

## Average Unit Density Program Text Excerpted from the 2011 Land Use Element

### AVERAGE UNIT-SIZE DENSITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The purpose of an Average Unit-Size Density Incentive Program is to encourage smaller, more affordable units through established unit sizes, while allowing flexibility for larger units, which help subsidize the cost of the smaller units. Under this program, there are two multi-family land use designations: Medium-High Residential and High Residential and an additional Priority Housing Overlay. When combined with other uses, such as commercial or office, these residential uses are characterized as mixed-use.

For mixed-use designations, the non-residential portion of a project is calculated independent of the residential density. The amount of non-residential square footage is regulated through the Development Plan Ordinance, and the overall scale and design of the proposed structure (both residential and non-residential) is regulated by Municipal Code and Design Review Process (height, setbacks, parking, etc.), including findings of neighborhood compatibility.

The multi-family residential and mixed-use land use designations calculate residential densities based on average unit sizes. For example, in the Medium High Density designation the range could be from 1,450 square feet project average for the lowest densities to 805 square feet for the highest densities. In the High Density designation, the range could be from 1,245 square feet project average for the lowest densities to 970 square feet for the highest densities. In addition, the Priority Housing Overlay could allow additional units above the High Density incentive program if built at 600 square feet.

For each land use designation the target unit size is approximately 1,000 square feet, sufficient to accommodate two bedrooms. In 2009, two bedroom units were the most highly demanded unit type on the market, given the City's historically low 2.35 persons per household demographic (compared to 2.72 for the county and 2.92 for the state), and the financial advantages of joint tenancy or home/office use.

The permitted densities under this incentive program are both minimums and maximums per the respective designation. Larger sized units are permitted within each "average unit size" category, although a corresponding number of smaller units are then required in order to achieve the "average size". Single family homes and multi-family projects that develop at the base density of 12 - 18 dwelling units per acre are exempted from the minimum requirement and are not subject to unit size limitations.

Therefore, the residential density for any given project under this program is calculated by the number of average size units that can fit into the building envelope (or volume of space) that is established by development review standards including design review considerations. The smaller the average size unit, the greater the density up to a maximum of either 27 du/ac under the Medium High Density designation, 36 du/ac under the High Density designation, or 63 du/ac under the Priority Housing Overlay.

Additional density incentives are also available for all affordable projects, on a project-by-project basis consistent with the City's Affordable Housing Policies and Procedures.

## GENERAL URBAN

The General Urban land use designations include multi-family, commercial and industrial designations, and are located in areas within and around the Downtown and commercial corridors as shown on the General Plan Map. They include the multi-family Medium High and High Density commercial/residential, as well as those commercial, office, and industrial areas that have historically provided work, recreation, shopping, and increasingly mixed commercial/residential uses. The primary commercial areas include the City's Downtown, Upper State Street, the Milpas Corridor, Coast Village Road, the Waterfront, and a small portion of the Mesa.

The base density of the multi-family and commercial zones (where residential is allowed) has historically been and continues to be a range of 12 - 18 dwelling units per acre. However, one of the main goals of the 2011 General Plan Update is to encourage smaller rental and workforce units close to transit, and easy walking and/or biking distance to commercial services and recreational opportunities.

Land Use and Housing Element policies allow for increased densities under an Average Unit-Size Density Incentive Program; the details to be developed in an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance. The density incentives allow for a range of density for the Medium/High Density (15-27 dwelling units per acre) and the High Density (28-36 dwelling units per acre) depending on the average size of the units. The Priority Housing Overlay would allow a range of 49 – 63 dwelling units per acre in select areas of the City to encourage rental, employer and co-op housing.

