

# Better Housing by Design - Recommended Draft Summary

## How can Portland's multi-dwelling zones be improved to meet the needs of current and future residents?

The Better Housing by Design project is revising development and design standards in Portland's multi-dwelling residential zones (R3, R2, R1 and RH) outside the Central City. These middle- and higher density zones provide opportunities for new housing to meet the needs of current and future residents.

The Recommended Draft presents draft zoning code regulations intended to better implement 2035 Comprehensive Plan policies and to improve development outcomes in the multi-dwelling zones. The code proposals are based on ideas from the Better Housing by Design Concept Report and were informed by community initiatives that called for improvements to multi-dwelling development, such as the Healthy Active Communities Initiative and the East Portland Action Plan.

The code proposals address the following major topics:

## Better designed and healthier multifamily housing: Let's zone for it!



**Diverse housing options and affordability**  
to meet diverse housing needs



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



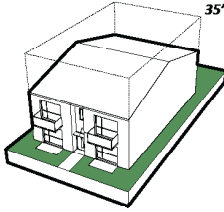
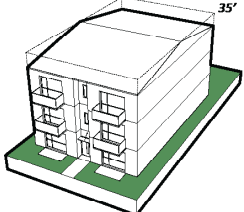

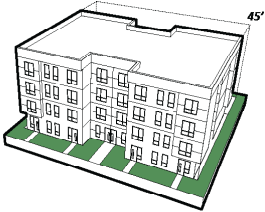
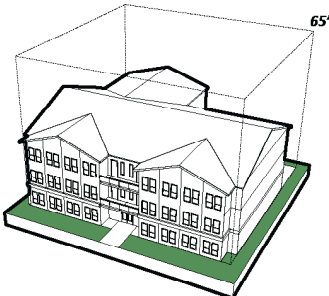
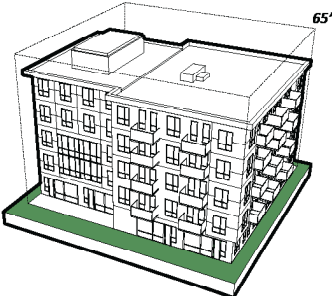
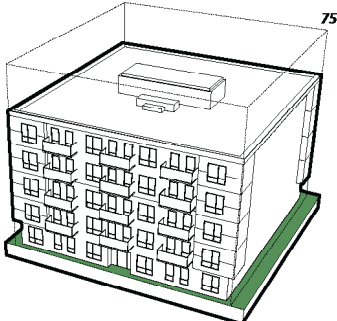
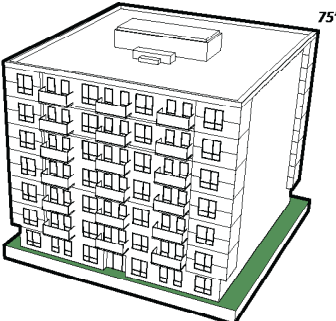
**Building design and scale** that contributes to pedestrian-friendly streets and relates to context



