

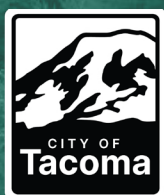
City of Tacoma

# Urban Residential Districts

# Development & Design Standards

November 2024

MITHŪN



This document contains TMC Sections 13.06.0202.F (District Development Standards) and 13.06.000.F (Minimum Design Standards), as well as supplemental information to explain how these standards work together with other applicable code sections for the Urban Residential zones.

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# Quick Guide for Urban Residential Zoning Code

## Steps

## Tacoma Title 13 Land Use Regulatory Code Chapter 13.06

Find the  
**Residential District**  
zone for your parcel

### 13.06.020 Urban Residential Districts

#### C. Districts Established

- UR-1 (Urban Residential 1)
- UR-2 (Urban Residential 2)
- UR-3 (Urban Residential 3)

#### E. District Use Restrictions

### F. District Development Standards

- 1. Housing Types, Density, Scale & Lot Standards
- 2. Urban Residential District Bonuses
- 3. Flexibility for Tree Retention

Find and comply  
with the **District**  
**Development Standards**  
specific to your Residential  
District Zone

Select and comply with the  
**Building Design Standards**  
specific to your housing  
type

### 13.06.100 Building Design Standards

### F. Urban Residential Minimum Design Standards

- 1. Applicability
- 2. Overview
- 3. Housing Types
  - a. Houseplex
  - b. Backyard Building
  - c. Courtyard Housing
  - d. Rowhouse
  - e. Multiplex
- 4. Additional Standards (applicable to most Housing Types)

Find and comply with  
the **Site Development**  
**Standards** for your district  
(not in this document)

### 13.06.090 Site Development Standards

- B. Landscaping standards
- C. Off-street parking areas
- D. Loading spaces
- E. Storage areas and vehicle storage areas
- F. Pedestrian and bicycle support standards
- J. Residential transition standards
- L. Utilities
- M. Street Level Building Transitions

## F. Urban Residential Districts (UR-1, 2 and 3) Development Standards

### 1. Housing types, densities, scale, and lot standards.

ZONE NAME	Urban Residential 1 (UR-1)	Urban Residential 2 (UR-2)	Urban Residential 3 (UR-3)
<b>Housing Types permitted</b>	Houseplexes Backyard Buildings Rowhouses Courtyard Housing (detached)	Houseplexes Backyard Buildings Rowhouses Courtyard Housing (all)	Houseplexes Backyard Buildings Rowhouses Courtyard Housing (all) Multiplexes
<b>Additional Uses Permitted</b>	See TMC 13.06.020.E.4		See TMC 13.06.020.E.4
<b>Lot Size, minimum</b>	2,500 square feet (except for Unit Lots per the provisions of TMC 13.04.093)		
	Separate ownership of dwelling units will be permitted through Unit Lot Subdivisions. Alley lot area credit: Half of the width of abutting alleys which are utilized for vehicular access to the lot may be counted toward the required minimum lot area.		
<b>Lot Width, minimum</b>	Minimum lot width is 25 feet (except for unit lots – see TMC 13.04.093).		
<b>Lot Frontage, minimum</b>	Minimum lot frontage is 25 feet (except for unit lots – see TMC 13.04.093).		
	Pipestem lots are not required to meet the minimum lot frontage requirements, provided the access easement or lot extension to such pipestem lot has a minimum width of 10 feet.		
<b>Density, maximum units per site area</b>	1/1500 SF	1/1000 SF	1/750 SF
<b>Density with Bonus, maximum units per site area</b>	Bonus 1: 1/1000 SF Bonus 2: 1/750 SF	Bonus 1: 1/750 SF Bonus 2: 1/500 SF	Bonus 1: 1/500 SF Bonus 2: 1/375 SF
<b>Density Notes</b>	All units on the lot count toward the maximum density or maximum bonus density, including those in separate buildings or in any combination of housing types. In no case shall the total number of units on a lot exceed the maximums in this table. Legal lots of record as of February 1, 2025 which do not meet the minimum area, setbacks and/or frontage requirements are allowed a minimum of 4 dwellings and 2 additional dwellings through use of the Bonus 1 program.		
<b>Critical Areas Density Bonus</b>	Critical Areas Protection Ordinance Residential Density Bonus: Per Section 13.11.260, in order to provide flexibility to avoid critical area impacts, minimum lot sizes and setbacks may be reduced in association with Critical Areas approvals.		
<b>Planned Residential Districts (PRDs)</b>	Existing PRDs remain in effect, minor modifications allowed. No new PRDs may be created.		
<b>Floor Area Ratio (FAR), maximum</b>	1 to 2 units: 0.6 3 or more units: 0.8	1 to 2 units: 0.8 3 or more units: 1.0	1 to 2 units: 1.0 3 or more units: 1.2
<b>Floor Area Ratio (FAR), maximum with Bonus</b>	Bonus 1: 1.0 Bonus 2: 1.2	Bonus 1: 1.2 Bonus 2: 1.6	Bonus 1: 1.6 Bonus 2: 2.0



<b>ZONE NAME</b>	<b>Urban Residential 1 (UR-1)</b>	<b>Urban Residential 2 (UR-2)</b>	<b>Urban Residential 3 (UR-3)</b>
<b>Height, maximum</b>	35 feet 25 feet high in rear 25 feet of lot		35 feet
	15 feet for accessory buildings.		
	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.		
<b>Height with Bonus, maximum</b>	Bonus 1 and 2: 35 feet, including 35 feet in rear yard		45 feet
<b>Number of Stories, maximum</b>	3		3 Bonus 1: 4 Bonus 2: 5
<b>Height flexibility with tree retention</b>	See TMC 13.06.020.F.3		
<b>Front Setback, minimum</b>	15 feet		10 feet
	Exception: porches, entries, and residential transition areas may be located within the front setback per the provisions of TMC 13.06.010.H.		
<b>Front Setback, minimum with Bonus</b>	Bonus 1: 10 feet Bonus 2: 5 feet		Bonus 1: 7.5 feet Bonus 2: 5 feet
<b>Front Setback Averaging</b>	Refer to Diagrams G.1 and G.2		
<b>Front Setback on Pedestrian Streets*, maximum * as designated in TMC 13.06.010.D</b>	<p>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.</p> <p>Exception: porches, entries and residential transition areas may be located within 5 feet of the lot line abutting the pedestrian street right-of-way per the provisions of TMC 13.06.010.H.</p> <p>Exemptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additions to legal, nonconforming buildings are exempt from maximum setbacks, as long as the addition does not contribute to the nonconformance.</li> <li>• When a public easement precludes compliance with this standard, the setback requirement shall be measured as close as possible to the easement, while also providing entry requirements.</li> <li>• Public facilities on sites greater than 5 acres shall be exempt from maximum setbacks. This exemption shall expire upon the establishment of a new Institutional Zoning designation, an Institutional Master Plan process, or similar zoning process for reviewing, evaluating and approving large, public, campus-like facilities.</li> <li>• Within parks, recreation and open space uses, accessory or ancillary structures, such as restroom buildings, playground equipment and picnic shelters, are exempt from the maximum setback standards.</li> </ul>		