This incentive program would replace the City's Variable Density ordinance in effect at the time of the General Plan Update. This three tier density incentive program, as outlined below, will be implemented on an 8 year "trial basis" after ordinance adoption, or until the construction of 250 units, whichever occurs first. If the Average Unit-Size Density Program is allowed to sunset, then the Zoning Ordinance would default to the City's existing Variable Density program based on number of bedrooms in effect as of December 2011

### Medium-High Density Residential

The Medium-High Density Residential designation applies primarily to the periphery of the Downtown, and commercial corridors. This designation has a base density of 12 -18 dwelling units per acre and principally serves as a transition from the medium density neighborhoods to the commercial centers of the city. A density range of 15 – 27 dwelling units per acre can be allowed under the Average Unit-Size Density Incentive Program. This designation applies to areas on the City's Eastside, Lower Riviera, Upper State Street, Westside, Laguna, Oak Park, West Beach and East Beach and reflects multi-family residential land uses. The areas around the Saint Vincent's housing project near Highway 154 also have this land use designation. The designation is consistent with the existing R-3 and R-4, Multiple-Family zoning classifications.

### High Density Residential

High Density Residential applies to both multi-family and mixed use designations in the more urban centers, with an allowed base density of 12-18 dwelling units per acre. Higher densities of 28-36 dwelling units per acre are allowed as an incentive to develop the denser housing close to the urban centers. These densities are intended to work in tandem with better transit, and a closer proximity to a wide variety of commercial services, open space, recreation and jobs.

The High Density areas also can permit higher densities of 49 – 63 dwelling units per acre if developed under the Priority Housing Overlay Program and the units are restricted to rental, employer sponsored housing, or cooperative housing. This designation is applied to a portion of

the residential parcels in the Downtown area generally between Sola Street, De La Vina Street, the freeway and Haley Street.

This area has historically been developed with denser, multi-family uses, and the land use designation is consistent with the existing R-3 and R-4, Multiple-Family residential zoning classifications.

### **Hotel/Medium High Density Residential**

This land use designation applies to the West Beach neighborhood and the area to the west of Dwight Murphy Field, and the residential base density is 12-18 dwelling units per acre with a range of 15 to 27 dwelling units per acre allowed with the Average Unit-Size Density Incentive Program. These areas are currently developed with denser multi-family uses and a scattering of hotels. The allowed uses are primarily multiple family housing, hotels, and other auxiliary uses primarily for use by hotel guests. The existing zoning classification for this area is R-4, Hotel Motel Multiple Residence Zone.

### **Ocean Related Commercial/Medium High Density Residential**

This designation is applied to much of the hotel and limited residential areas between Cabrillo Boulevard and the freeway, with a residential base density of 12-18 dwelling units per acre with a range of 15 to 27 dwelling units per acre allowed with the Average Unit-Size Density Incentive Program. The areas bordering Cabrillo and Castillo Street do not allow residential uses and allow primarily hotels and motels as well as other auxiliary uses for hotel guests. Where residential is permitted, there must be a mix of 70 percent residential and 30 percent ocean related. These uses are consistent with the City's Local Coastal Program.

The existing zoning varies between HRC-1, HRC-2 (Hotel and Related Commerce Zones) and O-C (Ocean-Related Commercial) and includes multi-family and hotel and related uses. The area below the railroad tracks in what has become known as the "funk zone" is zoned for primarily ocean dependent and ocean oriented uses, commercial recreational uses, arts and related uses, restaurants, and small stores. The Cabrillo Plaza project Specific Plan, also in this area, could add housing and commercial space to this area.

### **Office/Medium Density Residential**

The Office/Medium Density Residential designation is characterized by office and medical office uses primarily in the Cottage Hospital area and a few pockets on the Mesa and on Upper State Street that have a zoning classification of R-O, Restricted Office. The Medium Residential Density designation permits 12 du/ac. Due to their location near either low or medium density neighborhoods, the Medium Density designation is consistent with historical allowed densities.

Existing zoning classifications for these areas are C-O, Medical Office and R-O, Restricted Office.

### **Office/High Density Residential**

The Office/High Density Residential designation is characterized by office and multi-family residential uses. The High Density Residential designation has an allowed base density of 12-18 dwelling units per acre. A higher density of 28 to 36 dwelling units per acre is allowed as an incentive to develop the denser housing close to the urban centers. Areas of the city with this designation are areas along the southwest side of Garden Street between Carrillo Street and Victoria Street which have a mix of office, multi-family residential, and institutional uses, and in the area of Anacapa Street and Sola Street.

