





Middle housing flavors

	Multiplex (2+ units)	Townhouses	Cottage Cluster	Backyard Infill
				
Pro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Best heat efficiency ▶ Best for open space and trees ▶ Straightforward code revisions ▶ Shared entry with small number of units supports social trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ground level entry units (street activation, if oriented to street) ▶ Ownership oriented ▶ Heat efficient ▶ Popular with builders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Supports social interaction ▶ Ownership and/or condo oriented ▶ High quality open space (less sf but better utilization) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Preserves existing structures ▶ Allows homeowners to access land value without relocating ▶ Ownership oriented ▶ Straightforward code revisions
Con	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Building code imposes higher construction costs ▶ Usually entails replacement of existing house 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Inefficient layout (lots of stairs, hallways, narrow spaces) ▶ Hard to fit on narrow lots ▶ Usually entails replacement of existing house 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Requires a large site ▶ Heat inefficient (if detached units) ▶ Code is more complex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Inefficient layout ▶ Heat inefficient ▶ Flag lots make for "messier" urban form

Key code revisions for middle housing

- ▶ **Density.** Best approach is to remove density limits and use form-based standards (setbacks, height, coverage or FAR) to control building size and maintain neighborhood compatibility. There's no point in allowing duplexes if they have to be on a lot that's twice as large.
- ▶ **Minimum lot size:** Large minimum lot sizes prevent homeowners from subdividing lots, which would allow "cash poor" homeowners to benefit from rising land values. Combined with density limits, large minimum lot sizes ensure family-sized homes are scarce and expensive. Lower minimum lot sizes allow "backyard infill", adding new homes to existing neighborhoods with minimal building replacement.
- ▶ **Integrating usable open space for housing units:** Accommodating building(s), parking areas, and open space becomes much more challenging the more units are fitted on a lot. The code will need to clarify the location, size, and attributes of open space needed for each unit.
- ▶ **Allow alley-access:** The option to place garages on alleys (where present) makes middle housing more attractive, easier to fit on a lot, and improves street activation.

Burien Missing Middle Housing

- ▶ **Parking requirements:** High parking requirements make middle housing functionally impossible. Burien currently requires ~2 parking stalls per unit for all housing types. With twelve units of parking each the 8-plexes pictured below are 20% under-parked according to Burien’s current code.



Above: Non-conforming 8-plexes near downtown Burien in the RM-24 zone (Built to 2x allowed density and 4/5 of required parking).

- ▶ **Parking location and design.** Integrating parking in a manner that supports the units, minimizes visual impacts on the streetscape, and avoids taking up too much of the lot is more challenging with more than two units per lot. Even without parking requirements, buildings are likely to include parking to meet market demand. Some strategic regulations will be needed to accommodate options for parking while minimizing negative impacts.

Current Burien code

Zone	Allowed Types	Min lot size	Achieved Density	Example 7200 sf lot
RM-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Multiplex ▶ Townhouse ▶ Detached house 	5000 sf	24 DU per acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Quadplex on 7200 sf ▶ Four townhouses ▶ Req. parking for 8 (7 for TH)
RM-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Multiplex ▶ Townhouse ▶ Detached house 	5000 sf	18 DU per acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Triplex on 7200 sf ▶ Three townhouses ▶ Req. parking for 6 (5 for TH)
RM-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Multiplex ▶ Townhouse ▶ Detached house 	5000 sf	12 DU per acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Duplex on 7200 sf ▶ Two townhouses ▶ Req. parking for 4
SF-7200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Detached house and two ADUs 	7200 sf	18.2 DU per acre (with ADUs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Detached house + 2 ADUs on 7200 sf ▶ Req. parking for 4
SF-12000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Detached house and two ADUs 	12000 sf	10.9 DU per acre (with ADUs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Detached house + 2 ADUs on 12000 sf ▶ Req. parking for 4