<b>ZONE NAME</b>	<b>Urban Residential 1 (UR-1)</b>	<b>Urban Residential 2 (UR-2)</b>	<b>Urban Residential 3 (UR-3)</b>
<b>Side Setback, minimum</b>	5 feet or 8 feet on sides of buildings when there are units in that building whose primary entrance faces that same side yard Except side yards accessing new Backyard Buildings behind existing structures that cannot comply due to existing conditions or due to retaining existing buildings may only setback 5 feet. Refer to housing types in 13.06.100.F for measurement of Rowhouse side yards.		
<b>Rear Setback, minimum</b>	15 feet	10 feet	
	Refer to housing types in 13.06.100.F for exceptions to Backyard Buildings and Courtyard Housing. May be measured from centerline of alley where exists.		
<b>Rear Setback, minimum with Bonus</b>	Bonus 1: 10 feet Bonus 2: 5 feet	Bonus 1: 7.5 feet Bonus 2: 5 feet	
<b>Setback flexibility with tree retention</b>	See TMC 13.06.020.F.3		
<b>Pipestem Lot Setbacks</b>	Pipestem lots shall provide a minimum of 5 feet on all sides; and shall provide a front and rear setback on two opposite sides.		
<b>Building Separation on Lot, minimum</b>	Minimum 6-foot separation between buildings, or 10 feet when buildings are taller than 25 feet and for spaces oriented to the right-of-way		
<b>Parking stalls per unit, minimum</b>	Refer to Site Development Standards Section 13.06.090.C, Table 1, Off Street Parking Areas		
<b>Bicycle Parking</b>	Refer to Site Development Standards Section 13.06.090.G, Short and Long Term Bicycle Parking		
<b>Amenity Space per lot area</b>	10 percent	7.5 percent	5 percent
	See TMC 13.06.100.F.4		
<b>Amenity space flexibility with tree retention</b>	See TMC 13.06.020.F.3		
<b>Tree Credits, minimum (Canopy coverage of lot equivalent)</b>	30 percent	25 percent	20 percent
<b>Calculating Tree Credits</b>	Refer to Site Development Standards Section 13.06.090.B.2.d.(1)(a), Landscaping Standards		
<b>Tree Credits, minimum with Bonus</b>	Bonus 1: 25 percent Bonus 2: 20 percent	Bonus 1: 20 percent Bonus 2: 15 percent	Bonus 1: 15 percent Bonus 2: 10 percent

## 2. Urban Residential District Bonuses.

a. Applicability. Within UR Districts, development standards bonuses are available in exchange for the provision of public benefits with middle housing development. The bonus provisions allow for projects to be eligible to utilize more flexible and generous development standards, as specified in TMC 13.06.020.F.1, in exchange for specified public benefits – dedicated affordability or retention of existing buildings while adding additional dwellings to the lot. The bonuses are offered in two tiers, corresponding to the specific public benefits being provided. The bonus standards are not limited to the units subject to the achieving the bonus (i.e. affordable units, units located within a retained building) and they apply to the entire development.

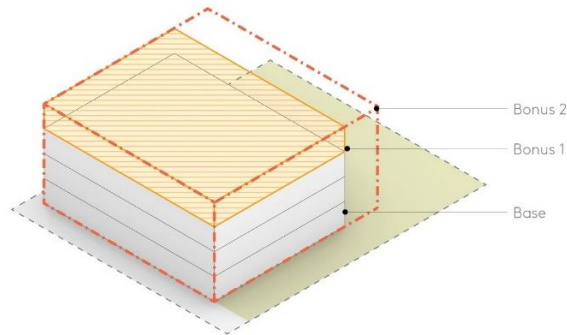


Diagram showing bonuses.

b. Purpose. The UR Districts are intended to promote a range of housing types, including middle housing, with development standards formulated to ensure reasonable compatibility with residential scale and patterns. Middle housing promotes multiple benefits in and of itself, including housing supply, choice and affordability, sustainability and transportation choices. The bonus program is intended to promote public benefits above and beyond those associated with middle housing. The two public benefits being promoted—dedicated affordability and the retention of existing buildings while adding dwellings to the lot—were selected to promote Comprehensive Plan policies, to address community priorities, and to comply with state law. In exchange for the specified public benefits, the project can utilize any and all of the development standards bonuses described in TMC 13.06.020.F.1. The bonuses have been crafted to offer significant value to middle housing development, while achieving the intended public benefits and still maintaining a reasonable balance of compatibility with neighborhood scale and residential patterns.

c. Public benefits. The following table details the public benefits options available in exchange for each bonus level:

Bonus Tier 1 ( <i>meet one of the two options</i> )	OPTION 1: Provision of affordability. Two units or 20 percent of total units at moderately affordable levels per the standards and requirements of TMC 1.39 Affordable Housing Bonuses Administrative Code—and specifically at the affordability levels specified in TMC 1.39.040. Fee in lieu of provision of affordable units is acceptable.
	OPTION 2: Retention of an existing primary building along with the addition of at least one dwelling to the site. To count as building retention, the structure may be remodeled and modified, subject to limitations, or left unremodeled or unmodified. Exterior alterations are subject to requirements in TMC 13.06.020.F.2.e
Bonus Tier 2	Provision of all units (100%) at deeper affordability levels per the standards and requirements of TMC 1.39 Affordable Housing Bonuses Administrative Code—and specifically at the affordability levels specified in TM 1.39.040. Fee in lieu of provision of affordable units will <u>not</u> be accepted.

d. Additional UR Bonus Program Requirements.

