)** in the MMH Combining District for Allowed Frontage Types by MMH Zone.

### The Palette of Frontage Types

The names of the frontage types depicted below indicate their particular configuration or function and are based on examples found in cities across the country. Some types may be more common than others in Santa Rosa, and the most representative types can be established by an on-the-ground survey. The following pages define each frontage type and provide photo examples.

### Frontage Types in Context

When choosing a building frontage from those shown below, it is important to understand that each frontage type is coordinated with an environment where it will be most appropriate. That is why

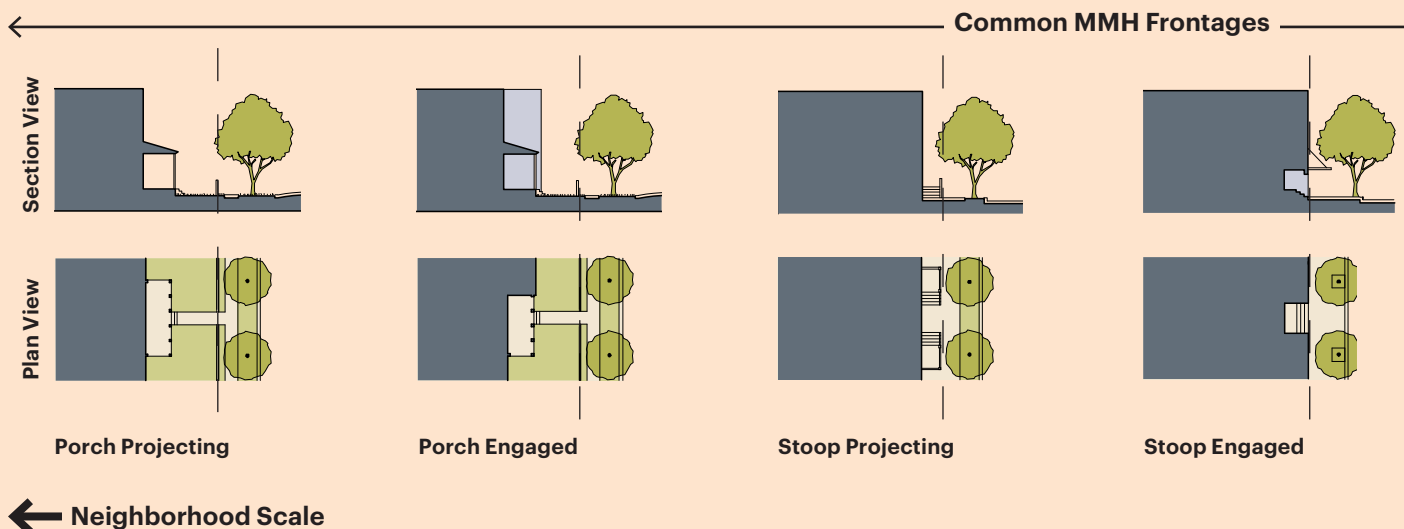
the frontage types below are organized in terms of intensity, and why the MMH zones differ in their allowed frontage types. For example, a projecting porch is a frontage type that is often used in less intense environments like low-rise neighborhoods, whereas a forecourt is used in more intense, urban environments.

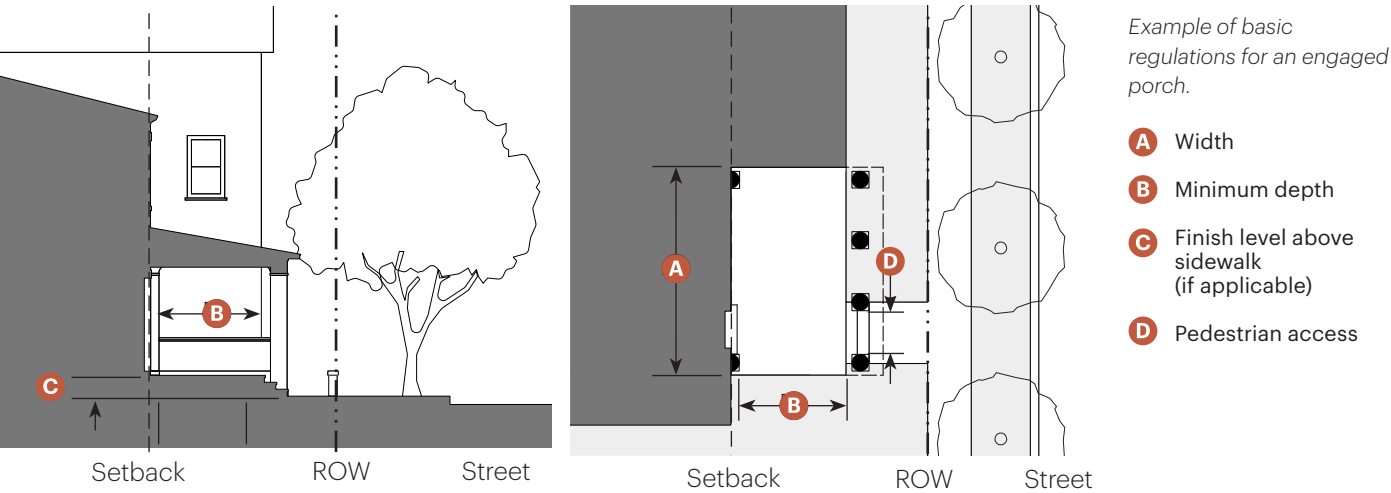
Relatedly, any given building type may be accessed through a range of different frontage types—but the building's form and intended use(s) may favor one frontage type over another. The forecourt is a common frontage type for a courtyard building, but is less commonly seen on a fourplex—for which a porch, stoop, or dooryard would all be appropriate frontages. Shopfronts are most appropriate where live/work

