

# MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING (MMH)

## MMH Zoning Code Section and Guidance Document



**Design Review and Preservation Board**

**August 21, 2025**

# AGENDA

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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



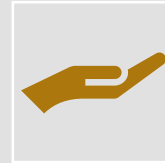
House-scale buildings with multiple units in walkable neighborhoods

# Key Characteristics

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**Small Units/Walkable neighborhoods**



**'Gentle Density'**



**Density less important than form**



**Creates neighborhoods**

# Key Characteristics

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**Minimal Parking**



**Public Realm**



**Shared Spaces**



**Livable Development**



# Local Examples of Missing Middle Housing







**Mews in London, built during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries**



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





# Why did MMH go missing?

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- **Focus on Single Family Homes or Downtown Mid/High Rise over last 75 years**
  - **Automobile-centered growth**
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**Why the  
renewed  
interest in  
MMH now?**



# MMH addresses Changing demographics

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**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

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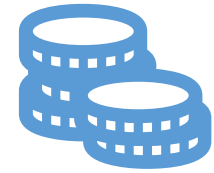
Walkable /  
Bikeable  
Neighborhoods



Sociability



Environmental  
Stewardship



Economic  
Benefits

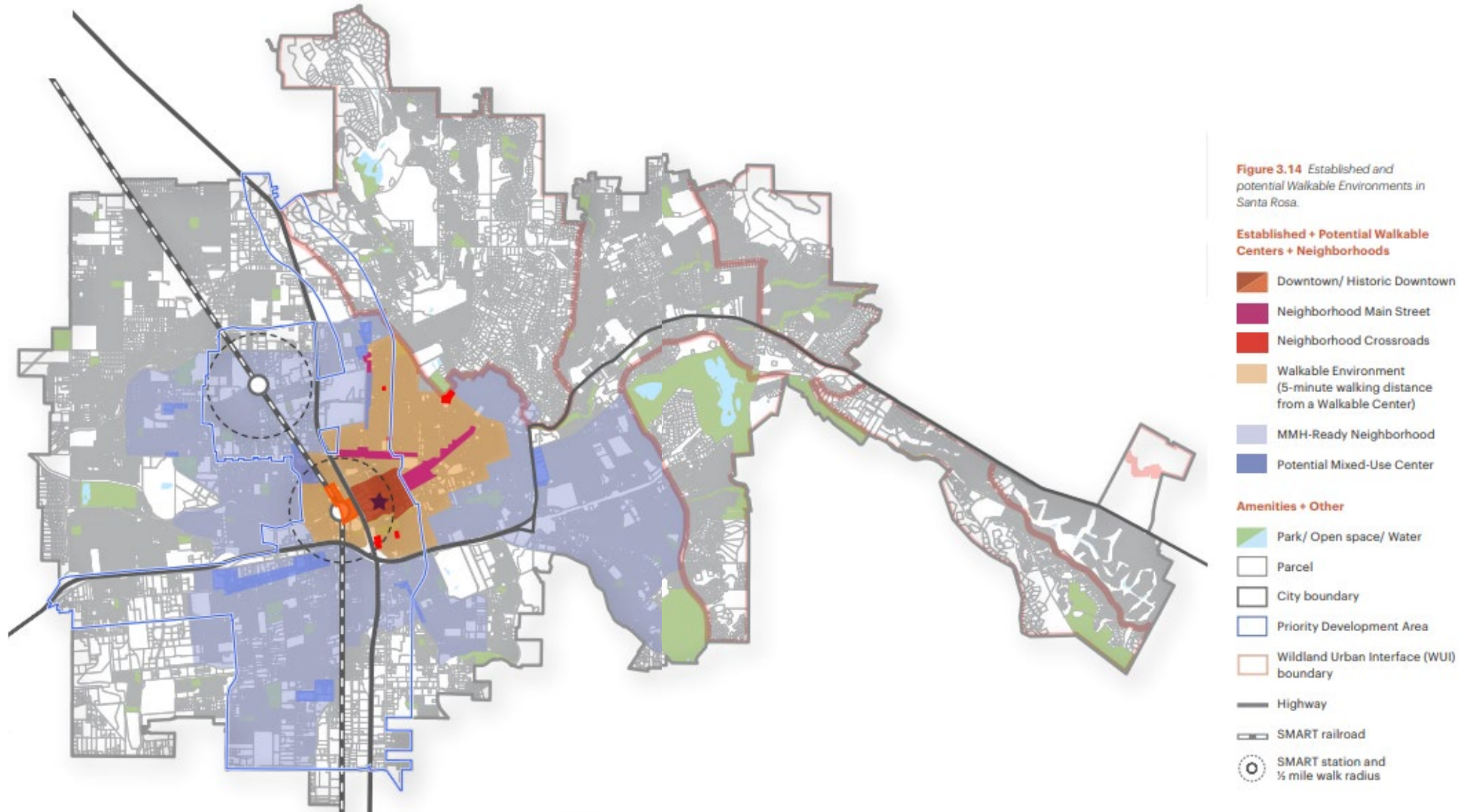
# Supporting Missing Middle Housing in Santa Rosa

