



UNLOCKING MIDTOWN'S POTENTIAL

A proposal to make small-scale development possible in MidTown, Columbus

This document explores the opportunities for and barriers to incremental development in MidTown. At its core, incremental development is about building neighborhoods that honor and strengthen the local. It is about local people responding to local need in the form of real estate and entrepreneurship. Historically, it has been an approach that created places to live, work, shop, and socialize all within an easy trip from home. The nation's best neighborhoods model this story of people gradually filling in the gaps toward a sense of completeness in a place. However, these great neighborhoods have become rare and often expensive for a variety of reasons that cities are now eager to overcome.

Many great places that were built gradually have been stagnant or deteriorating through decades of unfavorable economic and demographic shifts. Thousands of old neighborhoods see vacancies and decay where there once were corner stores and local meeting places. Still, they have a strong enough foundation to support new life in the coming decades if policy and financing cease to be a barrier. MidTown is full of neighborhoods like this - places that would benefit from little infill projects and small-scale repairs that reinvigorate a place without overhauling it. The challenge of this work is to ensure that reinvestment honors and strengthens the local, which is why incremental development is the best approach for the job. Unlocking opportunity in core neighborhoods is not only a great way to inspire pride and creativity in citizens, but a wise investment in the financial stability of the city.

This document is one product of a year-long Knight Cities collaboration between MidTown Inc., the Incremental Development Alliance, and many local partners in Columbus, Ga. The 'we' used henceforth refers to the community of people who emerged from that process with an enthusiasm to make small-scale development possible, and indeed the default, in MidTown, Columbus.

What does incremental development look like?

In practice, incremental development takes the form of *small projects that work in chorus to improve a place over time.*

Small projects

The goal is not to build a new city but to strengthen the one we have. Within existing neighborhoods, there are plenty of opportunities to create value that are simply too niche or dispersed to attract big developers. The best people for the job are locals who know and love their own communities, and who can cultivate a livelihood from small-scale projects. By focusing on the smallest steps that can be made in the right direction, we lower the barrier to entry and open the door for more citizens to participate in and benefit from revitalization. A small project could be as simple as setting out street furniture and sprucing up front porches, or setting up market tents in a parking lot on a Saturday afternoon.

Working in chorus

A key aspect of this work is harmony and momentum. Our team sought to train a whole cohort of small developers because when a group of neighbors roll up their sleeves together, the effect is greater than the sum of its parts. For example, your BBQ truck brings the crowds right by the front step of my bakery and makes the apartments above Joe's barber shop more attractive for tenants who value living near the action. Doing this work together is powerful and reinforcing because neighbors share in the rewards of their effort.

To improve a place over time

Small developers are not in it for a quick buck. The business model of a small developer depends on relationships, resourcefulness, and adaptability. They are rewarded when the neighborhood is strong and their tenants are happy. There are no shortcuts to achieve that kind of success because the process itself is what makes the whole thing work. Incremental development looks a little bit like gardening. Done thoughtfully, it takes patience and great care but grows into something much bigger than an annual yield. Over time, this care leads to real wealth derived from real assets, real community, real skills, and a commitment to place that provides stability over the long run.



Reviving the Missing Middle

When incremental development projects grow to the extent that they need a roof and walls, those buildings take the form of what is often called the “Missing Middle.”¹ These are small-scale, multi-unit buildings, to own or for rent, that fit beautifully into traditional neighborhoods. They are the “Middle” because they span the gap between detached houses and large apartment buildings to include things like triplexes, livework buildings, courtyard apartments, and other one-to-three story classics. They are “Missing” because for decades, these building types have not been built in great numbers due to changes in the building, finance, and planning industries. Missing Middle buildings are making a comeback as the most practical option for infill and neighborhood-based developers.

Columbus, like all cities with historic neighborhoods, has great examples of old Missing Middle buildings already. The challenge is to create the conditions for people to build, repair, or adapt additional Missing Middle buildings in their neighborhoods.

Why is this kind of development valuable?

Incremental development is valuable at the municipal, neighborhood, and individual level:

1. For the developer, building at this scale allows one to invest in their own neighborhood and cultivate local, lasting benefits. Small-scale development and the incremental approach are accessible to a far broader population than conventional real estate development, which means that the community can take ownership over the fate of their neighborhood and earn a return on sweat equity. When a small developer ensures that a building’s income exceeds its expenses, they create something valuable in the neighborhood that can be maintained and even improved over time. This is a sound personal investment that also gives back to the place that makes it possible.
2. For neighborhoods, incremental development can help repair damaged places and make them whole again, or create new life that makes them better than ever. Missing Middle buildings are perfect tools for adapting neighborhoods on a lot-by-lot basis. These buildings are well suited to the kind of infill lots available in most urban areas and they help add units without substantially changing the feel or scale of the street. Missing Middle buildings allow neighborhoods to keep their charm but grow their market.

¹ The term Missing Middle was coined by Opticos Design.

With more people living in the same land area, there is a greater customer base to sustain amenities like stores and restaurants nearby. This creates opportunities for local entrepreneurs and their employees while improving the general livability of the neighborhood.

3. For cities, it leads to neighborhoods that give more than they take. Adding Missing Middle to an area like MidTown, otherwise home to detached houses and struggling commercial property, builds the tax base. This low-footprint, high-impact development has a much more favorable value-per-acre² than the status quo, providing more support for infrastructure and amenity budgets.

Understanding Value-per-acre

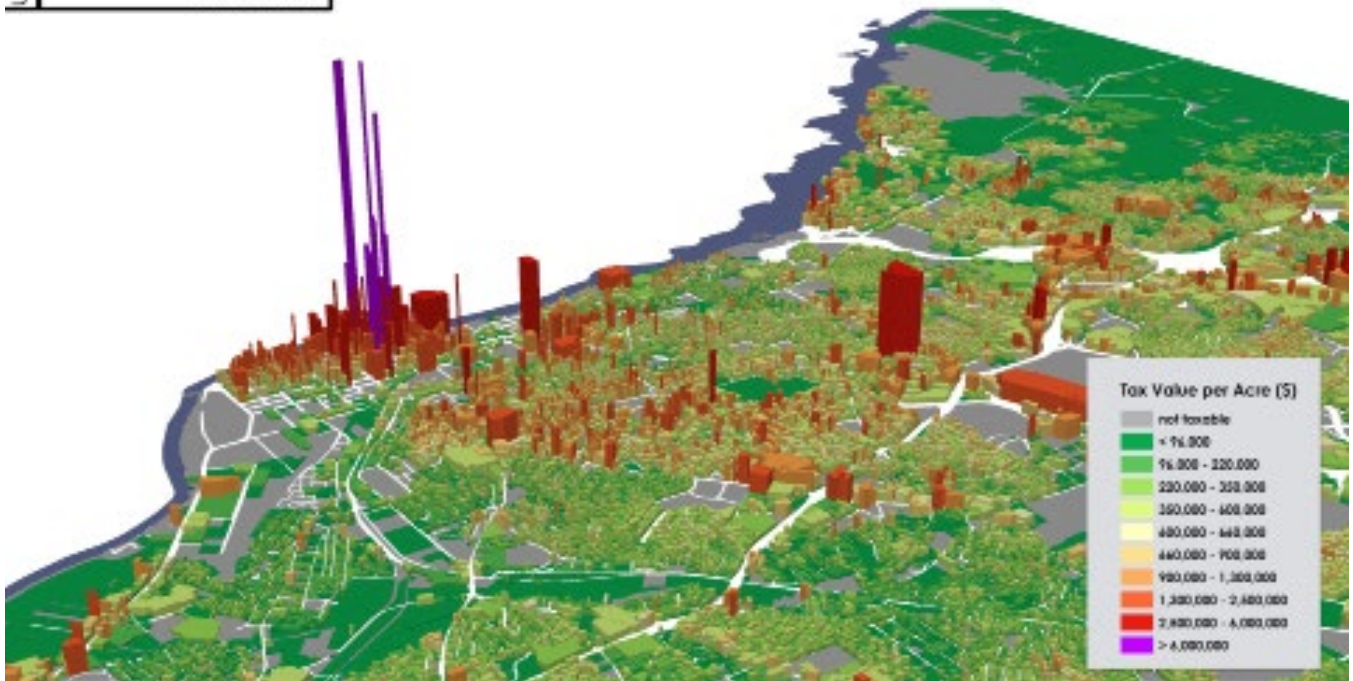
A city depends on taxable land to cover the costs of everything from infrastructure to emergency services. While it is possible for a city to grow the size of its population, without annexing other communities, it is not possible for cities to in the amount of taxable land. It's critically important to use the existing land base responsibly, especially since the decisions we make about land use generally have decades-long consequences. We should measure the potency of development from the perspective of value-per-acre, not just gross value, since the amount of land in the city is finite. Compact development also carries the benefit of more efficient infrastructure use, requiring less road, pipe, and wire to be installed and maintained.

