



# Affordable Housing Strategies for Dutchess County Municipalities

Our department has received numerous requests for guidance on tackling housing affordability at the local level. This resource is designed to help Dutchess County municipalities address this complex issue.

Since each community's needs are different, the strategies below are not listed by priority, but are instead organized alphabetically. Several of the strategies have detailed information sheets, which can be found by clicking the hyperlinked title or scrolling down.

## General Considerations



### Acknowledge Urban & Rural Distinctions

Strategies that make sense in cities, villages, and town centers will be different than strategies in more rural areas.



### Consider Infrastructure Needs

Areas with centralized water and/or sewer infrastructure (or the potential to create such systems) will use different strategies from those on wells/septic.



### Research Demographic Trends

Evaluate trends in local population and employment. These trends can help you determine not just how much housing to encourage, but what types. For example, many communities are experiencing little or no population growth but still adding new households, due in part to smaller household sizes, resulting in demand for smaller housing types.



### Understand School Enrollment

Seek updated enrollment data and projections from your local school district(s) and learn about accepted methodologies for projecting the number of school children from new housing development. Most schools are seeing declining enrollments, which leaves room to add households with schoolchildren without causing school overcrowding.



### Understand 'Affordable' and 'affordable' Housing

Affordable housing can either be subsidized (what we sometimes call 'Big A' Affordable) or unsubsidized ('little a' or naturally affordable). 'Big A' Affordable housing uses grants, tax credits, and other public funding sources to offset the loss from providing below-market rents or sale prices. Given the costs of land and construction, subsidies are often the only way to build housing that is affordable for the lowest income brackets, but these resources are limited and complex to navigate. 'Little a' affordable housing is just housing that is naturally more affordable – it might be on a smaller lot, have a smaller square footage, be older, or have a simpler design. Zoning codes are often an obstacle to creating new 'little a' affordable units.



## Specific Strategies

As noted above, these are not prioritized and are listed in alphabetical order. Detailed info sheets for some strategies can be found below the list. If a strategy appeals to you, click the hyperlinked title to jump to the info sheet.

### [Accessory Dwelling Units \(ADUs\)](#)

An accessory dwelling unit is typically a small apartment contained either within or attached to the primary dwelling, or in/as a standalone structure elsewhere on the property (e.g., above a detached garage or in a converted barn). Encouraging ADUs in your community can allow for a small but impactful source of additional housing units, often without a noticeable change to the neighborhood. While ADUs are technically allowed in many of our communities, local regulations are often so prescriptive that building an ADU is infeasible for most households.

### [Bulk Regulations](#)

The combined effect of minimum lot size, minimum unit square footage, setbacks, and other bulk regulations can increase the cost of building housing, which translates to higher sales or rental prices. Communities can review their bulk regulations to ensure that they are not unnecessarily contributing to higher housing costs.

### [Centralized Infrastructure](#)

Building in or adjacent to areas with centralized water/sewer allows for the creation of more units that can be smaller and more affordable. There are economies of scale when development does not need to provide space for well and septic capacity. In areas without existing infrastructure, housing developments can include the creation of smaller centralized water/sewer systems where the technology is scalable to fit the size of the project, but the project must be of sufficient size to justify the up-front cost.

### [Conservation Subdivisions](#)

For larger parcels that could be subdivided to create new single-family homes, conservation subdivision regulations retain the baseline density as prescribed by the municipal code while allowing for smaller lot sizes to cluster homes on a portion of the parent lot, preserving the remainder of the property. The reduced lot sizes can translate to lower home prices and property maintenance costs for homeowners. Conservation subdivisions can be mandated or they can be encouraged, often through use of a density bonus that allows a builder to construct additional homes if they opt for the conservation model.





## Commercial to Mixed Use Zoning

For decades, large tracts of land along major roadways have been set aside for strictly commercial uses, with no homes allowed. The need for more housing and the challenging retail market are causing many communities to rethink that dynamic. Allowing mixed-use projects by right in previously commercial-only zones can encourage housing above or adjacent to commercial uses, increasing housing, providing new nearby customers for businesses, and protecting properties from the twists and turns of the commercial real estate market.

## [Inclusionary Zoning](#)

Inclusionary zoning encourages or requires a certain percentage of housing units in a new development to be provided at below-market rents or sale prices. This can be a good way to gradually integrate subsidized units into the community, but it should generally be paired with incentives for the developer (such as extra units, waived application fees, etc.) to ensure that projects can still “pencil out” financially. Otherwise, inclusionary policies run the risk of stifling housing creation.

## Local Small-Scale Builders

In many of our communities, there is a need for builders who are interested in developing new smaller-scale housing projects or rehabbing existing structures to provide affordable housing. Municipalities and residents can work to create and support a network of local developers interested in smaller-scale housing.

## [Manufactured Housing](#)

Manufactured homes are often heavily restricted or prohibited in local codes. The box-like design of older homes and instances of bad management in manufactured home parks have given them a poor reputation, but they are a vital source of non-subsidized affordable housing, and the wide array of sizes and styles now available means that new manufactured homes can fit into a community whether as part of a park or surrounded by traditional site-built homes. Cooperative ownership models for manufactured home parks are also becoming increasingly common, guaranteeing local ownership and turning a depreciating asset (a single manufactured housing unit) into an appreciating one (a stake in the property as a whole).





