

2040 General Plan Proposed Key Strategies:

Permit a Greater Array of Housing Types in Single-Unit Neighborhoods

The General Plan and Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Update (2040 General Plan Update) was initiated in February 2019. The project consists of four main phases of work. To wrap-up Phase 2 – Options Exploration, on January 19, City Council is being asked to consider the Draft Land Use Map, Proposed Roadway Changes and Other Key Strategies. These Key Strategies represent substantial policy changes being considered for the 2040 General Plan.

One of the proposed key strategies is to permit a greater array of housing types such as duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes in existing residential neighborhoods. To help better understand the key strategy of permitting a greater array of housing types, below are some frequently asked questions with thorough explanations.

Is there a proposal to “eliminate single-family zoning?”

No. The proposed Key Strategy of permitting a greater array of housing types in the existing single-unit neighborhoods would not “eliminate single-family zoning.” There will be no restriction or change to allowing the construction of single-family/single-unit homes where they are currently permitted today. All homeowners can keep their single-family homes and developers can continue to build single-family housing. In fact:

- *70% of Sacramento’s residential neighborhoods are zoned for single-family only, with duplexes only allowed on corner lots.*
- *43% of the city’s total land area is zoned for single-family.*

What action is City Council being asked to consider on January 19 pertaining to the 2040 General Plan Update?

The General Plan and Climate Action and Adaptation Plan Update (2040 General Plan Update) was initiated in February 2019. The project consists of four main phases of work. To wrap-up Phase 2 – Options Exploration, on January 19, City Council is being asked to consider the Draft Land Use Map, Proposed Roadway Changes and Other Key Strategies.

The staff report will be posted to the City’s website on January 15 and can be found [here](#).

These Key Strategies represent substantial policy changes being considered for the 2040 General Plan. One of the proposed key strategies is to permit a greater array of housing types such as duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes in existing residential neighborhoods.

In Phase 3 - Draft Plan Preparation, the Key Strategies will be used to guide the detailed preparation of the Draft 2040 General Plan Elements, the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, and the Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR). These documents will be available for public review in Summer 2021 and will include all of the proposed strategies which will be organized by goals, policies, and implementation programs.

Council will then be asked to adopt the 2040 General Plan at the end of 2021.

What are the steps and timeline for implementation?

Once the 2040 General Plan is adopted by City Council, currently anticipated for December 2021, the [City's Planning and Development Code](#) (i.e. zoning code) will need to be updated in 2022 to be consistent with the adopted 2040 Land Use Map and Key Strategies. One of the anticipated changes to the Planning and Development Code would be to allow duplexes (currently allowed on corner lots), triplexes, or fourplexes by-right in traditionally single-unit zone neighborhoods (i.e. R-1 Zones).

Once the changes to the Planning and Development Code are adopted by City Council anticipated for late 2022, the missing-middle housing types of duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes would be allowed in residential zones (i.e. R-1).

Why is this being considered now?

Since the planning efforts for the 2040 General Plan Update first launched in early 2019, some of the key themes expressed from the community is for the City to take action to address the availability and affordability of housing, to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions to address the impacts of climate change, and to advance equity and inclusion. The proposed Key Strategies respond to these key themes.

In November 2019, City Council adopted the [Vision and Guiding Principles for the 2040 General Plan](#). One of the adopted guiding principles is to “cultivate a broad mix of housing types in residential zones throughout the city to provide options for residents of all income levels, while protecting existing residents and communities from displacement.” The proposed Key Strategies respond to the adopted guiding principles.

The Key Strategies were developed through significant community engagement. Phase 2 (November 2019 – November 2020) public engagement included input from approximately 2,200 participants, including stakeholder focus group workshops, a Virtual Citywide Workshop, Community Plan Area Virtual Workshops, a scientific survey, and input from various Boards and Commissions.

How is land use and zoning an equity issue?

One of the reasons why many of Sacramento's higher-resourced residential neighborhoods remain largely racially segregated is because many of the "desirable" neighborhoods remain zoned exclusively for single-unit homes, a more expensive product type.

