# ATTACHMENT B

"Innovative Design and Development Code"

Produced by Metro

This is the 'Contextual Design' section of the Model Code document produced by Metro. It includes an excellent explanation and discussion of the issues surrounding incorporating 'flexibility' into zoning codes, in light of the State of Oregon's statutory requirements. Note in particular the importance of providing 'clear and objective standards' per the State. Also, note the valuable discussion on form-based codes versus menu-based codes with and examples of each for achieving similar purposes. Included is an example of code language for cottage housing (Wood Village). This information was taken principally from the Washington State model code, where this type of housing is quite prevalent.

New construction built to form-based code standards, City of Hercules, California

Photograph provided by Pacific Municipal Consultants

Toolkit

Innovative design and development codes

# Code flexibility

One issue city planners face in establishing design and development codes is how to determine the appropriate amount of architectural controls. Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 10: Housing requires local governments to provide clear and objective standards for needed housing. Planners, designers and local residents recognize that more flexible development standards usually produce superior development while current implementation of the state required clear and objective (less flexible) standards prevents bad design but rarely encourage place-specific, context-sensitive design solutions. However, communities rely on clear and objective regulations because they are easier to administer and are recognized as more "fair." The resulting codes are rigid and do not allow much

variance in designs. Instead they prescribe blunt solutions for a vast range of development sites that would benefit instead from contextual responses. Codes that are flexible and allow a contextual response by offering alternatives achieve more appealing and suitable compact, mixed-use projects. Alternative code approaches, particularly form-based and menu-based codes, offer better opportunities for increasing flexibility as well as development capacity.

## How to use it:

**Form-based codes:** Form-based codes provide a method for regulating the physical form of development with clear and objective standards that allow flexibility and variation in the final built product so that designs can respond to the context. Elements such as building envelope (the outside area of the building), key dimensions, siting, and the relationship to adjacent buildings and the sidewalk are specified to a high level of detail in the code. Architectural styles are not prescribed, with the exception of the listing of allowable and prohibited materials and the location of signs. The intent of this strategy is to achieve a variety of architectural styles with structures appearing as if they evolved over time. To further achieve this goal, building requirements are sometimes waived for civic sites in order to provide greater flexibility for special architectural statements.

Recognizing that uses will change over the lifetime of a building, form-based codes de-emphasize density and use regulation in favor of controlling the built form. The code favors a mix of uses and housing types. It also recognizes the importance of the design of the public realm and the influence of individual buildings in shaping the streetscape.

Form-based codes often use street types to determine the physical design of buildings and shape well-defined spaces. The street is the organizing principle behind the code in order to create higher-quality environments as experienced by pedestrians. This approach helps ensure that building development and design standards create a clearly defined street hierarchy. Thus, the building type and design should be directly related to the type of street it is facing. For example, buildings on smaller-scaled local streets should have different uses, setbacks, heights and frontage elements than buildings on larger-scaled streets that serve the broader region.

Another central tenet of the form-based code approach is that changes in building bulk, height and massing are gradual and take place at the back of the lot. Increases in height generally do not exceed one story, stepping up a half-block at a time. If building heights exceed this standard, dimensions for setbacks, stepbacks and design are specified to ensure privacy and adequate transition. This stepping effect usually takes place over several blocks, so this approach may not work in many corridors, which generally include one or two blocks on each side of a main street.

The form-based code describes the appropriate transition for each block using clear and objective language as well as graphics, bypassing the need to oversee transitions on a case-by-case basis. As further described in the section on visualizing zoning,

form-based codes also represent a more visual alternative to conventional land use regulations, creating flexibility in the code and serving as a communication and policy-making tool.

Form-based codes replace existing zoning codes and can be mandatory or optional offering several implementation options for local governments. A form-based code can be integrated into the existing code, applied as a "by right" designation to selected zones and cross-referenced to existing code provisions. It can also function as an optional parallel code system within a separate chapter that has unique provisions not cross-referenced to other parts of the code, making this an available option in designated zones. Form-based codes can also take the form of floating zones that are triggered by an application to rezone a property.

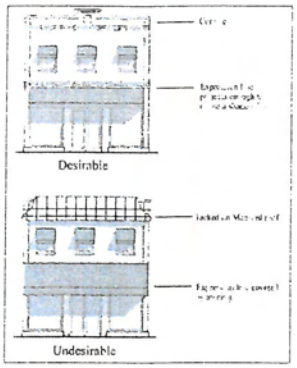
Form-based codes are often confused with design guidelines. However, they are not discretionary. While they offer flexibility like design guidelines, they do so by offering choices between objective standards rather than by offering multiple ways of meeting an aspirational guideline.

Form-based codes cannot be transported from another jurisdiction without customization. As context-sensitive codes, they must be tailored to the specific built environment and local efforts. Form-based codes can be created for infill areas if they start from a complete understanding of existing development patterns and building form. Such an inventory must be part of the work effort to develop a form-based code.

**Existing use of the tool in the region:** Form-based codes have not been widely implemented in Oregon. Several cities in California and around the country have successfully integrated form-based codes into existing codes, with Petaluma and Hercules being the most commonly referenced.

# City of Hercules, California

*The city is achieving varied building styles and creatives responses to the architectural guidelines.*

