

HOUSING TYPES IN URBAN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

Walkable, vibrant, inclusive and healthy residential neighborhoods are often made up of a variety of “middle housing” types that provide different building, yard and dwelling unit configurations to meet a variety of living preferences, family sizes and budgets. While providing for more growth, middle housing can fit in with existing residential patterns, promote walking and transit, minimize the impacts of vehicular access, and enhance the quality, character, and function of neighborhoods.

The Building Design Standards for Urban Residential Districts illustrate five Housing Types to provide both the predictability and variety of these successful middle housing neighborhoods.

ZONING REQUIREMENTS

The **Housing Types / Building Design Standards (TMC 13.06.100.F)** work together with other code sections to regulate the location, access, and “look and feel” of buildings, open space, trees, parking and other elements on a site. Refer to the following sections for other standards applicable to lots within the Urban Residential Districts:

1. **District Development Standards (TMC 13.06.020.F)** control density, allowed uses and housing types, scale (building area, height and setbacks), and the amount of amenity space and tree credits required on a site.
2. **Site Development Standards (TMC 13.06.090)** include landscaping & tree standards, off-street parking areas, pedestrian and bicycle support standards, fences and retaining walls, utilities, street level building transitions.
3. **Accessory Dwelling Units (13.06.080.A)** include requirements for these units, which are not considered a housing type.
4. **Unit Lot Subdivisions (TMC 13.04.093)** includes standards for subdivision of parcels into smaller “unit lots”, usually offered for sale as fee simple parcels.
5. **Landmarks and Historic Special Review Districts (TMC 13.07)** include applicable standards for entries and other building elements in Historic Districts. When conflicts in the code exist, Historic Standards take priority over Building Design Standards.

SELECTING A HOUSING TYPE

When applying for a permit, the applicant must indicate which Housing Type is being proposed, and must comply with Building Design Standards for that type. When combining Housing Types on a site, the applicable Housing Standards will be applied individually to each portion of the site as appropriate and indicated on the permit application.

HOUSING TYPE DEFINITIONS

The following chart outlines the five Housing Types allowed in certain Urban Residential zones.

Note that attached and detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs and DADUs) and townhouses are **not** official Housing Types in the land use code. But these common building or unit types may be located within any Housing Type (meeting the type’s standards) and must conform to the District Standards for density, FAR, height, setbacks, amenity space, landscaping and tree credits.



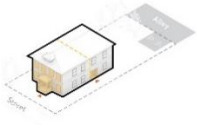
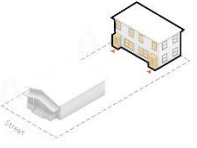

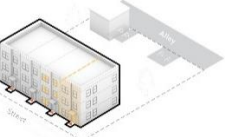
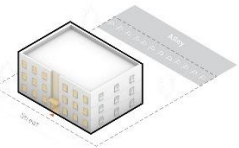
NOTE: This Tip Sheet does not substitute for codes and regulations.

The applicant is responsible for compliance with all codes and regulations, whether or not described in this document.

More information: [City of Tacoma, Planning and Development Services | www.tacomapermits.org](http://www.tacomapermits.org) | 253-591-5030

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HOUSING TYPES IN URBAN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

Houseplex	Backyard Building	Courtyard Housing	Rowhouses	Multiplexes
				
A single building with up to 6 units which is generally the size of a single-unit house, includes an entry from the street and a backyard. Includes single-unit houses.	A building located behind another structure at the rear of a lot, which may also contain a garage.	A group of detached or attached units arranged around a shared courtyard which is a shared social space taking the place of private back yards.	A multi-story building with access to the street from a front door; it is always attached to 2 to 5 other Rowhouses, which together create a "Rowhouse Cluster".	A medium building consisting of 7 or more stacked units with the appearance of a large house or a small apartment building.
Allowed in UR-1/2/3.	Allowed in UR-1/2/3.	Detached ok in UR-1/2/3. Attached ok in UR-2/3.	Allowed in UR-1/2/3.	Allowed only in UR-3.

"FORM-BASED CODE"

In the Building Design Standards section, two pages provide standards (with an overview, examples, diagrams and tables) for each of the five Housing Types. The tables include unique requirements for building orientation, access for pedestrians and cars, parking, habitable space, maximum building dimensions, requirements for entries, windows and articulation, as well as links to amenity space and tree credit requirements.

Requirements applicable to all housing types are outlined in a following Additional Building Design Standards section which includes more information about building layout on large and corner sites, and physical standards for non-residential uses and addressing. The standards do not dictate architectural style.

Part 1: Housing type overview

Part 2: Housing type examples


c. Courtyard Housing

(1) Description
A group of buildings or units arranged around a shared courtyard. Depending on the zone, units may be detached or attached. The courtyard is entered from the street, provides pedestrian access to the units, and is a shared social space which takes the place of private back yards. Detached buildings within Courtyard Housing developments may include up to six dwelling units per building.

(2) Applicability
The following standards apply to Courtyard Housing developments in all Urban Residential districts where allowed. The total number of units per lot is subject to District Development Standards density maximums.

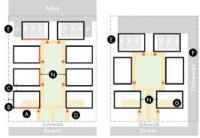
(3) Purpose
Courtyard housing offers an alternative spatial arrangement, while fitting the scale and adjacency to open spaces enjoyed in detached housing neighborhoods. The courts can contribute aesthetically to the street, or provide social spaces that foster children's play. The central courts allow residents to look in on each other occasionally, or to organize into semi-communal "co-housing" arrangements.