**East Portland standards and street connections** that respond to the area's distinct characteristics and needs

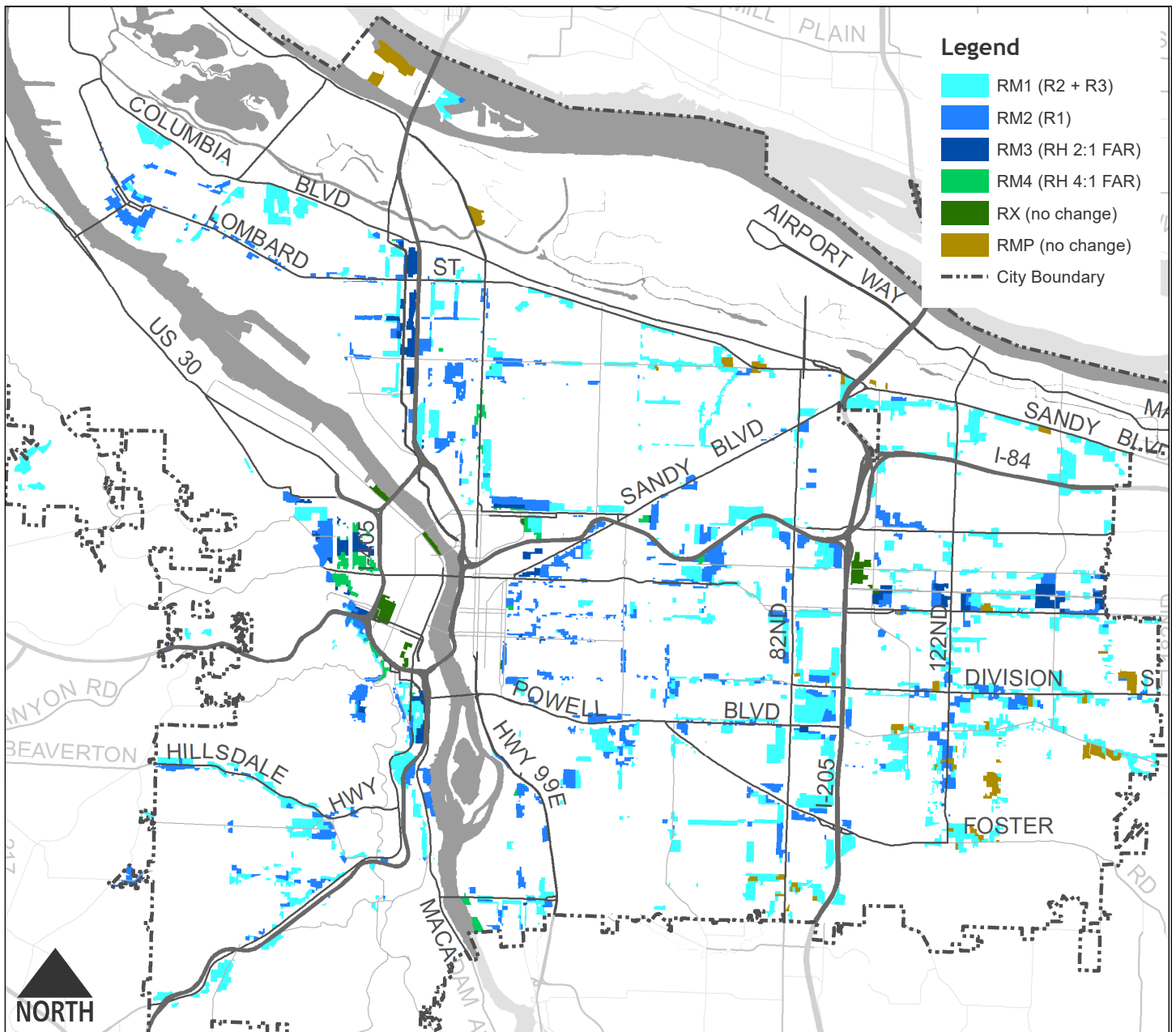
# Summary of the Multi-Dwelling Zones

The new framework for the multi-dwelling zones include four zones that are based on existing zones - keeping a similar scale but providing more flexibility for numbers and types of units. The summary standards and graphics reflect the development standards proposed in the Recommended Draft. The Bonus FAR is provided for projects with affordable housing or FAR transfers from sites where historic buildings, existing affordable housing or trees are being preserved.

	Base FAR	Bonus FAR
<b>New Zone: RM1</b> <b>Former Zones: R2 and R3</b> This is a low-scale zone that provides a transition to lower density residential areas, often located at edges of centers or along neighborhood corridors or other areas to provide continuity with the scale of established residential areas.  <b>Maximum Height: 35 feet</b> <b>Maximum Building Coverage: 50%</b>	 <p>1 to 1</p>	 <p>1.5 to 1</p>
<b>New Zone: RM2</b> <b>Former Zones: R1</b> This zone is applied in and around a variety of centers and corridors to contribute to the intended urban scale of these locations, while providing transitions in scale and characteristics to lower scale residential neighborhoods.  <b>Maximum Height: 45 feet</b> <b>Maximum Building Coverage: 60% (70% on Corridors)</b>	 <p>1.5 to 1</p>	 <p>2.25 to 1</p>
<b>New Zone: RM3</b> <b>Former Zones: RH [2:1 FAR]</b> This is a high-density zone applied in locations close to the Central City and in centers and major corridors. It allows for a mid-rise scale of buildings (up to six stories), and calls for landscaped front setbacks to integrate with established residential neighborhoods.  <b>Maximum Height: 65 feet</b> <b>Maximum Building Coverage: 85%</b>	 <p>2 to 1</p>	 <p>3 to 1</p>
<b>New Zone: RM4</b> <b>Former Zones: RH [4:1 FAR]</b> This is a high-density, more intensely urban zone applied in locations close to the Central City and in centers and major corridors. It is intended to provide a mid-rise or high-rise scale of up to seven or more stories.  <b>Maximum Height: 75 - 100 feet</b> <b>Maximum Building Coverage: 85%</b>	 <p>4 to 1*</p>	 <p>6 to 1*</p>

