Residential Infill Options in R2.5-R20 Zones

Summary of middle housing and other housing type options

Shaping the future of our neighborhoods together

Portland's neighborhoods have always been places of change. So it's important to work together as a community to make sure that change is for the better and benefits all of us.

In 2020 and 2022, City Council adopted a series of zoning code changes that enable more types of housing to be created in single dwelling neighborhoods. These changes will help increase the diversity of unit sizes and prices to meet the growing demand and changing demographics of the city. The changes also include new limits on building scale, as well as provisions to increase accessibility in our housing stock.

This document provides a summary of the key changes from the Residential Infill Projects and notes some important limitations and considerations. This summary does not reflect all the adopted changes and requirements. For more detail, please review the zoning code, and consult with the Bureau of Development Services.

Expanding the kinds of housing choices that are available in our residential neighborhoods is an important step to give more people the opportunity to live close to schools, parks, and jobs at a variety of price points. But it's only one part of a larger, coordinated effort to address the city's housing crisis.

Bureau of Development Services FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION

THE BUREAU OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

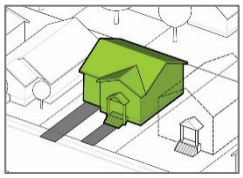
August 2022

www.portland.gov/bds/zoning-land-use/residential-infill-project

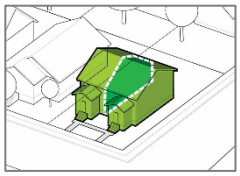
MORE HOUSING OPTIONS

In addition to a house, the following other housing types may be eligible on a particular property in the R2.5, R5, R7, R10 and R20 zones. Note: combinations of different types are not allowed (e.g. a triplex with a house, two duplexes instead of a fourplex, or an ADU as part of a cottage cluster).

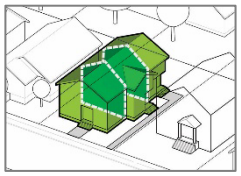
1 to 6 units in a single building



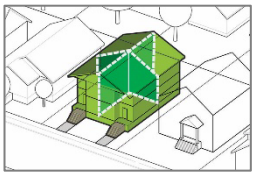
House



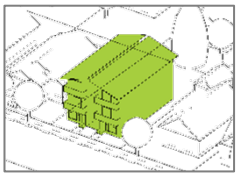
Duplex*



Triplex*



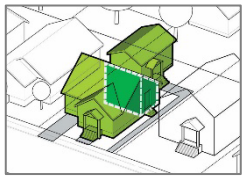
Fourplex*



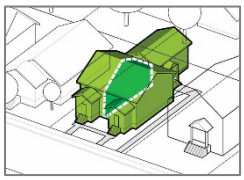
Affordable four*-, five- or sixplex

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) options

House + 1 ADU
(attached or detached)

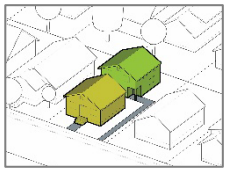


House + 2 ADUs
(only 1 ADU may be attached to the house. Both ADUs may be detached)

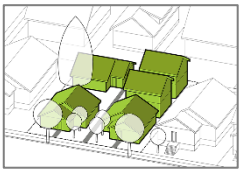


Duplex + 1 ADU
(the ADU must be detached from duplex. Duplex may not be a detached duplex)

Detached unit options

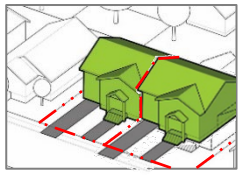


Detached Duplex*
(only allowed on site with existing house)

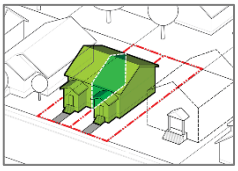


Cottage Cluster*
(3-16 detached units)
Not allowed in R20

Fee-simple ownership options



Attached Houses
(on regular sized lots)



Attached Houses
(on higher density land division lots)

*MHLD

Middle Housing Land Division
(for options with "*")

MIDDLE HOUSING LAND DIVISIONS

An alternative to rental or condo units.

Middle Housing Land Divisions provide an opportunity to divide certain middle housing types (duplex, detached duplex, triplex, fourplex, or cottage cluster) so that each unit is on its own lot and available for separate ownership.

