Better Housing by Design

AN UPDATE TO PORTLAND'S MULTI-DWELLING ZONING CODE

Concept Report
July 2017

Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
Innovation. Collaboration. Practical Solutions.
City of Portland, Oregon
Ted Wheeler, Mayor • Susan Anderson, Director

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Acknowledgments

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Comments

The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability will accept comments on the Better Housing by Design Concept Report until 5 p.m. on Monday, August 7, 2017. You may submit your comment in the following ways:

- Email: betterhousing@portlandoregon.gov
- U.S. Mail: City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, Attn: Better Housing by Design Project, 1900 SW 4th Avenue, Suite 7100, Portland, OR 97201

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Traducción o interpretación	Chuyển Ngữ hoặc Phiên Dịch	翻译或传译	Письменный или устный перевод	Traducere sau Interpretare
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Introduction

Better Housing by Design: An Update to Portland's Multi-Dwelling Zoning Code is being led by the City of Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS). This project is revising Zoning Code development standards in Portland's multi-dwelling zones (R3, R2, R1, and RH) outside the Central City. These medium- to high-density residential zones play a key role in providing new housing to meet the needs of a growing Portland. The many types of housing built in these zones include apartment and condominium buildings, fourplexes, rowhouses and houses.

The project's objective is to revise City regulations to better implement Comprehensive Plan policies that call for:

- Housing opportunities in and around centers and corridors.
- Housing diversity, including affordable and accessible housing.
- Design that supports residents' health and active living.
- Pedestrian-oriented street environments.
- Safe and convenient street and pedestrian connections.
- Design that respects neighborhood context and the distinct characteristics of different parts of Portland.
- Nature and green infrastructure that are integrated into the urban environment.
- Low-impact development that helps limit climate change and urban heat island effects.

This project includes a focus on Eastern Portland in order to foster more positive development outcomes that reflect the area's distinct characteristics and needs. Eastern Portland, largely located east of 82nd Avenue, includes large amounts of multi-dwelling zoning, often in areas that lack good street connections to local destinations and transit. Project staff are coordinating with the Portland Bureau of Transportation's (PBOT) Connected Centers Street Plan. PBOT's project is developing new approaches for creating street and pedestrian connections, with an initial focus on the Jade District and Rosewood centers in Eastern Portland.

What is the purpose of this report?

The Better Housing by Design Concept Report presents ideas (concepts) that will guide the development of detailed Zoning Code regulations. These concepts describe outcomes and approaches the regulations should be crafted to achieve. Project staff developed the concepts based on Comprehensive Plan policies, direction from past planning projects, and community input from a series of Stakeholder Working Group meetings and other public involvement activities (see Public Involvement, page 26).

Additional analysis and refinement of the concepts will occur as staff work on developing detailed code language for the Code Amendments Discussion Draft, to be published in Fall 2017 (see Next Steps, page 28). Some concept elements could change as part of this process, and as staff considers public comments on the Concept Report.

Why does this project matter?

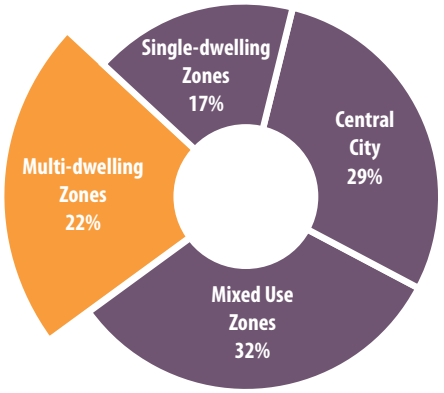
Between today and 2035, 80 percent of the roughly 120,000 new housing units developed in Portland will be in multi-dwelling buildings. Many of those buildings will be along mixed use corridors and main streets. Nearly one-quarter of the total growth will be in multi-dwelling zones outside the Central City. This housing development in and near centers and corridors will help meet local and regional objectives for locating housing close to services and transit. It also means that more Portlanders will be living in multi-dwelling buildings and other compact housing types, and that the design of this housing will be playing an increasingly important role in providing quality living environments for residents and in shaping the form and character of neighborhoods. Better Housing by Design is developing approaches to help ensure that new development in the multi-dwelling zones better meets the needs of current and future residents, while contributing to the positive qualities of the places where they are built.

Multi-dwelling zones play an important role in providing affordable housing opportunities, which are increasingly not available in single-dwelling zones or in higher density mixed-use zones – especially for families. Multi-dwelling zones have been the location of a large portion of housing development by affordable housing providers. These zones will continue to play a critical role in providing a broad range of housing to meet the needs of all Portlanders.

The livability of multi-dwelling housing has a disproportionate impact on the quality of life of people of color and low-income households, larger proportions of whom live in multi-dwelling housing than the general population. The project has been informed by extensive outreach to people of color, low-income and immigrant households, undertaken as part of past projects that focused on healthy housing. These projects identified the need for residential open spaces, housing design supportive of healthy living, and better and safer connections to neighborhood destinations — especially in East Portland.

Percent of housing units by zone

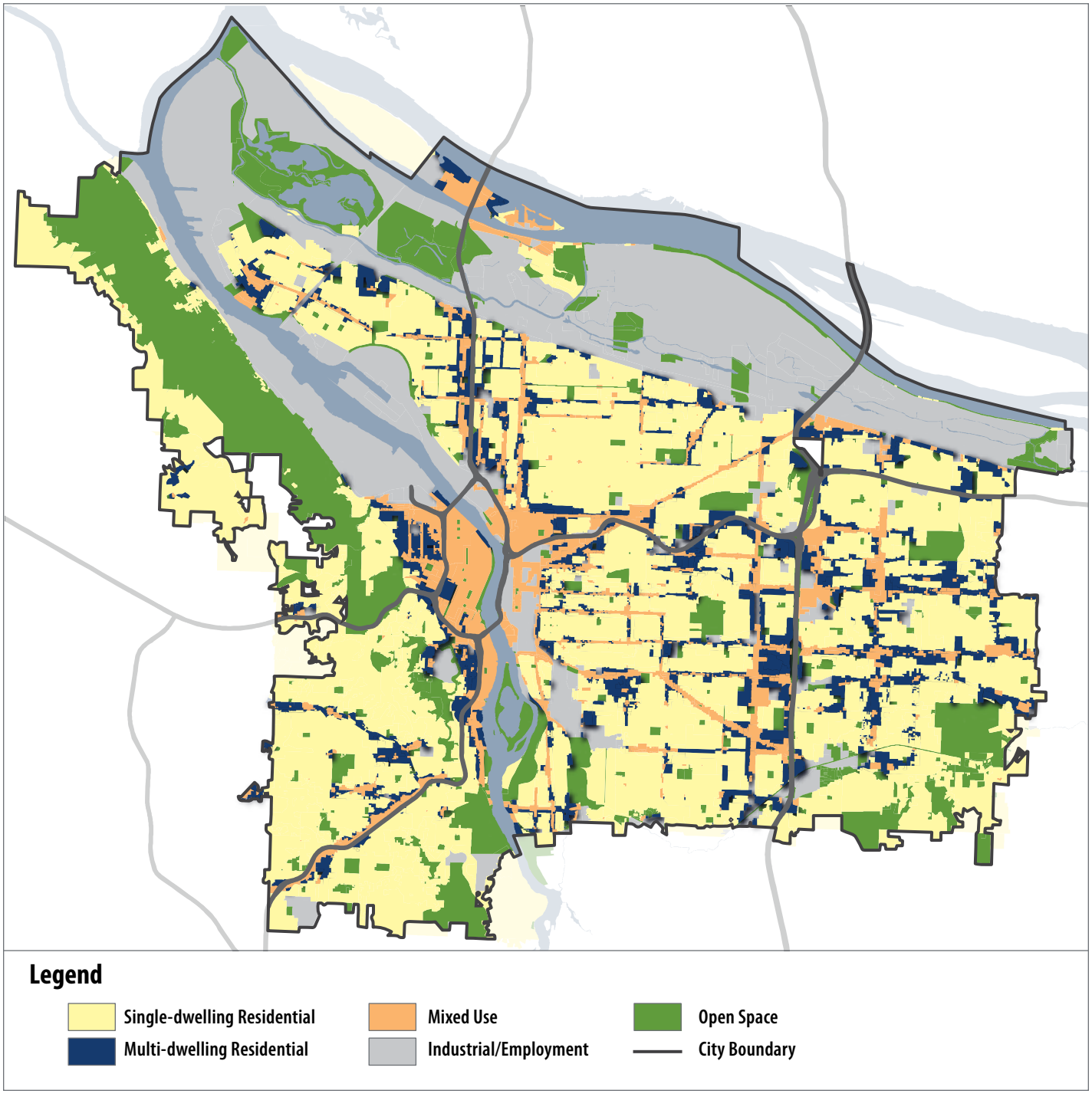
By 2035, more than 23,000 new housing units will likely be built in the multi-dwelling zones outside the Central City. That is 22 percent of the total residential growth expected over the next 20 years.