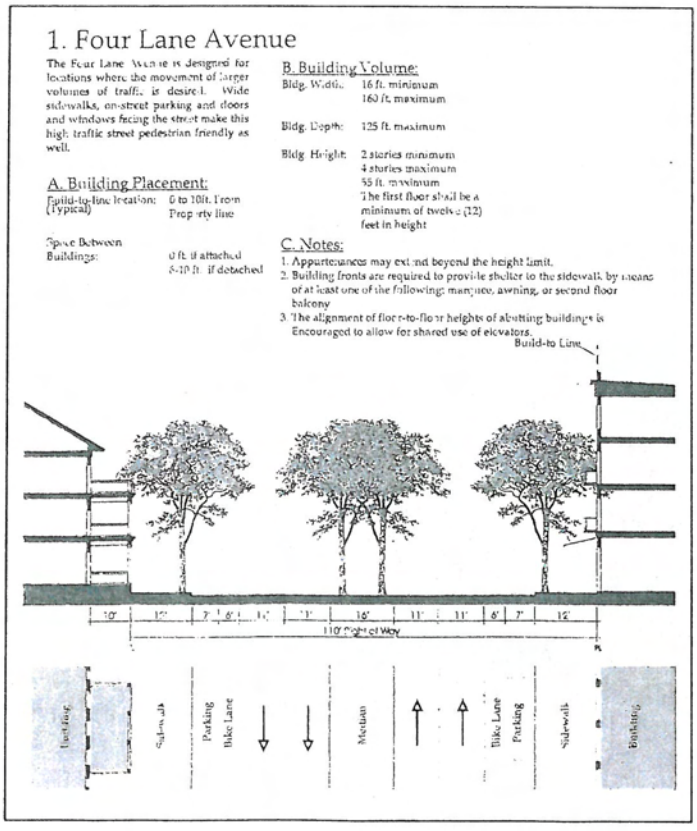


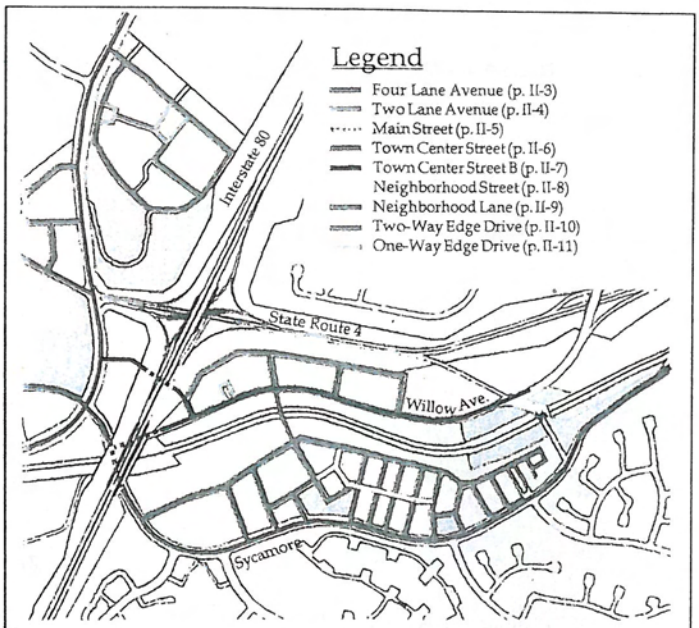

## Form-based codes

The City of Hercules, California, recently adopted a new design code with the intention of fostering smart growth development. The code, while highly specific in terms of physical form (by regulating building envelope, key dimensions, siting, and relationship to streets, sidewalks, and adjacent buildings), retains flexibility in uses. The code does not prescribe architectural styles but does prescribe a minimum set of basic design parameters.

Users of the code consult the regulating plan and determine the classification of the street in front of their parcel. Then they cross-reference the code relating to the street type to determine the applicable land development regulations. The code is sub-divided into four districts and eight distinct street types. Where two street types meet, the order in the hierarchy determines the code. Build-to-line requirements and building frontage requirements are waived for certain sites such as civic facilities in order to provide greater flexibility.

The new code has been successful, with a total of 300 units built and construction underway on the main street area of the Waterfront District. Developers have responded to the code with attractive projects that foster a mix of uses. New homes blend in with existing housing. The city is achieving varied building styles and creative responses to the architectural guidelines.

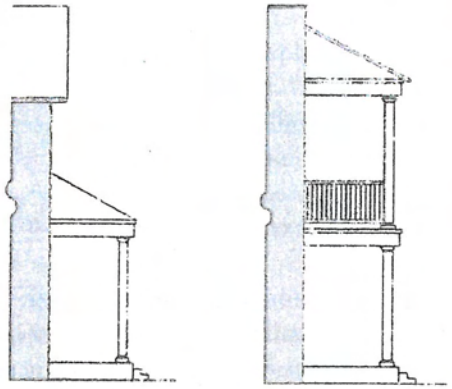


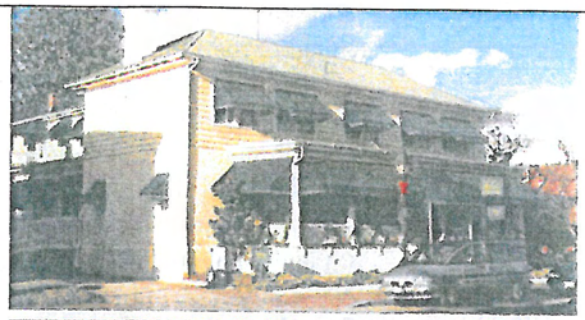




This illustration depicts a district of streets suited to serve a fine-grained mix of uses. The City expects a mix of allowed uses to occur in all neighborhoods and blocks. The City will require a mix of uses within buildings along Main Street and the Four Lane Avenue. The City will not require particular uses nor a particular distribution of uses, but will require the integration of residential and commercial uses. Uses allowed by right, by permit, or that are prohibited are listed in Chapter V of this Code.

The City will require a variety of architectural styles along all street types. However, along Main Street and the Four Lane Avenue, proposals for colonnades will be scrutinized to ensure adequate sight distance for automobile drivers.

## C. Front Porches

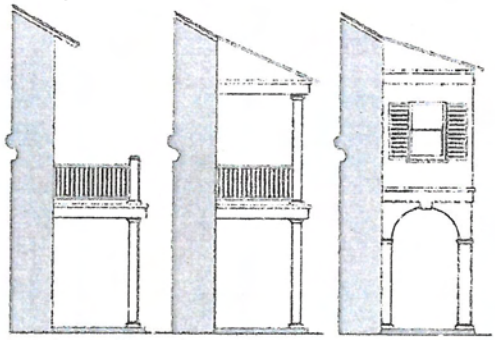




*Depth* = 8 ft. minimum
*Length* = 25%–90% of building front

- Front porches may have multi-story verandas and/or balconies above.
- Front porches shall be forward of the build-to line but shall not extend into the right-of-way.
- Front porches must be open, un-air-conditioned parts of the buildings. No more than 75% of the floor area of a porch shall be screened if the porch extends forward of the build-to line.

## D. Colonnades/Arcades



*Depth* = 8 ft. minimum from the build-to line to the inside column face
*Height* = 10 ft. minimum clear
*Length* = 75%–100% of building front

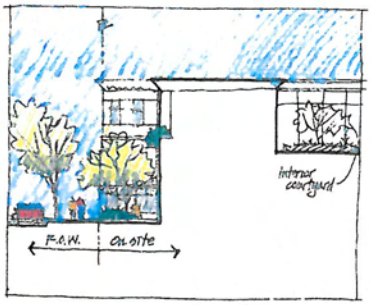
- Columns shall be a maximum of 6-in. wide in front of shop-front windows.
- Open multi-story verandas, awnings, balconies, and enclosed useable space shall be permitted above the colonnade.
- Colonnades shall only be constructed where the minimum depth can be obtained. Colonnades shall occur forward of the build-to line and may encroach within the right-of-way, but shall not extend past the curb line.
- On corners, colonnades may wrap around the side of the building facing the side street.
- Colonnades and arcades are not permitted on the four-lane avenue.