A city does not need to *maximize* value-per-acre with each development, but it should try to *optimize* value-per-acre by balancing developments with a strong financial impact alongside developments that have a strong community value. Within a value-per-acre analysis, Missing Middle buildings once again provide a happy medium. They can outperform the status quo even on small lots without being overbearing. Visually, they help provide a smooth transition between detached houses and bigger mixed-use or commercial properties.

Next page: Diagrams from Joe Minicozzi of Urban3. A three dimensional representation of value-per-acre in Columbus shows the potency of downtown. On a smaller scale, the chart demonstrates that while Wal-Mart has a high gross taxable value, when impact is measured per acre it underperforms main street style development by a wide margin. A meaningful analysis of development should compare apples to apples using land area consumed as the common denominator.

2 See breakout box on next page.

Urban3
Tax Value per Acre
 Columbus, GA



Urban3
Apples to Apples
 Comparing land use types



How to get there?

Columbus already has a great starting point to embrace the power of small-scale development. The city center is gaining momentum and the next logical step is to let that momentum spread into MidTown where the existing neighborhoods are well positioned for infill. Columbus also has helpful precedents, supportive organizations and civil servants, and creative citizens that will all help fill the gaps in MidTown. To make the most of its strengths, Columbus ensure novices can partake in development, not just those who understand “the system.” Effected properly, a zoning Overlay District would go a long way in addressing that challenge. While there are many ways regulatory change can be accomplished, we have chosen the path of an Overlay District because it has precedence in Columbus and presents an attainable first step in an ongoing commitment to calibrate rules toward locally-powered development.

The Overlay District would be an alternative set of zoning rules applied to a specific geographic area which attempt to accomplish the following:

- **Re-legalize the built heritage of Columbus.** There are many Missing Middle precedents in MidTown that the community cherishes but violate the zoning code. The Overlay District would provide pathways for these building types to be repaired, renovated, and even rebuilt from scratch.
- **Put the MidTown Tax Allocation District (TAD) to work.** The TAD was created in hopes that development revenues in MidTown would feed back into a virtuous circle of infrastructure and public realm improvements. However, zoning in the area is presently prohibiting the kinds of development that could kickstart this cycle. The Overlay District would unlock development opportunities in the TAD.
- **Make building approvals more straightforward and predictable.** Big developers with the resources to navigate a complicated rezoning process are not lining up to work in MidTown. Therefore, to stimulate development, it is imperative that the system work for small-scale developers who can be homegrown. Small development cannot bear the overhead burden of hiring consultants and changing the rules, nor can novice developers be expected to guess where and how zoning variances are attainable. The Overlay District would make it possible for small-scale developers to build quality projects by-right, with minimal cost of delay, negotiation, or getting variances.

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How did we arrive at that suggestion?

When this project began in the summer of 2016, we gathered a room of city officials, community leaders, and public servants to role play as Developers for the Day. This process involved taking the financial realities of real estate development and applying them to a current set of zoning regulations, a procedure we refer to as a stress test. In small groups, participants were assigned modest building plans ranging from a single-story commercial shop to a three-story 12-plex. Each group was to find a way to make the site plan legal and the building profitable given each zone's base requirements. Participants were surprised to discover that parking minimums sunk nearly every project. They also struggled to "build" anything greater than two units without violating minimum lot sizes or setbacks.

This launched an exploration into specific zoning amendments which could give small-scale development a fighting chance.

Current zoning challenges

The IncDev team performed further stress tests on MidTown zoning with results that mirrored those of the Developer for a Day exercise. The challenges uncovered formed the basis for zoning amendments discussed later.

Off-street parking minimums

Parking challenges revealed a large gap between the perceived possibilities for a lot on a spreadsheet vs. a site plan. Even where a lot was large enough to accommodate the gross *area* of required parking spaces (a minimum 1.5 spaces per one bedroom unit, and two spaces for two bedroom units), practical site *layout* became a limiting factor. When combined with setbacks, it became difficult to fit much more than 0.5 spaces per unit due to the inflexible geometry of parking lot design. Another unfortunate outcome was the sacrifice of virtually all quality open space to asphalt parking on a site. Only mandatory front or side setbacks were left over as permeable landscaping on small lots overwhelmed by parking.

Despite the clear intent for multi-family developments in residential multi-family zones, parking requirements restrict housing far below the number of units a site could comfortably accommodate. For example, the path of least resistance on a single 50ft wide lot becomes two units with three parking



spaces, instead of the maximum of three units, because the required five parking spaces do not fit. While a duplex can be considered multi-family it is an underwhelming manifestation of MidTown's development goals for these multi-family zones.

Multi-family demands multiple lots

Beyond parking, other layers of zoning combine to prevent the frugal use of land. A single 50ft lot could comfortably fit the footprint of a two-to-three story sixplex or even eightplex, as was common practice historically, but density maximums in MidTown's multi-family zones allow only two-to-three units per 50ft x 150ft lot. When smaller unit sizes for studio and one bedroom apartments result in smaller overall building sizes, the disparity grows between the practical vs. regulatory land area requirements.

In fact, in order to satisfy minimum lot area and lot coverage requirements, one would need to purchase adjacent lots to build most multi-family housing. Beyond the additional and arguably unnecessary expense, this workaround disrupts the streetscape leaving large gaps between small buildings. This changes the character of existing MidTown neighborhoods in a way that would justifiably promote opposition to new development by neighbors. Even heritage designation cannot protect old neighborhoods from being dismantled by zoning rules.

This approach to capping units simply *rearranges* the mass of buildings on a block instead of increasing the population and value of a given area. It is an approach that does nothing to make nearby retail and other neighborhood services viable and it threatens the supply of naturally occurring affordable housing provided by older structures. Since MidTown lots are already platted and fixed in size and configuration, it makes sense to calibrate zoning rules to meet the potential of those fixed parameters and reap the financial and social benefits.



HISTORICALLY:
MISSING MIDDLE
HOUSING EVOLVED OVER TIME

1 UNIT



3 UNITS



3 UNITS



4 UNITS



5 UNITS



2 UNITS



50ft x 150ft LOTS
18 UNITS / ACRE

TODAY:
TO SUBDIVIDE OLD HOUSES
OR BUILD NEW MISSING MIDDLE
YOU NEED TO CONSOLIDATE LOTS

1 UNIT



3 UNITS



4 UNITS



2 UNITS



50ft x 150ft LOTS
10 UNITS / ACRE

How zoning affects streetscapes

Common zoning requirements like minimum lot size, maximum density, and maximum lot coverage are intended to prevent overcrowding and protect open space. Often these requirements are over-ambitious and make for an inhospitable streetscape and unnecessarily expensive development (which gets passed on to tenants and buyers). In particular, poorly calibrated zoning can:

- 1) Stifle development, encouraging vacant lots or neglected buildings
- 2) Encourage use of extra space for unsightly parking
- 3) Lower tax revenue
- 4) Create gaps in the streetscape, lowering a block's street appeal

Consider the impact of minimum lot sizes, often expressed in minimum square feet (of lot) per unit. In existing neighborhoods, lots have a fixed depth so you can only grow your lot size by purchasing adjacent properties. Let's say you have a generous lot depth of 150ft in a zone with a minimum lot size of 3000 sf/unit. With a standard lot width of 50ft, you could only build two units per lot even when designated a multi-family zone ($50 \times 150 = 7500$). This effectively caps the value that can be added to the street and limits the customer base for local shops and restaurants.

It gets even tougher in those cozy neighborhoods where lots are under 50ft wide. With a lot frontage of 35ft, you would need two lots to build *anything*, let alone multi-family housing. Historic small lots become undevelopable unless consolidated, often requiring one to tear down old buildings to make way for a single new building. Even where that new building could be a great addition to the street, it will weaken the streetscape by creating large gaps between buildings, gaps that usually get filled with cars. This lowers the value of the street in taxable potential as well as qualitative measures like street appeal.