Zoning Map

Portland's Zoning Map and Zoning Code regulate what types of development (e.g., commercial, industrial, residential) are allowed where, and regulate the scale and general features of this development.

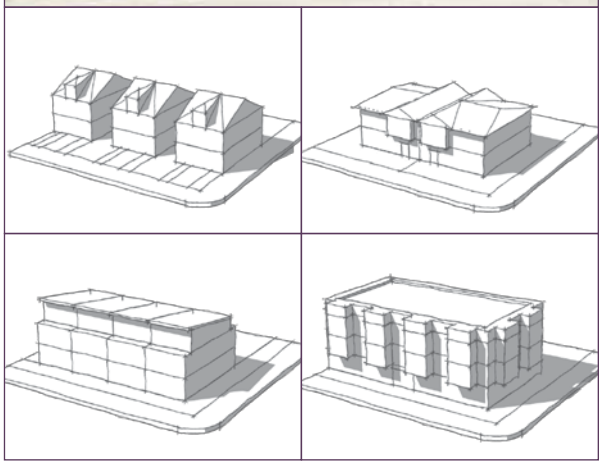
Multi-dwelling zones (blue) are typically located along or near transit corridors and in mixed-use centers, such as the St. Johns town center and the Jade District. These zones help implement the Comprehensive Plan and Climate Action Plan by providing housing opportunities close to commercial and community services, as well as transit. As summarized on the following pages, the zones allowing the greatest development intensity (such as the RH zone) are located close to the Central City and near high-capacity transit corridors. Lower density multi-dwelling zones (R3 and R2) are often located along local neighborhood streets close to major corridors and are intended to be compatible in scale with established residential areas.



Summary of the Base Zones

R3: Residential 3000

R3 is a low-density multi-dwelling zone located predominately in East Portland. Housing is characterized by one to two story buildings and a low building coverage.

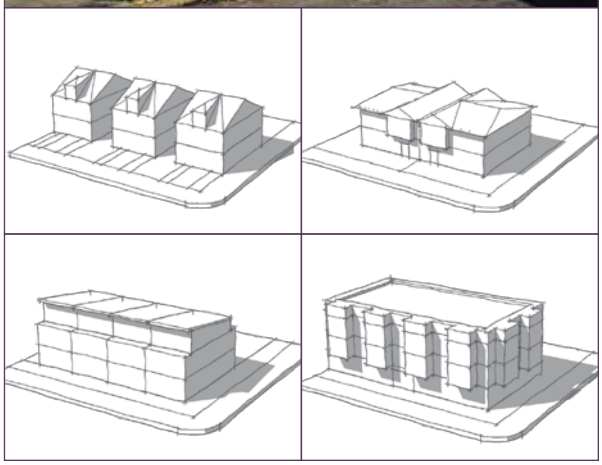


At a glance:

Height	35 feet
Maximum density	1 unit per 3,000 square feet of site area
Maximum lot coverage	45 percent of site area
Minimum front setback	10 feet
Required outdoor area	48 square feet per unit

R2: Residential 2000

R2 is a low-density multi-dwelling zone characterized by two to three story residential buildings and a medium building coverage. It is Portland's most widely-mapped zone and is typically located near civic and neighborhood corridors and centers, often along local side streets.



At a glance:

Height	40 feet
Maximum density	1 unit per 2,000 square feet of site area
Maximum lot coverage	50 percent of site area
Minimum front setback	10 feet
Required outdoor area	48 square feet per unit

R1: Residential 1000

R1 is a medium-density multi-dwelling zone characterized by two to four story residential buildings, with higher building coverage than the lower density zones. R1 zoning is applied along civic and neighborhood corridors, and local streets in centers and near high-capacity transit stations.

At a glance:

Height	45 feet
Maximum density	1 unit per 1,000 square feet of site area
Maximum lot coverage	60 percent of site area
Minimum front setback	3 feet
Required outdoor area	48 square feet per unit

RH: High-Density Residential

RH is a high-density multi-dwelling zone typically located close to the Central City or near high-capacity transit stations. Housing is characterized by buildings up to six or seven stories and high building coverage.

At a glance:

Height*	65/75/100 feet
Maximum density*	2:1 / 4:1 FAR
Maximum lot coverage	85 percent of site area
Minimum front setback	0 feet
Required outdoor area	none

* Varies by mapped location.

Concepts Overview

The concepts in this section propose new regulatory tools to address the following major topics. In the next section of this report, each topic is described in further detail with background information provided, followed by concept proposals.

Outdoor spaces and green elements that support human and environmental health.

- Open Space Requirements | Concepts 1 and 2
- Green Site Design | Concepts 3 and 4

Building design and scale that contributes to pedestrian-friendly streets, relates to context, and allows diverse housing types.

- Scale-based Zoning | Concept 5
- Building Design and Transitions | Concepts 6 – 10

Development bonuses and density transfers that offer incentives for affordable housing, family-sized units, and tree preservation.

- Concepts 11 and 12

Eastern Portland development standards that are responsive to the area's distinct characteristics.

- Concepts 13 and 14

Street connections that make it easier for people to access local destinations and transit.

- Concepts 15 – 18

Outdoor Space Requirements: Background

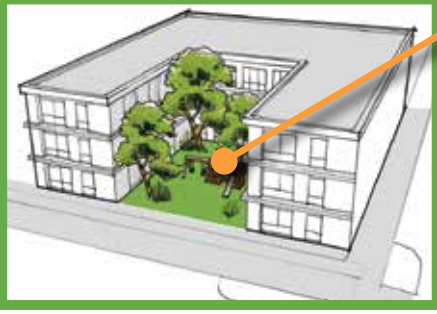
2035 Comprehensive Plan policies call for housing to include features that support healthy living, such as usable outdoor spaces for recreation, gardening and other activities.

