

3. Land Use Element

Based on current (2020) persons per household in Los Gatos of 2.4 persons/household, this increase in units will increase the community's population by 7,584 persons.

3.2 Implementing Small Multi-Unit Housing

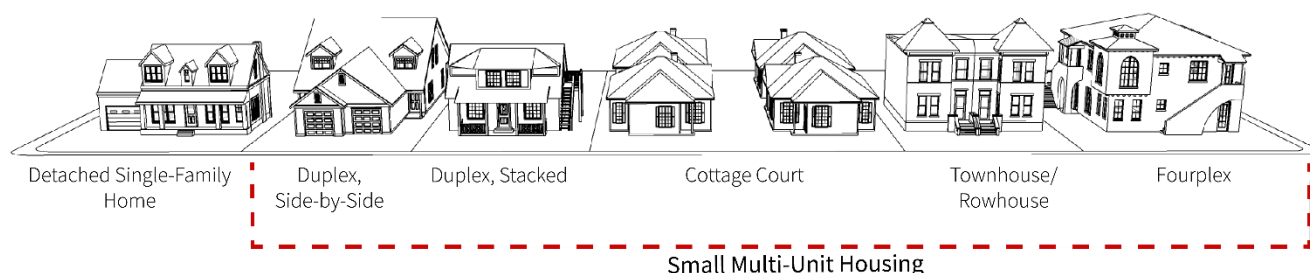
How to Meet the Housing Needs of Los Gatos

While housing and residential neighborhoods form the fabric that makes the Town a cohesive community, finding a place to call home in Los Gatos has been unattainable for many. The Town is not affordable for many prospective residents, and there are a lack of unit types and sizes to accommodate varied households. The aging population has also faced issues with the shortage of smaller dwelling units to allow aging in place within the community. The domination of single-family neighborhoods and the trend towards building larger and larger homes has further contributed to the housing issues in the Town.

These housing issues are not unique to Los Gatos and are seen throughout the Bay Area and many communities in California. The State of California has been working with communities to help meet the number and affordability of housing units needed in the State. As part of the Housing Element process, the State dictates the number of units, at a variety of income levels, that a jurisdiction must plan for. For Los Gatos, this is expected to be approximately 2,000 dwelling units of various affordability levels over the next eight-year cycle (2023-2031).

To address the diversity of housing needed in Los Gatos and meet the requirements of State law, the Town needs to look beyond the current process used to plan for housing. The Los Gatos planning process has typically focused on two categories of housing: detached single-family homes; and attached high-density multi-family apartments. To meet the diverse needs of the community, Los Gatos, like other communities nationwide, needs to strive for communities that are a heterogeneous mix of housing types and price points. This housing, which lies within High Density Residential (HDR- 14-22 units/acre) is often referred to as small multi-unit housing and can include a mix of housing types including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts/clusters, and townhomes (illustrated on Figure 3-4). Through design, these units are expected to be compatible in form and appearance with detached single-family homes.

Figure 3-4 Small Multi-Unit Housing Concept Illustrated



As part of the 2040 General Plan, a goal, policies, and implementation programs are included to support the development of Small Multi-Unit Housing within existing Los Gatos neighborhoods. Figure 3-5 illustrates this concept using a variety of Small Multi-Unit Housing types. In the graphic below, the two blocks were laid out to be identical relative to lot lines and existing structures, with the dwelling units shaded in white being existing dwelling units in a variety of sizes, but all being single-family detached homes. The portion of the graphic on the bottom (labeled "With Small Multi-Unit Housing") shows that same block with future development. The white shaded structures are those current units remaining and the gold shaded structures are new Small Multi-Unit Housing types. Some are in addition to existing structures ("A" and "F"), one is a replacement structure on an existing lot ("C"), and two show the consolidation of two lots to create one larger lot ("B" and "D").