### **Municipally Owned Properties**

Publicly owned properties can be good candidate sites for affordable housing since the municipality can require affordability as part of the sale. The municipality releases a Request for Proposals (RFP) for sale and development of the land specifying that it must be for affordable housing and chooses the most qualified developer from the respondents.

### **NYS Pro-Housing Community Designation**

Designating your municipality a Pro-Housing Community with New York State is now a requirement for several state grant programs – part of the state’s effort to reward local governments that are working to increase housing availability and affordability.

### **[Parking Requirements Reform](#)**

The cost of building and maintaining parking spaces increases the cost of housing, and the land required to provide that parking limits the space available to build more units. In some areas, particularly walkable centers or locations near transit, it is possible to reduce or eliminate parking requirements (and their associated costs) without negatively impacting quality of life.

### **Short-Term Rentals**

Some types of short-term rentals can reduce the availability and affordability of housing. Targeted local regulations can help mitigate those impacts without losing the benefits that short-term rentals contribute to the tourism economy.

### **Streamlining the Review Process**

Housing projects can easily get bogged down in a web of requirements – special permits, complex bulk regulations, mandated commercial components, and more. Each of these adds cost and uncertainty for an applicant and can result in a situation where a type or scale of housing might technically be allowed, but cumbersome regulations prevent it from being built. Communities can review their codes to reduce regulatory barriers for desired housing types. Dutchess County Planning is available to assist with development process reviews.

### **[Variety of Housing Types](#)**

Allowing a wider variety of housing types in local zoning codes recognizes that households come in all sizes and configurations, and not everyone is interested in or able to live in a single-family home on its own lot. Communities should consider how and where to allow and/or encourage duplexes, three- and fourplexes, micro units, cottage courts, and other forms of “Missing Middle” housing.





## What's next for your community?

Housing affordability is a deep-rooted issue that requires a multipronged approach to increase housing supply, offer diverse options, and provide below-market units for those who cannot meet market-rate prices. We encourage you to pursue as many of these ideas as you can fit within the context of your community. If you have any questions, want more information, or just want to talk through your options, please don't hesitate to reach out to the planners in our office.

Additional resources can be found on our [Housing](#) webpage, including annual reports on rental and for-sale housing, our 2022 Housing Needs Assessment, and potential funding sources like the County Housing Trust Fund and the HOME Investment Partnership Program. [Hudson Valley Pattern for Progress](#) has also produced several regional housing-related studies. The American Planning Association's 2024 [Housing Supply Accelerator Playbook](#) may also be helpful. Other resources are cited in the specific strategy sheets.



## Questions or Comments? Contact us!

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## Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

An accessory dwelling unit is typically a small apartment either within/attached to the primary dwelling or in/as a standalone structure elsewhere on the property (e.g., above a detached garage, in a converted barn, or as its own small building). ADUs are sometimes called in-law apartments or backyard cottages.



Types of ADUs. Source: [rupco.org/plusone](http://rupco.org/plusone)

### Benefits

- Encouraging ADUs in your community can allow for a small but impactful source of additional housing units, which are often naturally more affordable because of their small size.
- ADUs can introduce diversity of housing size and type into your community with little to no impact on any specific neighborhood, as they are spread across the community and built one at a time.
- Shrinking household sizes means that many single-family areas have fewer people in them than they used to – adding ADUs can help bring vibrancy back to neighborhoods.
- ADUs can offer valuable flexibility to residents, providing a way for young people to stay in their hometown and for older residents to remain on their properties.
- ADUs can also provide an income stream to the homeowner, if rented.





## Common Concerns

**If we allow ADUs as-of-right, our community will be overrun with them, effectively doubling the density in our neighborhoods which will make them crowded and create traffic congestion.**

- **Response:** Building an ADU is expensive and challenging, and most homeowners are not interested in being landlords. Septic and well capacity are also limiting factors in areas without central infrastructure. When ADUs are built, they tend to be spread out across a community, with little to no impact in any one area.

**Allowing rentals in a largely owner-occupied neighborhood will reduce quality of life.**

- **Response:** Rental housing is an important and often underrepresented part of our housing market. It is vital for those starting out, downsizing, and for many of the essential workers we rely on every day. ADUs are also small, with generally only one or two occupants, and the homeowner has more incentive than anyone to ensure they operate smoothly and quietly. Also, some ADUs will be occupied by family members of the homeowners.

## Strategies

Many communities technically allow ADUs but regulate them so strictly that they are only truly possible for a very small number of residents. The strategies below address some of the common overregulation issues that prevent these laws from achieving the desired benefits.