- (1) In no case, regardless of how many bonus features are incorporated, can the additional development flexibilities exceed the maximums authorized in TMC 13.06.020.F.1.
- (2) UR bonuses may be combined with other bonuses and incentives, including the Multifamily Tax Exemption Program per TMC 13.17.
- (3) Public benefits are not subject to variance.

e. UR Bonus Tier 1: Option 2 requirements for exterior alterations. To ensure retained existing structures continue to contribute to the area's unique history and character, any alterations to the building's exterior must be consistent with the following standards:

- (1) Exterior materials. Change of exterior materials, including cladding and roof surfaces, and colors are permitted.
- (2) Windows and doors. Existing window and doors located on the front building facade may be replaced but opening locations and sizes shall be maintained, except as described below. Replacement of windows with doors for new units and de minimus variation in location and size is permitted when replacements are proposed. Addition of new window and doors where none previously existing is permitted. These limitations do not apply to the modification, including removal, of windows and doors on other facades.
- (3) Porches. Existing porches and other covered entrance features located on the front building façade must be preserved. Additionally, such features may be added or expanded consistent with applicable development standards.
- (4) Garages. Unless deemed necessary to meet off-street parking requirements, conversion of existing garages to enclosed or semi-enclosed non-vehicular space is permitted.
- (5) Additions.
  - The design of any new addition should be harmonious with the composition of the existing building.
  - Facade. Building additions shall either be distinguished from the existing building in at least one of the following ways: Setback) the addition is set at least 10 ft. behind the existing building's exterior wall that is nearest the front lot line; Modulation) the addition's front façade is separated from the existing building by a vertical modulation a minimum depth and width of at least 3 and 5 feet, respectively; or, shall be inline with the existing front façade and incorporate distinguishing architectural or building design features so as to be in character with or complementary with the existing structure.
  - Height. The building's height may be increased provided that the vertical addition meets height limits and is generally consistent with or complementary with distinguishing building design features of the existing structure.
- (6) Building preservation. A minimum of the following portions of the building must be retained with any alterations. These limits only apply to the portions of the building that meet the age qualifications of a building.
  - At least 50% of building's footprint
  - 100% of the front, street-facing facade
  - 50% of the building's exterior walls shall be preserved and remain exterior wall.



### 3. Flexibility for Tree Retention

Flexibility for certain development standards are available when retaining an existing tree over 12 inches DBH, pursuant to the requirements of TMC 13.06.090, including the following:

a. Height flexibility for retaining at least one tree:

- (1) UR-1 and UR-2 districts: 35 feet maximum in rear yard.
- (2) UR-3 district: 45 feet maximum.

b. Front and rear setback flexibility:

- (1) UR-1 and UR-2 districts: 10 feet minimum for retaining one tree. 5 feet minimum for retaining a tree grove.
- (2) UR-3 district: 7.5 feet minimum for retaining one tree. 5 feet minimum for retaining a tree grove.

c. Side setback flexibility in all UR districts:

- (1) For retaining at least one tree: side setback can be reduced to 5 feet when accessing units, provided that retaining walls, utility meters or other permanent obstructions do not reduce usable width below 4 feet.

d. Parking quantity flexibility in all UR districts:

- (1) For retaining at least one tree: the number of required parking spaces may be reduced by 0.25 stalls per unit.
- (2) For retaining a tree grove: the number of required parking spaces may be reduced by 0.50 stalls per unit.

### 4. Flexibility for Ownership Opportunities

Flexibility to certain development standards is provided in order to incentivize developments that create new homeownership opportunities to owner-occupant households earning no more than 150 percent of the Pierce County family median income for at least the first 5-years from certification of occupancy. To ensure compliance, a binding title restriction conforming to City requirements shall be recorded on the property.

a. Incentives. The following development standards are modified as provided herein for qualifying homeownership projects:

- (1) The rear yard height limit in the UR-1 and UR-2 districts is raised to 35-feet.
- (2) No alley access is required if the alley is not currently developed.
- (3) The on-site tree credit requirement is reduced to the minimum "floor" level without requiring Tree Credit Fees or Canopy Loss Fees.

### 5. Flexibility for Accessory Dwelling Units

Flexibility to certain development standards is provided to current owner-occupant households earning no more than 150 percent of the Pierce County family median income. Incentives would be available when adding up to two accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on their own property and adding a binding title restriction that one of the units will be owner-occupied for at least the first 5-years from certification of occupancy.

a. Incentives. The following development standards are modified as provided herein for qualifying homeownership projects:

- (1) The rear yard height limit in the UR-1 and UR-2 districts is raised to 35-feet.
- (2) No alley access is required if the alley is not currently developed.
- (3) The on-site tree credit requirement is reduced to the minimum "floor" level without requiring Tree Credit Fees or Canopy Loss Fees.

## F. Urban Residential District Design Standards

### 1. Applicability

a. The Housing Types and Additional Standards (together, called the Building Design Standards) of this section are required to implement the urban design goals of the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Tacoma. The design standards apply to all new development in the UR districts as outlined below, except as follows:

(1) Standards. Each item of this section shall be addressed individually. Exceptions and exemptions noted for specific development situations apply only to the item noted.

b. These Design Standards work together with the other code sections to regulate buildings, open space, trees, parking and other elements on a site. Standards in one section are not repeated in another section. Refer to the following sections for other standards applicable to lots within the Urban Residential Districts:

- TMC 13.06.020.F. District Development Standards and Table: Housing Types allowed, Uses permitted, Lot area & measurements, Density, Floor Area Ratio, Maximum height, Number of stories, Setbacks, Building separation, Floor area ratio, Amenity space.

- TMC 13.06.090 Site Development Standards: Landscaping standards, Off-street parking areas, Pedestrian and bicycle support standards, Fences and retaining walls, Utilities, Street level building transitions.

c. 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.

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

e. Multiple buildings and different Housing Types may be combined on a site, especially on large sites. These are often, but not always, platted for separate ownership. Backyard Buildings, by definition, are anticipated behind many of the other Housing Types. When combining Housing Types on a site, the applicable Housing Standards will be applied individually to each portion of the site as appropriate and indicated on the permit application. In no case shall the maximum density standards for a site be exceeded.

### f. Alterations.

(1) Three thresholds are used to gauge the extent of design standard compliance on alterations to existing development:

Level I alterations include all remodels and/or additions within a two year period whose cumulative value is less than 50% of the value of existing development or structures, as determined by the applicable Building Code. The requirement for such alterations is only that the proposed improvements meet the standards and do not lead to further nonconformance with the standards. For example, if a property owner decides to replace a building façade's siding, then the siding shall meet the applicable exterior building material standards, but elements such as building modulation would not be required.

Level II alterations include all remodels and/or additions within a two year period whose cumulative value ranges from 50% to 200% of the value of the existing development or structure, as determined by the applicable Building Code. All standards that do not involve repositioning the building or reconfiguring site development shall apply to Level II alterations.

Level III alterations include all remodels and/or additions within a two year period whose cumulative value exceeds 200% of the value of the existing development or structure, as determined by the applicable Building Code. Such alterations shall conform to ALL standards.

(2) The standards do not apply to remodels that do not change the exterior form of the building. However, if a project involves both exterior and interior improvements, then the project valuation shall include both exterior and interior improvements.

(3) No addition or remodel shall increase the level of nonconformity or create new nonconformities to the development or design standards.