Character examples for Courtyard Housing



Tacoma Zoning Code
Urban Residential Districts Development & Design Standards
December 2020

Courtyard Housing Design Standards



(4) Building Placement
Buildings along a street must have primary orientation to the street. Internal buildings must orient to courtyard.

(5) Access and Parking
Entry from common courtyard to each building and/or unit. Entry from street ok at front entry.

(6) Building Size
45' max for a detached building or the wing of an attached building.

(7) Building Articulation
Covered entries required: 3' deep min. Single and entry: 30' SF min. Shared entry: 30' SF min.

(8) Open Space
Shared courtyard required. Min width: 20'.

Tacoma Zoning Code
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Part 3: Housing type plans & diagrams

Part 4: Housing type standards table

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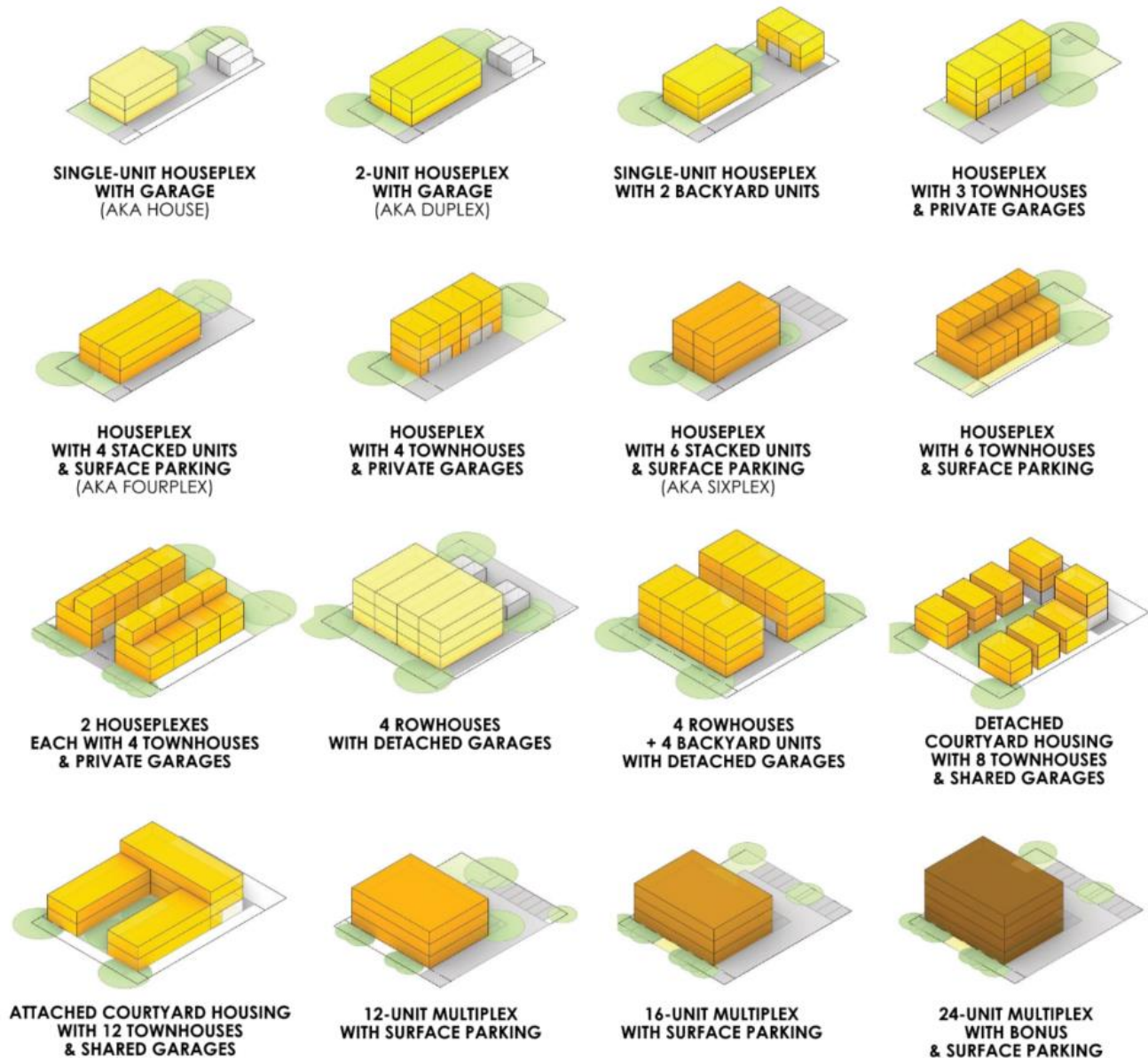


HOUSING TYPES IN URBAN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

COMBINING HOUSING TYPES

Multiple buildings and different Housing Types may be combined on a site, especially on large sites. Backyard Buildings, by definition, are anticipated behind many of the other Housing Types. When combining Housing Types on a site, the applicable Building Design Standards will be applied individually to each portion of the site as appropriate. A single building is never classified as two or more Housing Types.

Unlimited unique designs of middle housing buildings and sites are possible within the UR districts, and within the five allowed Housing Types. The below “massing diagrams” illustrate some possible scenarios on infill sites.



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