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## ZONING QUICK SHEET

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# BEST PRACTICE 2.4: Housing Diversity



**MICHIGAN ECONOMIC**  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

# Zoning Quick Sheets

## Best Practice 2.4 – Housing Diversity

### **What is this Best Practice?**

Best Practice 2.4 includes zoning tools that communities can incorporate in their ordinance to encourage the construction of new dwelling units with recommendations for different housing types to accommodate a variety of residential needs and preferences. It is important to bear in mind that while zoning codes can be used to permit new housing types, market forces and public sector involvement are key determinants of the number and type of units created.

### **Why is this a Best Practice?**

A diverse housing stock will help communities adapt to changes in housing demand and meet the needs of its current and future populations. Enabling and promoting a range of housing types is an essential aspect of a well-balanced, inclusive community. A diverse housing stock provides residents with lifestyle options and is conducive to both attracting and retaining residents.

“Missing Middle” housing is a term referring to a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types, many of which are house scale, that can help a community meet the growing demand for walkable urban living. Missing middle housing continues to be in short supply across the nation and this is limiting business development in some areas as housing shortages can have major impacts on employee recruitment. Communities that adopt zoning ordinances that permit a variety of missing middle housing types are better prepared to accommodate multi-generational needs and sustain a growing population and workforce, components of a prosperous local economy.

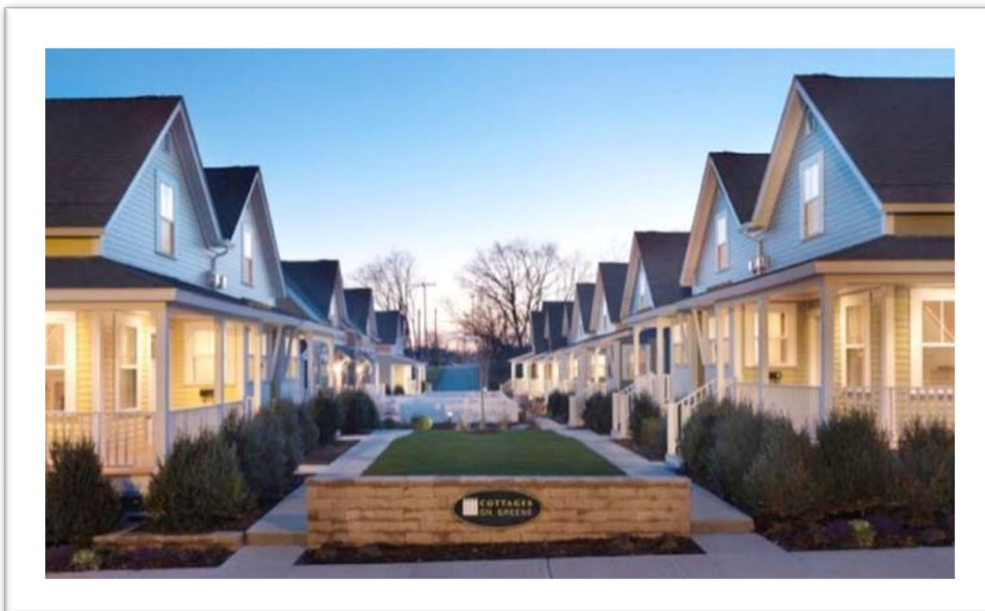
### **Definitions/ Terms to Know**

#### **Accessory Dwelling Units.**

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), also known as a granny flat, backyard cottage, sidekick house, casita, laneway house, secondary suite, auxiliary dwelling, or carriage flat, is defined by the American Planning Association as, “a smaller, independent residential dwelling unit located on the same lot as a stand-alone single-family home.”



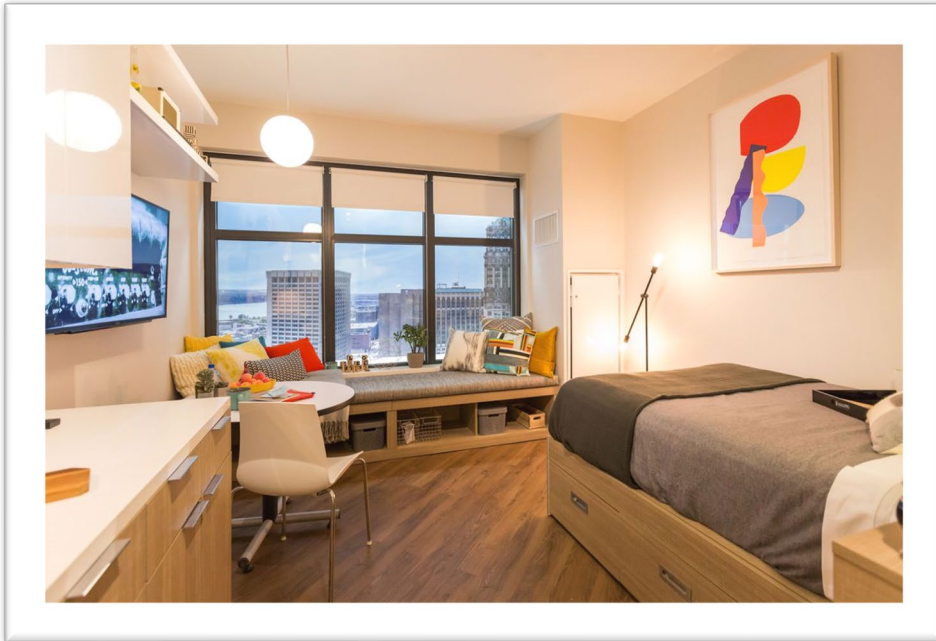
**Cottage Courts.** A group of small, detached structures arranged around a shared court that may or may not be visible from the street. The shared court is an important community-enhancing element that could include a gazebo, garden, playground or other community amenity.



**First Floor Residential.** Residential uses on the first floor of an all-residential or mixed-use building. For many years, it has been viewed as a best practice in planning to restrict first floor residential in Central Business, Office, or Commercial Districts to preserve valuable storefront real estate for commercial businesses that draw foot traffic and provide interesting streetscapes.



**Micro Units.** Micro units are typically small apartments with an open floor plan between 200-400 square feet in area. They can be efficiency or even one-bedroom units.



**Residential Above Commercial.** Mixed-use buildings can allow non-residential activities on lower floors and residential uses on upper floors to provide an environment that is walkable, active, and accommodating to a diverse range of uses.