## 2. Overview

### a. Description

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.

These Building Design Standards for the Urban Residential districts illustrate a number of Housing Types to provide both the predictability and variety of successful Middle Housing neighborhoods.

### b. Summary of the Housing Types

*Houseplex - House, Duplex, Triplex, 4-plex, 5-plex, 6-plex*

A single building containing 1 to 6 units, which may be in a “side-by-side” or “stacked” configuration. At least one private or shared entry is required from the street, and a private or shared yard is often included behind the building. Multi-story units that are oriented perpendicular to the street and where vehicular and/or pedestrian access is provided from a shared facility along the side (often called “slot homes”) are included in this type.

#### *Backyard Building*

A building located behind another structure at the rear of a lot. The building may contain a garage. The building may be accessed from a shared or private path from the front sidewalk or from a secondary street on a corner lot. A small yard and parking space can be included. This housing type can include detached accessory dwelling units (DADU), but also includes any structure containing no more than six units.

#### *Courtyard Housing*

A group of buildings or units arranged around a shared courtyard. Depending on the zone, units may be detached or attached. The courtyard is entered from the street, provides pedestrian access to the units, and is a shared social space which takes the place of private back yards. Detached buildings within Courtyard Housing developments may include up to six dwelling units per building.

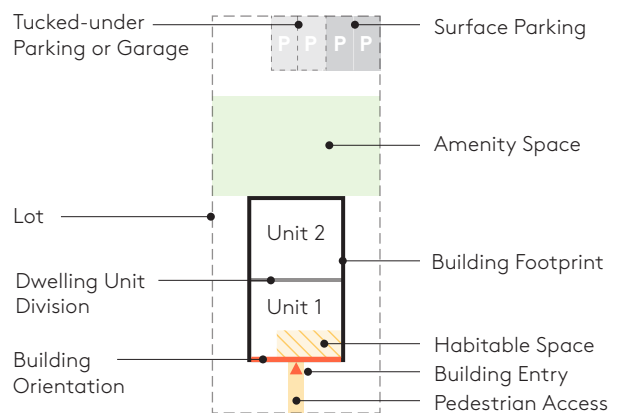
#### *Rowhouse*

Typically a multi-story building with access to the street from its front door and a private yard. Each Rowhouse may contain more than one unit accessed from the same sidewalk and front door. A Rowhouse is always attached to two to five other Rowhouse buildings, which together create a “Rowhouse Cluster” of 3 to 6 Rowhouses.

#### *Multiplex*

A building consisting of 7 or more stacked units, with the appearance of a large house or a small apartment building. Access is often from one shared entry at the street leading to a central corridor accessing all units, but other configurations are possible (including a few single-stair buildings connected together).

### c. Housing Types Key





### 3. Housing Type Standards

#### a. Houseplex - House, Duplex, Triplex, 4-plex, 5-plex, 6-plex

##### (1) Description

A single building containing 1 to 6 units, which may be in a “side-by-side” or “stacked” configuration. At least one private or shared entry is required from the street, and a private or shared yard is often included behind the building. Multi-story units that are oriented perpendicular to the street and where vehicular and/or pedestrian access is provided from a shared facility along the side (often called “slot homes”) are included in this type.

##### (2) Applicability

The following requirements apply to all Houseplex dwellings in all Urban Residential districts, as well as to new units added to or built within existing houses. The total number of units per lot is subject to District Development Standards density maximums.

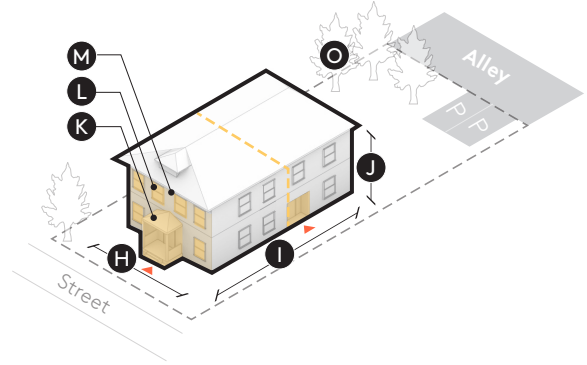
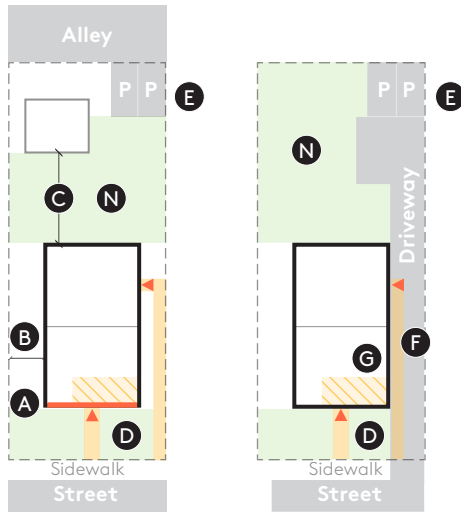
(3) **Purpose.** Houseplexes are intended to continue the existing pattern of lowscale neighborhoods with detached homes along the street, generous backyards, as well as sideyards creating a rhythm of light and air between buildings. This housing type enables “house scaled” structures with higher densities that allow more people to enjoy a traditional house and yard arrangement.

Character examples for Houseplexes





## Houseplex - House, Duplex, Triplex, 4-plex, 5-plex, 6-plex Design Standards



### (4) Building Placement

<b>A</b> Building Orientation*	Must have primary orientation to street; Corner buildings may orient to two streets.
<b>B</b> Setbacks	Refer to District Standards <i>TMC 13.06.020.F</i> .
<b>C</b> Separation Between Buildings On Same Site	10' 6' if building height of both buildings is less than 25' or existing tree is retained.

### (5) Access and Parking

<b>D</b> Pedestrian Access	Primary Entry: One entry required at primary street. Additional Entries: Allowed from street, side yard or rear yard. Sidewalks or pedestrian path required from the street.
<b>E</b> Parking	Required access from an alley if exists. Prohibited between building and street. Prohibited within front setback (except in front of garages). Garages must be setback 20' from lot line. Refer to Site Development Standards <i>TMC 13.06.090.C</i> for vehicle and <i>TMC 13.06.090.G</i> for bike parking ratios.
<b>F</b> Driveway	Max number: 1 per 12,000 SF of lot area. Limited to access from alley if exists. Refer to Site Development Standards <i>TMC 13.06.090.C</i> .
<b>G</b> Habitable Space*	10' deep along 75% of street-facing facades.

### (6) Building Size

<b>H</b> Building Width	UR-1 and UR-2: 50' max UR-3: 75' max
<b>I</b> Building Depth	UR-1 and UR-2: 75' max UR-3: 90'
<b>J</b> Height Limits	Refer to District Standards <i>TMC 13.06.020.F</i> .