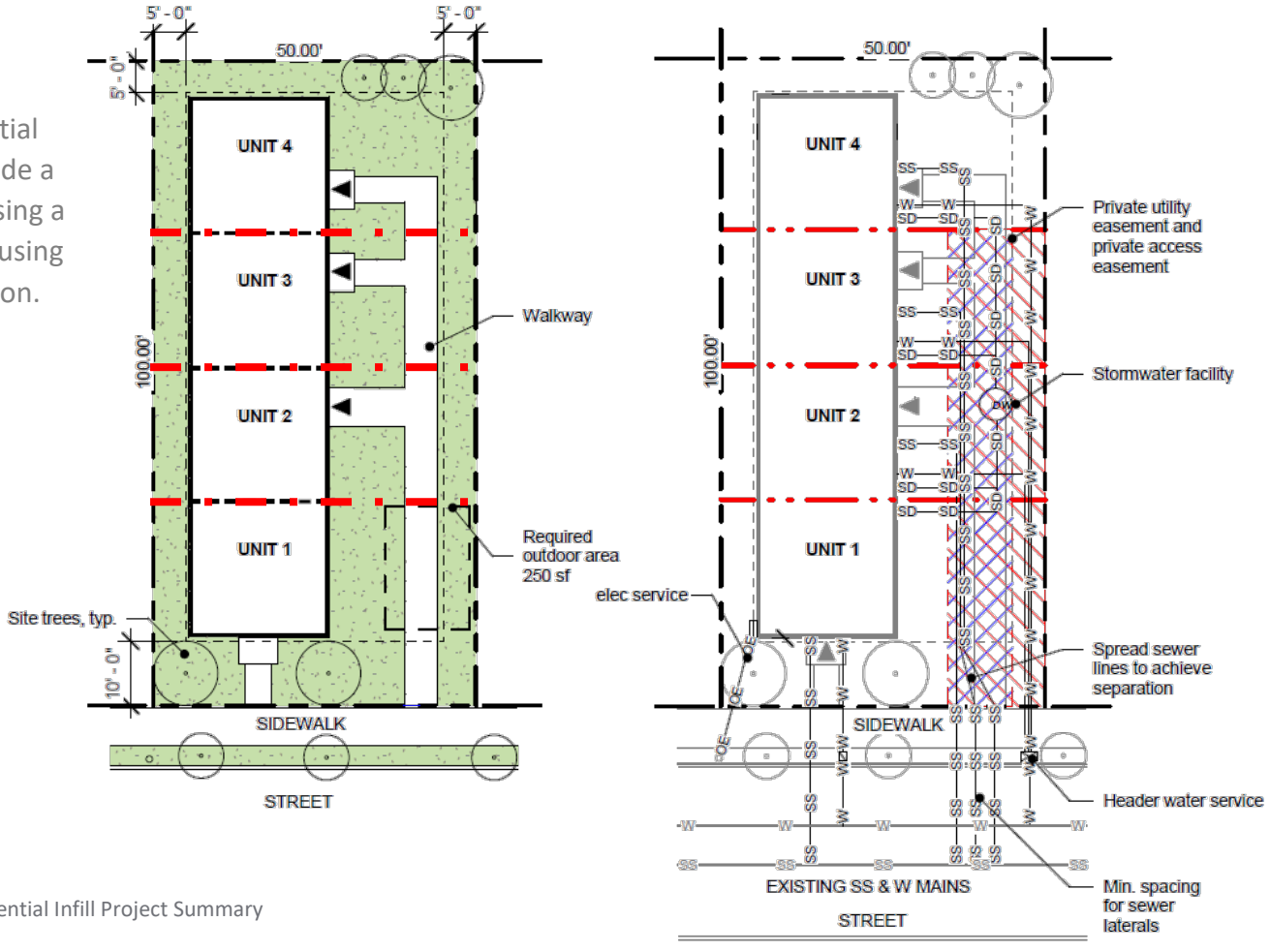
More limited approval standards

a. The development is an allowable middle housing type. See options with a "*" on page 2.
b. The development meets applicable development standards based on the original site.
c. The building is built to residential code (townhouse code for attached units).
d. Only one unit is allowed on each lot (no ADUs are allowed).
e. There are no minimum lot size or street frontage requirements for the new middle housing lots (though these standards do apply to the original site).
f. Utilities for sewer and water must be separate to each dwelling unit. Stormwater facilities may be shared subject to meeting plumbing code and the stormwater management manual.
g. Easements or tracts will be required for access, utilities, shared amenities, and shared building elements.

Different process from other Land Divisions

a. Must have an existing or proposed middle housing development. Cannot create lots for future development.
b. Building permit should be at an "approvable" stage before starting MHLD review.
c. 63-day maximum land division review process cannot be extended if issues arise.
d. Construction can occur during the review.
e. Final plat approval contingent on completion of certain building elements (e.g. framing and utilities) to ensure final lot lines are correctly sited.

One potential way to divide a fourplex using a Middle Housing Land Division.