- Allow as-of-right; avoid requiring site plan or special use permit approval.
- Avoid including ADUs in density calculations. ADUs should be an allowable accessory use on all residential parcels so long as the structure complies with bulk regulations.
- Avoid overregulating the maximum size – allow at least 800 square feet and/or at least 50% of the size of the primary dwelling. Higher maximums are often appropriate, especially in rural settings. Minimum sizes are also not necessary – state building code provides a natural minimum.
- For detached ADUs, allow new construction or, at a minimum, allow in existing structures that are a given age (e.g. 5 years old) at the time of the application (avoid tying the age of the structure to a fixed date, like the date of adoption, since over time that will make the law unnecessarily stricter).





- Minimize the number and complexity of any supplemental regulations.
- Consider commissioning architectural plans for one or more detached ADU styles that meet local design expectations. Residents could then choose a pre-approved style, saving on design costs and ensuring quality. The City of Kingston [hosted a design competition](#) to choose pre-approved ADU plans.

## Other Resources

- The Westchester County Department of Planning’s model ordinance could be a good starting point if your community is considering new ADU regulations: [www.wmpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ADU-Model-Ordinance-Westchester-Co-NY-Nov19.pdf](http://www.wmpf.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/ADU-Model-Ordinance-Westchester-Co-NY-Nov19.pdf)
- The AARP is a proponent of ADUs and has many resources, including their own model ordinance: [www.aarp.org/adu](http://www.aarp.org/adu). Their publication on removing local barriers to ADU construction could be particularly useful: [www.aarp.org/pri/topics/livable-communities/housing/expanding-adu-development-solutions-local-barriers](http://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/livable-communities/housing/expanding-adu-development-solutions-local-barriers)
- Municipalities can apply to New York State’s ADU +1 program, which provides financial assistance to qualified homeowners who wish to build an ADU. The program is only offered in municipalities that have enrolled in it: [hcr.ny.gov/adu](http://hcr.ny.gov/adu)
- Affordable housing advocacy group ShelterForce has a series of articles on the benefits of, and barriers to, ADU construction: [shelterforce.org/series/adus-explained](http://shelterforce.org/series/adus-explained)





## Centralized Infrastructure

Access to centralized water and sewer infrastructure can facilitate the creation of more affordable housing. Without a central system, options are far more limited, though some strategies can still be employed. Understanding the opportunities and limitations of water and sewer systems is an important step in addressing housing needs in your community.



### Benefits

- Centralized systems enable denser development, minimizing sprawl and habitat fragmentation. They require less land per housing unit to meet health and environmental regulations.
- Connecting to an existing centralized system can reduce costs for developers. Cost savings can translate into more affordable housing options for buyers and renters.
- Service providers benefit from selling unused capacity. This can improve their bottom line, enabling system improvements and expansions that benefit the greater community.
- Water and sewer districts offer benefits in the professional management of their systems, which typically leads to higher quality standards for water potability and sewage disposal.

### Common Concerns

#### For communities with existing central infrastructure:

**Initial connection costs to centralized systems can be high when expansions are required.**

**Often, those costs are passed onto the homebuyer/renter or existing customers.**

- **Response:** Concentrating development in areas with existing water/sewer capacity is the best way to reduce costs. Developers should talk to service providers early in the development process about options for system connections or expansions.

**Long-term maintenance and expansion of existing systems can lead to unforeseen costs for service providers, which can be passed on to customers.**

- **Response:** Service providers must plan for the longevity of the system. This includes an understanding of existing and future capacity and triggers for expansion. Service providers can reserve infrastructure and funding in advance, ensuring they are prepared for expansion when certain capacity thresholds are reached.





### For communities with no central infrastructure:

Without central infrastructure, it can be difficult to create affordable housing.

- **Response:** In areas without central water and sewer, communities should focus on permitting a variety of flexible housing types that can be served by onsite systems, and explore technologies that reduce the land area required for onsite systems. Depending on available space, options could include smaller apartment buildings, accessory dwelling units, duplexes/triplexes, etc.

Creating new central utilities is costly. It requires quality aquifers, enough land for multiple wells to meet required separation distances, and the creation of water and/or sewer districts with the municipality serving as the responsible entity or backup.

- **Response:** Though costly, new centralized infrastructure can greatly advance the housing goals of your community, especially if development is currently constrained by water quality or quantity issues. With enough demand and appropriate siting for treatment, new centralized systems may be an option in your community, and there are grants available to help defray costs.

## Strategies

### For communities with existing central infrastructure:

- Foster collaboration between municipalities, water/sewer service providers, the County Department of Health, and developers to understand the limitations and opportunities of your existing infrastructure. Knowing where you have capacity (or not) is critical to planning for growth.
- Prioritize development and redevelopment in areas with excess water and sewer capacity or where there are opportunities to connect to existing water and sewer infrastructure.
- Plan for long-term maintenance, system expansions, and improvements to infrastructure to preserve the capacity needed to serve your housing goals. Target grant opportunities to limit costs.

### For communities with no central infrastructure:

- Consider if new water or sewer infrastructure is a realistic option in your community. The first steps involve gauging community support and likely undertaking a feasibility study. Consult closely with the County Department of Health as you begin this process.