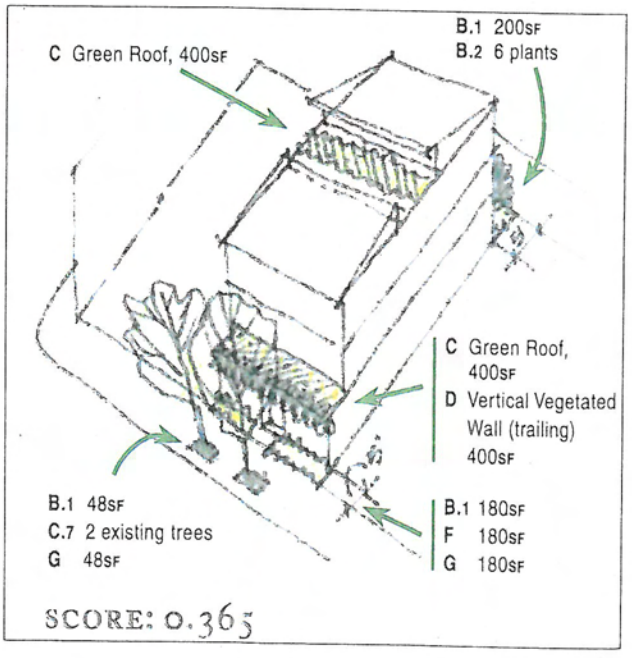
Excerpts from the City of Hercules' form-based code detailing street types and architectural standards

**Menu-based point system codes:** Menu approaches provide more flexibility in achieving code intent and site design that responds to the local context. They include code choices for the developer that can be selected based on the context of the site. The intent of the code is stated and several strategies are listed that will meet this objective, each with an associated point value based on its ability to achieve the code objective as well as other local goals of sustainability and place-making. Points are accrued by combining a range of design elements. A certain overall point value must be reached in order to meet the requirement. This strategy would be particularly successful along the region's corridors or in its centers to allow contextual responses to very different natural and physical environments.

**Existing use of the tool in the region:** Seattle, Washington, has experienced success with its menu-based code approach to its landscape requirement. It replaced mandated percentages of open space with a list of landscaping options. The system, targeted at new development in commercial areas, retains flexibility for developers while ensuring sustainable landscapes that create visually distinct places and help create an identity for these neighborhoods.

In this region, there are no examples of this type of menu-based point system being assigned to design alternatives. However, the City of Oregon City uses a menu approach for its garage standards defining multiple design standards that provide good design at reasonable costs. The provision requires a minimum number of elements to be included in the design of garages for homes on corner lots and through lots. Options include dormers, recessed entries and front balconies. Depending on the number of design elements met, a greater percentage of street-facing façade or an increased extension in front of the street-facing façade is allowed.




Examples of how points are calculated for landscape requirements using Seattle's Green Factor menu-based point system

example approach

# City of Seattle, Washington

## Menu-based point system

Green Factor, the City of Seattle's landscape requirement, was developed as part of an attempt to green the city's neighborhood business districts. Any new development in neighborhood business districts with multiple dwelling units or a certain amount of commercial uses or parking spaces is required to have the equivalent of 30 percent of the parcel vegetated. The Green Factor is intended to increase the amount and quality of urban landscaping in dense urban areas while allowing increased flexibility for developers to efficiently use their properties.

Green Factor provides a list of possible site landscaping options from which an applicant can choose. Each option is assigned a specific point value. Calculations are then made using a spreadsheet available on the city's web site that multiplies the number of plants or the square footage by its point factor. By either increasing the number of plants or the square footage of vegetated land, one can accomplish the aggregate required green factor. Bonus points can also be awarded.

The approach, based on similar codes in Europe, supports a landscape strategy that encourages sustainability and increases green space in the city. Previously, the landscaping requirement mandated a percentage of open space on a development site, but this did not ensure that the resulting landscaping would necessarily be green or sustainable. The code change was designed to improve the "extent and quality of landscapes" while increasing flexibility for those seeking to meet open space requirements.

*The approach, based on similar codes in Europe, supports a landscape strategy that encourages sustainability and increases green space in the city while increasing flexibility for those seeking to meet open space requirements.*

SEATTLE green factor

FINAL VERSION 3-9-07

| | | enter sq ft of parcel | | You need at least 0.300 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Parcel size (ENTER THIS VALUE FIRST)* | 1 | SCORE | - |

| | Types of Area** | Square Feet | Factor | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | Vegetation planted with a soil depth of less than 24" | | | |
| 1 | Lawn or grass pavers or ground covers | enter sq ft: 0 | 0.2 | - |
| 2 | Plants and shrubs 3' and higher at maturity | enter number of plants: 0 | 0 | 0.3 - |
| B | Vegetation planted with a soil depth of more than 24" | | | |
| 1 | Lawn, grass pavers or other plants less than 3' tall at maturity | enter sq ft: 0 | 0.7 | - |
| 2 | Shrubs taller than 3' at maturity - calculated at 16 sq ft per plant (typically planted no closer than 18" on center) | enter number of plants: 0 | 0 | 0.3 - |
| 3 | Tree canopy for "small trees" in SDOT's Street Tree Planting Schedule or equivalent canopy spread of 15' - calculated at 50 sq ft per tree | enter number of plants: 0 | 0 | 0.3 - |
| 4 | Tree canopy for "small/medium trees" in Street Tree Planting Schedule or equivalent canopy spread of 20' - calculated at 100 sq ft per tree | enter number of plants: 0 | 0 | 0.3 - |
| 5 | Tree canopy for "medium/large trees" in Street Tree Planting Schedule or equivalent canopy spread of 25' - calculated at 150 sq ft per tree | enter number of plants: 0 | 0 | 0.4 - |
| 6 | Tree canopy for "large trees" in in Street Tree Planting Schedule or equivalent canopy spread of 30' - calculated at 200 sq ft per tree | enter number of plants: 0 | 0 | 0.4 - |
| 7 | Tree canopy for preservation of "exceptional trees" or trees with trunk diameter exceeding 24" at four and one half feet above the ground. calculated at 250 sq ft per tree | enter number of plants: 0 | 0 | 0.5 - |
| B | Permeable paving that drains only itself. It must be at grade. - calculated per square foot | enter sq ft: 0 | 0.6 | - |
| C | Green roofs - 4" minimum soil depth at time of planting | enter sq ft: 0 | 0.7 | - |
| D | Vegetated walls | enter sq ft: 0 | 0.7 | - |
| E | Water features (fountains) or rain gardens (where allowed by SPU) | enter sq ft: 0 | 0.7 | - |

## The nuts and bolts

**Menu-based design codes:** Oregon law requires cities and counties that establish housing growth targets to provide clear and objective standards for design codes for those residential needs. The resulting non-discretionary site plan review track provides a fast and reliable option, with predictable review and approval timelines. However, use and building form are highly prescribed and often no option is made available for adjustments or variances to make the project fit the local context. This can pose a challenge for compact mixed-use projects.

