

Multi-family Zoning: Achieving Intended Densities

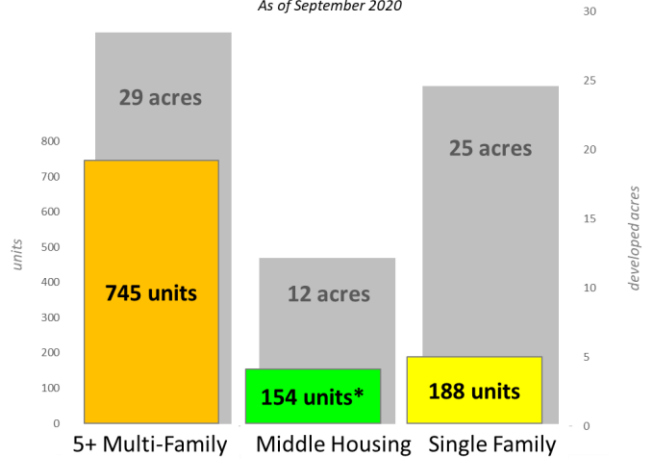


Background

The City Council asked staff to “leave no stone unturned” in seeking solutions to the City’s housing crisis. Through a series of focused discussions, staff identified several approaches that could result in increased housing variety for people of all ages, abilities and incomes. Key to these discussions was Council’s direction to find ways to allow smaller, less expensive housing units. Staff’s analysis of these options indicated that many areas zoned Residential Multi (RM) have been significantly underdeveloped with densities much less than what’s intended in the Comprehensive Plan. In some cases, these areas have been developed predominantly with lower density single-family homes.

Permits Issued in RM Zones Since Comprehensive Plan Adoption in November 2016

As of September 2020



*Middle housing forms include all Infill Toolkit forms, SF attached, SF with ADUs, duplex, triplex and fourplexes. 64 units of the 154 units are Infill Toolkit units

Summary

Changes to the land use code to facilitate the uses envisioned for RM zones have the potential to not only result in more units, but to also advance many goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan, including those related to housing affordability and options, climate change and compact land use. As such, on August 26, staff presented its preliminary analysis to the City Council Planning and Community Development Committee and was directed to further identify the necessary changes to facilitate intended development in RM zones. This project will include additional analysis, public involvement and public hearings and work sessions with the Planning Commission and City Council.



Small-scale housing in an RM zone

Potential Project Components

Simplified Zoning System

A **simplified ranged zoning system** for all RM zones. This system would assign values of high, medium or low to each RM zone and allow development at the highest density within each range.

Density Bonus

Projects in RM zones that meet location-efficient criteria would be eligible for a **density bonus**. Criteria could include proximity to high frequency transit, parks, schools, etc.

Infill Housing Toolkit

All **Infill Housing Toolkit** forms would be allowed in all RM zones. Small and smaller houses, cottages and duplexes are the only forms currently allowed in RM duplex zones.

Minimum Densities

Certain RM zones would potentially include **minimum densities**.

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General Timeline

	2019	2020	2021
Research, Analysis, and Key Issues	●————●		
Public Outreach	●————●		
Ordinance Development		●————●	
Planning Commission Review			●————●
City Council Review			●————●

What is RM Zoning?

POLICY LU-2: The Multi-Family Residential designation is intended for areas that are able to support **higher concentrations of people**, while encouraging a desirable living environment within and adjacent to these districts. This zoning also provides a **compatible mixture of residential housing types**, typical accessory uses, public and semi-public uses, office uses and limited neighborhood commercial uses in appropriate areas. (2016 Comprehensive Plan, Land Use Chapter)

Are Single-family Zones Impacted?

No. This project evaluates multi-family zones only.

For more information

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