- If central infrastructure is not desired or is otherwise not an option, focus your efforts on encouraging infill and a variety of housing types (smaller apartment buildings, accessory dwelling units, duplexes/triplexes, etc). Identify and collaborate with small-scale developers to provide these types of housing.
- Coordinate early and often with the County Department of Health and rely on their regulations and approval process to ensure that housing progresses at a sustainable rate in your community. Consider permitting any accessory dwelling units that can obtain water and septic approval from the Health Department.

## Other Resources

- This article from Strong Towns argues that our communities face an affordability crisis in maintaining water and sewer infrastructure, which can only be resolved by creating more compact, productive developments that generate sufficient tax revenue to sustain these critical services:  
[We Can't Afford to Maintain Our Water and Sewer Infrastructure...Unless We Build More Productive Places](#); Strong Towns (Morris, 2020)
- If you're thinking about water and sewer in your community, a great place to start is with the [Dutchess County Department of Health: Environmental Health Services](#) and/or the [Dutchess County Water and Wastewater Authority](#).
- Visit the County Health Department's website to get familiar with the Public Health Engineer that works with your municipality:  
[Public Health Engineers in Dutchess County](#).
- The articles below contain examples of current sewer infrastructure projects in Dutchess County:
  - [Town of Red Hook: Sewer District Creation \(2024\)](#)
  - [Tivoli Sewer Renovation \(2024\)](#)





## Inclusionary Zoning

Inclusionary zoning (IZ) requires or incentivizes a certain percentage of housing units in a new development to be provided at below-market rents or sale prices. Some planners use the term “inclusionary zoning” to refer only to mandatory policies and use a different term (such as “density bonus program” or “affordable housing incentive program”) to refer to incentive-based approaches.



## Benefits

- Inclusionary zoning gradually integrates below-market housing units into the community, ensuring that affordable housing is not isolated in certain areas.
- Inclusionary zoning units are typically built without state or federal subsidies, which reduces the complexity of project financing and allows developers who are not comfortable navigating subsidy processes to contribute to the local affordable housing supply.
- Inclusionary zoning places the cost burden of a below-market unit on the project developer, rather than on taxpayers.

## Common Concerns

**Inclusionary zoning stifles housing creation by making projects unaffordable for builders.**

- **Response:** Overly strict inclusionary zoning policies can stifle development, potentially resulting in fewer new housing units – affordable or otherwise. That makes mandatory IZ a good choice only in communities with high development pressure. In most communities, an incentive structure is more appropriate, with builders receiving permission to build additional units or other benefits to offset the cost of providing below-market units. The scale of those incentives can be tailored based on the strength of the housing market.





### Inclusionary zoning policies are difficult to manage.

- **Response:** Managing below-market units requires identifying qualified tenants and monitoring the compliance of landlords. That can be an administrative burden, and screening and selecting residents can be uncomfortable for a local government. Thankfully, there are non-profit housing service providers who routinely handle this kind of work. For a fee (either paid by the government or the landlord) a housing nonprofit can monitor units and place qualifying tenants. The fee structure is an important consideration, since requiring the landlord to pay the fees may also factor into the viability of a project.

## Strategies

- Engage directly with local housing developers and housing services providers when considering an IZ policy to ensure that the law is appropriately tailored to the local market.
- If opting for a mandatory program, consider whether an in-lieu fee option is appropriate. This option would allow developers to pay a fee to fund affordable housing units elsewhere in the community, rather than including below-market units in their project.
- For incentive programs, consider offering a range of incentives to provide flexibility for builders. Density bonuses, height bonuses, relaxed parking or bulk standards, expedited permitting and tax relief are all potential options.
- Partner with a non-profit housing services provider to manage the program. Determine whether management fees will be paid by property owners or a public source.
- Commit to re-evaluating the policy at regular intervals to ensure that it is meeting local goals.

## Other Resources

- The Affordable City by Shane Phillips, Chapters 6 and 31.
- Grounded Solutions Network's Inclusionary Housing website, which includes a calculator for estimating the viability of projects with inclusionary units:
  - [inclusionaryhousing.org](https://inclusionaryhousing.org)
  - [inclusionaryhousing.org/calculator](https://inclusionaryhousing.org/calculator)





## Manufactured Housing

Manufactured housing is a critical yet often underappreciated segment of affordable housing. Built in a factory setting, these homes are transported to their final location, offering a cost-effective alternative to traditional site-built homes. Different types of factory-built homes include:

- **Manufactured Homes:** These homes must meet [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\) construction standards](#), ensuring safety, durability, and energy efficiency.
- **Modular Homes:** These homes are assembled on-site and must adhere to local or state building codes, making them similar in quality and appearance to traditional site-built homes.
- **Mobile Homes:** This term specifically refers to homes built before 1976 under less stringent codes.

In New York, manufactured homes represent approximately 2.4% of the total housing stock and 10.3% of stock in rural areas. As of 2023, Dutchess County ranks second in the state for the number of Manufactured Home Communities (MHCs) with 88, trailing Saratoga County's 105 and ahead of Ulster County's 83 ([Rural Housing Coalition of New York](#)).