Cities and counties can deal with the tension between clear and objective regulations and more flexible discretionary review by offering developers a choice. Similar to a menu-based point system approach, menu-based design codes offer several design approaches that can be used to meet design standards. Paired with development standards, these design standards are administered as part of the site plan review process. Unlike design guidelines, they are not discretionary. All new structures and renovations within a targeted area are required to meet these standards.

Each design standard includes an intent statement explaining the goal to be accomplished as well as approaches or methods that can meet these objectives. These are accompanied by elements or techniques that provide detail for meeting the goals and objectives. In addition, graphic resources within the code include photos and 3-D diagrams to help explain the elements and further clarify what meets the design standards. In return for meeting the standards, applicants' projects are reviewed administratively, providing a time and cost savings to the developer while also ensuring that the design intent of the targeted area is met.

**Existing use of the tool in the region:** The City of Canby is proposing a design and development standard ordinance for its central business district. Other local governments such as Hillsboro or Washington County offer a two-track review process with clear and objective standards and discretionary design guidelines. A menu-based approach may be preferable in certain areas given the graphic nature of the code and the flexibility it allows. The City of Hayden, Idaho recently implemented a development and design standard ordinance similar to the one being contemplated in Canby.

Canby, Oregon is proposing flexible, graphic-oriented design and development codes for its downtown

Example approach

# City of Hayden, Idaho

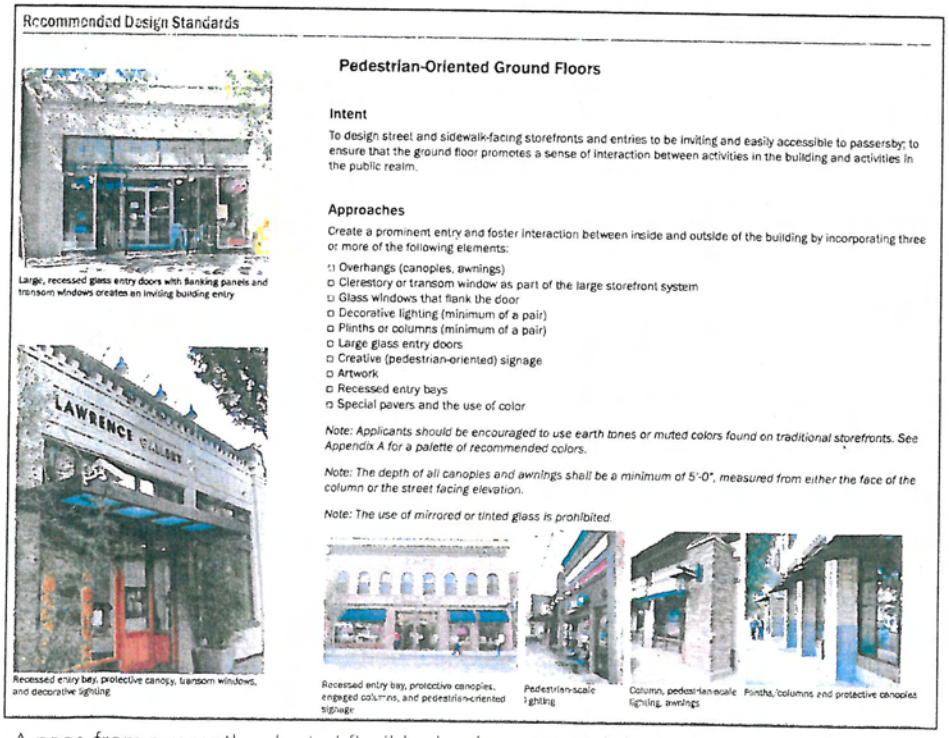
## Graphic menu-based design code

Seeking to implement its vision for a vibrant downtown, the City of Hayden, Idaho, formed an urban renewal district and developed a strategic implementation plan for the community's downtown revitalization. The implementation plan includes development and design standards that provide a palette of design-related approaches and tools to raise the quality of the design along the city's main street.

A graphic development code was created to require key standards such as scale, density, and height while offering a menu of clear and objective approaches to achieve design standards. All new construction and renovations of existing structures within the downtown are required to meet all development and design standards. A two-track process was also offered to anyone who chose to respond even more creatively to the design standards and demonstrate how they were meeting the intent.

While not innovative in its two-track process, Hayden's design standards provide a more graphic and flexible framework for achieving the city's vision of a vibrant and attractive downtown. Various design themes are addressed in the standards. Each theme is further explained through a design intent statement that describes the objective. Design approaches are then presented with accompanying graphics to detail methods that can be applied to meet intent. Applicants are required to include a certain number of design elements from the menu presented in order to achieve the stated design intent.

*Hayden's design standards provide a more graphic and flexible framework for achieving the city's vision of a vibrant and attractive downtown.*




A page from a recently adopted flexible development and design standards ordinance, City of Hayden, Idaho

## Keep in mind

**Management:** Rewriting local codes to incorporate the above approaches will require an upfront effort. In addition, some of the approaches require some discretion and ongoing management by staff. If employed, these more in-depth staffing efforts should be directed at centers and corridors, as they are more dynamic areas that require greater flexibility for site-specific redevelopment. Form-based codes and graphic development codes may be more appealing to local governments if buildings that meet specific standards of the code are allowed outright rather than requiring a discretionary review process. Likewise, menu-based approaches may offer a similar advantage since decisions are not discretionary but instead based on the total point value or the inclusion of one of the options provided in the design standards.

Menu-based design standards may also work well for smaller cities that do not have the resources to overhaul their existing zoning code with a form-based code or to administer a code that requires a higher level of discretion than existing objective zoning standards.

**Standards:** New codes must be consistent with Oregon laws governing land use, providing clear and objective standards that are quantifiable. Form-based codes, menu-based codes and graphic development codes all accomplish this goal. When implemented into local codes, care should be given to express development requirements as clearly as possible while not creating overly perscriptive standards.

If building style guidelines are too specific in a form-based code, built results can appear overly homogenous. Limiting the inclusion of specific architectural elements and building materials, and focusing instead on how buildings relate with the context of the surrounding neighborhood, will help reduce this feeling of uniformity.

In addition, form-based codes focus on the built form and do not necessarily require or prioritize the consideration of other planning elements such as environmental features, housing choices, or economic development. Local governments should carefully consider these other factors when writing a form-based code to ensure the new design and development requirements support the other goals of the community.

**Better buildings:** Adding flexibility into the process can result in more attractive buildings. Likewise, integrating design principles into codes through graphic media can ensure that the intent of the codes is more clear. Universal design elements result in creative project designs that can be more site-specific by allowing applicants to respond to intent, rather than prescriptive guidelines. To ensure this flexibility in form-based codes, the intent of the code as well as standards for variances and exceptions should be clearly explained using both text and images. Otherwise, an unusually high burden falls on the developer requesting the variance to prove the project still meets the intent of the code.