Currently, most of the multi-dwelling zones require outdoor space (48 square feet per unit), which can be private spaces or combined into larger shared spaces, such as courtyards.

48 square feet = enough space for a small table and chairs.

Types of residential outdoor spaces

Individual/ private spaces, such as patios, balconies or small yards



Larger shared spaces, like courtyards, play areas or shared recreation space

Issues include:

No residential outdoor space required in the RH zone

The high-density residential zone (RH) requires no outdoor spaces. In some situations, such as in East Portland where the RH zone is located close to light rail stations, parking lots are the only places for children to play.

Shared outdoor spaces

Apartment residents have identified the need for having usable outdoor spaces located close by for activities such as children's play and growing food. Currently, shared outdoor spaces that are large enough to provide these opportunities are not required and often not provided with new multi-dwelling development.

Outdoor Space Requirements: Concepts

Objective: Provide usable outdoor space for residents and opportunities for healthy eating/active living amenities.

CONCEPT 1. REQUIRE RESIDENTIAL OUTDOOR SPACES IN THE RH ZONE.

- **Require 48 square feet per unit** (36 square feet for small sites under 20,000 square feet), consistent with standards for similar development in mixed-use zones. This outdoor space can be in the form of private outdoor spaces or combined into shared outdoor spaces.
- **Indoor community facilities –** Allow indoor community spaces to be used to meet outdoor space requirements in all the multi-dwelling zones.

Examples of private and shared outdoor spaces included in development typical of the RH Zone.

CONCEPT 2. REQUIRE SHARED OUTDOOR SPACES FOR LARGER SITES.

- **Apply this requirement to sites 20,000 square feet or larger.** Larger sites can more easily accommodate shared outdoor spaces than can smaller sites.
- **Provide flexibility for a range of shared outdoor space arrangements**, such as spaces designed for children's play, gathering, and gardening. Providing spaces large enough for such activities will help support active living and improve health outcomes for residents.

  The percentage of site area to be shared outdoor space will be determined during code development (potentially 5 to 10 percent of site area). Other considerations will include the possibility of allowing this requirement to be met by outdoor spaces on rooftops or raised courtyards. Regulations may also be crafted to ensure that shared outdoor spaces are conveniently located for residents.

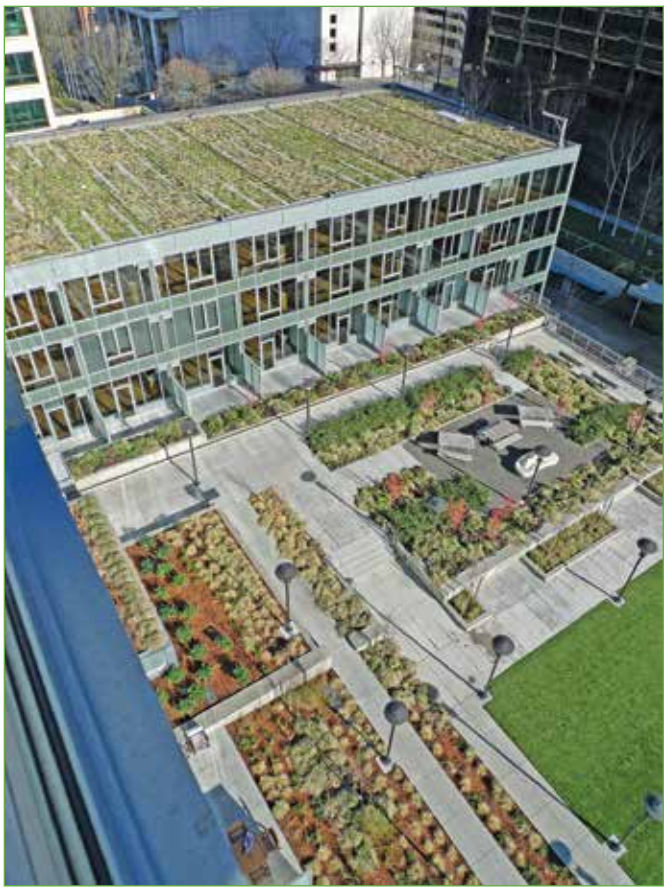
Green Site Design: Background

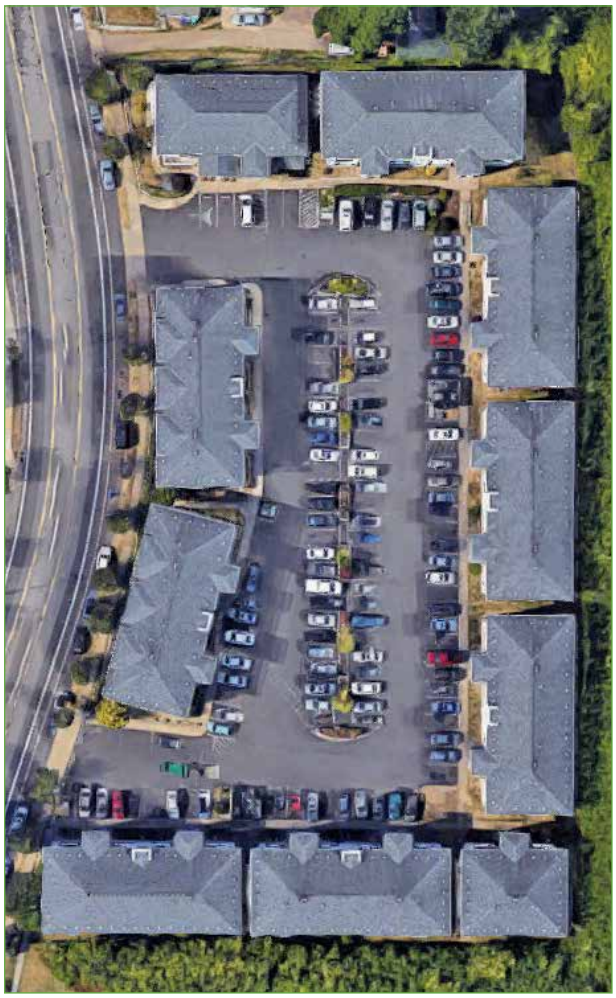
2035 Comprehensive Plan policies call for integrating green elements, such as eco roofs and vegetated stormwater facilities, into the urban environment. Comprehensive Plan policies also call for limiting impervious surfaces (e.g., cement, asphalt paving) and reducing urban heat island effects, which can be caused by large amounts of paved surfaces.

Issues include:

Lack of allowances for innovative green site design

Current regulations require multi-dwelling development to include landscaped areas. However, these regulations do not allow many innovative types of green features to count toward meeting required landscaping, which must be at ground level. For instance, eco roofs, raised landscaped courtyards and raised stormwater planters do not meet these requirements.





Large paved areas and urban heat islands

Due to climate change, Portland is expected to experience hotter, drier summers with more high-heat days. This can result in heat-related health problems, especially in locations with large amounts of pavement, which can cause urban heat islands. Modeling of urban heat island effects indicates that development with large amounts of asphalt paving can be over six degrees hotter than comparable development with intensive landscaping (see Appendices).

While the multi-dwelling zones limit the amount of building coverage, there is not a similar limit on the amount of paved surfaces, such as surface parking lots. Multi-dwelling development with large amounts of surface parking are a common development type in East Portland.

Green Site Design: Concepts

Objective: Provide opportunities for innovative approaches to green site design and minimize urban heat island effects.

CONCEPT 3. ALLOW ALTERNATIVES TO CONVENTIONAL LANDSCAPING.