COTTAGE CLUSTERS AND DETACHED DUPLEXES

Cluster sites

A cottage cluster is between 3 and 16 units. Cottage clusters are only allowed in the R10, R7, R5, R2.5 and RM1 zones, and cannot be on sites larger than an acre (or 40,000 sq ft in the RM zone). Like other middle housing options, they are not allowed in the 'z' overlay, or on streets that have not been accepted for maintenance. Cluster sites are exempt from regular FAR and building coverage standards, but other limitations apply.

Cottages

Cottages are separated units that are connected by a system of pedestrian paths and organized around a larger a common outdoor area. While there is a minimum number of units required on larger sites, the maximum number (up to 16) is determined by the applicant and what can reasonably fit on the site, considering unit sizes, outdoor area, setbacks, unit separation requirements and any proposed parking.

Max footprint size	Max floor area	Max height	Unit separation	Unit orientation	Visitability
900 sq ft	1,400 sq ft on average	25 feet	At least 6 feet	- To the street. For units within 25 feet of the street - To the common area. For at least 50% of the rest of the units	At least 33% of units

Common outdoor area

In lieu of larger individual private yards, one or more common outdoor areas are provided. A total of 200 sq ft per unit of common area is required (150 sq ft when cottages are at least 10 feet apart). Each outdoor area must be at least 450 sq ft. Common outdoor area may be located in the side or rear setbacks, but not the front.

Existing homes

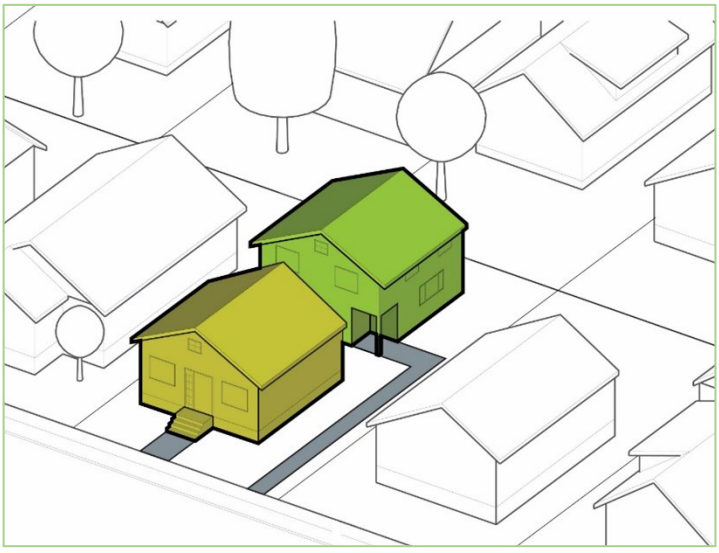
Cottage clusters can work for sites with an existing house on a larger yard. Existing homes are allowed to be non-conforming with regard to footprint, height, and size limitations. Note that ADU's (including pre-existing ones) cannot be part of a cottage cluster. However, detached ADUs may be able to convert to a cottage.

Detached Duplexes

Another option for sites with an existing house is a detached duplex. These are like a detached ADU, except that they can be larger (up to the balance of available floor area). They are also eligible for a middle housing land division so that they can be sold independently from the original house.

Some limitations

Only on sites with an existing house (5+ years old)
ADUs are not allowed
New unit height limit is 25 feet
Not allowed in 'z' overlay



OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Visitability

For 3 or more units, some portion of the units must be visitable. A visitable unit must have a no step entry, wider doorways, with a bathroom and living area on the ground floor.

Parking

There are no minimum parking requirements for residential uses in the single-dwelling zones. When parking is proposed, there are certain requirements and limitations to where it can be located in relation to the site. For lots that abut an alley, for example, parking access must be from the alley. In other cases, parking is not allowed between a building and the street. On narrow building facades, street facing attached garages may not be permissible.

Building Size (FAR)

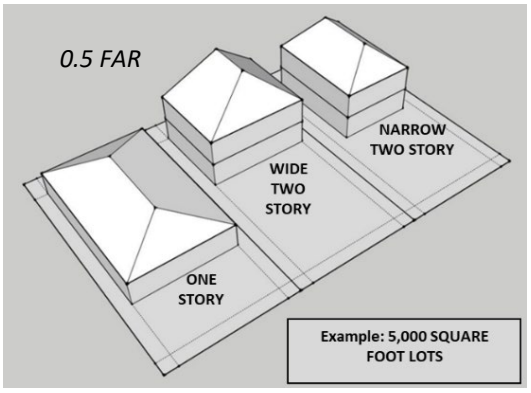
The total amount of floor area (the areas of a building measured on all floors excluding a basement) is limited by a ratio of the lot size. This is called a "Floor Area Ratio" or FAR. For example, an FAR of 0.5 for a 5,000 square foot lot results in an allowed floor area of 2,500 square feet (0.5X5,000=2,500). Other types of building size limits also apply such as setback, building coverage and height limits. FAR limits are not applicable to cottage clusters, but other floor area and building size requirements apply.

