

DEVELOPMENT IN URBAN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT 3 (UR-3)

URBAN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS & MIDDLE HOUSING

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. Middle housing neighborhoods can also promote pedestrian access, compatibility with existing residential neighborhoods, building orientation to the street, and minimize the impacts of vehicular access.

ZONE DESCRIPTION

Urban Residential District 3 (UR-3) is intended primarily for residential development including a range of dwellings and housing types, including multiplexes, at a transitional scale between that of lower-scale residential neighborhoods and the scale of Centers and Corridors, reflecting residential patterns such as pedestrian orientation and space between buildings. Buildings may occupy a little more of each residential lot than in the UR-2 District. Other compatible uses include residential businesses, neighborhood-serving commercial uses, and community facilities including parks, schools and religious facilities. The district is characterized by moderate activity levels and vehicular traffic, trees and other green features, and complete streets supporting transportation choices. UR-3 districts are generally located adjacent to higher intensity zoning districts and/or major Corridors. The number of units allowed per lot is based on a density calculation using the table on the next page. Find UR-3 districts on the [Interactive Zoning Map](#).

ZONING REQUIREMENTS

Development in UR-3 is regulated by these primary sections in the Tacoma Municipal Code:

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. Development bonuses and flexibilities are also found in this section.
2. **Building Design Standards (TMC 13.06.100.F)** illustrate five **Housing Types** to provide predictability and variety of successful middle housing neighborhoods. They control the positions, sizes, access, and relationships of buildings, parking and amenity spaces to their lots. They also include related physical standards for large or corner sites and non-residential uses.
3. **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, and Street level building transitions.
4. **Accessory Dwelling Units (TMC 13.06.080.A)** include requirements for these units, which are not considered a housing type.
5. **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.
6. **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.



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DEVELOPMENT IN URBAN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT 3 (UR-3)

LOT SIZE, DENSITY & FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR) | TMC 13.06.020.F

Lots must be at least 2,500 square feet. Separate ownership of dwelling units will be permitted through Unit Lot Subdivisions, which allows smaller individual “unit lots” within the development. (TMC 13.04.093) Half of the width of abutting alleys utilized for vehicular access to the lot may be counted in the minimum lot area. Density maximums (the number of units allowed by lot size) include all units on the lot in separate buildings or in any combination of housing types. Floor Area Ratio (the amount of building area per site area) is provided in the table below. Bonuses 1 and 2 offer increased density and FAR, but no flexibility is offered for retaining trees or providing ownership or accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

UR-3	Base Requirements	Bonus 1	Bonus 2	Flexibility for Tree Retention	Flexibility for Ownership and/or ADUs
Lot Size, minimum	2,500 square feet (except Unit Lots per TMC 13.04.093)				
Lot Width and frontage, minimum	25 feet (except unit lots per TMC 13.04.093) Pipestem lots: 10' access easement or lot extension				
Density, maximum units per site area	1/750 SF (ex. 8 on a 6000 SF lot)	1/500 SF (ex. 12 on 6000 SF lot)	1/375 SF (ex. 16 on 6000 SF lot)	N/A	
	Critical Areas Protection Ordinance Residential Density Bonus: minimum lot sizes and setbacks may be reduced per TMC 13.11.260.				
Floor Area Ratio (FAR), maximum	1 to 2 units: 1.0 3 or more units: 1.2	1.6	2.0	N/A	

BONUSES & FLEXIBILITIES | TMC 13.06.020.F.2 - F. 5

Development bonuses in the form of more flexible and generous development standards are available in exchange for providing public benefits—affordability or retention of existing buildings while adding additional dwellings to the lot. The bonuses are offered in two tiers (Bonus 1 and Bonus 2) corresponding to the specific public benefits being provided. Flexible development standards are also offered for retaining trees, providing ADUs, and/or providing ownership units; where possible, these standards are shown on the tables in this Tip Sheet.

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS | TMC 13.06.080.A

Two attached and/or detached accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are permitted on any legally established lot. The habitable area of an ADU is limited to a maximum of 1,000 square feet. They 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. ADUs count as dwelling units. No off-street parking is required, and removing existing off-street parking spaces for the purpose of siting an ADU is allowed. Residential Businesses are allowed per existing regulations, as is use of an ADU as a short-term rental under certain circumstances.