- Allow eco roofs, raised courtyards and raised stormwater planters to be used to meet a portion of landscaping requirements.
- Existing tree density requirements would continue, meaning that some site area would need to be suitable for trees.

CONCEPT 4. LIMIT LARGE SURFACE PARKING LOTS.

- Limit the amount of ground-level area that can be devoted to impervious surfaces, such as surface parking lots and driveways (potentially limiting these areas to no more than 30 percent of site area).

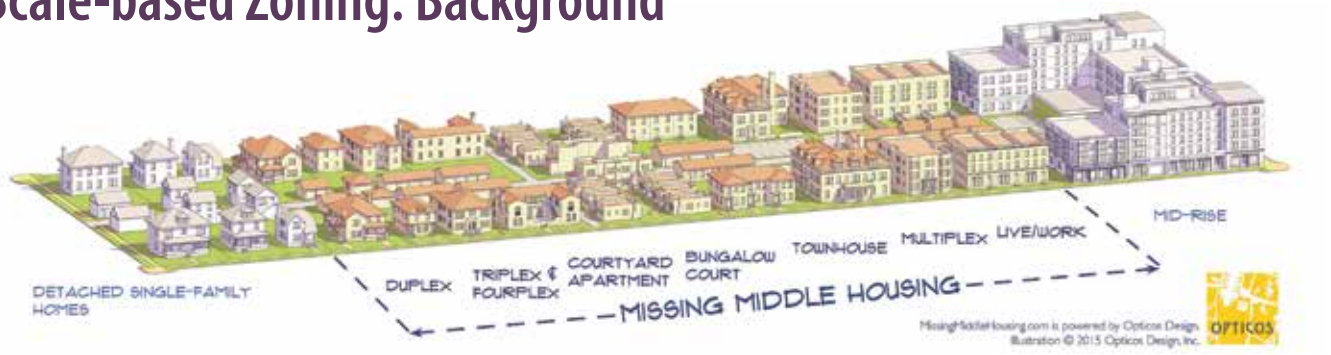
  Further analysis will be undertaken during code development to determine the appropriate limit, and whether this would apply only to vehicle areas or to all ground-level impervious surfaces.

Limits on impervious paved areas, such as large parking lots would encourage alternative approaches,

such as tucking some parking under buildings

or using permeable paving.

Scale-based Zoning: Background



2035 Comprehensive Plan policies call for a range of housing options and building scale, with more intense development in centers and corridors.

Low-rise multi-dwelling zones, such as the R2 zone, often provide transitions in scale between higher density areas and single-family residential areas. Historically, low-rise, multi-dwelling areas provided a diversity of middle housing types, such as duplexes, fourplexes, townhouses and courtyard apartments. These two- to three-story housing types provide housing density at a scale not much taller than single-family houses. Many of these, however, could not be built today in Portland's most common multi-dwelling zone, R2, because they exceed unit density limits. Other issues in the medium-density zones (R3, R2 and R1) include:

- Density-based regulations often result in large townhouse-type units whose multiple levels and stairs are not accessible to people with mobility limitations.
- The lack of housing unit variety also limits the range of affordability levels.
- In the R1 zone, often located along transit corridors and allowing four-story buildings, density regulations similarly limit housing options, even in transit-rich locations.

Middle Housing refers to a wide variety of multi-unit housing types at a low-rise scale, including duplexes, fourplexes and courtyard apartments. This variety is not possible within today's zones.


Duplex


Fourplex


Small-lot Duplex


Apartments


Courtyard Apartments


Courtyard Apartments

In the R1 zone old and new buildings along transit corridors are similar in scale, but the older apartment buildings accommodate more households.


1920 – 34 units | 10,000 sq. ft. site


2015 – 18 units | 18,000 sq. ft. site

Scale-based Zoning: Concepts

Objectives:

- **Encourage greater housing diversity (including physically-accessible units).**
- **Limit building scale in zones that typically apply along neighborhood side streets.**
- **Expand housing opportunities in zones along transit corridors.**

CONCEPT 5: REGULATE BY BUILDING SCALE/FAR INSTEAD OF UNIT DENSITY.

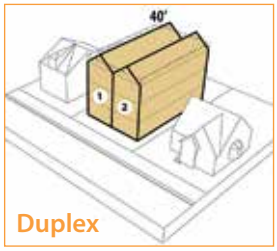
R2 Zone

Current approach:

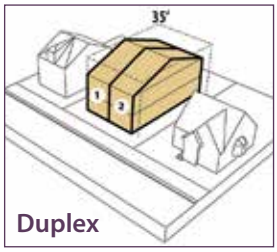
- 40-foot height limit.
- Density limited to one unit per 2,000 square feet of site area (2 units on a 5,000 square foot site).
- Often results in large townhouse units.

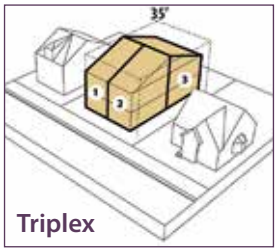
Proposed new approach:

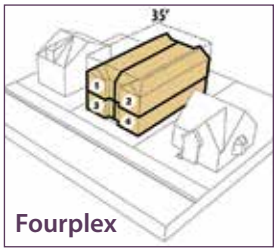
- Reduce allowed height to 35 feet.
- Provide flexibility for what happens inside a defined building scale (potentially a floor-to-area ratio of 1 to 1).



The proposed concept for the R2 zone would allow greater flexibility within a smaller building envelope. This would create incentives for more and different kinds of housing units



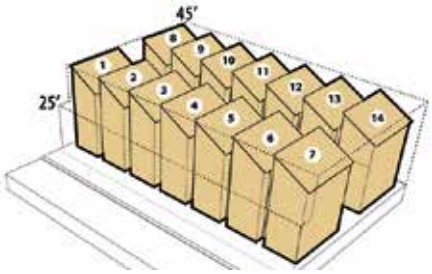




R1 Zone

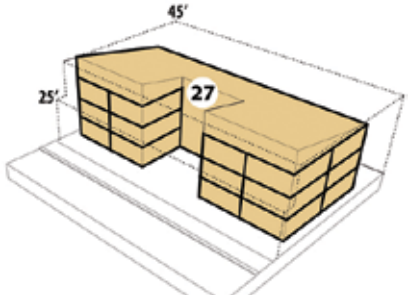
Current approach:

- 45-foot height limit.
- Density limited to one unit per 1,000 square feet of site area.
- Often results in townhouse units.



Proposed new approach:

- 45-foot height limit (unchanged)
- Provide flexibility for what happens inside the building (potentially a floor-to-area ratio of 1.5 to 1).



Physically accessible units. Along with greater flexibility for numbers of units, this concept would require 25 percent of units to be physically accessible when projects exceed a specified density, which will be determined during code development. Also to be determined is if the requirement will be for single-level, fully-accessible units, or for ***visitable*** units. Visitable units have accessible ground levels, but can have living spaces like bedrooms on upper levels.

Floor-to-area ratios (FAR). The building scale/FAR limits are preliminary and will be refined during code development, taking into account relationships to affordable housing development bonuses and building scale outcomes. For the R3 zone, the preliminary concept is for an FAR of .75 to 1. The RH zone is already regulated by FAR (2 to 1 or 4 to 1, depending on location).