The coziness of the neighborhood depends on a tight, consistent streetscape; zoning should protect that, not forbid it. Adjusting minimum lot size and zoning base requirements to match the practical needs of site design is a necessary step toward great infill and more valuable neighborhoods.

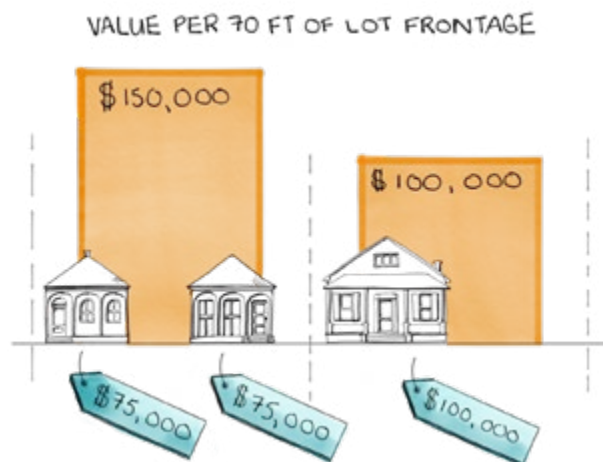
See these concepts illustrated on the following page..



The coziest neighborhoods often have narrow lots and a tight streetscape.



Even a nice new building can disrupt the streetscape when its development leads to large or inconsistent gaps between buildings.



If you have to tear down two homes to build every new home, you'll also erode your tax base.

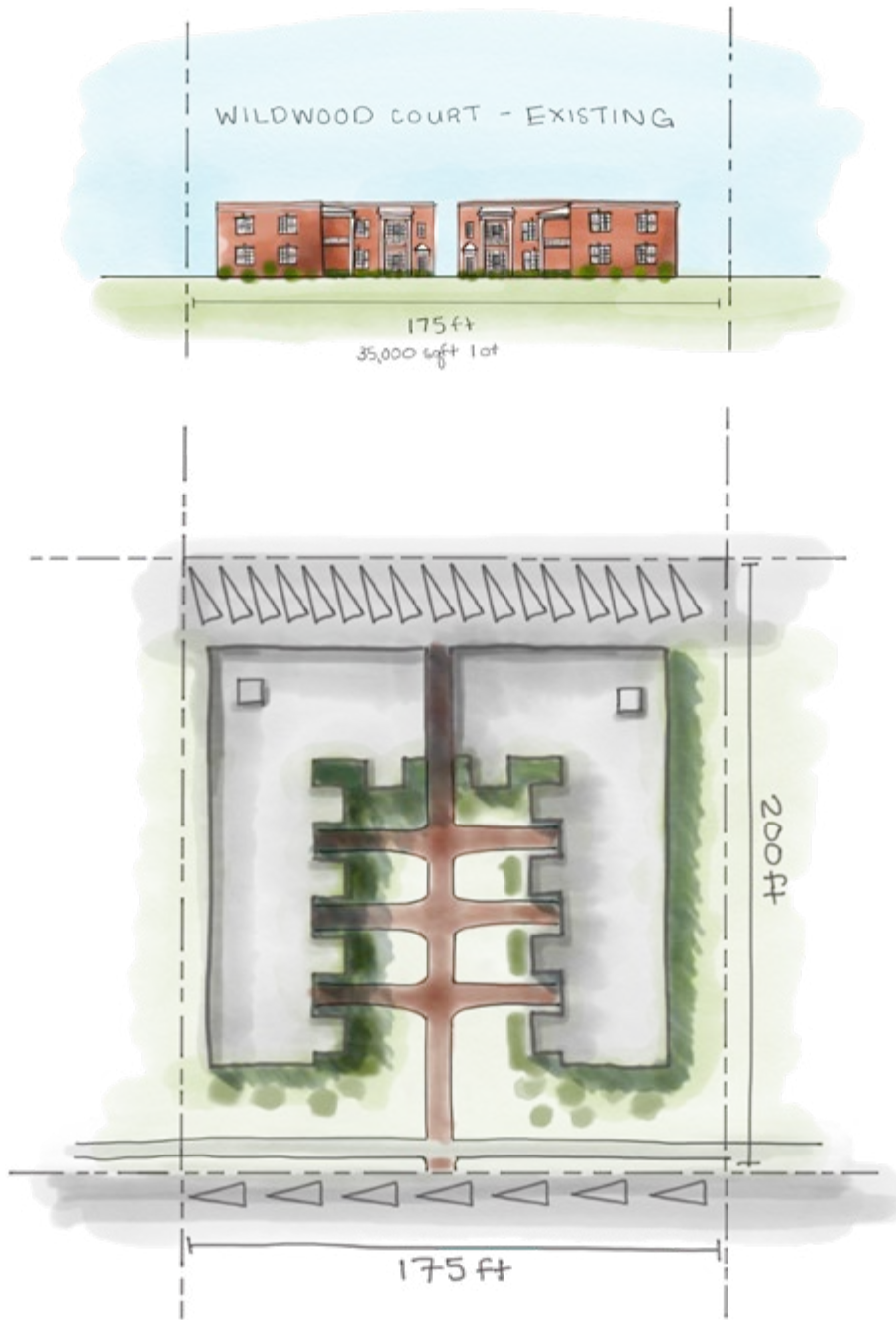
Reverse engineering a classic

Few apartment buildings in Columbus are as highly regarded as Wildwood Court, a classic courtyard development of 24 one and two bedroom apartments built in 1927. This building is beloved for its beauty and elegant contribution to the streetscape. It also delivers an enviable value-per-acre to the city in terms of tax revenue.

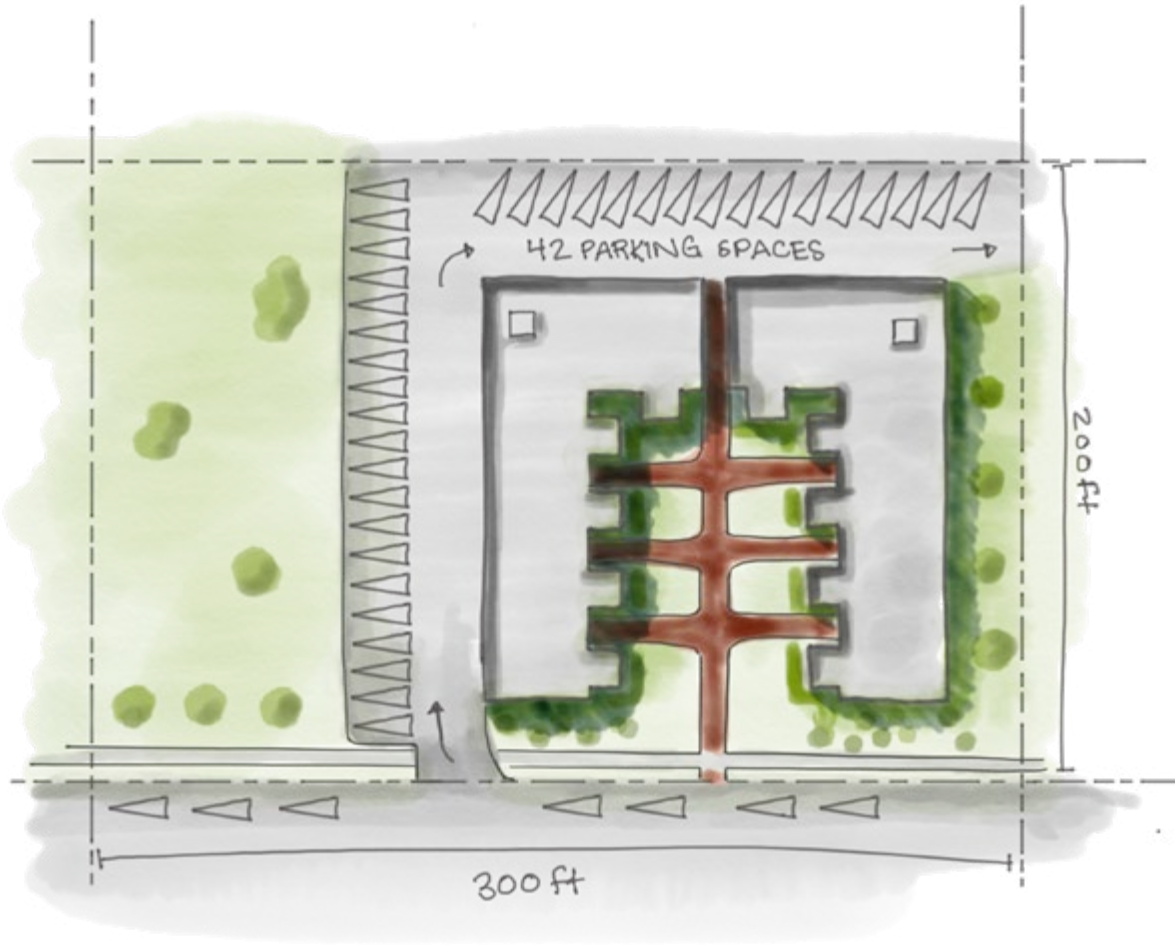
As illustrated in the following pages, the existing Wildwood Court fits snugly on a 175ft wide by 200ft deep lot. There appear to be just shy of 20 angled parking spaces hidden behind the building and at least six on-street parking spaces in front of the building. The courtyard layout allows for plenty of greenspace.