**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












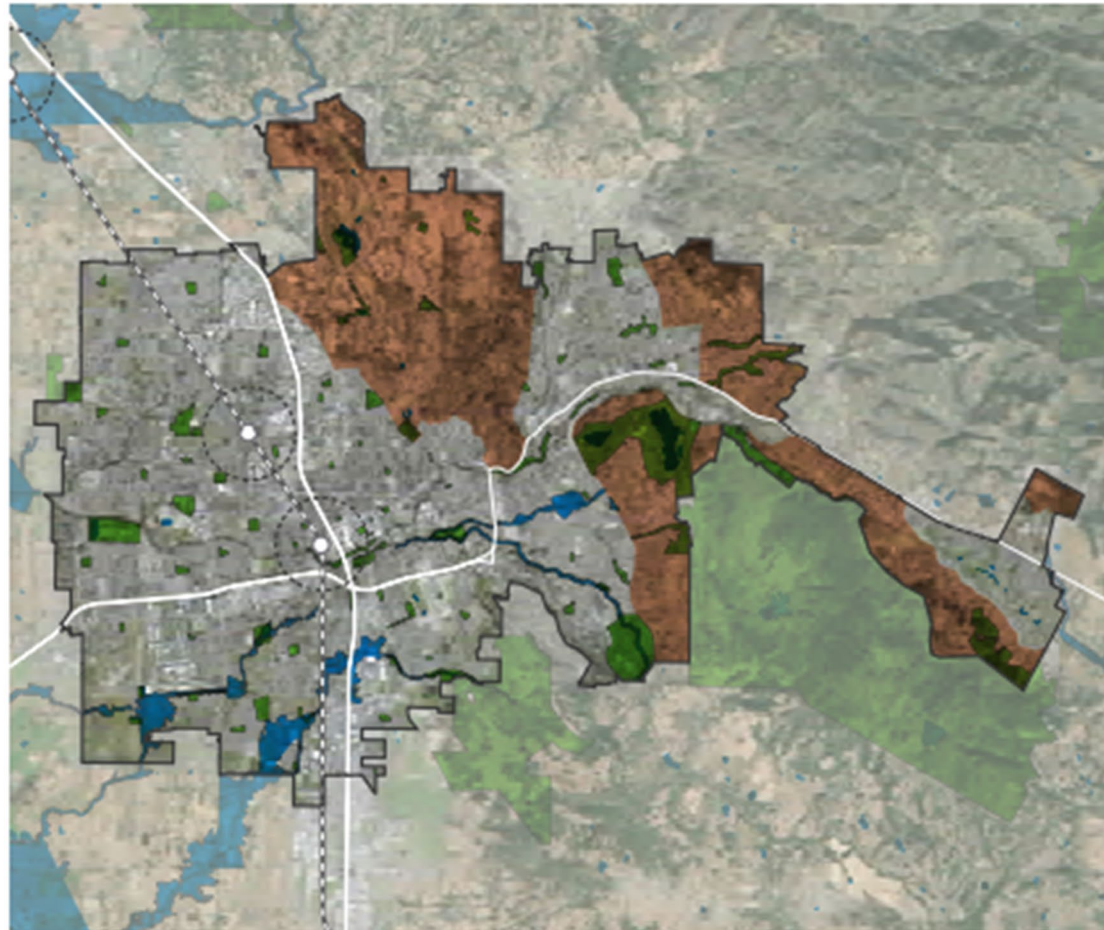
# Environmental Hazards and Open Space Lands