### CLOSER LOOK

#### Spectrum of Frontage Types

Source: *Form Based Codes: A Guide for Planners, Urban Designers, Municipalities, and Developers*. Dan Parolek AIA, Karen Parolek, Paul C. Crawford FAICP, Island Press





or ground-floor non-residential uses are intended.

**Important Features to Regulate**

The detailed regulations for frontage types are informed by best practices nationwide, but they can and should be refined according to measurements from good local precedents to ensure they are appropriate. For instance, setting the correct minimum depth for stoops and porches is extremely important in order to ensure that they are actually usable, look

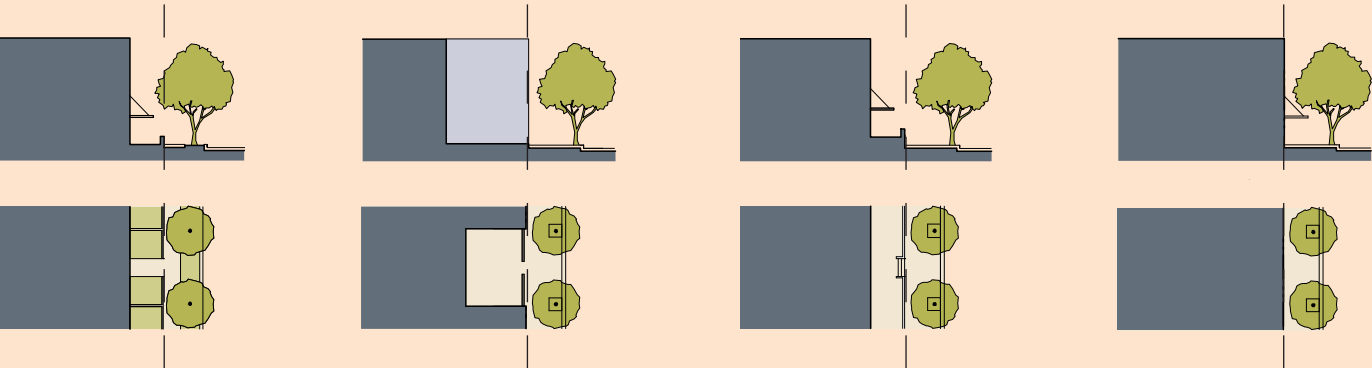
like they belong to the area, and improve the public/private interface by providing residents with a place to sit outside where they can also greet their neighbors.

It is also important to consider the relationship between parking and the frontage types. It is best practice to locate parking to the side or behind buildings to provide a direct connection between building entries and the public realm.



Example of MMH frontage in Santa Rosa. Multiple units in the building are accessed through the same frontage: in this case, a projecting porch.

..... Less Common MMH Frontages .....➤



Dooryard

Forecourt

Terrace

Shopfront

Downtown Scale ➡



## Porch Projecting



*Example of a Projecting Porch*

See **Table 2-31 (Porch Projecting)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

### Description

The main facade of the building is set back from the front design site line with a covered structure encroaching into the front setback. The resulting setback area may be defined by a fence or hedge to spatially maintain the edge of the street. The Porch may be one or two stories, is open on three sides, with all habitable space located behind the building setback line.



*Example of a Projecting Porch*



*Example of a Projecting Porch*

*General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.*



Porch Engaged



Example of an Engaged Porch

See **Table 2-32 (Porch Engaged)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

Description

A portion of the main facade of the building projects into the front setback to create an area for a covered structure that projects from the rest of the facade that is set back. The resulting yard may be defined by a fence or hedge to spatially define the edge of the street. The Porch may be one or two stories and may have two or three adjacent sides that are engaged to the building with at least one side open.



Example of an Engaged Porch



Example of an Engaged Porch

General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.



## Dooryard



*Example of a Dooryard*

See **Table 2-33 (Dooryard)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

### Description

The main facade of the building is set back from the front design site line, which is defined by a low wall or hedge, creating a small private area between the sidewalk and the facade. Each Dooryard is separated from adjacent Dooryards. The Dooryard may be raised or at grade.



*Example of a Dooryard*



*Example of a Dooryard*

*General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.*



Stoop



Example of a Stoop

See **Table 2-34 (Stoop)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

Description

The main facade of the building is near the front design site line with steps to an elevated entry. The Stoop is elevated above the sidewalk to provide privacy along the sidewalk-facing rooms. Stairs or ramps from the Stoop may lead directly to the sidewalk or may be parallel to the sidewalk.



Example of a Stoop



Example of a Stoop

General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.



## Forecourt



*Example of a Forecourt*

See **Table 2-35 (Forecourt)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

### Description

The main facade of the building is at or near the front design site line and a portion is set back, extending the public realm into the design site to create an entry court or shared garden space for housing, or an additional shopping or restaurant seating area within retail and service areas.



*Example of a Forecourt*



*Example of a Forecourt*

*General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.*



## Shopfront



Example of a Shopfront

See **Table 2-36 (Shopfront)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

### Description

The main facade of the building is at or near the front design site line with at-grade entrance from the sidewalk. The type is intended for service, retail, or restaurant use and includes substantial glazing between the Shopfront base and the ground floor ceiling. This type may include an awning that overlaps the sidewalk.