What would it take to rebuild this classic under the current zoning code? At minimum, almost double the land and over double the parking would be needed. Built today, Wildwood Court would need 300ft of frontage and over 40 off-street parking spaces. This would break down the streetscape and impose unnecessary expense on the development. Based on Wildwood's current rents, it's unlikely this building would be viable for a developer today even with conservative construction and operating cost estimates. That is largely a product of market forces, but right-sizing zoning would be one step toward helping today's developers put forward a Made-in-Columbus adaptation for current market conditions.





WILDWOOD COURT - CURRENT ZONING

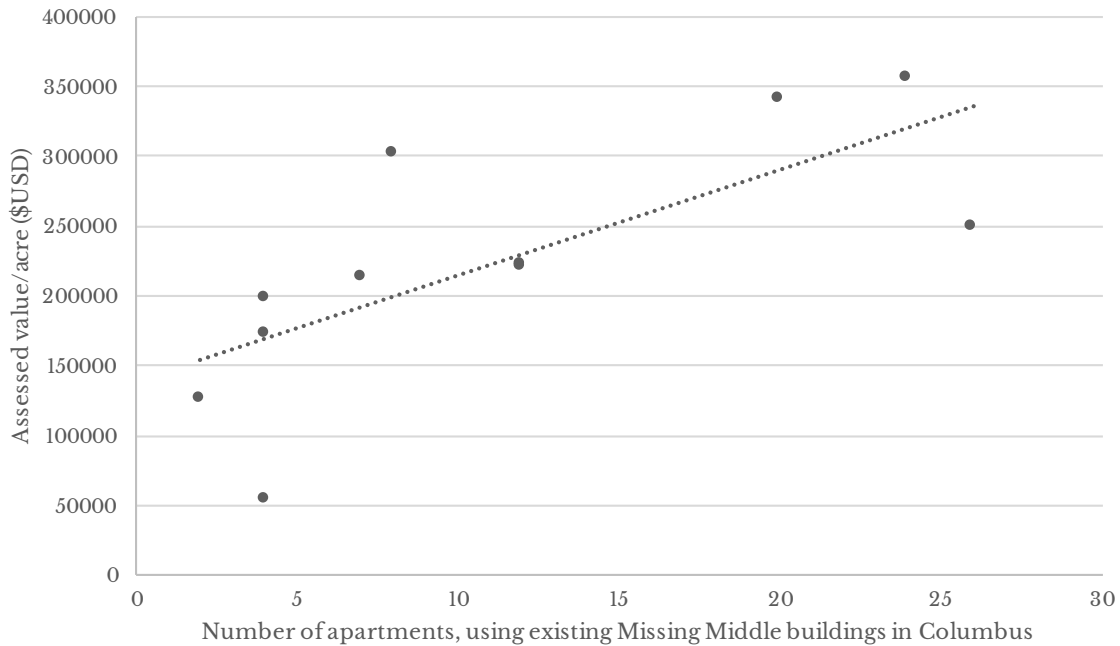


Zoning creates a MidTown-wide revenue cap and rent gap

Without the ability to build compact, Missing Middle style infill, the City of Columbus has inadvertently created a property tax revenue cap on small lots commonly found in MidTown. This is especially consequential for multi-family and commercial zones which are not subject to the assessed value tax freeze that applies to single-family houses in Columbus. Unlocking the potential of these lots could generate significant new funds for the city general fund and benefit the West MidTown Tax Allocation District.

Using examples of existing Missing Middle buildings in MidTown, this chart shows the correlation between a higher number of units and the assessed property value-per-acre. Again, a City should not aim to maximize value everywhere - a philosophy that would replace parks with high rises - but optimize value by balancing positive financial return and positive social return. Note that the highest value-per-acre building displayed on this chart is Wildwood Court, discussed above.

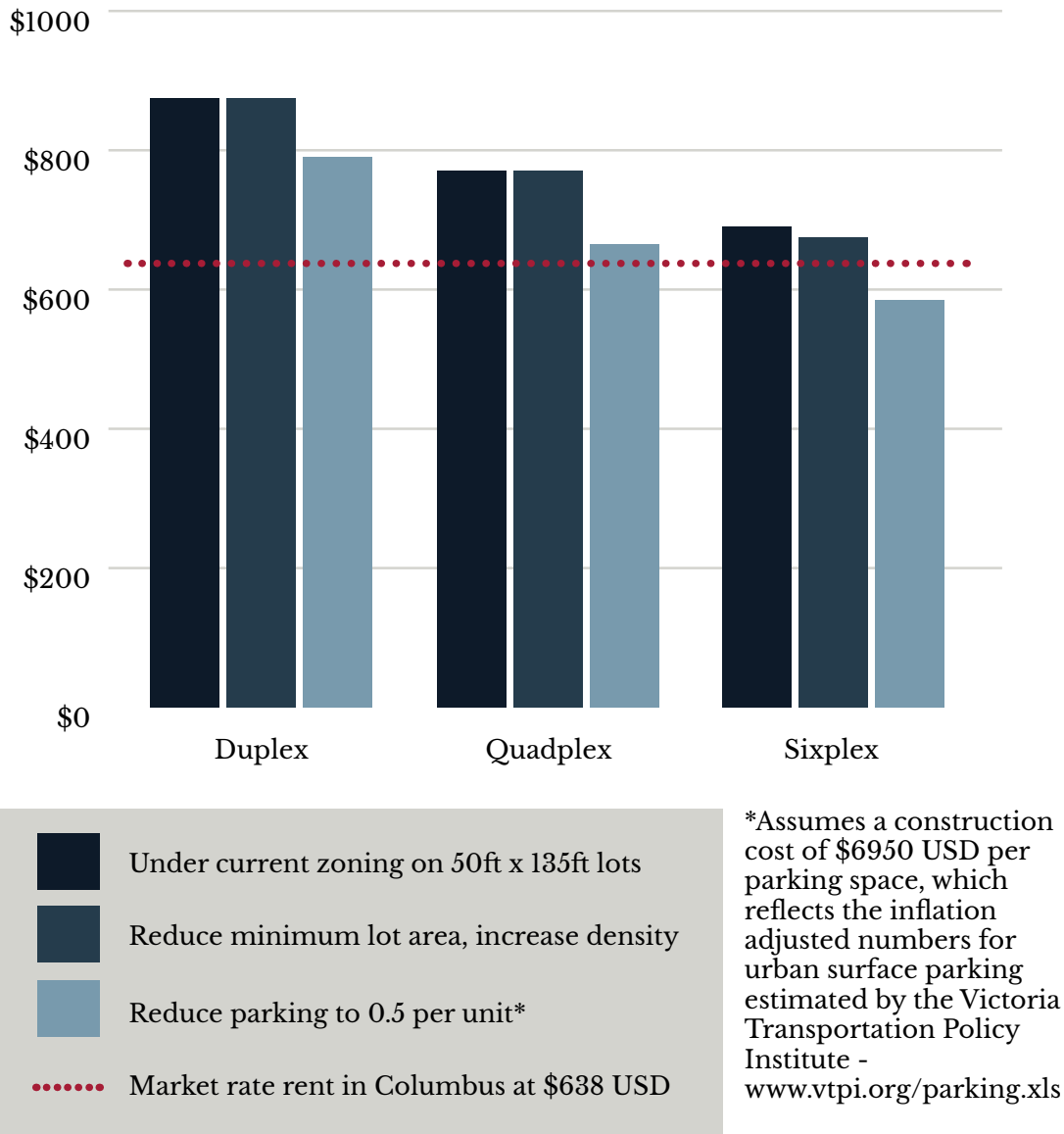
Growing value-per-acre with higher intensity development



The problem goes deeper than deprived tax revenue though. Unsustainable costs imposed on development result in one of two outcomes: people stop building things because they are non-viable at market rates; or extra costs get passed on to tenants and buyers.