### (7) Building Articulation

<b>K</b> Covered Entry*	Covered entries required: 3' deep min. Single unit entry: 20 SF min Shared entry: 30 SF min
<b>L</b> Transparency/Windows & Openings*	15% transparent to street; 10% transparent to alleys, shared open space, and surface parking courts
<b>M</b> Articulation*	Street-facing facades may be articulated to look like a single dwelling or to emphasize distinct dwelling units: One feature required for facades over 40' wide. Two features required for facades over 60' wide.

### (8) Open Space

<b>N</b> Amenity Space*	Private, common or mix. Refer to District Standards <i>TMC 13.06.020.F</i> .
<b>O</b> Tree Credit	Refer to District Standards <i>TMC 13.06.020.F</i> .

\* Refer also to Additional Standards *TMC 13.06.100.E.4* at the end of this chapter.

## b. Backyard Building

### (1) Description

A building located behind another structure at the rear of a lot. The building may contain a garage. The building may be accessed from a shared or private path from the front sidewalk or from a secondary street on a corner lot. A small yard and parking space can be included. This housing type can include detached accessory dwelling units (DADU), but also includes any structure containing no more than six units.

### (2) Applicability

The following standards apply to all Backyard Buildings in all Urban Residential districts. The total number of units per lot is subject to District Development Standards density maximums.

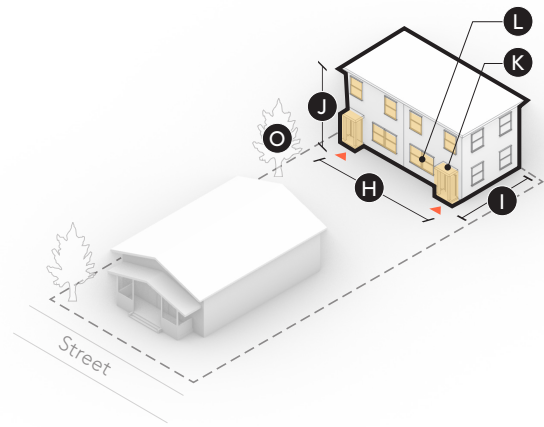
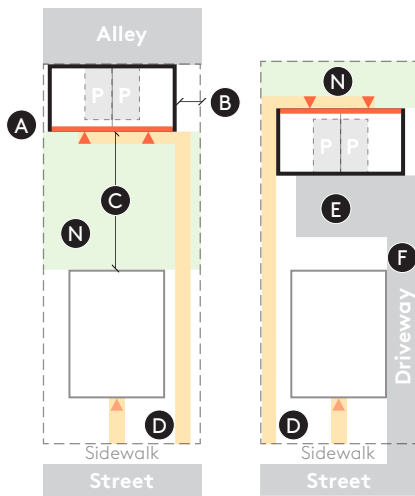
### (3) Purpose

Backyard Buildings are intended to create additional housing on infill lots, while maintaining neighborhood character and promoting retention of existing buildings, with "gentle density" that is less visible from the street. Backyard buildings can provide homeowners with a means to provide for companionship and security nearby, and they can also contribute to neighborhood stability and protect property values by creating avenues for additional income, aging in place, and the meeting of personal and property needs. With smaller footprints, these buildings can also be lower cost units that are more affordable to low- and moderate-income people.

### Character examples for Backyard Buildings



# Backyard Building Design Standards



## (4) Building Placement

- A Building Orientation\*** May orient to a backyard, alley, or a street on a corner lot based on site conditions.
- B Setbacks** 0' rear setback from alley. Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F*.
- C Separation Between Buildings On Same Site** 10'  
6' if building height of both buildings is less than 25' or existing tree is retained.

## (5) Access and Parking

- D Pedestrian Access** Sidewalk or pedestrian path required from street.  
Limited to access from an alley or existing driveway if exists. Prohibited between building and street. Prohibited within front setback.
- E Parking** Garages must be setback 20' from lot line. Refer to *Site Development Standards TMC 13.06.090.C* for vehicle and *TMC 13.06.090.G* for bike parking ratios.
- F Driveway** Max number: 1 per 12,000 SF of lot area shared with street-facing buildings. Required to be shared with driveways serving street-facing buildings, or must occur from alley if one exists. Refer to *Site Development Standards TMC 13.06.090.C*.
- G Habitable Space\*** N/A

## (6) Building Size

- H Building Width** UR-1 and UR-2: 40' max  
UR-3: 75' max
- I Building Depth** 40' max
- J Height Limits** Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F*.

## (7) Building Articulation

- K Covered Entry\*** Covered entries required:  
3' deep min  
Single unit entry: 20 SF min  
Shared entry: 30 SF min
- L Transparency/Windows & Openings\*** 15% transparent to street if one exists.  
10% transparent to alleys. Placement should endeavor to provide privacy from adjacent units.
- M Articulation\*** N/A

## (8) Open Space

- N Amenity Space\*** Private, common or mix. Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F*.
- O Tree Credit** Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F*.

\* Refer also to *Additional Standards TMC 13.06.100.E.4* at the end of this chapter.



## c. Courtyard Housing

### (1) Description

A group of buildings or units arranged around a shared courtyard. Depending on the zone, units may be detached or attached. The courtyard is entered from the street, provides pedestrian access to the units, and is a shared social space which takes the place of private back yards. Detached buildings within Courtyard Housing developments may include up to six dwelling units per building.

### (2) Applicability

The following standards apply to Courtyard Housing developments in all Urban Residential districts where allowed. The total number of units per lot is subject to District Development Standards density maximums.

### (3) Purpose

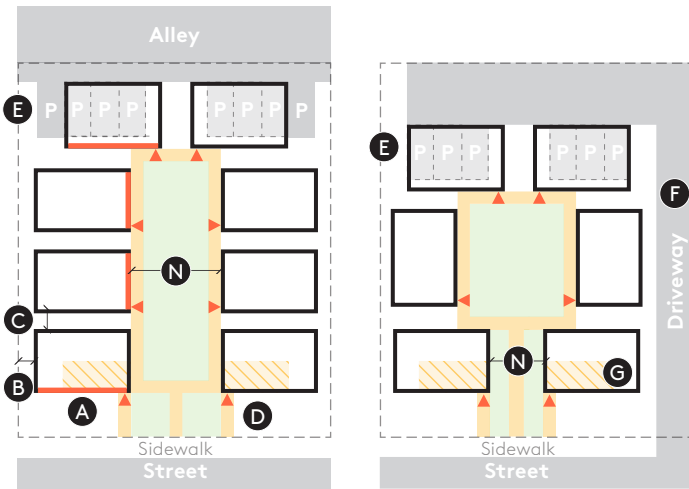
Courtyard housing offers an alternative spatial arrangement, while fitting the scale and adjacency to open spaces enjoyed in detached housing neighborhoods. The courts can contribute aesthetically to the street, or provide social spaces that foster children's play. The central courts allow residents to look in on each other occasionally, or to organize into semi-communal "co-housing" arrangements.