Example of a Shopfront

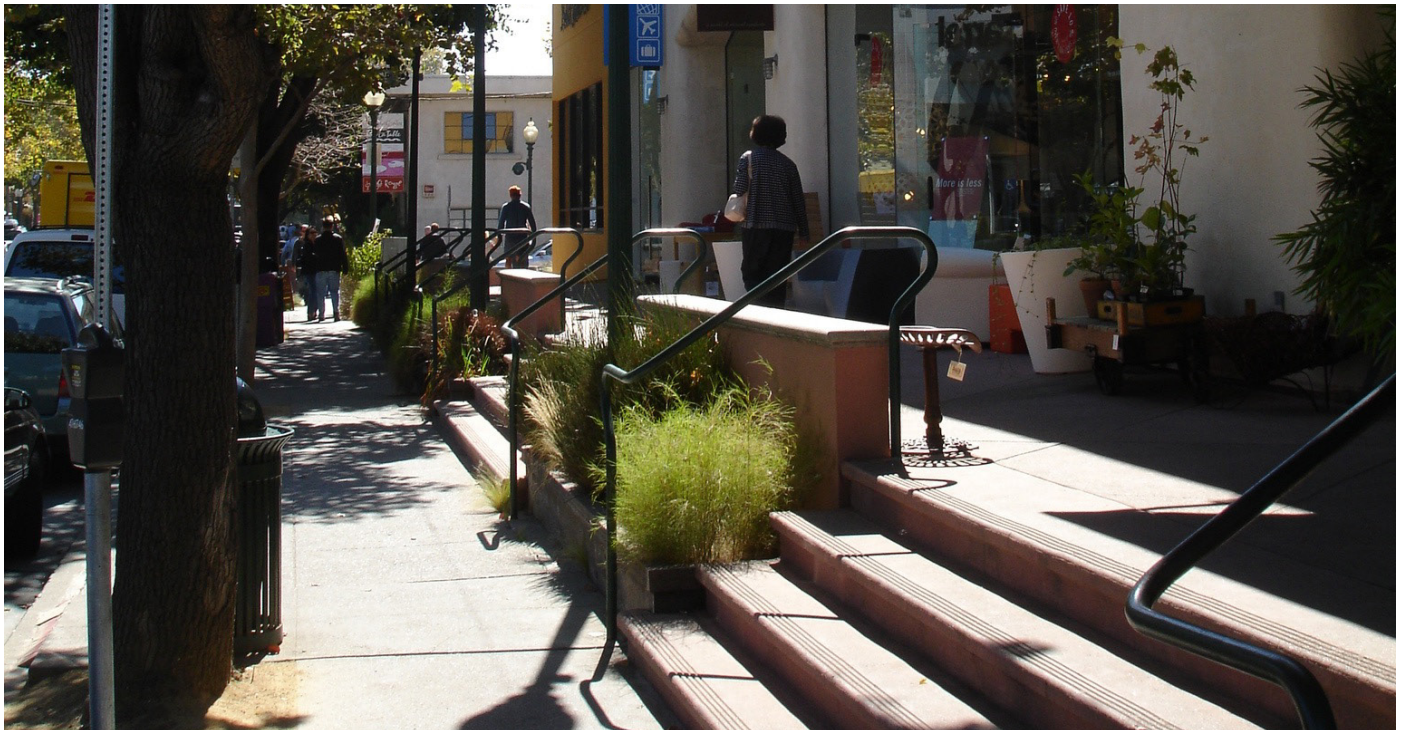


Example of a Shopfront

*General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.*



## Terrace



*Example of a Terrace*

See **Table 2-37 (Terrace)** in MMH Combining District for Standards

### Description

The main facade is at or near the front design site line with steps leading to an elevated area providing pedestrian circulation along the facade to connect multiple entrances. The type is used for retail, service, office uses, or housing to provide outdoor areas along the sidewalk and/or to accommodate an existing or intended grade change.



*Example of a Terrace*

*General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.*

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# Large Sites

CHAPTER

# 4

## In this chapter

<b>4.1</b> Design Sites for Multiple Buildings	54
<b>4.2</b> Designing Large Sites as Walkable Neighborhoods	56
<b>4.3</b> Civic Spaces	58
<b>4.4</b> Thoroughfares	64



## 4.1 Design Sites for Multiple Buildings

See § 20-28.100.C.5 (Multiple Building Site Design) in the MMH Combining District for Standards

### Summary

**Design Sites are a method for arranging multiple house-scale buildings on a development site while ensuring that all of the buildings front onto and activate a street, pedestrian way, or community open space.**

### Why Are Design Sites Important for Missing Middle Housing?

Missing Middle building types originated in walkable neighborhoods where buyers of pre-platted lots were free to build either a single-unit house or a multi-unit building on their lot—as described in Section 2.1 (What Are Building Types?). Today, developers often have a much larger site to work with, and they may not be interested in subdividing it to create a separate lot for each MMH building type. Design sites resolve this dilemma by ensuring appropriately sized and oriented sites for individual MMH buildings without requiring the overall site to be subdivided.

### How to Use Design Sites

**Design Sites** are used for projects with two or more primary buildings planned for a single development site. Each design site represents a lot that contains one primary building, as if the site were subdivided. Building setbacks and other development standards are applied to the design site as though it were a separate lot.

Each design site, and the building on it, must front the public realm—which for these purposes includes thoroughfares such as streets and paseos in addition to common open space such as a greenway

or pedestrian passage. Parking is located at the rear of or behind design sites.

On superblocks and parcels larger than the community's typical walkable block (typically over four acres or over 700 feet in length), using design sites provides flexibility for subdivision/parcelization, if desired. For more on the development of large sites, see Section 4.2 (Designing Large Sites as Walkable Neighborhoods).

### Exceptions for Deep, Narrow Sites

Existing deep, mid-block parcels with limited street frontage can benefit from using the design site approach, but such configurations make it difficult to extend a pedestrian-focused public realm into the site. Such sites may be exempted from the design site system if other criteria are met:

- Buildings are arranged around a common space, shared by vehicles and pedestrians.
- Over 50% of the ground floor space of each building is habitable.
- Each primary entrance includes a frontage type.
- The building(s) closest to the street orient toward, and take access from, the street.

## Q CLOSER LOOK

### Example Applications of Design Sites

The following general steps illustrate how to apply design sites to a large infill site where street connections through abutting parcels are not possible. Two examples are shown to illustrate different possible outcomes.

#### Step 1: Existing Project Site

The public realm is along the existing street (Front Street).

#### Step 2: Extend the Public Realm

With a new thoroughfare (Example A) or new community open space (Example B), the public realm is extended into the development site.

#### Step 3: Create Design Sites

Design sites are created to front the public realm along Front Street and the new thoroughfare (Example A) or community open space (Example B). Dimensions differ by intended building type (see Table 2-19—Building Types and Design Site Size).