## Existing Context + Environmental Hazards

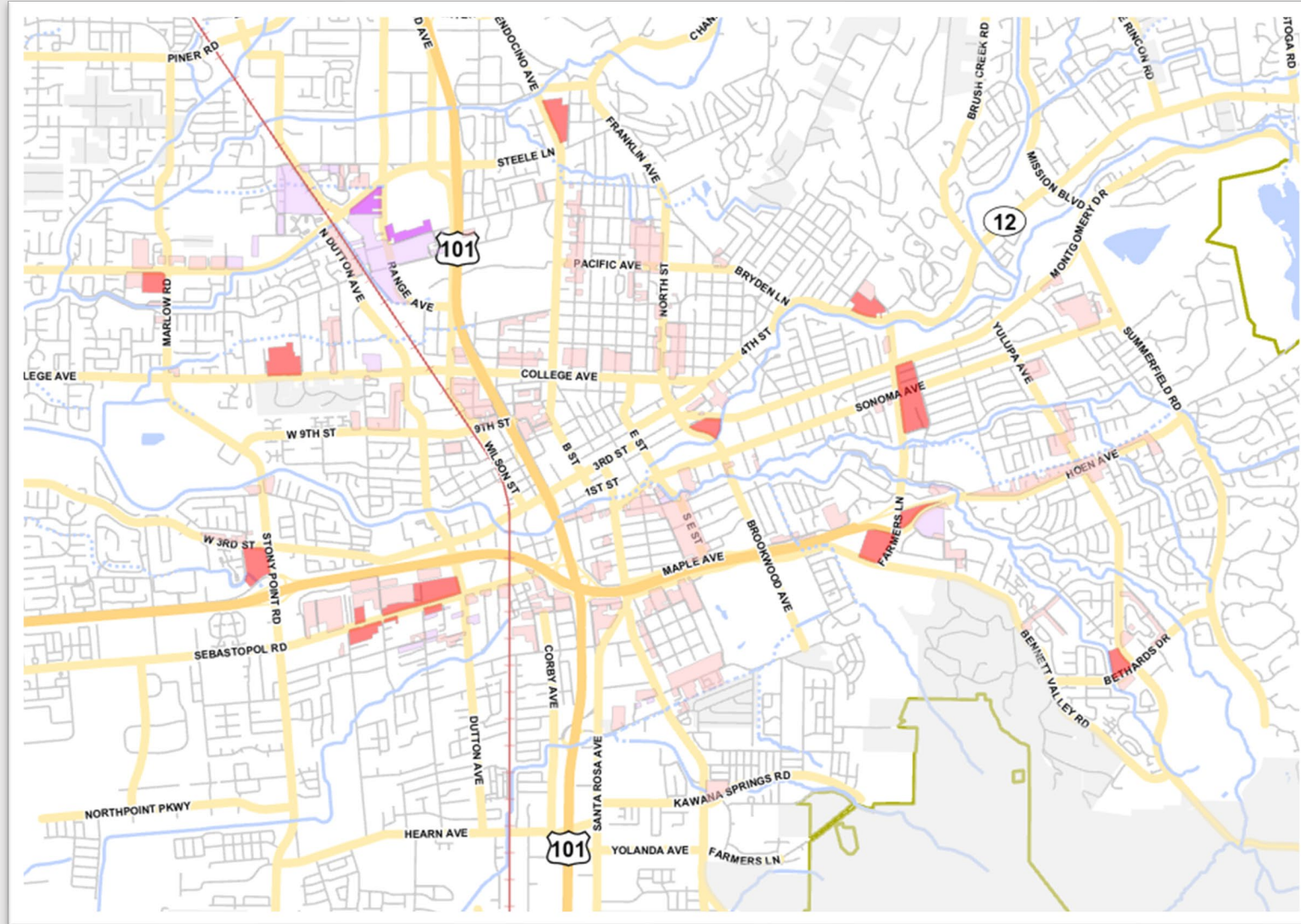
The map below shows existing urban areas within City limits. Shaped by its geography, parts of Santa Rosa are at increased risk from wildfire and flooding.