**Stacked Flats.** Stacked flats are multi-level buildings with independent residential units on each floor of the building, often regarded as a hybrid between a townhouse and an apartment.



**Tiny homes.** While there is no standard definition for a tiny home, they are typically between 100-500 sf and can be stationary or wheeled homes. They may be single units or be part of a tiny home community.



**Townhouses/ Rowhouses.** Townhouses/ Rowhouses are single family dwellings that are attached to another dwelling by a common sidewall with an independent front entrance and often include a private rear or front yard.



**Triplex, Quadplex & Other multiplex housing.** Not all multiple family living needs to take place in an apartment building. Small multiplex buildings can hold 3, 4, 5 or 6 dwelling units in structures that may not be incompatible with single family homes.





## Criteria and Expectations for Essentials and Certified

The RRC Best Practices outline housing types that communities can include in their zoning codes to diversify the housing stock. To align with RRC Essentials criteria, communities are expected to permit at least two of the outlined housing types by right. To align with RRC Certified criteria, communities are expected to permit at least three of the outlined housing types.

CRITERIA: The zoning ordinance allows for a variety of housing options.	
ESSENTIALS EXPECTATIONS	CERTIFIED EXPECTATIONS
<input type="checkbox"/> The ordinance allows for <b>two</b> or more of the following housing types by-right: ADUs; townhouses/rowhouses; triplexes; quadplexes; 6-plexes; stacked flats; residential above commercial; micro units; cottage housing/ bungalows; and/or tiny houses.	<input type="checkbox"/> The ordinance allows for <b>three</b> or more of the following housing types by-right: ADUs; townhouses/rowhouses; triplexes; quadplexes; 6-plexes; stacked flats; residential above commercial; micro units; cottage housing/ bungalows; and/or tiny houses.

## Zoning Tool

**Accessory Dwelling Units.** An ADU can either be attached to the primary residence or built as a separate accessory structure. When communities are faced with housing supply challenges, ADU's are one way to provide an affordable alternative housing type and increase residential density with minimal impact on neighborhood character.

**Cottage Courts.** Entrances from the homes should be from the shared court, which replaces the function of a rear yard. Home heights are often one to one and a half stories, with two story homes away from the shared court façade.

**First Floor Residential.** With changes in real estate trends and as more and more communities use form-based codes and overlay districts to regulate the way buildings fit within the surrounding urban realm, use-based restrictions such as these are becoming outdated. In addition, with housing supply shortages and retail and office vacancies, adaptive reuse and redevelopment within downtown areas may require residential uses on the first floor, either by special land use or permitted by right.

**Micro-Units & Tiny Homes.** Oftentimes, zoning ordinances have a minimum size regulation for single family homes, a restriction that is intended to prevent homeowners from building houses that are significantly out of character and scale from the rest of the neighborhood. However, tiny homes can provide an affordable alternative for individuals who want the privacy of a single-family home, but do not require the same amount of space. In addition, communities may want to permit tiny homes to meet goals of encouraging infill development and combatting sprawl. To accommodate this type of housing, some ordinances include regulations to permit cottage housing, bungalows, and tiny houses with standards for compatibility with surrounding residential.

Minimum size regulations can also extend to apartments, preventing developers from creating efficiency units, which may be attractive for individuals seeking an affordable alternative. As communities struggle with housing shortages, permitting new housing types, such as micro-units or efficiencies, will help to increase overall supply.



**Residential Above Commercial.** Many zoning ordinances require Conditional or Special Land Use permits for second story residential uses but permitting them by-right eliminates a barrier to development and helps encourage new units and housing types, activate the streets and improve walkability, and match buildings to the highest and best use. Zoning ordinances should include specific standards for mixed-use buildings to ensure compatibility between the commercial and residential use.

**Stacked Flats.** Without long corridors, stacked flats require fewer common areas typical of apartments, providing developers the opportunity to use a greater portion of the building as living space. Stacked flats only include one or two shared surfaces between units, but rather than sharing sidewalls like townhouses, stacked flats share a common floor and/or ceiling. Many ordinances have requirements that limit stacked flats to multi-family districts, despite the relative use and density as townhouses.

**Townhouses/ Rowhouses.** Townhouses/row houses are typically maintained by a homeowner's association, which reduces the obligations of residents, an attractive and often affordable option for seniors, young professionals, and young families alike. Zoning ordinances should provide standards for townhouses or row houses to provide a desirable alternative housing option.

**Triplex, Quadplex & Other multiplex housing.** Often, residential districts are restricted to single family or two-family homes, a strategy communities used to preserve neighborhood character and promote ownership; however, as demand for housing continues to exceed supply, communities must consider ways to build new housing or incorporate additional density incrementally. Triplexes, quadplexes and sixplexes are one way that communities can incorporate additional density and encourage single-family conversions, with standards to ensure they are built appropriate for the scale of the neighborhood and residents are provided their own separate, private entrance.

## Application in Communities

### ADU's (Accessory Dwelling Units)

**Name of Community:** Holland, MI

**Population:** 34,378 (2020 Census)

**Description:** Holland is located across the county line of Ottawa and Allegan Counties, near the eastern shore of Lake Michigan. Holland is known for its Dutch heritage, which is not only pivotal to its cultural identity, but also as a boon for tourism; the city's Tulip Festival and Dutch-themed attractions along the Lake Michigan shoreline are a major draw for outside visitors every year. In addition to the attractions, Downtown Holland is composed of vibrant, walkable streets with a variety of retail, restaurants, and galleries to peruse. Holland is one of the most recent communities to receive Michigan Redevelopment Ready Community Certification, after adopting a new public participation plan and updating the strategic plan, including the city's economic development strategy.

The City of Holland has included standards for Accessory Dwelling Units in their zoning ordinance to provide additional housing opportunities for residents. The standards for ADU's in Holland are at least as restrictive as the standards required of the principal structure (rear and side yard setbacks are the same as the principal structure, but the height limit is lower and there is an occupancy and size limit.) These standards ensure a minimal impact on neighboring

properties, but other communities may determine that a more permissive ordinance is necessary to encourage and incentivize the construction of ADU's.