### Character examples for Courtyard Housing





# Courtyard Housing Design Standards



## (4) Building Placement

- A Building Orientation\*** Buildings along a street must have primary orientation to the street. Internal buildings must orient to courtyard.
- B Setbacks** 0' Rear Setback from alley when parking is provided directly from alley. Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F*.
- C Separation Between Buildings On Same Site** 10'  
6' if building height of both buildings is less than 25' or existing tree is retained.

## (5) Access and Parking

- D Pedestrian Access** Entry from common courtyard to each building and/or unit; Entry from street ok at front units.  
Required access from an alley if exists. Prohibited between building and street. Prohibited within front setback. Garages must be setback 20' from lot line. Refer to Site Development Standards *TMC 13.06.090.C* for vehicle and *TMC 13.06.090.G* for bike parking ratios.
- E Parking**
- F Driveway** Max number: 1 per 12,000 SF of lot area. Limited to access from alley if exists. Refer to Site Development Standards *TMC 13.06.090.C*.
- G Habitable Space\*** 10' deep along 100% of street-facing facades.

## (6) Building Size

- H Building Width** 40' max for a detached building or the wing of an attached building
- I Building Depth** N/A
- J Height Limits** Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F*.

## (7) Building Articulation

- K Covered Entry\*** Covered entries required:  
3' deep min  
Single unit entry: 20 SF min  
Shared entry: 30 SF min
- L Transparency/Windows & Openings\*** 15% transparent to street and courtyard.  
10% transparent to alleys and surface parking lots.
- M Articulation\*** N/A

## (8) Open Space

- N Amenity Space\*** Shared courtyard required.  
Min width: 20'  
Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F*.
- O Tree Credit** Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F*.

\* Refer also to Additional Standards *TMC 13.06.100.E.4* at the end of this chapter.

## d. Rowhouse

### (1) Description

Typically a multi-story building with access to the street from its front door and a private yard. Each Rowhouse may contain more than one unit accessed from the same sidewalk and front door. A Rowhouse is always attached to two to five other Rowhouse buildings, which together create a “Rowhouse Cluster” of 3 to 6 Rowhouses.

### (2) Applicability

The following requirements apply to all Rowhouse dwellings in all Urban Residential districts. The total number of units per lot is subject to District Development Standards density maximums.

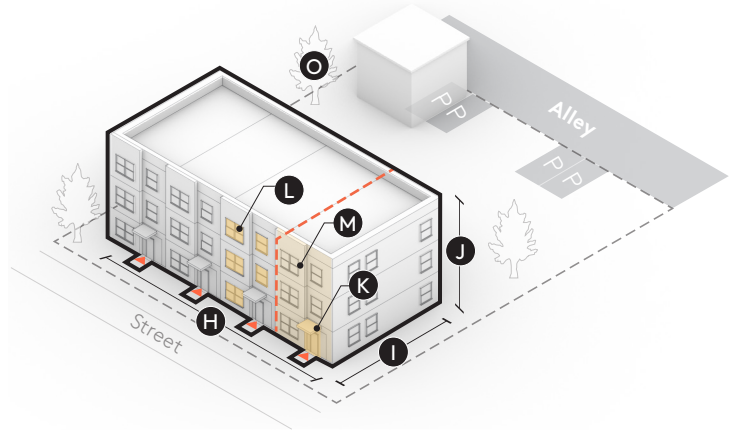
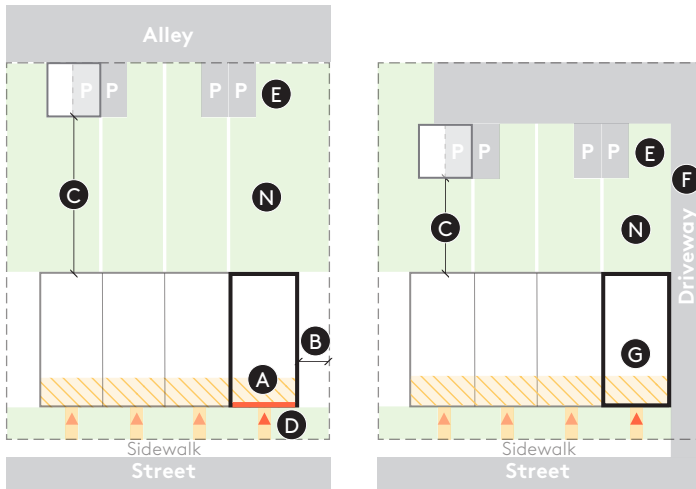
### (3) Purpose

Rowhouses are intended to provide housing at a scale between detached housing and multiplexes. With immediate street access to the units and to private backyards, this housing type can work well for families. Often provided for sale, they can create home ownership opportunities, and usually at a lower cost than detached houses because the buildings are connected and on smaller lots.

### Character examples for Rowhouses



# Rowhouse Design Standards



## (4) Building Placement

- A Building Orientation\*** Must have primary orientation to street; Rowhouse Clusters on corner lots may choose to orient to two streets.
- B Setbacks** Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F*, which measure to Rowhouse Clusters.
- C Separation Between Buildings On Same Site** 0' between Rowhouses  
10' between each Rowhouse Cluster  
6' if building height of both buildings is less than 25' or existing tree is retained.

## (5) Access and Parking

- D Pedestrian Access** Individual access via a sidewalk or pedestrian path is required to each Rowhouse from the street.  
Rowhouses on corner lots may select which street to orient to.
- E Parking** Required access from an alley if exists. Prohibited between building and street. Prohibited within front setback. Garages prohibited on front facades. Garages must be setback 20' from lot line. Refer to Site Development Standards *TMC 13.06.090.C* for vehicle and *TMC 13.06.090.G* for bike parking ratios.
- F Driveway** Max number: 1 per 12,000 SF of lot area. Rowhouse Clusters must share a driveway if parking from alley is not available. Limited to access from alley if exists. Refer to Site Development Standards *TMC 13.06.090.C*.
- G Habitable Space\*** 10' deep along 100% of street-facing facades.

## (6) Building Size

- H Building Width** UR-1 and UR-2: 75' max, 40' min (for each Rowhouse Cluster)  
UR-3: 90' max, 40' min (for each Rowhouse Cluster)
- I Building Depth** UR-1 and UR-2: 60'  
UR-3: 80'
- J Height Limits** Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F*.