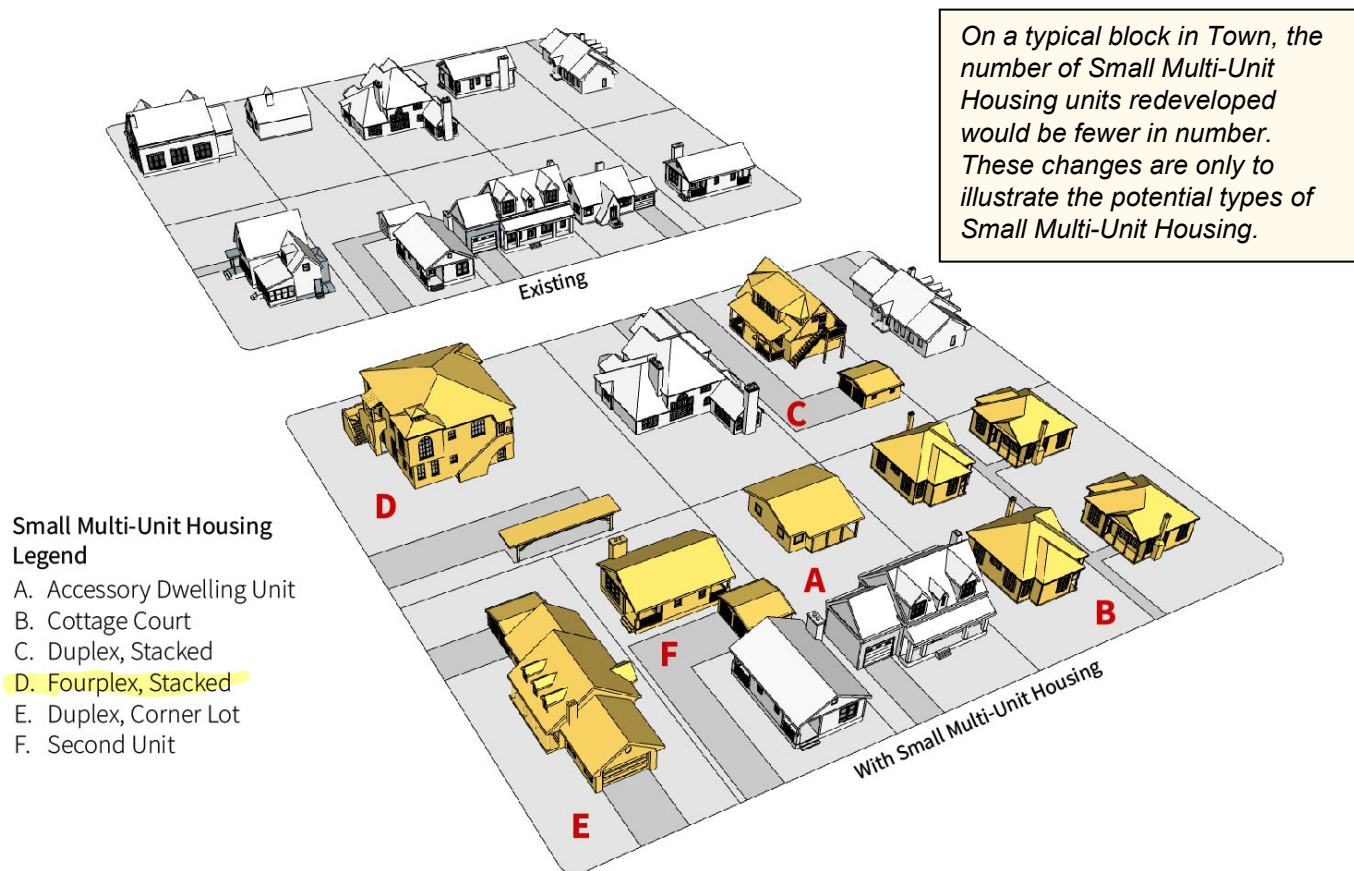


Figure 3-5 Small Multi-Unit Housing Types Illustrated (Sample Concepts)

This illustration is designed to show potential ideas for how to incorporate a range of housing types and sizes into an existing neighborhood. In addition to different types, the Small Multi-Unit Housing concepts would also support the production of a variety of unit sizes in the 500 to 1,000 square-foot range.

The following goal and policies will provide guidance on creation of small multi-unit housing.

LU-1

Provide opportunities for housing that can accommodate the needs, preferences, and financial capabilities of current and future residents in terms of different housing types, tenures, density, sizes, and costs.

LU-1.1

Mixed Residential Neighborhoods

Encourage creation of mixed residential neighborhoods through new and innovative housing types that meet the changing needs of Los Gatos households and expand housing choices in all neighborhoods. These housing types include, but are not limited to, single dwelling units, multi-family dwelling units, accessory dwelling units, small and micro units, use of pre-fabricated homes, and clustered housing/cottage housing.

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LU-1.2

Small Multi-Unit Housing

Support housing types and designs that increase density while remaining consistent with the building scale and character present in existing neighborhoods. This includes multi-family units or clustered residential buildings that provide relatively smaller, less expensive units within existing neighborhoods.

3.3 A Plan for Neighborhood Connectivity

Recent community design in California has been heavily influenced by the automobile. Instead of looking at providing easy access to goods and services near our homes, we have focused on moving in the larger region as our priority, where travel over significant distances in a short period of time was the primary design factor. This has led to an increased use of land for transportation systems and parking, the isolation of neighborhoods by placement of wide arterial streets, and the concentration of essential services and shopping in a more distant, regional context. This differs significantly from the earlier designs of communities that focused on a more complete neighborhood with easy access and close proximity to goods and services.

This concept, first formulated by Carlos Moreno of Pantheon Sorbonne University in Paris, was designed to look at creating a “15-minute city;” in the United States, this has also been framed using a 20-minute distance. For Los Gatos, the desire is to have goods and services within a distance that would support easy access by walking or biking. To support these different modes of travel, a distance of one mile from a residence was used to represent easy access for filling basic, daily needs. This design has three defining features:

- **Proximity.** Uses must be in close proximity to each other.
- **Diversity.** Land uses need to provide a mix of residential and commercial services.
- **Density.** Success requires a density of residential uses to support the commercial services.

As part of the Town’s future, the 2040 General Plan will shift focus to reestablishing more complete neighborhood areas that meet the daily needs of residents to be located within a one-mile distance.

The following goal and policy will provide guidance on neighborhood connectivity.

LU-2

Provide for a community fabric that supports a robust housing mix and convenient access to goods and services that meet daily needs.

LU-2.1

Mixed Uses and Convenience

Promote a mix of compatible uses in and adjacent to residential neighborhoods to serve the basic, daily needs of nearby residents. This should include neighborhood shopping and services available within one mile of all non-hillside residential areas in the following categories:

- Convenience retail;
- Access to healthy food choices;
- Health services;
- Schools;
- Parks and open space;
- Access to transit; and
- Employment opportunities.

3.4 Land Use Diagram, Designations, and Standards

The core of the Land Use Element is the description of land use designations to classify and distinguish the various land uses needed within the Town. Corresponding levels of intensity, density, and allowable uses, as required by Government Code Section 65302(a), are defined in this section.