



Home In Tacoma – Phase 2: Initial Package

May 22, 2023

As part of Tacoma’s Affordable Housing Action Strategy, Home In Tacoma Project – Phase 1, adopted by the City Council in December 2021, enacted changes to Tacoma’s housing growth strategy by directing that middle housing be supported citywide, along with actions to ensure that housing growth meets multiple community goals. Ordinance 28793 changed policies in Tacoma’s Comprehensive Plan – the City’s blueprint for community growth—and set the City on the path to establish new residential zoning, development standards, and affordability and anti-displacement actions, along with steps to support housing growth.

After several rounds of public engagement, the City has reached a mid-point in Home In Tacoma – Phase 2 effort. This memo presents a complete list of actions to be addressed in Phase 2, and summarizes an initial package of recommendations for Tacoma’s MIDDLE HOUSING ZONING FRAMEWORK, MIDDLE HOUSING STANDARDS, and AFFORDABLE HOUSING REGULATORY TOOLS.

The City is currently reviewing this initial package in light of the Washington State’s 2023 legislative session which included several bills with relevance to Home In Tacoma.

MIDDLE HOUSING ZONING FRAMEWORK

Phase 1 Policy direction

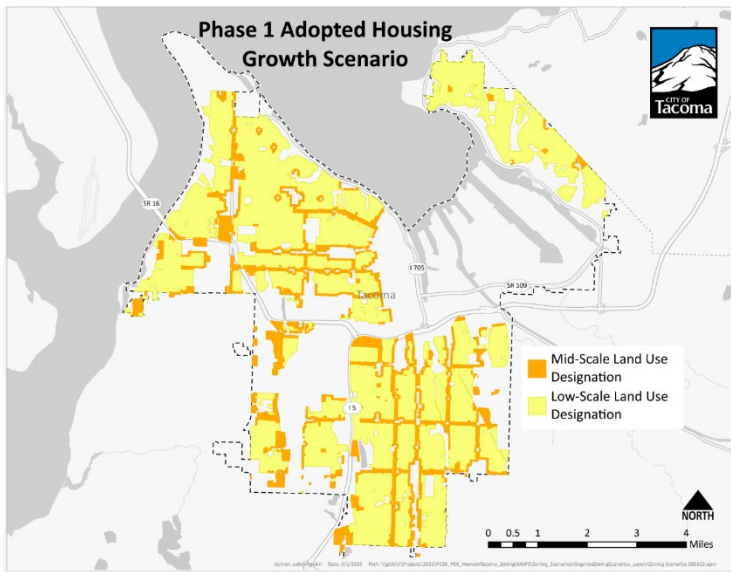
- **Missing Middle Housing** – Single-family zoning will be replaced by new zoning based on form and scale that enables Missing Middle housing
- **Citywide approach** – Zoning changes will be citywide using a systematic approach
- **Housing growth scenario** – The intent and geography of Low-scale and Mid-scale residential development is set, along with a general framework for building scale and density targets
- **Housing types** – Housing types, number of dwellings, and a general framework for permitting are set

Phase 2 zoning actions (items in blue have been the primary focus to date)

1. **Zoning framework:** Hybrid form-based system based on density, scale and housing types; includes density and scale bonuses
2. **Middle Housing zoning districts:** Establishes 2 Low-scale zones and 1 Mid-scale zone
3. **Zoning map criteria:** Directly implements Phase 1 map; higher density & scale near walkable features
4. **Other areas zoned single-family but not intended for substantial housing:** Zone to Low-scale 1; establish a Passive Open Space Overlay District to protect natural areas
5. **View Sensitive Districts – Potential East Tacoma Expansion:** McKinley and Roosevelt Ave areas under study
6. **Land uses:** Simplify list; reflect middle housing types; allow limited non-residential in Mid-scale
7. **Planned Residential Districts (PRDs):** Determine how adopted PRDs will fit in new zoning system
8. **Actions for consistency with State law:** Recent bills mandate middle housing be allowed at specified densities and housing types



Home In Tacoma – Adopted Phase 1 Housing Growth Scenario and Map



Examples of middle housing supported by Tacoma's growth strategy

Low-scale housing



Low-scale housing (in some circumstances)