## (7) Building Articulation

- K Covered Entry\*** Covered entries required: 3' deep min  
Single unit entry: 20 SF min  
Shared entry: 30 SF min
- L Transparency/Windows & Openings\*** 15% transparent to streets, 10% transparent to alleys, shared open space, and parking drives or lots
- M Articulation\*** Street-facing facades must be articulated to emphasize each individual Rowhouse using at least one Articulation Feature.

## (8) Open Space

- N Amenity Space\*** Private. Common open space of the same area is allowed. Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F*.
- O Tree Credit** Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F*.

\* Refer also to Additional Standards *TMC 13.06.100.E.4* at the end of this chapter.



## e. Multiplex

### (1) Description

A building consisting of 7 or more stacked units, with the appearance of a large house or a small apartment building. Access is often from one shared entry at the street leading to a central corridor accessing all units, but other configurations are possible (including a few single-stair buildings connected together).

### (2) Applicability

The following standards apply to Multiplex developments in all Urban Residential district. The total number of units per lot is subject to District Development Standards density maximums. Refer to Tacoma Municipal Code Section 13.06.100 C. for multi-family developments in other zones.

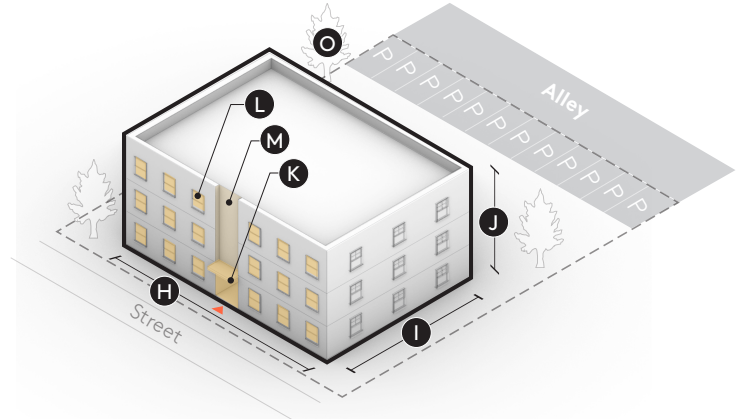
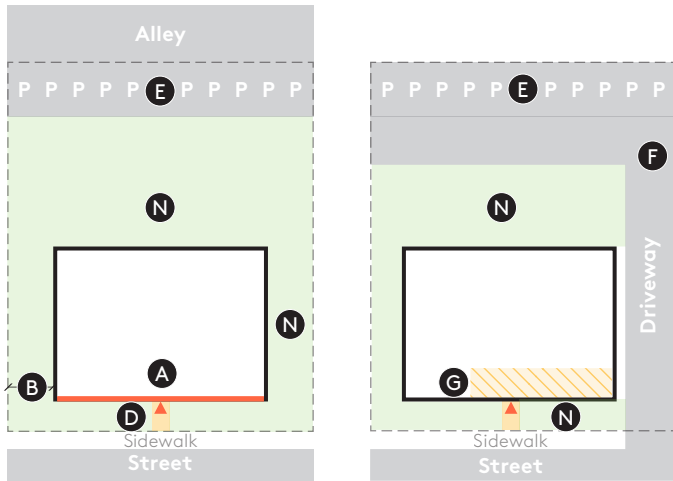
### (3) Purpose

Multiplexes are intended to provide housing at an intermediate scale between detached houses and the larger apartments buildings in mixed use centers. Located nearer transit and anticipated to contain smaller units, they can provide naturally occurring affordable housing.

### Character examples for Multiplexes



## Multiplex Design Standards



### (4) Building Placement

- A Building Orientation\*** Must have primary orientation to street.
- B Setbacks** Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F*.
- C Separation Between Buildings On Same Site** 10'  
6' if building height of both buildings is less than 25' or existing tree is retained.

### (5) Access and Parking

- D Pedestrian Access** At least one shared entry to the building is required from the street within 15' of the sidewalk. Individual entries to ground floor units are permitted.  
Required access from an alley if exists. Prohibited between building and street. Prohibited within front setback. Garages must be setback 20' from lot line. Refer to Site Development Standards *TMC 13.06.090.C* for vehicle and *TMC 13.06.090.G* for bike parking ratios.
- E Parking** Max number: 1 per 12,000 SF of lot area. Limited to access from alley if exists. Refer to Site Development Standards *TMC 13.06.090.C*.
- F Driveway** Max number: 1 per 12,000 SF of lot area. Limited to access from alley if exists. Refer to Site Development Standards *TMC 13.06.090.C*.
- G Habitable Space\*** 10' deep along 75% of street-facing facades.

### (6) Building Size

- H Building Width** 90' max
- I Building Depth** 100' max
- J Height limits** Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F*.

### (7) Building Articulation

- K Covered Entry\*** Covered entries required:  
3' deep min  
Single unit entry: 20 SF min  
Shared entry: 30 SF min
- L Transparency/Windows & Openings\*** 15% transparent to street, 10% transparent to alleys, shared open space, and surface parking lots.
- M Articulation\*** Required for street facing facades: One feature for facades up to 60' wide. Two features for facades over 60' wide.

### (8) Open Space

- N Amenity Space\*** Private amenity space may count for no more than 25% of total required. Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F*.
- O Tree Credit** Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F*.

\* Refer also to Additional Standards *TMC 13.06.100.E.4* at the end of this chapter.

## 4. Additional Building Design Standards

### a. Building Orientation

(1) A building shall have a front elevation with a primary entrance oriented to the adjacent street, right of way, or other space required by the Housing Type. Front setbacks are calculated to this front elevation, and Building Width is measured along this elevation. Refer to Habitable Space requirements required at the primary building elevation.

(2) Other building entries are allowed on other building facades in addition to the required entry on the front elevation.

(3) This front elevation and all street-facing facades shall not contain elements commonly associated with a rear elevation appearance, such as utility meters, refuse containers, loading docks, and/or dumpsters.

### b. Habitable Space

(1) Purpose: To promote active, welcoming, neighborly activities along streets and sidewalks.

(2) Spaces include: residential spaces such as foyers, entries, living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, bedrooms, dens, lofts, home offices, common amenity spaces, playrooms, and mudrooms. Also includes non-residential spaces such as lobbies, mailrooms, cafes, or commercial spaces. Excludes spaces such as garages, storage spaces, loading, mechanical, electrical, or other utility rooms. Excludes utility spaces such as garages, storage spaces, loading, or utility rooms.

(3) Location: The floor of a Habitable Space must be within 5 feet of sidewalk grade elevation, unless site conditions prohibit such a relationship. This is to allow garages or other utility spaces to be located partially underground along the street-frontage without counting against the Habitable Space requirements.