The Holland standards provide the applicant the option to share water and sewer service between the ADU and principal structure. Even though there are two users on the site, the ordinance has a requirement that ADU's and the principal building may not be sold separately, making shared metering feasible. Shared metering can provide significant cost-savings and eliminate one barrier to establishing an ADU.

In order to ensure that ADU's are inconsequential to neighborhood stability and do not encourage predatory landlords, the ordinance requires that an owner occupant must be living in the ADU or principal residence.

The Holland ADU ordinance can be found [here](#).

**Name of Community:** Traverse City, MI

**Population:** 15,678 (2020 Census)

**Description:** Traverse City is the County Seat of Grand Traverse County in the Northern Lower Peninsula. Known as the Cherry Capitol of the World, Traverse City's economy was historically driven by its thriving agricultural sector, but in recent years, Traverse City has grown in population and welcomed more intensive development downtown. With some of Michigan's best beaches and recreational opportunities, Traverse City has also experienced an increase in tourism during this time.

Traverse City has incorporated Accessory Dwelling Unit standards into their zoning ordinance to allow residents to construct both attached and detached accessory units. As a community with a high level of tourism, it is unsurprising that the Traverse City standards are written to prevent short-term occupancy. The ordinance requires that either the ADU or principal building are owner-occupied and have a Principal Residence exemption, restricting ADU's to those who have a personal stake in the property and community. Additionally, the ordinance restricts ADU's from being used as short-term rentals or constructed in houses that operate as a "Tourist House." Traverse City also takes an incremental approach to implementation by including a cap on the number of ADU permits issued annually.

In Traverse City, the dimensional standards for accessory dwelling units are the same standards as all accessory buildings, with setbacks that are more permissive than the principal structure. This makes it easier to accommodate an ADU or any accessory building on a lot that already includes a principal structure. Other communities may determine that ADU's should instead follow the same dimensional requirements as the principal building to prevent living space from being constructed in close proximity of neighbors.

The zoning ordinance for Traverse City can be viewed [here](#).

### **Included in District Regulations**

Accessory Dwelling Units. The intent of the allowed use of accessory dwelling units is to:

- a. Preserve and maintain the character of predominately single-family residential neighborhoods while broadening housing choices.
- b. Require owner-occupancy to provide the necessary on-site supervision that enhances maintenance and the preservation of the character of the City's single-family neighborhoods.
- c. Prevent disruption in the stability of the single-family neighborhoods, speculation and absentee ownership.
- d. Diversify housing options and create more affordable housing within existing single-family neighborhoods.
- e. Enhance neighborhood stability by providing extra income that potentially could allow homeowners to live in their houses longer and maintain their property better.
- f. Provide homeowners with a means of accommodating extended families, companionship, security, or services through tenants in either the accessory dwelling unit or principal dwelling.
- g. Will be placed in a manner to provide thoughtful consideration of landscaping, screening and window placement to protect the privacy of neighbors.

1. Accessory dwelling units are an allowed use provided they meet the following requirements:
  - a. The existing site and use are substantially in compliance with this Zoning Code.
  - b. There shall be a maximum limit of 15 newly registered accessory dwelling units per calendar year.
  - c. Only 1 accessory dwelling unit per parcel is allowed with a maximum of 2 dwellings per parcel.
  - d. The accessory dwelling unit is clearly incidental to the principal dwelling unit and the structures' exterior appear to be single-family.
  - e. Location of entrances. Only 1 entrance may be located on the façade of the primary dwelling facing the street, unless the primary dwelling contained additional entrances before the accessory dwelling unit was created. An exception to this regulation is entrances that do not have access from the ground such as entrances from balconies or decks.
  - f. Exterior stairs. Fire escapes for access to an upper level accessory dwelling shall not be located on the front of the primary dwelling. Interior stair floor area will not count in the size calculation of the accessory dwelling unit.
  - g. Individual site plans, floor plans, elevation drawings, building plans for the proposed accessory dwelling unit shall be submitted with the application for a land use permit. If exterior modifications are made after a land use permit is issued, revisions must be reviewed and approved by the Zoning Administrator.
  - h. The accessory dwelling unit incorporated in the principal dwelling may be no more than 800 square feet or the size of the principal dwelling, whichever is less. A unit in an accessory building may not exceed 800 square feet and must meet all the requirements of Section 1332.07.
  - i. At least 1 owner of record shall occupy either the primary dwelling unit or the accessory dwelling unit. The owner occupant shall meet the requirements for a principal residence tax exemption.
  - j. The accessory dwelling unit shall obtain a registration from the City Clerk annually.
    1. An owner desiring an accessory dwelling unit on their property is required to make written application to register with the City Clerk. The City Clerk shall provide forms for applications.
    2. The applicant shall truthfully state, in full, the information requested on the application, including:



- a. The applicant's name, telephone number, address of present place of residence, length of residence at such address;
  - b. Affidavit verifying applicant applies consent and understands that accessory dwelling units are subject to the conditions contained in this Ordinance section, in addition to conditions contained elsewhere in these Codified Ordinances.
3. A registration obtained under this section shall not relieve any person of the responsibility for obtaining any other permit, license or authorization required by another ordinance, statute or administrative rule.
  4. Administration and enforcement shall be the responsibility of the Zoning Administrator per Section 1322.04.
  5. Complaints. If a written complaint is made alleging that an accessory dwelling unit has violated any provisions of this chapter, the Zoning Administrator shall promptly forward the written complaint to the accessory dwelling unit owner together with a notice that an investigation will be made as to the truth of the complaint. The accessory dwelling unit owner may respond to the complaint and present evidence and respond to evidence produced by the investigation. If the Zoning Administrator determines that the accessory dwelling unit is in violation, the City may enforce these provisions by any means available under the law.
  6. Penalty per Section 202.99.
  7. Fee. A non-refundable registration fee shall be established by the City Commission.
- k. The accessory dwelling unit shall not be leased for a period of less than months at a time. Upon request of the City, the owner of record shall provide a lease agreement evidencing the length of the lease.
  - l. Each registered Accessory Dwelling Unit is subject to annual administrative review by the City. Registrant shall provide additional information as requested by the City.
  - m. An accessory dwelling unit shall be prohibited if the parcel has a licensed Tourist Home (listed in ordinance)

## **Cottage Court Housing, Bungalows, and Tiny Houses**

**Name of Community:** Detroit, MI

**Population:** 639,111 (2020 Census)

**Description:** The City of Detroit is the most populated city in the State of Michigan and the County Seat of Wayne County. Dubbed the “Motor City,” Detroit’s history as home to the Big Three automakers was influential on its built environment with auto-centric land uses, wide, high-speed roads, and sprawling single family homes. However, after years of decline, disinvestment and even a city-wide bankruptcy, city leaders, residents, businesses, and community organizations came together to chart the way towards one of America’s most impressive revitalization efforts, culminating in vibrant, walkable neighborhoods, new public spaces, complete streets, and a bustling central business district.