The Office/High Density Residential areas also can permit higher densities of 49 – 63 dwelling units per acre if developed under the Priority Housing Overlay Program and the units are restricted to rental, employer sponsored housing, or cooperative housing.

Existing zoning classifications for these areas are C-2, Commercial, R-O, Restricted Office, and R-3, Multiple-Family Residence which would be appropriate for a rezone to commercial zone in the future.

### **Commercial/Medium High Density Residential**

The Commercial/Medium-High Density land use designation generally applies to commercial neighborhood serving centers historically located within residential areas. The Medium-High Residential Density designation permits a base density of 12-18 dwelling units per acre. A range of 15 to 27 dwelling units per acre is allowed with the Average Unit-Size Density Incentive Program. Some of the areas with this land use designation include State Street (from Haley Street to just past Mission Street) and approximately 14 blocks of El Pueblo Viejo Downtown where many historic resources are located, including El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park; Salinas Street on the Eastside; the Mesa shopping areas; San Andres and Carrillo Street on the Westside; major portions of Upper State Street; and the Coast Village area. An area along Carrillo Street near the Santa Barbara High School also includes this designation.

The allowed land uses in these areas include residential, office, service shops, grocery stores, restaurants, banks, dry cleaners, childcare centers, pet shops, repair shops, and various other neighborhood/commercial serving businesses. These neighborhood and commercial service centers provide easy access to goods and services and help improve the livability and sustainability in areas with a high concentration of residential uses. As the Sustainable Neighborhood Plans develop, additional areas may be needed with this land use category and corresponding zoning.

This designation generally has an existing zoning classification of C-P, Restricted Commercial, and is more restrictive in height and setback standards than the general commercial areas, given the proximity of the surrounding residential uses. Areas of Downtown, Upper State, Coast Village Road and Carrillo Street currently have C-2, C-1 or other commercial zones.

### **Commercial/High Density Residential**

The Commercial/High Density Residential designation serves some of the general commercial areas of the City that are located along and/or near the major transit corridors. The areas include the south side of Upper State Street (La Cumbre Plaza/Five Points area), a portion along Milpas Street, and various areas in and around the Downtown center. The High Density Residential designation permits an allowed base density of 12-18 dwelling units per acre. A higher density of 28 to 36 dwelling units per acre is allowed as an incentive to develop the denser housing close to the urban centers. An exception is the area of Downtown that includes a large number of historic resources which have a Commercial/Medium High Density Residential designation.

The Commercial High Density Residential areas also permit higher densities of 49 – 63 dwelling units per acre if developed under the Priority Housing Overlay incentive program and the units are restricted to rental, employer sponsored housing, or cooperative housing.

The City's Downtown is the most concentrated and intensively used district of the City, and because most of these areas are general commercial, the widest range of commercial uses is permitted. City policies also promote the highest residential densities to encourage affordable housing that is close to transit, employment, shopping, cultural, recreational, and governmental facilities.

### **Commercial Industrial/Medium High Density Residential**

The Commercial Industrial designation area is bound by Ortega, Haley, Anacapa and Quarantina streets. This designation allows a wide variety of uses including manufacturing, automotive repair, office, retail, and residential. Many of the historic uses in this area provide essential services for the functioning of the city. This area currently has a zoning classification of C-M, Commercial Manufacturing Zone.

The General Plan recognizes the need for light industrial and manufacturing uses given that many of the businesses that could be displaced are local, in some cases one of a kind, and provide vital services to the community. This area has a base residential designation of 12-18 dwelling units per acre. The Medium-High Density allows also allows a range of 15 - 27 du/acre under the Average Unit-Size Density Incentive Program. To minimize the amount of market residential or displacement of light industrial and manufacturing sites with housing, the policies to allow additional densities for market rate rental housing would not apply in this area, however, higher densities could be allowed under the Priority Housing Overlay incentive program for rental, employer sponsored housing, or cooperative housing. Additional densities under the City's Affordable Housing Policies and Procedures could still be considered.