Mid-scale housing

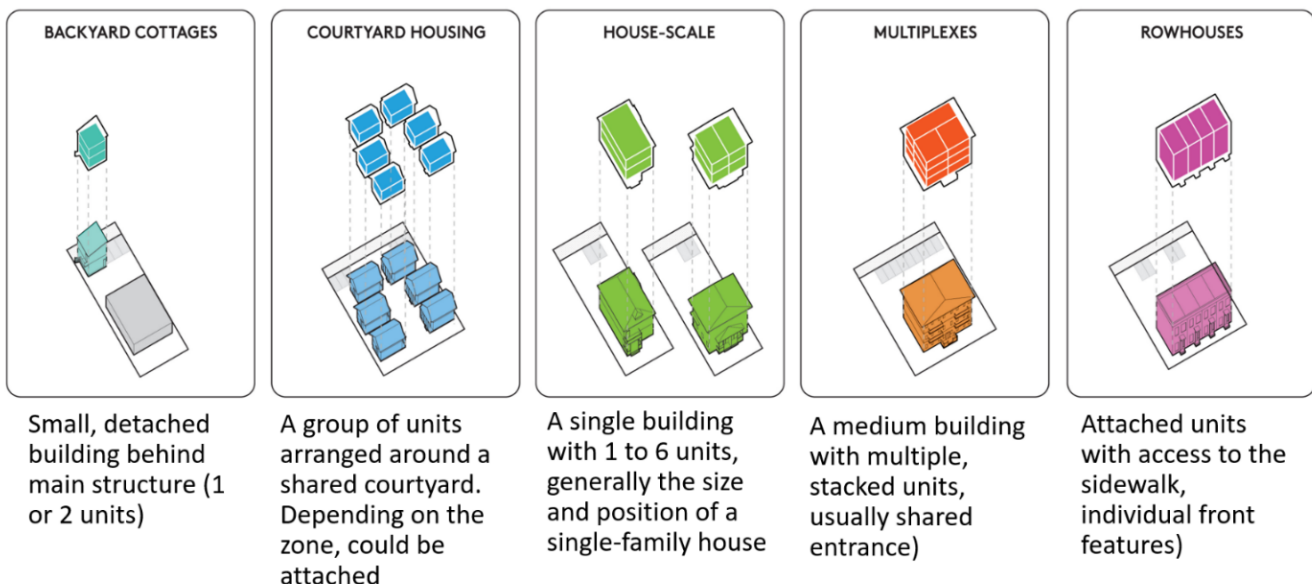


Proposed Middle Housing Zoning Districts

A hybrid form-based approach would control density (number of units allowed by lot size), scale (Floor Area Ratio) and allowed housing types. Density and scale increase with each zone, and through bonuses. **NOTE: This initial zoning package is under review in light of state housing bills.**

- **Low-scale Residential 1:** 3 dwellings (4 with bonus) on a typical lot; height 35 feet; housing types: Backyard Cottages, Courtyard Housing (detached), House-scale, Rowhouses
- **Low-scale Residential 2:** 4 dwellings (6 with bonus) on a typical lot; height 35 feet; housing types: Backyard Cottages, Courtyard Housing (attached), House-scale, Rowhouses, small Multiplex
- **Mid-scale Residential:** 6 dwellings (8 with bonus) on a typical lot; height 35 feet (45 feet with bonus); all Middle Housing types, as well as small non-residential uses