**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 1/2 mile walk radius

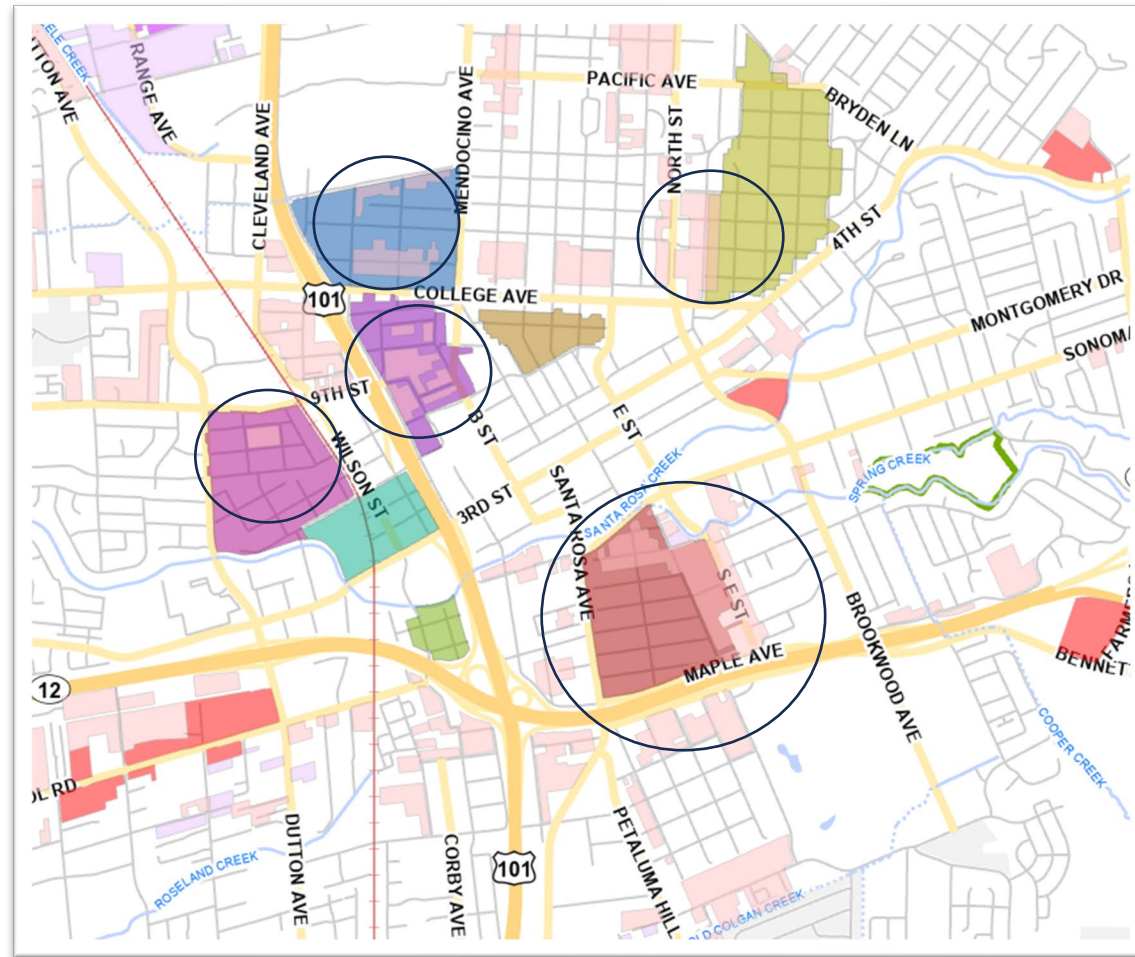


# Missing Middle Housing Overlay Areas





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



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

# Larger multi-unit buildings



**Multiplex Small**  
5-10 units



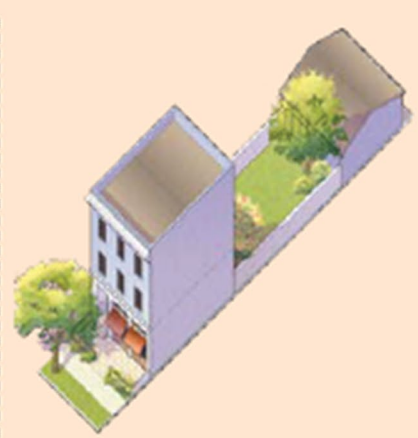
**Multiplex Large**  
6-18 units



**Courtyard Building**  
6-20 units





**Townhouse**  
1 unit