\* In historic districts, the RM4 base FAR is 3 to 1 and the bonus FAR is 4.5 to 1.

# Recommended Multi-Dwelling Zoning Map



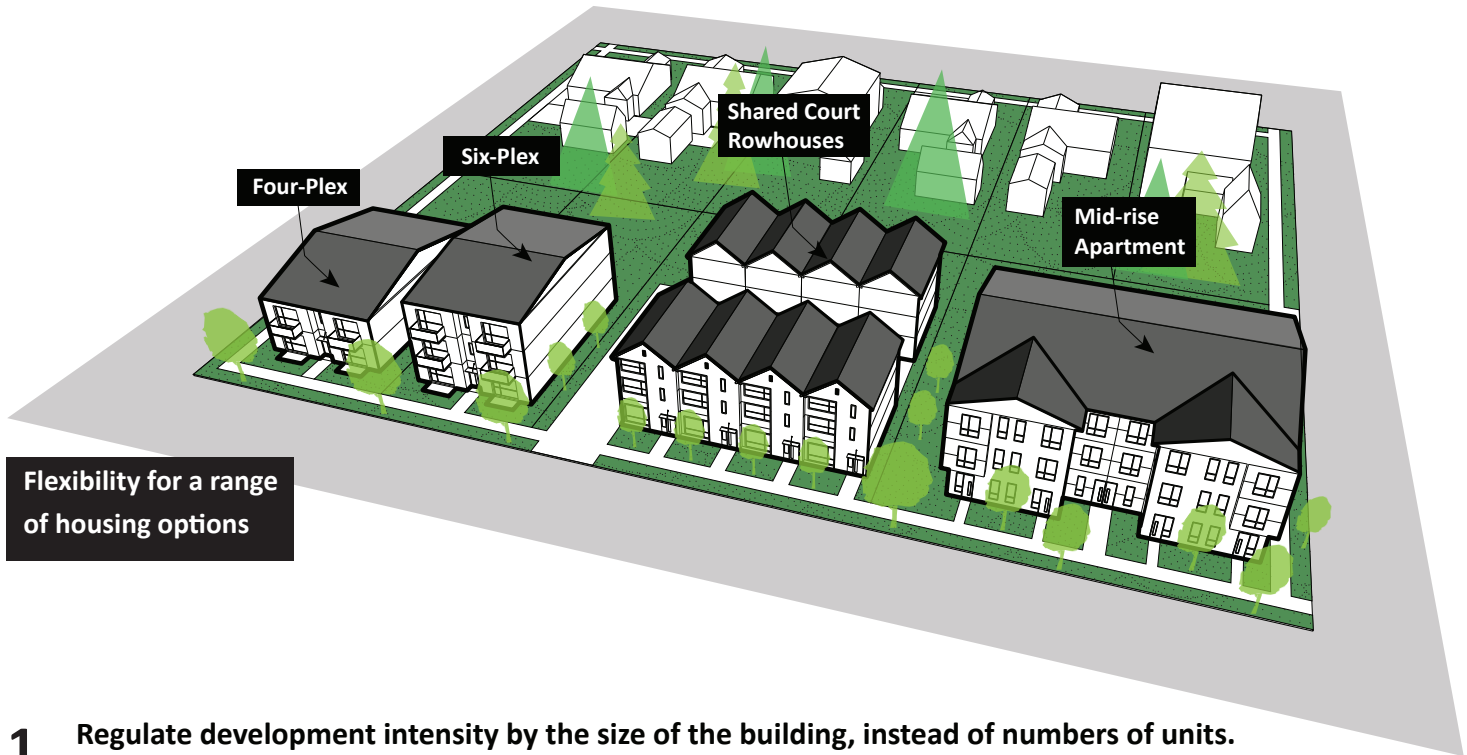
This shows draft amendments to the Zoning Map based on the proposed zoning framework.

