

Supporting Missing Middle Housing through Code Reform

Memphis is lowering construction costs and making it easier to build urban infill projects through an intensive reform of codes and regulations.

City: Memphis, TN

Purpose: To reform local policies that prevent the development or redevelopment of walkable communities, including “middle housing” types.

Lead Stakeholders: City, Private Sector

Process: Memphis’ 3.0 Comprehensive Plan identified a key need to enable infill housing and incremental “missing middle” development throughout the core city and near major community anchors. The City of Memphis began reviewing its codes and regulations to identify and reform policies and has since:

- **Amended building codes** to enable structures of 3 to 6 dwelling units to be reviewed under the residential building code rather than commercial building code;
- **Updated fire codes** to remove sprinkler requirements for triplexes and quadplexes under 5,000 sq. ft. made with 2-hour fire-rated walls and allow multifamily buildings up to 6 stories or 24 units to be built with a single staircase; and
- **Allowed builders to submit residential building plans** and stock plans for preapproved use for multiple projects and begun preparation of a public library of preapproved designs.

Outcomes:

- Ongoing and renewed private **sector interest and commitment to small- and medium-scale development.**
- Significant improvements to place-making capabilities and **stronger neighborhood development.**