In the City of Detroit, instead of having a minimum area for residential buildings, there is a “residential compatibility” provision, which requires that buildings match the scale of other structures on the surrounding block; this allows for smaller homes to be built when the scaling is consistent with the surrounding homes in the neighborhood. In addition, Detroit’s ordinance requires that new houses are built with three characteristics which are considered to be “common style” of the surrounding buildings on the block, listing massing as one of the features to be considered. This allows for flexibility in housing size, while protecting the historic character and aesthetic of the neighborhood.

The City of Detroit’s zoning ordinance can be viewed [here](#).

**Sec. 50-14-394. - Residential compatibility requirements.**

The residential design standards of this subdivision are intended to ensure that dwelling units, which are constructed on blocks that have been substantially developed, are generally compatible with existing dwelling units on those blocks. The regulations apply where at least 50 percent of the residential lots along both block faces of a block contain occupied dwelling units. The requirements of this subdivision are minimal. Residential developers are encouraged to build to the highest standards practicable.

**Sec. 50-14-395. - Residential compatibility requirement; floor area.**

(a) Single-family dwelling units. To the maximum extent practicable, the floor area of a proposed dwelling unit shall be no less than 90 percent and not more than 135 percent of the average floor area of other single-family dwelling units within 200 feet of the subject lot, along both sides of the street of the same block.

(b) Two-family dwelling units. To the maximum extent practicable, the floor area of a proposed dwelling unit shall be no less than 90 percent and not more than 135 percent of the average floor area of other two-family dwelling units within 200 feet of the subject lot, along both sides of the street of the same block.

**Sec. 50-14-396. - Residential compatibility requirement; appearance.**

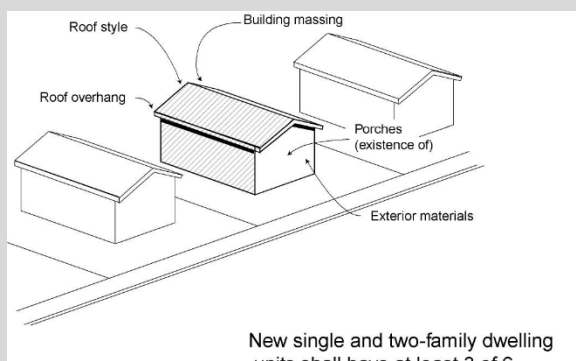
(a) To the maximum extent practicable, new single-family and two-family dwelling units shall be constructed to be generally compatible with other existing dwelling units of the same type on the same block face within 200 feet. This provision may be satisfied by constructing the subject dwelling unit so that at least three of the six features, which are

delineated in this section, are similar to the majority of other dwelling units within 200 feet on the block face on both sides of the street. (See Figure 50-14-396.) As an example, where there are 15 other single-family or two-family dwelling units within 200 feet of the proposed infill dwelling unit, any of the six features specified in this section that appear on a majority of those 15 dwellings, or eight of 15, should be considered as a "common style." Where a common style is shared for each of the six features, then the infill dwelling should exhibit three of those six features. Where a common style is shared for five of the features, then the infill dwelling should exhibit three of those five. Where a common style is shared for four of the features, then the infill dwelling should exhibit three of those four. Where a common style is shared for only one or two or three of the features, then the features of the infill dwelling should be similar to each of those. The six features are:

- (1) Roof style and overhang, including, but not limited to, gable, mansard, hip, A-frame, flat;
- (2) Garage orientation and design, whether attached or detached;
- (3) Building massing including, but not limited to, ranch with two-story attached garage; two-story with attached garage; bungalow;
- (4) Front porches, whether present or not;
- (5) Exterior building material; or
- (6) Pattern of window and door openings including, but not limited to, central door and three windows; offset door and four windows.

(b) As indicated in Section 50-14-394 of this Code, this provision shall not apply to infill situations on block faces where fewer than 50 percent of the residential lots contain occupied dwelling units.

Figure 50-14-396  
(For Informational Purposes Only)  
Appearance and Compatibility



**Name of Community:** Clare, MI

**Population:** 30,856 (2020 Census)

**Description:** The City of Clare is primarily in Clare County, with a portion of the city extending

over the border into neighboring Isabella County. Clare's quaint downtown and charm are reminiscent of many small, older communities in Michigan, offering an affordable lifestyle with access to shops, restaurants, and excellent recreational amenities. Clare's recent master plan update seeks to establish goals that will help manage growth and encourage development that is efficient, sustainable, economically resilient, complementary to existing uses, and supportive of the city's high quality of life.

The City of Clare's zoning ordinance has a minimum area for single family homes of 300 sf and side elevation length of 8', making tiny homes permissible. However, the ordinance includes a requirement which stipulates that applicants seeking to construct tiny homes (dwellings less than 720 square feet) must undergo a compliance review by the planning commission. Although the Clare Standards permit tiny houses amid neighborhoods of larger, single family structures, the ordinance includes compatibility requirements for the exterior building design of all residential structures, ensuring that tiny houses are consistent with the general aesthetic and character of the surrounding neighborhood. In addition, because the ordinance permits mobile homes in this zoning district, specific regulations for mobile home foundations are included.

The City of Clare's zoning ordinance can be viewed [here](#).

**Sec. 52-144. - Residential appearance requirements.**

The following appearance requirements for residential parcels shall be applied:

(1) Intent. Single-family dwellings, whether tiny homes, mobile homes, manufactured homes, modular homes or site ("stick") built homes, located outside a mobile home park shall conform to the standards of this section. The standards herein are intended to prevent "grossly dissimilar" dwellings by promoting dwellings that positively affect the value of dwellings in the surrounding area, improve the desirability of an area to existing or prospective homeowners, increase the stability of the environment, support the most appropriate use of real estate and promote the public health, safety and welfare of the community.