- Proposed zoning assigns the new zoning that most closely matches existing zoning (with some exceptions in historic districts to the assignment of RM3 and RM4 zoning that replaces the RH zone).
- The new RM1 zones combines the current R3 and R2 zones, both of which are intended to be compatible with single-dwelling areas and have similar development standards.
- Map changes only involve areas that already have multi-dwelling zoning. There are no expansions to where multi-dwelling zones are mapped.

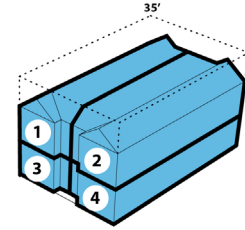
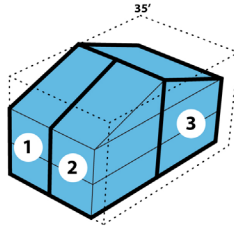
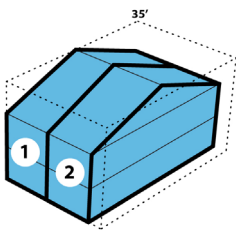
## Design Overlay Expansion

The Proposed Draft proposes to expand the Design Overlay zone to apply to all areas with RH zoning (new RM3 and RM4 zones). The Design Overlay zone is applied to places that allow large scale development (most areas with RH zoning already have the design overlay or are in historic districts).

# Diverse Housing Options and Affordability



- 1 Regulate development intensity by the size of the building, instead of numbers of units.**  
Allow flexibility for a mix of units within a defined building scale (regulated by floor area ratio – FAR).



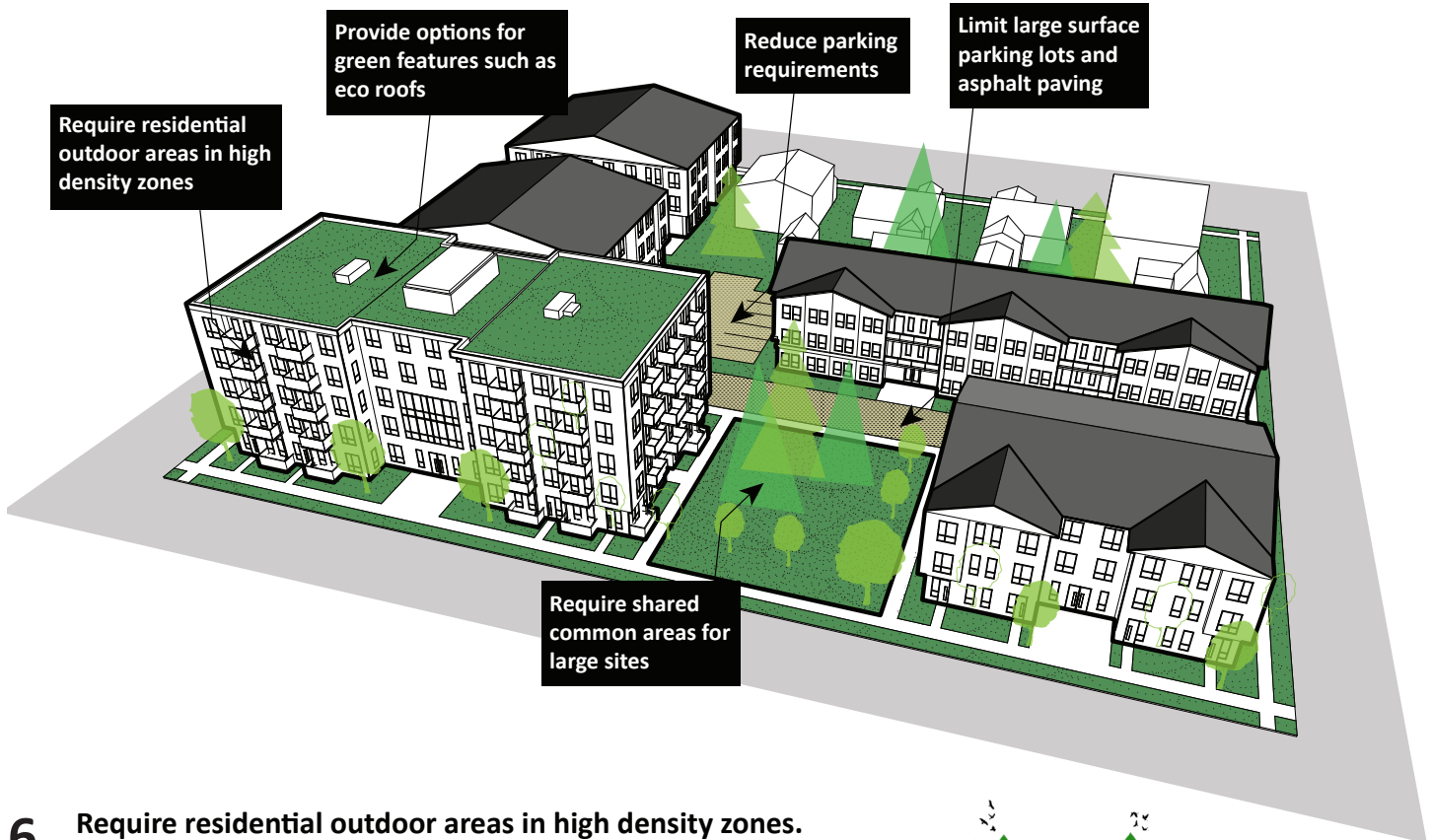
- 2 Prioritize affordable housing by:**
  - Increasing the inclusionary housing bonus to 50 percent above the base FAR.
  - Providing a higher level of development bonus (100 percent additional FAR) for projects with deeper housing affordability (at least half of units affordable to households earning up to 60 percent of median family income [MFI]).
  - Provide a development bonus of 25 percent for moderate-income family housing (half the units must have three bedrooms and be affordable at 100 percent MFI).
- 3 Promote physically-accessible housing.**
  - Provide a development bonus of 25 percent for projects in which at least a quarter of units are physically accessible for people with mobility limitations.
- 4 Provide incentives for preserving existing affordable housing and large trees through transfers of development rights.**