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Rent required for a two bedroom apartment



This chart illustrates how rent is influenced by the policy challenges discussed earlier. Since MidTown is not a hot market, for a new development to be worth the risk to an investor, rents would need to be higher than the market supports. However, when a sixplex can be built on a 50ft lot with only three off-street parking spaces, rents for that new building finally become competitive. The Overlay Zoning suggests policy moves in this direction. (Assumptions for this illustration: hard costs \$100/sf, soft costs \$22/sf, land cost \$1.45/sf, cap rate 6.5%, two-bed apt size 720-840sf)

Stipulated densities are missing the mark

In the Residential Multi-Family zones (RMF1, RMF2), stipulated densities are so low that they prevent meaningful multi-family development. On the other hand, stipulated density for the the Residential Office (RO) zone is unachievable on typical (read: small) infill lots. For example, a 150ft x 175ft lot (0.6 acres) could scarcely achieve 26 units/acre, 60% the stipulated density of 43 units/acre. The singular or combined effects of setbacks, minimum lot size per unit, and required off-site parking restrict density far below the intended levels.

This is another case where on a spreadsheet, density calculations may look reasonable, but as soon as one attempts to design a site around the required parking lot, limits become apparent. While larger lots can accomodate densities approaching the stipulated 43 units per acre, they must do so at great cost to the streetscape and walkability. The current code is optimized for buildings four or more stories tall with a small footprint, on huge lots where virtually every scrap of spare land is dedicated to asphalt parking. This is a recipe for an unlovable neighborhood.

Commercial-only zones are stuck in a stalemate

The Neighborhood Commercial (NC) and General Commercial (GC) zones suffer an even worse fate. As they are not currently allowed to include any residential units, these zones are stuck waiting for commercial rents to increase enough to justify repair or development. At present, commercial rents are too low for property owners to invest in substantial improvements to the area. Should residential units be permitted in these zones, their higher rents may create opportunities for the NC and GC zones to experience meaningful investment.

A note on gross vs. net density

As a matter for clarification, there is inconsistency in the existing code as to whether base requirements are calculated to net density or gross density (the former does not include public right of ways in lot area whereas the latter does). This conflict makes the code confusing, especially for non-professionals, and has a material impact on the outcome of projects. This matter should be outlined and illustrated clearly in the code.

MidTown Overlay

At present, the Columbus zoning code leaves a lot of opportunity on the table, especially for the MidTown area. If Columbus agrees that this regulatory environment is an impairment, they need to find an alternative path forward. We are recommending an Overlay to test in MidTown as a small and attainable first step.

By creating a district with an alternative set of zoning requirements, MidTown can make small-scale infill development possible as of right in MidTown and encourage the renovation and new construction of Missing Middle buildings.

The changes would physically depart from the status quo by:

- Allowing development of multi-unit buildings on single lots in multi-family zones, even those less than 50ft wide which are undevelopable under the current code
- Allowing residential uses in commercial-only zones
- Allowing for continuous streetscapes without large gaps between buildings
- Allowing for the built form intended by the current zoning code to be actualized on small lots where it is now prevented by conflicting requirements

Goal: Increase tax base and maintain the character of MidTown

By creating more opportunities for small-scale development, the proposed zoning changes would raise the ceiling of revenues for the Tax Allocation District, funding infrastructure and public amenity investments. By diversifying new development, Columbus will benefit from a growing tax base that rises with market values independent from the homes with frozen assessed value.

The potential impact of this would be most deeply felt in the suffering commercial areas of MidTown, which as discussed above are stuck in disrepair due to low rents. By allowing for residential uses in these commercial zones, housing rents could help buoy the business model for commercial real estate. In other words, adding housing units can help property owners stabilize and rehabilitate decaying commercial buildings.

Our recommendation would be to make the Overlay District mandatory as it would greatly improve streetscapes and help buffer against developments that would adversely impact urban design. The following technical section provides the text amendments that would define the MidTown Overlay.

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MIDTOWN OVERLAY

Technical Section

This section suggests changes that refine the base requirements of the prevalent zoning classifications in MidTown so that more Missing Middle buildings can be constructed. These buildings are generally one to three stories tall and under 12,000sf. The suggested text amendments will help MidTown make the most of existing lots and building stock, and will promote building of new housing and renovation of underused commercial buildings. There may be several ways to implement these changes to affect only the specified lots in MidTown, beyond an Overlay District. We have suggested an overlay because it is a familiar tool that has been used elsewhere in Columbus to preserve and enhance neighborhood character.

Specific zone amendments and comparisons

There are five zones for which we are proposing text amendments: Neighborhood Commercial (NC), General Commercial (GC), Residential Multi-Family 1 (RMF1), Residential Multi-Family 2 (RMF2), and Residential Office (RO). The residential zones have sub-categories such as duplex, multi-family, and non-residential, which stipulate different requirements.

This technical summary includes seven examples that compare what can be built under the current zoning and under the proposed changes on typical lots in west MidTown. The current zoning examples are meant to show a range of buildings that could be built by right today with no special permission or approvals. This range includes situations where the current zoning permits no buildings or buildings out of character with the neighborhood, as well as buildings that would fit right in.

The current code cannot reliably create a consistent outcome on small parcels in MidTown, especially sites under half an acre in size. That inconsistency is a challenge for planning, urban design, and economic development and promotes a fear of development from citizens. The Overlay calibrates regulations so that reasonable structures could consistently be built as of right on lots typical to MidTown in each major zone.

General amendments (beyond individual zones)

In addition to the specifications of individual zones, there are other requirements in the Unified Development Ordinance that should be changed or excepted in the specified area. These are critical factors that can halt a project or ruin a streetscape even where zone level changes are adopted. We recommend the following changes:

Section NEW

**NEW* Build-to Line* - Principal building front setback at cannot exceed 25ft in any residential zone and 15ft in any commercial zone. For lots that extend across an entire block, the build-to line is considered in force for buildings that front any public street.

Section 4.3.9 - Number of Parking Spaces Required

**NEW* All Sites* - No parking is allowed in front of the principal structure between the building and the public right of way. Exceptions can be made by the Planning Director to accommodate state-permitted accessible parking spaces.

Residential Parking - Units with one or more bedrooms require one space per unit. Any studio unit or single unit backyard cottage (on properties where the main building is four units or fewer) does not require parking. On-street parking directly adjacent to property border can be counted toward parking requirements. Guest parking is not required where there is on-street parking available.

Commercial Parking - No minimum parking requirements on lots less than 21,780 sf (0.5 acre). For sites one acre or less, number of parking spaces required cannot exceed the number which fit after the building is sited.

Section 4.2.19.B - Minimum Distances between Multi-Family Buildings

No minimum distance required by municipal code. Refer to adopted building codes for minimum distances based on number of wall openings.

Section 4.5.6 - Buffer Requirements

Type A Buffers Allowed between all buildings RMF1, RMF2, RO, NC, GC and sfR4.

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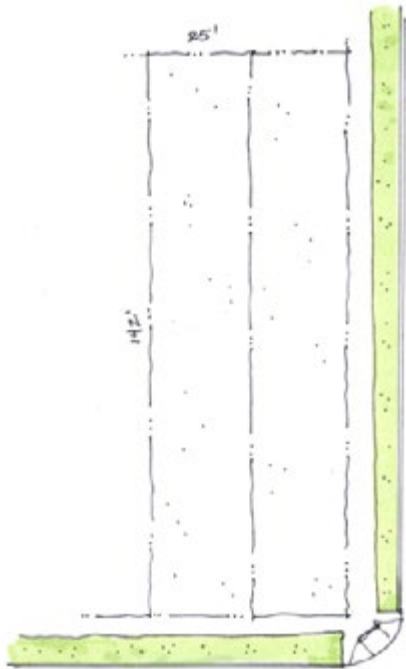
RMF1 - Residential Multi-Family 1 (Single Family)

This is the lowest intensity of the residential multi-family zones and presents an opportunity to re-legalize development of cottages on the 25ft wide lots found in East Highlands and East Wynnton neighborhoods. At present, there are many narrow lots in Midtown stuck in limbo due to the 50ft minimum lot width. Landowners cannot rehabilitate or build new without purchasing adjacent lots to consolidate parcels at significant expense.