Proposed Housing Types

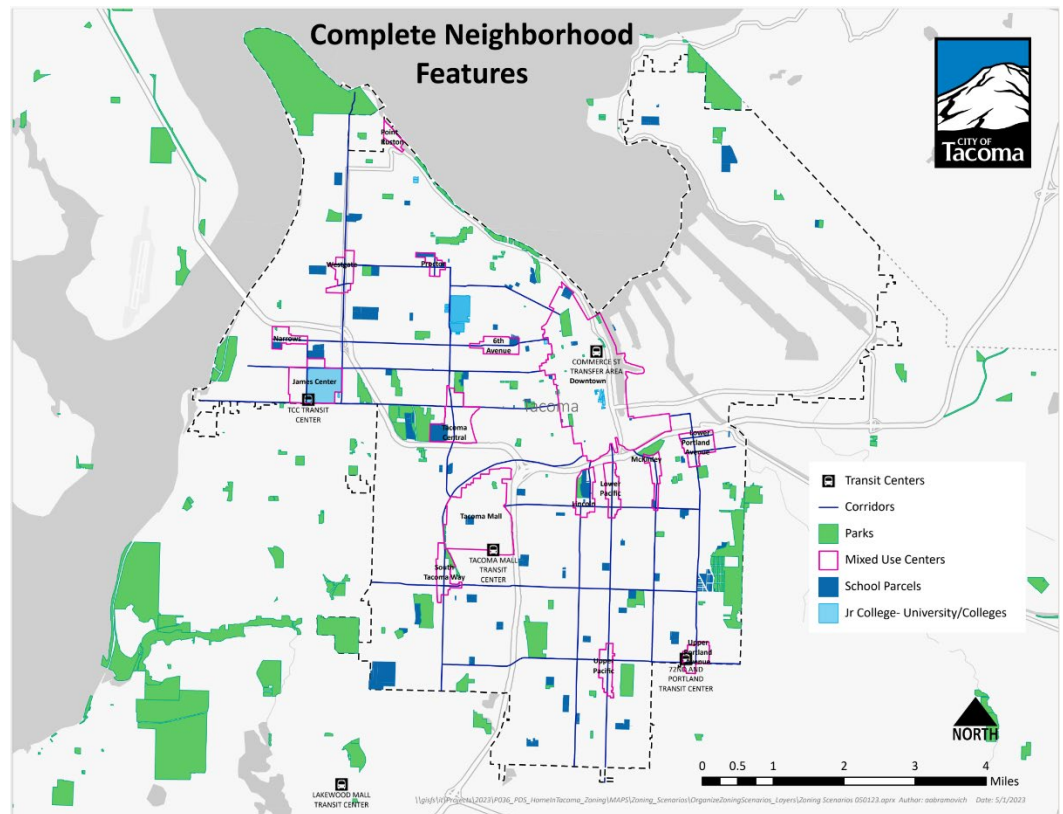


More housing choices in complete neighborhoods

Living in walkable locations can reduce household costs and increase access to opportunities like schools, jobs and transit.

The Mid-scale already takes advantage of those benefits.

This proposal would designate Low-scale 2, which supports slightly more density and larger buildings, near complete neighborhoods as well.



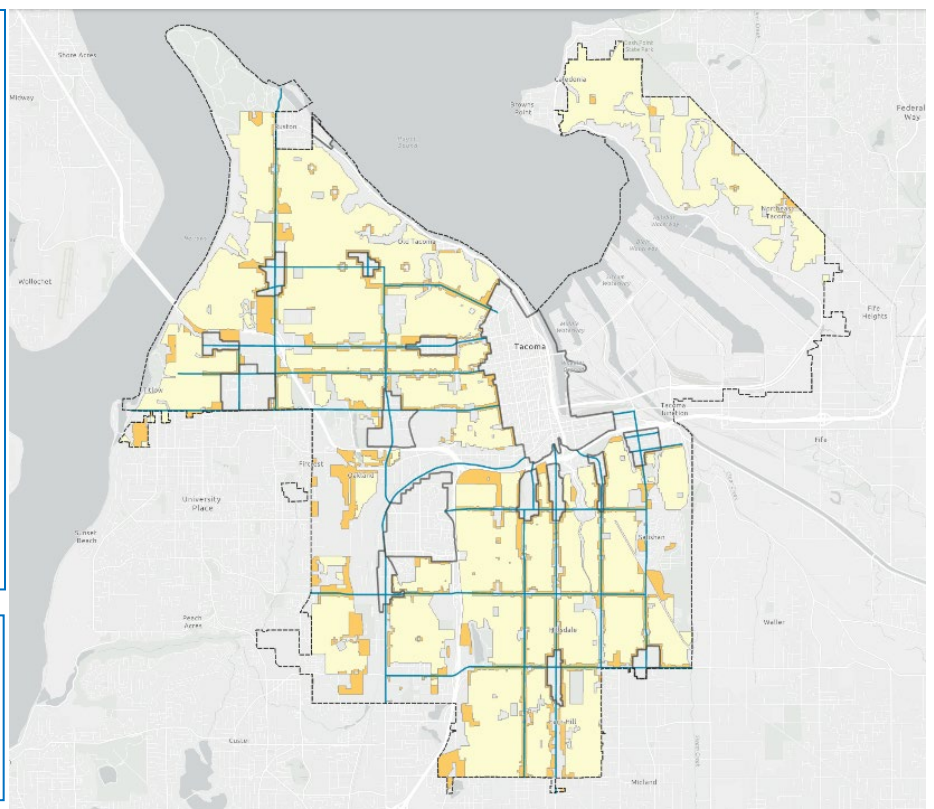
The initial package included two map options for the Low-scale Residential zones. At this time, these zoning map options are under review in light of the state's 2023 housing actions.