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HEIGHT & SETBACKS | TMC 13.06.020.F

Maximum height and minimum setbacks from property lines are required per the below table. Relaxed setbacks and height are offered for providing affordable units for retaining a building (Bonus 1 & 2), or for retaining trees or providing ownership or accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

Critical Area Code requirements continue to apply within the designated zoning allowances. Front and rear yard setbacks may be reduced up to half to avoid impact of critical areas or their buffers. See TMC 13.11.

UR-3	Base Requirements	Bonus 1	Bonus 2	Flexibility for Tree Retention	Flexibility for Ownership and/or ADUs
Height, maximum	35 feet, 15 feet for accessory buildings	45 feet		45 feet	N/A
	Buildings within a View Sensitive Overlay district are subject to additional restrictions per 13.06.070.A. Certain specified uses and structures are allowed to extend above height limits, per Section 13.06.602				
Number of Stories, maximum	3 stories	4 stories	5 stories	4 stories	N/A
Front Setback, minimum	10 feet Or average per Diagrams G.1&G.2 Ped Streets: between 5 feet and 15 feet for 50% min of frontage	7.5 feet	5 feet	7.5 feet Tree grove: 5 feet	N/A
	Exception: porches, entries, and residential transition areas may be located within the front setback				
Front Setback on Pedestrian Streets (per TMC 13.06.010.D), maximum:	Between 5 feet and 15 feet from the front lot line abutting the pedestrian street right-of-way for a minimum of 50 percent of the pedestrian street frontage. Except porches, entries and residential transition areas may be within 5 feet of the lot line per TMC 13.06.010.H. See Table 13.06.020.F for exemptions.				
Side Setback, minimum	5 feet 8 feet where primary unit entries are present unless infeasible to retain building			5 feet at primary unit entries (with usable width of 4 feet)	N/A
Rear Setback, minimum	10 feet Backyard Buildings and Courtyard Housing: 0 feet from alley	7.5 feet	5 feet	7.5 feet Tree grove: 5 feet	N/A
Pipestem lot setbacks	5' on all sides provide a front and rear setback on two opposite sides			N/A	
Building Separation on Lot, minimum	6 feet 10 feet when buildings are taller than 25 feet			N/A	



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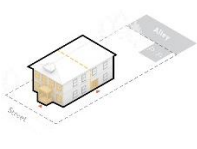
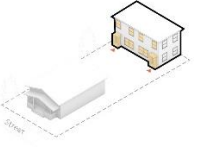

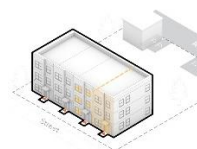
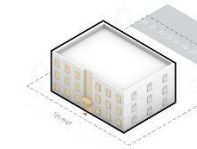
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DEVELOPMENT IN URBAN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT 3 (UR-3)

HOUSING TYPES | TMC 13.06.100.F

The following Housing Types are allowed in UR-3. Multiple buildings and different Housing Types may be combined on a site, especially on large sites—but a single building is never classified as two or more types. 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.

Houseplex	Backyard Building	Courtyard Housing	Rowhouses	Multiplexes
 <p>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.</p>	 <p>A building located behind another structure at the rear of a lot, which may also contain a garage.</p>	 <p>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.</p>	 <p>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".</p>	 <p>A medium building consisting of 7 or more stacked units with the appearance of a large house or a small apartment building.</p>

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.

Refer to TMC 13.07 (Landmarks and Historic Special Review Districts) for 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.

Part 1: Housing type overview

Part 2: Housing type examples

Part 3: Housing type plans & diagrams

Part 4: Housing type standards table



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DEVELOPMENT IN URBAN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT 3 (UR-3)

AUTO & BIKE PARKING | TMC 13.06.090.C & G

Parking requirements for new housing make it easier to fit multiple elements on a lot, encourage walkable neighborhoods, promote transportation choices, allow flexibility for developers, and lower construction costs. One stall is required per dwelling unit, except in the Reduced Parking Area (RPA). No parking maximums are included, so developers can build more parking than minimum requirements. Short- and long-term Bicycle Parking is also required. Parking access from an alley, if it exists, is required in most situations.