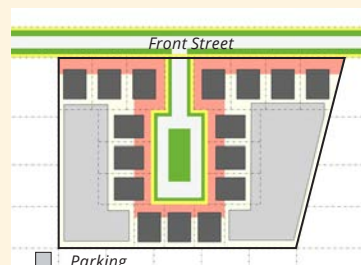
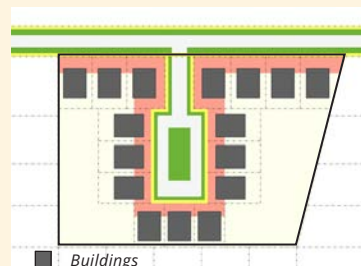
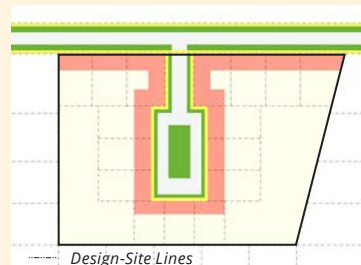
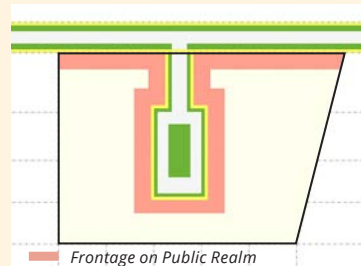
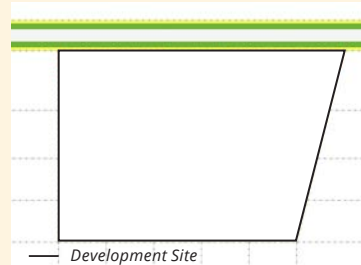
#### Step 4: Place Buildings

One primary building is placed on each design-site, fronting the public realm.

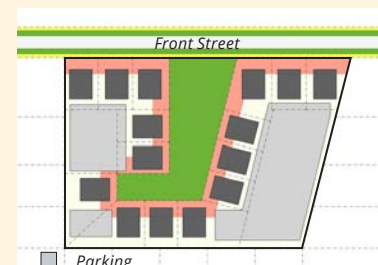
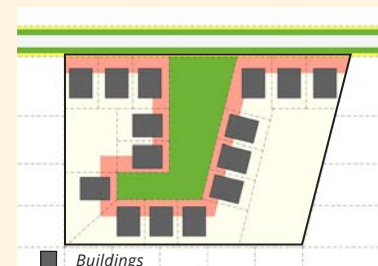
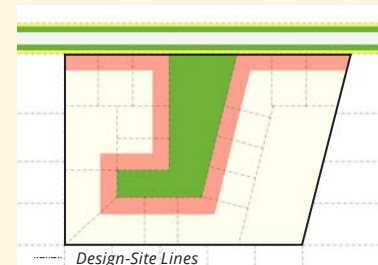
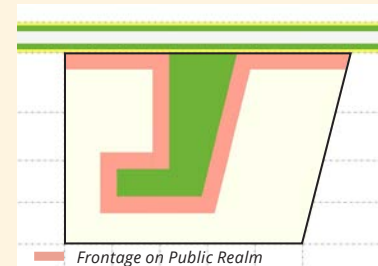
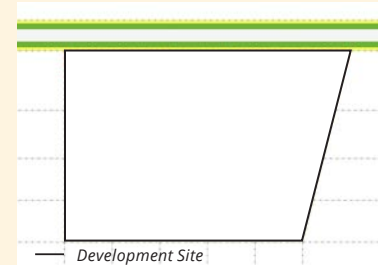
#### Step 5: Locate Parking

On-site parking is located on each design-site behind buildings, at the rear or grouped behind design-sites. Parking is accessed via driveways or alleys that connect from the existing or new thoroughfare.

#### Example A



#### Example B





## 4.2 Designing Large Sites as Walkable Neighborhoods

See § 20-28.100.F  
(Requirements for Sites  
of Four Acres or More)  
in MMH Combining  
District for Standards

### Summary

**The design of development sites influences how new buildings engage the public realm and fit within their context. New developments, whether infill or redevelopment, present prime opportunities to contribute to placemaking by locating buildings, common open spaces, and thoroughfares to visually shape the public realm and respect their surrounding context.**

### Guidance on Design for Walkable Neighborhoods

Building a walkable neighborhood involves ensuring that people have a variety of destinations close by, and that they have the ability to reach them via commonly accessible routes within the "public realm." Even solely residential projects can contribute to these principles by providing amenities such as common open space on site and by establishing a circulation network that facilitates residents' access to both on-site and off-site destinations.

In a walkable neighborhood, buildings are placed and accessed in relation to the adjacent public realm and neighboring parcels. Buildings open onto the public realm and collectively frame it as a sort of "outdoor room," within which people are free to move about or to linger for the sake of conversations, etc.