Code	Min Lot Size	Max Density	Max Lot Coverage	Min Lot Width	Max Bldg Height	Min Front Setback	Min Side Setback	Min Corner Side Setback	Min Rear Setback
Current Zoning	6,000 SF	7.25 units/acre	35%	50'	35'	20'	5'	20'	30'
Zoning Overlay	2,400 SF	18 units/acre	50%	25'	35'	20'	5'	5'	10' (0' on alley)

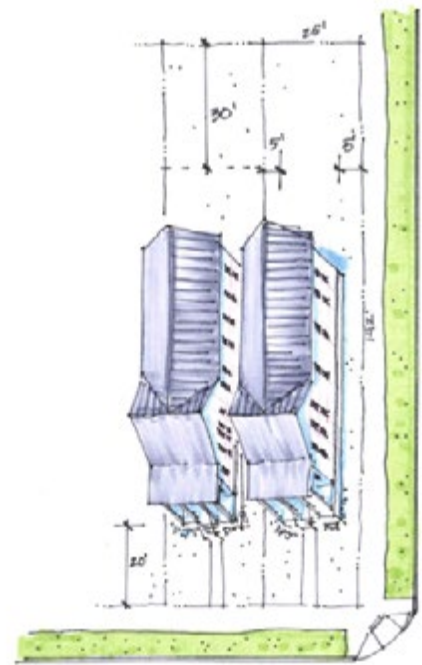
SAMPLE LOT: 25FT WIDE, 142' DEEP, 3,550 SF

Current Zoning



Because of minimum lot width and size requirements, nothing can be built on these 25ft lots individually.

Proposed Zoning



A cottage home of approximately 800 sf (15ft x 54ft in this case) can be built on 25ft lots.

RMF1 - Residential Multi-Family 1 (Duplex)

This is another opportunity to re-legalize development of cottages on the 37.5ft wide lots found in East Highlands and East Wynnton neighborhoods. With side and rear setbacks adjusted, many of these narrow lots are deep enough to accommodate a front-back duplex to give the property income potential. This simultaneously makes the building more affordable to finance with an owner-occupant and provides an additional housing unit in the neighborhood at an affordable price. It is a win-win for a lot type that is currently unbuildable.

Code	Min Lot Size	Max Density	Max Lot Coverage	Min Lot Width	Max Bldg Height	Min Front Setback	Min Side Setback	Min Corner Side Setback	Min Rear Setback
Current Zoning	6,000 SF (3,000 SF/unit)	14.5 units/acre	50%	50'	35'	20'	8'	20'	30'
Zoning Overlay	2,400 SF (1,200 SF/unit)	20 units/acre	50%	25'	35'	20'	5'	5'	10' (0' on alley)

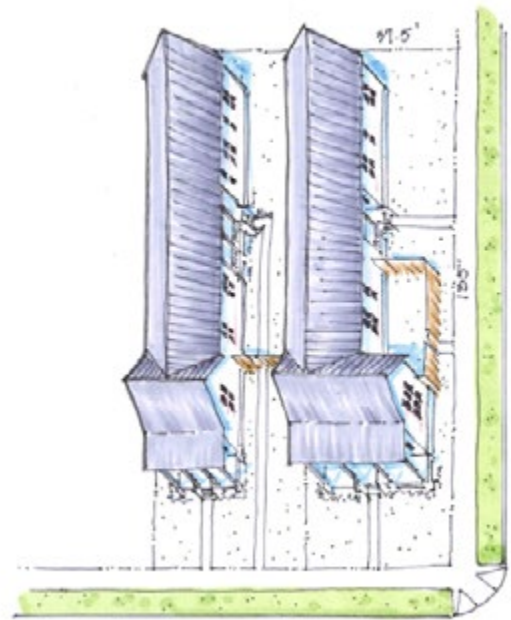
SAMPLE LOT: 37.5FT WIDE, 142' DEEP, 5,325 SF

Current Zoning



Because of minimum lot width and size requirements, nothing can be built on these 37.5ft lots individually.

Proposed Zoning



These small lots allow for a cozy front-back duplex of approximately 1200 sf. The long and narrow building form looks like a 24ft wide cottage.

RMF1 - Residential Multi-Family 1 (Multi-family)

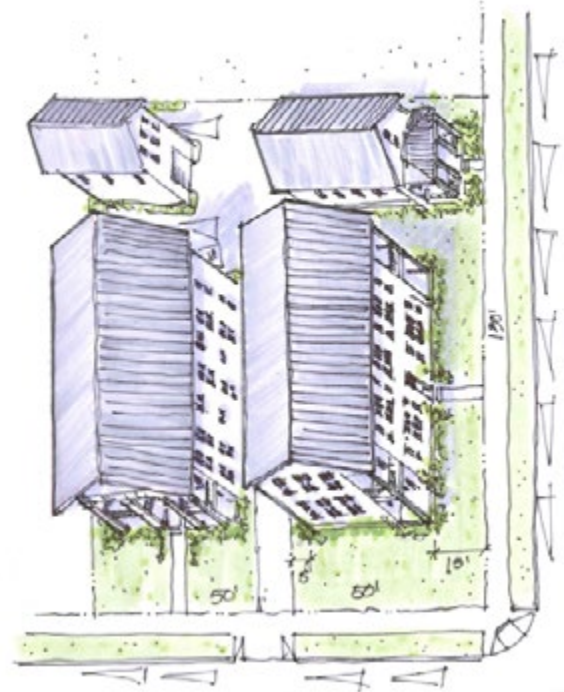
While a duplex is technically “multi,” it is not the full intent of a zone created to provide a lot of housing. The overlay zoning aims to double that intensity and make a quadplex fit on practically any 50ft wide lot. Proposed changes right-size the side and rear setbacks, adjust minimum lot size and width, and calibrate sf/unit to allow four units. Four units is a magic threshold in housing as it is the limit at which a building can be financed with a typical 30-year mortgage loan product. Any lot zoned for multi-family should allow for at least that threshold of bottom-up small-scale development.

Code	Min Lot Size	Max Density	Max Lot Coverage	Min Lot Width	Max Bldg Height	Min Front Setback	Min Side Setback	Min Corner Side Setback	Min Rear Setback
Current Zoning	6,000 SF (3,000 SF/unit)	14.5 units/ acre	50%	50'	35'	20'	8'	20'	30'
Zoning Overlay	2,400 SF (1,200 SF/unit)	28 units/ acre	50%	25'	35'	20'	5'	5'	10' (0' on alley)

SAMPLE LOT: 50FT WIDE, 130FT DEEP, 6,500 SF

Current Zoning

Proposed Zoning



Without violating the upper limits of minimum lot size (3000 sf/unit) and density (14.5 units/acre), only a duplex can be built on a 50ft wide lot.

A quadplex of approximately 4000 sf can easily fit, including reasonable off-street parking.

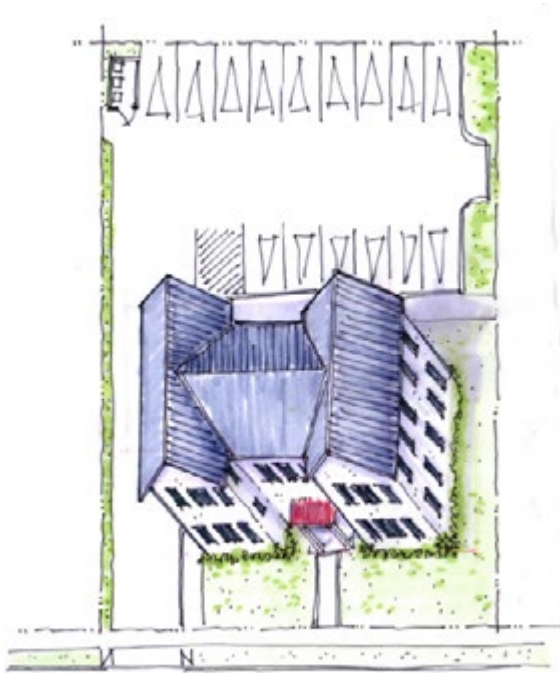
RMF2 - Residential Multi-Family 2 (Multi-family)

In theory, RMF2 is designed to be a more intense multi-family zone than RMF1. At present, the density related parameters of RMF2 make it virtually indistinguishable from a RMF1 on small lots. Under the current rules, many historic apartment developments would be illegal to build again despite these being of great value to the neighborhood and its residents. The proposed zoning asserts that RMF2 should accommodate buildings between five and 24 units on multiples of the typical 50ft wide lot. For example, 12 units on a 100ft wide lot fit nicely. Changes to minimum lot size and maximum density in particular support this.