**Live/Work**  
1 unit

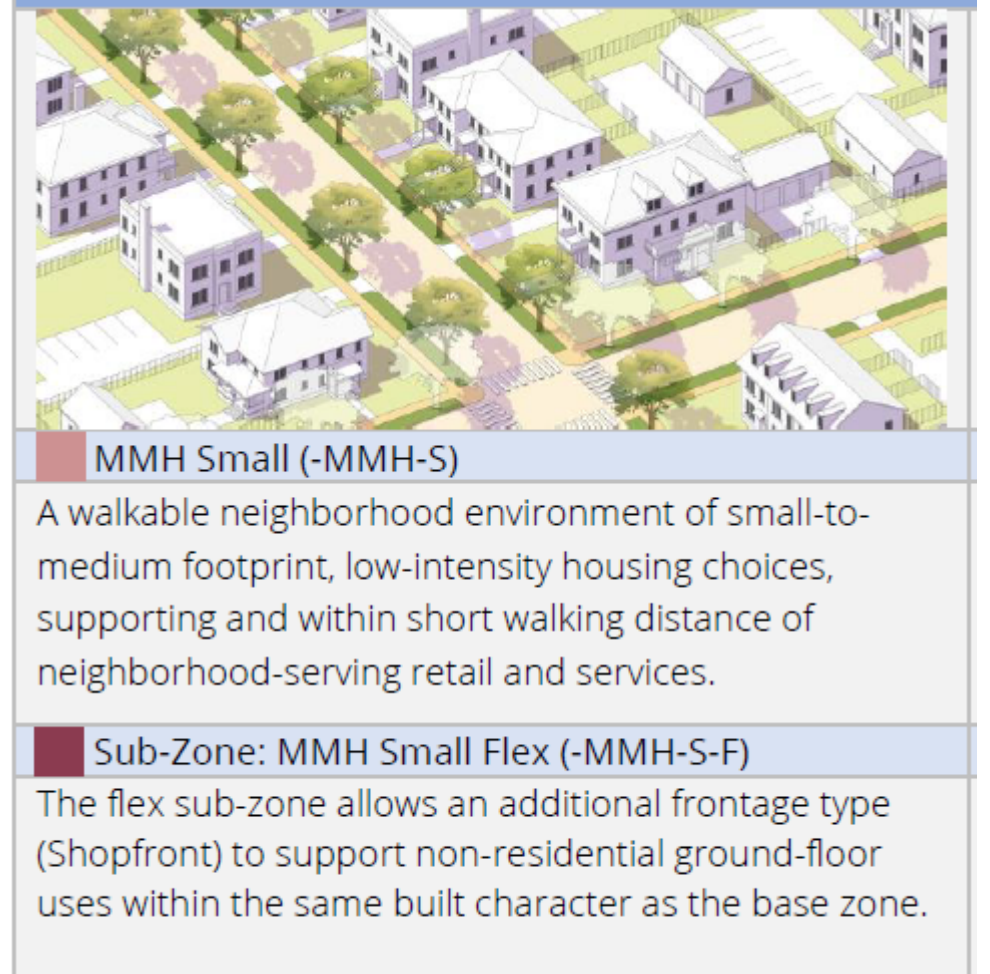
**TABLE 2-18—INTENT OF MMH ZONES**

	
<b>MMH Small (-MMH-S)</b>	<b>MMH Medium (-MMH-M)</b>
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.
<b>Sub-Zone: MMH Small Flex (-MMH-S-F)</b>	<b>Sub-Zone: MMH Medium Flex (-MMH-M-F)</b>
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



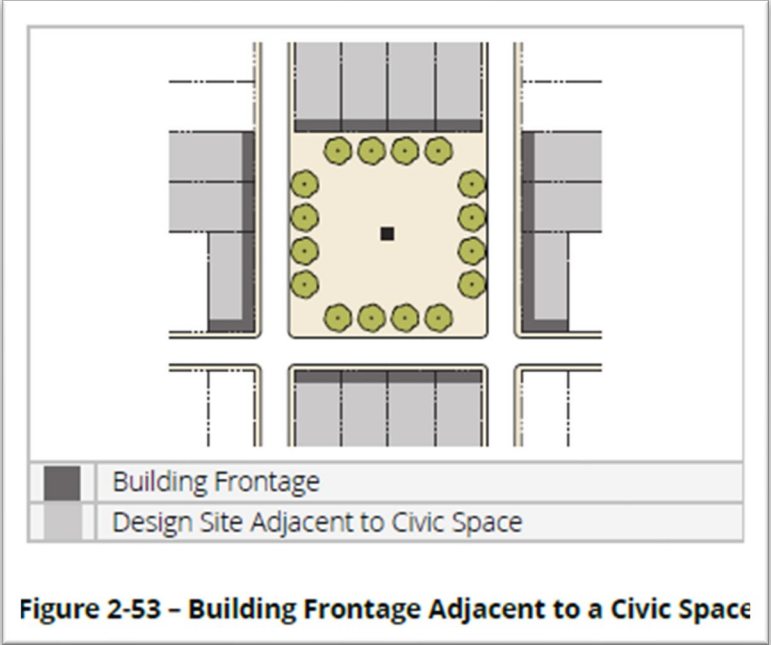
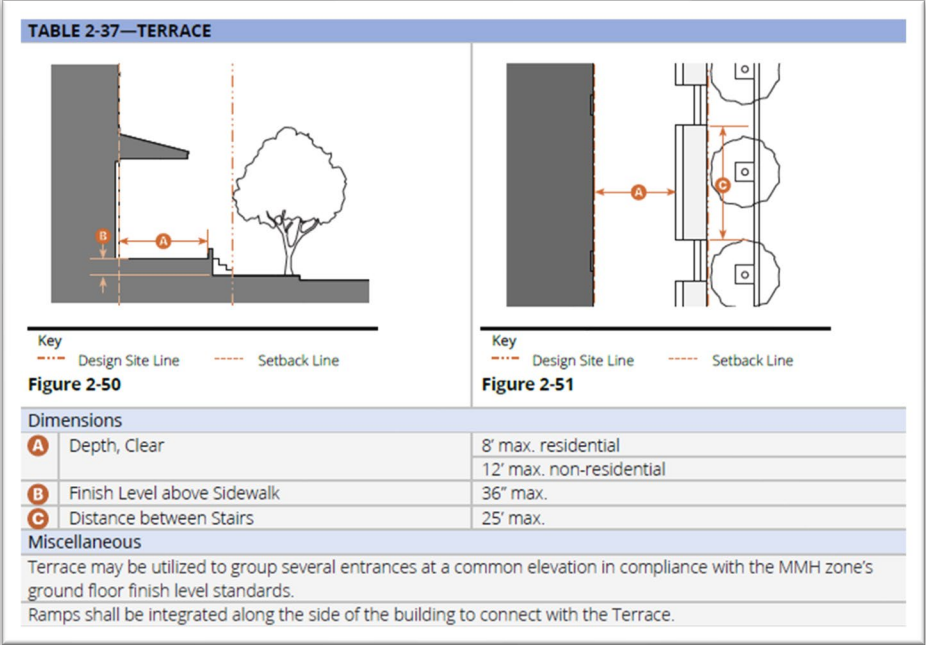
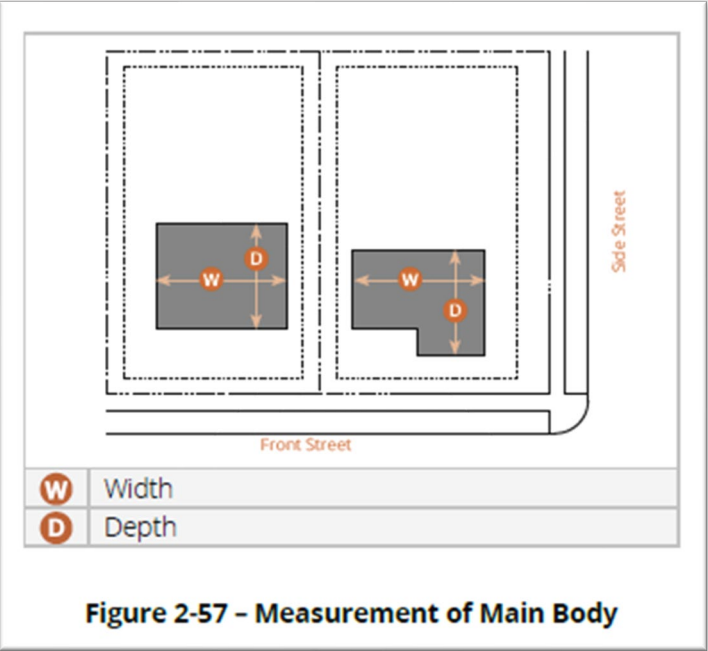
## MMH Medium (-MMH-M)