This will allow unused development potential to be transferred to other sites in exchange for preservation of these features or historic buildings.
- 5 Allow small scale commercial uses on major corridors.**

Allow limited amounts of ground-floor commercial uses on major corridors and allow daycare facilities throughout the multi-dwelling zones.

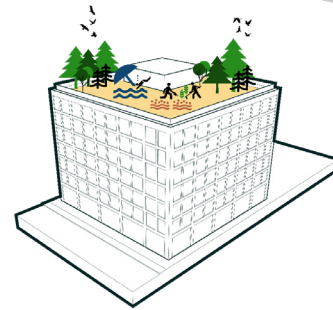


# Outdoor Spaces and Green Elements



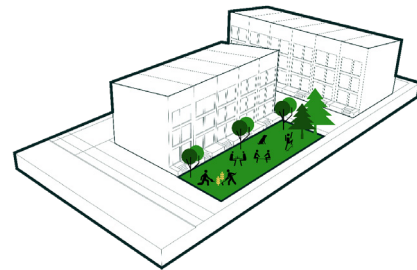
## 6 **Require residential outdoor areas in high density zones.**

Outdoor space should be 36 square feet per unit on sites up to 20,000 square feet and 48 square feet per unit on larger sites.



## 7 **Require shared common areas, such as courtyards, for large sites more than 20,000 square feet.**

Common areas must be at least 10 percent of site area (can be at ground level, raised or at rooftop level).



## 8 **Allow alternatives to conventional landscaping.**

Provide options for eco roofs, raised courtyards and stormwater planters to meet landscaping requirements.