### Neighborhood Design Step by Step

#### Step 1: Analyze the Site and Context

The first step is to analyze the project site and its context to understand how the site will relate to existing routes and destinations. To the greatest extent possible, the on-site public realm should—

in combination with existing public realm elements such as public streets and paths—connect as directly as possible to off-site routes and destinations. These might include nearby main streets, commercial corridors, shopping centers, or corner stores, as well as non-commercial destinations such as schools, churches, parks, and community centers.

#### Step 2: Establish the Public Realm

Establish a public realm that forms a continuous network within the site and connects the site with its context, informed by the analysis in Step 1.

The public realm includes civic spaces as described below in Section 4.3 (Civic Spaces) and thoroughfares as described in Section 4.4 (Thoroughfares).

#### Step 3: Create Design Sites

Sites for individual buildings are arranged to front the public realm. This process is described above in Section 4.1 (Design Sites for Multiple Buildings).

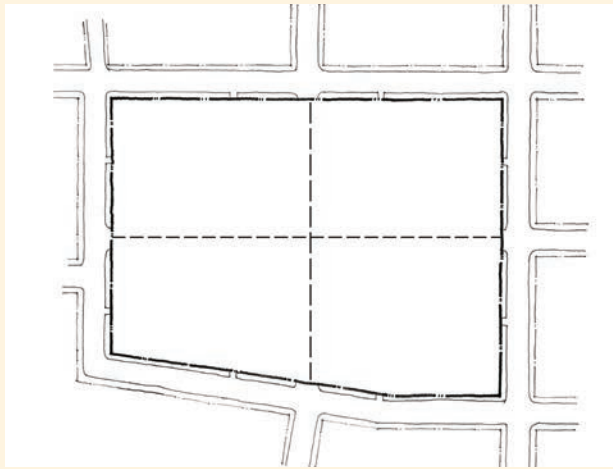
#### Step 4: Place Buildings

Once design sites are identified, building placement may be set according to the requirements of the MMH zone, as listed in Table 2-20 (Building Placement) in the MMH Combining District.

## Q CLOSER LOOK

### Example Application of Walkable Neighborhood Design Standards

The following four general steps are intended to summarize the process of applying the standards of the MMH Combining District. In this example, new thoroughfares and civic space create an interconnected network of new blocks within the project site. See [Section 4.1](#) for an introduction to design sites.



#### Step 1: Analyze Existing Project Site

*Analysis of the parcel or parcels within the scope of the development, as well as the surrounding context, will inform the best placement of public realm elements.*



#### Step 2: Identify Public Realm + Make Blocks

*The public realm is extended into the project site in the form of new streets, pedestrian paths, and civic space, generating new blocks for development.*



#### Step 3: Identify Design Sites

*Each block is divided into design sites for individual buildings. Each design site fronts and abuts the public realm.*



#### Step 4: Place Buildings

*One primary building is located on each design site. Buildings are oriented toward the public realm and are placed pursuant to MMH zone standards.*



## 4.3 Civic Spaces

See § 20-28.100.G (Civic Space Types) in the MMH Combining District for Standards

### Summary

**Open space for passive and/or active recreational opportunities contributes to a healthier environment and lifestyle for residents and community members. Civic space is provided based on the project/building size and physical context to further enhance the public realm or livability on site.**

### Why Are Civic Spaces Important?

On development sites large enough for extensions of the public realm into the project site, new civic spaces provide frontage opportunities and spaces for residents to gather. Residents' lives are enriched when they have a sense of being part of a community in addition to meeting their basic needs for housing, etc., and civic spaces within neighborhoods offer the chance for neighbors to encounter each other in a shared setting. Moreover, having generous shared open spaces for recreation reduces the need for each unit to provide large amounts of open space on its own. Examples of open space types are included later in this chapter.

### Guidance on Civic Spaces

Civic spaces are provided in larger developments (over about four acres) and are purposefully designed as a community-wide amenity with gathering and recreational space. Providing civic space as an amenity benefits the surrounding neighborhood, thereby helping to offset whatever change to the existing scale or residential intensity of the area the new development represents, in addition to enhancing the value of the new development itself.

The relationship between the space and its surroundings is crucial to its success. Buildings facing a civic space contribute to an active public realm through active ground floors and entries connected to the public realm through frontage types.

Public access to the civic space is also important, and a civic space is typically connected with a street on at least one side. At civic spaces, pedestrian crossings need to be prioritized over vehicular movement to ensure a walkable environment.

### Civic Space Types in Context

Different civic space types may be more or less appropriate in different locations. For example, the physical character of pocket parks includes more natural elements (i.e., more landscape); pocket parks are typically located in neighborhoods of a more residential character. The physical character of pocket plazas, by contrast, is very urban (i.e., more hardscape); pocket plazas are typically located in a mixed-use context characterized by connected or block-scale buildings.