## Putting it together

As additional investments are made in the region's centers and corridors, graceful transitions need to be created at the edges of these areas. Form-based codes and codes that allow applicants to choose from a menu allow context-sensitive design solutions in and around centers and corridors. By building this flexibility into regulating codes and by enabling architectural responses to the existing community design, cities and counties can realize more attractive transitions that improve the quality of centers and corridors as well as the surrounding neighborhoods.

### Tips for implementation

- Develop a menu-based approach or a form-based code to offer applicants multiple options for achieving design objectives.
- Use form-based code techniques to emphasize the design of the public realm, provide high quality environments for pedestrians, and set specific standards for achieving a gradual transition between areas of differing urban form.
- Consider the time and expertise (either staff or outside consultant) required to customize and develop a form-based code.
- Write clear and objective standards for these new code approaches.
- Craft clear intent statements explaining the goal to be accomplished, and provide graphics such as photos and 3-D diagrams to illustrate the types of development that meet the intent statement.

Fall 2009

www.oregonmetro.gov

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT TOOLKIT VOLUME 2

CASE STUDY

# Cottage housing in the City of Wood Village

Cottage housing is a new model of clustered single family housing that provides a transition between single family housing neighborhoods and higher density areas, creating a development pattern that maximizes land values, reduces infrastructure costs and provides housing next to services. As the region implements the 2040 Growth Concept, the long range growth plan, Metro is working to help communities address the stark differences in scale, density and use that often appear between established neighborhoods and newer, higher density commercial or residential development in town centers and corridors. These transitions underutilize land and create a disjointed development pattern, often undermining the capacity of the region and the character of our communities.

Metro highlighted cottage housing in the **Community Investment Toolkit: Innovative Design and Development Codes**. After learning of cottage housing in the toolkit, the City of Wood Village researched the concept further in partnership with Metro and adopted minor adjustments to their development code to facilitate cottage housing developments in their community. The City's experience illustrates how local governments in the region can use innovative strategies to build vibrant, sustainable communities. This case study summarizes this research for use by other communities who may wish to consider cottage housing.

## Cottage housing

Cottage housing is used as a creative infill development between higher density mixed-use areas and established neighborhoods of lower density single family housing. The coordinated design plan and smaller units of cottage housing developments allow densities that are somewhat higher than typical single-family neighborhoods, similar to the density of attached row houses, but minimize impacts on adjacent residential areas because of their smaller overall bulk and scale. While a cottage housing development focuses internally to the central outdoor space, the project maintains visual and pedestrian connections with the existing neighborhood in form and scale and with windows, doors and porches on the exterior façade oriented to human activity on the street.

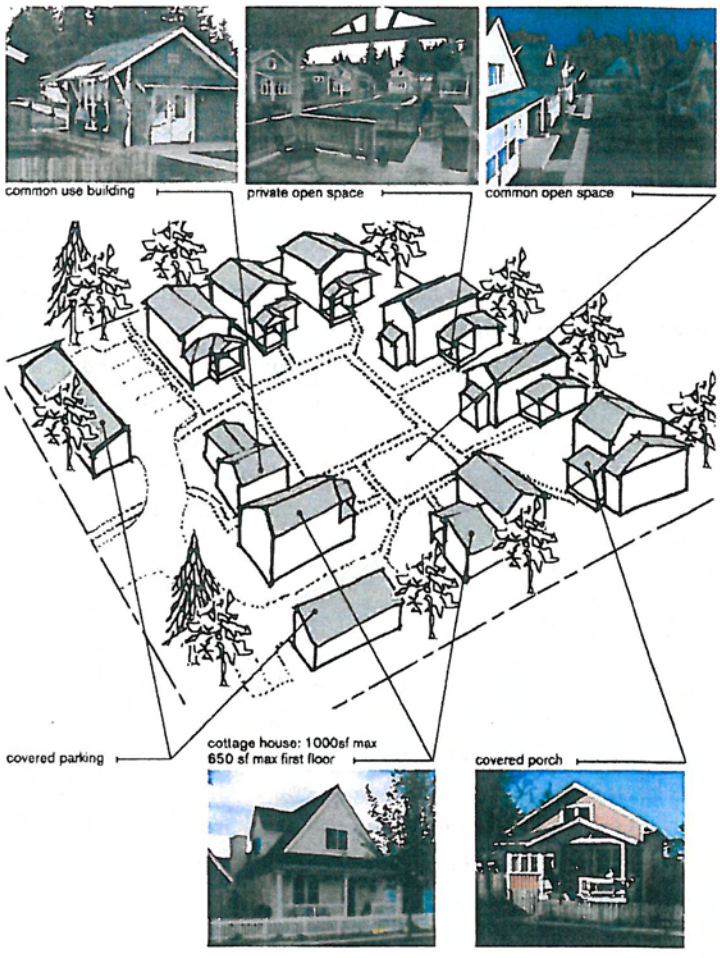
Metro

Photos above – from left, Salish Pond Cottages, Greenwood Avenue Cottages and Conover Commons. The projects were designed by Ross Chapin Architects. Greenwood Avenue Cottages and Conover Commons were developed by The Cottage Company.

*"The City of Wood Village is leading the way in applying an innovative tool that promotes efficient land use and supports their community vision. Metro looks forward to more partnerships like this with other communities around the region."*

– Rod Park,
Metro Councilor

From a homeowner's perspective, cottage housing offers an alternative housing opportunity that is responsive to changing household demographics, lifestyles and housing needs. Although average household size is decreasing, single-family housing still remains the preferred housing type. Cottage housing maintains a single-family housing environment by providing a small private yard space and detached units, but combines it with the affordable cost and reduced maintenance attributes of attached housing. The site design also encourages neighborhood interaction and safety by orienting homes around a functional community space. Community spaces are designed to be usable and can be easily tailored to the needs of the residents (e.g. past developments have used the space as an art studio, a workshop equipped with shared facilities, or a community garden). Cottage housing is therefore ideal for retirees wanting to downsize but remain in a single family neighborhood, as well as for small families and single parent households desiring homeownership.




**Cottage housing layout**

Cottage housing is generally defined as a development of small, detached single-family dwelling units clustered around a central outdoor common space within a coordinated site plan. The cottage units are smaller than single-family houses and are often oriented toward the common space. While houses share amenities such as open space, gardens, a workshop, or a community building, each cottage house also has its own yard and the privacy of a roofed porch.