Code	Min Lot Size	Max Density	Max Lot Coverage	Min Lot Width	Max Bldg Height	Min Front Setback	Min Side Setback	Min Corner Side Setback	Min Rear Setback
Current Zoning	7,500 SF (2,000 SF/unit)	16.5 units/acre	40%	60'	75'	20'	10'	20'	30'
Zoning Overlay	7,500 SF (1,200 SF/unit)	30 units/acre	50%	50'	55'	20'	5'	5'	30' (0' on alley)

SAMPLE LOT: 100FT WIDE, 150FT DEEP, 15,000 SF

Current Zoning



With limitations imposed by the 16.5 units/acre requirement, only six units are allowed on this 100ft lot. This site plan exceeds minimum parking requirements.

Proposed Zoning



A 12 unit, three story walkup building of approximately 9000 sf can easily fit on this 100ft lot, including reasonable off-street parking.

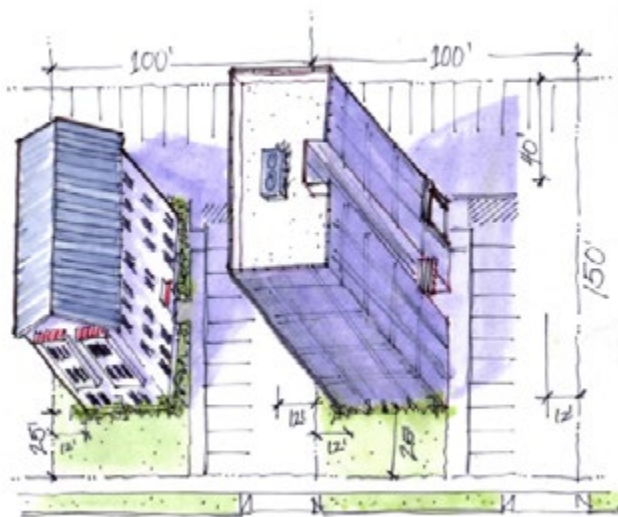
RO - Residential Office (Multi-family/Mixed-Use/Non-Residential)

This zone acts as a good buffer for sites where the ground floor use is transitioning from predominately commercial to mostly residential. This zone allows for the highest residential density of up to 43 units/acre and allows mixed-use for a limited range of commercial tenants. The proposed zoning adapts setbacks, minimum lot size and width to allow for fulfillment of the zone's intent on small sites. At present, setbacks prevent using the allotted 100% lot coverage and limit small lots to far below the allowed residential density.

Code	Min Lot Size	Max Density	Max Lot Coverage	Min Lot Width	Max Bldg Height	Min Front Setback	Min Side Setback	Min Corner Side Setback	Min Rear Setback
Current Zoning	10,000 SF (1,000 SF/unit)	43 units/acre	100%	75'	150'	25'	12'	25'	40'
Zoning Overlay	5,000 SF (800 SF/unit)	43 units/acre	100%	50'	150'	0'	0'	0'	0'

SAMPLE LOT: 100FT WIDE, 150FT DEEP, 15,000 SF

Current Zoning



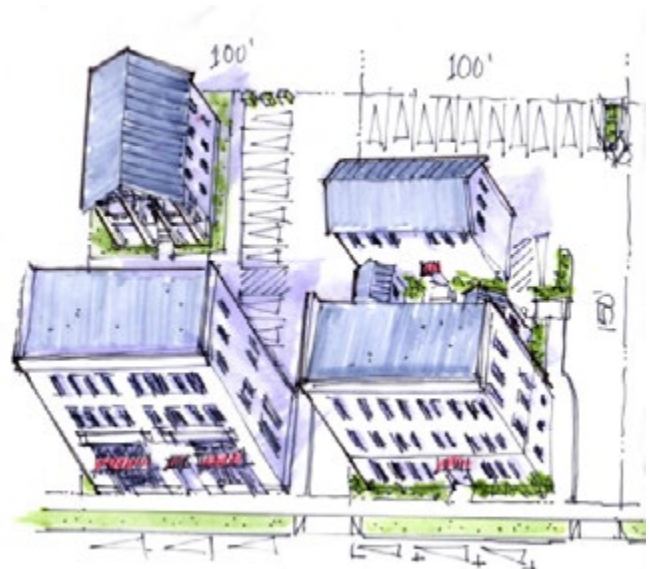
MULTI-FAMILY

NON-RESIDENTIAL

LEFT: While units/acre calculations allow 15 units, the amount of space available for efficient parking constrains the site planning possibilities. This limits the total sf size of the building (shown as ~4000 sf) and the number and type of residential units allowed.

RIGHT: Given a similar maximized parking layout (28 spaces, including some tuck under at rear), this is the largest building allowed at 7000 sf.

Proposed Zoning



MIXED USE

MULTI-FAMILY

LEFT: A three story walkup building with ten residential units and two shallow ground floor retail units (1250 sf total), plus a rear quadplex for a total of 14 units.

RIGHT: A three story walkup building with 12 units forms a courtyard with four rear units above or next to a garage for a total of 16. The site includes a reasonable amount of off-street parking, both covered and surface.

Full Overlay Tables - Residential Zones

(MidTown Overlay amendments are shaded in grey)

RMF1 - Residential Multi-family 1									
<i>Zone</i>	<i>Min Lot Size</i>	<i>Max Density</i>	<i>Max Lot Coverage</i>	<i>Min Lot Width</i>	<i>Max Bldg Height</i>	<i>Min Front Setback</i>	<i>Min Side Setback</i>	<i>Min Corner Side Setback</i>	<i>Min Rear Setback</i>
Single Family	6,000 SF	7.25 units/acre	35%	50'	35'	20'	5'	20'	30'
	2,400 SF	18 units/acre	50%	25'	35'	20'	5'	5'	10' (0' on alley)
Townhouse	1800 (1000 SF/unit)	18 units/acre	50%	20'	35'	20'	8'	20'	30'
	1800 (1000 SF/unit)	18 units/acre	50%	18'	35'	20'	5'	5'	10' (0' on alley)
Duplex	6,000 SF (3,000 SF/unit)	14.5 units/acre	50%	50'	35'	20'	8'	20'	30'
	2,400 SF (1,200 SF/unit)	20 units/acre	50%	25'	35'	20'	5'	5'	10' (0' on alley)
Multi-family	6,000 SF (3,000 SF/unit)	14.5 units/acre	50%	50'	35'	20'	8'	20'	30'
	2,400 SF (1,200 SF/unit)	28 units/acre	50%	25'	35'	20'	5'	5'	10' (0' on alley)

RMF2 - Residential Multi-family 2									
<i>Zone</i>	<i>Min Lot Size</i>	<i>Max Density</i>	<i>Max Lot Coverage</i>	<i>Min Lot Width</i>	<i>Max Bldg Height</i>	<i>Min Front Setback</i>	<i>Min Side Setback</i>	<i>Min Corner Side Setback</i>	<i>Min Rear Setback</i>
Townhouse	1,800 (1,800 SF/unit)	18 units/acre	50%	20'	35'	20'	8'	20'	30'
	1,800 (1,800 SF/unit)	18 units/acre	50%	18'	35'	20'	5'	5'	10' (0' on alley)
Duplex	7,000 SF (2,000 SF/unit)	16.5 units/acre	40%	60'	75'	20'	10'	20'	30'
	2,400 SF (1,200 SF/unit)	20 units/acre	50%	25'	35'	20'	5'	5'	10' (0' on alley)
Multi-family	7,500 SF (2,000 SF/unit)	16.5 units/acre	40%	60'	75'	20'	10'	20'	30'
	7,500 SF (1,200 SF/unit)	30 units/acre	50%	50'	55'	20'	5'	5'	30' (0' on alley)