There were racially restrictive covenants in many of our neighborhoods (Land Park, East Sacramento, Elmhurst, Pocket, etc.) until the early 20th century, and government-sponsored redlining was practiced until outlawed by the Fair Housing Act in 1968 (although discriminatory practices continued long-after 1968).

Past discriminatory practices of racially restrictive covenants and government-sponsored redlining have created barriers to homeownership and intergenerational wealth-building for many minority families, and subsequent single-family zoning in high opportunity neighborhoods has reinforced it.

The exclusion of lower-cost housing types (e.g. duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes) prevent lower-income residents from moving to neighborhoods with the best parks, schools, and other desirable amenities. Allowing a greater array of housing types in Sacramento's residential neighborhoods will help create more equitable and inclusive neighborhoods by addressing the remnant forces of government policies of exclusion and racial segregation.

The Sacramento Area Council of Government's [Housing Policy Toolkit](#) (June 2020) provides a detailed overview of the role of zoning in exclusionary housing practices that can be found on pages 21-27.

What is allowed in my single-family neighborhood now?

Single-unit homes (i.e. single-family), duplexes on any corner lot, and up to two Accessory Dwelling Units (not to exceed 1,200 square feet).

Has my neighborhood always been zoned R-1 to only allow single-family units?

If you live in an older neighborhood, likely not. Land use and zoning policies have evolved over the years as the City grew. Various areas of the city have their own unique story, but as an example, here is a summary of allowable housing types in the Elmhurst Neighborhood:

- *From 1923-1929 "apartment houses" (or multi-family as this housing product is more commonly known) were allowed.*
- *By 1936 zoning changes had restricted most of the neighborhood to 2 units maximum per lot, with the properties facing T Street restricted to just 1 unit.*
- *In 1956 the remainder of the neighborhood was zoned to exclusively the R-1 zone (single-family).*

Are housing types such as duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes appropriate in residential neighborhoods?

Yes. These missing-middle housing types such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes are already found throughout the City's "single-family" neighborhoods and you may not even be aware of it.

In fact, there are over 2,300 of these housing types scattered throughout the City's neighborhoods that were established before 1960.

This proposed Key Strategy of permitting a greater array of housing types in residential neighborhoods is a thoughtful approach for allowing neighborhood scale housing options that fit into the fabric of existing neighborhoods.

What do duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes look like? How big and tall can they be?

The proposed land use change of using floor area ratio (instead of density [dwelling units per acre]) focuses on regulating the form and size of buildings, with less emphasis on the number of units in the building.

The building envelope and size would be in line with what you see in our neighborhoods today, however, a few more people could now be living in these homes.

These housing types would comply with Citywide Design Guidelines and the Planning and Development Code's development standards would continue to control the outward appearance of buildings (i.e. size and height) and maintain the overall neighborhood scale and character.

As an example, [the current development standards for the single-unit dwelling zone \(R-1\)](#), include:

- *Height: 35 ft. maximum*
- *Minimum setbacks (from street/structures): 20 ft. front, 15 ft. rear, 5 ft. side*
- *Lot coverage: 40% maximum*

How about some actual photos of these housing types that are currently in the City?

*Great idea. Please see **Attachment A** below to view some representative examples of duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes currently found in the City's "single-family" neighborhoods.*

What about parking?

Residential neighborhoods zoned R-1 typically require a minimum of 1 off-street parking space per unit. Most of the neighborhoods in the core of the City are in [Traditional Parking District](#). Therefore, under current parking standards, a duplex would need 2 off-street parking spaces, a triplex would need 3, etc. However, per State law, no parking spaces can be required for Accessory Dwelling Units.

Who is expected to live in these housing types?

The proposed key strategy of permitting a greater array of housing types in existing single-unit neighborhoods, is one of many actions the City is considering to encourage lower-cost, “missing-middle” housing. “Missing-middle” housing are buildings with multiple units-compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes.

These “missing-middle” housing types are traditionally lower-cost housing options and are considered by the State to be affordable to those with moderate incomes like our community members that work in our schools, restaurants, small businesses, or for the State.

