

Missing Middle Work Group / Session 5 (*Projecting Middle Housing Production*)

Summary of Small Group Breakouts

The fifth session of the Missing Middle Work Group was focused on approaches for estimating the production of middle housing in response to potential zoning changes. It also included a presentation and discussion of the potential impacts of SB9 (recently signed into law) and an introduction to an interactive tool being created to help jurisdictions evaluate the impact of different standards on the feasibility of different middle housing typologies.

The following notes summarize the discussions that happened in the two small group break-out sessions. The two groups were organized by city size, with Large and Mid-Sized Cities grouped together, and Small Cities and Towns grouped together.

Both groups were presented with two questions. Unlike previous breakouts, this session asked jurisdictions to come to the breakout with specific issues or challenges they are facing so that the group and consultant team could provide feedback, thoughts and direction.

Q1 Do you have additional questions or comments about the presentation?

Q2 What are specific issues or challenges your jurisdiction is facing? (participants were notified in advance to come prepared with a topic to discuss with the group)

Summary from Large and Mid-Size Cities Breakout

- Redwood City - How does density bonus apply?
 - It only applies above 5 units. It can be hard to make it out-compete market rate units for small projects.
- SF - How do you get deeper affordability?
 - It is really difficult. Maybe 80% or 120%.
 - SF - Losing people above 120%. Especially interested in families
- Redwood City - Trying to square up all the rules: HAA, Crisis Act, SB 9
 - For MM looking at multifamily zones (no FAR)
 - May need to cap size, without violating a law while keeping it objective
 - Opticos - Not sure. Concerns with SB 330
 - Can new state law that sets minimum FARs apply?

- Berkeley - No density cap currently; Need to use recent trends and density we are seeing, concerns about HAA and SB 330; Difficult to implement density bonus without density limits
 - Hayward - Can you still use waivers?
 - Berkeley - Yes, it's very hypothetical
- San Jose - Trying to get our heads around SB 9 and SB 10. Weird situation where R1 will allow more than R2. Thinking about reuse of large old houses. For SB 10, 6-8 unit complexes can be more affordable. Maybe allow those developments on some lots.
 - Tyler - Common. It can cascade through other zones. 6-plexes are likely overlapping with multifamily zones
 - SJ - But not here. Maybe use allowances larger than SB 9 to transition
 - Tyler - Portland seeing interest in smaller lot, small number of multifamily. Works for contractors and other stakeholders
- Hayward - Population constrained by resources. Population with money wants to build big homes. I'd be surprised if we are flooded with applications. Biggest challenge is competing expectations of decision makers - lots of parking and inclusionary. IZ recently started applying to 2 units or more. Most decision makers don't understand the economics of requiring more affordable housing. Developers in Hayward won't use SB 9. Best projects are SB35 projects (fly through the process, look the best)
- Berkeley - using multi-units as a use
- SSF - Doing general plan update and developing form-based code. Layering in density and intensity of use. Adding in more than just SF and MF. Trying to create more transitional areas, between SF and commercial. Increasing intensity. Urban residential. Lots of different things being discussed. For example, for T zones - duplex to multiplex. Then some of the design standards apply depending on building type.
 - Stefan - Similar to Marin County toolkit. Re: building code - lots of work with building code. Memphis? just started allowing buildings up to 6 units to be reviewed under local building code and not ICC code. Allows small buildings to be allowed in same category as single family. This reduces the complexity of buildings (e.g. don't need to be sprinklered). Also, simplified permit application. SF makes exceptions to ICC for changes to existing buildings.

What has helped educate decision makers?

- San Jose - Do a feasibility study to educate.
- Tyler - Consider training for new planning commissioners
- Josh - San Mateo used multi-jurisdiction training series

- Berkeley - Has a firm doing education and report and affordable fees

Summary from Small Cities and Towns Breakout

- Burlingame - The information about market feasibility was very useful and I will be looking forward to the analysis tool. A printable PDF option would be great. I didn't have any questions to dig into, as the presentation today and our site inventory analysis scenarios both indicated that SB 9 lot splits will likely not be market-feasible for many parcels in Burlingame
- Fairfax -
 - Going into HEU but now recalibrating for SB9. Wanted to include more opportunities for MM but not sure if SB9 will interfere with some plans - can split lots and put in SF detached, so how do we incentivize multifamily on split lots?
 - Should be strong baseline incentive to putting two detached SFH on split lots; our work suggests the need to get to at least 4 plex for smaller units to be able to compete.
 - Thinking about capping size of SF detached units to 800 sf to not end up with a bunch of SF; in Marin, land costs could be .5M or more for split lots so want to incentive duplex, fourplex and more, and not just a bunch of expensive SF
 - Might get more dev happening if you allow SF homes, but will be larger, less affordable; if being too draconian, could inadvertently create negative impacts.
 - Need to strike the right balance but hard to be generally prescriptive
 - Lots of 5-7k sf lots, high median income and lots of need for affordability; now want to do more density. Design the envelope, and modify it for more density. Lots of interest in affordable by design
- Benicia -
 - Mostly small parcels, lots of issues like utilities. Mix used limited zoning district established that allows for res capable MF; not a SF district but doesn't interact with SB9. Has ODS that can ensure 4-6plexes can be compatible with adjacent zones. Community is concerned with compatibility but also very concerned about affordability. Biggest challenge is bringing community along, that density isn't scary and addressing parking, maybe permit programs.
 - Is there an example of streamlining group housing/coop housing?
 - Not that we know of

Priority Prototypes

For the interactive tool being developed, jurisdictions were asked which middle housing typologies would be most beneficial to include. Feedback is summarized below.

- House-scale fourplex (RWC, HAY, FRE, BERK, SF) - 5
 - House-scale sixplex (RWC, FRE, SF) - 3
 - Duplex (RWC, HAY, SSF) - 3
 - 12-plex (SF) - 1
 - Townhouse (SSF) - 1
 - 3-story Sixplex (RWC, FRE, SF) - 3
 - Cottage Cluster (3+ small detached units) (HAY, SSF) - 2
 - Modern Cottage Cluster (BERK) - 1
 - 20 unit (RWC's inclusionary cut-off) - 1
-
- Fairfax: 4 and 6 plex, microunits (2-300sf or studio), also with open outdoor areas
 - Becky: will look into microunits.
 - Benecia: been thinking of MM a little bigger than 3-500sf
 - Tony: examples of this size and 1200sf units in existing units; we say get them below 1000sf, but that does not exclude ones on the smaller size

Requests for Final Session

A request was made to address Objective Design and Development Standards (ODDS) related to SB9 at the final session in December.