(2) Applicability. All single-family dwellings on individual lots shall meet the appearance standards noted in subsection (3), below. The determination for compliance with these standards for dwellings less than 720 square feet shall be made by the planning commission; the determination for compliance for dwellings 720 square feet and larger shall be made by the city building inspector. All single-family dwellings shall comply in all respects with this Code, including minimum heights for habitable rooms. Where a dwelling is required to comply with any federal or state standards or regulations for construction and where such standards or regulations for construction are different than those imposed by this Code, then, and in such event, such federal or state standard or regulation shall apply. Homes less than 400 square feet shall comply with the International Residential Code. The standards set forth in this definition shall not apply to a mobile home located in a licensed mobile home park, except to the extent required by state or federal law, or otherwise specifically required in provisions of this Code pertaining to such parks.

(3) Exterior building appearance. Each home shall be aesthetically compatible in appearance with other residences in similar zoning districts in the surrounding area.



Surrounding area shall be defined as within 2,000 feet from the edge of the lot in each direction, within the same zoning district, where at least 20 percent of the lots are developed. All dwellings shall be built with durable high-quality materials, including brick, wood, fiber-cement siding, vinyl siding or other materials of similar quality in terms of durability and appearance. Corrugated metal, unfinished wood and other materials dissimilar with other residences shall be prohibited. Compatibility shall also be based on the following factors:

a. Building design. Building appearance and materials used in a new single-family dwelling shall be similar to the appearance and materials used in single family homes in the surrounding area. Dwellings shall be compatible with surrounding dwellings in terms of color, cladding material, style of roof/porches, nonstructural ornamentation, and the location/style of windows and doors.

b. Roof pitch and overhang. The dwelling shall be aesthetically compatible in appearance with other residences in the vicinity, with either a roof overhang of not less than 12 inches on all sides or alternatively with windowsills or roof-drainage systems concentrating roof drainage at collection points along the sides of the dwelling. Roof types shall be gable roof, hip roof, or gambrel roof design with a minimum 4:12 roof pitch. Homes less than 400 square feet in floor area may have a flat roof.

c. Building elevation. The dwelling has a minimum width across any front, side or rear elevation of 20 feet, except that tiny home dwellings may have a minimum width of eight feet on a side elevation.

d. Building openings. The dwelling shall have an exterior door on the front elevation and a second being either in the rear or side of the dwelling. The front elevation of all single-family dwellings shall have a stoop, deck, patio or porch at the front entrance.

e. Additions. Additions to existing buildings must complement the current residence's design with regard to height, proportion, scale, materials, and type of openings.

f. The above standards shall not be construed to prohibit innovative design and appearance concepts involving such matters as solar energy, view, unique land contour, or variation from the common or standard designed home.

(4) Building permit. All construction allowed under this chapter shall be commenced only after a building permit has been obtained in accordance with the city building code and other building regulations. Tiny homes shall adhere to the International Residential Code. All dwelling units and additions thereto shall be able to meet or exceed the construction standards of the applicable building, electrical, plumbing, mechanical and fire codes.

(5) Foundation. All single-family dwellings shall be firmly attached to a permanent foundation constructed on the site in accordance with the city's building code and shall have a wall of the same perimeter dimensions as the dwelling and constructed of such materials and type as required in the applicable building code for single-family dwellings. If the dwelling is a mobile home as defined in this Code, such dwelling shall be installed pursuant to the manufacturer's setup instructions and shall be secured to the premises by an anchoring system or device complying with the rules and regulations of the state mobile home commission or shall have a perimeter wall as required in this subsection.

When any dwelling is removed from its foundation, such foundation shall be completely removed and the site shall be returned to its original state.

(6) Undercarriage. In the event that such dwelling unit shall be a mobile home or other home with wheels, the wheels, tongue, hitch assembly and other towing appurtenances shall be removed before attachment to its permanent foundation. The foundation or perimeter masonry skirting shall fully enclose the undercarriage and the chassis.

(7) Storage area. Each such dwelling unit shall contain a storage area equal to ten percent of the square footage of the dwelling or 200 square feet, whichever is less, except for tiny homes, which shall have a storage area of at least 100 square feet. This storage area shall consist of a basement, attic, attached garage, or a separate detached accessory structure which complies with the standards of this zoning ordinance regarding accessory buildings and structures. The intent of these standards is to limit the extent of outdoor storage.

**Name of Community: Grayling Charter Township, MI**

**Population: 5,642 (2020 Census)**

**Description:** Grayling Charter Township is located in Crawford County, in the Northern Lower Peninsula, surrounding the City of Grayling. Grayling Township is home to the Michigan National Guard's Camp Grayling, which consists of 44.4% of the Township's total land area. The remaining portions of the Township are primarily used for residential or remain undeveloped. The township is abundant in natural resources, and even operates a public nature park that includes a fish hatchery. Many residents choose Grayling Township for its quiet and private way of living, in addition to the many year-round opportunities for outdoor recreation, with beautiful lakes and multi-modal trails for biking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and even skijoring.

Grayling Township's zoning ordinance includes many unique housing types, in order to promote a variety of choices for residents and meet the Township's unique seasonal demands as a recreational destination. Among these varying types, the Township includes tiny homes as a Special Land Use in every residential zoning district. The ordinance defines a tiny home as any home which does not meet the minimum square footage for a dwelling unit, which varies by district. The only standard for tiny homes in the Township Ordinance is a requirement that states they must meet be permanent structures with footings and sanitary facilities approved by the District Health Department. Other communities may consider additional standards that moderate the design to ensure that it appears similar to a single family home, with a front facing entrance or a pitched roof.

To view Grayling Township's Ordinance, click [here](#).

**Section 7.33 Tiny Homes**

Tiny Homes shall be defined as any home which is smaller than the minimum dwelling unit size in the district in which it is located. Tiny homes shall be permanent structures with footings and sanitary facilities approved by the District Health Department.

