

## The “Transect”, ADUs and “Missing Middle” Housing.

### THREE COMPLIMENTARY IDEAS.

The Transect and Missing Middle Housing both rely on judgments about scale and intensity that lead to compatible uses that address housing issues. Compatibility, balance, transition and adjacencies challenge urban development decisions as the transect is used to locate and design accessory dwelling units [ADUs] and “missing middle” housing.

Previous generations lived in residential neighborhoods with a rich mix of housing types. Use of the transect can facilitate new ADUs and “missing middle” housing and re-introduce common sense and civility back into an urban development process to consistently produce affordable housing.

### THE RURAL-TO-URBAN TRANSECT.

In April 2017, Robert Steuteville wrote:

**“The New Urbanism brought the environmental transect methodology into planning and development of human-scale, complete communities. Now the human habitat can be analyzed as a continuum with the natural world.”**

“Naturalists use the transect concept to describe the characteristics of ecosystems and the transition from one ecosystem to another. Andres Duany [DPZ] and other urbanists applied this concept to human settlements, and since about 2000 this idea has permeated the thinking of new urbanists. The rural-to-urban Transect is divided into six zones: natural (T1), rural (T2), sub-urban (T3), general urban (T4), center (T5), and core (T6). The remaining category, Special District, applies to parts of the built environment with specialty uses that do not fit into neighborhoods.”

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**Read more at LINK:**

<https://www.cnu.org/publicsquare/2017/04/13/great-idea-rural-urban-transect>

### ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS [ADUs].

As discussed by Koi Peterson in his book *Backdoor Revolution: The Definitive Guide to ADU Development* [presented on page 73], ADUs offer resurgence of an old idea that can revolutionize and revitalize neighborhoods.

Jamie Ross, President and CEO of the Florida Housing Coalition in “Housing News Network”, Volume 32, Issue 2, August 2016, describes the concept and its application:

*“An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is a residential unit that is secondary to the primary residence of the homeowner. It can be an apartment within the primary residence or it can be an attached or freestanding home on the same lot as the primary residence.”*

*“The concept of an accessory dwelling unit is to have an additional complete residence, meaning a place for sleeping, bathing, and eating independent of the primary home.”*

*“An ADU is a tool for providing affordable rental housing and promoting smart growth. These smaller housing units are typically infill units built where there is existing infrastructure, making greater use of the already developed land.”*

ADUs have the sustainable benefit of being a physical asset that provides economic and social benefits to the primary house owner and the neighborhood.



The preservation of existing neighborhoods with a mix of housing types is an important goal for affordability and community sociability. A diverse housing stock already exists without consternation in established neighborhoods in many cities; the challenge is to build new infill “missing middle” housing in established neighborhoods currently without a diverse housing stock. New residential communities are increasingly embracing a diversity of housing types although yet to be intermingled.

### “MISSING MIDDLE” HOUSING.

Contemporary residential development, certainly over the last 50 years, has been pretty binary. Housing was either single family or complexes of apartments; garden apartments or urban mid-rise and high-rise.

Yet, if we walk the streets of the older neighborhoods in almost any city, we find a rich mix of single family homes, duplexes, an occasional triplex and many small apartment buildings with eight to ten rental units. Small apartment buildings immediately adjacent to large single family homes are not unusual. The idea of placing a new duplex in a single

*“Optico Design Founder Daniel Parolek inspired a new movement for housing choice in 2010 when he coined the term ‘missing middle housing,’ a transformative concept that highlights a time-proven and beloved way to provide more housing and more housing choices in sustainable, walkable places”.*

<http://missingmiddlehousing.com>

family neighborhood draws upon the courageous. Even with the current trend of non-exclusive single family zoning districts, a casual mixing of new duplexes, townhomes or small apartment buildings in established neighborhoods seems far off.

Part of the hesitancy to diversify the housing stock in neighborhoods is the binary choice offered by the housing industry; the choices are single family houses or garden apartments. A middle path has been identified: “missing middle housing”...the duplexes, triplexes, cottages and small apartment buildings. **Read more at:** <https://missingmiddlehousing.com/>

### Development Standards.

- Locations: Residential collector streets and corner lots.
- Buildings: No more than two stories, no more than ten units, no setbacks smaller than specified for single family houses, including parking areas.
- Exterior improvements: No extreme parking lot lighting, no commercial dumpsters, no parking areas adjacent to single family lots without extensive noise and motion buffers.



From...Bloomberg CityLab

## “Denser Housing is Gaining Traction on America’s East Coast”.

KRISTON CAPPS, JANUARY 3, 2020

“Maryland joins Virginia with a new proposal to tackle the affordable housing crisis. And it’s sweeping in its ambition.”

**READ MORE AT:** <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-01-03/maryland-s-ambitious-pitch-for-denser-housing>

Cities and counties are grappling with the constraints that retard the growth of affordable housing. One approach being considered is the elimination of exclusive single-family housing districts. New ordinances are granting property owners in single-family residentially zoned areas the opportunity, **by right**, to build duplexes, tri-plexes and carriage homes along with accessory dwelling units.



Small apartment buildings have traditionally been found in single-family residential neighborhoods; this “missing middle” housing can be located in single-family neighborhoods when design standards limit the number of units and building height, designate locations for fences/walls, parking areas and dumpsters; and identify appropriate sites in neighborhoods such as corner lots and lots on residential collector streets.

### READINGS.

*Developing Affordable Housing: A Practical Guide for Nonprofit Organizations* (3rd Edition), Bennett L. Hecht, John Wiley & Sons, 2006.

*The Business of Affordable Housing: Ten Developers' Perspectives*, Richard Haughey, Urban Land Institute, 2007.

*Affordable Housing Development: Financial Feasibility, Tax Increment Financing and Tax Credits*, 1st ed. 2019 Edition, Jaime P. Luque, Nuriddin Ikromov, William B. Noseworthy, 2019.