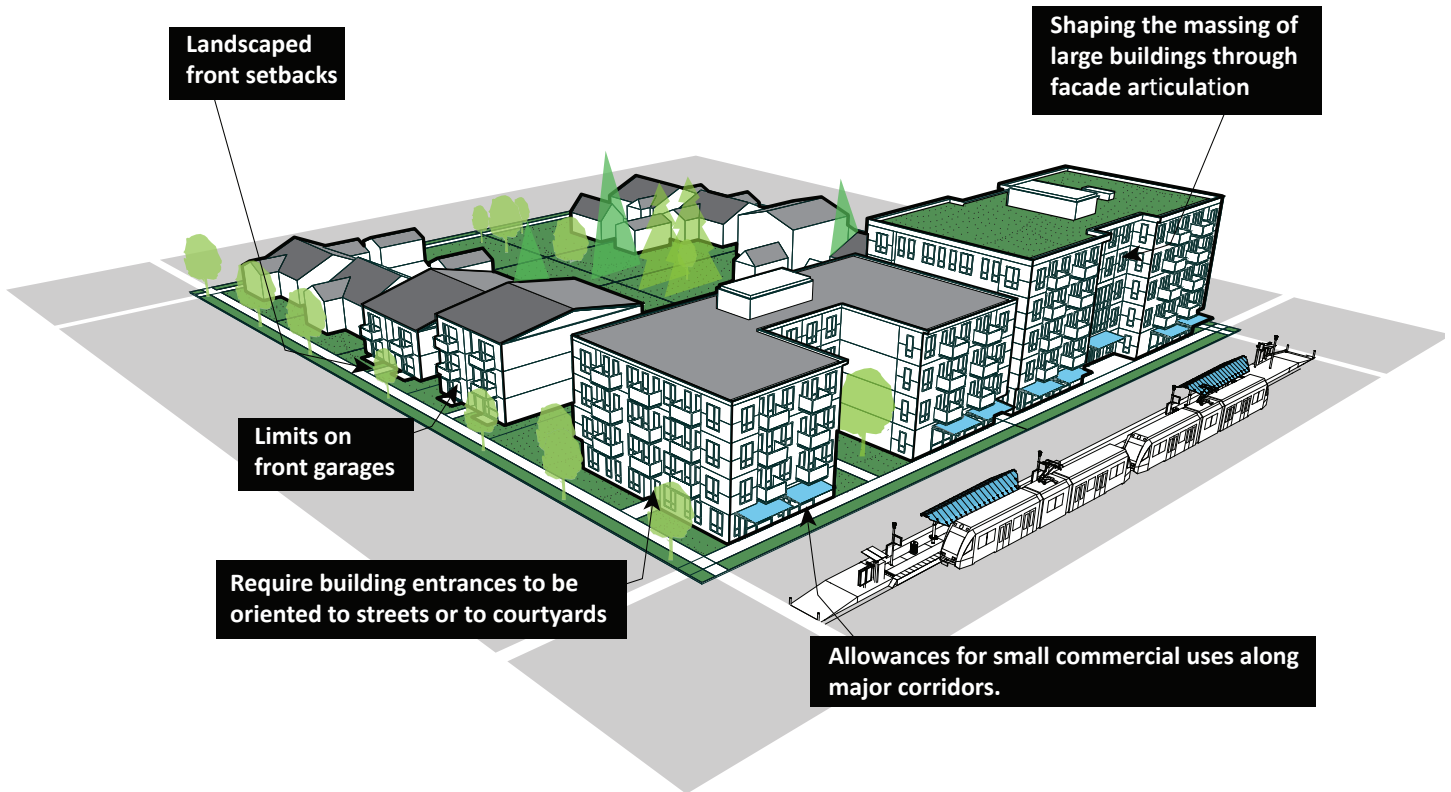
## 9 **Limit large surface parking lots and asphalt paving:**

- Limit surface parking to 30 percent of site area.
- Limit asphalt paving to 15 percent of site area (because of the greater urban heat impacts of asphalt).

## 10 **Reduce parking requirements.**

- No parking required for most development on small sites (up to 10,000 square feet in size).
- On larger sites, reduce the minimum required parking ratio to one space for every two units (instead of one space for each unit).

# Building Design and Scale



**11** Limit garages to no more than 50 percent of building street frontages and disallow parking in front of buildings.

**12** Require building entrances to be oriented to streets or to courtyards.

**13** Require front setbacks that reflect neighborhood patterns and limit privacy impacts.

10-foot minimum front setbacks in the RM2 (R1) and RM3 (RH) zones, with smaller setbacks allowed for commercial uses and raised ground floors, or to match adjacent buildings or accommodate courtyards.