# Regional Model for Cottage Housing Standards



## A. Intent

1. Support the growth management goal of more efficient use of urban residential land;
2. Support development of diverse housing in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan;
3. Increase the variety of housing types available for smaller households;
4. Provide opportunities for small, detached dwelling units within existing neighborhoods;
5. Provide opportunities for creative, diverse, and high quality infill development that is compatible with existing neighborhoods.

## B. Definition of cottage housing development

A development of detached dwellings which has the following characteristics:

1. Each unit is of a size and function suitable for a single person or small family;
2. Each unit has the construction characteristics of a single-family house;
3. The density of the development is typically 7 to 14 units per acre;
4. Units are for residential use only and may not be operated as transient accommodations;
5. The development is designed with a coherent concept and includes: private and shared usable open space, off-street parking, access within the site and from the site, amenities such as a multipurpose room, workshop, garden, and a coordinated landscape plan;
6. Cottage design incorporates classic cottage features or northwest style using quality materials.

## C. Small, compact dwellings

The total floor area of each cottage unit shall not exceed 1,000 square feet. Total floor area is the area included with the surrounding exterior walls, but excluding any space where the floor to ceiling height is less than six feet.

## D. Number of cottages allowed

Two cottage housing units shall be allowed in place of each single family home allowed by the base density of the district.

## E. Small clusters of cottages

Cottage housing units shall be developed in clusters of a minimum of 4 units to a maximum of 12 units.

## F. Separation of developments

Cottage housing developments shall be separate from each other by at least 1,000 feet.

## G. Maximum height

The height limit for all structures shall not exceed 18 feet. Cottages or amenity buildings having pitched roofs with a minimum slope of 6:12 may extend up to 25 feet at the ridge of the roof.

## H. Common space

Cottage housing units shall be oriented around a central common space. The common open space must be at least 400 square feet per cottage housing unit. The common space shall have cottage units facing at least two sides. Open space with a dimension of less than 20 feet shall not be included in the calculated common open space.

For more information:

503-797-1839
www.oregonmetro.gov/communityinvestment

Metro

Metro
*People places. Open spaces.*

Clean air and clean water do not stop at city limits or county lines. Neither does the need for jobs, a thriving economy and good transportation choices for people and businesses in our region. Voters have asked Metro to help with the challenges that cross those lines and affect the 25 cities and three counties in the Portland metropolitan area.

A regional approach simply makes sense when it comes to protecting open space, caring for parks, planning for the best use of land, managing garbage disposal and increasing recycling. Metro oversees world-class facilities such as the Oregon Zoo, which contributes to conservation and education, and the Oregon Convention Center, which benefits the region's economy.

**Metro Council**

President
David Bragdon

Rod Park
District 1

Carlotta Collette
District 2

Carl Hosticka
District 3

Kathryn Harrington
District 4

Rex Burkholder
District 5

Robert Liberty
District 6

Metro Council
503-797-1700
metrocouncil@oregonmetro.gov

**Auditor**
Suzanne Flynn

Fall 2009

Printed on recycled-content paper
09385

**I. Private ground space**

Each cottage housing unit shall be provided with a private use open space on the ground of at least 300 square feet with no dimension of less than 10 feet on one side. It should be contiguous to each cottage, for the exclusive use of the cottage resident, and oriented toward the common open space.

**J. Ownership**

Cottages are for residential use only and may not be operated as transient accommodations. Cottage housing developments are sited on one commonly owned property, or individual parcels may be created by subdividing the land with shared amenities owned in common.

**K. Separation of structures**

All structures shall maintain no less than 10 feet of separation within the cluster. Eaves may project into the required separation up to 12 inches.

**L. Parking requirements**

There shall be at least one off street parking space per dwelling unit.

**M. Parking design (lots or structures)**

1. Setback a minimum of 5 to 20 feet from the street, depending on the orientation of the structure or lot. If the structure or lot is perpendicular to the street, the narrow dimension may be within 5 feet of the street. If parallel to the street the lot or structure must be at least 20 feet from the street;
2. Clustered and separated from the common areas by landscaping and/or an architectural screen. Solid board fencing shall not be allowed as an architectural screen;
3. Screened from public streets and adjacent residential uses by a landscaping and/or architectural screen, which shall not include a solid board fence.

**N. Setbacks**

Setbacks for all structures from the property lines shall be an average of 10 feet, but shall not be less than 5 feet and not less than 15 feet from a public street.

**O. Usable porches**

Each unit shall have a covered porch with an area of at least 80 square feet and a minimum dimension of 5 feet. The porches on at least half the units shall face the common space.

**P. Fences**

All fences on the interior of the development shall be no more than 3 feet in height. Fences along the exterior of the development may be up to 6 feet in height, except as restricted by intersection clear vision standards. Chain link fences shall not be allowed.

**Q. Maximum lot coverage**

The total footprint of all structures shall not exceed 40 percent of the site area. Impervious surfaces shall not exceed 60 percent of the site area.

**R. Architectural elements and materials**

Cottages fronting a street shall avoid blank walls by including at least one of the following:

1. Changes in exterior siding material and paint color;
2. Windows which may include bay windows; and/or
3. Building modulation with a depth measuring at least one foot.

Structures shall be provided with substantial exterior trim elements consistent with traditional northwest cottage design and small home craftsmanship.

---

Note: The Regional Model for Cottage Housing Standards was adapted from successful cottage housing developments in the state of Washington and the Washington cottage housing model code.

## Nuts and bolts

Because cottage housing demands more compact development, existing code often must be modified to allow for reduced minimum lot size and setback requirements. The table on page 4 outlines the model cottage housing standards based on successful developments in the state of Washington. Key elements of the model development standards include:

Salish Pond Cottages designed by Ross Chapin Architects

**Higher densities than traditional single family housing.** Cottage housing densities typically require a low lot coverage maximum of 40 to 60 percent; moderate density limits such as .35 Floor Area Ratio (FAR); two times the zone density allowance; or one unit per 2,000 to 5,000 square feet of land area. Given these densities, cottage housing is marketable and most successful as a transition tool in single family or moderate density multi-family zones where the cottage densities exceed the capacity of the underlying zone. Cottage housing codes can avoid overly dense developments by setting a maximum allowed number of units as well as requiring at least 1,000 feet between developments.

**A maximum housing size of 1,000 square feet.** When the style was in its infancy, units were between 500 to 600 square feet, but the market has driven up housing size – in some developments to more than 1,500 square feet. In order to maintain the intent of cottage housing, it is recommended that maximum unit size average not exceed 1,000 square feet, with a maximum building height of 18 feet for houses without pitched roofs and 25 feet for houses with pitched roofs.

**Usable open space.** Development standards encourage the creation of functional community open space not typically required or always available in single family housing developments. For instance, a steep natural ravine on a site may not qualify as usable open space in a cottage housing project because it would be impossible to build a community facility or a community garden with such topographic constraints. In a comparable planned development, a housing developer often requests that such spaces qualify for required open space. To maintain a single family environment, functional private open space is also required for each cottage housing unit.