Pocket Park/Plaza

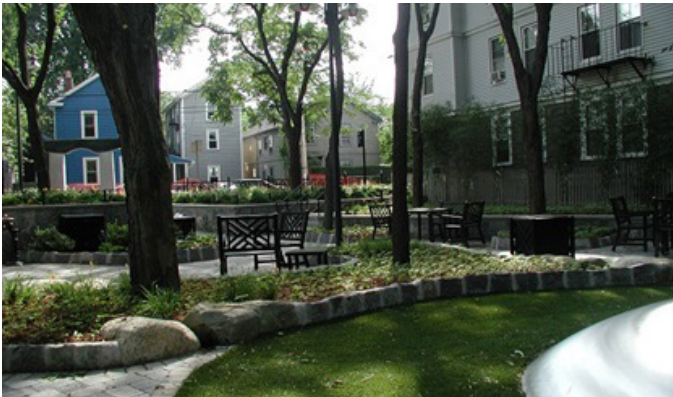


Example of a Pocket Plaza

See **Table 2-38 (Pocket Park/Plaza)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

Description

A small-scale space, serving the immediate neighborhood, available for informal activities and civic purposes, intended as intimate spaces for seating or dining.



Example of a Pocket Park



Example of a Pocket Park

General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.



## Playground



*Example of a Playground*

See **Table 2-39 (Playground)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

### Description

A small-scale space designed and equipped for the recreation of children. These spaces serve as quiet, safe places protected from the street and typically in locations where children do not have to cross any major streets. An open shelter, play structures, or interactive art and fountains may be included. Playgrounds may be included within all other civic space types.