FAR Bonuses

Additional FAR (+0.1) may be available for projects that add units to a site with an existing house, such as an ADU, or that provide at least one regulated affordable unit.

# of Units	Housing Type	Floor area ratio (FAR) by Zone				
		R20*	R10*	R7	R5	R2.5
1	House *or* Attached House	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.7
2	Duplex *or* House + ADU	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.8
3	Triplex *or* Duplex + ADU *or* House + 2 ADUs	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.9
4	Fourplex	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8	1.0
4-6	Affordable four-, five-, *or* six-plex	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2
3-16	Cottage Cluster	n/a	No limit	No limit	No limit	No limit

* FAR limits only apply to lots less than 10,000 sq ft in the R10 and R20 zones



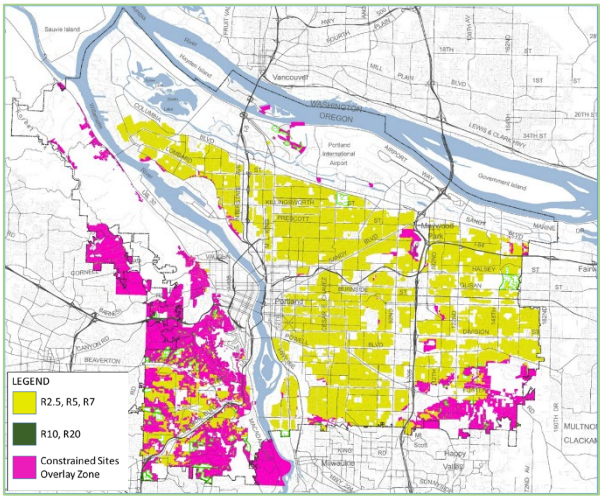
SOME HOUSING OPTION LIMITATIONS

Constrained Sites 'z' Overlay Zone

Some single dwelling zoned lots have a 'z' overlay. This applies in areas with natural resources, natural land hazards such as floodplain, landslide or wildfire risk. Small areas around the Columbia River may also be constrained by airport noise or have an industrial designation.

You can check your zoning on the Portland Zoning Map: https://www.portlandmaps.com/bps/zoning/#/map/

Lots with this overlay are limited to either a house, a house with one ADU, or a duplex. Detached duplexes are not allowed in the 'z' overlay. Attached houses are an allowed housing type, but new lots created for attached houses will need to meet standard density lot size standards.



Maintained Streets

Another potential housing option limitation is lots that lack frontage on a street that has been accepted for maintenance by the City or State. Private streets that connect to maintained streets may be eligible for more housing types, but those streets could be subject to private agreements between neighbors using that street.

Lots that lack such street frontage are limited to either a house, a house with one ADU, or a duplex. Unlike the 'z' overlay, detached duplexes are allowed in these cases. Street maintenance information is available here: www.portland.gov/transportation/development/maintenance-rip

Minimum Lot Size

While a house, house with one ADU, attached house, or duplex including detached duplex is allowed on most legally platted lots, there are minimum lot sizes that apply to other housing types and lots. A lot of record is one created prior to July 26, 1979 through a recorded deed or other legal instrument of conveyance. A lot remnant is a platted lot that has been reduced in size usually through a property line adjustment. An adjusted lot is a platted lot that has been increased in size typically through a property line adjustment.

Minimum Lot sizes by Housing Type and Zone (See also 33.110.202)					
Housing Type	**R20**	**R10**	**R7**	**R5**	**R2.5**
House, house w/1 ADU, attached house, duplex or detached duplex on some legally platted or adjusted lots	No minimum				
Attached house w/1 ADU on some legally platted or adjusted lots	10,000 sq ft	5,000 sq ft	3,500 sq ft	2,500 sq ft	1,500 sq ft
House, house w/1 ADU, attached house, attached house w/1 ADU duplex or detached duplex on lot of record or lot remnant	12,000 sq ft	6,000 sq ft	4,200 sq ft	3,000 sq ft	1,500 sq ft
House w/2 ADUs, attached house w/2 ADUs duplex w/1 ADU, triplex, fourplex, Affordable 4-, 5- or 6-plex on any lot or lot of record					
Cottage Cluster	n/a	7,000 sq ft	7,000 sq ft	5,000 sq ft	5,000 sq ft