### Benefits

- **Affordability:** Manufactured homes are more affordable due to higher construction efficiencies and faster construction times, costing approximately 40% less per square foot on average than site-built homes (NYU). This affordability, combined with energy efficiencies mandated by HUD regulations, reduces both the initial cost and ongoing utility expenses, and makes homeownership more accessible for a broader range of people.



Diversity of Manufactured Housing Options  
Source: [ManufacturedHousing.org](https://www.ManufacturedHousing.org)





- **Design Variety:** Manufactured homes offer diverse design options, ranging from traditional to contemporary styles. Buyers can select from various floor plans, high-quality finishes, and customizable features like porches, decks, and garages, ensuring these homes meet a wide array of aesthetic and functional needs.
- **Sustainability:** Manufactured homes are often more sustainable than traditional homes. The factory-built process minimizes waste and maximizes the efficient use of materials while reducing energy consumption and emissions compared to traditional on-site construction. Many manufacturers also use environmentally friendly materials and incorporate energy-efficient systems, reducing the overall environmental impact.
- **Adaptable Siting:** Manufactured homes provide significant flexibility in terms of placement. They can be sited on private land, within manufactured home communities, as infill in urban areas, or used as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) to increase residential density in existing neighborhoods, making them suitable for a wide range of housing needs.



Source: [ManufacturedHousing.org](https://www.ManufacturedHousing.org)

## Common Concerns

**Allowing manufactured homes and MHCs will lower property values, disrupt established neighborhood character, and decline neighborhood quality and reputation.**

- **Response:** Modern manufactured homes feature amenities and aesthetics comparable to single-family residences. These homes can complement existing neighborhoods, enhancing neighborhood diversity and providing viable, affordable housing solutions.

**Manufactured home owners face instability from rent increases and potential land sales, as well as limited financing options, which hinder long-term financial security.**

- **Response:** Because manufactured housing owners often don't own the land their home occupies, chattel loans become necessary. A chattel loan is a type of financing secured by the home itself rather than the land. These loans typically come with higher interest rates and shorter terms, limiting homeowners' ability to build net worth as the land appreciates while the structure may depreciate. However, affixing a manufactured home to a permanent foundation and owning both the structure and land can open up more financing options and enhance the potential for property appreciation. Cooperative MHCs, where residents collectively own and manage the land, make this scenario more attainable.





## Strategies

- Permit manufactured homes and MHCs in a broader range of zoning districts to increase the availability of suitable sites and integrate these homes into more diverse communities. Consider basic (not overly restrictive) design standards to ensure that new manufactured homes will be compatible with neighboring residences.
- Allow manufactured homes to be used as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) or as infill projects to provide affordable housing options in existing neighborhoods.
- Promote cooperative MHCs to increase resident land ownership, fostering stability and enabling homeowners to build equity (see [Manufactured Home Cooperative Fund \(MHCFF\)](#)).
- Promote public awareness of the modern quality, design variety, and affordability of manufactured homes. These homes may help shift public perception and demonstrate the potential for manufactured homes to blend into neighborhoods. Additionally, they may qualify for more traditional financing options, making them more accessible to homebuyers (see [Off-Site Built Homes: An Evolving Industry that Meets Today's Affordable Housing Needs](#) [industry publication]).



Source: [ManufacturedHousing.org](https://www.ManufacturedHousing.org)

## Other Resources

- Recent Policy Changes/Legislation:
  - [HUD Announces New Actions to Support Affordability for Manufactured Homes and Communities as Part of the Biden-Harris Administration's Housing Supply Action Plan](#) (February 2024)
  - [Governor Hochul Signs Legislation to Support Homeowners at Manufactured Home Parks](#) (October 2023)
- [Manufactured Housing Is a Good Source of Unsubsidized Affordable Housing – Except When It's Not – Part 1, Part 2, Part 3](#) (NYU Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy)
- [Municipal Regulation of Manufactured Housing](#) (NYS Division of Local Government Services, 2023)
- [A Review of Barriers to Greater Use of Manufactured Housing for Entry-Level Homeownership](#) (Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University)