UR-3	Base Requirements	Bonus 1	Bonus 2	Flexibility for Tree Retention	Flexibility for Ownership and/or ADUs
Parking stalls per unit, minimum	0.50 RPA: none, except accessible stalls	Zero for bonus units	Zero for entire project	Reduce required stalls per unit by 0.25 Tree grove: reduce required stalls per unit by 0.5	Zero for up to 2 ADUs per site
Bicycle Parking, minimum	1-4 units: 1/unit long term stalls, 0 short term stalls 5+ units: 1/unit long term stalls, 1/20 units short term stalls			N/A	
Driveway Widths	9' min: 1 stall 10' min: 1- 8 stalls 16' min: 9-20 stalls 20' min: 21+ stalls or for 2-20 stalls at arterials			N/A	

LANDSCAPING, TREES & AMENITY SPACE | TMC 13.06.090.B

Planting new trees, retaining existing trees, or some combination, is required for all development to meet minimum "Tree Credits", which quantify the value of a tree's canopy coverage as a percentage of lot area. Both existing and new trees provide value, thus are allocated credit based on the mature size of their species (for new trees) or trunk diameter (for existing trees). The total credits of retained and new trees on a site must meet the required minimum. Fees in lieu of tree planting (Canopy Loss Fees) and offsite "tree banking" offer flexibility where meeting required credits is infeasible. Soil volume requirements are regulated to promote tree longevity and health, and suspended pavement systems are encouraged to provide soil for trees in the same place as driveways, parking and paths. See the [Urban Forest Manual](#) for more information.

Each dwelling unit is required to have amenity yard space equivalent to 5% of the lot size, with configurations and dimensional standards outlined in the Housing Types.

UR-3	Base Requirements	Bonus 1	Bonus 2	Flexibility for Tree Retention	Flexibility for Ownership and/or ADUs
Overall Site Landscaping, minimum per lot area	5 percent			N/A	
Native plants	50 percent minimum of required plantings			N/A	
Tree Credits, equivalent to percentage of lot area, min.	20 percent 10 percent "floor" after applying fees	15 percent 10 percent "floor" after applying fees	10 percent	Offered at higher rate for retained trees	10 percent "floor" without fees
Amenity Space per lot area, minimum	5 percent			N/A	



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OFFSITE IMPROVEMENTS & ALLEYS | TMC 2.22

Offsite improvements such as sidewalks, curbs, crosswalks, and alleys, are required for all new development projects per TMC 2.22.040. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are exempt from offsite improvements, as defined in TMC 2.22 and House Bill 1137. When constructing an ADU, impacts to the public right-of-way may occur for the installation / relocation of utilities or relocation / closure of existing driveway approaches. When providing ownership opportunities and/or accessory dwelling units (per TMC 13.06.020.F.4 or F.5) no alley access is required if the alley is not currently developed as gravel, asphalt, or concrete pavements.

UTILITIES | TMC 12.08, 12.09, 12.10

Private utility separation and installation standards are required to ensure public safety and maintenance access. Fitting utilities on a site can get more challenging as density increases. Early planning to allocate space for utilities can alleviate changes to the size or number of units proposed for construction.

It is permitted to share utilities among units on the same site, including water, sewer, solid waste areas and containers, and stormwater management facilities. Solid waste enclosures are usually necessary when there are three or more units per lot. Some stormwater facilities can be located under parking or planting, but require clearances from buildings, trees, and utilities. Tacoma Power does not allow submetering, meaning each unit must have its own meter to be charged separately for electrical service. All new services are required to be underground unless an engineer determines otherwise.

See the [Solid Waste Manual](#), the [Stormwater Management Manual](#), and the [Side Sewer Manual](#) for requirements. Contact Tacoma Power at 253-502-8436 or nsengineer@cityoftacoma.org.

PERMITTING | TMC 2.02

Permits are required for new construction in UR zones. Planning and Development Services (PDS) issues permits for several different activities including, but not limited to, building, earthwork (grade/fill), plumbing, mechanical, utility and storm connections, and land use permits (rezone, conditional use, etc.). Some work requires permitting from multiple agencies.

Resources for permit requirements can be found at the links below. Potential applicants are encouraged to review the Tacoma Permits website and contact us to clarify any project-specific questions. This can be done by phone or by email.

- Tacoma Permits: www.TacomaPermits.org
- Tip Sheets: www.tacomapermits.org/tip-sheet-index
- Office Hours and Contact Information: www.tacomapermits.org/contact-us

When applying for a permit within a UR district, the applicant must indicate which Housing Type is being proposed and must comply with Building Design Standards for that type.



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