Building Design and Transitions: Background

2035 Comprehensive Plan policies call for development to be designed to respond to context, contribute to pedestrian-friendly street frontages and transition in scale to lower density zones. Examples of issues related to these topics include:

Despite policy aspirations, the multi-dwelling zones have few limits on front garages and, in some cases, no requirements for front entrances, which can negatively impact the pedestrian environment of streets.

Community plan vision

Recent development

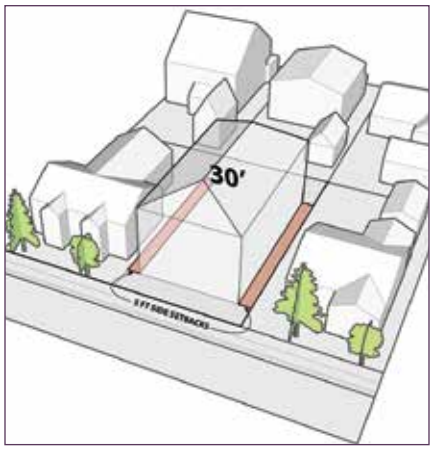
Lack of front setback requirements in the higher density zones (R1 and RH) sometimes result in abrupt transitions to existing development, and can impact residents' privacy.

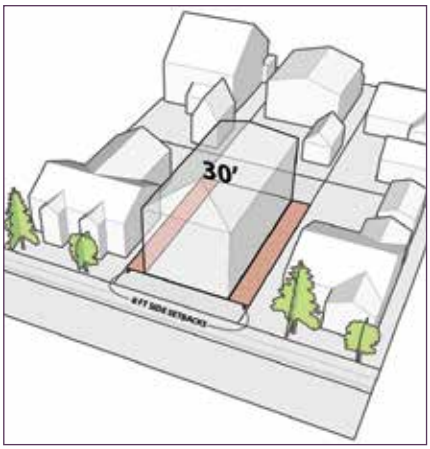
Also creating abrupt transitions, buildings of four or more stories can be built next to properties with single-dwelling zoning.

Barriers to small-site development

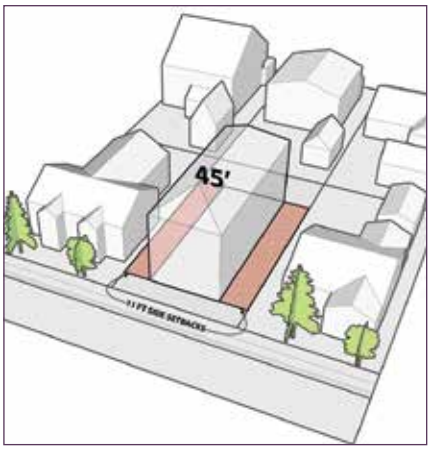
Some regulations are oriented to large development sites typical of suburban locations and do not work well on small infill sites.

For instance, existing side setback requirements in the multi-dwelling zones often require more space around buildings (setbacks) than is required for similar scale development in single-dwelling zones (up to 14 feet, compared to 5 feet in single-dwelling zones). This makes it difficult to do small site development that can continue neighborhood patterns.





Single-dwelling zones



Multi-dwelling zones

Building Design and Transitions: Concepts

Design of Street Frontages Objective: Foster pedestrian-friendly streets by orienting buildings to streets, and minimizing front garages, blank walls and other building features that do not create an inviting street environment.

CONCEPT 6. LIMIT GARAGES ALONG STREET FRONTAGES TO 50 PERCENT OF THE BUILDING GROUND LEVEL. REQUIRE PARKING TO BE ACCESSED FROM ALLEYS, WHERE THEY EXIST.

This would promote arrangements such as the following:

Rear parking, or options with no off-street parking in areas close to transit.

Front parking that takes up no more than half of street frontages.

Exemptions may be provided for other garage arrangements like tuck-under garages, that limit impacts on the street environment.

This limitation would also apply to large ground-level parking garages.

Requirements for alley-accessed parking will need to be coordinated with PBOT and it may be necessary to reconsider existing limitations on alley access for multi-dwelling parking.

CONCEPT 7. REQUIRE BUILDING ENTRANCES TO BE ORIENTED TO PUBLIC STREETS OR PATHWAYS, OR TO COURTYARDS CONNECTED TO PUBLIC STREETS.

This would prevent this.

And promote entrances oriented to the streets and pedestrian spaces.

Building Design and Transitions: Concepts

Building Setbacks and Height Transitions Objective: Integrate larger scale buildings into residential areas through greater continuity in front setbacks and transitions in scale next to single-dwelling zoning, while facilitating compact development on small sites.

CONCEPT 8. REQUIRE 10-FOOT FRONT SETBACKS IN R1 AND RH ZONES.

This would help integrate new development with established residential characteristics. The concept would allow for reduced setbacks to match adjacent existing buildings and provide exemptions for development that includes ground-floor commercial uses (see Concept 14).

The most intensely urban RH zoning (with an FAR of 4 to 1) would continue to not require front setbacks. Further analysis will be needed to assess impacts of these setback requirements on other issues, such as rear parking and the feasibility of small-site development.

The required front setback would be relative to the context of neighboring buildings.

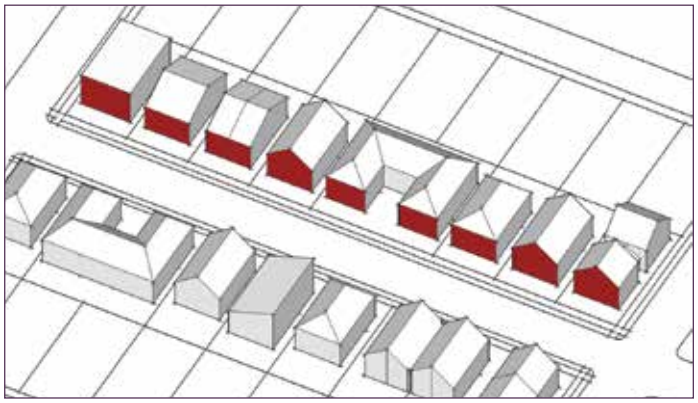
CONCEPT 9. REQUIRE HEIGHT TRANSITIONS.

Require taller buildings to step down in scale when located next to single-dwelling zones, with building heights limited to 35 feet (three stories) within 25 feet of properties with single-dwelling zoning.

CONCEPT 10. SIMPLIFY SIDE SETBACK REGULATIONS.

Require 5-foot minimum setbacks (as applies in single-dwelling zones) to facilitate development on small sites that can continue neighborhood patterns, and leaving room for more usable outdoor space, such as central courtyards.

Consider other potential code amendments that could facilitate development on small sites, such as allowing small structures like storage sheds in setback areas, reducing parking requirements, more flexible landscaping standards, and allowing the creation of new small lots.



Development Bonuses and Density Transfers: Concepts

Objective: Prioritize affordable housing as a development outcome, and provide incentives for the preservation of historic buildings and trees.

Background

Currently, through a system of development bonuses, buildings can be larger if they provide specific amenities or affordable units. In multi-dwelling zones, the amount of additional development scale provided for affordable housing units is limited to 25 percent (compared to more than 60 percent in the mixed use zones), while other development bonuses can be combined for up to 50 percent more development.

This limits the ability to provide an attractive incentive for affordable housing units, especially for buildings with fewer than 20 units that are not required to provide affordable housing. In Stakeholder Working Group discussions, community members identified affordable housing as the greatest priority for development bonuses.