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



# **Key Development Standards**

Lot size / Design site

Building size / type

Massing and height

Frontage type

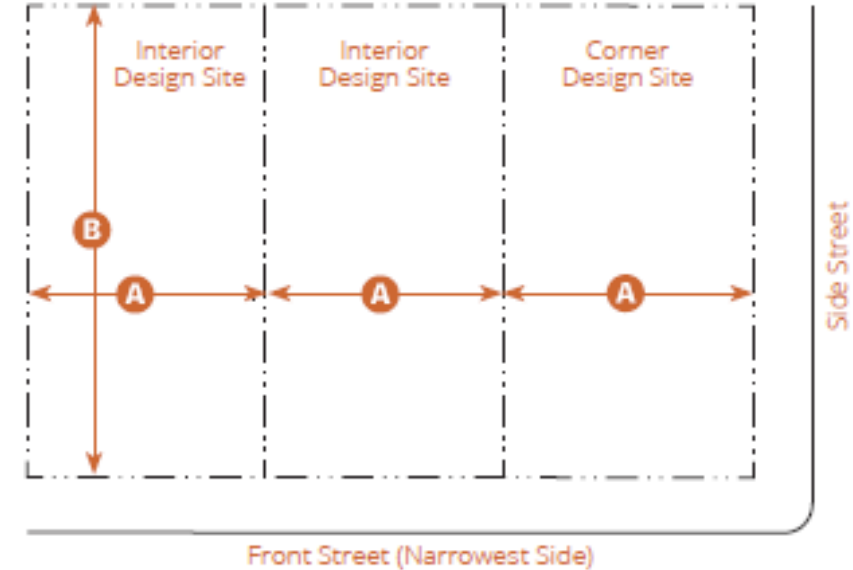
Vehicle access and parking

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 <b>A</b>	Depth <b>B</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.					