Mid-scale Residential District

A single Mid-scale Zone is proposed directly implementing the adopted Phase 1 Mid-scale designations.

In Mid-scale areas, a mix of housing types including multiplexes would be supported.

Height would generally be 35 feet, with a bonus option to build to 45 feet in areas near designated Corridors (shown on this map) where additional height would not be incompatible.



Once they are ready, online versions of these maps will be available at www.cityoftacoma.org/homeintacoma.

MIDDLE HOUSING STANDARDS

Phase 1 Policy direction

- **Compatible growth:** Promote and support infill that is reasonably compatible with residential patterns and enhances the quality, character and function of residential neighborhoods
- **Residential patterns:** Standards will focus primarily on residential patterns including building form and scale, yards, pedestrian access (rather than on architectural style)
- **Meet multiple goals:** Standards should support housing affordability and choice, design, sustainability, accessibility, pedestrian-orientation, walkability, adaptive reuse of existing buildings

Phase 2 standards actions (items in blue have been the primary focus to date)

- **Height:** 35 feet (potential 45 feet in Mid-scale); varies by housing type
- **Scale:** Floor Area Ratio (linked to number of units), building width/depth, yard requirements
- **Lot standards:** Allow lots down to 2,500 square feet; smaller “pocket” lots can be sold separately
- **Setbacks:** Front setbacks reduced from 20 to 15 feet in Low-scale, 10 in Mid-scale
- **Pedestrian and vehicular access:** Pedestrian-oriented features face street, cars in rear lot
- **Parking:** Reduced from 2 per dwelling to 1, with reductions for transportation choices
- **Trees/landscaping:** Street trees and onsite tree canopy required, evaluate options for flexibility
- **Housing types:** Backyard Cottages, Courtyard Housing, House-scale, Multiplexes and Rowhouses
- **Building orientation and design features:** Promote compatibility, pedestrian orientation
- **Adaptive reuse/historic preservation, Physical accessibility, Green building:** Promote with bonuses
- **Definitions, discretionary permits, Special Needs Housing, Short-term Rentals:** Integrate the new zoning framework, remove housing barriers
- **Tiny, modular and mobile homes:** Remove land use code barriers
- **Actions for consistency with State law:** Recent bills are pertinent to middle housing standards

AFFORDABLE HOUSING REGULATORY TOOLS

Phase 1 Policy direction

- **Calibrate standards to promote affordability:** Identify how standards can support housing supply, choice and affordability as well as ownership opportunities
- **Strengthen Tacoma’s affordable housing regulatory tools:** Modify and expand the City’s inclusionary housing provisions to target unmet need and align with market conditions
- **Anti-displacement Strategy:** Develop an anti-displacement strategy that coordinates zoning, standards, regulatory affordability tools, AHAS actions, and other targeted actions

Phase 2 affordability and bonus actions (items in blue have been the primary focus to date)

- **General guidance and objectives**
 1. Affordability is a top priority, but other public goals could also be supported
 2. Value of bonuses must be commensurate with the cost of the public benefit (or fee in lieu); proposed reduction of “by-right” scale for detached single-family makes bonuses more viable; target bonuses to non-profit and for-profit developers
 3. Use the Equity Index to target bonuses based on neighborhood priorities
- **What development bonuses to offer:** Density in combination with scale, potentially parking reductions
- **What public benefits could be promoted:** Affordable housing units; physically accessible (visitable) units; family-sized units; retention of existing structures while adding units; green features
- **Structure of bonus program:** Reduce “friction” for users; evaluate and prepare for administrative burden; set parameters such as income targets, term of affordability, percentage of units, voluntary vs. mandatory
- **Relation to Multifamily Tax Exemption Program:** MFTE will be offered in Mid-scale areas
- **Actions for consistency with State law:** Recent bills mandate specific affordability bonuses