

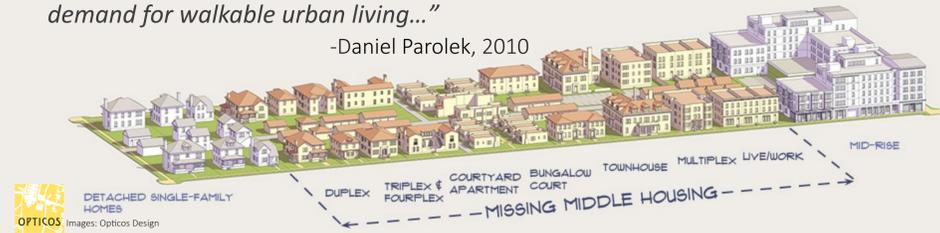
Study Goals

This study looks to understand barriers to increasing housing type diversity through missing middle housing. Missing middle housing speaks to a 2-10 unit range of housing rarely seen post WWII. Considering municipal planner, consulting planner, and developers' experiences, I look to propose solutions to enable the creation of missing middle housing.

What is Missing Middle Housing?

"...a range of [2-10 unit] multi-unit or clustered housing types compatible in scale with single-family homes that help meet the growing demand for walkable urban living..."

-Daniel Parolek, 2010

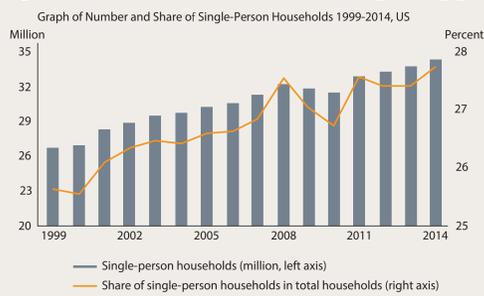


Post WWII, Federal policies and programs to create homeownership opportunities for returning veterans led to the large-scale development of single-family housing (Duany 2000, p.9; Larco 2010, p.71-72).

Why do we Need Missing Middle Housing?

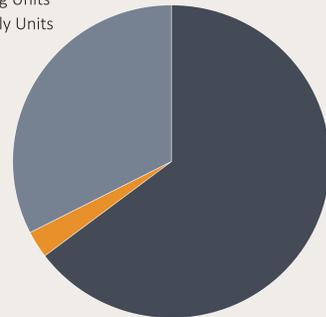
- Increase **housing options**
- Increase smaller **market-rate affordability**
- Maintain neighborhood **character**
- Increasing **density**
- Address changing **demographics**

Single person households are the fastest growing group in the US



2017 Census Data Percent Construction

- 5+ Dwelling Units
- 2-4 Dwelling Units
- Single Family Units



Demand for small lot attached housing exceeded supply by 35 million units in the state of California alone (Nelson, 2015)

Without housing unit diversity one of three household welfare situations may result:

1. Household is forced to relocated to an area where the housing type is available
2. Overconsumption of housing, which may cause affordability issues
3. Under consumption of housing, which results in overcrowding

(Paulsen 2010, p. 410)

How can Barriers be Understood?



To understand the barriers to implementing missing middle housing I studied barriers to the implementation of **New Urbanist development** as a different, but comparable development technique. New Urbanist Developments provide a useful comparison for the following reasons:

- Focus on housing and infill developments
- Need for divergence from traditional planning methods
- Emphasis on walk-ability and housing type diversity



Hunters View, San Francisco, CA | Source CNU



Seaside Village, Seaside, FL | Source CNU



Glenwood Park, Glenwood Park, GA | Source CNU

10 semi-structured interviews were used to identify potential barriers and potential solutions to development, interviewees consisted of:

- **4 Municipal Planners;** two from municipalities with successful New Urbanist Projects
- **4 Planning Consultants** specializing in New Urbanist Developments
- **2 Developers** involved in New Urbanist Developments

MISSING MIDDLE HOUSING

Exploring Potential Barriers to the Production of 2-10 Unit Housing Developments

Gillian Cooper | Spring 2018 | Advisor: Professor Aslıgül Göçmen



Images: Strong Towns.org

BARRIERS

Regulatory Systemic

State Environmental Review Process

- Consultants working in states with strenuous environmental review processes saw these regulations as increasing project length and cost

Conditional Use Zoning

The rezoning process is a development deterrent due to:

- High risk
- High cost
- Susceptibility to community push back

Lag Time Between Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code Updates

- 100% of interviewees agreed that the gap between plan and zoning updates is a barrier to development projects
- The EPA reflects that outdated codes prevent municipalities from getting the developments they want

"1-4 units is considered a single-family house by FHA, VA, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac and can be purchased with a standard 30-yr mortgage."

Our zoning codes should reflect this and allow for fourplex on any residential lot. -otherwise conservative banks will be more progressive and committed to housing choices than our city planners."

(Consulting Planner Interview)

Developers' Bottom Line

- Developers reflected that municipal planners fail to understand developer side processes when recommending projects

Burden of Impact Fees

- Impact fee allocation was seen as creating an unequal barrier to missing middle development
- As impact fees drive up the cost of development they are seen to be the downfall of many smaller projects

Negative Public Perception

- Public perception of density is a key barrier to the creation of missing middle housing
- National Association of Home Builders stated that 56% of home buyers interviewed stated that they **'do not want density'**; this creates issues as density does not speak to form



These three images from the Urban Land Institute are all the same density 10du/acre

"Density has become a four letter word."

-Developer Interview

Financial Social

SOLUTIONS

Environmental Streamlining Processes

- For processes such as the California Environmental Quality Act municipalities can perform streamlining processes to reduce cost and time burden on developers
- Environmental Impact Reports analyze potential development impacts within a municipality, such as increased traffic, storm water, and other impacts

Form-Based Codes

- Shifts primary regulation focus from use to form
- Enables by-right development through providing predictability in the built environment
- Form based codes have been seen to integrate municipal goals into regulating documents
- As form based codes speak to the comprehensive plan they can speak directly to community vision giving residents greater control of the types of developments seen

Creating a Collaborative Process

- Initiating collaboration between land use fields (engineering, building, storm water) allows for the collaborative creation of standards, in turn mitigating regulatory overlap
- Knowledge sharing between research and in field practice is essential to ensuring development speaks to demand
- 2 developers interviewed stated that municipalities with interdepartmental collaboration seemed to have more comprehensive standards

Evaluating Impact Fee Systems

- The use of impact fee schedule adjustment has been recommended for encouraging green infrastructure, in order to align fees with municipal goals
- Municipalities should take a progressive stance on impact fee schedules to promote the types of developments they want in their municipality

Highlighting Excellence in the Field

- Excellent existing developments provide illustrative examples for planners to point to when engaging the public in conversation about proposed developments
- Looking to excellent examples is a way of giving the public officials certainty when looking to change regulations

Utilizing the Charrette Process to Connect with Community

- A charrette process is a key way to enhance plans so that they speak to community desires
- Bridge the gap between developer and community vision
- When utilizing the process, planners must ensure to make participation accessible to all those in the community
- This process bridges the gap between community and developer project perception

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Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture