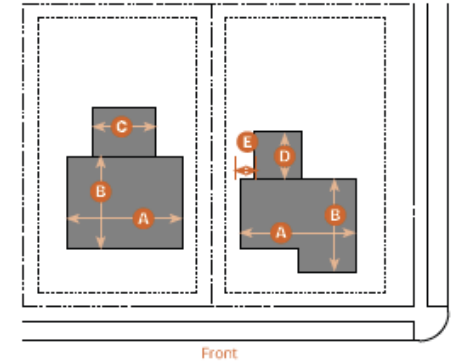
# Development Form

Standards for:

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

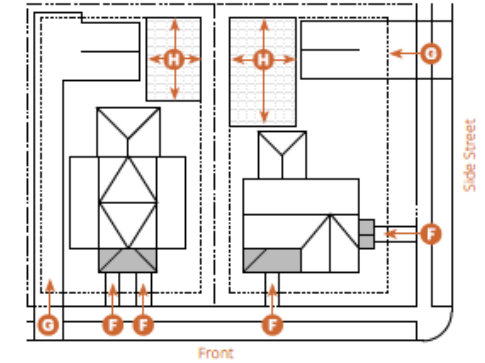
**TABLE 2-25—DUPLEX STACKED**

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

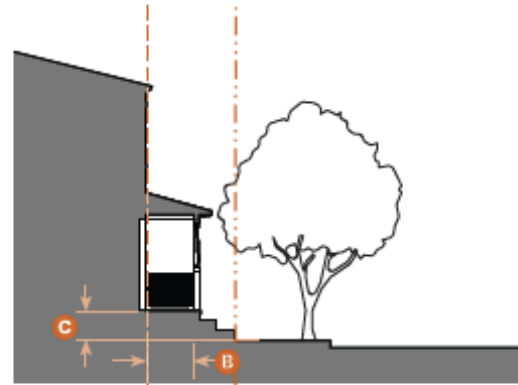
**Figure 2-27**

Building Size and Massing		Main Body	Wing(s)
Height (Stories)		2 max.	1 max.
Width		<b>A</b> 36' max.	<b>C</b> 15' max.
Depth		<b>B</b> 50' max.	<b>D</b> 20' max.
Separation between Wings		N/A	15' min.
Offset from Main Body		N/A	<b>E</b> 2' min.
Pedestrian Access			
<b>F</b>	Primary Entrance Location	Front Street or Side Street	
Each unit shall have an individual entrance.			
Vehicular Access and Parking			
<b>G</b>	Driveway and parking location shall comply with standards in Table 2-23 (Vehicular and Bicycle Parking).		
Common Open Space			
<b>H</b>	Width	15' min.	
<b>H</b>	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

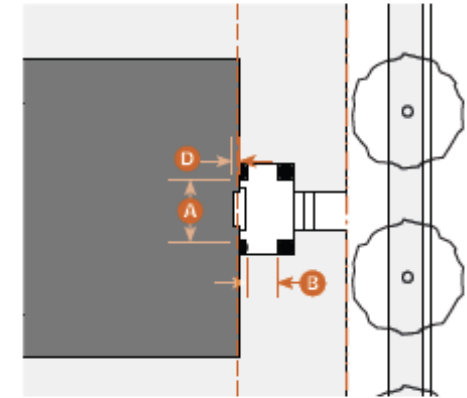
- Entrances facing the street must include frontage types such as stoops, projecting or engaged porches, dooryards, and forecourts.
- Terraces and shopfronts are permitted for non-residential uses.

TABLE 2-34—STOOP



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

Figure 2-44



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

Figure 2-45

## Dimensions

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

## Miscellaneous

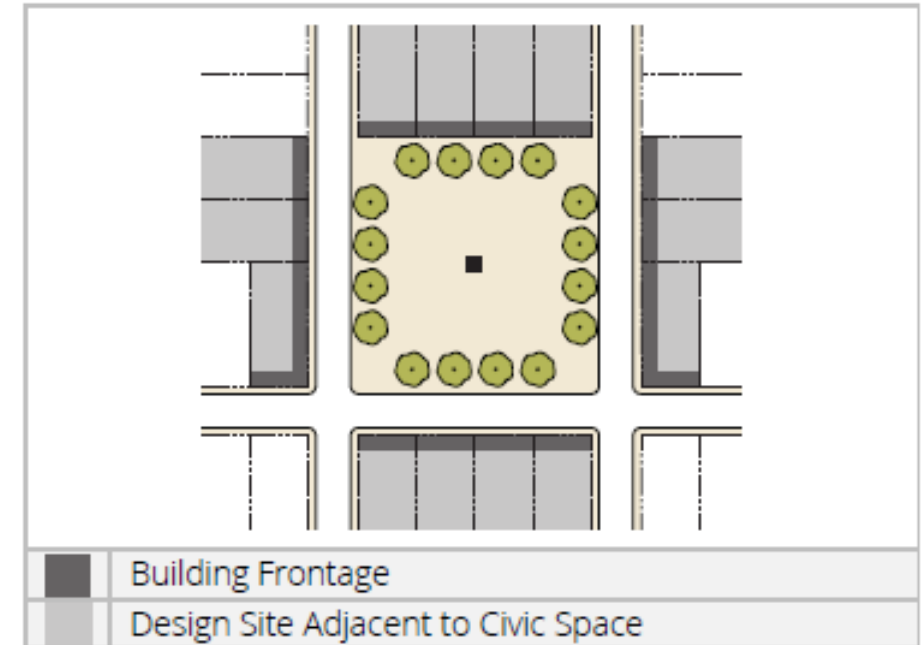
Each Stoop shall provide access to only one ground floor entrance.