4.3 Table of Permitted and Special Land Uses									
P = Permitted by right	S = Permitted with a Special Use Permit								
*Uses with Supplemental Regulations (Article 7)									
RESIDENTIAL USES									
Tiny Homes (homes smaller than the minimum home size in district)* (57.33)	S	S	S					S	S

## **First Floor Residential**

**Name of Community:** Grand Rapids, MI

**Population:** 198,917 (2020 Census)

**Description:** Grand Rapids is Michigan's second largest city and the county seat of Kent County. Between the 2010 and 2020 Census, the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area population increased by over 40%, making it the fastest growing metropolitan area in Michigan. During this time, Grand Rapids has completed many pivotal redevelopment, infill, and adaptive reuse projects that have garnered attention from outside visitors, generated economic opportunities, and helped to connect key areas of the Downtown. To keep up with the momentum of growth and development, the city has embarked on its first master plan update in twenty years.

In 2021, Grand Rapids amended its zoning ordinance to include ground floor residential as a permitted use in half of the commercial districts where it was previously unallowed, including downtown. City leaders lauded this change to meet shared community goals, as shifts in retail and office have led to vacancies, while demand for residential remains a top priority. To read more about Grand Rapids recent change towards permitting first floor residential, visit this [article](#).

The City of Grand Rapids' zoning ordinance can be viewed [here](#).

## **Residential Above Commercial**

**Name of Community:** Ferndale, MI

**Population:** 19,190 (2020 Census)

**Description:** The City of Ferndale is an inner-ring suburb of Detroit located in Oakland County. While Ferndale experienced economic disinvestment following the departure of automotive and manufacturing jobs and the 2008 recession, but the city's efforts towards revitalization have since paid off, and Ferndale is during an unprecedented period of growth and development with many dense, mixed-use projects on the horizon. To ensure that this growth is aligned with the community's long-term vision, Ferndale is working to adopt a new master plan with goals for sustainability, mobility, affordable housing, and community design.

The City of Ferndale permits residential above commercial in its mixed-use zoning districts, with specific use regulations intended to ensure compatibility between the residential use and the commercial use below it. In buildings with upper-level residential, the ordinance restricts the business hours of the commercial use and prevents commercial or office uses from being established above the residential use.

The City of Ferndale's zoning ordinance can be viewed [here](#).

### **Sec 24-159 Upper-Level Residential**

1. Upper-level residential uses shall not be located at street level or in the basement.
2. Stories located above a residential use shall not be used for business or office purposes.
3. Buildings having residential uses in combination with business or office uses may have a common lobby area, provided that commercial and office users do not have access to the residential portions of the building.
4. Loading docks, service areas and doors accessing them shall be permitted at the rear of the building only.

5. Businesses shall not be open to the public between 2:30 a.m. and 6:00 a.m.
6. All buildings must comply with the schedule of regulations for the underlying zoning district.
7. All land uses shall comply with the environmental performance standards ordinance.
8. Signs shall be permitted only if attached to the face of the building. Signs shall comply with the sign ordinance (and with the appearance review ordinance if located in the DDA) and shall advertise only the name of the business or activity conducted within.
9. If the underlying zoning district is located in the DDA, the front façade of the principal building at street level shall be located within six (6) feet of the front property line.
10. All business, servicing or processing shall be conducted completely within enclosed structures except for those open air uses permitted in this Section or in the underlying district. Outdoor storage is prohibited.
11. Goods produced on the premises shall be sold at retail on the premises.
12. All developments that include residential uses must comply with section 24-184, Architectural compatibility and design guidelines applicable to non-residential buildings.

### **Stacked flats**

**Name of Community:** Battle Creek, MI

**Population:** 52,731 (2020 Census)

**Description:** The City of Battle Creek is in Calhoun County in Southwestern Michigan along the I-94 corridor. While historically, Downtown Battle Creek has primarily been used for office and entertainment uses with abundant surface parking, recent planning efforts seek to accommodate new infill development, including housing and commercial uses, while preserving Battle Creek's historic character and beloved riverfront. In addition, the city's master plan has goals to encourage walkability and economic development with action items that pave a pathway for the city to improve streets so they are safe and attractive to pedestrians and help restore vacant or obsolete buildings to active use.

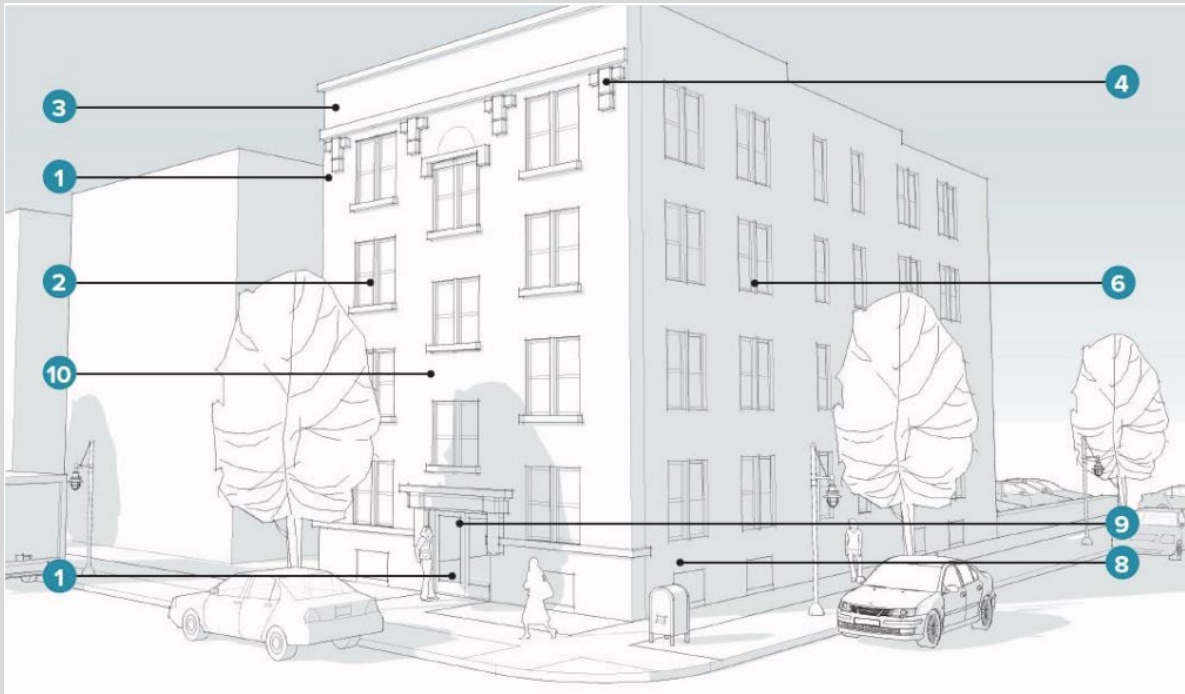
The City of Battle Creek has form-based standards in the Neighborhood Commercial District (T-3), Downtown Commercial District (T-4), and Core Downtown Commercial District (T-5). The form-based standards include provisions for duplexes, triplexes, townhouses and apartments to include options for units to either be stacked or adjacent. Many ordinances inadvertently prohibit this type of development from happening by requiring private entrances for duplexes, triplexes, or townhouses, but by expressly permitting stacked units, the Battle Creek ordinance helps to encourage development of this missing middle housing type.

