The RESIDENTIAL INFILL PROJECT
Finding Middle Housing in Portland
Rail-Volution - October 10, 2016
SNAPSHOT
PORTLAND, OREGON
PORTLAND is growing

123,000 new households by 2035

260,000 new residents by 2035 added to 620,000 current residents
PORTLAND is changing

Less persons per household
Smaller percentage of households with children (but more households with children overall)
More racial and cultural diversity
Increasing senior population
Portland’s 2035 Growth Trajectory

80 percent of new housing units will be built in Portland’s higher-density multi-dwelling or mixed use zones.

Source: 2035 Comprehensive Plan (Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability), June 2016
Portland’s 2035 Growth Trajectory

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20 percent of the new housing units will be built in Portland’s single-dwelling residential neighborhoods.

Source: 2035 Comprehensive Plan (Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability), June 2016
Meeting Growth Demands

More than 44% of land in Portland is zoned Single-Family Residential.
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Portland - like nearly all U.S. cities - limits development of middle housing in single-dwelling areas, even when building forms could be made compatible with other single-dwelling houses in a neighborhood.
Portland’s Limited Housing Choices

Over 75% is single-dwelling detached houses or 20+ unit apartments or condominiums.
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Less than 25% is ‘middle housing’ types that are more amenable to housing affordability and adaptability.
Limited Housing Choices

Occupied housing units, by building type

- Single unit detached
- Single unit attached
- Two units
- Three or four units
- Five to nine units
- Ten to 19 units
- 20+ units

MIDDLE HOUSING SPECTRUM

MIDDLE HOUSING forms most suitable in single-dwelling neighborhoods (one to four units)

Source: Based on research by Emily Badger and Christopher Ingraham, as reported in *The Most Popular Type of Home In Every Major American City, Charted* (Wall Street Journal), September 21, 2015.
Portland’s decreasing housing affordability

“Since the third quarter of 2014, Portland rents have increased an average of 8 - 9%—or roughly $100 per month over the previous year.”

Source: *State of Housing in Portland* (Portland Housing Bureau), October 2015
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In 2015, Portland City Council declared a “housing emergency” to stymie sharply increasing rents, as well as prioritize effective solutions for affordable housing and homelessness.
Decreasing Housing Affordability

“Affordability” Defined: LESS THAN 30% OF MONTHLY INCOME ON RENT (not including utilities)

Source: *State of Housing in Portland* (Portland Housing Bureau), October 2015
More Demolitions

In Portland, more than 300 single-family homes are demolished each year.

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The demolition tax was defeated.
Foregone Opportunity of Demolitions

Demolished: +/- 1,000 square foot one-family house
Purchased for $310,000 in 2015

Built: 3,160 square foot one-family house
Sold for $779,000 in 2016
FINDING MIDDLE HOUSING IN PORTLAND
THE RESIDENTIAL INFILL PROJECT
Project Goal

“The goal of the Residential Infill Project is to adapt Portland’s single-dwelling zoning rules to meet the needs of current and future generations.”
Three Project Topics

1. Scale of Houses

2. ‘Historically-Narrow’ Lots

3. Housing Choices (ADUs, Internal Conversions, Duplexes, etc.)
Three Project Topics

1. Scale of Houses
   - Draft Proposal: Reduce the allowed size of new/remodeled houses while allowing flexibility in form.

2. ‘Historically-Narrow’ Lots
   - Draft Proposal: Allow houses on ‘historically-narrow’ lots in some areas; limit garages.

3. Housing Choices (ADUs, Internal Conversions, Duplexes, etc.)
   - Draft Proposal: Increase housing choices, especially in some areas, while encouraging house preservation.
Three Project Topics

1. Scale of Houses
2. ‘Historically-Narrow’ Lots
3. Housing Choices (ADUs, Internal Conversions, Duplexes, etc.)

Draft Proposal: Increase housing choices, especially in some areas, while encouraging house preservation.
“The current demand for affordable small-footprint or attached housing in the U.S. exceeds supply by up to 35 million units, but most cities limit the types of housing that can be built.”

Source: Daniel Parolek, Opticos Design
Finding Middle Housing

Residential Infill Project (2015-2017)

Multi-Dwelling Code Project (2016-)

THE RESIDENTIAL INFILL PROJECT Portland, Oregon
Policy 5.6 - Middle Housing

“Enable and encourage development of middle housing. This includes multi-unit or clustered residential buildings that provide relatively smaller, less expensive units; more units; and a scale transition between the core of the mixed use center and surrounding single family areas. Where appropriate, apply zoning that would allow this within a quarter mile of designated centers, corridors with frequent service transit, high capacity transit stations, and within the Inner Ring around the Central City.”

Source: 2035 Comprehensive Plan (Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability), June 2016
Policy 5.6 - Middle Housing

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Source: 2035 Comprehensive Plan (Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability), June 2016
3. Housing Choices

Draft Proposal for Increasing Housing Choices:
• Allow more units within the same form as a house *near Centers and Corridors*.
• Allow cottage clusters on lots larger than 10,000 square feet.
• Establish a minimum unit requirement for R2.5-zoned lots (1 unit or ADU per 2,500 square feet of site area).
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A Tool for Middle Housing
Few are “in the middle” on Portland’s middle housing debate.
Information on Portland’s RESIDENTIAL INFILL PROJECT
www.portlandoregon.gov/bps
Thank you.