## Parking Requirements Reform

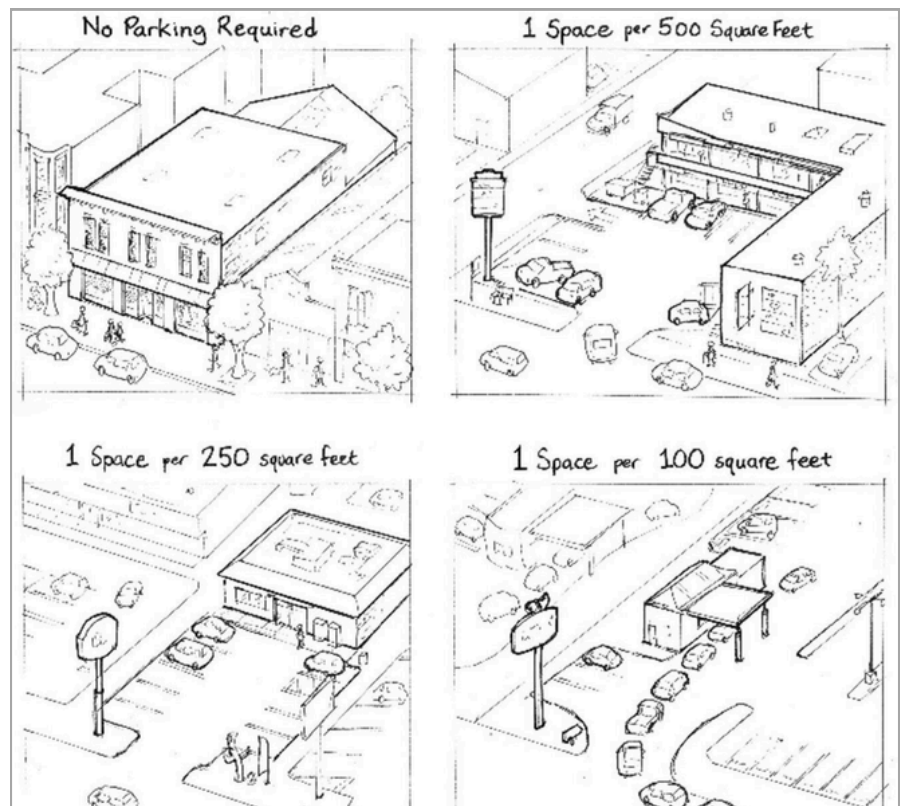
Many, if not most, parking requirements are based on old studies and limited data and have been passed down without regard to the local land use context, demographics, or transportation options. In most cases, these requirements are higher than needed, resulting in more off-street parking than necessary.



Requiring large amounts of parking (typically through minimum parking requirements) restricts a municipality's and applicant's flexibility to adjust to a variety of sites and contexts, and can make new housing, local retail, infill projects, and other desired development much more expensive or even infeasible. Parking also takes up a lot of land, and over-supplying parking prevents the use of that land for more productive purposes, including housing.

### Benefits of Requiring Less Parking

- Lowers the cost of development, making desired development, such as housing and infill projects, more feasible and affordable
- Makes more land available for economically productive uses, including housing and local businesses
- Reduces impervious surface and runoff, improves walkability, and makes the street (and community) more attractive
- Provides flexibility to meet local needs



Alfred Twu illustrations from Paved Paradise show the impact of various levels of parking requirements on urban form.

Source: [www.gacities.com/Resources/Reference-Articles/Shining-a-Light-on-Parking-Reform.aspx](http://www.gacities.com/Resources/Reference-Articles/Shining-a-Light-on-Parking-Reform.aspx)





## Common Concerns

**If we don't require enough parking, people will park on residential streets, and our neighborhood will be overrun!**

- **Response:** Allowing shared parking, providing one or more public parking lots, and creating a dynamic, walkable area where people don't mind walking a block or two to their destination can all help reduce parking pressure on a particular site. For complex or controversial projects, the Planning Board can require a parking demand analysis. In most cases, developers will do their research and propose parking to fit local needs.

**What about accessible (handicapped) spaces? Parking for the elderly?**

- **Response:** Accessible spaces would still be required, per the [Americans with Disabilities Act](#). Flexible requirements does not mean no parking – it is reasonable to provide some parking (including for people with limited mobility), just less than typically required.

**What if things change and we need more parking later?**

- **Response:** If necessary, parking can be 'land-banked,' such that some space is reserved (often landscaped) in case it is needed for parking later. Land-banking does have drawbacks (the space cannot be used for anything else), so it should not be treated as a universal solution. Consider the context – there may be plenty of parking within walking distance, even if it's not directly on the subject site.

## Strategies

- **Reduce or Remove parking requirements:** There are three main approaches to this, all intended to provide more flexibility in how parking is provided:
  1. **Remove minimum parking requirements** and let the applicant propose what is reasonable based on parking demand at similar establishments, the specific site context, and the proposed use(s). If needed, the Planning Board and applicant can negotiate as part of the site plan review process. Adjusted versions of this strategy include:
    - Remove minimum requirements in certain areas only, such as walkable centers, near train stations or bus lines, etc.
    - Remove minimum requirements for certain uses or smaller projects (such as projects under 5,000 square feet).
    - Don't require additional parking for reconstruction of an existing site or renovation of an existing non-conforming use.





2. **Provide parking maximums** instead of minimums, with the option for the Planning Board to override the maximum in cases where more parking is clearly needed.
  3. **Reduce parking minimums** to be substantially lower than legacy requirements and provided as guidance for the Planning Board rather than a requirement.
- **Allow Shared Parking:** In many cases, multiple uses can share parking, such that the parking needed is significantly less than the sum for each if provided separately (people can park once and walk between sites/uses). Shared parking can be on adjacent lots, with written agreement from the property owner.
  - If retaining requirements by use, **simplify your off-street parking schedule** to create fewer use categories.
  - **Round down**, rather than up (and for reductions, round up rather than down), to avoid over-supply.
  - Incorporate a **bicycle parking requirement**, or at least consideration, as part of site plan review, particularly for commercial, multi-family, and institutional uses. The Dutchess County Transportation Council has guidance at [dutchessny.gov/BikeParking](https://dutchessny.gov/BikeParking). In general, long-term (covered) bike parking should be provided at uses where people stay for 4 or more hours, and easily accessible short-term parking (near the entrance) should be provided at uses where people stay for fewer than 2 hours. ‘Inverted U’ racks are recommended for ease of use.

