

# Calgary Planning Commission Member Comments



For CPC2021-1478 / LOC2021-0065  
heard at Calgary Planning Commission  
Meeting 2022 February 10



Member	Reasons for Decision or Comments
<p><b>Commissioner Tiedemann</b></p>	<p>Reasons for Approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Given that this site is located directly beside a built out M-CG parcel and across the street from a completed M-U1 building, I think the density being proposed through this land use amendment is entirely reasonable and should be supported. The development outcomes that will be allowed from this land use amendment will help to provide diversified, unique housing options in a very popular community that continues to see increased housing prices. These types of applications will go a long way to help achieve the 50/50 growth targets set out in the MDP and will help to provide more diverse housing options for Calgarians. Smart densification and more efficient use of existing city infrastructure also support the climate goals that have been set out by council.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Commissioner Hawryluk</b></p>	<p>Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council may benefit from some background on missing middle housing with this application. Dan Parolek introduced the term ‘missing middle housing’ to describe “a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units—compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes—located in a walkable neighborhood.”</li> </ul> <p>Parolek outlines several core types of missing middle housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Duplex: side-by-side [our Land Use Bylaw calls these semi-detached dwellings]</li> <li>- Duplex: stacked</li> <li>- Cottage court</li> <li>- Fourplex: stacked</li> <li>- Townhouse [this includes row houses]</li> <li>- Triplex: stacked (triple decker)</li> <li>- Multiplex: medium (mansion apartment)</li> <li>- Courtyard building</li> <li>- Live-work (flexhouse)</li> </ul> <p>The proposed form appears to be a mix between townhouse and courtyard buildings. According to Parolek, there are other</p>

missing middle type variations. In his book, *Missing Middle Housing*, Parolek writes about other types:

“There are unlimited variations of multiunit housing types that can fit within the Missing Middle classification. They might include town houses over flats; the Mews Homes, which are highlighted as a case study in chapter 6; or types that mix town houses and flats in creative ways. The most important shared characteristic of these types is simply the house form and scale, but the design must not be compromised by the integration of parking (as we often see), and the types must also engage the street. But since housing types is not a common planning and zoning methodology and not a typical way to discuss housing, it is best to start with these basic configurations and then expand once community members, planners, local developers, and decision makers get comfortable with a types-based approach” (175).

While community members’ comfort with missing middle and a types-based approach ranges, as evidenced by letters from community associations, the City Census categories for type of structure like converted structures, duplexes, and townhouses show that missing middle housing has started in this area with these basic configurations. Some apartments may count as missing middle housing, but it is safest to exclude them because the community-level Census results appears to consider a stacked triplex and a 30-storey apartment tower as a single type of structure. According to the 2019 City Census, at least 31% of all dwellings in South Calgary, 38% of all dwellings in Altadore, and 37% of all dwellings in Garrison Woods are missing middle housing. This averages to 35% of all dwellings in the Marda Loop area. Looking at population, at least 34% of residents in South Calgary, 37% in Altadore, and 36% in Garrison Woods live in missing middle housing. In total, at least 36% of residents in the Marda Loop area live in missing middle housing. Those numbers suggest that missing middle housing in the Marda Loop area started with the basic configurations and that over a third of community residents are comfortable enough with missing middle housing to live in it. It may be time to expand to other types of missing middle housing.

Parolek also writes about Upper Missing Middle Housing types, which “should be treated as a separate category from Missing Middle. Compared to the Core Missing Middle types, the Upper Missing Middle types are:

- Taller: Mostly three to four stories, typically still walk-up, but sometimes up to five stories.

- Deeper: These types often go from front setback to close-to-rear property line with little or no rear setback.
- Wider: These types are often wider than a house but not dramatically wider than the core Missing Middle types, often still equal to or less than 75 ft [22.8m] wide.
- Appropriate in different locations: These types often provide an appropriate transition from corridor, main street, higher-intensity lots into single-family or lower-intensity neighbourhoods, or are appropriate in residential areas that may currently have smaller buildings or single-family homes where policy and plans have a defined degree of change, evolution, or transformation for these areas” (173).

This proposal may have some of the attributes of Upper Missing Middle like the height and rear setback. Parolek’s guidance about appropriate locations is helpful with this application and is consistent with the Municipal Development Plan’s Key Direction 3 to “direct land use change within a framework of nodes and corridors” (2.2). The 33rd Avenue SW application is on an official Main Street.

In closing, architects have observed that “form follows finance.” The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation can change finance programs faster than the City changes its Land Use Bylaw. This Direct Control District allows form to follow finance while producing a ground-oriented type of housing. However, Direct Control Districts can appear to be used to avoid or discourage appeals to the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board, which is concerning. This type of Direct Control should be a stopgap measure until the City adds a suitable Land Use District to the Land Use Bylaw or a produces a more flexible Land Use Bylaw. A free and fair housing market should let many people produce the homes that current and future Calgarians need—not just the homes that require a consultant to get Council approval.