**14** Simplify side setback regulations and reduce barriers to development on small sites.

Require 5-foot side and rear setbacks in most situations and allow small accessory structures like storage sheds in setbacks (consistent with single-dwelling zone regulations).

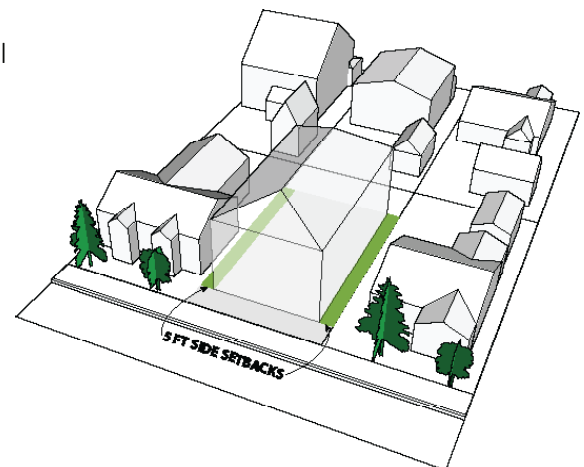
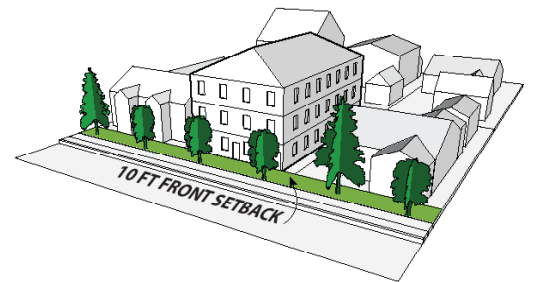
**15** Require building height transitions to single-dwelling zones.

Limit building height to 35 feet (three stories) within 25 feet of single-dwelling zones.

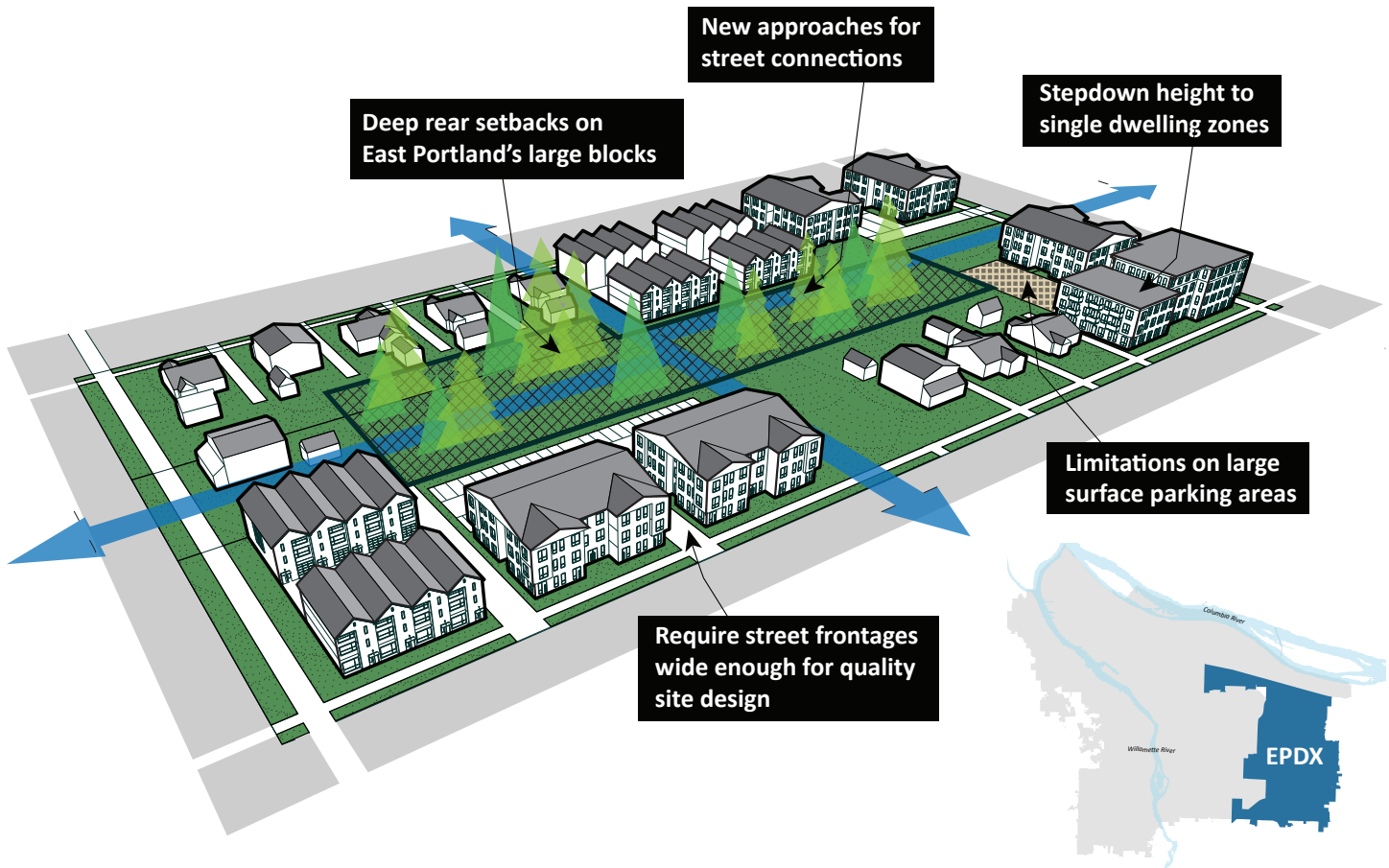
**16** Require large building facades to be divided into smaller components.