## Other Resources

- The [Parking Reform Network](#) has background information and best practices from around the country. Many municipalities – urban, rural, and in between – have removed parking minimums and found it to decrease costs and incentivize smart growth. Examples in New York include the [City of Hudson](#), [Village of Saranac Lake](#), and [Town of Canandaigua](#). The [City of Kingston](#) revised its code to provide parking maximums; see also [engagekingston.com/kingston-forward](https://engagekingston.com/kingston-forward).
- [The High Cost of Free Parking](#), by Donald Shoup, is a comprehensive study of the need for parking reform. Donald Shoup’s [website](#) also includes sample reforms, articles, videos, and other resources related to parking reform.





## Variety of Housing Types

A population with a wide variety of housing needs and wants should have a wide variety of housing types to choose from. Most of the housing that has been built over the last 80 years, however, fits into one of two categories: detached single-family homes (usually on large lots), or big apartment complexes. Other housing types – cottage courts, duplexes, townhomes, courtyard buildings and the like – are few and far between. A major reason for this is that zoning codes often permit detached single-family homes almost everywhere while setting a few areas aside for apartment buildings. In many places, it is simply not permissible to build any other kinds of homes.

Those other housing types have come to be called “Missing Middle”: “Middle” because they fall between single-family homes and larger scale apartment buildings, “Missing” because they have been legislated out of our housing mix. Missing middle homes are compatible in scale with single-family homes and meet the need for more housing choices at different price points. Reviewing and modernizing codes to allow more types of homes in more places will not only result in more housing being built, but will increase the chances that young people, older people, and anyone whose needs may not fit into the narrow confines of “detached house or apartment complex” can find the housing they want.

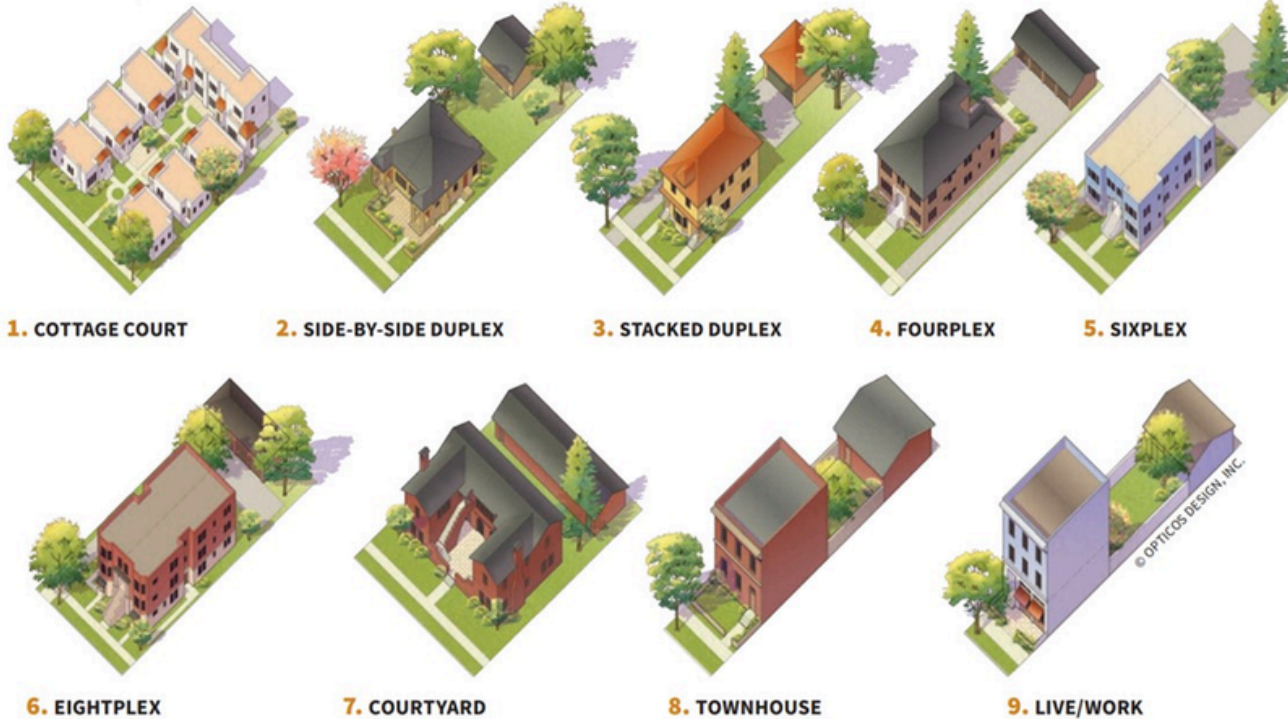
## Benefits of Missing Middle Housing

- Provides a variety of housing options that allow people to stay within their communities as their housing needs change.
- Uses land more efficiently, reducing overall development costs and resulting in housing that can be more affordable to rent or purchase.
- Adds needed housing units to a community without fundamentally changing the physical characteristics of a neighborhood.