CONCEPT 11. PRIORITIZE AFFORDABLE HOUSING BY INCREASING THE INCLUSIONARY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT BONUS AND BY DISCONTINUING MOST OTHER DEVELOPMENT BONUSES.

Existing Development Bonuses	Proposed Concept Direction
Affordable housing	Prioritize by increasing amount of development bonus (beyond current 25 percent bonus, potentially to 50 percent).
Three bedroom units	Continue, in order to provide an incentive for family-sized units.
Outdoor recreation facilities **Play areas for children** **Large outdoor areas**	Remove as a development bonus, but address through new requirements for shared outdoor spaces.
Storage areas **Sound insulation** **Crime prevention** **Solar water heating**	Remove as a development bonus.
Tree preservation	Remove as a development bonus, but address through a new transfer of development rights allowance for tree preservation.

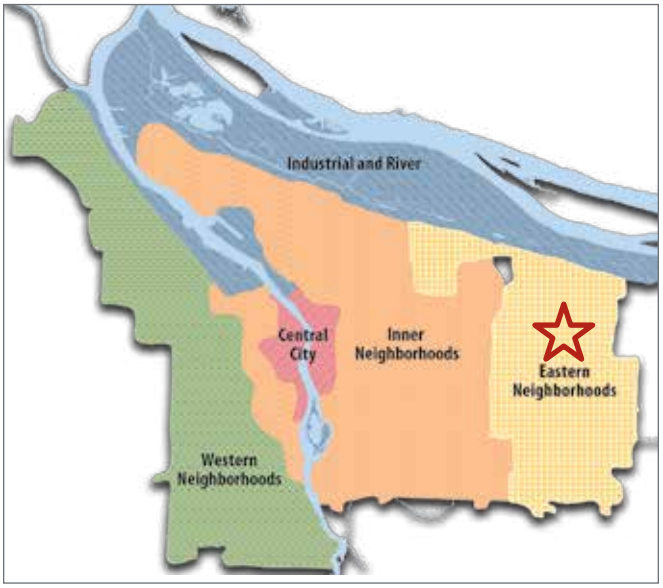
CONCEPT 12. MODIFY ALLOWANCES FOR TRANSFERS OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS TO PRIORITIZE TREE PRESERVATION ALONG WITH HISTORIC PRESERVATION.

In order to retain an incentive to preserve trees, this would follow an approach that is currently used for historic preservation. This approach allows unused development potential to be transferred to other sites with multi-dwelling zoning, in exchange for preservation. The current tree preservation development bonus, which allows greater density on the same site as the preserved trees, is rarely used.

Eastern Portland Development Standards: Background

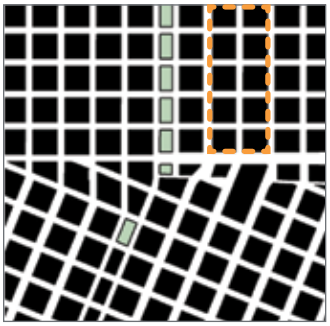
2035 Comprehensive Plan policies call for development to be responsive to the distinct characteristics and needs of different parts of Portland. For Eastern Portland (largely east of 82nd Avenue), policies call for respecting the area's stands of Douglas firs and the positive aspects of its large blocks. Policies also recognize the need for more street connections to make it easier for people to get to community destinations.

New multi-dwelling development in Eastern Portland has contributed to meeting housing needs. But it has not always met expectations in terms of design, and few new street connections have been created.

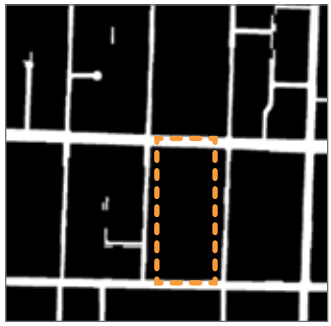


Issues and opportunities include:

- Large numbers of families, many of whom live in apartments.
- Large blocks (often 400 to 600 feet wide at their narrow dimension, compared to 200-feet wide in Inner neighborhoods), resulting in poor street connectivity, but also providing opportunities for new types of open space patterns and connections.
- Groves of Douglas firs that are valued by community members.
- Big, multi-lane arterial streets, often lined by multi-dwelling zoning, with traffic that compromises residential livability.



Roughly 12 square blocks in downtown Portland …

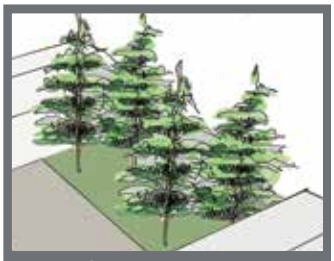


… could fit into one large East Portland block.

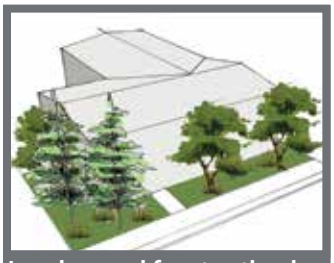
Development on the area's deep lots often leaves little unbuilt or unpaved space.

Elements that East Portland community members say are important to include with multi-dwelling development

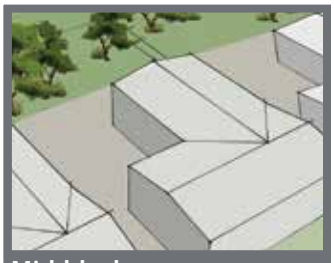
Common open space areas



Space for large trees



Landscaped front setbacks



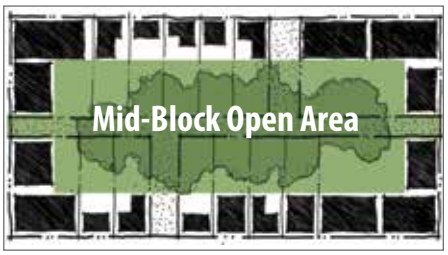
Mid-block open space

Eastern Portland Development Standards: Concepts

Objective: Guide development to respond in a positive way to Eastern Portland characteristics, such as the area's large blocks and big streets.

CONCEPT 13. CONTINUE EASTERN PORTLAND MID-BLOCK OPEN AREAS. KEEP MID-BLOCK AREAS AS GREENER AND MORE OPEN, WITH DEVELOPMENT FOCUSED ALONG STREETS.

This would help retain some of the area's patterns of open spaces, such as rear yards and tree groves. Keeping mid-block areas more open could also help leave space for connections through the area's large blocks to help improve connectivity.



These two examples have the same housing unit sizes and density.

Current approach: Development extends to rear of lots.

Mid-block open area approach: development arranged to provide mid-block outdoor area at rear of site.

CONCEPT 14. ALLOW SMALL-SCALE COMMERCIAL USES IN MULTI-DWELLING ZONES ON MAJOR CORRIDORS AND NEAR LIGHT RAIL STATIONS.

Allowing limited ground-floor commercial uses (such as live-work spaces that combine business space with a housing unit) could help address the negative impacts from traffic to residents of housing in the multi-dwelling zones located along Eastern Portland's multi-lane corridors. It would also allow more opportunities for neighborhood commercial services in an area of Portland that lacks walkable access to services. Facilitating commercial services near light rail stations also responds to the area's need for these services in locations that have a lot of pedestrian activity.

These allowances could apply along major corridors citywide, although Eastern Portland has greater amounts of multi-dwelling zoning located in these types of locations.