But, doesn’t the City have an affordable housing shortage?

Yes. This proposed key Strategy is just one small slice of the larger affordable housing pie. It will take many policies, programs, and a strong funding commitment from the federal, state, and local governments to begin to tackle the tremendous need.

The State requires the City to accommodate and plan for 45,580 new housing units by 2029, including 17,000 housing units that are affordable to our lower-income residents. The 2021-2029 Housing Element -an 8 Year Housing Strategy will include a variety of policies and programs to address this need. This draft document will be available for public review in the next month. To learn more, visit the City’s [webpage](#).

Who else is doing this?

Other cities like Portland and Minneapolis have also changed their land use and zoning regulations to allow a wider range of small-scale multi-unit housing in all of their residential neighborhoods.

The Sacramento Area Council of Government’s [Housing Policy Toolkit](#) (June 2020) is a menu of policy options and best practices for removing governmental constraints to new housing at the local level in the Sacramento Region. One of SACOG’s recommendations is to expand “missing-middle” zoning and to allow for duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes on all residentially zoned land.

The California Department of Housing and Community Development will be launching its Prohousing Designation Program in the coming months. Jurisdictions that receive a Prohousing Designation will receive incentives in the form of additional points or other preferences in the scoring of competitive State funding grant programs for affordable housing. One of the ways local governments can demonstrate that they are “prohousing” is through implementation of the proposed Key Strategy of allowing a greater array of housing types in residential neighborhoods. It is critical that the City of Sacramento receive these State grant funds to continue to construct affordable housing.

How can I continue to participate in the 2040 General Plan Update process?

The Draft 2040 General Plan and Climate Action and Adaptation Plan is anticipated to be available for public review in Summer 2021. Visit www.sac2040gpu.org or [sign-up for email updates](#).

Last Updated: 1/13/21

Attachment A

Examples of duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes currently found in the City's "single-family" neighborhoods.

Two examples of existing duplexes:

- 1. An existing duplex in the Curtis Park neighborhood.***



- 2. An existing duplex in the Land Park neighborhood.***



Two examples of existing triplexes:

1. An existing triplex in the Curtis Park neighborhood.

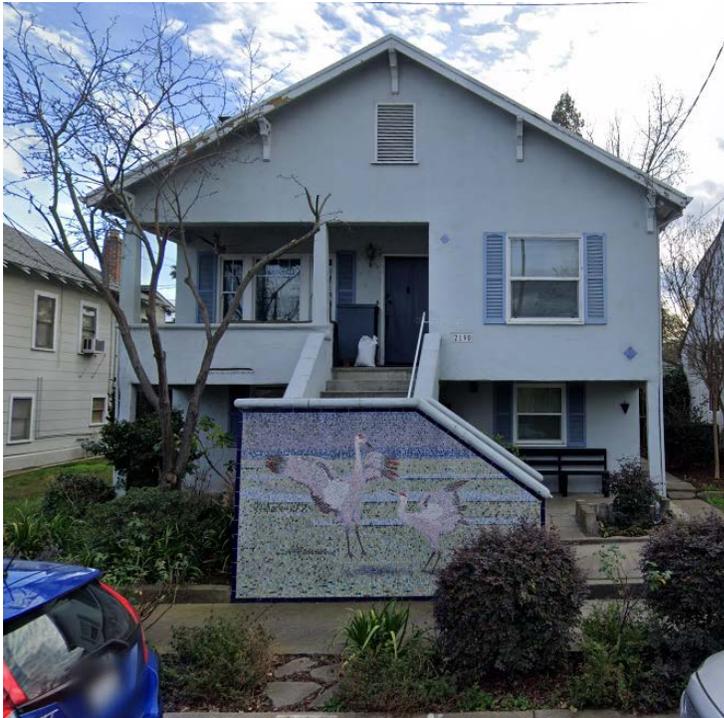


2. An existing triplex in the North Oak Park neighborhood.



Two examples of existing fourplexes:

- 1. An existing fourplex in the Land Park neighborhood.***



- 2. An existing fourplex in the East Sacramento neighborhood.***