### A Missing Middle Housing Sampler



Source: *Discovering and Developing Missing Middle Housing*, AARP and Opticos Design

## Common Concerns

There are few if any developers doing these types of projects in our area.

- **Response:** Because economies of scale encourage large-scale multifamily development, and for the simple fact that smaller scale missing middle housing has been effectively illegal to build for the last half century, there is a lack of builders who specialize in this type of housing. Talk with your area contractors, real estate professionals, and lenders (for example, the Community Preservation Corporation) about building a network of developers who do small-scale housing.

Our community is worried about the negative impacts of increased housing.

- **Response:** Be upfront and transparent about the benefits versus costs of adding housing to your community. Host open meetings where residents can ask questions and raise concerns. Conduct surveys. Be an empathetic and active listener when talking to community members. Come prepared with information about trends in school enrollment and traffic, and share examples of other neighborhoods that have increased housing choice while maintaining or improving quality of life. Focus on the community benefits of increased housing, including supporting the local economy and providing housing that meets the needs of different demographic groups.





## What could this look like in my community?

Despite how few missing middle housing units have been built in recent years, there are still examples across Dutchess County of missing middle housing integrating seamlessly into downtowns, suburbs and rural areas. In the Village of Rhinebeck alone, there are nearly 100 residential buildings with between two and ten units, many of which have been part of the fabric of the village for centuries. Each community has examples, including the following:

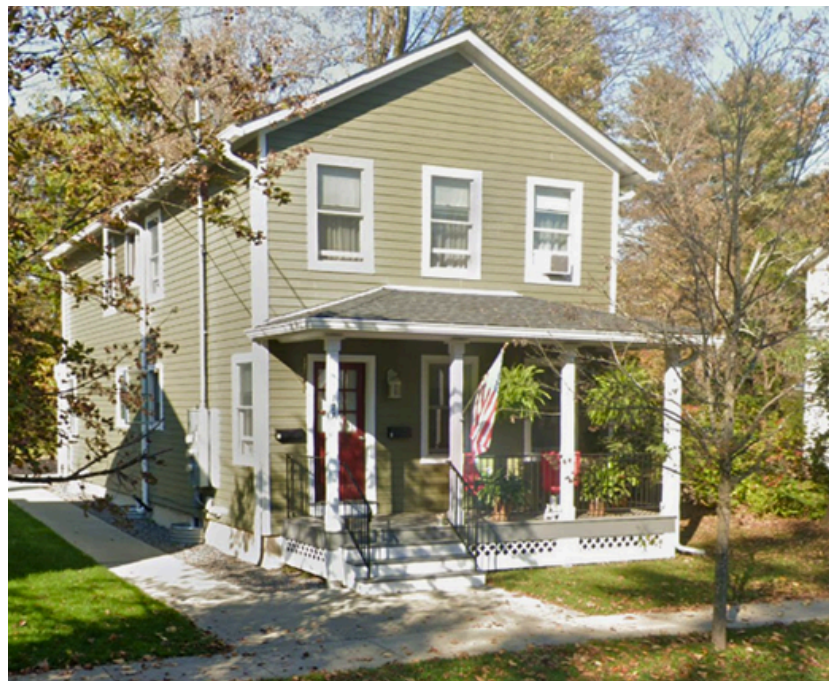
*(images sourced from Google Streetview, accessed September 2024)*



**1-, 2- and 3-family homes line a street in Hyde Park**



**A 4-family home in rural Stanford**



**A new 2-family home in the Village of Rhinebeck**





## Strategies

- Identify where missing middle housing already exists in your community or neighboring communities. Organize walking tours or site visits to see how this type of housing already works in your region.
- Be clear about the desired degree of change in your area. Is your community looking for smaller, more incremental changes or opportunities for small-to-medium-sized projects? Think about where those opportunities exist in your community.
- Map where new missing middle housing makes sense in your community. Look for areas where this type of housing can seamlessly integrate within existing housing stock. Work with your municipal engineer and the County Health Department to understand any infrastructure limitations that might exist.
- Be thoughtful about how you speak about housing with the community. Opposition to development can make for a non-starter when considering adding missing middle housing. It is important to frame the conversation around the community's housing needs. Avoid using terms like “density” and “upzoning,” and focus more on the form and scale of the housing itself (e.g. duplex, fourplex, cottage court, courtyard building), along with housing choice and accessibility (where will your community's teachers and police live; where will your children live?).



**A 4-family home in Wappinger**

## Other Resources

- Missing Middle Housing: Thinking Big and Building Small to Respond to Today's Housing Crisis. (2020). Daniel Parolek
- [Discovering and Developing Missing Middle Housing \(AARP\)](#)
- [missingmiddlehousing.com](http://missingmiddlehousing.com)
- [How Six Cities Are Creating Missing Middle Housing \(RPA\)](#)