RO - Residential Office									
<i>Zone</i>	<i>Min Lot Size</i>	<i>Max Density</i>	<i>Max Lot Coverage</i>	<i>Min Lot Width</i>	<i>Max Bldg Height</i>	<i>Min Front Setback</i>	<i>Min Side Setback</i>	<i>Min Corner Side Setback</i>	<i>Min Rear Setback</i>
Townhouse	1,800 (1,800 SF/unit)	18 units/acre	50%	20'	35'	20'	8'	20'	30'
	1,800 (1,200 SF/unit)	18 units/acre	50%	18'	35'	20'	5'	5'	30' (0' on alley)
Multi-family, Nonresidential, or Mixed Use	10,000 SF (1,000 SF/unit)	43 units/acre	100%	75'	150'	25'	12'	25'	40'
	5,000 SF (800 SF/unit)	43 units/acre	100%	50'	150'	0'	0'	0'	0'

NC - Neighborhood Commercial

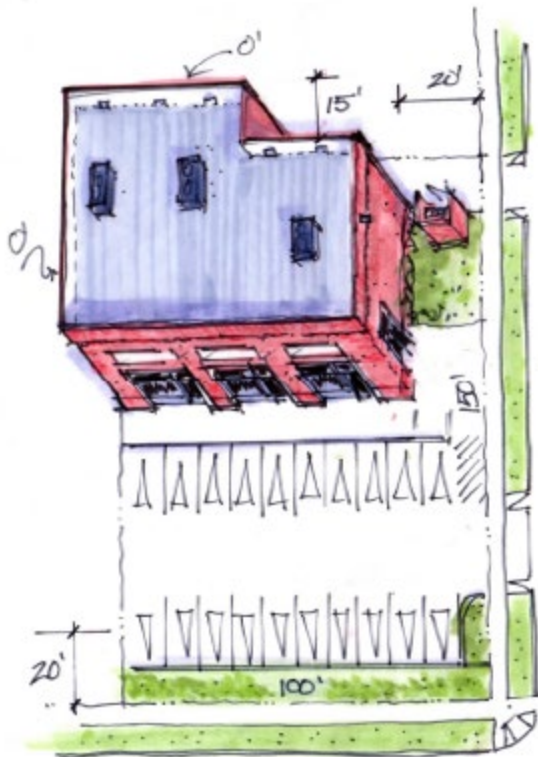
The intention of this zone is to provide commercial space for neighborhood scale businesses. While the existing zoning does allow for small buildings, the site planning parameters make for car-focused design. Rather than promoting narrow storefronts and a mainstreet feel with buildings close to the sidewalk, the base requirements are calibrated to chain style stores with parking in front. The proposed zoning corrects for these issues and also allows residential uses by right, a critical element of flexibility since commercial rents are now so low. The maximum building size of 5,000 sf is changed to a maximum building footprint of 7500 sf and no limit to total square footage, allowing for more practical multi-story buildings with residential upper floors.

Code	Min Lot Size	Max Density	Max Lot Coverage	Min Lot Width	Max Bldg Height	Min Front Setback	Min Side Setback	Min Corner Side Setback	Min Rear Setback
Current Zoning	4,000 SF (1,000 SF/unit)	None	100%	40'	50'	20'	0'/15**	20'	0'/15**
Zoning Overlay	2,400 SF (800 SF/unit)	43 units/acre	100%	25'	55'	0'	0'/15**	0'	0'/15**

*15 feet when abutting a residential zoning district.

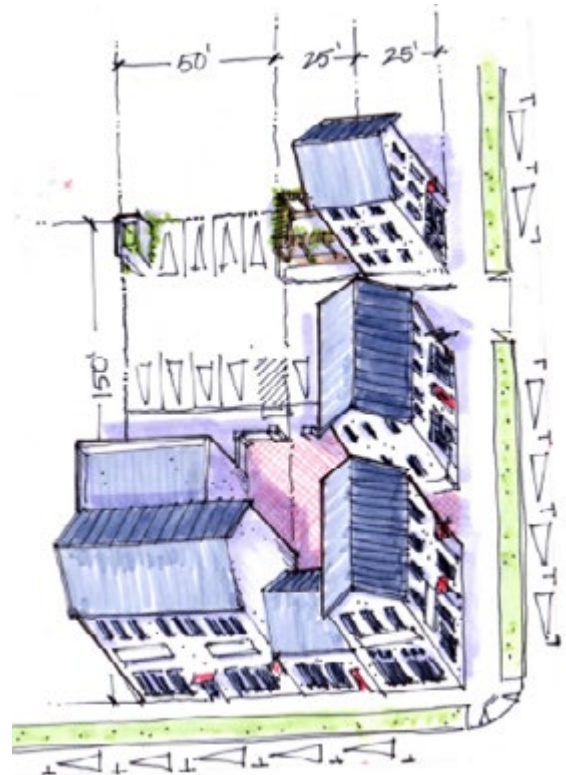
SAMPLE LOT: 100FT WIDE, 150FT DEEP, 15,000 SF

Current Zoning



A 3,750 sf (maximum size allowed is 5,000 sf) retail building shares a common wall with the property line down the middle. Parking is allowed in front of the building. No residential uses are permitted.

Proposed Zoning



Individual buildings as small as 25ft wide are each on fee simple lots with rear parking via a shared cross easement configuration. Residential units are incorporated in the rear ground floor or on the second floor of these potentially owner-occupied buildings.

GC - General Commercial

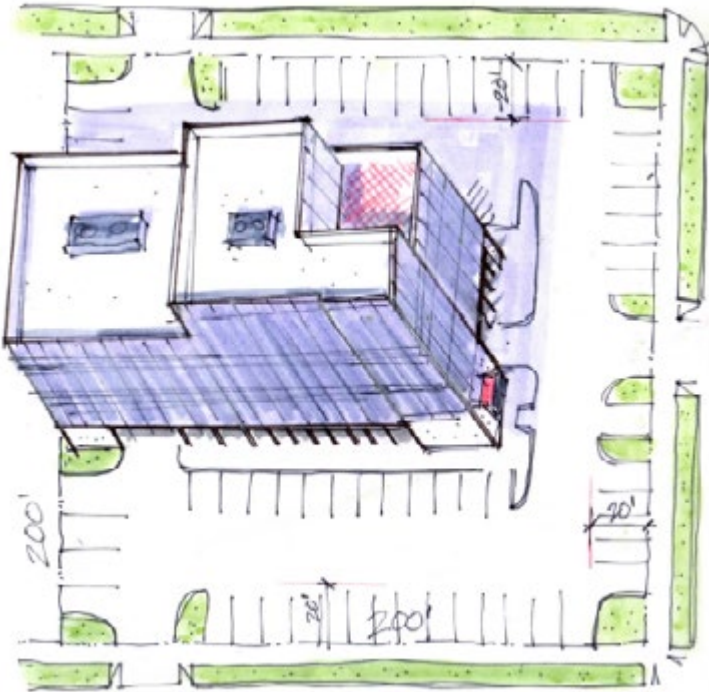
This zone is the most flexible and permissive available. The proposed changes extend this flexibility by allowing mixed-use with the addition of residential units. The adjusted setbacks allow for 100% lot coverage, and lot size and width minimums are lowered to create opportunities on small lots. To achieve the desired urban design of a walkable neighborhood, the proposed zoning requires parking to be located behind the building. This zone perhaps benefits the most from that provision, resulting in a more consistent building form along major streets.

Code	Min Lot Size	Max Density	Max Lot Coverage	Min Lot Width	Max Bldg Height	Min Front Setback	Min Side Setback	Min Corner Side Setback	Min Rear Setback
Current Zoning	4,000 SF	None	100%	40'	70'	20'	0'/15'*	20'	0'/15'*
Zoning Overlay	2,400 SF	No Limit	100%	25'	70'	0'	0'	0'	0'

*15 feet when abutting a residential zoning district.

SAMPLE BLOCK: 200FT WIDE, 200FT DEEP, 40,000 SF

Current Zoning



The square footage of the building is constrained by the number of parking spaces that fit on site. To maximize the building size, the four story, 21,000 sf commercial building was raised up on pillars to allow for the most efficient parking layout. No residential uses are permitted.

Proposed Zoning



Four, three story walkup buildings, nine units each, with ground floor retail and upper story residential. These are connected by single story commercial buildings, allowing for cost effective restaurants that shield the surface parking lot from the sidewalk.