Housing along outer SE Division

Light rail station at 148th Avenue

Small commercial uses at ground level of rowhouses

Other concepts closely related to Eastern Portland issues:

- **Outdoor Space Requirements** (Concepts 1 and 2)
- **Building Design and Transitions**, including front setbacks and transitions to single-dwelling zones (Concepts 8 – 9)
- **Development Bonuses and Density Transfers**, including tree preservation (Concept 12)
- **Street Connections** (Concepts 15 – 18)

Street Connections: Background

2035 Comprehensive Plan policies call for safe and accessible street and pedestrian connections, especially in centers, where services and housing are intended to be concentrated.

Many of Portland's Eastern Neighborhoods contain areas where the blocks are very large and streets are few and far between. They often do not meet street connectivity standards, which require streets to be spaced no further than 530 feet apart.

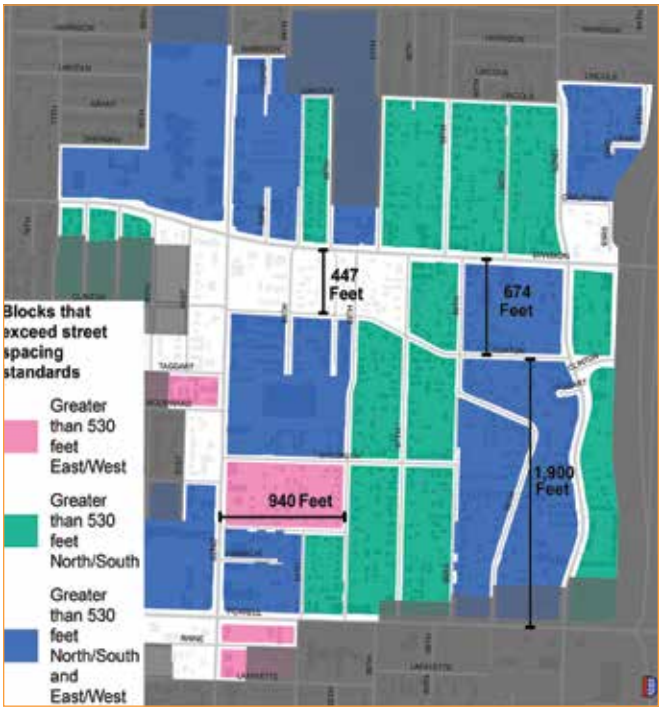
The long blocks and lack of connections make these areas challenging to get around by foot or bicycle. As the area's centers continue to grow, new streets will be needed to serve the increasing numbers of residents, workers, and visitors.

Currently, there are limited tools to get new street connections

New development provides opportunities to create new street connections in existing neighborhoods. In the past, standards for new connections required full streets with parking and sidewalks on both sides. But many lots in Eastern Portland are too small to fit a full street connection, resulting in no new connections when development occurs on these sites. Also, when new street connections are provided, current regulations reduce the amount of housing units that can be built, which creates a disincentive to providing street connections. These and other factors have made it difficult to get new connections where they are needed.

Connected Centers Street Plan

In coordination with the Better Housing by Design project, Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) is developing a Connected Centers Street Plan to examine regulatory and implementation measures that could create better connectivity in growing centers. The focus of this PBOT plan is areas where street and pathway connectivity is severely deficient. Eastern Portland's Jade District and Rosewood neighborhood centers are the initial study areas. The concepts and implementation approaches developed for these areas will be refined for use in other centers where new connections are needed.



Full street connections are too wide to fit into many lots in Eastern neighborhoods (50 foot wide street shown).

Street Connections: Concepts

Objective: Provide more effective ways to achieve needed street and pedestrian connections when development occurs.

CONCEPT 15. PROVIDE MORE OPTIONS TO ACHIEVE REQUIRED STREET CONNECTIONS BASED ON SITE-SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITIES.

Allow connections that serve pedestrian and bicycle access in locations where full street connections are not feasible, and establish a hierarchy of priorities for different types of street connections. Include references in the multi-dwelling zoning code to street connectivity requirements.

Option 1
Most Desirable

Street Connection
Dedicated Right-of-way
full street | partial street | one-way street

If option 1 is not feasible then go to option 2

Option 2
Second choice

Pedestrian/Bicycle Connection
Dedicated Right-of-way
Public easement

If option 2 is not feasible then go to option 3

Option 3
Third choice

Right-of-way Dedication
Public access easement only
reserved for possible future connection

If option 3 is not feasible then

NO CONNECTION

CONCEPT 16. PROVIDE NEW INCREMENTAL APPROACHES TO CREATING STREETS ON SMALL SITES.

This approach would create street connections in stages as infill development occurs, sharing requirements for building street improvements across adjacent properties over time, with narrow dimensions to make it easier to create connections on small sites. Allowances for this approach may focus on ***Connection Opportunity Areas***, which will be specified locations with poor street connectivity in designated centers.

Phase 1

- Narrow street space shared by cars and pedestrians.
- No through connection.

Phase 2

- Narrow street space shared by cars and pedestrians.
- Through connection for peds/bikes.
- No through connects for motor vehicles.

Phase 3

- Sidewalk added with new development.
- Through connection for peds/bikes.
- No through connection for motor vehicles.

Phase 4

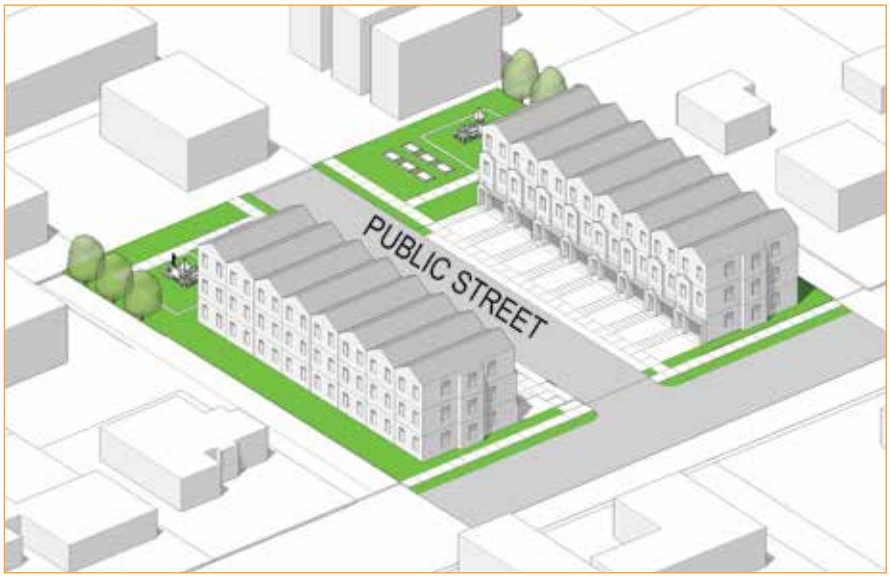
- Completed street.
- Sidewalk on one side of street.
- Through connection for all modes.

Street Connections: Concepts

CONCEPT 17. SET A MINIMUM LOT SIZE OR MINIMUM STREET FRONTAGE REQUIREMENT FOR NEW MULTI-DWELLING DEVELOPMENT IN LOCATIONS THAT HAVE DEFICIENT STREET CONNECTIVITY.

This approach would ensure new development is on sites of sufficient size to provide connections to facilitate new street connections where they are needed most.

This approach would be applied to *Connection Opportunity Areas*, which will be specified locations within designated centers that have poor connectivity (based on street spacing standards and analysis of pedestrian connectivity). Dimensions for this requirement will be determined during code development, and will be coordinated with the incremental approaches of Concept 16.