**Quality aesthetics and parking standards.** Quality design and aesthetic controls are often required in order to create an efficient use of space and ease transitions between existing developments. Controls for garage and/or parking areas include setbacks of 20 to 40 feet from the street and an average maximum parking requirement of 1.5 parking spaces per unit. Cottage housing codes and projects have also required an average of one space per unit. Allowing reduced parking standards has been successful given the target demographics of cottage housing, goals for increased densities, and the desire for a more flexible, high-quality design. Quality design standards can include required covered front porches and northwest architectural design and materials.

**Ownership.** Ownership is an important element of the cottage housing style. Usually cottage housing developments are sited on one commonly owned parcel and each cottage is sold as a condominium. However, cottage housing units can also be owned fee-simple by subdividing the land into individual parcels with shared amenities owned in common by the cluster

### Washington state

Cottage housing is a relatively new concept to the Portland metro area, but has been a popular form of infill development in cities across the state of Washington since the early 1990s. Early success in cities such as Seattle, Kirkland, and Richmond prompted the Seattle Housing Partnership to develop a model code for cottage housing in 2001. The Washington state model code has provided a foundation for cottage housing standards across the state of Washington and was assessed by Metro in the creation of the Regional Model for Cottage Housing Standards included in this case study.

residents. This model offers a unique home ownership opportunity not commonly available. Ownership models vary and are typically determined by the developer based on the local market, unless the city only allows one of these options in the zoning code.

**Development review.** Cottage housing provisions are placed within the municipal code. Specific development plans can be reviewed and permitted through various avenues, a decision unique to each jurisdiction. Examples include administrative review, the subdivision process, a design review board, or a public hearing with a design review board or planning commission. When reviewing cottage housing development designs, priority is given to plans with functional, usable open space and a design that meets the intent and definition of cottage housing.

### Model cottage housing code

| | |
|---|---|
| **Zones** | Vary by city; single family or moderate density multi-family |
| **Lot cover** | 40 to 60 percent |
| **Density** | .35 floor area ratio, twice the existing allowed density; 7-14 units per acre |
| **Unit size** | 1,000 square feet maximum |
| **Number of units** | 4 minimum /12 maximum |
| **Height/ridge pitch** | 18 to 25' with 6:12 minimum slope |
| **Yards front/side/rear** | 15'/5'/5' |
| **Minimum open space-private/ common** | 300 square feet per unit, minimum dimension of 10'/400 square feet per unit, minimum dimension of 20' with cottage units facing at least two sides |
| **Garage or parking standards** | 1-1.5 spaces; bundled parking; screened from view. 20' setback |
| **Usable porches** | Usable covered porches, minimum 80 square feet with a minimum dimension of 5' |
| **Privacy standards** | Minimum 10' distance between structures |
| **Separation of developments** | Minimum 1,000 feet |
| **Review procedure** | Varies by city |
| **Ownership** | Fee-simple subdivided land ownership with shared common space; commonly owned parcel with each cottage sold as a condominium |
| **Other provisions** | Quality design and construction provisions. Maximum 3' fences within a development |

**City of Shoreline, Washington**

The City of Shoreline, Washington, implemented cottage housing and learned that scaling and density standards are integral to the effectiveness of a cottage housing development. City officials did not include such requirements in their standards, and as a result developers utilized density bonuses and built cottage housing developments with double the density intended by the code. This was compounded by the lack of separation between cottage developments. Due to the resulting appearance of overcrowded units, Shoreline decided to repeal the cottage housing provisions four years after adopting standards into their code.

## Keep in mind

**Applicability.** Cottage housing is an infill development opportunity to bridge transition gaps and create more affordable housing opportunities near amenities. Successful cottage housing standards clearly outline the intent of cottage housing and are allowed by right. They are also placed in their own section of code instead of being buried throughout other code sections, thereby limiting confusion and easing the ability of developers to implement projects.

Danielson Grove Cottages designed by Ross Chapin Architects and developed by The Cottage Company

**Flexibility.** Overly rigid regulations may hinder the ability of developers to implement projects. Therefore successful cottage housing standards are flexible, outlining a broad set of rules within which the developer can refine the project to fit the specific marketplace and the homeowner. For instance, flexible height restrictions can give developers the creativity to allow for better transitions between zones and may lead to more financially feasible projects. This flexibility is important because full two-story framing is often less expensive than story-and-a-half framing.

**Dwelling size.** Cottage housing is designed to create cottages as an alternative style of housing to larger single-family homes. Developers desiring to build larger homes may do so under existing development regulations for single family dwelling units. Thus, cottage housing development codes usually limit building mass to 1,000 square feet or less in order to maintain the original intent of cottage housing. Limiting dwelling size also ensures that cottage housing developments can serve as an effective tool to bridge transitions.

*"I think it's a significant trend, better rather than bigger, quality over quantity. It's something people have been waiting for. It takes more work, details and supervision but – like the old pre-1940s craftsman homes with mantels and casings – they are homes that get a premium price."*

– Jim Soules, Cottage Company, LLC

**Scaling.** Creating a compact, aesthetically pleasing development pattern through scaling requirements is also a key element of cottage housing. A minimum of four units per cluster is needed in order to create a coordinated site design, while a maximum of 12 units will prevent an over abundance of housing. In cities like Shoreline, Wash., having no maximum resulted in abuse of density bonuses and massive developments that undermined the effectiveness of cottage housing as a tool for bridging transitions.

**Parking.** In cottage housing standards, parking requirements are generally limited and preferably clustered off to the side or in an adjoining alley. Direct individual driveway access to the street is not necessary. Limiting parking helps achieve the goals of cottage housing in increasing density and creating a more pedestrian-friendly atmosphere. It also increases flexibility, allowing developers to be more creative with site design to increase a project's overall quality and its financial feasibility.

**Affordability.** Providing high-quality housing units at an affordable price is one of the primary goals of cottage housing developments. Due to its small scale, cottage housing is often a more affordable alternative to traditional single family housing. In the areas surveyed, cottage housing units were typically 20 to 30 percent below traditional market housing. Incentives can be placed to ensure affordability, including relaxing standards for architectural or building material regulations. This is particularly useful in areas with higher housing costs where the market often demands quality construction anyway.

## Putting it together

*"To address the realities of a limited land supply and changing demographics, the City of Wood Village has worked with Metro to identify a number of innovative solutions. Cottage housing allows the City to use our land more efficiently, while providing greatly needed housing next to services."*

– Sheila Ritz, City of Wood Village Administrator

After attending a presentation by Metro on the Community Investment Toolkit, staff from the City of Wood Village became interested in cottage housing as a good fit for redevelopment of underutilized residential land, particularly in transition areas between high density residential or commercial uses and single family residential areas. Given the limited land supply, the City felt it was important to offer a variety of more thoughtful housing options than the traditional single family subdivisions, duplex rentals or leased manufactured home lots. By pursuing cottage housing, the City was looking to promote quality craftsmanship and desirable growth in their existing neighborhoods.