Gates are not allowed.



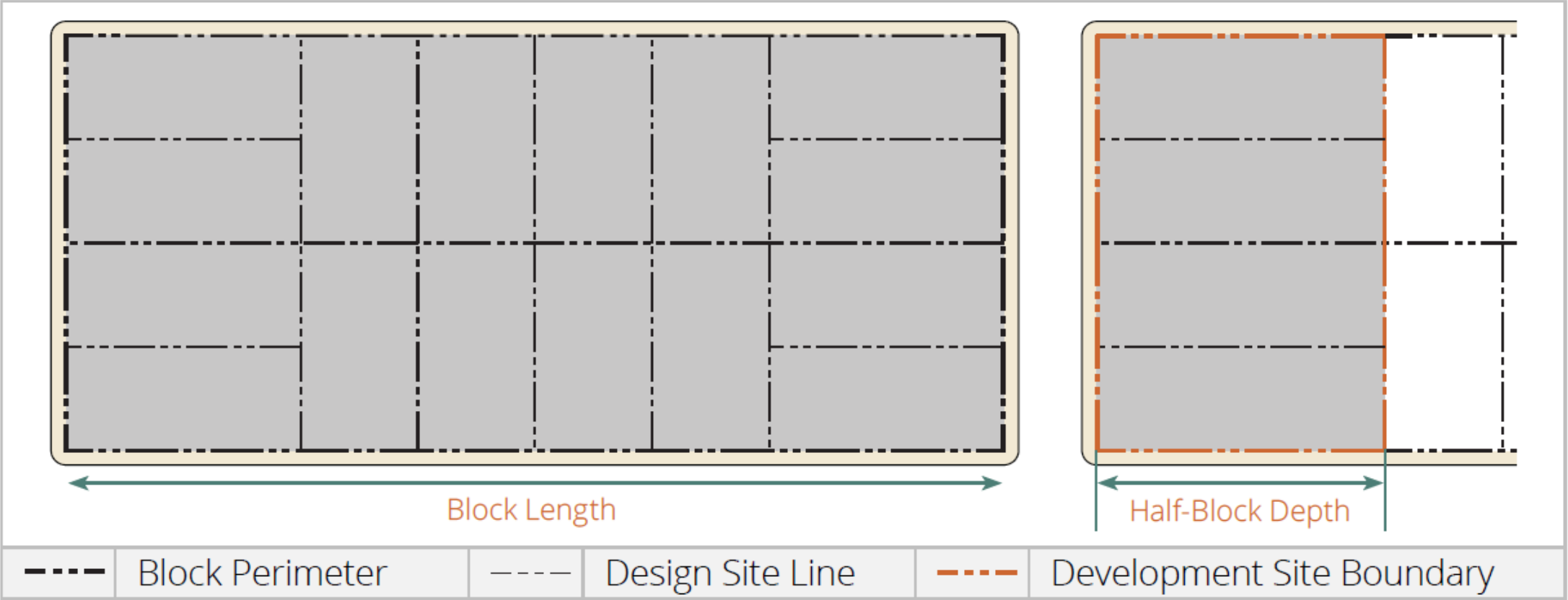
# Civic Spaces

- 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 <sup>1</sup>	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 <sup>2</sup>			
Travel Lanes	10' min./max. <sup>3</sup>		Min. 10' clear shared use path with 5' min. paving and/or landscaping on each side (total 20' min.)
Bicycle Lanes (Optional)	5' min. <sup>4</sup>		
Parking Lanes	8' min. <sup>4</sup>		
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.
<sup>1</sup> 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.			
<sup>2</sup> Clear width of pavement shall comply with applicable fire department regulations where thoroughfare is to be used for emergency vehicle access.			
<sup>3</sup> Travel lane width may increase to 12' where adjacent to curb, in compliance with City standards.			
<sup>4</sup> 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

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**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

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# Next Steps

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- Meetings on MMH Code and MMH Guidance Document scheduled for Planning Commission and Council in September/October 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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