### c. Articulation Features

(1) Applicability. As required in Building Design Standards for Houseplexes, Rowhouses and Multiplexes.

(2) Required Articulation Features. These may combined:

(a) Modulation.

(i) Articulating a building's roofline. May include sloping, stepping back or forward, a strong cornice line, or an expressive overhang.

(ii) Articulating a building's top to contrast and complement its lower levels. May include upper level setbacks (provided the top of the building is visible from the centerline of the adjacent street), and/or façade and window features below.

(iii) Articulating a building's base to contrast and complement its upper levels. May include a change of plane at least 2 feet deep, and/or façade and window features below.

(iv) Articulating a building's elevation. May include vertical changes of plane at least 2 feet deep, and/or façade and window features below.

(v) Repeated stoops at least 3 feet above sidewalk grade to individual units.

(b) Facades and windows.

(i) Significant changes of cladding material.

(ii) Real brick used as the cladding material on a majority of the façade.

(iii) Repeated balconies or bay windows. Maximum spacing of 16 feet.

(iv) Windows with deep or detailed frames. May include windows recessed at least 2.5 inches from the cladding material, decorative window trim, or deep metal "flashing" surrounds.



#### d. Transparency / Windows & Openings

(1) Vertical façade surfaces facing a street, alley, courtyard, plaza, drive aisle, parking court, or surface parking lot shall incorporate transparent doors and windows equal to the amount required by the Housing Type. Rough openings are used to calculate this requirement. Windows in garage doors or walls do count toward meeting this standard.

(2) Unscreened, flat, blank walls on the first story more than 25 feet in width are prohibited facing a public street and/or highway right-of-way, residential zone, or parking lot. These walls shall use modulation, windows, openings, landscaping to achieve the required visual break. The visual break shall be at least 1 foot in width. Items provided for other requirements may satisfy this requirement as appropriate. Stored merchandise, pipes, conduit, utility boxes, air vents, and/or similar equipment do not count toward this requirement.

(3) Placement of windows on facades facing neighboring buildings, or units or buildings on the same lot, shall endeavor to create appropriate levels of privacy between neighbors.

#### e. Covered Entries

(1) Applicability: Covered entries are required for primary entries to buildings and units. They are not required for additional entries such as side doors or back doors.

(2) May include: porches, canopies, alcoves beneath upper story overhangs, and other elements or combinations that protect pedestrians from the weather.

(3) May be included as part of Amenity Space requirement.

(4) Awnings made of canvas or non-permanent construction do not count towards meeting this requirement.

(5) Refer to TMC 13.05.040 for porch requirements in Historic Districts.

#### f. Amenity Space

(1) All units shall have access to either private or common amenity space.

(2) Private Amenity Space: This includes ground-related spaces such as yards, patios, gardens, and decks. Requirements include the following:

(a) No dimension shall be less than 7 feet.

(b) Must be directly accessible from the dwelling unit.

(c) May also be provided as balconies or porches of at least 50 SF, and no dimension less than 5 feet.

(3) Common Amenity Space: This includes ground-related spaces such as yards, patios, courtyards, decks, community gardens, children's play areas, or other multi-purpose outdoor recreational and/or green spaces. Requirements include the following:

(a) No dimension shall be less than 7 feet.

(b) Must be positioned near a shared path, shared building entry, or other pedestrian activity.

(c) Must feature paths, appropriate hard surfacing, landscaping, seating, lighting and other pedestrian amenities to make the area functional and enjoyable.

(d) Should be oriented to receive direct sunlight for part of the day, facing east, west, or (preferably) south, when possible.

(e) Must be open to the sky, except a maximum of 25% of the common amenity space may be covered but not enclosed by porches, gazebos, pergolas, or other such structures, provided no dimension is less than 8 feet.

(4) Rooftop decks may be used to meet up to 50% of the Amenity Space requirements if they include the same minimum dimensions and amenities required of ground-related amenity space.

(5) Landscaping: Up to 35% of the amenity space may be comprised of landscaping. Refer to Landscaping Standards *TMC 13.06.090.B.*

(6) Vehicular access areas shall not count as amenity space.

## g. Non-Residential Use

(1) Applicability: Refer to District Standards *TMC 13.06.020.F* for uses allowed per zone. Non-residential uses except garages, loading and utility spaces count towards “Habitable Space Requirements”.

(2) Location:

(a) Must be on ground level, and include a front entry within 2’ of sidewalk grade elevation.

(b) Commercial uses must be on a corner lot

(c) Must be in street-facing building and in a street-facing space within the building.

(3) Area and number:

(a) Maximum area of 3,000 SF.

(b) No limit to number of businesses.

(4) Setbacks: Comply with District Standards, except commercial uses have 0’ front setback min, and 10’ front setback max.

(5) Transparency: 25% min transparent facade between 2-10’ above sidewalk grade.

## h. Corner Sites

(1) Applicable to sites with two or more street frontages. On non-alley sites, an applicant may choose which street to use as the primary street for the purposes of determining Building Orientation, and Building Width and Depth.

(2) Garages are only allowed within the rear portion of corner lot, at least 70’ from the front property line, unless directed otherwise by City engineer.

(3) Backyard Buildings and Courtyard Housing on corner lots must have primary or secondary pedestrian entries accessed from the secondary street. Secondary pedestrian entries are also encouraged in other Housing Types.

(4) Standards for Windows & Openings apply to both street-facing facades on corner lots.

## i. Large Sites

(1) Applicable to sites 60,000 SF or larger

(2) Connectivity: Must meet the connectivity standards in *TMC 13.06.090.F*. Pedestrian and Bicycle support standards.

(3) Standards: Large Sites must comply with District Standards, Building Design Standards, and Site Design Standards, with the following exceptions:

- When complying with Housing Type Building Design Standards for 4. Building Placement and 5. Access & Parking, the following connections may be used in place of Streets:
  - Through-Block Connections
  - Interior Access Roads
  - Walkways, Pathways
  - Pedestrian Connections 10’ or wider
- Backyard Buildings: One row of Backyard Buildings is allowed behind each street-fronting Houseplexes, Rowhouses or Multiplexes.

(4) Nonconforming large sites permitted before (March 2024) may allow renovations and additions to existing buildings.

## j. Addressing

All buildings must have clear addressing visible from the street. If Backyard Buildings or any Courtyard Housing buildings are not visible from the street, an address and some form of directional notation must be located along a walkway, on a fence, on a front building, or in some location that differentiates the front building address from the rear building address and is visible from the main access point to the property.

# Tacoma Urban Residential Districts Development & Design Standards

November, 2024

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