The City of Battle Creek's zoning ordinance can be viewed [here](#).



**Section 1250.04 Form Based Development Standards for the T-3, T-4, and T-5 Districts. (e) Building Type Standards for New Construction**

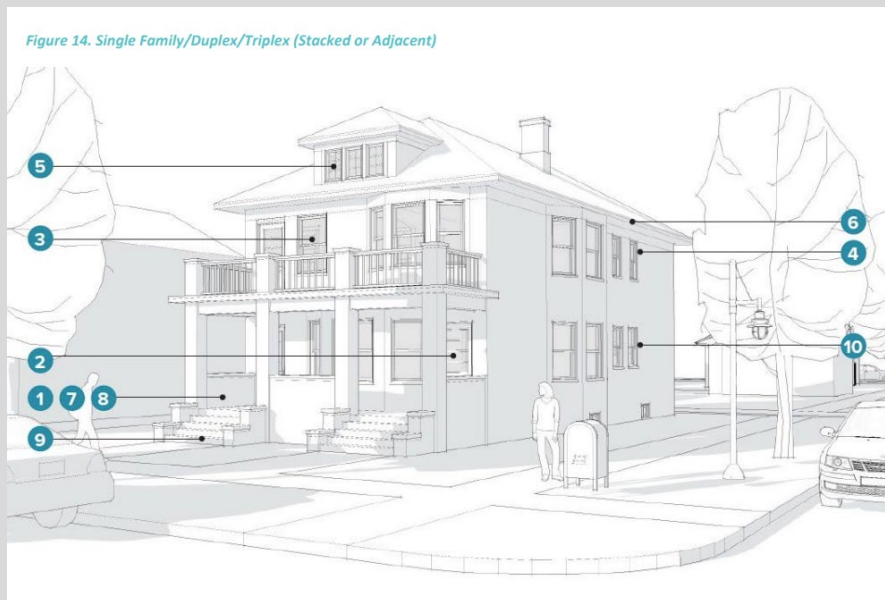
(1) Apartments. A medium sized building that contains five to ten dwelling units either side-by-side or stacked between two floors. There can be one shared entry or individual entries facing the street.



**Illustrated Design Standards:**

1. Traditional building façade treatments (including masonry reliefs and/or motifs) and main entrances located along street of building address. and along any adjacent street right-of-way on corner lots.
2. Opaque façade through which window and door openings appear to have been “punched” as through paper in a ring binder.
3. Building cornice (at top of building) of substantial height and decoration.
4. Minimum one horizontal molding or accent material projection dividing the façade into layers.
5. Pattern of solids and voids generated by the vertical and horizontal alignment of windows and doors in repeating sizes.

6. Window groupings encouraged, with groups of up to 3 allowable.
  7. Main entrances at grade for accessibility, working in conjunction with interior lobby or vestibule and elevator(s).
  8. Ground Floor Units (finished floor) 36" to 42" above grade.
  9. Main entrance articulation.
  10. Prominent sills and/or heads required for windows located along facades (discouraged along other exterior walls).
  11. Parking lots permitted only in the rear yard. Parking lots may be permitted in the side yard for larger projects with multiple buildings and multiple parking lots. No building entrances from side parking lots allowable.
  12. Building façade treatments are required on building facades fronting on a public street, alley, or right-of-way. 13. Floor to floor heights limited to 12'.
- 3) Single Family/Duplex/Triplex (Stacked or Adjacent). A small or medium sized building with one, two, or three dwelling units that may be stacked vertically or attached horizontally.



1. Traditionally styled single-family house form containing one to three residential units with a main entrance at the front façade. Stacked duplex and triplex entrances may have separate doors or share a vestibule. Horizontal adjacent duplex and triplex units shall have their own independent main entrance on the front façade and may have alternate or service entrances along the sides and/or back.
2. Finished floor located 24" to 30" above grade.

3. Opaque exterior walls through which window and door openings appear to have been “punched” as through paper in a ring binder.
4. Pattern of solids and voids generated by the vertical and horizontal alignment of windows and doors in variously repeating sizes.
5. Window groupings encouraged, with groups of up to 3 allowable.
6. Building overhangs commensurate with style of architecture.
7. Ground floor 24” to 30” above grade.
8. Min. 6’-6” deep front porch maximum 30” above grade with optional decorative rail 28”–36” above porch floor.
9. Floor to floor heights limited to 10’-6”
10. Parking lots permitted only in the rear yard. Parking lots may be permitted in the side yard for larger projects with multiple buildings and multiple parking lots. No building entrances from side parking lots allowable.

### **Townhouses/ Rowhouses**

**Name of Community:** Ypsilanti, MI

**Population:** 20,648 (2020 Census)

**Description:** The City of Ypsilanti is located in Washtenaw County and home to Eastern Michigan University. Ypsilanti was the second city to incorporate in the State of Michigan and has a rich tradition of historic preservation to prove it, with the fifth largest preservation district in the state. The decline of the auto-industry in Michigan and 2008 recession had a profound impact on Ypsilanti’s economy; during the years since, Ypsilanti has worked to recover lost jobs and tax revenue by seeking a more diverse economy. Revitalization has been a community-wide effort, and recently, culminated in Ypsilanti receiving \$4.3 million in State funding for the Water Street Redevelopment Project in the heart of Downtown.