**17** Provide options for more intensely urban options along major corridors.

This includes allowances for a continuous frontage of buildings along corridors (except in the lower-scale RM1 zone) and increased height allowances in the RM4 zone close to frequent transit.



# East Portland Standards and Street Connections



- 18 Continue East Portland mid-block open areas through requirements for deep rear setbacks.**  
Require rear setbacks equivalent to 25 percent of site depth to keep the centers of blocks greener, with more open space. Provide exceptions for projects providing new street connections or central open space.
- 19 Require street frontages wide enough for quality site design and to provide space for new street connections in East Portland centers.**  
Require a minimum street frontage width of 90 feet for development in multi-dwelling zones located in the Jade District, 122nd & Burnside, Rosewood/Glenfair and Midway center areas.
- 20 Calculate development allowances prior to street dedication to facilitate street connections.**

## Other Major Proposed Amendments

- **Require transportation and parking demand management approaches.**  
In all the multi-dwelling zones in locations close to frequent transit, this will require projects with buildings with 10 or more units to use strategies that reduce transportation impacts, such as by providing residents with transit passes, bike share or car share memberships, and information on transportation options.
- **Amend mixed use zone regulations for consistency with the multi-dwelling zone changes.**  
This includes allowances for affordable housing bonuses in historic districts, no side setback requirements next to multi-dwelling zones along corridors, and changes to requirements for building height transitions and off-street parking.

# Next Steps and How to Testify



## Better Housing by Design Recommended Draft

In June 2018, the Planning and Sustainability Commission held a public hearing and received over 270 pieces of testimony from community members on the previous version of the Better Housing by Design proposals, the *Proposed Draft*. In response to this public testimony, the Commission held seven work sessions over several months, resulting in changes from the *Proposed Draft*. On April 30, 2019 the Commission voted to recommend City Council adopt their *Recommended Draft*, which is summarized in this document and is available on the project website.

## Next Steps

The *Better Housing by Design Recommended Draft* will be forwarded to City Council for a public hearing and testimony, deliberations, possible amendments and a vote. The City Council public hearing has not yet been scheduled, but is anticipated in Fall 2019.

You can request to be notified about the City Council public hearing here:

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/619996>

## How can I learn more about the Recommended Draft?

- 1. Map App:** [www.portlandmaps.com/bps/mapapp](http://www.portlandmaps.com/bps/mapapp)
- 2. Visit the Better Housing by Design project website at:**  
[www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/betterhousing](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/betterhousing)  
Get the latest news, view documents and more.
- 3. Ask City staff a question.** Call 503-823-4203 or email us at [betterhousing@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:betterhousing@portlandoregon.gov)



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