### Creating cottage housing standards for Wood Village

City staff contacted Metro for technical assistance to research successful cottage housing developments in other cities and to help create cottage-style housing provisions for the City of Wood Village. Metro staff and city planners researched the cottage housing model code from the state of Washington, as well as cottage housing zoning requirements in the following cities in the state of Washington: Federal Way, Kirkland, Langley, Port Townsend, Redmond, Seattle and Shoreline. Metro and City staff also reviewed similar development projects within the Portland metropolitan region, including Salidge Ponds in Fairview and the "Common Green" housing developments in Portland.

Metro worked with City staff to synthesize the findings of the research and to address how cottage housing could be adapted to the City of Wood Village, both geographically in terms of where cottage housing would work within the city and in terms of how to incorporate cottage housing standards into City code.

After reviewing areas where cottage housing would be most beneficial, the City decided to include this type of housing as an approved use in the Multi Residential MR2 and MR4 zones. They selected these zones because they represent the transition areas adjoining the town center, the Halsey Street corridor and the neighborhood commercial zone to single-family neighborhoods. These areas also include larger parcels of land that have re-development potential and are generally flat for usable open space. The adjacent town center and neighborhood commercial zones offer cottage housing developments easy access to services and frequent transit routes. Cottage housing developments in these areas will be subject to the standards adopted into the City of Wood Village's zoning code as well as subdivision and/or design review approval by the planning commission.

In the preliminary development of the special cottage housing development standards, the City considered no limitation to the square footage of each unit and also considered more off-street parking than other jurisdictions because of the narrow streets and the number and size of vehicles per household. Staff and the planning commission eventually recommended to the City Council that a dwelling unit size limitation of 1,200 square feet was important to preserve the overall cottage housing character of single family mass and scale and to assure compact development. They also recommended a reduction in the minimum number of off-street parking spaces required from 1.5 to 1 space per dwelling, to be consistent with the existing single-family dwelling minimum parking standard. The planning commission recommended including individual garages with design standards, set back and to the side or

rear of each unit to respond to the characteristics and suspected demand of their community. They also recommended limited parking structures or parking lots to be closer to streets in certain circumstances in order to maximize internal common spaces, given the successful results of these standards implemented in other jurisdictions. Staff and the planning commission also outlined and recommended inclusion of architectural elements and material standards in order to ensure quality cottage craftsmanship.

In order to better respond to the market and changing demographics, the Wood Village Planning Commission decided to offer either fee-simple ownership through the subdivision of land or condominium ownership of each detached dwelling. The choice will be up to the developer, although land ownership is encouraged. The commission also recommended an increase in the maximum height of a pitched roof to 30 feet (versus 25 feet in the model) for more flexible design options. The Wood Village City Council agreed with these recommendations and unanimously adopted the cottage housing standards as recommended by the planning commission.

The City adopted these special cottage housing standards within the multi-family housing section of the City's zoning code. Thus, this type of housing is a use allowed by right if a developer meets the outlined standards. In doing so, the City chose not to embed the cottage housing standards within more complicated sections of its code that require more rigorous review processes, such as the Planned Use Development requirements, in order to ease implementation for developers. By making these decisions and choosing to maintain the other elements of cottage housing, the resulting cottage housing standards for the City of Wood Village adhere to the original intent of cottage housing and are consistent with the lessons learned in the cities in the state of Washington.

Hastings Green developed by Northwest Pacific Development Group through Portland's "Common Green" provisions

### City of Portland

While the City of Portland does not have cottage housing, it offers a similar style called "Common Green" housing provisions. Hastings Green in the South Tabor neighborhood at Southeast Clinton between 70th and 71st completed phase one development in 2003 and includes 13 single-family dwellings. The well-designed, high-quality units sold as condominiums, each with about 1,100 square feet and one to two bedrooms. A common space in the center of the units is used by residents as a community garden and clustered parking is provided. The first 10 units sold in six weeks. Phase two, constructed across the street, sold out prior to completion. The project has a density of 14 dwelling units per acre.

### Tips for implementation

- Focus on the intent of cottage housing and how it fits into the context of transition zones within your community.
- Isolate areas where you think cottage housing would work and talk to the community to get feedback.
- Hold a public hearing to fully explain the intent of cottage housing and the benefits of its use as a housing option and transition tool.
- Invite housing developers and gather feedback from them, as well as local citizens, in order to guide the local cottage housing development standards.
- Make standards easy to understand. Include images for clarification.
- Make standards easy to implement by creating a special section for cottage housing within the city's zoning code.

**Metro**
*People places. Open spaces.*

Clean air and clean water do not stop at city limits or county lines. Neither does the need for jobs, a thriving economy and good transportation choices for people and businesses in our region. Voters have asked Metro to help with the challenges that cross those lines and affect the 25 cities and three counties in the Portland metropolitan area.

A regional approach simply makes sense when it comes to protecting open space, caring for parks, planning for the best use of land, managing garbage disposal and increasing recycling. Metro oversees world-class facilities such as the Oregon Zoo, which contributes to conservation and education, and the Oregon Convention Center, which benefits the region's economy.

**Metro Council**
503-797-1700
metrocouncil@oregonmetro.gov

President
David Bragdon

Rod Park
District 1

Carlotta Collette
District 2

Carl Hosticka
District 3

Kathryn Harrington
District 4

Rex Burkholder
District 5

Robert Liberty
District 6

**Auditor**
Suzanne Flynn

Fall 2009

Printed on recycled-content paper 09359

## Resources

**For more information on the Regional Model for Cottage Housing Standards, contact:**

**Metro**
600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232
503-797-1839
www.oregonmetro.gov/communityinvestment

**For more information on the City of Wood Village Cottage Housing Standards, contact:**

**City of Wood Village**
2055 NE 238th Drive
Wood Village, OR 97060
503-667-6211
Staff contact: Carole Connell, AICP
www.ci.wood-village.or.us/

**For more information on the Washington Model Code for Cottage Housing, contact:**

**Michael Luis and Associates**
P.O. Box 15
Medina, WA 98039
425-453-5123
www.luisassociates@comcast.net

**For more information on Portland's Common Green Provisions, contact:**

**City of Portland**
Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
1900 SW 4th Avenue
7th Floor, Suite 7100
Portland, OR 97201
503-823-7700
www.portlandonline.com/bps
You can also access the provisions online in the "Infill Design Toolbox" at:
www.portlandonline.com/bps/index.cfm?c=49254