CONCEPT 18. CALCULATE DENSITY ALLOWANCES PRIOR TO STREET DEDICATION.

Allow density to be calculated before right-of-way for a new connection is dedicated, to reduce disincentives to providing street connections.

Currently, development that provides a public street connection loses development allowances.

While a development that only includes a private driveway has no such penalty.

Performance Measures

The following performance measures will be used to monitor successful implementation of the Better Housing by Design concepts and code amendments over time. They will also provide information on progress toward broader city objectives related to housing and Portland's growth.

1. **New multi-dwelling housing built using amended zoning code.**

   This measures the number of new multi-dwelling units built under the amended multi-dwelling zoning code.

   a. **By development type.** What kinds of buildings and densities are being built in each multi-dwelling zone (detached or attached homes, duplexes, fourplexes and other plexes, apartment buildings, etc.)?

   b. **By geographic area.** Where are new multi-dwelling units being built in Portland? What is the geographic distribution by various sub geographies, such as the Central City, Riverside, and Western, Inner and Eastern neighborhood pattern areas?

   c. **By centers and corridors.** What is the increase in density in designated centers and corridors? Is higher density development occurring where there is complementary transit service?

2. **Affordablility of new multi-dwelling units.**

   How many new regulated affordable housing units have been built in the multi-dwelling zones?

3. **Less site area devoted to vehicle-only circulation.**

   How many new multi-dwelling projects devote less than 30 percent of the site to vehicle-only circulation or impervious surfaces?

4. **Better shared open space within multi-dwelling sites.**

   For each new multi-dwelling project, what types and how many square feet of shared open space is within the site?

5. **New connected streets in centers.**

   How many new multi-dwelling properties in centers with deficient street connectivity add walking and biking connections to the existing street network or plan for some type of connected access? This measure applies primarily to East Portland (e.g., the Jade District and Rosewood neighborhood centers).

Public Involvement

Development of the Better Housing by Design concepts was informed by a range of public involvement activities, including:

Stakeholder Working Group meetings

A series of five Stakeholder Working Group (SWG) meetings were held from March through May 2017. These meetings included participants with a range of perspectives, including community group representatives, development professionals, tenant advocates, neighborhood residents, affordable housing providers and age-friendly advocates.

These meetings served as a forum for discussing issues and potential solutions, and helped inform City staff as they developed concepts. Each meeting focused on a different set of topics, with three of the meetings focusing on development and street connectivity issues in Eastern Portland. Participants in the SWG meetings were not appointed, and meetings were open to any interested community members. This approach allowed for a shifting set of meeting participants with interest and experience in the specific topics and geographies for each meeting.

Community walks in the Jade District and Rosewood Neighborhood Centers

Walks with community stakeholders were held in the Jade District and Rosewood neighborhood centers during October and November 2016. Participants shared perspectives on multi-dwelling development and street connectivity issues in these areas, which served as study areas for both the Better Housing by Design project and PBOT's Connected Centers Street Plan project.

Roundtable discussions with development professionals

A series of three roundtable discussions were held with affordable housing providers, designers, and builders and developers in January and February 2017. These discussions provided an opportunity to hear from development professionals about what is working or not working well with Portland's multi-dwelling regulations and how they can be improved, as well as receive initial feedback on potential new directions and implementation ideas.

Initial public workshop

A public workshop was held on February 25, 2017, to introduce the project to the public and provide an initial opportunity to discuss issues related to multi-dwelling development and street connectivity. The event was held at PCC Southeast at SE 82nd and Division to accommodate community members who live in Eastern Portland.

Public open houses on draft concepts

On June 1 and June 3, 2017, public open houses were held to present the draft code concepts and to receive initial public input prior to the release of the Concept Report. Again, one of the open houses was held at PCC Southeast for the convenience East Portlanders.

Meetings with community groups

Project staff met with community groups to introduce project issues and potential solutions, and to receive feedback, including:

- Neighborhood district coalitions
- Jade District/APANO
- The Rosewood Initiative
- Anti-displacement PDX
- Urban League
- East Portland Action Plan Housing Subcommittee

Ongoing communication

Regular communications about the Better Housing by Design project were made available through the project website, monthly e-mail updates to the project mailing list, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability newsletters, social media sites (Facebook, NextDoor and Twitter) and media releases.

What staff heard

Among the many issues raised by community members were:

- Participants in SWG meetings emphasized the need to address Portland's housing challenges by prioritizing affordable housing and expanding housing opportunities. Other important priorities were having development contribute to pedestrian-friendly streets and usable outdoor space for residents. Points of contention in these meetings and other community meetings included differing perspectives on off-street parking and compatibility with neighborhood characteristics.
- East Portland community members emphasized the importance of including areas for play and gathering as part of multi-dwelling development, especially given the many families living in apartments in the area and the lack of parks. They also emphasized the need for designing pedestrian connections for safety.
- Development professionals emphasized the need for predictable regulations and allowing development flexibility. Some indicated that development and density standards in the multi-dwelling zones complicated development; that it was easier to do multi-dwelling development in commercial zones than in the multi-dwelling zones. Many also indicated that it was important to reduce the cost of creating new streets because providing street connections affected the feasibility of projects and housing affordability.

More complete information on public input, including summary notes and submitted comments from the project's public events, are included in the Concept Report Appendices.

Development Prototypes

A series of development prototypes, illustrating alternative development configurations, were shared with Stakeholder Working Group participants during meetings. Staff used the development prototypes for discussions on whether some configurations were preferred outcomes and should be facilitated by regulations, or discouraged. The prototypes were based on common site types in different parts of the city and included Eastern Portland examples. The following are some examples that were identified by meeting participants as representing positive or negative outcomes.

The positively rated prototypes tended to have shared open spaces, such as courtyards, as central design elements, or fit density within a house-like form.

The negatively rated examples tended to have less substantial open spaces and prominent vehicle areas.

How to Comment and Next Steps

This Concept Report describes the development and design concepts that project staff will use to create detailed regulations for the multi-dwelling zones. Staff will consider public comments received on the concepts in this report as they begin work on drafting the zoning code regulations.

Comments

The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability will accept comments on the Better Housing by Design Concept Report until **5 p.m. on Monday, August 7, 2017**. You may submit your comment in the following ways:

- Email: betterhousing@portlandoregon.gov
- U.S. Mail: City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, Attn: Better Housing by Design Project, 1900 SW 4th Avenue, Suite 7100, Portland, OR 97201

Next Steps

With completion of the Concept Report, the project will move into the code development stage. Project staff will turn the ideas in the Concept Report into zoning code language to guide future development in the multi-dwelling zones. There will be several opportunities for the public to comment on the draft zoning code amendments.

Fall 2017	• **Discussion Draft Code Amendments released**, followed by a public comment period.
Winter – Spring 2018	• **Proposed Draft Code Amendments released.** Testimony will be received by the Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) in writing and at a public hearing. • **Recommended Draft released** (incorporating changes directed by the PSC). Testimony will be received by City Council in writing and at a public hearing. • **Adopted Draft released** (incorporating changes directed by Council).

For more information

- **Visit: www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/betterhousing**
- **Contact Bureau of Planning and Sustainability:**
  - Bill Cunningham, Project Manager at 503-823-4203
  - Sara Wright, Community Involvement at 503-823-7728
  - email: betterhousing@portlandoregon.gov