*Example of a Playground*

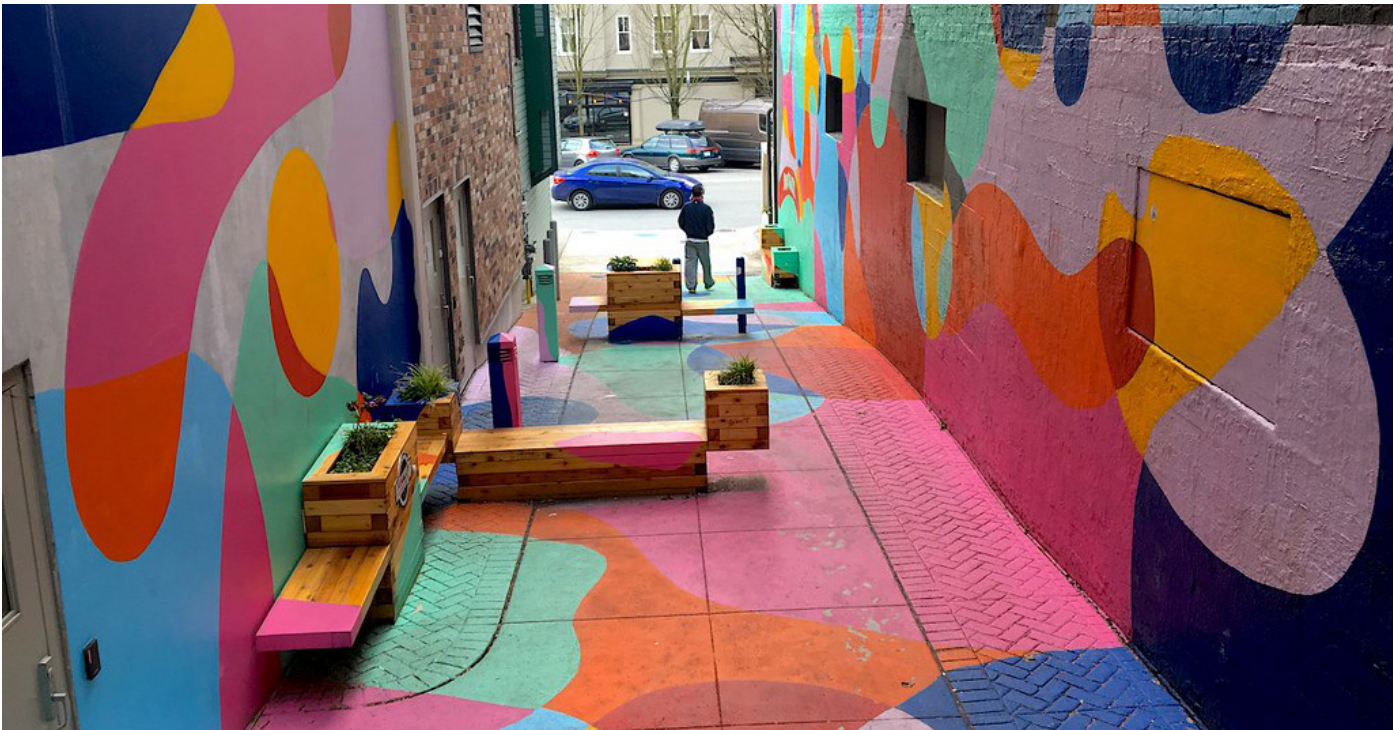


*Example of a Playground*

*General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.*



Passage



Example of a Passage

See **Table 2-40 (Passage)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

Description

A pedestrian pathway that extends from a public sidewalk or civic space. The pathway is lined by non-residential shopfronts and/or residential ground floors and pedestrian entrances as required by the MMH zone.



Example of a Passage



Example of a Passage

General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.



## Greenway



*Example of a Greenway*

See **Table 2-41 (Greenway)** in the MMH Combining District for Standards

### Description

A multiple-block-long linear space designed for community gathering and as a path of travel for nearby residents and employees, defined by a tree-lined street on at least one side and by the building frontage(s) across the street(s). A Greenway plays an important role as a green connector between destinations.



*Example of a Greenway*



*Example of a Greenway*

*General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.*

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## 4.4 Thoroughfares

See § 20-28.100.H (Thoroughfares) in MMH Combining District for Standards

### Summary

**The intent of the Thoroughfares is to provide connectivity for residents, offering them multiple options for making their way through the neighborhood and for reaching nearby destinations.**

### Why Are New Thoroughfares Important?

As discussed in Section 4.2, providing routes for residents to access both on-site and off-site destinations is important for delivering on the value of walkability. Expanding the pedestrian, bike, and vehicular circulation network through new thoroughfares is a time-honored way of achieving this goal.

On development sites large enough for extensions of the public realm into the project site, new streets and/or paseos also provide frontage opportunities that can integrate more buildings into the neighborhood than would otherwise be possible.

### How to Incorporate New Thoroughfares

Where possible, extending the surrounding street network into the site through new thoroughfares is the best way to enhance connectivity. The Paseo type is an alternative to a street for dividing superblocks while maintaining a pedestrian environment. Alleys provide vehicular access from existing or new streets to parking behind the buildings. This helps maintain a continuous public realm and reduces the need for driveways.

On low-speed streets, bicycles can be accommodated in the traffic lanes (i.e., "sharrow"). Bicycle lanes can be added to create a safer biking environment and a more comfortable public realm.

### New Blocks and Block Size

The creation of new blocks increases the number of routes for walking, biking, and driving. An interconnected network of streets, paseos, and/or civic spaces can be used to divide superblocks (i.e., parcels over 700 feet along any street or deeper than 500 feet from the street to the back of the parcel) into smaller, walkable blocks.

To determine the block size that works for the context, look to adjacent or nearby block sizes and continue that pattern. Generally, the appropriate block size(s) depends on the intended environment.

### Streets and Paseos in Context

In environments of primarily house-scale residential buildings, streets and paseos typically include more landscaping and less hardscape; in a mixed-use context characterized by connected or block-scale buildings, streets and paseos typically include more hardscape than landscape with an emphasis on street trees in tree wells/grates.

Minor Street



Example of a Minor Street

See **Table 2-42 (Thoroughfare Types)** in MMH Combining District for Standards

Description

A street that accommodates low-speed vehicular and bicycle traffic in two directions, as well as on-street parking. On each side of the street, there are sidewalks at least 5' wide and landscape strips where street trees may be planted.



Example of a Minor Street



Example of a Minor Street

General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.



## Main Street



*Example of a Main Street*

See **Table 2-42 (Thoroughfare Types)** in MMH Combining District for Standards

### Description

A street with wide sidewalks that accommodates low-speed vehicular and bicycle traffic, as well as on-street parking. Street trees are planted in tree wells, leaving more room for pedestrians. This street type is typically lined by non-residential ground floor spaces.



*Example of a Main Street*



*Example of a Main Street*

*General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.*



Paseo



Example of a Paseo

See **Table 2-42 (Thoroughfare Types)** in MMH Combining District for Standards

Description

A small-scale space designed primarily for foot and bicycle traffic, but which is also built to accommodate emergency vehicle access. Paseos typically include seating, landscaping, and paving materials that distinguish them from a typical street.



Example of a Paseo



Example of a Paseo

General Note: Photos on this page are illustrative, not regulatory.