The City of Ypsilanti has a zoning ordinance that includes two different types of districts: use based districts and Walkable Urban Districts. The Walkable Urban Districts use form-based regulations to accommodate a broad range of uses that are compatible with the character of the district. Within the Walkable Urban Districts, several building types are permitted, including townhouses. The intent of Ypsilanti’s form-based districts is to maintain a walkable neighborhood where residents can easily meet their daily needs without a vehicle, thus, the ordinance requires townhouses to have parking in the rear and frontages including a porch or stoop. The city’s Core Neighborhood Single Family Walkable Urban District is predominately a residential district with historic mansions, estates, houses, and cottages; in this district, townhouses are only permitted on corner lots, a restriction that helps preserve the historic character of the neighborhood and maintain a diverse mix of housing along each street.

The City of Ypsilanti’s zoning ordinance is available [here](#).

## Triplexes and Quadplexes

**Name of Community:** East Grand Rapids, MI

**Population:** 11,404 (2020 Census)

**Description:** The City of East Grand Rapids is in Kent County in the Grand Rapids Metropolitan Area. East Grand Rapids is a mature, built out city, with many neighborhoods of dense, walkable single-family homes. The East Grand Rapids Master Plan seeks to preserve community character while preparing for development that is complementary with advancements in technology and the shifting housing and transportation needs of residents. In recent years, planning efforts in East Grand Rapids have focused on infill opportunities and developing the Gas Light Village, a mixed-use district that includes alternative housing types and eclectic shops, restaurants and services.

East Grand Rapids has established a multiple-family residential district (MFR District) as a transitional district between the city's core and residential neighborhoods. The intent of the MFR district is to, "accommodate a mix of complementary housing options within specific locations where varied unit types and higher densities create a suitable transition from adjacent land uses, accommodate varied lifestyle choices, provide affordable options, and support the recommendations of the city master plan." In this district, single family conversions to multiple family (up to four units) are permitted by-right, whereas other multiple family structures (new construction) are required to obtain a Special Land Use permit. This favorability towards single-family conversions helps to meet the ordinance's intent of creating new housing types and providing higher densities while ensuring compatibility with adjacent land uses; single-family conversions to duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes are one way that communities can increase housing supply with minimal change to the neighborhood landscape.

View the City of East Grand Rapids' zoning ordinance [here](#).

### Article 5.30- Standards Applicable to Two- and Multiple- Family Dwellings

Two-family and multiple family dwellings in the MFR Residential District shall comply with the following standards.

(A) General standards.

(1) Single-family conversions to multi-family dwellings shall be encouraged to promote the intent of the MFR Residential District while preserving the existing character and housing stock to the greatest extent possible. For the purposes of this section, **SINGLE-FAMILY CONVERSIONS** are defined as the repurposing of a single-family home to accommodate up to four dwelling units. All other development shall be considered new construction.

(2) All developments in the MFR District shall conform to the standards in Table 5.30.

Lot Size (square feet)	Single-Family Conversion	New Construction
Minimum unit size (square feet)	Studio: 300	Studio: 350
	1 bedroom: 450	1 bedroom: 550
	2 bedroom: 650	2 bedroom: 800
	3 bedroom: 850	3 bedroom: 1,000
Minimum lot area per unit (s.ft. per unit)	Duplex: 2,000	Duplex: 2,500
	3 - 4 units: 1,660	3+ units: 2,100



(3) Wherever two or more different building materials are used on a building façade, the heavier material in weight or appearance shall be placed below the lighter material.

(4) In the case of multiple family buildings where the dwelling units are accessed from a common hallway or gathering area, the main entrance to the building shall face a public street and be directly accessible from the sidewalk adjoining the front yard.

(5) Rooftop terraces or patios atop a flat roof structure shall subject to the following.

(a) No part of the rooftop terrace or patio, including the floor or base level, shall exceed the maximum allowable building height except as provided in § 5.59 of the zoning ordinance.

(b) Rooftop terraces shall maintain the following setbacks:

i. Minimum 20 feet from the front lot line;

ii. Minimum 25 feet from the rear lot line; and'

iii. Minimum ten feet from each side lot line, but in no case less than five feet from the side exterior building walls.

(c) Lighting for a rooftop terrace or patio shall not exceed three foot height from the terrace surface and shall comply with § 5.69 of the zoning ordinance.

(6) A minimum of 40 square feet of enclosed storage space, excluding closets, shall be provided for each dwelling unit. The required enclosed storage space may be located within a basement, garage, or other structure approved by the Director of Public Works.

(B) Standards for single-family conversions.

(1) No more than four dwelling units shall be developed in a single-family conversion.

(2) Single-family conversions may increase their existing livable floor area, provided that such expansion does not exceed 25% of the existing livable floor area of the home, and that no more than a combined 25% of the existing exterior wall and roof area of the home is removed or demolished.

(3) Existing porches in the front of the building shall be retained or replaced with porches of comparable or greater size and character.

(4) Surface parking for single-family conversions shall be located in the rear or side yard only. However, in no case shall any portion of a parking structure, parking lot, or attached garage be located closer to the front lot line than the main entry of the building.

Image Credits:

Accessory Dwelling Unit: <https://www.cityofsalinas.org/our-city-services/community-development/building-adu-salinas-accessory-dwelling-unit/news/accessory-dwelling-unit-adu-program-implemented>

Cottage Courts: [http://www.designcoalition.org/DCInstitute/A\\_Programs/A20.30-CottageCourts.htm](http://www.designcoalition.org/DCInstitute/A_Programs/A20.30-CottageCourts.htm)

First Floor Residential: <https://www.fenstylivingku.com/apartment/203-w-main-street-first-floor/>

Micro Unit: <https://detroit.curbed.com/2016/11/4/13511634/micro-apartments-28-grand-bedrock>

Residential above commercial: <https://peregrinecompany.com/apartments/downtown-lofts/>

Stacked Flats: <https://ggwash.org/view/42112/in-praise-of-the-stacked-townhouse>

Tiny Homes: [https://detroit.curbed.com/2017/5/31/15719970/tiny-homes-detroit-questions?utm\\_campaign=detroit.curbed&utm\\_content=entry&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=pinterest](https://detroit.curbed.com/2017/5/31/15719970/tiny-homes-detroit-questions?utm_campaign=detroit.curbed&utm_content=entry&utm_medium=social&utm_source=pinterest)

Townhouses/ Rowhouses: <https://www.bouma.com/condo/ashley-mews-ann-arbor>

Triplexes, Quadplexes, and Sixplexes: <https://liverangewater.com/rangewater-acquires-first-single-family-rental-community-conversion-for-storia%E2%84%A0-portfolio-located-in-san-antonio-2/>