

Research Summary of Other Cities

Overview Summary of Enabled Diverse Housing Options

The following table compares proposed changes to regulation and policy in several cities across North America that address building form, secondary suites, and parking requirements to enable more diverse forms of housing development. More detailed information on subject city case studies can be seen following this table.

Table 1: City Comparisons, what is enabled through policy and regulation changes

Cities	Changes in Policy/Regulation	Regulations for Suites	Changes in Parking Requirements
Portland	Reduce regulatory restrictions by broadening the types of housing available in single-detached residential zones. This includes duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage clusters, and attached houses	A house with two accessory dwellings and a duplex with an accessory dwelling	No minimum parking requirements
Seattle	Zoning changes in the low-rise residential area allows for the construction of townhouses, three-story rowhouses, and three- and four-story apartment structures	Each dwelling unit can have one accessory dwelling	One parking stall per unit, however no minimum parking requirements in urban villages
Minneapolis	Amendments to the Minneapolis 2040 Plan and changes to zoning regulations to allow up to three units in all low-rise residential districts	An accessory dwelling unit may only be added to single-family or two-family dwellings	No minimum parking requirements
Edmonton	Zoning changes were applied to low-rise and medium-density residential zones enabling duplex housing with a secondary suite as well as multi-unit housing (which refers to three or more principal dwellings)	A single-detached with a secondary suite, semi-detached with a secondary suite, or row house with a secondary suite	No minimum parking requirements
Victoria	Proposing three new uses, houseplexes (from three to 6 units), corner townhouses, and heritage conserving infill that will be permitted in the city's Traditional Residential districts	A single-family home with a secondary suite	0.77 parking spaces per unit

Toronto	The areas designated “Neighbourhoods” in the Official Plan will allow a greater range of low-rise residential building types, such as semi-detached houses, duplexes, fourplexes, stacked townhouses, duplexes, fourplexes, accessory dwelling units (such as garden suites and laneway suites), and low-rise apartments	Secondary suites in townhouses city-wide, laneway suites across the city	No minimum parking requirements
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Portland Residential Infill Project, OR

Portland implemented the Residential Infill Project, a set of changes to the city's single-detached zoning bylaws that remove regulatory hurdles and encourage higher-density, middle-income housing types. The residential infill project changes reduce regulatory restrictions by broadening the types of housing available inside single-detached residential zones. It raises the allowed floor area ratio for multi-dwelling structures while decreasing it for new single-detached dwellings. Finally, with its unique land use regulations, it opens the door for higher density.

The following are the key findings of the Portland Residential Infill Project:

1. They complied with the state mandate (House Bill 2001) and the Senate bill for missing middle housing implementation by permitting duplexes on all parcels and other middle housing (triplexes, fourplexes, cottage clusters, attached houses) on the majority of parcels¹.
2. The zoning changes permit a house with two accessory dwelling units, a duplex with an accessory dwelling unit, a triplex, a fourplex, a cottage cluster, and affordable fourplexes and multi-dwelling structures¹.
3. Affordable fourplexes and multi-dwelling structures should have a maximum of six dwelling units on interior and corner lots (50 percent of those units on the site should be affordable to those earning no more than 60 percent of the area median family income)².
4. There is no minimum parking requirement for household living use in single dwelling zones, both near and far from public transit².

References

1. Housing Choices (House Bill 2001): Urban Planning: State of Oregon (2001). Available at: <https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/UP/Pages/Housing-Choices.aspx>
2. Portland Residential Infill Project (2022) Available at: <https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/rip>

Seattle Mandatory Housing Affordability, WA

Seattle's growth and development has led to issues with housing stock and affordability. The purpose of Seattle's Mandatory Housing Affordability (MHA) legislation is to increase housing options and planning approvals. The legislation aims to reduce residential displacement by expanding the quantity of affordable dwellings that are accessible to low-income families with different housing options.

The following are the key findings of the Seattle's Mandatory Housing Affordability:

1. Zoning changes in the low-rise residential area allow for the construction of townhouses, three-story rowhouses, and three- and four-story apartment structures¹.

2. Accessory dwelling units are permitted in all neighbourhood residential zones and each principal dwelling unit can have one accessory dwelling unit². In most zones, one parking stall per unit is required. However, there is no minimum parking requirement in urban villages if it is within a quarter mile of a street with frequent transit service².

References

1. Chapter 23.44 - Residential, Single-Family | Municipal Code | Seattle, WA | Municode Library (2022)
2. Seattle ADUniverse (2022). Available at: <https://aduniverse-seattlecitygis.hub.arcgis.com/>

Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan 2040, MN

Minneapolis has addressed housing through two approaches – by revising the Minneapolis 2040 Plan and changing zoning regulations to allow one-to-three units in all low-rise residential districts that previously only allowed one unit. One of the Minneapolis 2040 Plan's goals is to alleviate racial inequities in economic, housing, safety, and health outcomes in Minneapolis. The Plan recognizes the role that Minneapolis' zoning laws, in conjunction with previous discriminatory housing policies (redlining), had in shaping inequitable access to homes¹.

The following are the key findings of the Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan 2040:

1. Zoning code amendments in the low-rise residential area allow residential uses with up to three units that retain the same building scale and size permitted for single-detached houses².
2. An accessory dwelling unit may only be added to a single or semi-detached dwelling.
3. For one to three dwelling units, there is no minimum parking requirement. For four dwelling units or more, there is a maximum of two parking stalls per unit³.

References

1. Minneapolis Missing Middle Housing (2022). Available at: <https://minneapolis2040.com/implementation/the-missing-middle#Goals>
2. Minneapolis, C. of (2022) Residential buildings with up to three units. Available at: <https://www2.minneapolismn.gov/business-services/planning-zoning/amendments/adopted-proposed/recently-adopted/residential-buildings-3-units-amendment/>
3. Parking, Loading, and Mobility Regulations (2021). Available at: <https://minneapolis2040.com/implementation/parking-loading-and-mobility-regulations/>

Infill Roadmap 2018, Edmonton, AB

The City of Edmonton developed the Infill Roadmap 2018 to enable new housing choices in their mature neighbourhoods. The Roadmap aimed at enhancing different forms of housing such as triplexes, rowhouses, and low-and mid-rise apartments up to six stories. To supplement the data obtained during the stakeholder and community consultation, three technical papers were also created: Edmonton's Urban Neighbourhood Evolution, Municipal Tools Review, and Market Housing and Affordability Study.

The following are some key findings from the Infill Roadmap 2018:

1. The zoning changes were applied to low-rise and medium-density residential zones. These changes enable duplex housing with a secondary suite as well as multi-unit housing (which refers to three or more principal dwellings)¹.
2. The changes have reduced the amenity area required for each residential unit from 15 squared metres to 7.5 squared metres, and it is also required for row-housing and multi-unit housing¹.

3. In 2020, Edmonton city council voted to eliminate parking minimums. Open option parking enables developers, property owners, and companies to choose how much on-site parking to provide on properties based on operations, activities, or lifestyle².

References

1. Missing Middle Zoning Review | City of Edmonton (2022). Available at: https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/urban_planning_and_design/medium-scale-housing-review
2. Parking Rules for New Homes and Businesses | City of Edmonton (2020). Available at: https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/urban_planning_and_design/comprehensive-parking-review

Missing Middle Housing Initiative, Victoria, BC

The Victoria Missing Middle Housing Initiative proposes that house-plexes (buildings with three to six units that are all accessed from grade) and corner townhomes, be permitted in the city's Traditional Residential districts where other low-density residential forms are allowed. It would also support in the preservation of heritage properties by permitting additional residences to be constructed on the same property as the heritage registered structure. At the same time, Victoria's Official Community Plan already envisions Missing Middle housing forms throughout the city¹.

The following are the key findings from the Initiative:

1. Missing middle housing is shaped through the Official Community Plan amendments and policy consolidation, zoning regulation bylaw amendment, affordable housing standards bylaw amendment and the land use procedures bylaw amendment².
2. Victoria is proposing three new uses and related regulations: house-plexes (from three to six units), corner townhouses, and heritage conserving infill³.
3. The proposed regulations require 0.77 parking spaces per unit. This is less than the current zoning requirement of 1.0-1.45 spaces per dwelling³.
4. Two bicycle parking stalls are required per unit, and one stall per secondary dwelling unit³.

References

1. Victoria Missing Middle Housing | Have Your Say (2022). Available at: <https://engage.victoria.ca/missing-middle-housing/>
2. Victoria Council Report (2022). City of Victoria. Available at: <https://pub-victoria.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=82130>.
3. Missing Middle Housing Initiative Information Boards (2022). City of Victoria

Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods, Toronto, ON

The City of Toronto has been undertaking the program of Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods to include more diverse housing forms. The areas designated "Neighbourhoods" in the Official Plan are primarily residential buildings up to four-storeys. These areas permit a greater range of low-rise residential building types, such as semi-detached houses, duplexes, fourplexes, stacked townhouses, accessory dwelling units (such as garden suites and laneway suites), and low-rise apartments.

The following are the key findings from the Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods project:

1. Permitting secondary suites in townhouses city-wide as well as removing the requirement for the original house to be at least five years old¹.

2. Allowing laneway suites across the city².
3. Creating townhouse and low-rise apartment guidelines to help implement policies in the Official Plan and monitoring the outcomes³.
4. The City is recommending inclusion of garden suites in neighbourhoods to expand housing options.
5. Doing pilot projects for different housing forms, ranging from duplexes to low-rise apartments.
6. There is no minimum parking requirement for each dwelling unit in the following forms: detached house, semi-detached house, townhouse, duplex, triplex or fourplex⁴.

References

1. Toronto, C. of (2018c) Secondary Suites, City of Toronto. Available at: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/planning-studies-initiatives/secondary-suites/>
2. Toronto, C. of (2018b) Changing Lanes: Laneway Suites in the City of Toronto, City of Toronto. Available at: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/planning-studies-initiatives/changing-lanes-the-city-of-torontos-review-of-laneway-suites/> *Missing Middle Housing Initiative Information Boards (2022)*.
3. Toronto, C. of (2017) Townhouse & Low-Rise Apartment Guidelines, City of Toronto. Available at: <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/official-plan-guidelines/design-guidelines/townhouse-and-low-rise-apartments/>
4. City of Toronto Zoning By-law 82-2022, as amended (Office Consolidation). Available at: <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/bylaws/2022/law0089.pdf>